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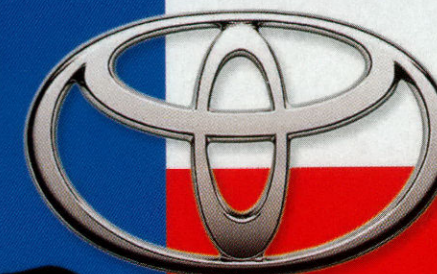


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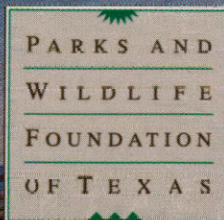
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FRONT: The 2003-2004 hunting season is looking like a winner. See "Hunting Forecast 2003" starting on page 24. Photo © garykramer.net

BACK: The spectacular scenery of Palo Duro Canyon State Park provides a backdrop for the Palo Duro Trail 50, an ultra marathon. Story begins on page 54.

This page: White-tailed deer © Mike Searles.

TEXAS

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

AUGUST 2003, VOL. 61, NO. 8

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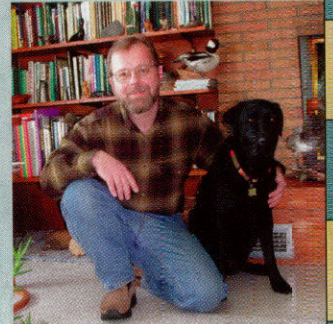
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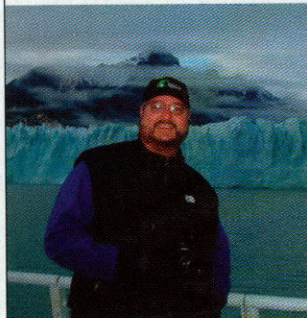
ABC
AUDITED

In the Field

MICHAEL FURTMAN, who writes about digital photography in this issue, has been writing about and photographing nature and the outdoors for 22 years. His last article for *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine was the essay "God's Swamp," which appeared in the July 2002 issue. That essay earned him a first place award in the Natural History category from the Outdoor Writers Association of America. Furtman is the author of 15 books and countless magazine articles. He also has served as a television script writer for several outdoor programs that appeared on ESPN. An avid hunter, angler and wilderness canoeist, Furtman lives in Duluth, Minnesota, with his wife, Mary Jo, and their black Labrador retriever, Wigeon. See more of his work at his Web site, <www.michaelfurtman.com>.



JOHN H. OSTDICK spent time bouncing along Gulf waterways, visiting deer camps near Del Rio and picking his way through East Texas forests while doing this month's story about state game wardens. A Dallas freelancer with 24 years' experience in magazines and newspapers, Ostdick has served in editor positions at *American Way* magazine and *The Dallas Morning News*. He has traveled worldwide writing for various magazines, including *Diversions*, *Delta Sky*, *Hemispheres* and *The Robb Report*, and is a contributing writer to the Travel Arts Syndicate. He also collaborated on *Boone Pickens: The Luckiest Guy in the World* (Beard Books 2000).



STEVE WILSON, a freelance writer living in Austin, writes in this issue about an effort to reforest pastureland adjoining Old Sabine Bottom Wildlife Management Area. Wilson, a native Kentuckian, spent eight years in New York City before moving to Austin two years ago. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Newsweek* and *Smithsonian*. His freelance writing has allowed him a range of colorful experiences, from wrestling an alligator to attending a seance for Harry Houdini. Currently, he's working on a biography of comedian Paul Lynde.



AT ISSUE

FROM THE PEN OF ROBERT L. COOK

Throughout much of my career there has been a kind of uneasiness between a set of folks who share almost all wildlife conservation beliefs. I'm talking about the hunters, fishers, environmentalists, landowners, game wardens and biologists of Texas, whom you will read about in this issue.

The casual observer might assume that we are all pretty much cut from the same cloth, that we hold the same values, defend the same principles. And in general, that is correct. However, below that normally tranquil surface there has, at times, been apprehension among these folks who should stand solidly together in the defense of our natural resources, private property rights and individual freedoms.

Several of the most basic freedoms of Texans — such as the right to bear arms, the public's ownership of wildlife and landowners' right to control the access to and use of their land — are fundamental beliefs which we support 100 percent. We support and defend the privileges of hunting and fishing, which many of us share and enjoy. We believe in conservation and management of our natural resources and the sustainable use of these resources. We believe that hunting and fishing may be the most important conservation tools available to ensure that habitat for fish and wildlife is properly cared for and maintained well into the future.

Yet, there have been times when this uneasiness has stood in the way of these champions of conservation in Texas. Hunters and anglers are too often viewed as uncaring users who sometimes exceed the bag limit, instead of the absolutely essential conservationists that they are. Some landowners still cast a suspicious eye on game wardens, wildlife biologists and hunters and they assume that anyone from the government is trying to interfere in their business.

I've never paid too much attention to claims from a few outdoor users that our wardens are mean and uncaring, but I'm sure there have been times when we could have done better. Biologists have, at times, been too zealous, too insensitive to people in their defense of the environment and in their desire to conserve the wildlife and lands that we all love. They have also at times, I fear, been jealous of our game wardens — who are seen by most Texans, especially landowners, as the defenders of the wildlife and our land. Landowners, hunters and fishermen have, now and then, not understood and have rejected the biological data which our fish and wildlife biologists collect and upon which they base their harvest and management recommendations. Environmentalists are often viewed as anti-hunters opposed to any form of active management and their voices fall on deaf ears.

We have all made mistakes; fortunately, we have learned from those experiences. Today, our biologists and game wardens work closely together as a unified team of professional conservationists for Texas. Out of necessity and as a result of lessons learned, our hunters, anglers, landowners, non-consumptive users, environmentalists and the millions of Texans who simply appreciate all wildlife are more closely bound together today than ever. It is critical that we continue to work together, that we put aside our differences and focus on the conservation, management and appreciation of our incredible natural resources.

Read and learn more about conservation in this issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. Get involved.

*Hunting and fishing
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conservation tools
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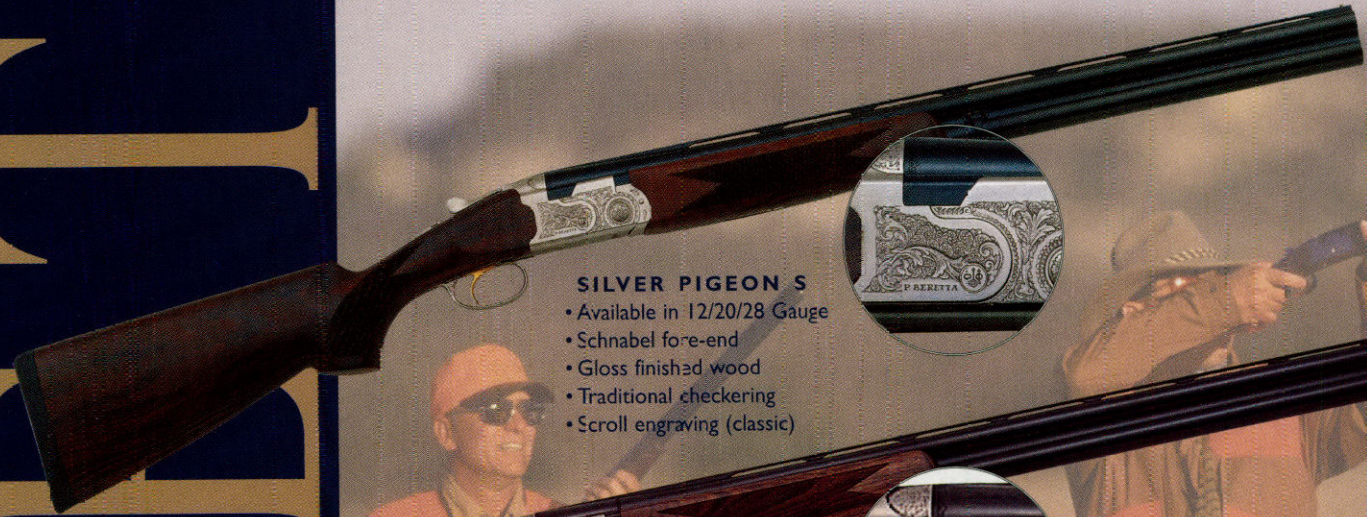
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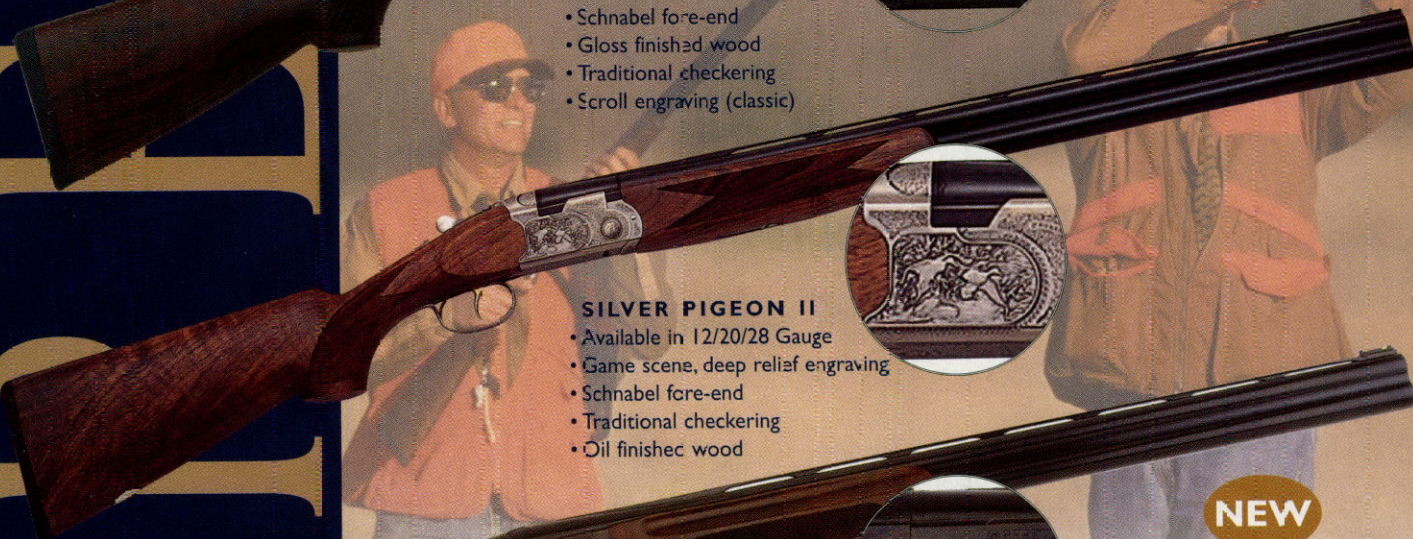
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PICKS, PANS AND PROBES FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

FOREWORD

August is one of the biggest months of the year for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, because this month many of us take one of our most important conservation actions: we buy our hunting and fishing licenses. With the exception of the senior combination license and the senior SuperCombo, many license prices are increasing this year, for the first time since 1996.

Obviously, when you consider what each of us spends in our pursuits of hunting and fishing, a license remains a very small part of the expense. Plus, I like to think that license buyers recognize the critical role in wildlife conservation that these fees play.

Last year, TPWD sold more than 2.6 million licenses, generating nearly \$61 million in revenue for the agency. Nonresidents, many of them from Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and other states, paid \$7.4 million of that total for the privilege of hunting and fishing in the Lone Star State.

By law, this money must be spent on wildlife, fish and water safety. As most people know, some of it goes to law enforcement, to train new game wardens and to enforce laws that protect our fish and game and to help people enjoy the outdoors safely. But here are a few facts you might not know about where your license dollars have gone since 1996:

- Wildlife management areas increased by nearly 28,000 acres
- Public dove hunting access increased by 200 percent
- 2,600 Eastern turkeys stocked in 41 East Texas counties
- A 200 percent increase in public hunting opportunity days
- A statewide initiative to improve quail habitat
- The amount of private land in wildlife management plans doubled to 15.5 million acres
- 431 million fingerlings stocked in Texas coastal and inland waters
- 82 winter-trout fisheries stocked with 2.5 million fingerlings
- More than 12,000 abandoned crab traps removed from the bays

Plus, TPWD has raised \$5.2 million from donations and used your license fees to create 38 new artificial reefs that provide both fishing and diving opportunities.

Although many of you who buy hunting and fishing licenses enjoy using them on a regular basis (as do I with my annual SuperCombo), a recent survey shows that one of every five people who buy a hunting license doesn't even hunt! These folks buy the license because they want to support conservation, habitat and wildlife, and they know that this department will use their money responsibly to do so.

Why is a hunting license such an important conservation tool? The reason is simple: Whether you hunt all season long, once in a while or not at all, when you save habitat for game animals and game fish you are also saving it for non-game animals, endangered species, tropical songbirds, native plants and biodiversity.

As you'll read in this issue, our expert biologists in the field are predicting one of the best hunting seasons in decades. So when you buy your license this year, you might think of it not as "just" a hunting or fishing license, but a conservation license as well. Many Texans already do.



LETTERS

TEXAS: THE STATE OF BAYS

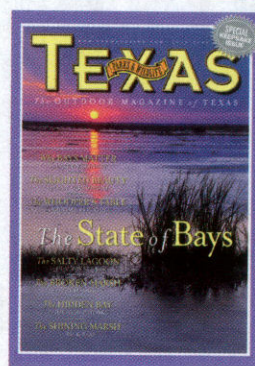
Reading descriptive writing is one of my favorite activities and I find that only rarely does a writer of Rick Bass' talent come along.

I have watched ibises in the wild but Bass' article in the July 2003

issue, "The Shining Marsh," further opens my senses and makes me want to return.

Thank you for providing your readers with continued offerings of this outstanding writer. He has the ability to put words on paper which inspire us to go witness nature for ourselves.

JERI PORTER
Austin



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the Corpus Christi Army Depot. Twenty years ago, there were abundant redfish, trout, flounder and blue crab within wading depth. Now, it's rare that anyone even attempts to fish here. When the water is clear near the shore, all that can be seen are a few hermit crabs where before there were numerous juvenile fish swimming in the shallows.

I have no expertise nor the means to evaluate the cause of this great desertion. However, one manifestation of the problem is the

MAIL CALL

dirty foam that forms a band along the shoreline whenever wavelets lap against it.

FRED ROBINSON
Corpus Christi

DEER TOO DEAR

When I started deer hunting in Texas back in the late 1950s, four of us had a year-round lease just outside of Harper for which we each paid \$50. There was nothing but a place to camp and water was available at the rancher's house. At that time most of the landowners in the Hill Country received most of their income from raising cattle or angora goats. The surrounding communities received much of their incomes from money spent by the hunters. I remember a sign at the county fair in Fredericksburg that stated "more money was brought into the town by hunting than any other single means."

At that time, the landowners' leasing of lands for hunting was a sideline for them, which brought in some extra money. It appears that now most of the landowners might raise a few cattle, if any, so they can have a tax write-off of equipment, etc. Most of them seem to be expecting the hunters to be paying the largest portion of their income. It would be very interesting to know what percentage of their income the landowners are receiving now from hunting leases compared to the past years.

As far as the high fencing goes, I completely disagree with the practice. The landowners can put up the high fences, which probably can be used as a tax write off, and make considerably more income from hunters willing to pay the ridiculously high fees. I personally was a meat hunter, as I processed and ate all the wild game I killed. The landowner should be required to buy the deer, from the state, that he fences in with the high fencing.

GLENN A. RIEDEL
Burleson

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could they be UFOs? — have been spotted all over Texas.

Relax, it's just our little friends the lightning bugs, or fireflies, as some call them. Yes, they're back for their nightly light shows, and the best time to view them is dusk. They prefer areas with trees like your local state park. Please do not catch them, as their life span is very short; just take your child or grandchild out for a fun-filled night of adventure watching the dancing lights. I take my four-year-old granddaughter, Clarissa, on our lightning bug tours and I make a special effort to enjoy every second because the twinkle of the lightning bug and the twinkle in a small child's eyes fade much too soon.

JOHN TURLINGTON
Fort Worth

BIG CAT AFICIONADO

Shouldn't the mountain lion be eligible to be placed on the endangered species list in Texas?

There are so few of them statewide, and this animal belongs to the great Texas outdoors. What a thrill it was when I saw one in the wild!

Awhile back, near Strawn, one was shot by a deer hunter. What was his reasoning, I wonder, as I am a hunter myself.

To my knowledge, the mountain lion is little or no threat to domestic livestock.

R.M. LIGHTNER
Crowley

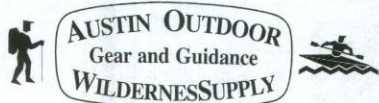
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SCOUT

NEWS AND VIEWS IN THE TEXAS OUTDOORS

Reforesting Old Sabine Bottom

A newly created forest will absorb heat-trapping greenhouse gases.

Several times a year, the Sabine River spills its backwash into Old Sabine Bottom and fills it up like a stoppered sink. The water slithers along the ground of the flat forest, slowly wrapping itself around oak, elm and hackberry trunks as it rises. Most visitors appreciate these trees as serene bathing beauties. To a group of state, energy and environmental interests, they're something more: storage containers for carbon dioxide.

In April, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, The Conservation Fund, Reliant Energy and Environmental Synergy, Inc. announced the near-completion of a joint project to purchase and reforest 569 acres of pastureland adjoining Old Sabine Bottom. The acquisition raises the acreage of this wildlife management area to 5,736, reclaims habitats for fish and wildlife and provides other environmental benefits, such as better filtration of a watershed that extends to the Gulf of Mexico. But it's the new forest's potential to absorb 215,000 tons of heat-trapping greenhouse gases during the next 70 years that attracted Reliant's interest and made the deal possible.

Acting as a middleman to speed up the process and cut through red tape, The Conservation Fund bought the East Texas piece of ranch land for \$600,000 and sold it to TPWD. Houston-based Reliant Energy then paid Synergy \$160,000 to plant 162,000 water and willow oaks and native pecan seedlings and TPWD \$50 an acre for upkeep. Although an energy corporation, a government agency and an environmental organization working together may sound like some version of a priest-rabbi-minister joke, it's a model that likely will grow more common as industries embrace carbon sequestration through reforestation (say that three times fast).

Anticipating that the White House's voluntary program to curb carbon dioxide output eventually will become regulatory law, energy companies such as Reliant have been getting a head start. Taking steps now to reduce pollution not only wins them public relations points, but also builds a reserve of



Texas industries are paying to create bottomland forests at the Old Sabine Bottom Wildlife Management Area.

"carbon credits" that they may use one day to offset required upgrades or sell to other companies through the Chicago Climate Exchange.

With many technologies for capturing and storing carbon dioxide still under development, American industries have turned to the simplest form of carbon sequestration: planting trees. Jim Wisniewski, CEO of Environmental Synergy, Inc., estimates that an acre of trees can lock away 400 tons of carbon in 70 years. Considering that it paid less than \$1 a ton, Reliant got a good deal. In European countries that have signed the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to reduce emissions, these units trade for \$6 to \$12.

The concept of tree planting to combat the greenhouse effect has even filtered down to the consumer level. With marketing names such as "carbon neutral" and "carbon offsets," environmental outfits such as Future Forests have established scales by which guilty donors can calculate how many trees they can plant to balance out the pollution emitted by their cars and airplane flights.

As the idea gains currency, critics have begun to decry the practice as a quick-fix measure to put off paying for carbon-free technologies. Some environmentalists charge that using trees as carbon vampires could even create incentives to clear old-growth forests that can't absorb any more carbon and replace them with young and hungry new ones. And certain scientists question the reliability of storing carbon in vessels at the mercy of disease and natural catastrophes.

"Let's say you have a forest fire," says Charles Jackson, a climate specialist with the Institute for Geophysics at the University of Texas. "All that carbon basically goes right back. So it takes you 100 years to grow it, and it takes a one-week period to bring that back to zero. Certainly it's a volatile container."

Larry Selzer, president of The Conservation Fund, says

sturdy bottomland hardwoods in a wet habitat like Old Sabine Bottom will likely resist such problems. However, he acknowledges that the new forest will absorb only a small percentage of the millions of tons of carbon dioxide Reliant's 117 power plants put in the air. Reforestation, he says, is but one of many options that industries should pursue to curb their pollution.

"Perhaps at some point we will as a country have developed the technologies that will allow us to transition to a carbon-free emission environment, but that's not in the near term," he says. "Those technologies may be five, 10, 20 years away. In the meantime, carbon sequestration through reforestation is very valuable, very tangible, and over that time frame, very secure."

— Steve Wilson

Safety is Priceless

By taking these precautions, you can vastly improve your hunter safety this season.

Compared to the 785 deaths from falls and 279 from drownings in Texas in 2001, hunting is a safe activity. Texas had only three hunting-related fatalities in each of the years 2001 and 2002, the second-lowest number since TPWD began keeping records in 1966. (The high was 37 deaths in 1968.) Given that more than one million Texans purchased hunting licenses and spent about 14 million days hunting in 2002, that's a very good record. But it could have — should have — been better.

The death of 48-year-old Gary Derr of Shelbyville last Nov. 30 is an example of an incident that could have been prevented.

Derr and his 13-year-old son were happy to take advantage of the generous offer of a local landowner, who let people hunt his 300 acres in Shelby County for free. No check-in was required; people simply showed up and went hunting. Derr and his son entered the property through a gate and spent the afternoon deer hunting. Near sunset they walked from a wooded area toward an open field. As they walked, they startled some deer.

One at a time, the deer moved into an open field. Hunting in that field was 24-year-old Michael Cooper, who lived next to the property and had walked in. Neither Cooper nor the Derrs knew others were hunting.

A doe ran into the open field, and Michael Cooper shot it. Shortly after, a nice buck appeared, and Cooper shot it, too. Feeling lucky, Cooper went to look at the buck. It was after sunset but still well within legal shooting time, so when he heard a sound and saw movement at the edge of the field, he fired again.

This time it was no deer. Shot in the abdomen from about 250 yards, Gary Derr died in the hospital that night.

Game warden Jim Yetter of Shelbyville investigated the incident, and while he feels the shooting was an accident, he thinks it was preventable. "A lot of things went bad at the same



Wearing hunter orange, even when it's not required, helps other hunters see you, which can save your life.

time," he says. "Mr. Cooper had just killed two deer and was excited. The Derrs were not wearing hunter orange. Mr. Cooper failed to identify his target. He could make out movement, but he could not tell what it was. The lack of light was definitely a factor. It's a mistake he will have to live with the rest of his life."

After investigations by the Shelby County sheriff and district attorney and consultation with the Derr family, no charges were filed. "Mr. Cooper was not breaking any hunting laws," Yetter says. "The family also felt it was an accident and that charges were not appropriate."

Four simple steps can help you avoid the most common hunting accidents.

1. Take a hunter education course. "Hunter education has had a great impact on the safety of hunters," says TPWD education director Steve Hall. "The number of hunting accidents in the United States and Texas has declined by more than half in the last three decades."

2. Fire only when it is safe. Be sure of your target and always be aware of your surroundings. Dove-hunting accidents in which the victim is covered by a shooter swinging on a bird remain the most common mishaps.

3. Never carry a loaded firearm in or around a vehicle. One of the 2002 fatalities occurred when a loaded handgun was passed from one person to another inside a vehicle.

4. Wear hunter orange to be seen. "Even though it may not be required when hunting on private land, hunter orange vests and caps have reduced 'hunter judgment' mistakes by more than 50 percent in states requiring them to be worn," Hall says.

— Larry D. Hodge

Building Bridges

*Houston cycling clubs repair, improve
Huntsville park trails.*

Two Houston-area cycling organizations have joined forces with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to further develop and maintain Huntsville State Park's multi-use trail system.

The Greater Houston Off-Road Biking Association (GHORBA) and Northwest Cycling Club (NWCC) are constructing several boardwalk-style bridges, enabling park visitors to cross the park's swamplands. The groups also help with the maintenance of the park's 10-mile-long trail system.

The ongoing project is being funded by various sources, including NWCC, which donated \$1,500 to GHORBA in April, and REI, an outdoor goods store. NWCC's contribution is going toward the construction of a bridge.

Huntsville State Park volunteer trail stewards look at the trail system as a whole when deciding what parts need repair and what parts don't. They conduct a series of walkthroughs, in which they assess the amount of traffic each trail receives, note the effects weather and erosion have had on the trails and look for ways to reroute damaged trails.

They then report their findings to GHORBA, which holds monthly "work parties" to make the needed repairs. At the parties, volunteers do everything from shoveling dirt to constructing bridges to transplanting trees and bushes in order to cover up trails no longer in use. Local food stores join in as well, donating food and drinks to the volunteers.

"It is part of GHORBA's mission statement to do volunteer work [maintaining the trails]," says Kelly Strader, vice pres-



Cyclists at Huntsville State Park will be able to cross the park's swamplands, thanks to some new boardwalk-style bridges.

ident of trails for GHORBA. "Huntsville is a good place to recreate."

The park, located an hour's drive north of Houston in Sam Houston National Forest, attracts cyclists, runners, hikers and nature enthusiasts alike.

The trails, which are all dirt save for the wooden bridges that cross over the area's swamplands, are designed and constructed so that wildlife and birds are observed in a natural setting.

"Huntsville is pretty keen on keeping a natural look, sort of like a game trail that deer travel on, only wider," says trail steward Jimm Schroeder. "We try not to make it look too manmade."
—Jennifer Nalewicki

FIELD NOTES

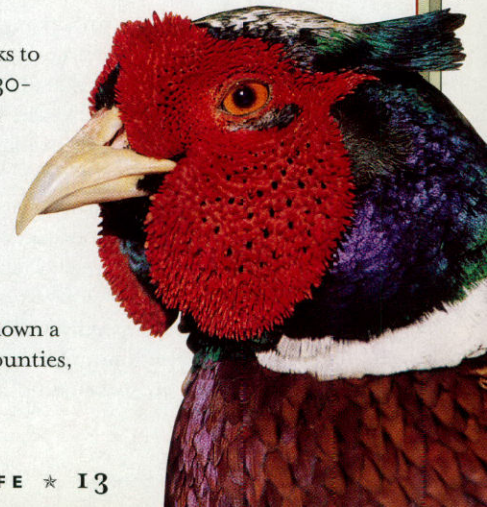
TEXAS HUNTERS ARE BEING ASKED to keep on the lookout for debris from the Feb. 1 crash of the space shuttle Columbia. Along with their hunting licenses, hunters will receive a toll-free number to NASA's debris hot line to phone should they come across a piece of the shuttle while out in the Texas countryside. About 117,000 license pouches with the number have been printed for distribution in East Texas, Houston and Dallas. So far 82,000 pieces of debris have been recovered, representing 40 percent of the shuttle's weight. The NASA debris hot line number is (866) 446-5603.

Changes in Pheasant Seasons

*In the Panhandle, hunters get two more weeks to chase the big birds,
while the season closes in four coastal counties.*

Pheasant hunters will find it easier to schedule a hunt in the Panhandle this year thanks to a longer season. In April the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Commission approved a 30-day pheasant season — up from 16 days — and lowered the bag limit from three cocks a day to two. The additional days will extend the season into January.

At the opposite end of the state, the commission closed the pheasant season in the coastal counties of Brazoria, Fort Bend, Matagorda and Wharton. "We started stocking wild-trapped pheasants from the Sacramento Valley of California in the early 1970s, and they did well for a pretty good period of time," explains TPWC district biologist Bob Carroll. "Then farming changed from rice to cotton and soybeans, and the pheasant population declined. By the mid-1990s we rarely saw or heard birds. You hate to shut down a season, but I decided it was time. We kept the season in Chambers, Jefferson and Liberty counties, which still have huntable populations of birds on a few big ranches." —Larry D. Hojce



Thai Flies

Thai fly tiers produce lures designed by Texans.

Two of the most popular saltwater flies on the Texas Coast are the Haines shrimp and the parachute crab. The Haines shrimps are made of hot pink or green-and-brown polyester material, glittery thread, chicken feathers and tiny beads for eyes. The parachute crab has a brown-and-green wool body about the size of a dime, with gold bead eyes and a feathered tail.

You can't buy one of these lures tied by their inventors, Larry Haines of Port Isabel or Larry Sunderland of Austin. "I never intended to tie the parachute crab for sale myself," explains Sunderland. "The monotony of tying flies for sale is too much. I sell about 100 dozen a year, and an experienced tier can produce about eight an hour." The Haines shrimp takes even more time to make.

Haines and Sunderland have others doing the intricate and tedious work. Their source is the city of Chiang Mai in Thailand, which is renowned for its arts and crafts, and the conduit is Buddy Atwell of Houston Associates of Austin, (512) 328-4237, an importer and distributor for fly-fishing tackle. Atwell lived in Thailand for eight years and married a Thai woman, giving him good connections in the country. Atwell began importing the flies designed by Haines and Sunderland four years ago, but fly tying in Thailand dates back to the 1970s, when an American named Bill Black taught Thais to tie flies in order to make them more affordable.

"Almost every fly available at a reasonable price in this country is tied offshore," says Jim Lynn of Westbank Anglers in Dallas, which sells flies made in Thailand as well as other countries. Foreign-tied flies typically retail for \$4 to \$5; domestic ones start at about \$6. Low price does not affect quality. "You can't tell those tied in Thailand from the ones I tie," says Haines.

Haines, owner of The Shop in Port Isabel, sells more Haines shrimp than any other fly. "Basically it's tied for redfish and speckled seatrout, but it also catches flounder, snook and even tarpon. It seems to appeal to everything," he says. Larry Sunderland's parachute crab was also designed to appeal to redfish, though it works on bonefish as well.

Whichever fly you choose, it may well have been tied in Chiang Mai by a young woman who has never used one. The tiers command high wages because of the skill required. Working on a piecemeal rate in a country with a per-capita income of \$2,000, top tiers can earn as much as \$3,400 annually.

Chiang Mai, a city of 170,000 in northern Thailand, draws people from nearby mountain regions so undeveloped that elephants still carry goods to remote villages. Founded in 1296, the city developed into a regional center for fine handicrafts, especially silver jewelry, umbrellas, paper, textiles and lacquer work. The artistry and skill needed to produce those items translates well into fly tying. Chiang Mai offers other assets, too: low cost of living, cheap factory space and a working class population with many English speakers. Since the 1970s the business has mushroomed so that Chiang Mai has been called the "Silicon Valley of fly tying" by Wayne Richey, head of Targus Fly & Feather, one of the largest fly-making operations in Thailand.

Most of the \$5 million worth of flies produced annually in Chiang Mai wind up at the end of a tippet somewhere in the



Black death, top, and the yarn crab are two of the hundreds of flies tied by skillful Thai workers.

United States. Targus Fly & Feather, <www.targusfly.com>, offers 708 patterns tied in Thailand. Brookside Flies, <www.brooksideflies.com>, sells more than 300 patterns, all packaged by the dozen in tiny boxes labeled by hand with the name of the fly and the Thai tier. C.M.K. Flies & Feathers, <www.cmklflies.com>, serves as the manufacturer for McChes Devaux of France and also custom makes flies to order.

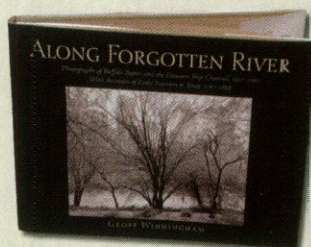
—Larry J. Hodge

TEXAS READER

Buffalo Bayou Blues

RIVERS ARE WHERE CITIES ARE BORN, and woe to the city that forgets its origin. Photographer Geoff Winningham calls his new book of photographs, short essays and historical descriptions of Buffalo Bayou, *Along Forgotten River*. (160 pages, 80 duotones, hardcover, Texas State Historical Association, \$39.95 (800) 826-8911) From the monochromatic photographs to historical accounts of the lost natural greatness of the stream, Winningham plays the blues for a river.

From 1997 to 2001, Winningham photographed Buffalo Bayou from beginning to end, from high in the air to down on the bank. He starts



from the bayou's origins at a small pond and a drainage ditch about 30 miles west of Houston, tracks it through the western suburbs, past the pilings of downtown bridges where the homeless rest, through the huge petro-chemical plants that line the ship channel and out to

Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

Sunlight seems to ache in his cover photograph of willows that screen the bayou just west of downtown Houston. Buildings tower ghostlike behind the trees, facing into silvery reflections from windows and the bayou's waters.

There is a ghostlike quality to this book. Part of it comes from the austere, almost astringent quality of the photographs. It's as if Winningham is trying to make them documents and not just aesthetic treats. Winningham doesn't take pretty pictures, but ones that are a bit forlorn.

What's forgotten can be sad, and in order to reclaim the river for memory, he can't make it pretty. The forgotten river has endured too much history and too much change for that.

—Michael Berryhill



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Hunting Crossbows

A medieval weapon has become a high-tech hunting device.

Hunting crossbows offer no advantage over conventional bows in terms of range. The outer limits of both are about 40 yards. But crossbows do have some advantages over archery equipment, and those thinking of making the transition from rifles to primitive sporting arms will want to consider new advances in crossbow technology.

Crossbow handling and sighting are similar to shooting a rifle. The stock, trigger and sights will be familiar to most hunters. Many crossbows use crosshair or red-dot scopes for sighting. These allow good target acquisition and, in some models, compensate slightly for trajectory. And like rifles, crossbows are equipped with safety devices to keep them from being fired accidentally.

Because the crossbow is pre-drawn, it offers hunters a significant advantage over conventional archery. Unlike the conventional archer, the crossbow hunter does not have to draw back the string just before shooting, a movement that might spook game, especially turkeys.

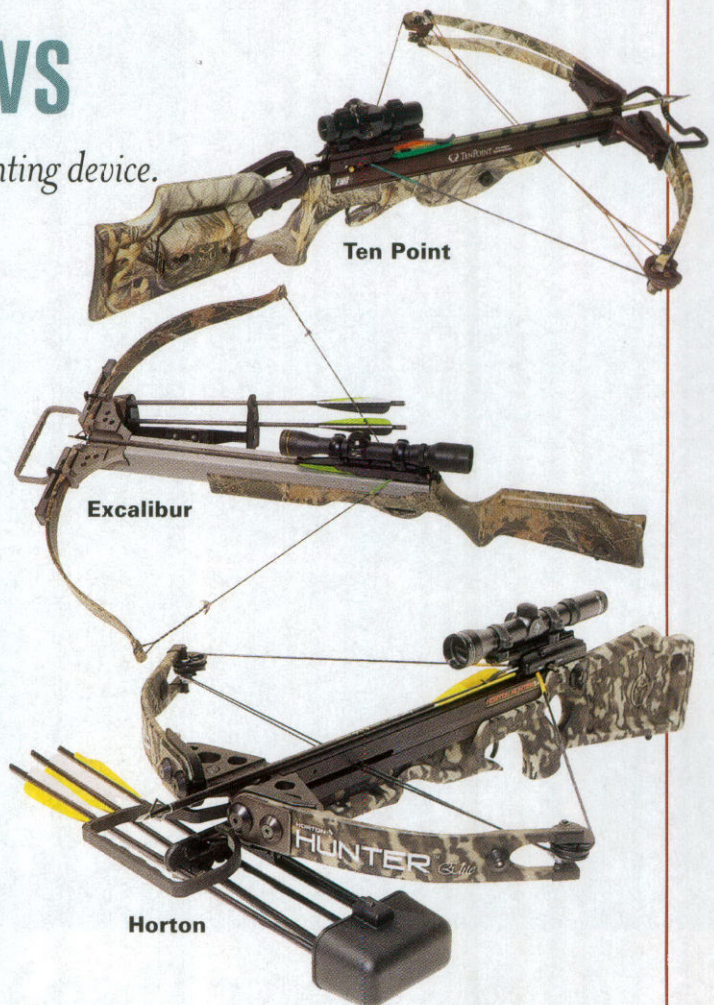
Cocking is the most difficult process in using a crossbow. It requires pulling back a heavy-duty string on a short bow with a draw weight of 150-200 pounds and, at the same time, centering the string on the trigger for shooting accuracy. A strong archer can do this, but most will want some sort of mechanical cocking device: either a rope-pulley or winch system. The rope-pulley is lighter and less troublesome to use in the field, but hunters with physical disabilities may prefer a winch.

Today's hunting crossbow arrows are 20 inches long and made of either aluminum or carbon fiber. They take interchangeable screw-on points for target or field use.

As a hunting device, the crossbow is as effective as archery equipment and is legal in Texas for game animals and non-migratory game birds during the general season. (They're illegal for migratory game birds.) Archery can be a great choice for hunting feral hogs and other exotics that have no closed season. During the archery-only season for deer and turkey, however, a crossbow hunter must purchase an archery stamp and also carry a physician's letter indicating that he or she has an upper limb impairment that would make it extremely difficult to draw a conventional bow.

The best of crossbow technology is found in high-end models, which use the latest bow technology, scope sighting and safety-first trigger designs.

One of the finest is the **Ten Point Stealth X2**, which offers excellent construction, speed, accuracy and redundant safety features. If extra weight is not a concern, this bow, combined with AcuDraw winder-winch mounted in the butt, is one of the easiest bows to cock. A dry-fire inhibitor prevents the bow from being accidentally released without an arrow in place. This is perhaps the safest handling of any currently manufactured crossbow and the easy-to-use cocking aid makes it an ideal choice for anyone with a physical handicap. (\$979, 185#, kit including AcuDraw



and red-dot scope, Ten Point Crossbows, (330) 628-9245, <www.tenpointcrossbows.com>)

The **Excalibur Exomag** keeps things simple by using a magnum-strength, 200-pound recurve rather than a compound bow. It delivers blazing arrow speed and eliminates the need for cam adjustments or tuning sometimes required of compound bows. Designed and manufactured by crossbow hunters, this bow comes with an excellent trigger system, comfortable synthetic stock and is exceptionally well constructed, consistently accurate, and reliable. (\$800, kit with cross-hair scope, Excalibur Crossbow Inc., (800) 463-1817, <www.excaliburcrossbow.com>)

The widely available **Horton Hunter Elite** is a sturdy, compact, fast compound bow. This popular model offers an ergonomic stock, is comfortable and has a textured grip surface and distinctive camouflage pattern. The excellent 4X32mm Multi-A-Range Horton scope is waterproof and fogproof, and has an elevation adjustment integrated into the stock. The Hunter Elite shoots only Horton arrows, which are equipped with "moon nocks" to ensure that the arrow is loaded properly for maximum safety and accuracy. (Under \$600, 175# kit with cross-hair scope, Horton Crossbows, (330) 633-0305, <www.hortonmfg.com>)

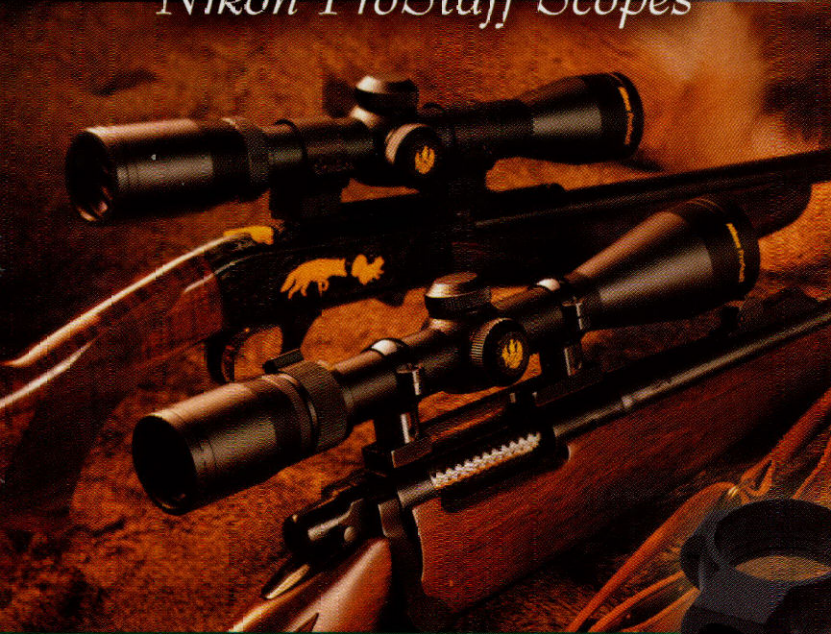
The crossbow kits that are described above are all excellent combinations. Whether one is shooting a flat target, roving a field course or hunting big game, these top-model crossbows deliver quality construction and shooting performance. ★



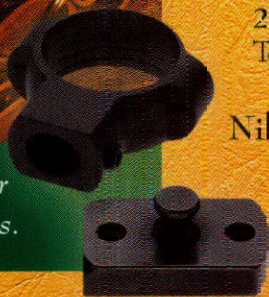
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3 Days in the Field / by Susan L. Ebert

DESTINATION: ROCKPORT-FULTON

TRAVEL TIME FROM :

AMARILLO – 12.5 hours / AUSTIN – 4 hours / BROWNSVILLE – 4 hours / DALLAS – 7 hours / EL PASO – 11 hours
HOUSTON – 4.5 hours / SAN ANTONIO – 3 hours

The Lure of the Coast

With torrents continuing and floodwaters rising last July, I study the increasing number of road closings on the TxDOT Web site to locate routes outside the river basins.

I am determined not to bail out on a long-planned weekend in Rockport-Fulton, a favorite Coastal Bend destination.

When Dana and her son Noah arrive at my Austin home, she casts a worried eye to the turbid skies. “We’re on,” I pronounce. “It’ll just take us a little longer to get there.” With Dana, Noah and me in her car and my two teens, Scott, 17, and Cristy, 16, trailing behind in my truck, we skirt the swollen Guadalupe river basin with what turns out to be well-calculated detours. It’s the first time I’ve watched my son drive in torrential rain, so I constantly scan my rearview mirror. Once, my heart jumps into my throat as a doe leaps into the wet roadway in front of my two teens. *Don’t punch the brakes, I taught him. Easy does it. Don’t swerve ever; hold the road. You have inertia in your favor if you keep going in a straight line.* His slowing truck never wavers. The doe sprints past him. I breathe again.

The Kontiki Beach Resort, just south of the Copano Bay bridge in the village of Fulton, sparkles in the storm-swept afternoon. The rains have passed through for now, and our offspring unfold their ever-extending limbs and set out to explore the marina, the two long fishing piers, the tennis courts and the swimming pool. Brown pelicans stand vigil on the marina pilings, and pickets of heron and egret fish the rims of the marshy inlet. Mullet slap the surface.

Dana’s son Noah, 8, has never fished, so the two of us step out the back door of the condo, less than 10 yards away from the marina. To my delight, Noah, like me, is left-handed, so I don’t have to do the usual transposing. He has the strong, smooth arm of a budding Nolan Ryan, and is soon pitching the top-water lure clean across the marina and dancing it back to him in a jolly jig.

Although I prefer fly fishing and throwing plastic, I’m no purist, especially in teaching children. There’s something about threading a worm,

shrimp or croaker onto a hook that connects a child to the food chain and the natural world. So charging my two teens to look after Noah, Dana and I set out on a bait-and-grocery run. First stop is Fleming’s Bait Stand in Rockport Harbor, for both bait and table shrimp, and a couple dozen croaker. The new H-E-B south of Rockport and Fulton has everything else. “The produce department is prettier than most jewelry stores,” I comment to Dana, and we come back laden with fruits and vegetables.

I’ve brought two flyrods, two spinners and “Don’t-Touch-Mama’s Baitcaster”—its official name—which seems to successfully ward off casual use. I rig them all that evening, so we’re ready to go.

The following morning, while everyone sleeps, I strap on my water sandals and headlamp and jog around the oyster reef from the Kontiki to the end of the Copano Bay State Fishing Pier as the sun rises through surly Van Gogh clouds. Splashing over the oystershell in ankle-deep water, I soon spy two black skimmers on a spit of shell. One of the skimmers looks one-legged. On closer examination, I see that it has monofilament balled around an atrophying leg. I spend an hour trying to nab the trailing fishing line in hopes I can cut

Fishing piers at Goose Island State Park and Rockport Beach Park are popular spots for family outings.





Captain Sally Moffett, left, is a guide on the Texas Coast who specializes in fly fishing from kayaks. Goose Island State Park's Big Tree, above, is estimated to be more than 1,000 years old.

it free. Furious and frustrated that I cannot get close enough to help the bird, I pick up one of the numerous plastic bags fluttering along this pristine shore, and fill it with balled-up fishing line discarded by unthinking anglers from the night before. I tie it tight and thrust it into the closed garbage bin on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Copano Bay Fishing Pier, thinking, *If people knew how harmful these careless acts are to fish and wildlife, wouldn't they act more responsibly?*

Dana and I pry our children from their nests and set out after breakfast for an excursion across the Copano Bay Bridge to the tiny village of Lamar. Cardinals and scissor-tailed flycatchers flit across our paths as we meander along St. Charles Bay toward Goose Island State Park's Big Tree, one of the most famous trees in the world and until a usurper in Brazoria County was awarded the title recently, the Texas State Champion Live Oak. Estimated to be more than 1,000 years old, the Big Tree measures 35 feet in circumference and has a crown spread of nearly 90 feet. It is said to have been a council tree, both for the Karankawa Indians and the white settlers who came later. We linger in its stately presence, savoring the shade and the bay breeze.

Goose Island State Park may be only 321 acres, but it's whopping big on fun. The 1,620-foot-long fishing pier, at the junction of Aransas, Copano and St. Charles bays, presents spectacular fishing access for youngsters, as schools of speckled trout traverse underneath day and night, as well as redfish, flounder and black drum. It's also one of only two state parks — Matagorda Island being the other — in which to see the endangered whooping crane. The birding is varied and plentiful as shorebirds, waterfowl and migrating songbirds abound. Visitors can also enjoy recreational crabbing and oystering. With more than 100 electrified campsites, two playgrounds, a bait stand and a two-lane boat ramp, this park is chockablock with adventure.

Later, the boys lazily fish the marina while Cristy paints. After a short tour of Fulton Mansion State Historic Site and quaint Fulton Harbor, we stroll the curio shops and art galleries of downtown Rockport. As the sun sets, our collective mood is calm but the world around us is blowing a gale. Cristy walks out on the pier to sketch while son Scott and Dana play their acoustic guitars. We sing, play music; laugh.

Dana and I cement a friendship. "You're pretty well pre-

pared," she comments; "like that MacGyver character who could fix anything with either duct tape, air foil or gum."

As she hugs me goodbye, she teases, "I can't believe you didn't bring duct tape."

Captain Sally Moffett of Reel Fun Charters runs one of the most innovative guide services I know: She piles kayaks onto her bay boat dubbed "Twenty-four-feet-o'-Hell," and takes clients out into the inner labyrinth of the skinny water cradling San Jose Island.

The night before we're to fish, we're once again under anvil thunderheads and flood advisories. Moffett and I confer, and agree we'll have to call it in the morning; if there's lightning or other dangerous conditions, we'll bag it. Moffett holds a Master U.S. Coast Guard license and would not risk unsafe weather. She knows I'll be up for a physically challenging trip, though; wind and waves alone won't stop us.

Tonight, we stay at Hoopes' House, a vanilla-and-daffodil Victorian confection in downtown Rockport, within walking distance of shops, restaurants, Rockport Harbor and the Texas Maritime Museum.

After supper, Cristy and I head for the pool, but by now it is flat out pouring, and the sky is firing with lightning and shouting with thunder. We sit in the gazebo, swathed in Hoopes' House robes, and talk, really talk the way mothers and daughters need to talk and so rarely do. On a Saturday night, she would be out with her friends; this conversation in the midst of a fierce lightning storm is a rare gift.

The following morning, I awake at 5, pound out three miles around Rockport Harbor, shower, pull on my fishing clothes and grab my gear. At Palm Harbor, where Moffett and I are to launch, the wind is slicing sideways and the fog bank is touchably low. An angry, greenish cloudbank hangs over the northeast horizon. Moffett sizes up the situation. "We're safe," she says, "but it may be rough. Are you game?" "Heck, yeah," I reply.

We bound over the bay to San Jose Island, where she drops anchor and we each board sit-on-top kayaks, with fly rods and spinning gear at the ready. We fight the wind as we paddle across Fence Lake, the missing joint in my left shoulder chattering in protest. I mentally package the pain and toss it overboard. Chin into the wind, I paddle, teeth clenched.

Then I see a yellow-crowned night heron on the shore! Another! Then a flight of roseate spoonbills, hot pink in the

fog. Two willets sound their piercing cry; golden, black-spotted tails swirl near my paddle. Three wigeons, harbingers of flights to come, pass overhead. The shoulder pain abates as the splendor of this wild place floods my senses.

We anchor our kayaks and wade. The mud is thick and viscous; I find I need to constantly move my feet to stay balanced. I ask Moffett how she came to this life she so obviously adores.

"I worked in the legal profession for 14 years," she confides, "and when I decided to become a fishing guide, I knew I wanted to be a different kind of fishing guide. I grew up on the water, but not fly fishing; my spirit led me to it. Chuck Scates is the one who took me under his wing. I was not very good when he decided to teach me." She pauses, laughing. "Actually, I was pathetic. Scates is the guru of Texas saltwater fly fishing; somehow he sensed my passion and my tenacity and gave to me.

"I want the fish to be here tomorrow," continues Moffett, "so I encourage my clients to practice catch and release. The magic of these pristine wild places is what I hope to share."

Despite last night's storm, the skinny water in Fence Lake is clear. The stingrays dart around our wadeboots, as do shrimp, crab and speckled trout. Redfish streak past us in the knee-deep water.

It's too windy to throw fly lines, so we pitch topwater lures. Each blowup brings a rush; each fish is released with a prayer and a thank you.

We retrieve our kayaks and climb aboard. I'm weary, and feeling more so when I realize we're on the back reaches of Fence Lake, far from Moffett's anchored bay boat. "Just

stand up," says Moffett, doing so herself.

I do, and am amazed to see that our bodies have become sails. With our blonde ponytails flying beneath our hats, the wind at our backs, we cast and retrieve, catch and release, talk and observe as "Twenty-four-feet-of-Hell" looms closer. It's a day that should not end, I think, as we stand side by side, gliding across the surface as the ripe nursery bay undulates beneath us.

It's what happens, I remind myself; not what's planned. ☆

For More Information

Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce, (800) 242-0071 or (800) 826-6441, <www.rockport-fulton.org>

Goose Island State Park, (361) 729-2858, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/goose/goose.htm>

Fulton Mansion State Historic Site, (361) 729-0385, ext. 25; <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/fulton/fulton.htm>

Copano Bay State Fishing Pier, (361) 729-7762, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/copano/>

Coastal Bend Guides Association, <www.cbga.org>

Whooping Crane Tours, <www.birdrockport.com/bird_tours.htm>

Captain Sally's Reel Fun Charters, (361) 729-9095, <www.captainsally.com>

Hoopeshouse Bed and Breakfast, (800) 924-1003, ext. 300, <www.hoopeshouse.com>

Kontiki Beach Resorts, (361) 729-2318, <www.kontikibeach.com>

Palm Harbor Marina, (361) 729-8540, <www.palmharbormarina.com>

Texas Maritime Museum, (361) 729-1271, <www.texasmaritimemuseum.org>

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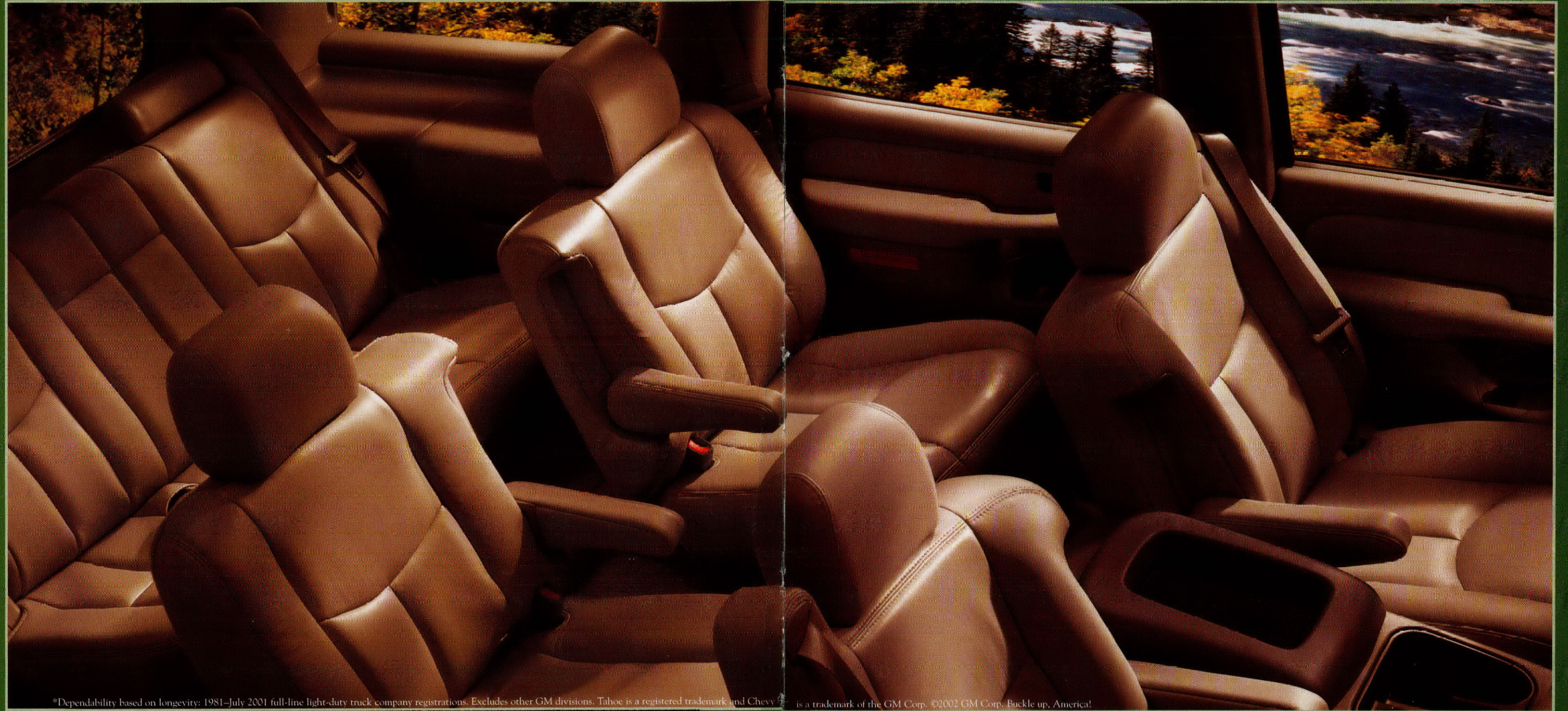


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DOVES: THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER BIRDS IN TEXAS

SEASON DATES

North Zone: Sept. 1-Oct. 30; north of I-30 from Texarkana to Fort Worth, then north of I-20 to its intersection with I-10, then north of I-10 to Fort Hancock, then west of Texas 148, Texas 20 and F.M. 1088.

Central Zone: Sept. 1-Oct. 30 and Dec. 26-Jan. 4; south of North Zone boundary and north of I-10 from Orange to San Antonio, then north of U.S. 90 to Del Rio, then north of U.S. 277 Spur to the international toll bridge.

South Zone: Sept. 20-Nov. 5 and Dec. 20-Jan. 11; south of I-10 from Orange to San Antonio, then south of U.S. 90 to Del Rio, then south of U.S. 277 Spur to the international toll bridge.

Special White-winged Dove Area: Sept. 6-7, 13-14, Sept. 20-Nov. 5 and Dec. 20-Jan. 7; west of U.S. 83 from its intersection with U.S. 90 in Uvalde, then west of Texas 44, Texas 16, F.M. 1017 and Texas 186.

After white-tailed deer, doves generate more hunting effort in Texas than any other species. About 450,000 dove hunters spend 1.2 million days afield each

year. The \$435 they typically spend in pursuit of doves amounts to one-third of the money spent annually by the average hunter, and most of this money changes hands during a few weeks in September. Internationally, doves may be a symbol of peace, but in Texas, when their economic impact of close to \$20 million a year is considered, doves roar.

Part of dove hunting's popularity stems from the timing of the season, which marks the end of a long, hot summer and the beginning of the fall hunting season. Many deer hunters open their camps and begin filling feeders on Labor Day weekend, and a dove hunt adds interest and some tasty eating. This year, with Sept. 1 falling on a Monday, dove shooting will not start until Labor Day, making it a short hunt.

In a typical year, Texas hunters take some 4.5 million doves. White-winged doves, which until a few years ago were confined mainly to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, make up about a fourth of the birds taken and may show up almost anywhere in the state.

"This bird has moved northward and westward from South Texas and established populations in cities such as Waco, Brownwood and San Angelo," says Kevin Mote, TPWD district leader in Brownwood. He advises purchasing the

whitewing stamp or Super Combo license if planning to hunt doves within 30 miles of a city of 15,000 to 20,000 people. "However, don't be surprised to see a few mixed in with mourning doves, regardless of where you hunt," he says. And since silhouetted birds are sometimes hard to identify, the best advice for dove hunters is to buy the whitewing stamp.

Food sources and water concentrate doves, and TPWD biologists recommend keying on harvested grain fields and natural food sources such as sunflowers and croton. Flight paths between roosting areas and food and water sources produce the best shooting. Areas south of San Antonio and around Uvalde and Brownwood generally hold doves throughout the season. Hill Country counties such as Gillespie, Mason and McCulloch usually furnish good hunting. TPWD Trans-Pecos district leader Mike Hobson expects high dove numbers this year as well. Purchasers of an Annual Public Hunting Permit (\$48) may hunt doves on any of more than 150 parcels of leased private land statewide; a map booklet gives locations, dates available and any special requirements imposed by landowners.

NORMALLY CAUTIOUS TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT biologists are using such phrases as "above average," "good to excellent," "exceptional" and "possibly record-setting" to describe the upcoming 2003-2004 hunting seasons. They base their optimism on the good spring range conditions throughout the state. While still hoping that rain will continue to fall at opportune times, one veteran biologist nevertheless says, "The question is not whether it will be a good year but, barring some unforeseen, catastrophic event, just how good a year it will be."

Species by species, here's what TPWD biologists predict hunters have to look forward to this fall.

BY LARRY D. HODGE



HUNTING FORECAST 2003



WATERFOWL HUNTERS: AT THE MERCY OF WEATHER

SEASON DATES

Final season dates for waterfowl hunting are set in August. Consult the "2003-2004 Waterfowl Digest" for dates and zone boundaries. The following dates were those proposed at press time. Waterfowl hunting begins with teal season Sept. 20-Sept. 28. (In the High Plains Mallard Management Unit, one week of the split duck season is proposed to begin Sept. 29, in effect making the teal season there 16 days, with the added bonus of being able to take other ducks as well after the 23th.) Goose season begins Oct. 25. The first big push of geese onto the coastal prairies west of Houston usually comes by Nov. 10, with white-fronted (specklebelly) and snow geese arriving first.

Duck- and goose-hunting success is very dependent on weather. Warm weather north of Texas keeps ponds open, and ducks and geese may not migrate south from the northern states and Canada until cold weather forces them to. Abundant rains can scatter birds all over the country, making hunting more difficult. Drought will concentrate birds on available water, and outfitters take advantage of this by pumping water to create roost ponds and hold birds in the area.

Given the unpredictability of the weather, biologists are understandably hesitant to forecast waterfowl hunting. However, there will always be birds in traditional places such as the rice prairies west of Houston, where outfitters and landown-

ers manage water for the birds. Jim Sutherlin, project leader for the Upper Coast Wetlands Ecosystem Project, notes that conditions appear favorable for good production of submerged aquatic plants in wetlands along the coast, and this food source should attract and hold waterfowl.

Portions of the Panhandle that receive summer rains can be covered up with ducks and geese when cold weather pushes birds south. Peanut and wheat fields in the Knox County area draw large numbers of geese, especially Canadas. Pay close attention to season and bag limit announcements this fall, however, as there is the possibility that the dark goose season in the western zone may be shortened and the bag limit reduced.

Biologist Billy Lambert notes that snow geese are expanding their range into the Post Oak Savannah. Gary Calkins in the Pineywoods expects good habitat conditions for ducks but notes, as did his counterparts in other parts of the state, that cold weather on the northern plains is needed to push ducks and geese into Texas. Scout for places with food and water and watch the weather; a severe snowstorm on the Great Plains can bring a blizzard of waterfowl to Texas. Also, locally heavy rains can cause East Texas streams to overbank; flooded hardwood bottomlands littered with acorns draw mallards and wood ducks.



QUAIL: HIGH HOPES IN SOUTH TEXAS

SEASON DATES

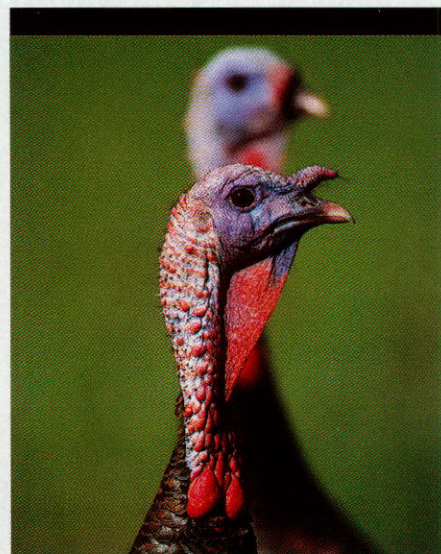
Oct. 25-Feb. 29.

If you have a place to hunt quail, count yourself lucky. Quail populations over the eastern half of the state plummeted as habitat declined. South Texas and the Rolling Plains of North Texas and adjacent Oklahoma are the last strongholds of bobwhite quail in the United States. Scaled quail continue to do well in West

Texas and western parts of South Texas.

About 90,000 quail hunters spend a bit over three days each in pursuit of quail, but their economic impact is significant. Quail Unlimited estimates each of its members spends \$10,000 a year on quail hunting, with 65 percent of that being spent in the county hunted.

South Texas may be setting up for the best quail season in a decade, biologists say. "This is the second consecutive year of good quail production, and quail hunting prospects look good to excellent in South Texas," says district leader Joe Herrera. Scaled quail in West Texas also look promising, says Mike Hobson. "Regardless of future rainfall, current conditions should lead to at least an average number of quail available for harvest."



TURKEYS: THE TWO-SEASON BIRD

SEASON DATES

Rio Grande: archery, Sept. 27-Oct. 26; general, North Texas, Nov. 1-Jan. 4 and Apr. 3-May 9; South Texas, Nov. 1-Jan. 18 and Mar. 27-May 2; Brooks, Kenedy and Kleberg counties, Nov. 1-Feb. 29; youth only, Oct. 25-26 and Jan. 17-18.

Eastern: April 12-April 25.

Rio Grande turkeys share honors with squirrels as the only game animals that are in season both spring and fall (except javelinas, which may be hunted year-round in 50 counties). Fall turkeys usually are taken incidentally by deer hunters; 30 percent of the 62,000 turkeys taken in Texas last season were harvested in autumn in the Edwards Plateau. The Rolling Plains, South Texas and Cross Timbers are the other main turkey-hunting areas. Max Traweck says the Hill Country should have good numbers of

adult birds this fall and expects a good hatch in 2003, boding well for the future. Prospects are even brighter in South Texas. "There should be an abundance of mature gobblers due to the above-average hatch in 2001, and the 2003 hatch should rank right up there with the best of them," says Joe Herrera.

The sleeper may be the counties in the western part of the Rio Grande's range, west and north of Brownwood. "Much of the district has experienced good turkey reproduction for the past two years, and this year is shaping up to be another good one," says Kevin Mote. "Fall populations could be the highest in five years, with a healthy percentage of the population being mature birds."

Eastern turkeys may be hunted only in the spring and generally may be found in scattered populations east of Interstate 45. Much of the hunting takes place on public land accessible to purchasers of an Annual Public Hunting Permit. For an unusual turkey hunting experience, take a boat to Wright Patman Lake southwest of Texarkana and fish your way around the shore until you hear a turkey gobble on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land around the lake. Tie up the boat and go after him.

OTHER GAME: SMALL NUMBERS, BIG FUN

SEASON DATES

Pronghorns: Oct. 4-Oct. 12; **pheasants:** Panhandle, Dec. 13-Jan. 11; coastal, Nov. 1-Feb. 29; **javelinas,** Sept. 1-Aug. 31 except Oct. 1-Feb. 29 in about 43 counties; see county listings in the 2003-2004 *Outdoor Annual*; **squirrels,** youth only, Sept. 27-Sept. 28; East Texas, Oct. 1-Feb. 1 and May 1-May 31; **feral hogs and other exotics,** no closed season.

Like mule deer, pronghorn antelope

live primarily in the Trans-Pecos and parts of the Panhandle. (Pronghorns are not really antelope and, in fact, are the only species in their family.) Drought has reduced their numbers in the Trans-Pecos to about 5,400 animals; about 4,500 remain in the Panhandle. The number of antelope permits issued to landowners each year is based on the population, which means few people will have the chance to hunt these magnificent creatures (891 buck antelope permits were issued to 432 landowners in 2002). Both Mike Hobson in the Trans-Pecos and Danny Swepston in the Panhandle expect numbers to climb a bit this year, but the long-term outlook for pronghorns remains bleak.

Flushing pheasants probably cause more hearts to flutter than any other Texas game bird, which is only one of the reasons some 28,000 hunters make the long trek to the Panhandle to take an average of fewer than two birds each. That one cackling cock rising into a setting sun after a punishing day of walking can make the hunt memorable. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which pays farmers to take cropland out of production and plant it in grass, has created a great deal of additional habitat for pheasants, even though the tangled mats of grass on CRP land (which can't be grazed) are hard to hunt. The 30-day season this year should mean more people will be able to find the time to enjoy a pheasant hunt. While pheasant numbers are expected to remain low, the level of pleasure they bring will always be high.

Javelinas are on the increase in the Trans-Pecos and on the decrease in parts of South Texas. However, Joe Herrera points out that lush conditions in South Texas this year should result in an overall increase in numbers. About 28,000 hunters took 17,000 javelinas during the 2000-2001 season. "Javelinas are unique to the Southwest and offer excellent

potential for out-of-state hunters, first-time hunters, youth and hunters using archery, muzzle-loader and handgun equipment," says David Synatzske, who is manager of the Chaparral Wildlife Management Area. Javelinas visit water-holes and feeders regularly in the Trans-Pecos, Mike Hobson says, making them fairly easy to pattern. While javelinas can be hunted year-round in most of their range, several Trans-Pecos counties have a season running Oct. 1 through the last Sunday in February; check the *Outdoor Annual* for the county you are hunting.

East Texas remains the stronghold of squirrel hunting. Billy Lambert says populations are good throughout the Post Oak Savannah. Find acorns and you will find squirrels. The Pineywoods had a good acorn crop last year, and the result was good litters this spring. These two ecological regions had the bulk of the hunters (44,900) and harvest (161,037) in 2001-2002. Public-land squirrel hunting can be quite good in the Pineywoods; the White Oak Creek Wildlife Management Area gives the first two weeks in October over to squirrel hunting.

Feral hogs are a dirty word to most wildlife biologists, because they compete with native wildlife and are destructive to the habitat, but all agree they are fun to hunt and good to eat. "It will benefit other wildlife if efforts are made to reduce feral hog numbers, and this will be a good year to do it," advises David Synatzske.

The other free-ranging exotic of note is the aoudad sheep, which can be found from the Edwards Plateau to the Panhandle to the Trans-Pecos. Like feral hogs and other exotics, they may be hunted year-round, and although some may tell you aoudads are not good to eat, don't believe it. The best jalapeno/cheese summer sausage and chili meat I've ever eaten were made from a 200-pound male aoudad.



JAVELINA © GARY KRAMER/NET; OTHER PHOTOS © MIKE SEARLES PHOTOGRAPHY

WHITE-TAILED DEER: WHAT MOST TEXAS HUNTERS WANT

SEASON DATES

Archery: Sept. 27-Oct. 26; youth only: Oct. 25-26; general: North Texas, Nov. 1-Jan. 4; Panhandle (six counties), Nov. 22-Dec. 7; South Texas, Nov. 1-Jan. 18; late antlerless and spike, muzzleloader: Jan. 10-Jan. 18; Edwards Plateau, Jan. 5-Jan. 18; South Texas, Jan. 19-Feb. 1.

If you hunt in Texas, chances are better than even that you hunt white-tailed deer. Out of nearly 1 million hunters in Texas in 2001, more than 511,000 hunted whitetails, spending nearly \$1 billion in the process. Last season deer were taken in 202 of Texas' 254 counties. Texas hunters bring down an average of 418,000 whitetails each year.

Conventional wisdom used to hold that if you just want to get a deer, go to the Hill Country; if you want to get a good deer, go to South Texas. Better habitat management by private landowners statewide is changing that. TPWD and the Texas Wildlife Association cosponsor the Texas Big Game Awards, which recognize the efforts of landowners to improve wildlife habitat. One of the results of improved habitat is larger deer, and records for the 2002-2003 season show that 46 of the bucks with typical (i.e., symmetrical) antlers entered from the Edwards Plateau met the minimum 140 Boone and Crockett score required for entry in the South Texas division. (Four of those deer came off public land — three from Fort Hood, one from the Kerr Wildlife Management Area.) No longer do you have to hunt in South Texas to have a chance at a good buck.

A handful of Hill Country counties — Gillespie, Kerr, Kimble, Llano, Mason and San Saba — tower above the rest of the state in numbers of deer hunters and deer harvested. Biologist Max Traweck expects better-than-average antler quality in the Hill Country this season, but he notes that an overpopulation of deer in the area — as many as one deer to every two to three acres — prevents most Hill Country deer from getting enough to eat

to reach their full potential, either in antler size or body weight. The average Hill Country doe will field dress around 65 pounds, while bucks may weigh about 80. In South Texas, where there may be a deer to every 15 to 20 acres, the average doe will field-dress at about 80 pounds, bucks at 120 or so.

The abundance of deer and small landownerships in the Hill Country helps keep hunting there affordable. Day hunting is widely available in the Hill Country through local chambers of commerce; fees start at about \$125 per hunter a day, offering very good opportunities for family hunts at a reasonable price. Ranchers trying to improve their deer herds welcome hunters who will hunt does and help bring herd numbers within the carrying capacity of the land, although a lease fee is generally charged.

Good numbers of bucks in the 3.5-year-old age class last year in the Post Oak Savannah and Pineywoods districts have biologists there anticipating an above-average season. Excellent habitat conditions and new antler restrictions put in place in Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lavaca, Lee and Washington counties last year worked as intended to reduce the taking of young bucks, giving them time to grow up and produce bigger antlers. District leader Bob Carroll expects better-than-average antler development this year and more older bucks in the herd. Kevin Mote, whose district stretches from Brownwood west to Midland and north to the Red River, also predicts above-average numbers of mature deer with good antlers this year.

South Texas biologists foresee good to excellent antlers, and with an abundance of 4.5- and 6.5-year-old bucks in the herd, they predict the coming season could be one of the best on record. The bad news is that if you don't have a lease or package hunt lined up by the time you read this, it's probably too late.



MULE DEER: BIG BOYS OF THE WEST



SEASON DATES

Archery: Sept. 27-Oct. 26; general, Panhandle, Nov. 22-Dec. 7; southwestern Panhandle, Nov. 22-Nov. 30; Trans-Pecos, Nov. 29-Dec. 14.

Mule deer (named for their long ears) range the deserts of the Trans-Pecos, the western fringes of the Edwards Plateau and parts of the Panhandle. Muleys in the Panhandle often are able to feed on wheat, alfalfa and grains and tend to grow bigger bodies and antlers than desert deer, sometimes field-dressing 200 pounds or better. That said, however, most of the mule deer entered in the Texas Big Game Awards for 2002-2003 came from the Trans-Pecos.

While the white-tailed deer is Everyman's deer in Texas, low numbers of mule deer and their restricted range make muley hunters a pretty exclusive club. In 2001-2002 the 14,976 mule deer hunters in Texas took only 3,104 animals.

Muleys are still recovering from a long-term drought in West Texas. In 2000, mule deer numbers dropped below 100,000 but have climbed the last two years, to about 150,000. Mike Hobson thinks body weights and antler growth in the Trans-Pecos should be above average, assuming good summer rains. Panhandle district biologist Danny Sweetston concurs and notes that muleys tend to be more common in the eastern Panhandle in the sandhills and draws along the Canadian River and the rougher areas of the Rolling Plains around the Caprock Escarpment. ★



A GAME

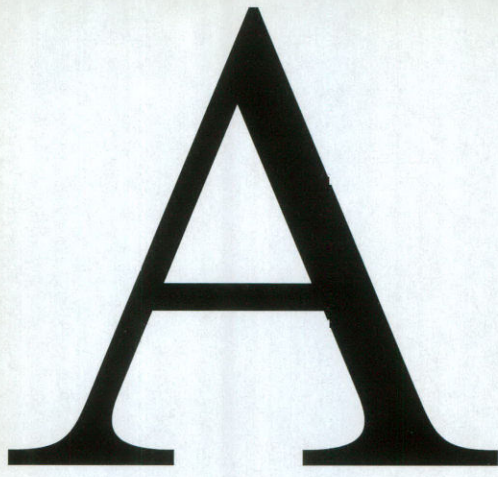


WARDEN'S LIFE



HUNTING FOR POACHERS
IS ONLY A PART OF WHAT
TEXAS GAME WARDENS DO.

ARTICLE BY JOHN H. OSTDICK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EARL NOTTINGHAM



ALTHOUGH MOST TEXAS GAME WARDENS ARE ATTRACTED TO THEIR OCCUPATION BECAUSE THEY ENJOY HUNTING AND FISHING, ONCE ON THE JOB THEY USUALLY FIND LITTLE TIME TO DO EITHER. THEY SPEND LONG, OFTEN SOLITARY NIGHTS LISTENING FOR SOUNDS OF POACHERS. ★ SOMETIMES THEY ENCOUNTER HEAVILY ARMED HUNTERS WHOSE JUDGMENT MAY BE CLOUDED BY ALCOHOL, AND THEY NEVER CAN TELL WHEN THEY MIGHT STUMBLE ONTO A METHAMPHETAMINE LAB HIDDEN IN THE WOODS.



Part peace officer and part agency public relations representative, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department game wardens are charged with enforcing state hunting and fishing laws, protecting natural resources and the environment and overseeing boating safety. They also spend a good portion of time educating the public through formal programs and by responding to individual inquiries about game laws — whether on regular patrols or during chance encounters on a late-night grocery run. In rural areas, they often may be the first person on a crime scene. They often participate in disaster relief efforts.

The scope of their beat is daunting. With 40 game warden cadets expected to graduate from the academy this summer, their ranks will exceed 500, but Texas is a big state. Its 254 counties and 267,277 square miles are home to more than 20 million people and a staggering collection of wildlife species. More than 3 million surface acres of water lie within its boundaries. More than 500,000 hunters participated in the fall Texas white-tailed deer hunting season alone.

Enforcing wildlife laws is not all that game wardens do. As certified peace officers, they are charged with enforcing all state criminal laws. Most of them have college degrees; each has graduated after 1,200 hours of training at TPWD's Austin academy. Some serve a stone's throw from where they grew up; others have woven themselves into the social fabric of their far-flung assignment counties.

"A good game warden strongly believes in conservation and likes to work with people," says Col. James Stinebaugh, director of TPWD's Law Enforcement

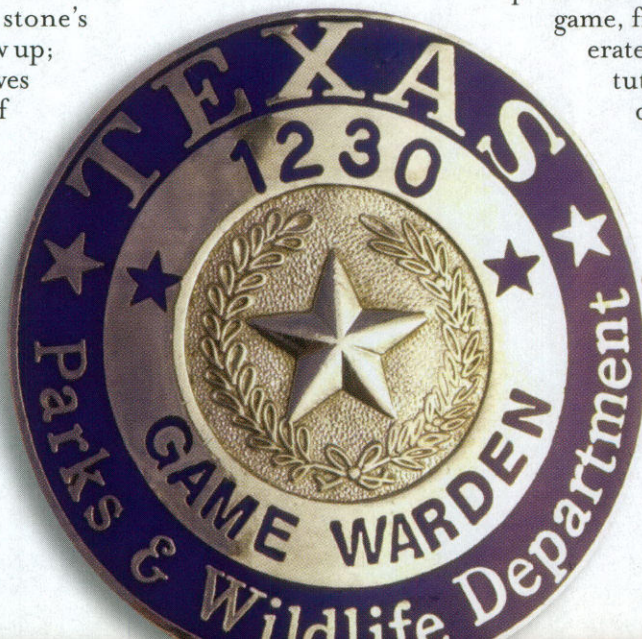
Division. Stinebaugh started his law enforcement career as a game warden in Freer and San Saba counties in 1967. After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps in the 1960s and a short stint with the U.S. Border Patrol in 1971, the native Texan spent 27 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before rejoining TPWD in October 2001. He is unabashed in his fervor for the work.

"This is the best job in the world," he says. "A good warden likes to be outside on the coldest night and on the hottest day. An old sheriff once told me that he wanted a deputy who isn't afraid to fight but also one who doesn't like to fight. That fits in this job as well. If you find all of these qualities in a person, you've got yourself a good game warden."

In their role of protecting wildlife and the environment, game wardens take special aim at what they call real outlaws, those who blatantly ignore wildlife law whether by illegally shooting game, taking fish by illegal methods or creating toxic messes that damage the environment. Experience tells them many of these outlaws often will venture into other illegal activities, such as theft or drug trade.

During 2002, game wardens conducted investigations that led to 33,005 criminal cases involving the environment and wildlife resources. The resulting penalties brought \$1.1 million into the state's game, fish and water safety fund and generated nearly \$300,000 in civil restitution. Since a warden's regular duties encompass answering calls and routine patrols, the agency has created special units that concentrate on marine theft, environmental crimes and large-scale, wildlife-related crimes.

A glimpse into the lives of a handful of wardens shows the breadth of their responsibilities.



During the fall hunting season, **JUAN CARLOS FLORES** — better known as J.C. — figures he drives 200 to 400 miles a day through the rolling, brushy terrain of Val Verde County, checking deer camps and responding to calls. He's one of three wardens working this southwestern county's 3,232 square miles out of Del Rio. He knows the region well, for he was born and raised in tiny Comstock (population 375).

Val Verde County is an active workplace. Flores, 46, patrols the Amistad National Recreation Area, a beautiful, clear lake fed by the region's three major rivers, the Rio Grande, the Pecos and the Devils.

"We have 540 miles of shoreline on the U.S. side of the border," Flores says. "We have to monitor commercial fishing from Mexico, which also means picking up a lot of gill netting and fish traps, which are legal in Mexico but not in U.S. waters."

In the fall, Flores has deer, turkey and dove hunting to supervise, and sometimes he encounters the unexpected. Last year Flores led the investigation of a man who shot a bear: a Class C misdemeanor for a first offense, a \$500 court fee and several thousand dollars in restitution.

Wildlife is not his only concern. "Being close to the border," he says, "a lot of drug runners mark spots, just like a road hunter might to pick up a

carcass later." (Road hunters often kill a deer, mark the spot off the road with a rock on top of a soda can or other object, and return later to be sure they haven't been detected before loading the kill.) "When you are watching these guys," he says, "you never know if they've shot a deer, or are picking up a group of illegal aliens or a load of dope. The response to each case can be different."

He credits his strict parents, who still live in Val Verde County, with helping him be the first from his family to graduate from high school and college. He majored in criminal justice with a wildlife minor at Sul Ross State University in Alpine.

After graduating from the TPWD game warden academy in Austin in 1988, it didn't take long for him to learn how perilous his job can be. After Flores stopped three road hunters, one of the men became belligerent and threatening. Flores had unloaded their guns and put them on the hood of their car before interrogating them.

"As I was walking back to my car, I heard the loud one trying to load a .270," he says. "I ran back to him, caught him between the car and door, and disarmed him. You learn from these experiences."

"The county's ranches used to be dotted with sheep and goats," Flores continues, "but after the Clinton Administration repealed wool and mohair incentives, they all but vanished. Now, the majority of the large properties out here are being subdivided into ranchitos."

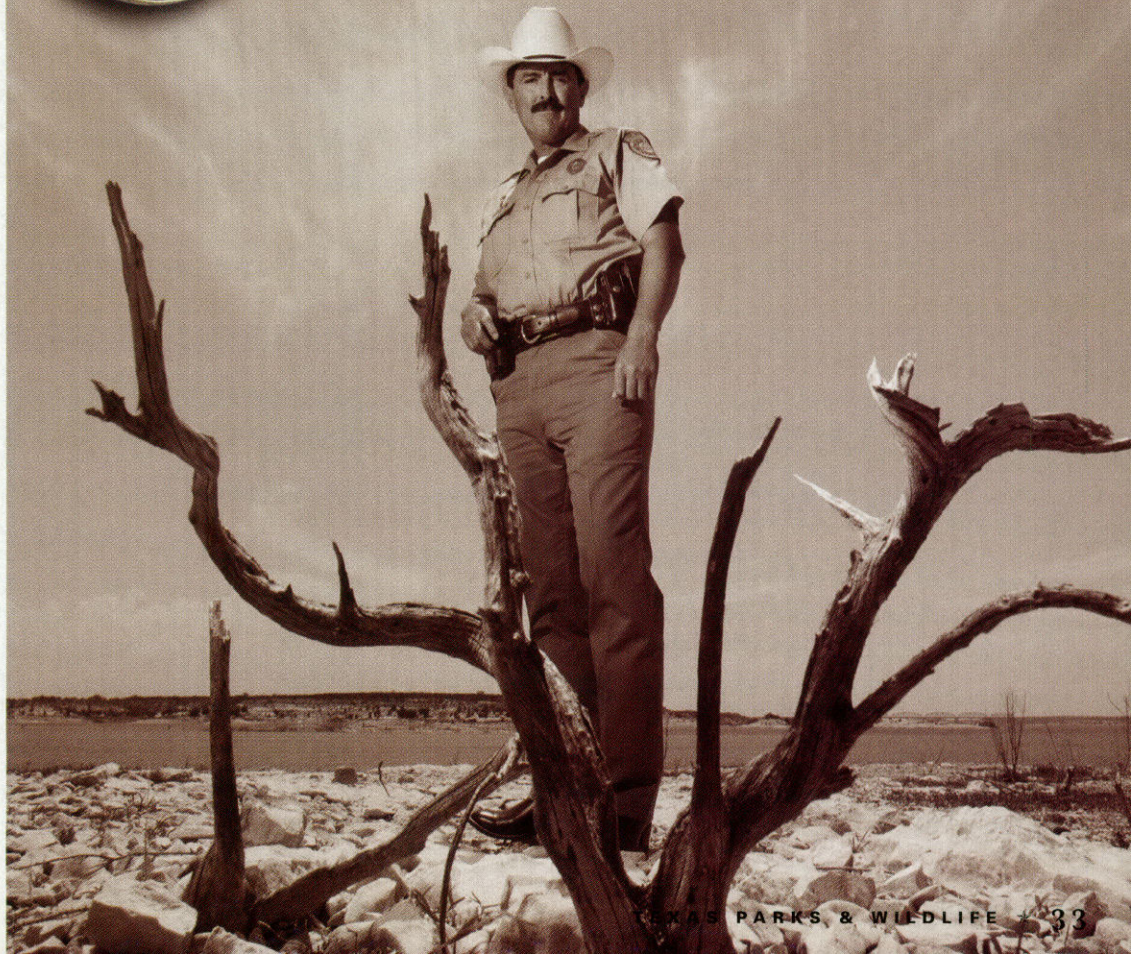
Today, deer leases provide a major source of local income. The fact that property is changing hands quickly makes enforcement a greater challenge, he says, raising two six-inch-diameter key rings crammed full of gate keys.

"Being a game warden is lots of work but there's a certain freedom in doing it," he says. "A warden forges a number of friendships and finds a variety in the types of chores involved. I just lucked out being chosen to come here."



JUAN CARLOS FLORES

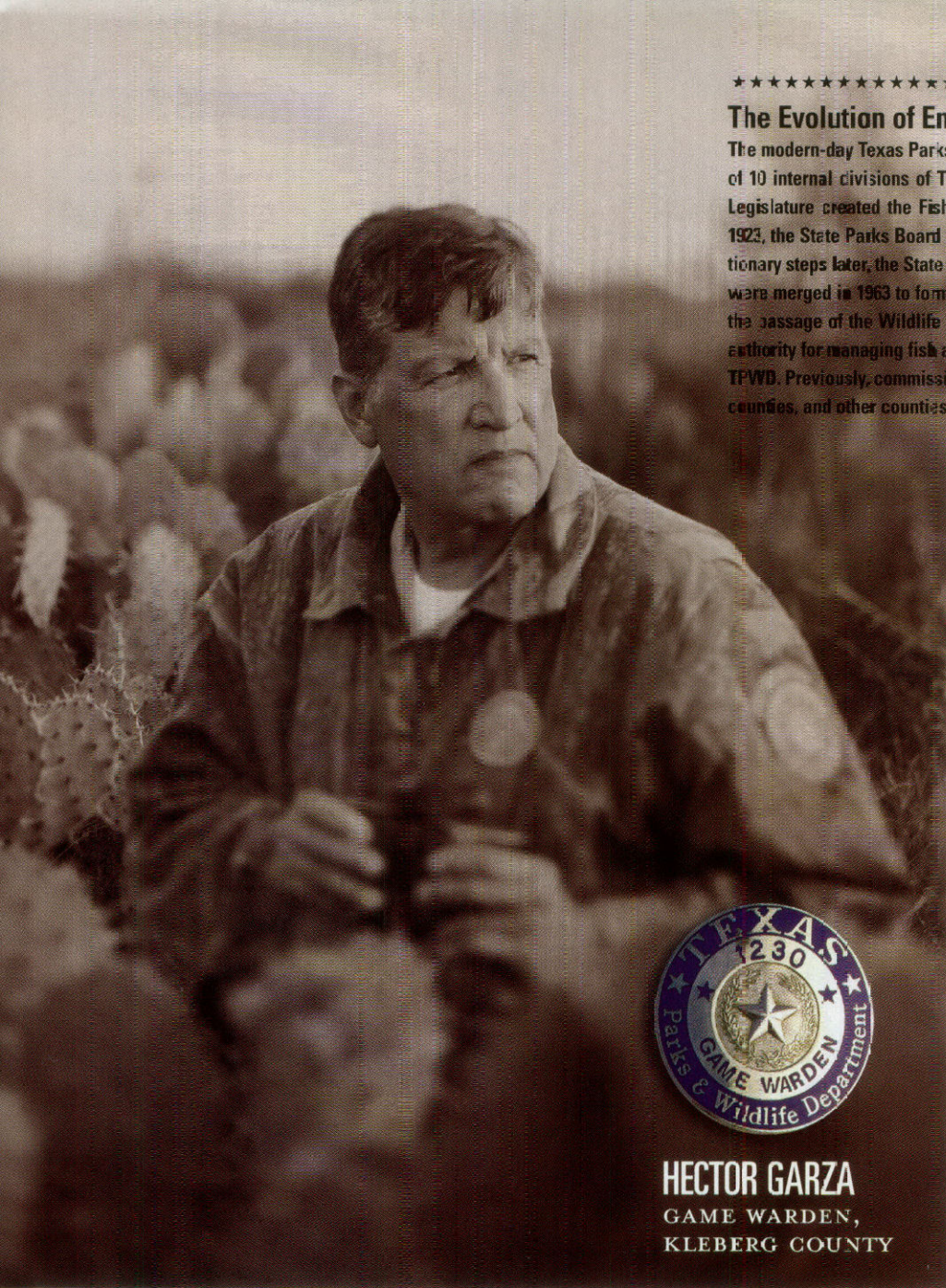
GAME WARDEN,
VAL VERDE COUNTY



**A GOOD
WARDEN LIKES
TO BE OUTSIDE
ON THE
COLDEST NIGHT
AND ON THE
HOTTEST DAY.**

The Evolution of Enforcement

The modern-day Texas Parks and Wildlife Department enforcement arm, one of 10 internal divisions of TPWD, traces its origin to 1895, when the Texas Legislature created the Fish and Oyster Commission to regulate fishing. In 1923, the State Parks Board was created as a separate entity. Several evolutionary steps later, the State Parks Board and the Game and Fish Commission were merged in 1963 to form the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. With the passage of the Wildlife Conservation Act in 1983, the legislature placed authority for managing fish and wildlife resources in all Texas counties with TPWD. Previously, commissioners courts had set game and fish laws in many counties, and other counties had veto power over department regulations.



HECTOR GARZA
GAME WARDEN,
KLEBERG COUNTY

Scouts. "I developed a love for the outdoors at an early age, when my dad and uncle used to pile us into the station wagon and drive out into the countryside to hunt for rabbits," says Garza. About five times a year, Garza helps with youth hunts on the King Ranch, for a few days helping 10 to 20 primarily urban teens learn wildlife lessons and hunting ethics.

After more than a dozen years in the Navy, Garza worked in the police forces in Mission and McAllen before joining TPWD.

"As a police officer," he says, "I dealt with the negatives of society. Being a game warden is different.

Even if a contact is breaking the law, it's usually a manageable situation. The first week of the hunting season, I stopped two boys driving in the rain. The barrel of one of the rifles in their truck was wet so I knew they had been shooting out of their vehicle. They tried to tell me it was wet because their windows were open, but I pointed out to them that the back seat was still dry.

"I told them, 'Look, guys, anybody can go to the bank and get a loan to pay a big fine, or even take some vacation time to serve some time in jail. But have you ever considered that if you get caught doing this and are convicted of a felony, your legal hunting days are over, because you can no longer legally possess a firearm?' I hope that notion is encouraging these boys to give it up."

HECTOR GARZA's turf is a poacher's paradise. He patrols two divisions of the legendary King Ranch in Kleberg County, about 40 miles southwest of Corpus Christi. The entire ranch covers 825,000 acres, bigger than the state of Rhode Island. Fourteen miles of fence line extend along both sides of Texas 141 between the King Ranch and the U.S. 281 intersection — "that's 28 miles of easy access to deer," he says. "At any time, every quarter of a mile or so, there's probably a deer being shot along here. Sometimes, they'll shoot the deer and then wait for a break in traffic before dragging the whole carcass into their vehicle."

The 54-year-old Garza works closely with King Ranch security forces. He helped build a shelter on top of a donat-

ed airport beacon tower, creating a vantage point from which he can see about 20 miles along the northern boundary of the ranch, which is particularly accessible and vulnerable to walk-up hunters. The King Ranch policy is that if deer from the property jump the fence, they are open game; but some hunters may shoot across its fence or maneuver over low spots to trespass.

After 20 years of patrolling Kleberg County, Garza says that although "a certain segment of our outlaw hunters still violate the law because it gives them a thrill," stiffer wildlife law penalties have significantly slowed down illegal activities.

Garza grew up in McAllen, where his father was instrumental in the growth of cross-border programs with the Boy

BOBBY KANA and partner Ray Canales are patrolling the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in Galveston Bay in a lightweight skiff on a breezy, choppy November day. Galveston County includes 398 square miles of land and 478 square miles of water, including a sizable commercial fishing industry as well as offshore recreational fishermen and boaters.

As they approach a shrimp boat with a solo captain, the six-foot-plus Kana nimbly shifts to the front of the bouncing craft to prepare boarding the much larger vessel. Suddenly, the captain begins dumping something off the far side of his boat. He ignores Kana's shouted orders to stop. By the time Kana leaps aboard the rocking vessel, all traces of what was dumped are gone and the captain is pleading ignorance.

The warden cites the captain for failure to allow inspection of an aquatic product, a Class C offense that can carry a fine of \$25 up to \$500. As the game wardens pull away, the captain is in his pilothouse, his radio crackling as he spreads the word that the wardens are

out performing inspections.

"During the summer, we'll run 12- to 14-hour days on the water, checking licenses and inspecting catches," Kana says. "During the fall and winter, we get out when the weather permits."

When the seasons are open, 300 to 400 commercial fishing, shrimping or oyster boats may be working in these waters. Today, the wardens will board about 20 of them. A license or fire extinguisher check may lead to discovery of undersize flounder catches (they must be at least 14 inches long) or spot-caliper measurement of oysters may determine if a captain's catch has too many small oysters in it.

"Although we have brought most of it under control, we even have a little illegal netting down here," says Kana. "Some of the older families are still active; they feel it's their heritage, I suppose. We don't have a deer season here, but we have some tremendous deer, so we have some encounters with illegal hunters. We have a large waterfowl hunt, with all the marshes we have. We have bird-hunting clubs on local ranches.

During our patrols, we'll also come across stolen Jet Skis or boats with their identification numbers removed."

Kana, 40, was born and raised in Palacios, on Matagorda Bay, and has lived on the Texas Coast for three-quarters of his life, the last 10 as a game warden in Galveston. He and wife Dena both love to bow hunt. Their vacations are often bow-hunting forays — with amusement park stops along the way for their two children, Hunter, 3, and Ty, 7. "One of us will hunt, and the other will stay with the kids, and then we trade places," he says.

Kana helps coordinate a youth hunt for children ages 12 to 17 at a Hill Country ranch owned by a local businessman. He also sponsors once-a-month fishing expeditions for children at a small pond near his house and at other locations in the county.

"I met my first game warden when I took my first hunter education course," he says. "I was probably about 13 at the time, and I've wanted to be a game warden ever since. I love the outdoors, and the work is fascinating."



BOBBY KANA

GAME WARDEN, GALVESTON COUNTY

What Game Wardens Do

Here's a sampling of reports filed from the field during the past year.

A Lavaca County game warden investigating reports of road shooting finds a fresh candy wrapper in the area. He later goes to a local store and determines the identity of a customer who just purchased that brand of candy, leading to the apprehension of the illegal shooter and partners in crime.

Following up a report of an alligator attack at Lake Hawkins, a game warden for Gregg and Wood counties interviews four minors and one adult at the scene. He determines that the injured party was the victim of a boating accident and the attack report was an attempt to cover up the alcohol-related incident.

A Brazos County game warden questions a man pouring blood from an ice chest. The man at first denies killing anything but then recalls killing a hog; about this time, the man's dog appears with a deer tail clutched in its mouth.

Smith County game wardens perform a routine check on a vehicle, in the process discovering marijuana and a homemade pipe constructed from a hollowed-out deer antler.

Refugio County game wardens file disorderly conduct charges against two men after they water ski in their "birthday suits" along the Aransas River, passing near a populated river camp.

After observing what appears to be a domestic violence incident involving two men and a woman at a local gas station, a Kaufman County game warden asks for identification. The two men produce Texas Department of Corrections inmate cards. One of the men and the woman have outstanding warrants, and a subsequent search of the vehicle finds stolen property, an active mobile methamphetamine lab, and packages of cocaine and crystal methamphetamine.

In Nueces County, a game warden assists with a drug raid at a Corpus Christi home after a tip that the two suspects there also possess 12 baby alligators.

When a San Augustine County game warden overhears local deputies and ambulance personnel talking on the radio about not being able to locate a camp where someone is reported to be having a heart attack, he relays that he knows the camp and responds. The road into the camp is too muddy for the ambulance to navigate, so the warden uses his four-wheel drive vehicle to transport the victim to the ambulance. The victim eventually is released from a local hospital and scheduled for heart surgery.



Thirty years after being plunked down in East Texas, San Antonio-born **RAYMOND KOSUB** feels completely at home in Kirbyville in Jasper County. About 85 percent of Jasper County's mostly flat 937 square miles is thick with forest, mostly pine and hardwood.

"I fell in love with the country here immediately," says Kosub. "The blooms in the spring are incredible, and I never knew there were so many shades of green until I came here. It took a while to get people here to accept me, however.

"When I first arrived I was young, with nary a clue about this community," he explains. "I went to a local barbecue, off-duty and out of uniform. After a while this older guy who had imbibed a bit too much approached me about helping him check his net nearby. I declined without saying anything but another fella told the first, 'Don't you know who you just approached? That's the new game warden.' Well, that wasn't my last awkward moment here, that's for sure — but that first man eventually became my father-in-law and quit his illegal netting."

Kosub, 53, is one of three wardens in Jasper County, about 15 miles wide and about 60 miles north to south. The Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies selected Kosub as its game warden of the year in 1999. His duties include water safety and fishing law enforcement at Sam Rayburn Reservoir, B.A. Steinhagen Lake 13 miles west of Jasper, and the 200 miles of the Neches and Angelina rivers bordering or flowing through the county.

In the months following the space shuttle explosion over Texas in February, Kosub was one of many state game wardens who participated in the somber search for the craft's debris, struggling through the thick woods around San Augustine and Nacogdoches and aiding diving crews in Toledo Bend.

"We found quite a few pieces," he says. "It was strange, because without the spring foliage you could see the

smallest of pieces out there. They just looked so different from everything you're used to looking at in the forest."

Kosub swings his mud-splattered truck down to Yellow Bluff, a wooded area on the Neches River that once was home to a ferry crossing, post office and country store. Nature has reclaimed all signs of them, but Kosub uses the spot to launch his boat when he is working the river. Swampy marshes, dotted with oak and pine trees, spread out on each side of the road.

"We have a lot of problems here with illegal netting and shocking fish," he says. "While these boys used to use bulky devices, such as old telephone cranks, the technology has changed and allowed them to be sneakier. Some have gotten downright ingenious with their electrical sources — some triggers can be tucked inside a snuff box."

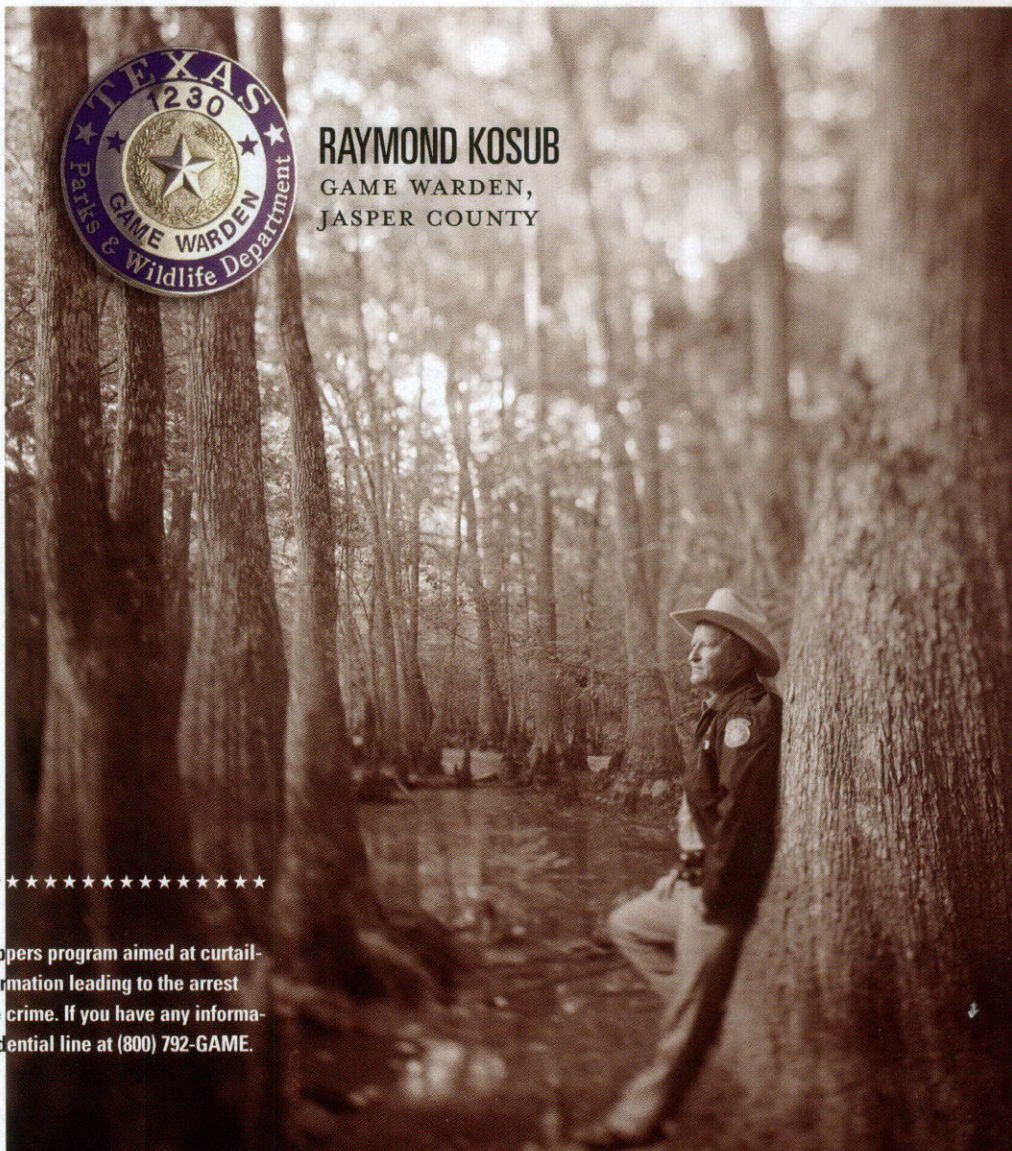
Road hunting and the use of deer dogs remain large issues here as well. "Some people here are still hell-bent on using dogs, no matter what," says Kosub.

In the early 1980s, an encounter with

four night hunters who had been drinking almost turned deadly when they got the upper hand on Kosub. Before the evening ended, they had held a gun to his head and threatened his life several times. "I thought a lot about my family that night," he says. He eventually prevailed. "I guess that those men just didn't have killing me in them," he says.

"I also get a lot of alligator-related calls in the spring," Kosub adds. "I got one call about 3 a.m. from a frantic man who reported a giant alligator in his front yard. It was about 9-foot, all right. I told the man that whatever happened, he needed to keep a spotlight on that 'gator at all times. I got a rope on it, but it ran under the man's house. Of course, the man dropped the light. I finally jumped on the alligator's back, tied off his legs, and taped his mouth.

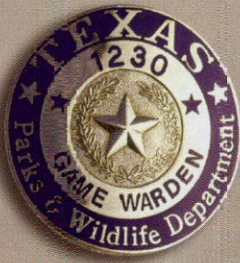
"That's the strange part of this job. You can sit at night for weeks by yourself and nothing happens. And then one night of activity will make up for it."



RAYMOND KOSUB
GAME WARDEN,
JASPER COUNTY

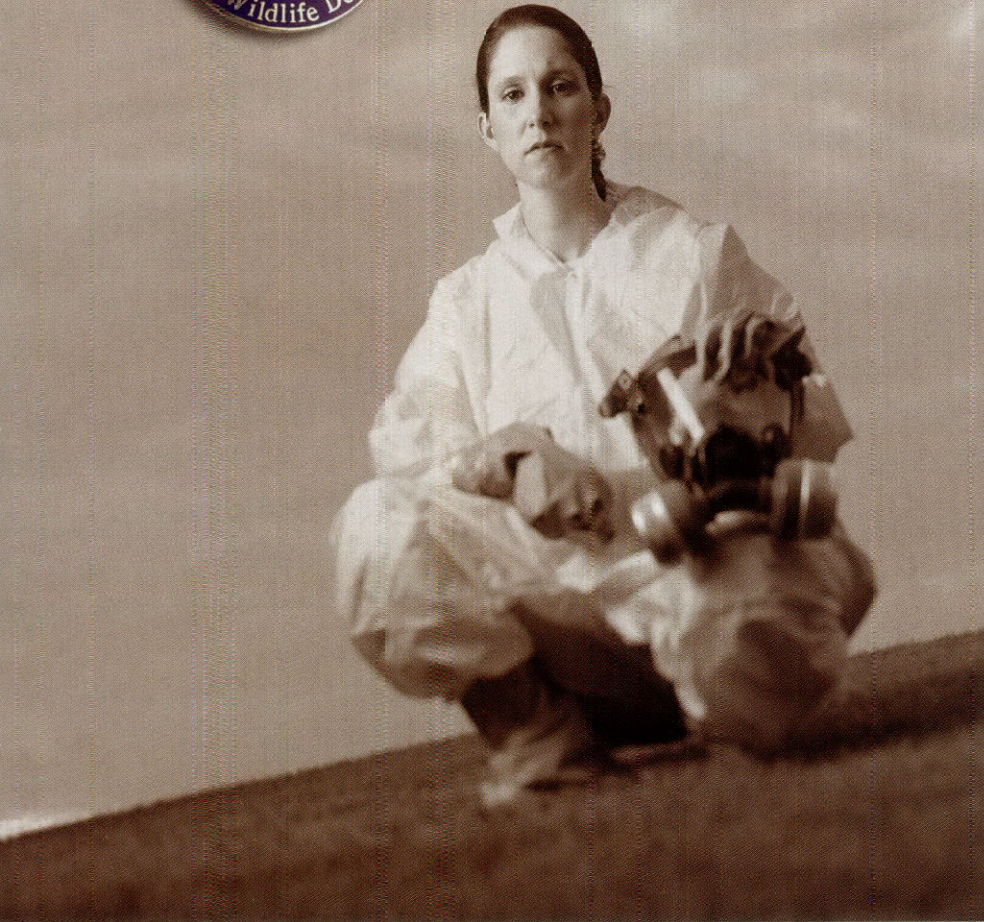
Work with the Wardens

Operation Game Thief, a privately funded crime-stoppers program aimed at curtailing poaching, offers a reward of up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of someone who commits a wildlife crime. If you have any information about a crime involving wildlife, call the confidential line at (800) 792-GAME.



CYNTHIA GUAJARDO-SORRELL

GAME WARDEN, ENVIRONMENTAL
CRIMES UNIT, HARRIS COUNTY



**"I'M STILL A
GAME WARDEN AT
HEART. I SEE
TRACKS OFF THE
SIDE OF THE
ROAD AND I TAP
THE BRAKES."**

Harris County, a highly industrialized area with the nation's largest concentration of petrochemical plants, might not seem a hotspot for game wardens, but it's proving just that for 29-year-old **CYNTHIA-GUAJARDO SORRELL**. Sorrell is the newest of six wardens and one captain assigned to a statewide environmental crimes unit.

A year ago last May, a warehouse owner reported a tenant had fled his building, leaving a toxic mess behind. "The barrels we found at the site were just bulging," Sorrell says. "One was smoking. Within 30 minutes at the site, everyone who was involved in the investigation started developing headaches. Something I stepped on in there ate the soles off my Dr. Martens."

About five months into her new job, she learned she was pregnant. Doctors advised her not to visit testing sites because of exposure concerns, so she has shifted her focus to research on other officers' cases for the duration of her pregnancy. This involves double-checking and logging evidence, working

on warrants and following paper trails.

"I'm still a game warden at heart," she says, laughing as she moves her truck through Houston traffic. "I see tracks off the side of the road and I tap the brakes. My first inclination is to investigate the trail. Many of the aspects of this job run counter to many of my intuitions as a game warden. As a game warden in the field, you are very hands-on — you touch, smell, you dig through. In this job, you don't do any of that until you know what you are dealing with. When I come onto a site, a whiff of a chemical may obliterate my sense of smell or render me sightless."

Born and raised in El Paso, Sorrell graduated from the TPWD game warden academy in Austin at 22 and took her first assignment in Jacksonville.

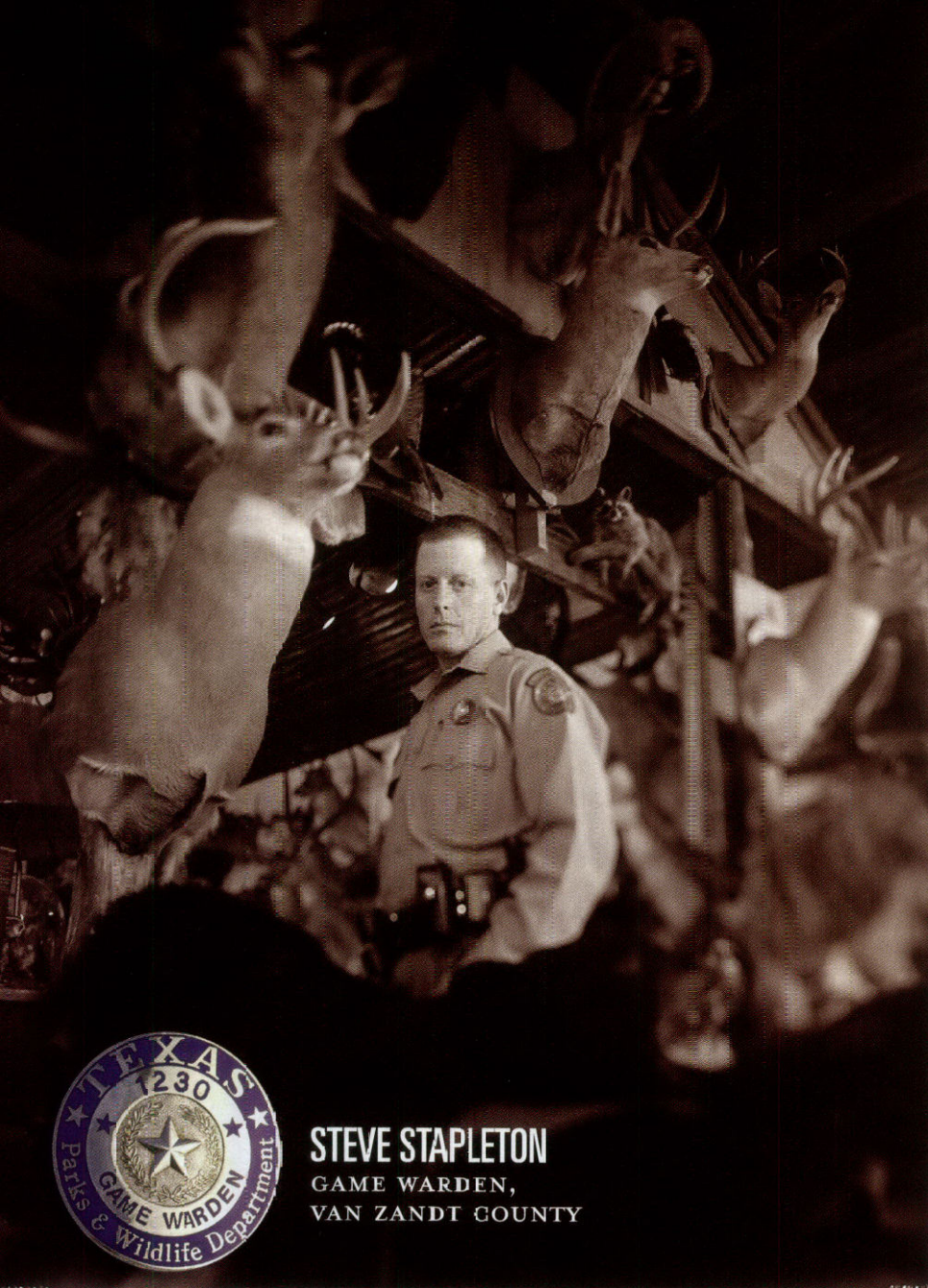
"I wanted to go to East Texas because I had heard that it was the best place to become a good game warden," she says. "But I suffered major culture shock, as there had never been a female officer in that region before. I had to earn every inch of respect I got."

Fellow East Texas wardens still talk about arriving on the scene of a distress call several years ago just as the slightly built Sorrell was pulling a 250-pound man out of Lake Tawakoni. The resuscitated man would have died without her immediate aid, they say.

Wardens are required to have four years of TPWD experience before they can be eligible for the environmental crimes unit. Although she had come to love East Texas and was engaged to a local police officer, Sorrell had attended some briefings about the unit and was very interested. "I actually interviewed and got this job two weeks before my wedding," she says. "My fiancé was very supportive, and it seemed like a now-or-never thing. We got back from the honeymoon, and then I moved."

Once relocated, Sorrell became immersed in the study of chemicals. "My first six months of the job involved intensive training and specialized education programs," she says. "In many ways, I still feel like I've just come out of game warden school again."

As a game warden in the field, Sorrell notes, she would start a case, finish it fairly quickly and go to the next, all part of the cat-and-mouse game of catching poachers. But in the Houston unit, the caseload work may stretch into months or years. "You don't get the immediate gratification of catching the bad guy right away," she says. "In fact, you may never see the mouse at all."



STEVE STAPLETON
GAME WARDEN,
VAN ZANDT COUNTY

When STEVE STAPLETON, a trim, redheaded warden, walks through the original Dogtown area of Canton's flea market grounds in uniform, the greetings from the scattered old-timers gathered here are tepid. Although deer dogs are now illegal, this is where historically they have traded hands, and old traditions die a long, slow death in East Texas. Word that he is on the grounds spreads quickly.

Most of the Canton vendors are regulars. As Stapleton moves into the main grounds, checking nongame trading permits and looking for the illegal trading of endangered, threatened or protected species or parts or feathers of the same, he admits that shortly after his uniform was spotted, any vendors offering illegal materials probably pulled them back out of sight.

"We'll work the grounds undercover if we hear of any specific illegal activity going on," he says. "Showing the uniform down here reminds everyone that we're on the job, however."

A short time later, as Stapleton turns onto Highway 19, he notices a man walking to his parked car with the carcass of an owl in his hands. One of the wings of the bird is missing, and the man is so engrossed with removing the other one that he doesn't notice Stapleton make a U-turn behind him. The man tosses the torso of the owl aside and is about to place the second wing on the rear floorboard of his car with the first, when he locks up to see Stapleton getting out of his truck.

Although the owl was dead when the Naples man found it — a car had struck the beautiful, brown-and-white bird — harvesting its plumage is still illegal

(possession of a protected species, a Class C misdemeanor that carries a \$500 fine). Stapleton writes the man a citation, which prompts a heated discussion between the violator and his wife as Stapleton pulls away. "I think that will be a lively ride home," the warden says.

Stapleton, 33, has patrolled the 849 square miles of Van Zandt County for the past three years. He graduated from East Texas State University with two degrees, then earned a degree in wildlife biology from Colorado State University, working for the U.S. Forest Service in Colorado and Arkansas before being accepted into the Austin academy.

In the course of a day he might check out the deer and the paperwork at a small meat-processing plant. He'll stop at a shallow spillway at the Tawakoni dam to make sure no one is taking fish with illegal methods. At the end of 2002 Stapleton saw little of his wife and 2-year old son. Working with a fellow warden, he led an intense, 17-hour-long investigation in which five men were apprehended and three whole deer, two quartered deer and one bobcat, several firearms and spotlights were seized. During the Christmas holidays, Stapleton worked with a Newton County operation targeting deer dogs.

As dusk approaches, Stapleton makes his way to a small private lake at the far end of Van Zandt County. Hiding in the woods, he soon hears an explosion of guns banging away at ducks on a roost hole.

"The law dictates all duck hunting halts at sunset, but these three guys started shooting sitting ducks 30 minutes after dark," he says. Stapleton is waiting for them when they return to their truck nearby. "We didn't know you was there," is all they can say.

After talking to the three, he finds their aim as bad as their judgment.

"The ducks shouldn't have stood a chance," he says, "but these guys were pretty bad shots and only got about six or seven."

"You know," he continues, shaking his head, "most of the wardens get into this job because they love wildlife, but they end up dealing mostly with people. We don't have any wildlife problems; we just have people problems." ★

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ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY RUSSELL A. GRAVES

GETTING ALONG WITH LANDOWNERS



HERE ARE **10** WAYS TO MAKE LANDOWNERS HAPPY AND GET INVITED BACK.

one Respect the land as if it were your own.

When you invite people into your home, you expect them to treat it with respect. Let that concept be your guide as you tread upon land that belongs to someone else.

Minnie Bradley owns a sprawling Angus cattle ranch in the Texas Panhandle that she season-leases for hunting deer and quail. "The cattle, people, wildlife and land are all tied together on my ranch, and I like people who recognize that relationship and respect it," she says.

The golden rule of leasing is not to do anything on someone else's property you wouldn't want done on yours.

two Stay on established roads.

Ranchers spend thousands of dollars to build and maintain roads throughout their ranches. The reason for roads is twofold: to give ranchers access to remote parts of their ranch, and to maintain the integrity of the pastures they carefully manage.

Royce Siebman, a conservationist for the

Natural Resources Conservation Service in Childress County, day-leases his land to hunters from all over the country. Siebman looks with disdain on people who drive off his established roads, and he has the professional expertise to recognize the impact. "Grasslands are fragile ecosystems, and soil conditions affect how grass grows," says Siebman. "I have seen tire tracks made on a pasture that still exist several years later."

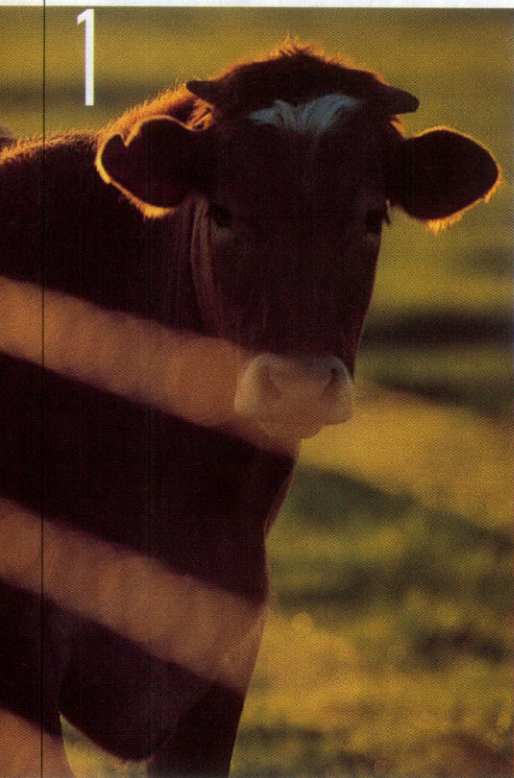
Ranchers such as Siebman who raise beef cattle on their land are basically grass farm-

ers. Their goal is to maintain healthy stands of forage so that their cattle can eat the grass and convert it into beef. Ultimately, the profit they make from their cattle depends on the health of their grass.

Driving your pickup or all-terrain vehicle off-road can be deadly to grass. During dry weather, simply driving on grass can kill vegetation by crushing it beneath the tires. Soil compaction compounds the problem. When soil becomes packed hard from the weight of vehicles, roots can't penetrate the soil, and rain can't soak into the soil. Water that runs off creates erosion.

Traveling off ranch roads in the rain can have much the same effect. Driving over muddy pastures tears up the ground. Once the soil is disturbed, pioneer plants, ones that are usually unpalatable to cattle, often take the place of protein-producing forage.

Unless you have a landowner's explicit permission, stick to the existing roads. Otherwise, you may be shown the gate.



is open, and the next time it is closed. The best rule is, unless you have been given instructions to the contrary by the landowner or manager, leave gates as you find them.

Offer to help out with chores.

Perhaps there is no better way to show a landowner that you care about his or her place than offering to help with chores. Imagine someone offering to mow your lawn. Sounds great, doesn't it? Now, maybe you can appreciate how ranchers may feel when you offer them a little respite from their busy schedules.

Perhaps they need help working cattle or have a shed that needs a fresh coat of paint. Can you pick up something they need when you go into town for lunch? The idea is to be attentive to the needs of the landowner and offer to help whenever you can.

Most importantly, offer your help free of charge. Look at it as a way of saying thanks. Whether you pay for the privilege to



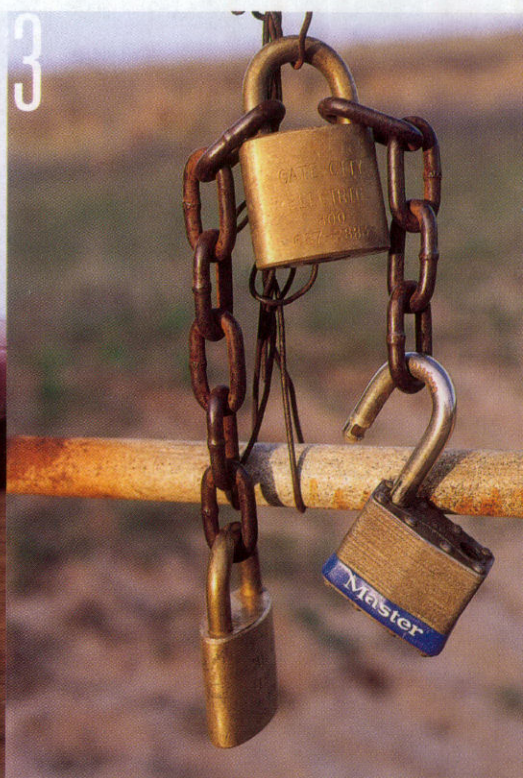
deal can grow into a friendship in which you and the landowner have a mutual interest in the continued productivity of the land.

Gifts don't have to be extravagant. Photographs of a deer you took in one of their pastures or a gift of fresh fish or game may fit the bill. Cards sent on birthdays, holidays or anniversaries — occasionally stuffed with a restaurant gift certificate — can also go a long way toward telling landowners that you cherish the privilege they have provided you.

Make litter your business.

This one is a no-brainer. You know how unsightly litter is along public roadways. It looks even worse on private lands. Never, under any circumstances, litter. And if you find any trash, even if it isn't yours, pick it up promptly.

Trash is more than empty bottles or candy wrappers. It includes spent shells,



Leave gates as you find them.

Rotational grazing is the practice of allowing animals to graze on a parcel of land for a specified length of time while other parcels are allowed to rest. The premise of rotational grazing is that while one block of land is being grazed, the other pastures are given time to recuperate from grazing pressure and grow new forage. If a ranch is broken into four parcels and each pasture is grazed for three months, each pasture gets nine months in which to recover.

Rotational grazing could explain why sometimes you go into a pasture and a gate

trespass or not is immaterial. The point is to be a good neighbor. As such, friends are always willing to help friends.

Give gifts.

I know. You may be thinking, "I pay for the lease, why should I give gifts?"

But consider that at its core, the business deal made between lessor and lessee is the basis of a relationship. If you are new to a place and are just getting to know the owners, a gift is a great way to say that your new relationship is important to you and you want to see it continue. An initial business

clipped fishing line and film canisters — anything you bring onto the place with you.

Minnie Bradley says that someone who throws cigarette butts in her pastures won't be invited back. In fire-prone rangelands, a misplaced cigarette butt can cause untold economic damage.

Make sure you know your guest privileges.

When you first secure permission to go on a ranch, make sure you and the landowner have a clear understanding on the matter of guest privileges. Are you

allowed to bring family members or other guests? Maybe it is OK for you to bird watch, but what about your sister? Can you bring her? If so, does she have to stay with you or can she venture out on her own?

The adage about it being easier to act first and ask forgiveness later does not apply here. It is always safer to be a bit of a pest and ask lots of questions initially instead of making assumptions about what you are allowed to do.

A common mistake is bringing a guest and allowing the person to hunt. Unless the landowner specifically grants permission, this is a quick way to lose a lease. Imagine all the guest scenarios you possibly can and get answers about them before you start planning a trip. A landowner's denial of guest privileges may not be anything personal. Instead, she or he may be acting upon the advice of counsel regarding liability. Remember, too, that income from leasing is what enables many ranchers to survive

livestock in trouble, washed-out roads, water-supply problems or anything else that doesn't seem right.

Be sensitive to landowners' relationships with their neighbors and report anything out of the ordinary on adjoining properties. Siebman says land users need to realize how important neighbors are to each other in rural Texas.

"Remember the landowner has neighbors and think how you can help that relationship," Siebman says. "An example would be if a deer jumped the property fence after it was shot and the lessee needs to go onto the neighbor's property to get it. Always call and get permission."

Become the landowner's partner in preserving the economic and ecological well-being of the land. By being a part of a ranch's management scheme instead of detracting from it, you will make yourself welcome for many years to come.

Communicate, communicate, communicate.

Communication is probably the most important concept to grasp when it comes to getting along with landowners. At the initial meeting, get any potential issues such as guest privileges or limits to visitation times on the table so they can be discussed and resolved in a civil manner.

Once the provisions for your visitation have been ironed out, make it a point to sit down often with the landowner and visit as friends, not as business associates.

"We have a busy ranch, so I like to have hunters call ahead of time and let me know when they'll be there," says Bradley. "All of my hunters are great at communicating when they plan on being out and are always quick to let me know if they see any problems on the ranch."

Effective communication is a two-way street, though. Make sure that the landowner can get in touch with you when



tough economic times. If they give away too much, they may not have a place to lease.

Report anything out of the ordinary.

This point goes back to being a good neighbor. If you have a hunting lease and visit it often, chances are you'll see some parts of the ranch more frequently than the landowner does. Keep an eye on things like the fences. If you see a strand of fence wire broken or a post uprooted, tell the landowner. He will appreciate the heads-up on averting a potential problem.

Also, be on the watch for trespassers,

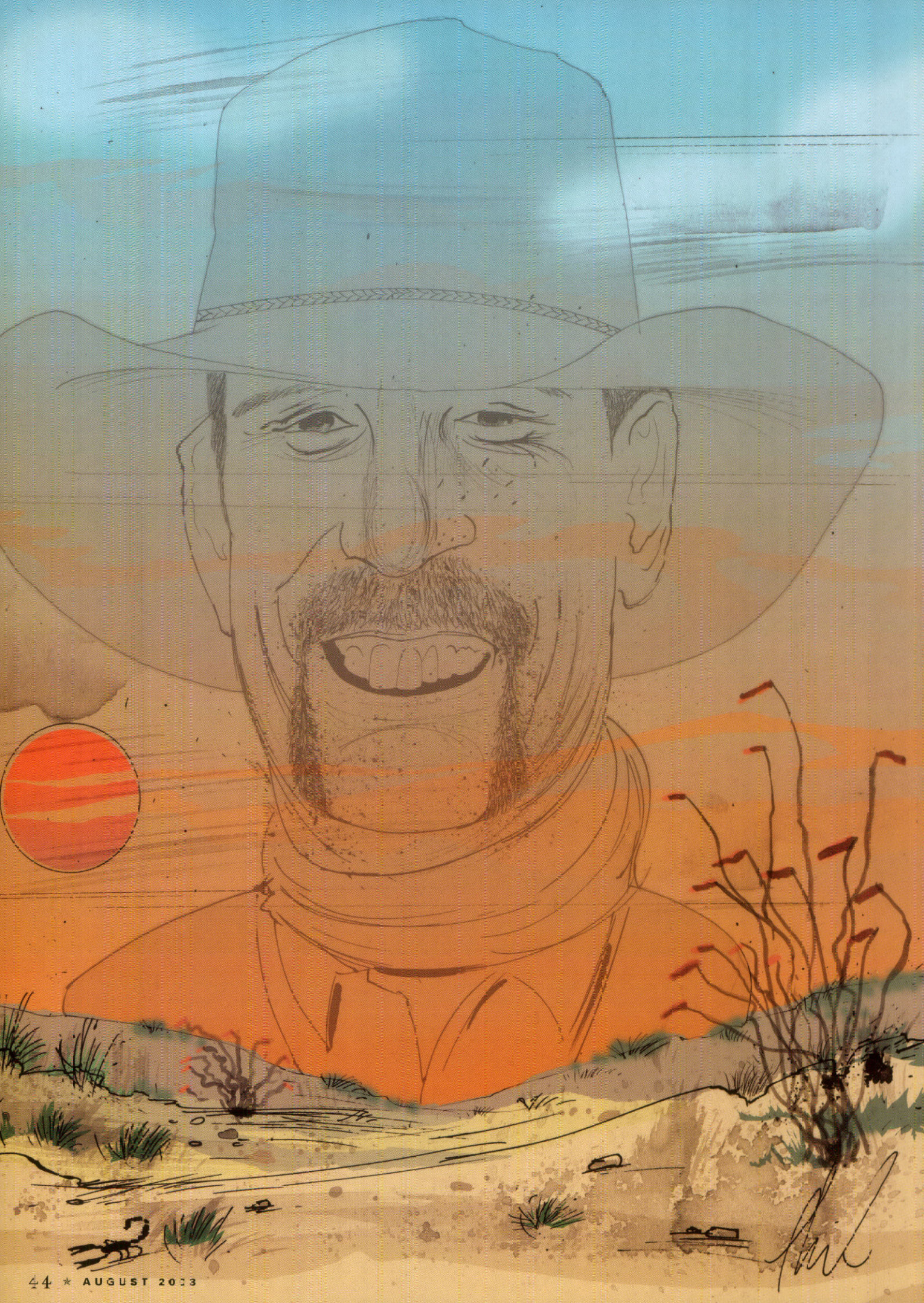
Play by the landowner's rules.

Although the state sets bag limits for game, landowners have the right to set lower limits, and many do. Respect the landowner's wildlife management plans. If a management plan allows only bass over 18 inches to be kept, or bucks with eight points or more to be shot, abide by the rules.

If you are a photographer or nature watcher, never put getting a photograph or a look at an animal over the welfare of the subject. Harassing wildlife is unethical and shows lack of respect.

necessary. Make yourself available whenever they want to meet – even if you'd rather be out taking photos that time of day.

Spend time cultivating your relationships with landowners and you will become a partner in the ongoing conservation of wild resources on private Texas lands. "Honesty and integrity should be first and foremost in any landowner/lessee relationship," says Siebman. "If someone who uses my land is honest about what they are doing and has good communication with me, that is usually enough to make me want to keep them around." ★



DESERT CROSSING

DAVID ALLOWAY TAUGHT PEOPLE HOW TO SURVIVE IN THE DESERT IN HOPES THAT THE DESERT WOULD SURVIVE THE EFFECTS OF PEOPLE.

BY E. DAN KLEPPER
ILLUSTRATION BY PHIL DISLEY

One of the first things I noticed about desert survival expert David Alloway was the similarity between his preferred environment, the desert, and his sense of humor. Both were very, very dry. It was just one of the many attributes he possessed that will be missed here in far West Texas, where Alloway, a 10-year veteran of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, died suddenly in early March.

Having first met Alloway just five years ago during one of his Basic Desert Survival workshops, I had anticipated a long and lazy *amistad* with a fellow Texas writer. Alloway fit into the desert as readily and comfortably as the desert seemed to embrace his attentions, and I felt at once a kinship in his affinity for exploring the secrets of the natural world. After our introduction, I signed up to take part in one of his advanced survival workshops. At that time Alloway wrote the phrase, "From one author to another, both desert lovers" inside the pages of my copy of his new book, *Desert Survival Skills*. The first part of the phrase had just become a fresh reality for each of us, but the second seemed to have always been true.

Alloway, a writer, cowboy, father and friend, made his home and his career from the Chihuahuan Desert in West Texas and never ceased to find the humor in the challenges of harsh desert life. His company, David Alloway's Skills of Survival, specialized in the art of desert survival. Its motto, *Dum vita est, spes est*, translates into English as "Where there is life there is hope." Alloway was fond of his informal and more inspiring translation, "It ain't over 'til you're buzzard chow."

His dry wit shines in his book. Alloway wrote this about a conversation taking place on a typical 85-degree West Texas day: "Visitor, mopping brow: 'Whew! What do youse think the temperature is?' Me: 'I dunno. I don't pay attention to these cold snaps. They never last.'"

Regarding the proper clothing to be worn in the desert, Alloway was amused that "...many people are amazed at me wearing long pants on days at 115° F. I am amazed someone would wear shorts out in the direct sun, surrounded by thorny vegetation.... I am a big believer in long, loose-fitting pants. I think blood on top of a sunburn is so *déclassé*." My favorite, however, is the short and sweet "...let's talk candidly about underwear. To wear, or not to wear, that is the question."

Alloway's humor and antics occasionally scaled the heights of West Texas mythology. He is rumored to have ridden a horse into the old Lajitas Bar and, once he had thoroughly startled the bar patrons, proceeded on horseback up the bar staircase and onto the balcony. But every once in a while Alloway ended up receiving the punch line rather than delivering it. His friend and fellow TPWD ranger David Long tells of Alloway in the early days.

"When David was going to school at Sul Ross [State University], studying biology and learning about resource protection and desert ecology," Long says, "he and a buddy of his took a couple of girlfriends down to Big Bend National Park. It had been a really great year for wildflowers, so the bluebonnets were everywhere. He and his buddy decided to pull over and pick some bluebonnets for the girls. They were down among the wildflowers picking away when a park ranger pulled up. While Alloway and his friend listened to a stern lecture on the value of natural resources and the rules for leaving plants and animals undisturbed, his girlfriend snapped a picture of the confrontation. The next week the photograph was pinned up on the Sul Ross bulletin board without any explanation. The photo showed Alloway down on one knee offering up a bouquet of bluebonnets to a park ranger."

Mischief and good humor aside, Alloway was a levelheaded thinker and a realist who tackled the vagaries of life — whether in desert extremes or the pedestrian day-to-day — on their own terms with an informed mind and a steady sensibility. But he was also a deeply religious man. In addition to his regular attendance in area church services and his membership in the St. James Episcopal Church in Alpine, Alloway was an Episcopal lay minister. His friend and fellow Big Bend writer, Sam Richardson, recalls the two sides of Alloway that made him such a great West Texas personality.

"David had agreed to marry a couple who had come to the Big Bend and wanted the marriage ceremony to take place outside,"

Richardson recounts. "David comes out in his full Episcopal robe, marries the couple and then plays them a wedding song on a flute he had hand-carved and decorated with feathers and beads. At the end of the ceremony he made a gift of the flute to the newlyweds. An hour later he was wearing cowboy boots and a hat, drinkin' beer at the Lajitas Bar and talkin' cowboy talk." It was this odd blend of rough-necked cowpoke and theologian that gave Alloway's character a special light and allowed him to cast a warm radiance across the lives of so many West Texans. It is a light that will surely be missed by both the people and the landscape that he loved.

Alloway leaves behind family and many friends as well as a full array of accomplishments. He began his career in West Texas more than 15 years ago as a wrangler, guiding horseback trips for a touring company owned by rancher Cathey Carter and her late husband.

"David was great with people and he knew a lot about this country," Cathey Carter recalls. "He became like one of our kids, a real lovable person who fit right into the family. David was funny and smart and very well read. He always wanted to be a cowboy."

Alloway worked with the Carters for five years and then landed a job as an interpretive ranger with TPWD at Big Bend Ranch State Park, where he spent the next 10 years honing his skills as a desert outdoorsman and survivalist. His expertise led him to create his own company, specializing in desert survival instruction for a broad array of students including the U.S. Air Force and Customs Service pilots, National Park Service personnel and Mexican and Australian park rangers. He became the first non-Australian to complete the 200-kilometer Pilbara Trek in Western Australia, considered to be the toughest civilian survival course in the world. Alloway wrote many articles on desert survival, and his company has been featured in such magazines as *Outside*, *Texas Monthly*, *Men's Journal* and *Maxim*, as well as the April 2003 issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. He guest starred in episode three of the television hit *Worst Case Scenario*, illustrating survival and rescue techniques for someone whose car breaks down in the middle of the desert. But it wasn't the accolades that drove Alloway to devote his life to teaching people how to survive in the desert. It was, instead, the passion he felt about helping the

desert to survive humankind.

"I hope you come to the desert and find all the special things that have made it such a big part of my life," Alloway wrote. "Not all people view the desert as a providing and fragile ecosystem. Desert rivers are pumped dry and the water replaced with sewage. Some consider it a place for low-level nuclear waste, which they tell us is safe... Others see it as a place no one cares for or owns... The desert is not inhospitable, but it does require special survival strategies. The desert also requires some special care for it and its inhabitants to survive... We need to protect the desert through considerate use, economic alternates and using our vote. For those who see what the desert truly is, its use as a dumping ground is not only unwarranted, but an attack on the very environment that nurtured humankind in its infancy... We need not fear the desert. We should fear for it."

As I struggled to write this tribute, an assignment I took on willingly only to discover the difficulties of facing a loss while trying to focus on a life, I sifted through my file of correspondence with Alloway looking for direction. There were e-mails in which we discussed our plans for an article I wrote for this magazine, messages about new ideas for other articles and ways we could work together, certificates he mailed, note cards he sent and copies of his newsletter, *The Buzzard Cheater*. During my search I came upon a short paragraph he wrote in one of his newsletters describing his return to the desert of Australia, one of his favorite places on earth:

"The Pilbara is an ancient, magical place. The dawn chorus of birds, the aboriginal rock art, and the wild solitude call me back. I love the brick-red color of the land, the silhouettes of tangled trees against the sunset, the eerie glow of ghost gums in the moonlight, the howl of dingoes, and the sapphire waters of the Indian Ocean. It was a homecoming for me."

As I read the description, I was struck by the imagery of the passage and the tenderness with which Alloway revealed his feelings for this place, a place in many ways so much like his Chihuahuan Desert. It was as if he spoke of a love for all desert places, a devotion born from his own desert home where his spirit, without a doubt, prevails. ☆

"I HOPE YOU COME TO
THE DESERT AND FIND
ALL THE SPECIAL THINGS
THAT HAVE MADE IT
SUCH A BIG PART OF MY
LIFE," ALLOWAY WROTE.

Let us CATCH YOU doing something RIGHT!



Game Warden Joe says:

“When it gets as hot as a billy goat in a pepper patch, there’s only one way to cool off, and that’s to be out on the water! And Texas Game Wardens will be there too, looking to catch you following these safety tips...



“They call them **life jackets** for a reason. You can’t float without one. Your life depends on it!”



“‘Three sheets to the wind’ is NOT a nautical term. Having fun on the water means **staying sober** so you can safely drive the boat!”



“When operating personal watercraft, always stay at least **50 feet** from other boats and people. Just think of the other watercraft like rattlesnakes: fun to look at, but you don’t want to get **too close!**”

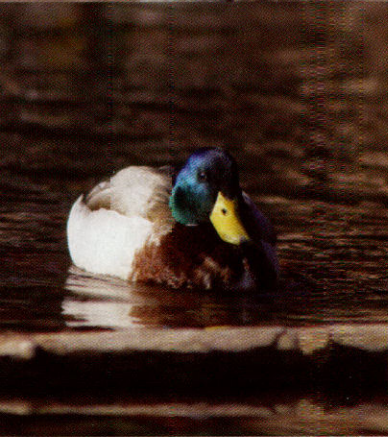
“When we catch you doing something right, instead of a citation, we’ll give you some cool stuff, like floating key chains, bumper stickers or t-shirts. So play it safe this summer!”

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/boat

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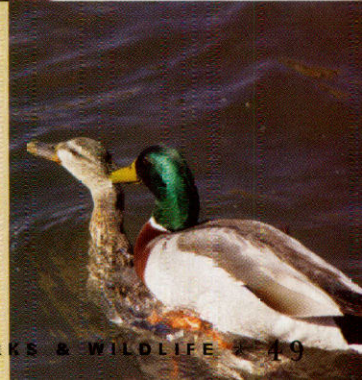
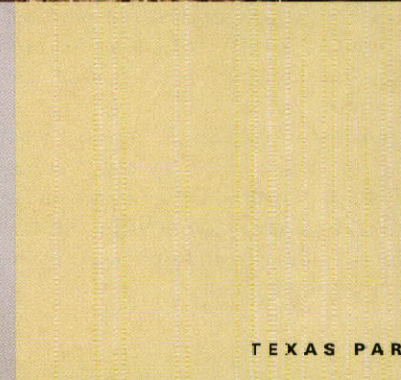
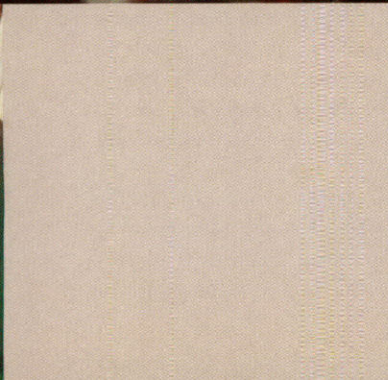




GOING DIGITAL

A professional photographer explains why he made the shift from film.

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL FURTMAN



The first time I saw my digital images printed on paper came almost three years ago, when I was examining the proofs for a gift book. As I paged through, I couldn't help but notice that in almost every case, the photographs I had shot with a digital camera reproduced better than those I had shot on film.

A sunset on a remote Canadian lake was captured in glorious orange, a fiery ball sinking beneath dark spires of pine. In another, the backlit, lacy seed-heads of native big bluestem shone sharply. Page after page, the images matched not only what was in my photographer's mind, but matched, and even exceeded, the detail, saturation and clarity of the film images sharing the pages.

I was stunned, not just because they looked so good, but also because these images had been taken with a consumer-level, point-and-shoot digital camera that some experts said produced images far inferior to those on film.

I fell in love with digital photography, but as good as those images were, I knew that point-and-shoot cameras limit creativity. If only, I thought, camera manufacturers would come out with a digital single-lens reflex (SLR) camera with interchangeable lenses, then many serious photographers would make the switch. But that seemed impossibly far in the future.

Boy, was I wrong. The future is here, and for many of us, it's digital.

Photography, more than many technologies, has gone relatively unchanged during the past century. Sure, there have been great advances in cameras and lenses and improvements in film. But the basic process for creating images hadn't changed. Film is made of a thin, light-sensitive emulsion containing silver halides, all coating a flexible acetate base. When a silver halide crystal is struck by a photon of light, a tiny speck of solid silver is formed. A scene's dark areas produce few of these silver specks and light areas produce more, resulting in a latent image that, when doused in a chemical bath, becomes the photographic negative familiar to us all.

With the advent of digital photography, the very core of the process changed. Though digital cameras look and handle much like film cameras, the similarity ends there. Light, now falling on an electronic sensor that sits where film formerly resided, is transformed into a set of numbers that are assigned an average tone, and these tonal areas are called picture elements, or pixels. This information is stored in the camera and later downloaded to a viewing device, generally a computer. At this point, the image can be treated much as we'd treat a film negative: it can be printed, cropped, enhanced and so on.

But just as most photographers really don't know or care just how film's chemical reactions work, most probably won't give a hoot how digital cameras work. Judgments will be based on the quality of the photographs.

"People think that digital photography is just now approaching the quality of film," says Montana-based professional nature photographer Daniel J. Cox, "but the truth is, it has been the equal of 35mm for some time now."

Cox, a *National Geographic* contributor who has won international recognition for his animal portraits, is one of the many recent converts among professional photographers. Other nature photographers cling to their film cameras like a capsized victim clutches a flotation device. The debate within the industry hasn't gone unnoticed by serious amateur photographers.

"I just got back from a polar bear shoot," says Cox. "Back at the lodge, when downloading my digital images to my laptop, I could barely get any work done because the amateur photographers were so interested in seeing the quality of digital images."

TIME TO MAKE THE SWITCH?

It seems that either you are in love with digital photography, or you are in love with film and are reluctant to make the switch.

I can relate to that. But my first experience with digital photography, using a Nikon 880 point-and-shoot camera, led to my conversion. Though "just" a 3.4-megapixel camera, the photos shot at its highest resolution were spectacular.

The key to sharpness is in the number of pixels. The greater the number of pixels, the more information stored, and at a finer level. Digital cameras that have 5 million pixels or more (a million pixels is called a "megapixel") are the current state of the art. Think of low-pixel cameras as the equivalent of the old 110 format film — small and suitable only for small prints. Five-plus megapixel cameras are the counterparts of 35mm film. And with the advent of a few extremely expensive 12-megapixel cameras, digital enthusiasts now even have the equivalent of medium-format film cameras.

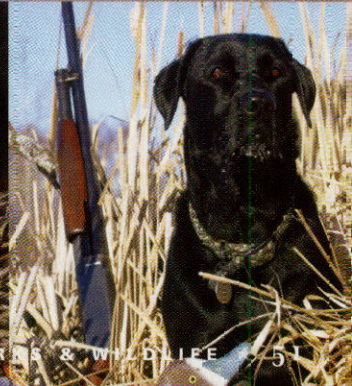
While five-megapixel cameras have been around a few years, they were essentially glorified point-and-shoot cameras, leaving much to be desired. What has pushed professional and serious amateur photographers into the digital realm has been the arrival in the last year of affordable SLR digital cameras.

"Most point-and-shoot cameras are very frustrating due to a lengthy lag between the time the shutter button is pressed and when the camera actually takes the photo," says Cox. "If you are just interested in still photos, such as wildflowers or landscapes, a point-and-shoot may be sufficient. But for moving subjects, a digital SLR is the only way to go."

While Sigma, Kodak and Fuji all have introduced digital SLRs, the real competition seems to be between perennial rivals Canon and Nikon. Both offer digital SLRs in the six-megapixel range that cost approximately \$1,500. They also accept the full range of lenses that Canon or Nikon 35mm film camera owners already possess. At the time of this writing, the two were in a price war, with Canon introducing its EOS 10D and dropping the price \$700 from the cost of its immediate predecessor, the D60. Nikon followed suit and dropped the price of its D100. This competition bodes well for consumers.

These six-megapixel SLRs deliver photos that have a native print size of about 17 inches by 12 inches, or 3,072 pixels by 2,048 pixels. This is generally far larger than most amateurs will ever print, and even large enough for the professionals, since a photo of that size would easily cover a two-page spread in this magazine.

Consumers familiar with print size may be confounded by the common unit of measurement in digital photography: pixels per inch. Think of pixels as the grain of film. Traditional photographic prints are nothing more than ink dots on paper, and the





Quick Look at Digital Advantages

- Huge savings in film and processing.
- Instant feedback on exposure, focus, etc.
- More frames per storage card than a roll of film.
- Edit photos immediately in camera or on computer. No printing costs of unwanted images.
- Most new digital SLRs have additional magnification of about 1.5, giving increased telephoto range to lenses.

• Airline travel/security concerns are eliminated since flash cards and micro drives are not affected by security X-rays.

• No need to turn over your precious memories to a one-hour lab for possible destruction or loss.

• Ability to change "film" ISO on each image.

• Photographic experimentation and learning are enhanced because of immediate feedback and the low cost of shooting as many images as you'd like.

Sharing Your Digital Photos

You can share your digital photos the traditional way — as prints — but you have several options.

First, you can take your digital images to a photo lab for printing. Depending upon the quality of your home printer, this may yield the best results. But digital images can also be printed on inexpensive home inkjet printers with amazing results.

Here are some tips for making the best prints:

photos you see in this magazine are printed at about 300 dots per inch. Digital images follow similar rules. Measured in pixels per inch instead of dots per inch, an image produced by a low-pixel digital camera will blur quickly if enlarged beyond snapshot size. Because high-pixel digital photos have a large number of pixels per inch, they can be cropped and enlarged significantly before the individual pixels begin to distort the image.

BUT CAN IT HANDLE ACTION?

Last year, as duck season began and my first digital SLR — a Canon D60 — arrived, I decided to take a risk. I put away my film bodies and began shooting nothing but digital images. Shooting photos of retrievers and later, of a group of ducks wintering near my home, gave me a chance to really test this new photographic format.

One of the more common criticisms of digital photography is that the write time — the time it takes the camera's computer to store the digital image — is too slow for action photography. Yet I was well aware that sports photographers whose work appears in daily papers and magazines had made the switch to digital long ago. There seemed no reason I couldn't capture a mallard drake on the wing as easily as someone else could grab a Michael Jordan jump shot.

And I did. Although the D60 isn't noted for its speed, it does shoot at three frames per second in bursts of up to eight shots before the camera momentarily pauses to write to memory. As you'll note by the accompanying photos, that was fast enough to put a mid-air stop to ducks. In addition, I found that I actually obtained more good action shots than I ever did in 20 years of shooting film simply because I could shoot for free. No more film costs!

That's because digital cameras store their images to a removable memory card. The cards are relatively inexpensive and can be reused an almost unlimited number of times. Freed from the expense of film and processing, I found myself taking photographic risks that I'd never dreamed of before.

Beyond that, I found that digital SLRs have another significant advantage over their film counterparts: immediate feedback. All digital cameras have a small, liquid-crystal display monitor on their backs. Photographers instantly know, by reviewing their photos on site, whether exposure and focus were correct. This feedback is an invaluable tool for improving your photography, allowing you to adjust settings to correct problems instantly.

The second criticism of digital images is that they still don't produce an image as "fine" as 35mm film — that the images can't be cropped and enlarged. But with a six-megapixel camera, I argue that this simply isn't true. You be the judge.

Accompanying this article are images of a mallard and a black Lab shown at a normal aspect ratio and an enlarged, cropped version. Note the detail in the duck's eye and the ice crystals on the dog's whiskers. I think you'll agree that the amount of fine detail these new cameras can record is amazing.

THE DOWNSIDE?

If there are downsides to digital imaging, they are few. The first, some would argue, is the expense of the camera. As mentioned earlier, digital SLRs run about \$1,500.

Although that's a lot of cash, consider that you'll never again have to buy film. A serious photographer on a weekend outing, shooting Texas landscapes, wildflowers or wildlife can burn up a lot of film. With color transparency film running about \$8 per roll, and processing at least another \$4, a 10-roll weekend outing would run a minimum of \$120. It's clear that it wouldn't take long before a serious photographer would recoup the investment in a new digital camera.

"The amount of money I save is massive," says Cox. "No more shooting dozens of images as in-camera dupes to send to my agents. No more money spent on high-quality duplicates of one-and-only originals that I don't want to risk in the mail. No more worrying about the lab screwing up your great shots. And no more huge piles of plastic and cardboard waste from the individual packaging of film cassettes."

The second possible downside, Cox points out, is that becoming a digital photographer does mean having a modicum of computer skills and, of course, a computer. A computer becomes your digital darkroom and also your photo album. However, since a computer is already found in most homes today, it is likely that anyone making the switch to digital already has the needed equipment, and most cameras come bundled with necessary software.

LEARNING MORE

It is a given that between the time I write this and when you read it, new advances in digital photography will take place. Because making the switch to digital involves some serious money, consumers should do some research before plunging in. Much good information can be found on the Internet (see sidebar).

Once you own a digital camera, you'll enjoy learning how to shoot a bit differently. After all, the "film" is free. Burn and learn!

"Digital photography has eliminated the absolute need to be so technically adept with a camera," says Cox. "When shooting with slide film, it was always very important to keep an eye on your exposure meter within the camera. It's still necessary to pay attention, but even a fairly major change in lighting is not as much of a problem. Digital also gives you the ability to quickly change 'film' ISO when necessary — shoot in bright daylight at ISO 200 one frame and 1,600 on the next when the clouds roll in."

So is this the end of film? Hardly. There will always be those in love with acetate photography. Should you switch? Only you can decide that. I'm sold. So are Cox and a growing number of his peers.

I can tell you this — if you've held off making the switch because you believed digital image quality was substandard, now is the time to take a second look.

Digital photography has come of age. ★

Start with a good photo. You can't blame your printer when your source image is poor.

Use a good printer. You'll want a printer with at least four colors and 600-dpi resolution.

Use the right paper. Different papers produce different results because they react differently with inks. Generally, you'll get the best results if you use paper specifically designed for your printer. Buy small quantities of paper until you find the right one.

Use your printer correctly. Use the most current version of the printer driver, then set the printer's preferences to the highest quality. Set resolution output to 300 dpi for top-quality photos. Set the printer's paper settings correctly, e.g., "Photo Paper."

You can also share your photos via e-mail. Be sure to reduce the image size when sending via e-mail, in consideration of the time your friends will spend downloading your image file.

For More Information

Some sites you should visit before making a digital camera purchase, or for learning techniques, are: <www.lonestardigital.com>

<www.dpreview.com>

<www.luminous-landscape.com>

<www.robgalbraith.com>

<www.fredmiranda.com>

<www.naturalexposures.com>

ENDUR



The Palo Duro trail run tests racers' resistance to pain and their desire for euphoria.

Article by Brandon Weaver, photos by Russell A. Graves

RANCE



TESTED

IT IS PRE-DAWN IN PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK, and brief whiffs of moisture from a shower linger in the crisp October air. On the floor of the canyon, nearly 200 runners are bustling with nervous energy, preparing for the 18th annual Palo Duro Trail 50, a long-distance trail run that plays out on a rugged 12.5-mile loop through the park's interior.



IN THE ULTRA MARATHON, YOUTH IS CONSIDERED A HINDRANCE. IT TAKES YEARS OF TRAINING FOR THE HUMAN BODY TO RUN LONG DISTANCES EFFICIENTLY.

As the racers congregate toward the starting line, a man in a kilt plays a haunting rendition of "Amazing Grace" on bagpipes. An amplified voice booms from the darkness. "Racers line up!" We're only minutes from its 7 a.m. start time.

When signing up for this event, runners choose from three distances: a 20-kilometer (12.5 miles) fun run/walk, a 50-kilometer (31-mile) run, or the big daddy, a 50-miler. Like most of the racers lined up this morning, I'm running the 50k, which is about five miles longer than a traditional marathon.

In the ultra marathon, (any running race longer than 26.2 miles), youth is considered a hindrance. It takes years of

training for the human body to run long distances efficiently. At 30, I need a few years and many more miles before I hit my peak. In the 50k race the average age is in the mid-40s. The average age in the 50-mile race is 47.

Most of us are refugees from the mind-numbing urban marathon. Mile after mile of pounding the pavement through cities is hard on the knees, joints and, more importantly, the brain. Ultra marathons take place almost exclusively on trails in wilderness areas. Once a runner has experienced the rapture of striding along a dirt trail and consuming the nuances of the backcountry with each breath, a normal marathon has little appeal. Running

through nature heightens the senses to the point that you assimilate into the scenery instead of just observing it. After this race, a part of Palo Duro Canyon will have entered my soul.

As I line up for the start, I'm a little anxious. Long-distance running hasn't been good to me. While training for my first marathon in 1998, I encountered the bane of long-distance runners: iliotibial band syndrome. The IT band is a ligament that runs down the outside of the leg from the hip to the shin. It's most vulnerable at its narrowest point along the outside of the knee. When the IT band flares up, it feels like someone injected hot glue into your knee. I've taken three years off from running dis-



Johnson	Deborah	F	40	TX
Kolivosky	Karen	F	33	TX
Lake	Thomas	M	55	TX
Lawler	Jeff	M	32	AR
Looten	Patricia	F	40	TX
Lowry	Tom	M	57	TX
Lundell	Jarrad	M	17	TX
Lundell	Lorille	F	45	TX
Lyles	Wayne	M	48	TX
McCoid	Crystal	F	21	TX
Norman	Betty	F	83	TX
Ornelas	Raul	M	42	TX
Parker	Ruth	F	85	TX
Piedra	Rose Mari	F	38	TX
Pierce	Dorothy	F	51	OK
Polvadore	Teresa	F	38	TX
Regan	Cris	F	58	KS
Regan	Mike	M	61	KS
Richards	Sandra	F	40	TX
Ribar	Larry	M	57	TX
Schrader	Chris	M	44	TX
Schrader	Lea	F	37	TX
Shinabery	Stephanie	F	41	AR
Spence	Cheryl	F	45	OK
Spence	W. Dean	M	52	OK
Spicer	Jennifer	F	30	TX
Spindler	Peter	M	55	TX



tances longer than 20 miles to let the injury fully heal, so I'm hoping it won't be a problem.

When the command to start is given, hundreds of tiny beeps erupt as the racers start their watches. We stampede from the grassy area of the starting line to the park road, then take a sharp right onto the Paseo Del Rio trail, where we're engulfed by the dense cover of mesquite trees and darkness.

We sort ourselves out into single file. The etiquette of trail racing is civilized. "If you need to get around me, just let me know and I'll move over," says the man running in front of me. That's the last thing I want. The trail is little more

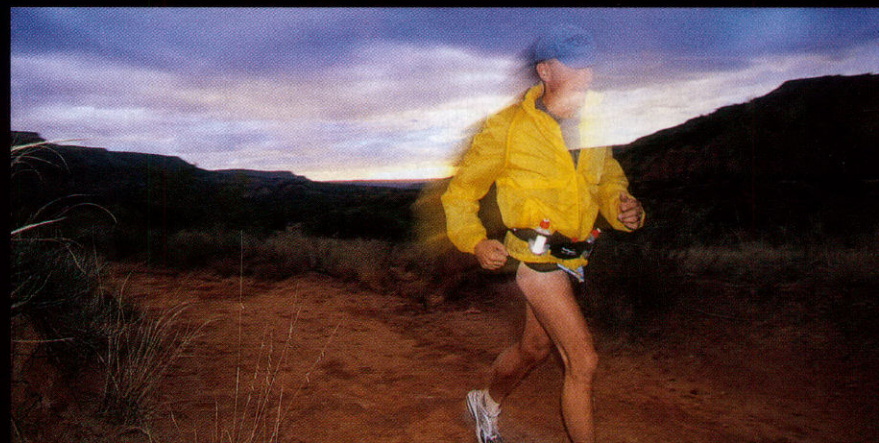
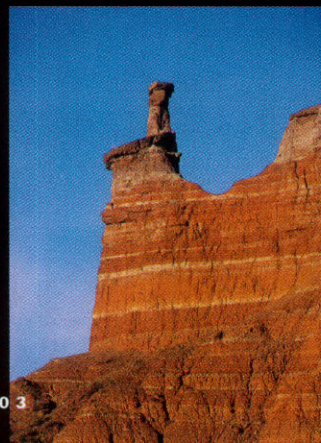
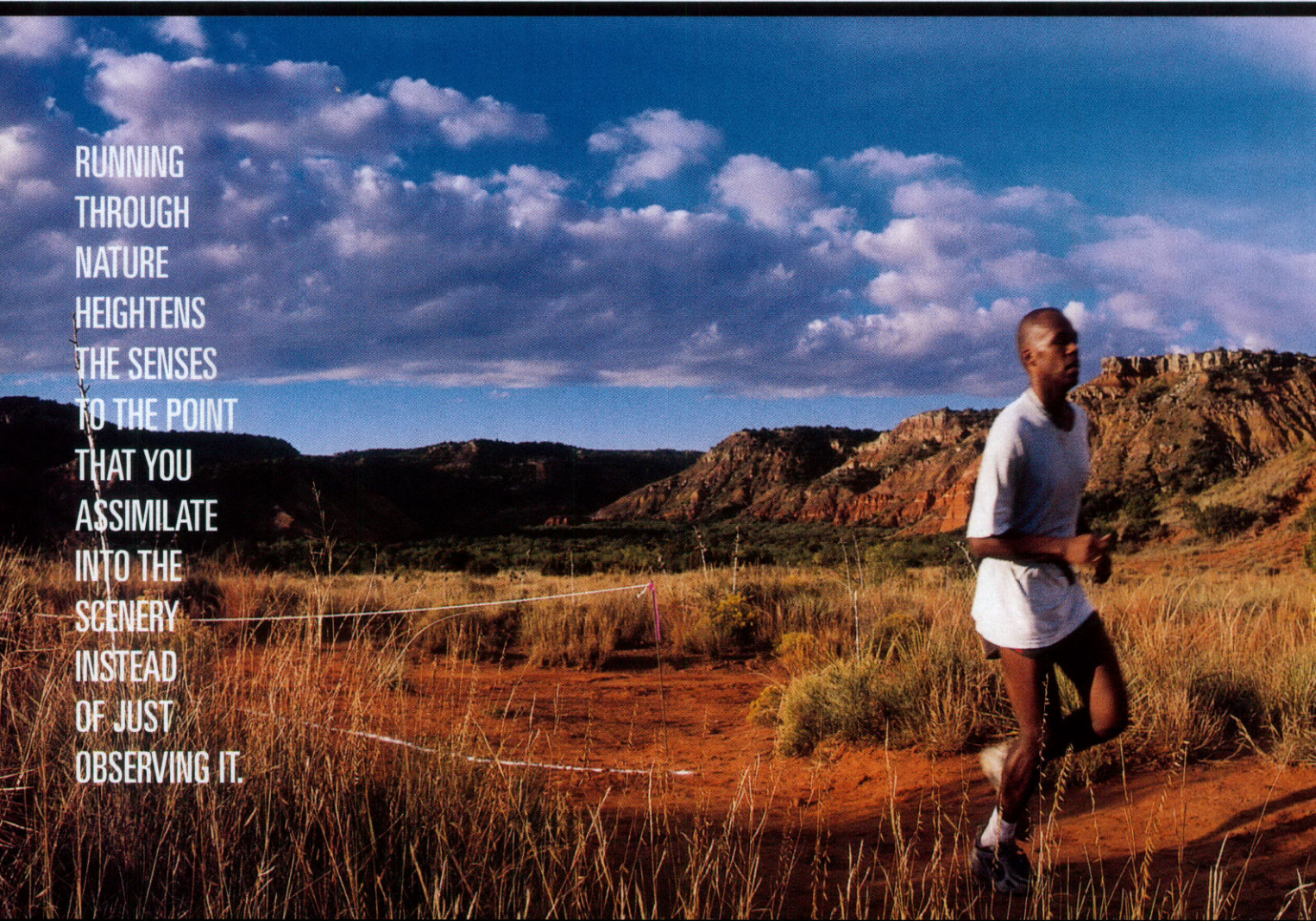
than a winding black shadow. I'm not carrying a light, and the sun will be below the horizon for another hour. "No that's OK. I'm using your light," I answer. Immediately behind me, another runner is bounding along the trail, carrying a small flashlight. Between the two light sources, the trail is well illuminated. I reluctantly make the same offer to move over for him.

I will get to know him later in the morning, but right now he is too preoccupied to worry about passing me. He's annoyed about starting the race in the dark. The thought of stepping in a mud puddle and spending the next six hours with a wet shoe is all he can think about.

He declines my offer.

After about a mile, the trail spits us onto the park road. When we hit the pavement, everyone's pace quickens. We run across the park road's second water crossing. The water is sloshing in the culverts below and laps at the edge of the concrete, threatening to engulf the road's surface, but our shoes stay dry. The group heads into the Lighthouse trailhead parking lot and splits at the Two Moons Aid Station. The 50-milers go left. They're doing four laps of the 12.5-mile loop. I go right with the other 50k runners. We're cutting the first loop in half and running six miles. After that, we'll complete two full 12.5-mile loops.

RUNNING
THROUGH
NATURE
HEIGHTENS
THE SENSES
TO THE POINT
THAT YOU
ASSIMILATE
INTO THE
SCENERY
INSTEAD
OF JUST
OBSERVING IT.



The split thins the group, and I find myself running through the darkness behind only one other person. We're two strangers bound together by an 11-minute mile pace. "My name's Matt," he says, just barely turning his head.

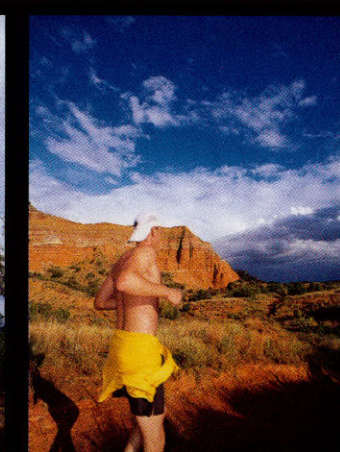
Matt Crownover and I spend the next several minutes casually jogging and getting to know one another. Crownover, a 30-year-old chaplain at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, had been camped directly across the park road from the start/finish line at the Hackberry Campgrounds. He was still at his campsite, leisurely enjoying the early morning, when he realized he was about to miss the race. He grabbed his gear and

rushed to the starting line just as we said amen to the morning prayer.

As we slow to walk up a long hill, we hear a voice with a British accent behind us. Sarah Brown, 33, is hustling, so we move over to let her by. Originally from England, the Fort Worth resident tends to start out too fast. She's looking for a group to help her maintain a steady pace for the first loop. She informally joins forces with us. While all three of us have extensive endurance racing backgrounds, we discover this is our first ultra marathon. We spend the next hour running in the twilight and chatting about everything from the metric system to the majestic scenery.

Watching the sun rise while running through the backcountry of Palo Duro Canyon is a rapturous experience. The sunlight filters over the canyon wall and stirs the sleeping terrain. The gentle knolls and grand mesas slowly rise from the curtain of night and begin their day. I want to live in this moment forever, but I know this euphoria is fleeting. At some point as the race progresses, this sensation will be nothing more than a taunting memory.

At the end of the first loop, Matt drops off to shed his jacket and flashlight. I stop briefly at the Two Moons Aid Station before I begin my first long loop. The aid station is stocked with



energy-sustaining foods: boiled red potatoes, dishes of salt, fig bars, M&Ms, peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches, chips and Coke, water and Gatorade. Most racers wear a utility belt with a water bottle and pockets for food. I fill half of my bottle with water and the rest with Coke (human rocket fuel) and head out. Sarah drops back at the aid station, so I'm running solo.

A couple of miles into the second loop, a new running partner appears. Christian Poppeliers, 33, is sporting a tie-died shirt and nursing a nasty cold. Back home in Houston he'd been fighting a 102-degree fever all week. When he arrived in Amarillo on Friday, he'd convinced himself he was over it. Now at nine miles into the race, he realizes he's made a grave mistake.

It's been drizzling off and on for the last couple of hours. Slowly the weather

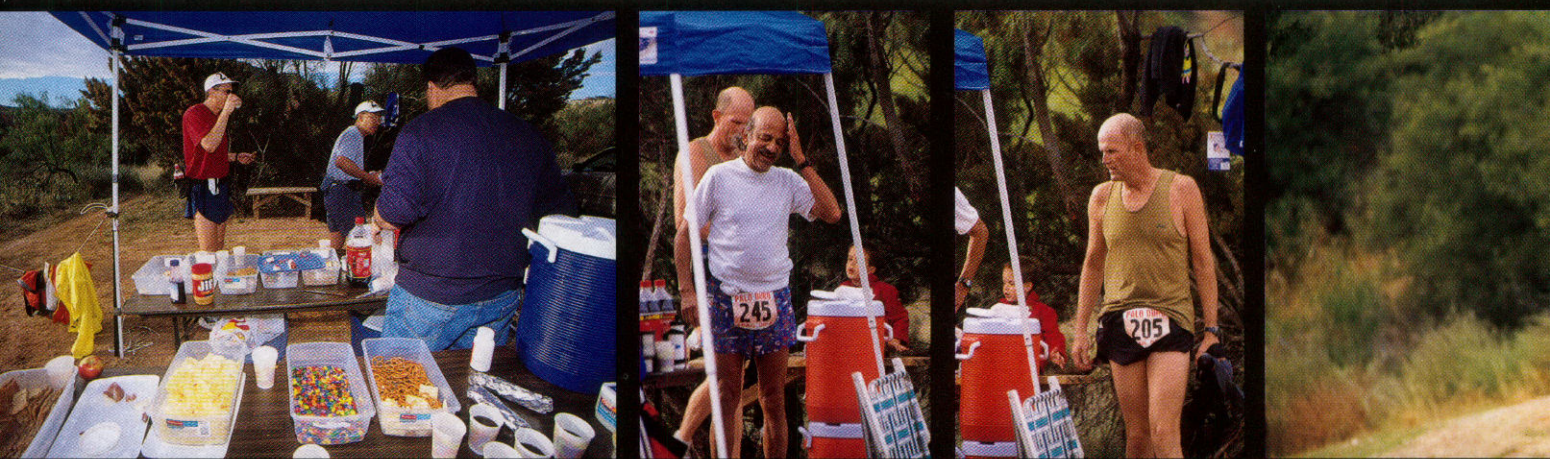
breaks and a rainbow forms in the canyon from rim to rim. Red Spicer, the race director, takes a moment from his duties to enjoy the beautiful weather. He's been organizing this event for 18 years, and he's seen just how brutal the weather can be. One notable year the race-day temperature was 17 degrees. To keep the beverages at the aid stations from freezing, workers stashed them in their heated cars.

Accompanied by Christian's wheezing, we knock out our second loop together without drama. At the last mile, Christian begins to fall back, and I assume he's dropping out. I begin my last loop for the day and check my watch. I'm a little over 3½ hours into the race. Things look good. Suddenly, I hear a familiar voice call my name. It's Matt Crownover and he's clicking along at a brisk pace. He passes me and disappears

around the corner. He ultimately finishes at five hours and 45 minutes, for a ninth-place finish.

At mile 20, I feel the first tinges in my IT band. I try to put it out of my mind and slow down, hoping it's just normal knee pain. From behind I hear Christian's now-familiar heavy breaths. I'm amazed he's still going. He eases past me and is gone. Once again, I'm alone. The onslaught of pain is slow and steady, traveling from my shin up into my lower back. With each mile that creeps by, my knee grows stiffer. Just before mile 25, I catch Christian again, and he's in really bad shape. When I see his face, I know he's done. At the next aid station, he pulls out. Later that night in his hotel room he vomits blood, and his cold develops into a full respiratory infection. It takes him a month to fully recover.

I walk the next six miles completely



THE AID STATION IS STOCKED WITH ENERGY-SUSTAINING FOODS: BOILED RED POTATOES, DISHES OF SALT, FIG BARS, PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICHES, CHIPS AND COKE, WATER AND GATORADE.



alone. The temperature has dropped, and the wind is cutting through the canyon. My whole body hurts and the cold weather amplifies my suffering. I check my watch. I've been at this for more than five hours. This morning's euphoria is long gone. I hate this stupid canyon. I hate running. And all I want to do is get in a car, sit down, and leave this infernal place.

At around mile 28 my self-pity is interrupted. It's Sarah. She passes by, giving me a breathless, "Hey!" Periodically her image pops up on the trail ahead of me. She finishes in six hours and 20 minutes and takes fourth place in the women's division.

The last 1½ miles is the longest of my life. Normally an IT band injury hurts only when you run. The problem is I've been walking on it for 11 miles and it hurts every moment I'm standing. The

trail seems to sense this and taunts me, climbing and careening along the edge of the canyon wall, torturing me with each change in elevation. The trail winds its way through a field of hoodoos, circular pedestals of gray rock, and I encounter a woman sitting atop a large one. "Everybody that's been through here looks pretty bad," she says with a pleasant smile. "Just hang in there. You're almost done."

The finish line stretch is guarded by 11 rock steps descending 30 feet down a nearly vertical hill. The steps average about 12 inches in height. My right knee refuses to bend, and my left is protesting loudly, but through bursts of pain I scramble down the ledges and lurch the final 50 yards across the line with a time of six hours and 41 minutes. I'm done. No epiphanies. I just want to go home.

A month later, I return to Palo Duro

with my mountain bike to ride the course. It's Friday morning in mid-November and the park is virtually empty. I start out on the Paseo Del Rio trail. Memories of the race morning fill my head and I realize just how much I loved running here. I want that euphoric feeling from the race's first hour back. I want that to be my lasting impression from the race, but it's not. I decide then and there to come back and claim that glory, to finish this race on my own terms. ★

Race Information

Web site:

<www.palodurocanyon.com/race.php>

Race Director: Red Spicer (806)


353-3847



DAN LAY

One of Texas' first professional wildlife biologists, Lay was an ardent guardian of Texas' natural resources. // BY MARY-LOVE BIGONY

Ecolologist and writer Dan Lay led a life filled with firsts. He was in the first Texas class to earn a graduate degree in wildlife management and was one of the state's first professional wildlife biologists. He was responsible for acquiring Texas' first wildlife management area and led the state's first nongame conservation program. For 40 years, Lay worked for the Game, Fish and Oyster



Lay always enjoyed fishing at the Forks of the River in Jasper County, a spot he visited for the first time in 1938.

Commission — now the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department — helping it evolve from an agency primarily concerned with law enforcement to the multifaceted agency it is today. Even after his retirement in 1979, Lay, who died last year at age 88, continued to be a tireless advocate for conservation and the outdoors. The hundreds of people whose lives he touched remember him as the consummate gentleman, a naturalist and ecologist without equal.

Born in 1914 in Beaumont, Lay grew up watching the daily flights of thousands of blackbirds coming in to roost in cane marshes along the Neches River. The Lay family lived in town, and young Dan envied his classmates who lived in houseboats and rowed skiffs across the Neches to get to school. He graduated from high school in 1932, during the Great Depression. His father, a pharmacist, encouraged him to go to college, and he headed for Texas A&M University to major in agriculture. In 1936 he met pioneering wildlife biologist Walter P. Taylor. This encounter would change the course of his life.

Taylor had come to Texas A&M to establish one of the first Cooperative Wildlife Research Units in the nation, a program created by the U.S. Biological Survey to promote a graduate curriculum in wildlife research and game management. Lay was there when Taylor arrived on campus.

"I helped him unload," Lay recalled in 1991, "and started looking at all the camping gear he had. He had a fly rod, a beautiful one, and I thought, 'Boy, that's for me!' Since then I've talked to students who wanted to go into this work and I've told them they won't be spending all their time hunt-

ing and fishing. But there I was, trapped by the image of that beautiful fly rod. I learned later that Walter P. rarely ever used it."

After receiving his bachelor's degree in agriculture in 1936, Lay stayed at Texas A&M to study under Taylor, earning his master's degree in wildlife research and game management in 1938. Later that year he became one of the first professional wildlife biologists at the Game, Fish and Oyster Commission.

One of Lay's early assignments involved the first Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project, W-1-R. He was stationed in Beaumont and served as the regional game manager for 20 Southeast Texas counties.

"Dan began investigating the countryside," says longtime friend Carl Frentress, a TPWD biologist in Athens, of Lay's early years in East Texas. "He looked at what was out there, what the ecological foundations were, knowing that we needed this baseline to understand; knowing that things were going to change. He always took field notes and made records. He had his eye on all the subtleties and minor components that are part of the whole milieu of the forest. And when they began to come apart, he knew it, even if it still looked like a forest."

Over the course of their friendship, Frentress went on dozens of outings with Lay. "Dan was a naturalist," says Frentress. "That really burned in him. He had to be outside. When he was hunting and fishing it was as intense as when he was working. It was a most pleasurable experience to go with him. When you went with Dan, you were in the outdoors, totally immersed, and when you came back you spent the rest of the afternoon talking about what you'd seen."

Lay stayed in East Texas until World War II broke out, then was transferred to the agency's Austin headquarters. "Dan was deaf in his right ear, so he didn't have to serve in the war," says Frentress. "He became sort of like a senior advisor to [executive director] Will Tucker. He didn't have a title. He was just told to go do things."

One thing Lay did while in Austin was secure acquisition of Texas' first wildlife management area, Sierra Diablo near Van Horn, in 1945. TPWD biologist Danny Swebston of Canyon, one of Lay's young proteges in the early 1970s, recalls Lay telling him about it years later: "During the hearings at the State Capitol, Dan developed a severe pain in his side," says Swebston. "But he was afraid that if he left, the vote would not go through. He knew we needed that land if we were going to save what was left of the native bighorn herd out there. Shortly after the final vote, Dan was admitted to the hospital with a ruptured appendix."

When the war ended, Lay returned to East

Texas. "Dan loved East Texas," says retired biologist Bill Sheffield of College Station, a friend of 45 years. "He was a field biologist, and that's really all he wanted to be." Sheffield says he once heard that when Lay was working in Austin, he used his authority to create a field biologist position in East Texas and then put himself in it. "I asked him if that was true," says Sheffield. "Dan kind of grinned and said, 'Pretty much.'"

In the 1960s, Lay was involved in the department's first nongame project in Texas. Its focus was an 8-inch-long resident of the East Texas forests, the red-cockaded woodpecker. Unlike most woodpeckers, which drill their cavities in dead trees, the red-cockaded needs living pine trees. But not just any tree. To have enough heartwood for a cavity, it must be old — usually 75 years or more. The logging boom that began in the 1870s eliminated many of these big, old trees. Modern silviculture compounded the problem. To increase profits, trees were harvested after 25 to 30 years.

Adding to the predicament is the fact that this woodpecker requires open, parklike habitat, which historically was maintained by fires. Suppression of wildfires created a condition biologists call "hardwood midstory

**THE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE
WHOSE LIVES DAN LAY
TOUCHED REMEMBER HIM
AS THE CONSUMMATE
GENTLEMAN, A NATURALIST
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encroachment," which further degrades the woodpecker's habitat by making it harder for them to get to their cavities.

Based on Lay's research, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife (later the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) declared the red-cockaded woodpecker an endangered species in 1970. Lay spent the next two decades at odds with various timber-management agencies — the U.S. Forest Service, National Forests in Texas and private timber companies — regarding habitat protection. On Oct. 11, 1989, he wrote to Arthur Temple, Jr. of Temple-Inland: "Recently you told me you did not like the red-cockaded woodpecker business and that you doubted there was an emergency. I don't like it either. There is an emergency and Forest Service records show it. The birds are headed for oblivion and it may be too late already."

"Dan was truly an ecologist," says TPWD Executive Director Robert L. Cook. "He was first to raise the alarm about the pine forest monoculture. The virgin forests were gone by 1900, but Dan saw the forests come back.

Then he saw the conversion to pine plantations. He was able to take a nonconfrontational approach when talking about politically unpopular subjects, such as pine forests."

In the 1940s, Lay began writing what would grow to be an influential body of work: more than 40 articles for professional journals and more than 60 popular articles, including 36 for this magazine. In 1984, five years after his retirement from TPWD, he wrote *Land of Bears and Honey: A Natural History of East Texas*, with Joe C. Truett. One reviewer compared the book to the writings of Aldo Leopold, author of *A Sand County Almanac*, which is credited with starting the modern environmental movement. Another reviewer wrote, "East Texans have their own regional Walden..."

Land of Bears and Honey is a collection of nine essays describing the unspoiled wilderness of East Texas in the centuries before the first settlers arrived and examining how humans coped with and altered the environment: "People love their comforts and trees their gentle rains. But the vigor of both men and forests arises from the wellspring of adversity. Without strife, perhaps neither the people nor the trees of East Texas would have flourished as they did."

The authors wrote about not just bears, but all the animals that inhabited East Texas: red wolves, jaguars, passenger pigeons, bison and the ivory-billed woodpecker: "Legend, that brew of fact and fiction more potent than either alone, lives best in dank, dark places. In this country it loves the lowlands of the Southeast. One legend of this low country is about a mysterious bird, the ivory-billed woodpecker. At first the bird was real, winging through the dark woods as the settlers hung on the periphery. Then it became scarce and finally disappeared. Some say Legend says it still flies."

Many of today's wildlife managers first knew Lay through his writing. "Our professors had many of Dan's publications as required reading, as well as some of his popular articles from the old *Game and Fish* magazine," says retired wildlife biologist Bobby Alexander of Mount Pleasant, who attended Texas A&M in the mid-1950s. "I met Dan in person in 1958, and was awestruck just being in his presence."

Perhaps Dan Lay's most valuable gift to Texas was his willingness to share his time and wisdom with others, especially students.

"He was the consummate gentlemen," says Hayden Haucke, manager of Engeling Wildlife Management Area. "He didn't seem to have highs and lows. He always made himself available to lend advice and counsel."

Gene McCarty, TPWD chief of staff and a fisheries biologist, met Lay when McCarty

Continued on page 71

Continued from page 65

DENISON: KJIM-AM 1500 / 11:54 a.m.
DENTON: KNTU-FM 88.1 / 10:58 a.m., 3:58 p.m., 11:59 p.m.
DIMMITT: KDHN-AM 1470 / 12:30 p.m.
EAGLE PASS: KINL-FM 92.7 / 3:30 p.m.
EASTLAND: KEAS-AM 1590 / 5:50 a.m., 5:50 p.m. KATX-FM 97.7 / 5:50 a.m. & 5:50 p.m.
EDNA: KGUL-FM 96.1 / 7:10 a.m.
EL CAMPO: KULP-AM 1390 / 2 p.m.
FAIRFIELD: KNES-FM 99.1 / 6:47 a.m.
FLORESVILLE: KULB-FM 89.7 / 1:30 p.m.
FORT STOCKTON: KFST-AM 860 / 12:55 p.m., KFST-FM 94.3 / 12:55 p.m.
GAINESVILLE: KGAF-AM 1580 / 10 a.m.
GRANBURY: KPIR-AM 1420 / 4:05 p.m.
GREENVILLE: KGVL-AM 1400 / 8:10 a.m.
HARLINGEN: KNBH-FM 88.9 / 4:58 p.m.; KHID-FM 88.1 / 4:58 p.m.
HASKELL: KVRP-FM 97.1 / 9:30 a.m.; KVRP-AM 1400 / 9:30 a.m.
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JUNCTION: KMBL-AM 1450 / 7:36 a.m., 12:46 p.m., 5:56 p.m., KOOK-FM 93.5 / 7:36 a.m., 12:46 p.m., 5:56 p.m.
KERRVILLE: KRNH-FM 92.3 / 5:31 a.m., 12:57 p.m., 7:35 p.m.; KMBL-AM 1450 / 5:49 a.m., 12:49 p.m., 5:49 p.m.; KERV-AM 1230 / 5:49 a.m., 12:49 p.m., 5:49 p.m.; KRVL-FM 94.3 / 5:49 a.m., 12:49 p.m., 5:49 p.m.
LAMPASAS: KCYL-AM 1450 / 7:10 a.m., KACQ-FM 101.9 / 7:10 a.m.
LAREDO: KHOY-FM 88.1 / 2 p.m.
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LUBBOCK: KJTV-AM 950 / 6:45 a.m.
MADISONVILLE: KMVL-AM 1220 / 7:45 a.m.; KMVL-FM 100.5 / 7:45 a.m.
MARBLE FALLS: KHLB-AM 1340 / 12:20 p.m., 5:20 p.m.; KHLB-FM 106.9 / 12:20 p.m., 5:20 p.m.
MARSHALL: KCUL-FM 92.3 / 6:15 a.m.
MCCALLEN: KHID-FM 88.1 / 4:58 p.m.
MESQUITE: KEOM-FM 88.5 / 5:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m. M-Th.; 5:30 a.m., 4:45 p.m. F)

MEXIA: KYCX-AM 1580 / 3:15 p.m.; KYCX-FM 104.9 / 3:15 p.m.
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PECOS: KIUN-AM 1400 / 10:30 a.m.
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SAN ANTONIO: KENS-AM 1160 / 6:25 p.m.; KSTX-FM 89.1 / 9:04 p.m.
SEGUIN: KWED-AM 1580 / 7:55 a.m.
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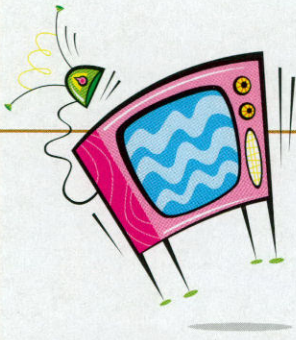


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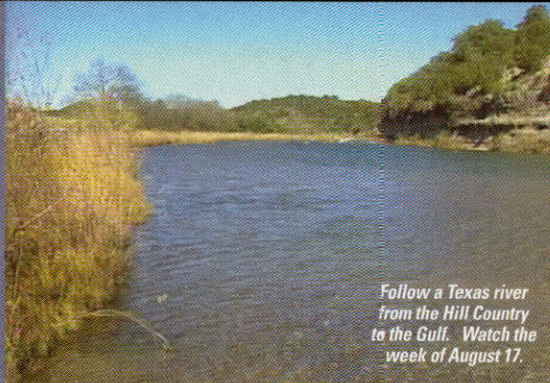
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Aug. 3 – 10:
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Aug. 10 – 17:
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Aug. 17 – 24:
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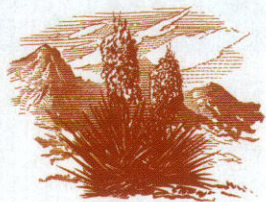
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CROCKETT: KIVY-AM 1290 / 7:45 a.m., KIVY-FM 92.7 / 7:45 a.m.

Continued on page 64

GETAWAYS

FROM BIG BEND TO THE BIG THICKET AND THE RED TO THE RIO GRANDE



BIG BEND COUNTRY

AUG.: Desert Garden Tours, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Terlingua, reservations required, call for dates, (432) 424-3327.

AUG.: Texas Camel Treks, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, (866) 6CAMELS.

AUG.: Amphitheater Programs, Davis Mountains SP, Fort Davis, every Wednesday through Saturday night, (432) 426-3337.

AUG.: Bouldering Tours, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, every Wednesday through Sunday, by prior arrangement, (915) 849-6684.

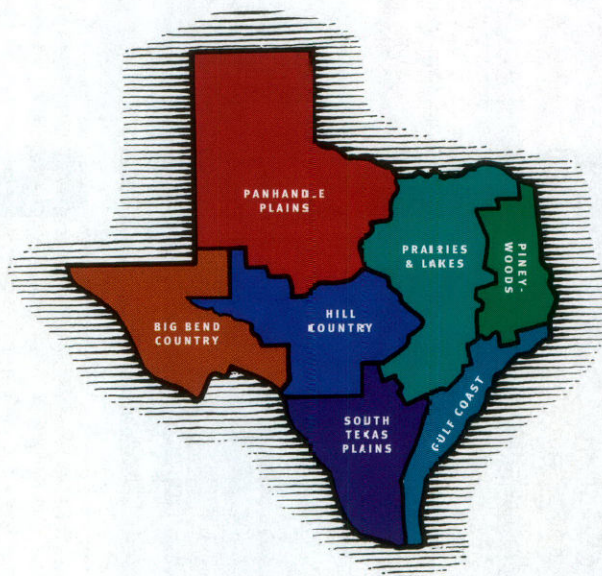
AUG.: Hiking Tours, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, every Wednesday through Sunday, by prior arrangement, (915) 849-6684.

AUG.: Pictograph Tours, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, every Wednesday through Sunday, by prior arrangement, (915) 849-6684.

AUG.: Texas Camel Treks, Monahans Sandhills SP, Monahans, call for dates, (432) 943-2092.

AUG.: Fate Bell Cave Dwelling Tour, Seminole Canyon SP & HS, Comstock, every Wednesday through Sunday, (432) 292-4464.

AUG.: White Shaman Tour, Seminole Canyon SP & HS, Comstock, every Saturday,



For more detailed information on outdoor getaways across the state, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us and click on "TPWD Events" in the center light blue area entitled "In the Parks."

(800) ROCKART.

AUG. 1-31: Fishing on the Rio Grande, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (432) 376-2216.

AUG. 1-31: Maravillas Canyon-Rio Grande Equestrian Trail, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (432) 376-2216.

AUG. 2-3, 16-17: Guided Interpretive Tours, Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, reservations required, (915) 566-6441.

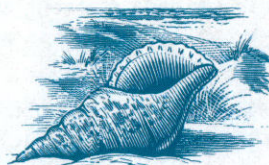
AUG. 9: Madrid Falls Tour, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, reservations required, (432) 229-3416.

AUG. 9: Stories of Spirits, Magoffin Home SHS, El Paso, (915) 533-5147.

AUG. 16, 30: Gualde Mesa Tour, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, reservations required, (432) 229-3416.

AUG. 17: Bird Identification Tours, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

AUG. 30-31: Bats in the Big Bend, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Terlingua, (432) 424-3327



GULF COAST

AUG.: Hatchery Tours, Coastal Conservation Association/American Electric Power Marine Development Center SFH, Corpus Christi, every Monday through Saturday except holidays, reservations required, (361) 939-7784.

AUG.: Aquarium and Hatchery Tours, Sea Center Texas, Lake Jackson, every Tuesday through Sunday, (979) 292-0100.

AUG.: Airboat Tours, Sea Rim SP, Sabine Pass, every Wednesday through Sunday, reservations required, (409) 971-2559.

AUG. 1: Night River Tour, Tony Houseman SP & WMA, reservations required, (409) 886-4742.

AUG. 2: Tanning Demonstration, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHS, West Columbia, (979) 345-4656.

AUG. 2, 9, 15, 16, 23, 30: Story Time, Sea Center Texas, Lake Jackson, (979) 292-0100.

AUG. 16: Sand Casting Workshop, Galveston Island SP, Galveston, (409) 737-1222.



HILL COUNTRY

AUG. 1: Range and Wildlife Seminar, Kerr WMA, Hunt, (830) 238-4483.

AUG.: Evening Bat Flight Tour, Devil's Sinkhole SNA, Rocksprings, every Wednesday through Sunday evening, (830) 683-BATS.

AUG.: Saturday Evening Interpretive Programs, Guadalupe River SP, Spring Branch, (830) 438-2656.

AUG.: Saturday Morning Interpretive Walk, Honey Creek SNA, Spring Branch, every Saturday, (830) 438-2656.

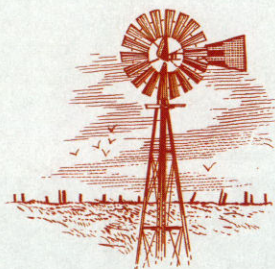
AUG.: Go Fishing with a Ranger, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, every Saturday, (512) 793-2223.

AUG.: Stumpy Hollow Nature Hike, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, every Saturday, (512) 793-2223.

AUG. 7, 14, 21, 28, 31: Basic Canoe Skills Clinic, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, reservations required, (512) 793-2223.

AUG. 7, 14, 21, 28, 31:

Devil's Waterhole Canoe Tour, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, reservations required, (512) 793-2223.
AUG. 9: Full Moon Hike, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.
AUG. 9, 17: Guided Hikes, Bright Leaf SNA, Austin, (512) 459-7269.
AUG. 16: Summit Trail Project, Enchanted Rock SNA, Fredericksburg, (325) 247-3903 Ext. 8.
AUG. 16, 30: Evening Bat Flight Tour, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, reservations required, (830) 563-2342.
AUG. 16, 30: Wild Cave Tour, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, reservations required, (830) 563-2342.
AUG. 23: Bluegrass Music in the Park, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.
AUG. 30-31: Island Assault 1944 Living History Program, Admiral Nimitz SHS-National Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg, (830) 997-4379.
AUG. 30-SEPT. 1: Third Annual Gathering of Friends, Hill Country SNA, Bandera, (210) 854-3848.



PANHANDLE PLAINS

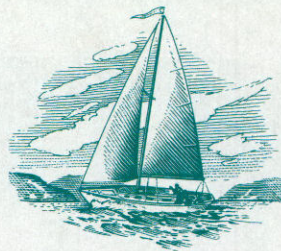
AUG. 1, 8, 15: History Hike, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.
AUG. 1-17: "Texas Legacies" Musical Drama, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 655-2181.
AUG. 1-23: Annual Summer Art Exhibition, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, (940) 839-4331.
AUG. 2: Trail Talk, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.
AUG. 2: Prehistoric Permian Track Tour, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, (325) 949-4757.
AUG. 3, 10, 17: Worship Service, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.
AUG. 5, 12: Family Nature Hike, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.
AUG. 6, 31: Canyon Critters, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.
AUG. 7, 14: River Walk, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon

(806) 488-2227.
AUG. 9: Canyon Heritage, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.
AUG. 13: Canyon Rock, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.
AUG. 13, 30: Campfire Tails, Abilene SP, Tuscola, (325) 572-3204.
AUG. 16: The Outdoor Store, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.
AUG. 23: Wildscaping, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.
AUG. 23: Sun Fun and Star Walk, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, (940) 839-4331.
AUG. 23: Bat Mania, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.
AUG. 30: Night Noises, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.



PINEYWOODS

AUG. 3, 10, 24: Walk on the Wild Side, Martin Dies, Jr, SP, Jasper, (409) 384-5231.
AUG. 9: Steam Engine Shop Tours, Texas State Railroad SP, Rusk, (800) 442-8951 or (903) 683-2561 outside Texas.
AUG. 9, 23: Guided Nature Trail Hike, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.
AUG. 15, 29: Nature Slide Program, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, reservations required, (409) 755-7322.
AUG. 16: Floating the Forks, Martin Dies, Jr, SP, Jasper, reservations required, (409) 384-5231.
AUG. 23, 30: Interpretive Programs, Tyler SP, Tyler, (903) 597-5338.
AUG. 30: Campfire Programs, Martin Dies, Jr, SP, Jasper, (409) 384-5231.
AUG. 30: Pioneer Woodworking Skills, Mission Tejas SP, Grapeland, (936) 687-2394.
AUG. 31: Mission San Francisco de los Tejas Tour, Mission Tejas SP, Grapeland, (936) 687-2394.



PRAIRIES & LAKES

AUG.: Yegua and Nails Creek Canoe Tours, Lake Somerville SP & Trailway/Birch Creek Unit, Somerville, every Thursday, reservations required, (979) 535-7763.
AUG.: Yegua and Nails Creek Canoe Tours, Lake Somerville SP & Trailway/Nails Creek Unit, Ledbetter, every Thursday, reservations required, (979) 535-7763.
AUG.: Historic and Scenic Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, available by reservation only to groups of 10 or more, (979) 968-5658.
AUG.: Kreische Brewery Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, every Saturday & Sunday weather permitting, (979) 968-5658.
AUG.: Monument Hill Tour, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, available by reservation only to groups of 10 or more, (979) 968-5658.
AUG. 2: Get to Know the Trees, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
AUG. 2: Pond Trail Hike, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
AUG. 2: Creatures of the Night, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, (903) 395-3100.
AUG. 2-3, 10, 16-17, 23-24, 30-31: Tours, Fanthorp Inn SHS, Anderson, (936) 873-2633.
AUG. 2, 31: Cowboy Campfire, Music, and Poetry, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells.
AUG. 3, 10: Kreische House Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.
AUG. 9: Our Scaly-Skinned Friends, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
AUG. 9: Top 10 Park Secrets, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
AUG. 9: Sunset Nature Hike, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek

Unit, Cooper, (903) 395-3100.
AUG. 9: Stagecoach Days, Fanthorp Inn SHS, Anderson, (936) 873-2633.
AUG. 9: Kids' Wilderness Survival, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, reservations required, (940) 328-1171.
AUG. 9-31: Catfish Harvest, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, (903) 676-BASS.
AUG. 16: Farming Like It Used to Be, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
AUG. 16: Spiders, Snakes and Other Venomous Creatures, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, (903) 395-3100.
AUG. 22: Family Night, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, (903) 676-BASS.
AUG. 23: Kids' Wilderness Survival, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, reservations required; (972) 291-5940.
AUG. 23: Silent Birds of the Night, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
AUG. 23: Bug Safari, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, (903) 395-3100.
AUG. 23: Night Sounds, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 327-8950.
AUG. 30: Campfire Sing-Along, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
AUG. 30: Penn Farm Tour, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940, (972) 291-3900.
AUG. 30: Poisonous Plants, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, (903) 395-3100.



SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

AUG. 23: Animal Signs, Government Canyon SNA, San Antonio, reservations required, (210) 688-9055.

SP	State Park
SHS	State Historical Site
SNA	State Natural Area
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
SFH	State Fish Hatchery

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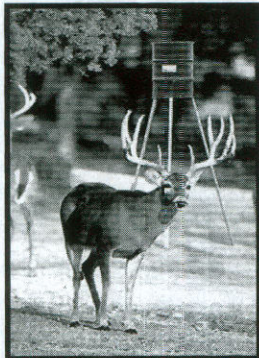
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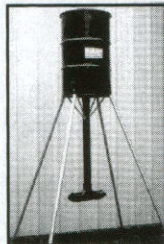
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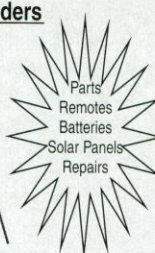
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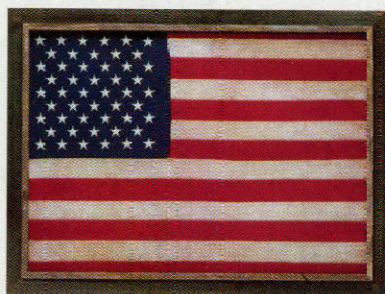


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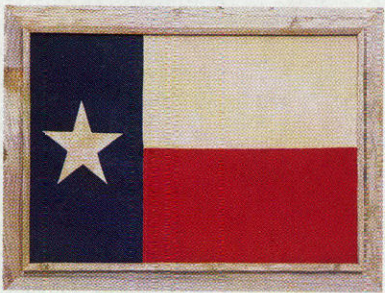


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was a graduate student at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. Lay worked for TPWD and had an office on the university campus. "Two other graduate students and I decided to do an ecological study of the Angelina-Neches Scientific Area," says McCarty. "Someone told us we should talk to Dan Lay. So we went to his office and told him what we wanted to do. He took in three goofy graduate students and in just a few hours, molded us into scientists."

Lay's interest in students and his concerns for the future of wildlife conservation prompted him to set up a scholarship for wildlife and fisheries sciences students at Texas A&M University. Carl Frentress says that one of the things that candidates for the scholarship must do is write an essay expressing the Aldo Leopold philosophy of a land ethic, in which humans see themselves as part of the natural community. Frentress also says that Lay, who made money in the stock market, wanted wildlife students to learn how to achieve financial security, so he instructed that courses in financial planning be part of the curriculum. "If you're financially secure, he believed, you're more capable of thinking independently," says Frentress. "That was very important to him."

Lay's last article was published in the *East Texas Historical Journal* a few months before his death in 2002. Entitled "Outdoors in East Texas Then and Now," it is a collection of his observations over most of the 20th century.

"Public acceptance of the new science of wildlife management was generous and almost complete," he recalled of his early years in the profession. "We were inspired to protect the natural world. Young people could gain much from camping, fishing, hunting and other activities. The intangible values were recognized."

He ends with a look toward the future, a future in which his influence will continue to be felt: "The cultural and intangible values of the natural world are more important than ever before. Scarcity contributes to appreciation. Those restricted to rocking chairs need to hear and see a hummingbird or watch a butterfly. Their grandchildren need places to sleep under the stars and listen to owls."

Frentress offers this tribute to his friend and mentor: "As a scientist, Dan Lay left his footprints in many of the wild places, past and present, in Texas. As a citizen, he was a champion of the wholeness people need from properly functioning ecosystems and balanced lives. He knew the ache society experiences when values are lost; he sought to be a factor for relief. He knew that, after all, we too are part of ecosystems." ★

PARTING SHOT

At first glance, Dallas photographer David J. Sams thought the object he spotted floating a mile southeast of the South Padre Island jetty was a water jug. On closer inspection he discovered he was looking at a masked booby, an uncommon sight considering that masked boobies live on the open ocean and come to shore only to breed and raise their young. Found predominately around the tropical islands of the Atlantic Ocean, masked boobies plunge headfirst into the ocean from as high as 90 feet in the air to catch fish and squid.





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KING OF TEXAS OUTDOORS

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