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Page 24



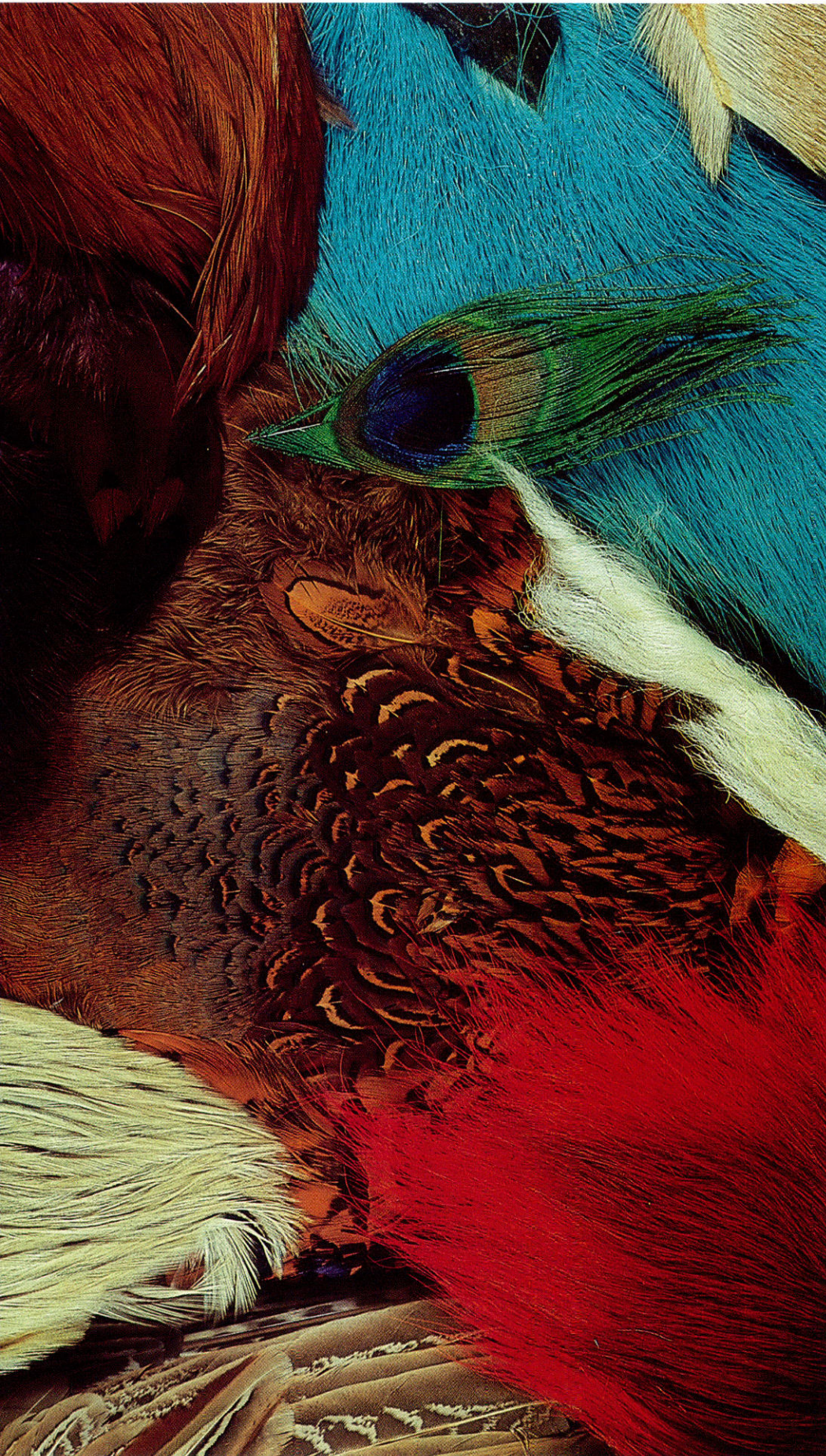
Page 14



Page 2

The Art and Science of Flytying by <i>Steve Hall</i>	2
An old art is gaining popularity among modern sportsmen.	
Remnants of a Prehistoric Sea by <i>Harvey Miller</i>	10
Playa lakes in the High Plains are some of the best places to find wildlife.	
Birders Flock to Freeport by <i>Leigh Hopper</i>	14
The Freeport Christmas Bird Count is one of the most successful counts in the nation.	
Henry Fanthorp's Inn by <i>Sue Moss</i>	18
Now a state historic site, Fanthorp Inn was a way station for travelers in the 19th century.	
Wintering Texas by <i>Mary-Love Bigony</i>	24
Snow and ice add a holiday sparkle to the Texas landscape.	
Outdoor Roundup by <i>Jim Cox</i>	32
News briefs compiled by the department's news service.	
Hidden Whitetails by <i>David Baxter</i>	34
White-tailed deer have an amazing ability to camouflage themselves.	
The Yellow Goose of Texas by <i>Grady Allen</i>	38
Marking techniques allow biologists to track snow geese.	
Gilbert Deals South Texas a Glancing Blow	42
by <i>Steve Bentsen</i> The world watched as the largest hurricane of the century headed toward South Texas last September.	
Letters	48
Covers	

Front: This white-crowned sparrow is featured on our 1988 *Texas Parks & Wildlife* Christmas card, which is sent to new subscribers who receive gift subscriptions to the magazine during the holiday season. Photo by Wyman P. Meinzer. **Inside Front and Inside Back:** Winter scenes such as this North Texas landscape can be enjoyed in a photo story beginning on page 24. Photo by Wyman P. Meinzer.



The Art

Article by Steve Hall,
Photos by Glen Mills



From an abstract set of materials, the flytier ultimately creates an artistic yet scientific imitation that can fool fish such as this German brown trout taken on a "buckskin nymph" pattern.

and Science of Flytying

Flytying is an art that in many ways can be compared to painting. Both require a great deal of dexterity to create and express ideas from real or abstract beginnings. Whether fishing streamside or exhibiting art, critics must be evoked or lured into acceptance of the creation. With artificial flies, fish are not only tough critics, they also provide a true test of flytying skills.

Both flytiers and painters hope to achieve a certain magic based on combinations of techniques, colors, shapes, textures, shadows, symmetry or exactness. These help the works come alive, the objective of each.

As a science, flytying is mostly a study of animal habits, actions, and the design and motion of an otherwise static object. Fly creations play an integral part of a greater process which rewards fly-fishers with added recreational, aesthetic, social, economic and personal benefits. Imitating insects and other critters soon gives the flytier lessons in stream entomology, fish habits, reproduction and predation.

Furthermore, it gives the fly-fisherman a sense of ownership, a chance to fool fish in their environment, under the fish's terms.

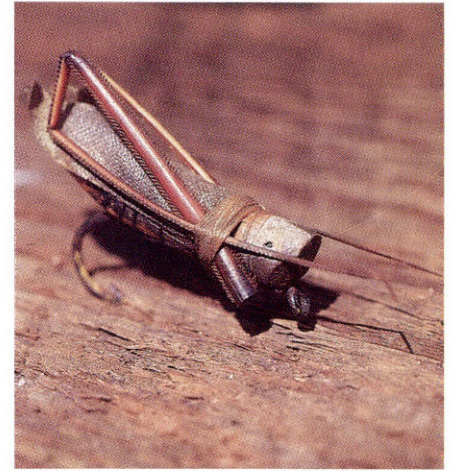
Many people see a similarity between fly-fishers and bowhunters.

Both have a purist-type attitude, attacking an outdoor challenge by limiting themselves in a fanatic sort of way. Fly-fishers seek to learn everything there is to know about their sport, because without a certain degree and combination of knowledge and skills, it becomes difficult or just plain frustrating. One errant backcast that becomes entangled in streamside vegetation or a hook in the back of the head are potent learning experiences.

Flytying can be just as difficult. Perhaps you can save money, but this may not be a large enough dividend to justify tying your own flies. According to Bill Trimble, an avid Hill Country fly-



Steve Hall



fisher and tier who frequents the Austin Angler, an independent Orvis shop, “You really have to enjoy flytying; if you don’t, you ought to purchase your flies, since buying flies saves you time and puts you into the stream quicker.”

But once the flytying fever is caught, it is tough to shake either the angling or the tying, and most flytiers speak of nothing else (to each other of course). Imagine trying to hold a conversation with a non-enthusiast at a social event, “So, uh—have you dead-drifted any nymphs lately?” “Having any luck with your peeper poppers?” It wouldn’t take long to alienate the rest of the crowd.

But enter a flytying shop and one hears all about matukas, zonkers, waterpups, wooly buggers, near-nuffs, bitch creeks, crazy charlies, humpies, parachutes, irresistibles and wulffs; the list is endless. All flytiers, too, have unique creations they call their “secret formulas” for big fish. At this point, one of them pulls from a small plastic bottle a size-22 dry fly less than half the width of a dime stating, “Here it is—the monster snatcher.”

Flytying evolved over many centuries, and its originators would marvel at the progress it has made over just the past decade. Likewise, today’s anglers treasure patterns from long ago and continue to use them successfully in modern-day waters.

However, one need not be an angler to enjoy the creations of a century ago. A tour to the American Museum of Fly-fishing in Manchester, Vermont will dazzle individuals with its historical glamour and array of colors.

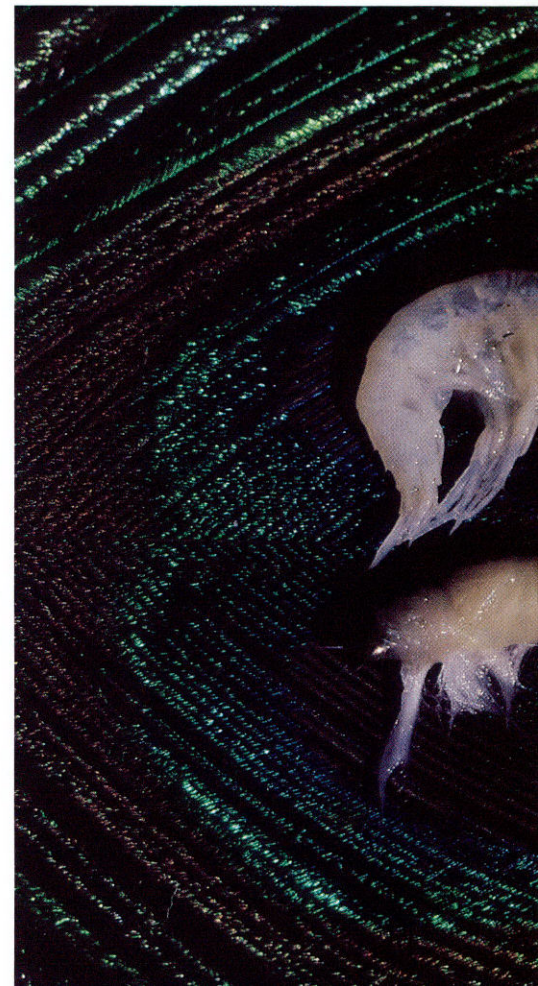
Natural color was what gave early

Flytying has evolved into a science of exactness. Tiers can imitate fish foods less than the size of a dime (above). Earlier patterns (right and upper right) continue to hold a certain magic, based on their originators’ imaginations and the materials available to them at the time.

flies their magic. The plumes of fruit-crow, blue jay, golden pheasant, peacock, junglefowl, ibis, cranes, egrets, macaws, wood ducks, bustards and turkey were highly sought treasures of early tiers.

One could also go west to Florence, Oregon and see the “Cushner Collection,” exquisitely framed and rare pieces which truly capture fly-fishing’s originals. The private museum owned by William Cushner presents works from flytiers such as Theodore Gordan, the father of American fly-fishing and master of fish foolery. Gordan, a Wall Street financier, devoted much of his later life to tying, angling and testing flies.

Others who graced early American flytying efforts include Charles and Laura Walker Orvis who founded the Orvis Company in 1856. Their daughter, Mary Orvis Marbury, authored a book entitled “Favorite Flies and Their History,” which includes accounts from early Americans such as C. S. Wells who described top flies for taking black bass in Texas. Mentioned are the scarlet ibis, professor, royal coachman (still a popular fly by today’s standards) and the white miller, a fly which worked best at night.



These purists and others such as Roy Steenrod, Joe Brooks, John Ather-ton, Lee Wulff, Dan Bailey, Charles Krom and countless others paved the way for today's flytiers. Many of their flies have been tested in virtually every major body of water within America's borders.

Flyfishing has long been associated with trout. However, today's anglers are now finding the opportunities limitless. Texas fly-fishers avidly pursue freshwater bass, sunfish and trout, as well as saltwater species such as red-fish and seatrout with patience, vigor and tenacity. The sport is growing tremendously, especially along the coast.

But before putting on the waders and grabbing the flyrod, an angler must learn which flies to use (i.e. what fish feed upon), where flies work best, and which techniques create the best actions from flies. Then comes an appreciation of how flies are tied and the qualities they demonstrate in or on the water.

FLIES AND FISHING

The artificial fly is a marvelous tool. It imitates critters or provokes reactions in fish; it can be retrieved time

and again without losing its identity; it catches countless fish and keeps on hooking; and it floats, sinks or swims.

So, knowing which flies to use means determining what fish feed on and which fly best simulates their prey. Flytying provides the means to construct replicas of these food items. Some are easily imitated, such as an ant or grub; others, such as a frog, are a little more complicated.

Fish feed on a seemingly infinite number of creatures. They can be finicky or gluttonous. Insects, worms, amphibians, crustacea, roe (fish eggs), smaller fish and even mice and snakes comprise the bulk of fish diets.

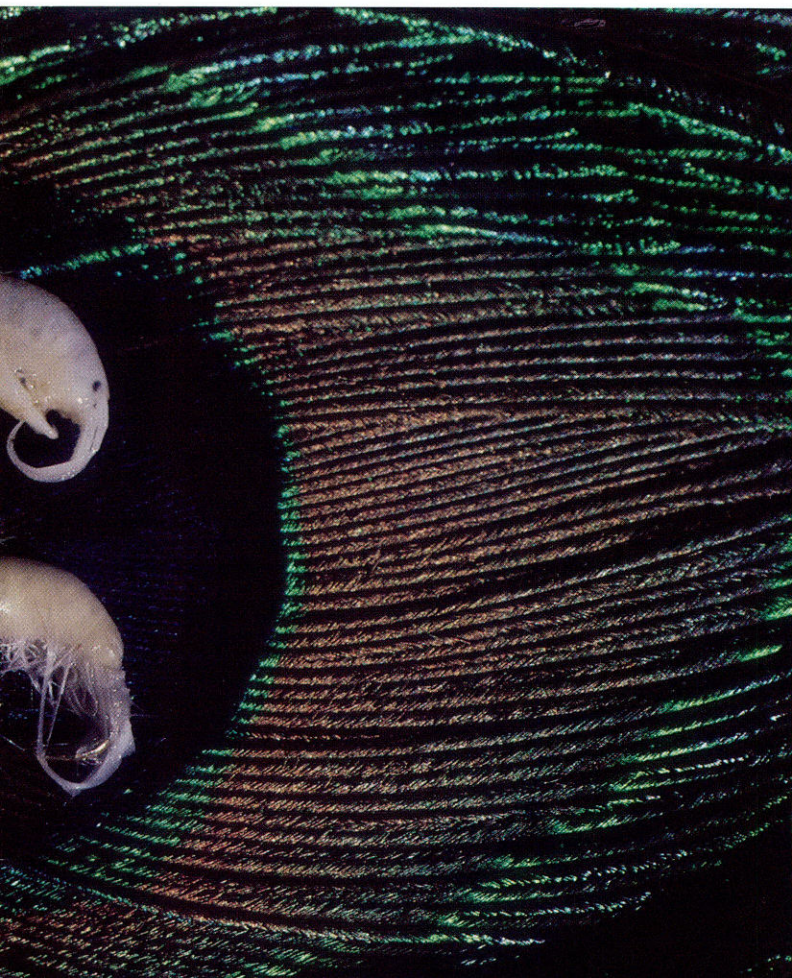
Aquatic insects such as mayflies, stoneflies, caddisflies, true flies or midges, dragonflies or damselflies and terrestrials all are imitated by flytiers. Small fish such as minnows, sculpins and fry can be represented by streamers and bucktail patterns, and terrestrials such as grasshoppers, crickets and ants also are favorite patterns. Some flytying patterns do not appear to resemble any food item known to flytiers.

The life cycle of several groups of insects will explain some of the terminology used in flytying. The nymph

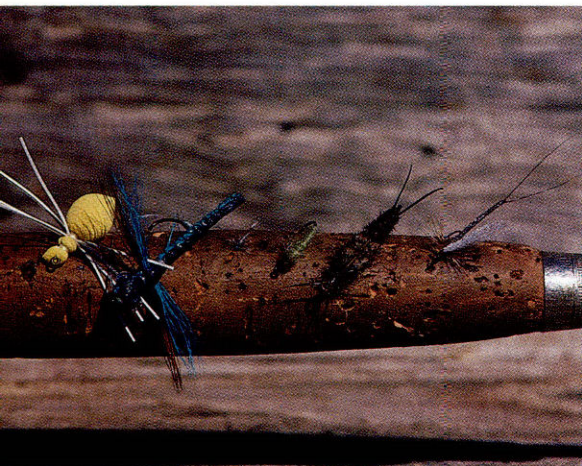
stage of mayflies, typically with three tails, is found under logs, rocks or in the mud on the bottom of lakes and streams. Stonefly nymphs, those with two tails, crawl out of the water and attach their living case to rocks or logs. Caddis larvae construct a "stick house" around themselves for camouflage and protection. Some believe caddis cases can be imitated effectively by wooly worm patterns.

Mayfly nymphs and caddis pupae swim or crawl to the surface and "emerge" to begin their adult stages. Emerger patterns are extremely effective at times, but do not seem as prevalent in fly-fishers' selections as most other stages.

The mature mayfly or "dun," with two long tails, emerges from the



The study of insects (entomology), smaller fish and other fish food items helps the flytier construct replicas such as this freshwater shrimp (left) and stonefly (top right).



Lower left: Popular sunfish, bass and trout flies include the yellow woolly worm, Bitch Creek nymph, girdle bug and Montana stone fly. Left: Various patterns that imitate a terrestrial, damselfly, midge, caddis, stone and mayfly. Upper left: The Adams pattern in several styles or stages may include the spent wing, parachute, spinner or bumpy variations. Upper right: Streamers such as the gray ghost, matuka, dace, zonker, shad and woolly bugger (clockwise from upper right) duplicate swimming prey.

depths, then further develops into a sexually mature "spinner." Female spinners return to the water's surface to deposit their eggs, and dead spinners fall to the surface in the "spent-wing" position.

Classic duns, spinners and spent-wings are popular dry fly patterns.

Where flies should be fished and which techniques create action are

best learned through experience and knowledge of a particular location. However, it is fairly easy to associate where and how to fish certain patterns if you understand what the flies imitate. Frog poppers are fished on the surface near shorelines and are particularly effective for warm-water species, especially bass. Some patterns are designed to be fished below the water's surface. For example, by simply adding lead wraps to the hook before tying the body, nymph patterns sink to the bottom quickly where fish, particularly trout, await an easy meal as the nymphs roll out of a riffle area into a calm pool.

Streamers, whether in a stream or on the coast, are fished wet. Motion also plays a major role. A fly-fisher can try various retrieves, but strategies that impart short, darting movements of natural baitfish tend to be effective. A wounded appearance may attract fish, too, especially bass and pike. Zonkers, matukas and other such streamers are favored here.

Dry flies must float on the water's surface and should be treated to make

them float or tied with buoyant materials such as hollow deer and elk hair.

The key to flyfishing is to learn about the ecology or specific environment. Fish generally try to expend a minimum amount of energy to collect the greatest amount of food. When a hatch or swarm of insects occurs above streams, ponds or lakes, fish can collect many insects while staying in one location without using too much energy racing up and down in search for food. Knowing hatches, which are published in many fly-fisher's "hot spots" brochures, will greatly enhance your fishing. But remember, duplicating the exact species and size of fly may be extremely important. Trout sometimes refuse a size 16 when a size

Dry flies such as this mayfly, midge and Adams are designed to float on the water's surface like their real counterparts.



The basic flytying tools include a top-notch tying vise, hooks of assorted sizes, thread and (from left in photo at right) a bobbin, bodkin or dubbing needle, hackle pliers, scissors and head cement, as well as an assortment of materials.



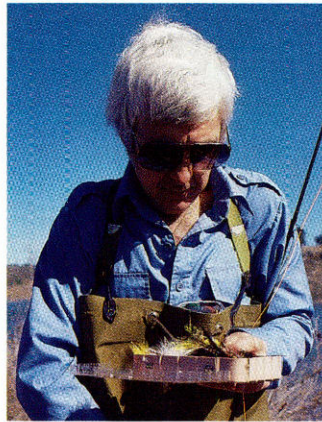
20 (smaller hook) will cause a frenzy. One final note: A strainer or fish net is a handy device while fly-fishing. It can be used quickly to determine the current conditions and common insects or hatches found in that particular environment. The avid fly-fisher will also take a travelling flytying kit on every trip in case he didn't have the particular hatch pattern in his fly vest.

FLYTYING TOOLS, MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

Larry Sunderland of the Austin Angler suggests enrolling in a flytying club or getting personalized instruction from a friend or custom shop. "Learning from a book is at times very frustrating, despite there being many wonderful books and literature on the market," he says.

A videotape is an excellent compromise, and tapes by professionals such as Gary Borger, Jack Dennis, Jimmy Nix and Gary Lafontaine are available at most Orvis shops and other outlets.

A flytier's tools are like a dentist's, just less numerous. To get started, one needs only the basics which include a vise, preferably with the capability to firmly hold hooks of various sizes, a bobbin to hold the thread, a bodkin or dubbing needle, a good quality pair of hackle pliers and scissors, and head cement. Other than these, dubbing wax, magnifying lens, hair stacker,



Author and flyfisherman Dave Whitlock (above) writes, "Flyfishermen show a greater latitude of self-expression." Modern-day tiers have demonstrated this through the use of dyes such as in rabbit and deer fur and pheasant feathers.

bobbin threader, whip finisher, material clip, tweezers, hook file, sharpener, small pliers, hemostat, toothbrush, magnet, floatant solutions and flytier's desk are valuable options.

What really makes flytying an art, however, are the materials: original naturals, substitute naturals and synthetics as Dave Whitlock, author of "Guide to Aquatic Trout Foods," classifies them. He further divides flies as being suggestive, impressionistic, realistic and exact, depending on usage of materials and techniques.

Although fur and feathers continue to dominate flytiers' kits, today's tiers also are using synthetics and dyes,

which serve a wide variety of purposes. In many instances, they have taken over the markets. The reasons are simple. Synthetics are relatively easy to acquire and cheap, come in a variety of colors and shapes, duplicate many textures and provide flies with characteristics such as buoyancy, shine and luminescence.

Dyes are used to make color variations in such items as hackle, from domestic chicken saddles or necks, rabbit fur, duck and pheasant feathers. Additionally, paints are used mainly for wooden, cork and foam poppers and other bass bugs.

Synthetics and dyes have replaced



plumes and feathers, since it now is illegal to shoot, sale or transport most bird species. Salmon flies are a good example of flies that once were made from exotic or illegally sold feathers.

But some domestic feathers, which can be legally sold, include hackle which is, perhaps, the single most important material in flytying besides the different threads. It can be used as wings, tails, legs or fins in all categories of flies.

Chenille, yarns, floss, monofilament, metallics such as tinsel, non-metallics such as "flashbou," elastic bands, corks and legal furs and feathers in different colors and qualities will reward you with many flies.

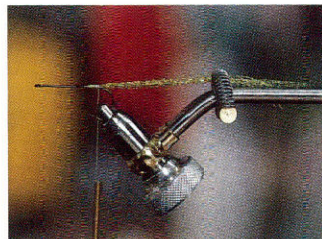
Hooks are the most critical element of a fly. A flytier needs plenty of sizes, shapes and styles in order to successfully imitate a variety of food items. Hooks are comprised of points, barbs, bend, shanks and eyes. They must be extremely sharp to penetrate and hold fighting fish. Many fly-fishers and tiers file their barbs. According to Jim Freres, flytying instructor at the Austin Angler, "I prefer the barbless hooks because of easier penetration and extraction from a fish's mouth. With a barb, there may be more damage when trying to release a fish."

Tying flies or nymphs usually begins with the tail secured over the bend, away and outward from the rear por-

tion of the shank. Moving toward the front or eye, most of the shank is wrapped with the body of the fly, many times including abdomen, thorax, casing or legs. Then, a section remains near the eye which is reserved for the head where the final knots are tied. Dry flies may typically be tied in a different sequence, starting with the wings, for example.

Three basic knots needed to tie flies are the jam, half-hitch and the whip finish. The jam starts the thread on a hook; the half-hitch secures different tying steps; and the whip finish cinches the head of the fly. Head cement reinforces key spots including the head.

A deer hair frog popper in 7 easy steps



A typical deer-hair frog "popper" starts with a jam knot and non-metallic tinsel designed to impart motion in the frog's kicking legs.



Two legs made of dyed grizzly hackle are affixed over the bend of hook on each side of the tinsel.



Wound hackle from the same grizzly saddle or neck is used for the frog's body and front legs.

Dyed chicken saddles and necks (backle), paints, metallics and non-metallics (far left) are used to assemble saltwater flies (below left) used for red drum, spotted seatrout, tarpon and bonefish. A flytier can use pliers to bend or pinch the barb (top left) for easy extraction from the fish's mouth in catch-and-release fishing.

To correct these problems, or to avoid them altogether, beginners should follow Larry's advice and hook up with someone who can teach them how to tie. "I started fly-fishing at 13," he said, "and if I had someone to guide me, I would have learned in one or two years what has taken me most of my life to learn."

Jim Freres, who teaches beginning and advanced flytying classes for the Austin Angler says, "Flytying instruction can help the beginner avoid some of the frustrations that could otherwise become stumbling blocks. Many times, we compare a beginner's first fly to a commercially tied replica. Often, the student's fly is better because of the individualized attention given to each wrap of thread or feather. I merely assist them with many new or difficult techniques."

Jim is one of several flytying instructors across the state. However, many flytying clubs also will assist newcomers. (See sidebar.)

Once the skills are learned and a certain knowledge is gained, flytiers are on their way to an adventure which can only be summarized as a "fever to fool fish with fur and feathers." **

FLYFISHING/FLYTYING CLUBS

Texas Flyfishers
P.O. Box 27141
Houston, Texas 77227-7141

Alamo Flyfishers
P.O. Box 936
San Antonio, Texas 78294-0936

Ft. Worth Flyfishers
P.O. Box 1133
Ft. Worth, Texas 76101

Dallas Flyfishers
5321 Farquhar
Dallas, Texas 75209

Golden Spread Flyfishers
Box 9273
Amarillo, Texas 79105

INDEPENDENT ORVIS DEALERS

Austin Angler
312 1/2 Congress Ave.
Austin, Texas 78701

The Tackle Box
Outfitters
4001 Broadway
San Antonio, Texas 78209

INDEPENDENT GUIDES

Sam Carpenter
HCR 652
Rockport, Texas 78382

Wade Dunkin
Shallow Water Guide Service
P.O. Box 2088
South Padre Island, Texas 78597



Jim Freres (center) teaches beginning and advanced flytying classes at the Austin Angler. Beginners receive tips that will save them years of trial and error.



White deer fur is spun under the shank. Loosely wrapping thread around the clump creates an outward effect



Dyed yellow and olive deer fur layers are spun and tied in a similar fashion.



The thread is brought forward toward the eye and tied off in a "whip finish."



The fly is trimmed to form a floating body and head. Eyeballs are attached with bead cement or waterproof bond.

PLAYAS Remnants

by Harvey Miller

If you hunt in the High Plains of Texas, chances are you will hunt in or near playas. Whatever game you are seeking, it is likely to be found in or along the edge of playas. Just ask your guide, landowner host or High Plains hunting companions; they will tell you that playas are good places to find wildlife.

"What's a playa?" you might ask. If you hunt elsewhere in Texas or don't hunt at all, you probably haven't heard much about playas as wildlife habitats. Even some people who routinely hunt them are unaware of the importance of playas to game during the closed seasons and to nongame wildlife throughout the year.

The High Plains were formed of outwash that followed the uplift of the

Rocky Mountains. This outwash was so massive that it buried whole mountain ranges. It was deposited as the bed of an inland sea, which shaped it into the nearly flat landscape seen today. That rocky, gravely outwash is now the formation which holds the world-famous Ogallala aquifer.

Today, the High Plains of Texas are dominated by a semiarid, continental climate with annual precipitation averaging 12 to 24 inches, annual evaporation averaging 80 to 110 inches and erratic weather, including temperatures ranging annually from below zero to over 100 degrees F.

Playas are depressions that dot the landscape of the High Plains. Not everyone agrees as to what caused the depressions, but the speculations



Glen Mills

Shallow depressions called playas dot the landscape of the High Plains in the Texas Panhandle. Playas and the surrounding croplands accommodate hundreds of thousands of ducks every winter.

Wyman P. Meinzer

of a Prehistoric Sea



range from meteor impacts to buffalo wallows. The generally circular shape of the playas gives some support to slumping caused by collapse of underground formations such as salt domes. Whatever the cause, it is fairly certain that the windblown silt from the depressions has helped to maintain them.

Over the ages, unique soils have developed in the depressions. These soils have a lot of clay in them, which holds water and clearly marks playas forever, even though they may be filled with garbage or buried under a concrete parking lot.

Dr. Fred Guthery of Texas Tech and others, using a count of the areas of those unique soils on soil survey maps, found more than 19,300 playas covering 340,000 acres in the High Plains of Texas. The average playa is almost 18 acres.

Land use has played a major role in both the kind and abundance of wildlife in the High Plains. Early explorers who ventured into the area found seemingly endless grasslands and large herds of bison. Stockmen moved in as the last Indians were being subdued and the last bison being slaughtered. Farmers arrived soon thereafter and, by the early 1900s, much of the fertile High Plains had been plowed and were raising crops. Today, the High Plains are ranked among the most intensively used agricultural areas in the world, and nearly half of the cropland planted in 1985 (4.6 million acres) was irrigated primarily by pumping from the Ogallala aquifer.

Since playas are lined with nearly water-tight soils, they naturally catch rainfall and runoff water. If there is

enough water, playas become lakes until that water is lost to evaporation. Much of the rainfall in the High Plains is from thunderstorms, which often are very intense. Therefore, playas can become brimming lakes overnight. Nearby playas may remain dry, reflecting the spotty nature of thunderstorms.

Unpredictable flooding makes it risky to cultivate playas. However, not everyone is discouraged and it is not uncommon to find crops standing in playa lakes. More frequently, farmers have taken advantage of this flooding by excavating sumps in their playas so that any water caught in them can be pumped out for irrigation.

As a result of highly variable water supplies, playas are dynamic and usually provide a variety of habitats throughout the High Plains. Many will be overgrown with smartweeds, curly dock and fireweeds. Some will be lakes and of those, some will have been flooded during the growing season and dry up afterwards, leaving a mudflat with only a fringe of cover. A few will be all the above.

Playa lakes, because they usually are shallow and are not wet year after year, tend to have abundant foods and are very attractive to upland birds such as pheasant and waterfowl. Indeed, playas and the surrounding croplands accommodate hundreds of thousands of ducks and tens of thousands of geese nearly every winter. Playas that

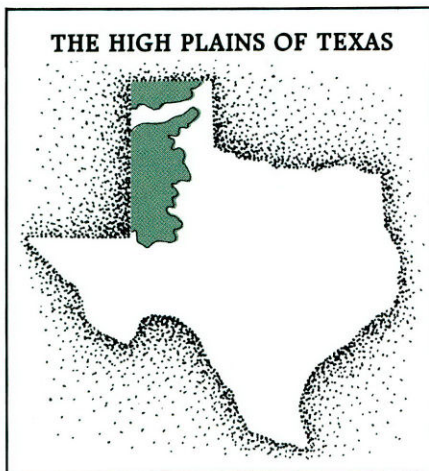


Bill Reaves

have some emergent aquatic plants generally are excellent for hunting ducks and geese.

Nearly all playas, except those completely cultivated, have enough weeds to attract resident game and provide excellent hunting. Those that are dry or nearly so provide food, shelter, and nesting sites for both game and non-game wildlife.

There are no accurate measures of the importance of playas to wildlife. Perhaps the best appreciation of these dynamic habitats is in contemplating the question, "What would the High Plains be without playas?" **



James F. Bergan

Playas can be modified for use in an irrigation system (above).



Glen Mills

A variety of ducks and geese are attracted to the playas and the abundant food supply found there. Upland birds such as pheasants (far left) use the perimeters of the playas or the dry playa basins. Not only are playas good hunting spots, they provide habitat for game and nongame species throughout the year.





Christmas Count



No wonder bird-watchers have a reputation for being eccentric. With binoculars slung about their necks, they plod across muddy pastures, thrash through brambles and swat mosquitoes, just to glimpse a few twittering, chirping or screeching critters.

But birders participating in the Freeport Christmas Bird Count in Brazoria County usually find it worth their while to endure the elements. Last year, this spot on the Texas Gulf Coast, along with Orange County, California, boasted the greatest variety of birds in the United States.

The 32-year-old Freeport Christmas Bird Count, supervised by the National Audubon Society and organized by local volunteers, is one of the most successful counts in the nation. Eight times in the past 11 years, the National

Audubon Society's *American Birds* magazine has ranked Freeport either number one or tied for first place.

Usually, the counters at Freeport spot more than 200 different species during the 24-hour counting period—everything from hummingbirds to eagles, pigeons to plovers. Until the 1986 count, a new species was added to the list every year. In the Freeport count's history, 96 species have appeared year after year and a total of 320 different species have been tallied.

The Freeport Christmas Bird Count, one of Texas' 80 Christmas counts, takes place in a circle with a 7.5-mile radius, an area of roughly 177 square miles, divided by roads and rivers into eight major sections. It includes parts of Freeport, Lake Jackson, Clute, Jones Creek, Surfside and Quintana.

The Freeport count officially begins

at 12:01 a.m. on a designated day in December and ends at midnight. This year's count will be on December 18. Most counting takes place in daylight hours between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. when birds can be identified by their colors.

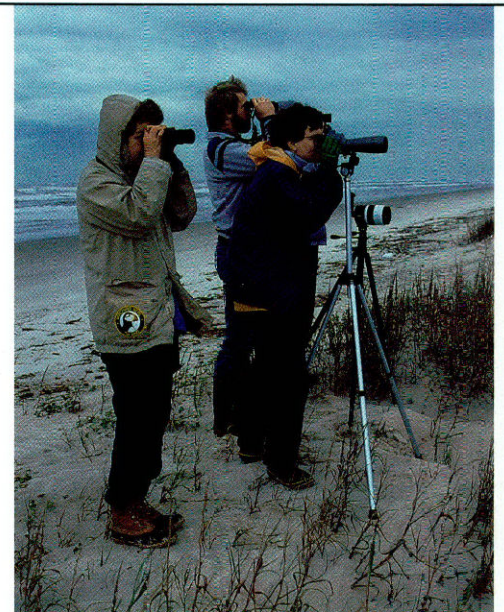
Methods for snagging sightings range from tedious to ingenious. Tom Collins of Lake Jackson usually volunteers to track down the count's token screech owl. This means going out before dawn and playing a screech owl recording until the real bird responds.

After daybreak, birders use screech owl recordings or make their own pish-pish-pish sound to attract flocks of small birds. Titmice, chickadees, sparrows and an occasional odd bird pop into sight out of curiosity or to mob the intruder. The screech owl's screech attracts spectators like a cry of "Fight!" on a school playground.



Birders Flock to Freeport

Article by Leigh Hopper,
Photos by Leroy Williamson





From left: Roadrunners show up in almost every part of the state, as does the cardinal. A white pelican in the company of double-crested cormorants is a common winter sight on the Texas coast. The reddish egret, a threatened species, is one of the less common species.

To flush out rails—a type of swamp-bird that likes to hide in saltgrass—birders pull a chain along the ground between two swamp buggies.

Imaginative techniques aside, sometimes the best birdwatching tool is patience. Faye Humphrey of Lake Jackson, a hummingbird watcher, finds her role rather dull: “You just have to sit and wait and wait and wait.”

Several factors have contributed to the Freeport count’s success over the years, namely the variety of habitats found within the count circle: ocean, beach, jetty, freshwater and salt-water marshes and bayous, woodlands, coastal prairies, residential areas, mudflats, freshwater ponds and lakes. Moderate weather also helps. Mosquitoes thrive under such conditions, encouraging some birds that usually go farther south to linger—at

least through the count date.

“The key is mosquitoes,” says Fred Collins, president of the Houston Audubon Society and a regular participant in the Freeport Christmas Bird Count. “If you have so many mosquitoes you can hardly get out of your car, you’ll have a good count.”

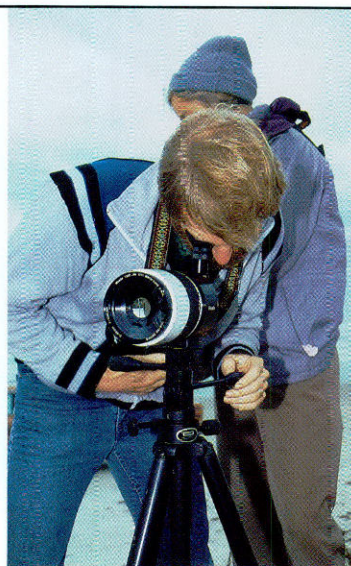
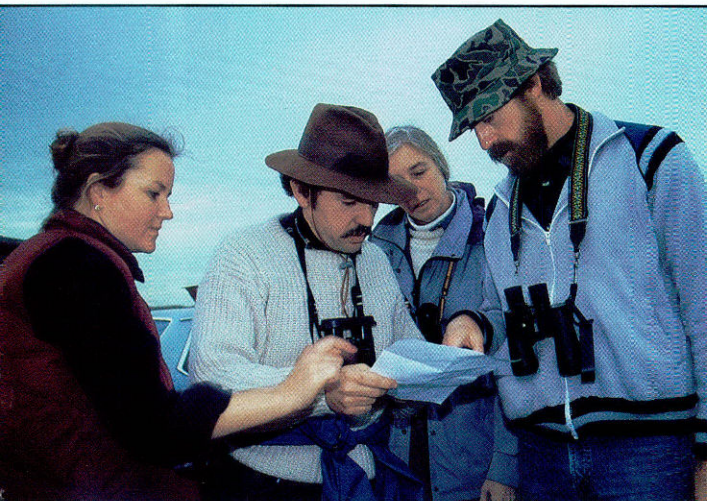
In addition, everyone crosses their fingers for sunshine because weather can make or break a count, regardless of the bug supply. If it rains, the count goes on, but most birds lay low.

This year marks the 89th anniversary of the National Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Count, and the 32nd anniversary of Freeport’s Christmas Bird Count. The original count was the inspiration of Frank Chapman of Massachusetts, an Audubon Society staff member and

editor of the defunct *Bird Lore* magazine. He offered the idea as an alternative to the popular holiday sport of blasting every bird in sight with a gun.

Chapman’s count took place on Christmas Day, 1900, in 25 locations, mostly around major northeastern cities. The idea caught on and ever since then, bird counts have been held at Christmas, partly out of tradition and partly because an area’s bird population is stable in the winter. In fall and spring, many birds are on their way someplace else. Bird populations are stable in the summertime also, but most birders want to avoid hot weather and bugs.

The National Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Counts now number approximately 1,550, and take place in the United States, Canada, the West Indies, and South and Middle America



Birders who travel to Freeport for the Christmas Bird Count usually find it worth their while to endure the elements. Participants spend long hours scanning the sky and checking their notes. Although most counting takes place during daylight hours, the count officially begins at 12:01 a.m. and ends at midnight.



during the two-week period between December 18 and January 4. Results from the counts are published in the National Audubon Society's ornithological journal, *American Birds*.

The Freeport Christmas Count was initiated by a Houston teenager fascinated by birds. Sixteen-year-old Victor Emanuel, an avid birdwatcher by the time he was eight years old, learned about Christmas counts through his friend, neighbor and mentor, the late Armand Yramategui (namesake for the Armand Bayou Nature Center), a leading Texas naturalist and conservationist active in Houston's Outdoor Nature Club. It was Yramategui who pointed out Freeport to Emanuel as an ideal site.

A handful of birders helped Emanuel on that first Christmas count in 1957 and as word spread of the high

number of birds, the count began drawing birdwatchers from all over the Houston area. Eventually, Emanuel moved to Austin, never missing a count, and brought new recruits from there. While the climate attracted birds, it was the people tallying up fowl that made the count a success. For the past five years, the count has averaged close to 150 participants.

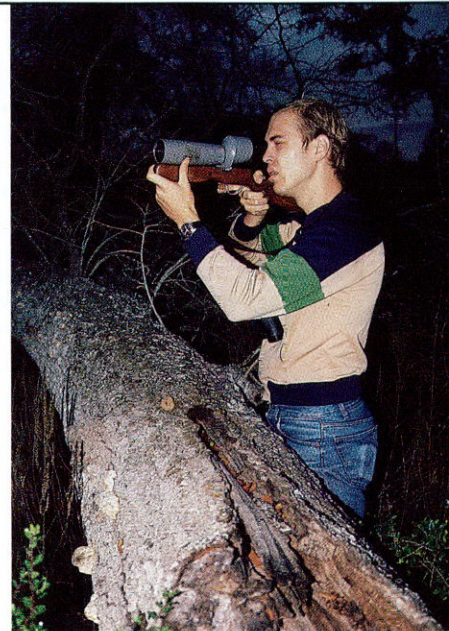
In 1976, Tom and Sherry Collins of Lake Jackson started a local faction of amateur ornithologists, the Brazosport Birders, giving the count an important core of interested people who help with count preparations.

Long before the count date, local birders begin scouting out hot spots. Permission to enter certain properties and keys to unlock gates are obtained. A week before the

count, Sherry Collins checks on about 50 hummingbird feeders scattered throughout the count area.

It's hard to say what inspires someone into birdwatching in the first place. Maybe it's simply an opportunity to wear rubber boots and tromp around outdoors with a sense of purpose. Greg Lasley of Austin, a South Texas regional editor for *American Birds*, thinks people enjoy combining a social event with the gathering of scientific data.

And it's useful data indeed. The number and variety of birds in an area are a good barometer of weather, feeding conditions, and the effect of land development on wildlife. For example, for many years Cocoa, Florida was one of the Freeport Count's main competitors, but new construction drove many birds out of the area. In





Counters at Freeport usually spot more than 200 different species during the 24-hour counting period. From left: Eastern meadowlark, turkey vultures, American oystercatcher, black skimmer, great blue heron and red-winged blackbirds.

another example, a hard freeze that hit Freeport in 1983 took its toll on the hummingbird population, and hummers have not returned in as great of numbers since.

Lasley also recalls that for a time, brown pelicans disappeared from the Freeport count area because of the presence of DDT. The pesticide softened pelican eggs, causing them to burst before reaching maturity. Once DDT was banned, the pelicans gradually returned.

Witnessing changes like these, people feel they're making a significant scientific contribution, Lasley says. And they are. With more than 38,000 participants, the National Audubon Society's Christmas Count may be the largest volunteer science project in the world.

After the day-long Freeport Count, birders assemble in the Dow Chemical

Company cafeteria to warm up, dry off and tally birds. They exchange tales of the day's misadventures but no one reveals their best sightings—or "zingers," as Lasley calls them—until the official countdown.

A compiler runs through a list of birds seen in the area in prior counts and birders answer ye or nay. A panel of judges listens closely to descriptions of unusual birds, questioning sighters about why they think it's this bird and not another, who else saw the bird, what the bird was doing and what kind of binoculars were used. If one distinguishing feature is missing from the description, positive identification of the bird may be impossible.

Judges must also be on the lookout for cases of wishful thinking, Fred Col-

lins says. People get excited about contributing something to the count and end up confusing what they saw in a book with what was perched in the tree.

After everyone is duly impressed with each other's western tanagers and parasitic jaegers, birders gather their rain gear and rubber boots and head for a good night's sleep, the lucky ones carrying with them the memory of a "zinger."

The 1987 total reached 215 different species. Results of the count were scheduled to be published in the late fall issue of *American Birds*.

Plans for the 1988 Freeport Christmas Bird Count are now underway, and the more volunteers the merrier. Prospective counters may contact Tom and Sherry Collins at 409-297-3954 for more information. **

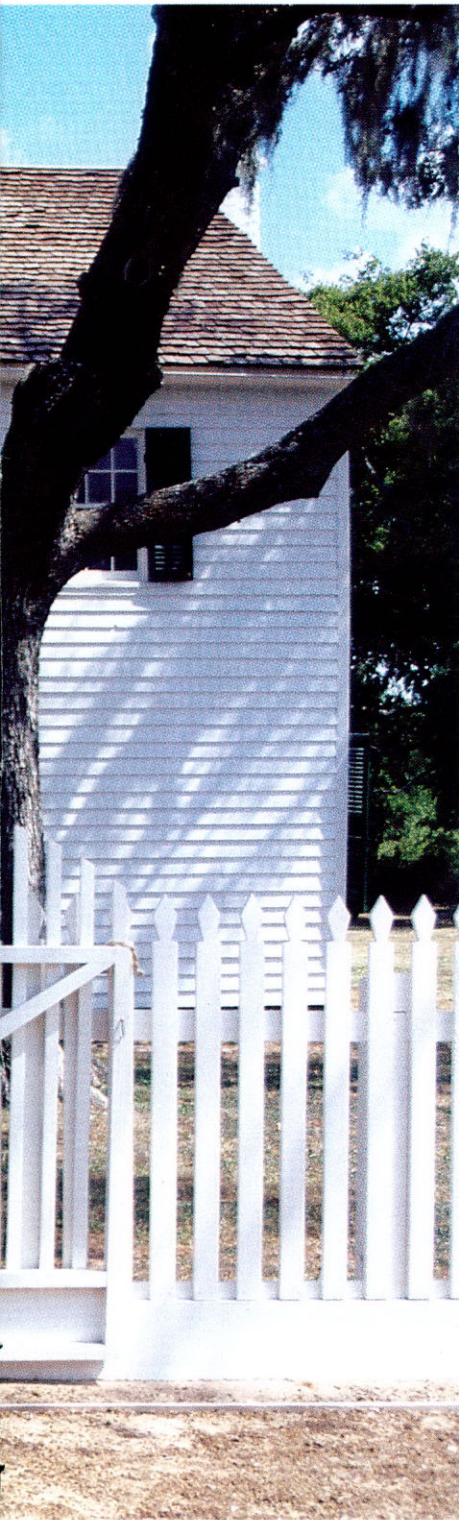


Binoculars are indispensable, of course, and a field guide is a good thing to have along. Some participants play recordings to attract flocks of small birds. Imaginative techniques aside, sometimes the best birdwatching tool is patience.

Henry Fanthorp's Inn



by Sue Moss



Leroy Williamson

Early visitors to Texas were seldom complimentary of transportation or accommodations in the state. Roads were primitive, obstacles frequent and conditions unpredictable. Travelers took their ease where they could in the very earliest days of the Republic, and most found themselves in the cramped log houses of early settlers.

By the eve of the Civil War, however, most towns in Texas had one or more inns or taverns that took paying guests on a regular basis, and for the most part, accommodations had improved. The Fanthorp Inn in present-day Anderson started out as one of those hospitable homes that were open to early travelers. Unlike most, however, it grew to be a large, well-known inn.

EARLY YEARS AT FANTHORP'S

Henry Fanthorp had arrived in Texas from Great Britain by 1832, approximately 40 years old and twice a widower. According to generally accepted Grimes County lore, he built a corncrib soon after acquiring a quarter-league from Francis Holland. He began dealing in corn—buying cheap in the summer and selling dear in the late winter when corn stores were scarce. He used the crib for what shelter he needed and stored corn in the rest.

By 1834, however, Fanthorp had built a more conventional double-pen log home and brought his new bride to it. Henry Fanthorp and Rachel V. Kennard were married on February 16, 1834. Rachel Kennard was the daughter of Anthony D. Kennard, who had come to Texas in 1832 and settled in what is now Grimes County. Rachel was 20 years old when they married; Henry Fanthorp was 43. The Fanthorps had three children: John Henry, born in 1840; Sarah Elizabeth, born in 1842 and Mary Ann, born in 1844.

The Fanthorps' house was on a well-

used road and became a natural stopping place for travelers. During the fateful days of March 1836, Anson Jones, who later would be the last president of the Republic, passed the night of March 7 there; William P. Zuber, en route to Washington with William Kennard (Rachel's brother) to join the volunteers, stayed the night of March 8. Fanthorp himself enlisted in the new Republic's army in March 1836, although where or how he served is unknown. He supplied "two Beaves delivered to the Volunteers on their March to Head Quarters of the Texas Army" on August 13, 1836, at Good Spring Prairie, and he lent the fledgling government \$700.

The years immediately following the revolution were busy ones for Henry Fanthorp. Between 1837 and 1840, he set up the enterprise at "Fanthorp's," as the inn became known, that lasted until his death in 1867. Entries in a credit ledger of the period indicate that Fanthorp's was a stopping place for many travelers. Some stayed overnight, others took a meal, and still others boarded and lodged there on a regular basis. In 1837 and 1838, Fanthorp's charged \$2.00 to accommodate one man with one horse for one night and two meals. These fees were double the more usual rates of \$1.00 to \$1.25 at other Texas stopping places. As was common for the time, Fanthorp advanced considerable credit to some of his patrons. He rendered a bill for a Mr. Call from February 23, 1839, to July 29, 1839, for 248 meals at a total cost of \$93.00.

The fare Fanthorp's offered were staples of every Texan's diet: coffee, pork, tough beef, sweet potatoes and corn bread. Frequent purchases of flour (most likely wheat), sugar, allspice and ginger and occasional purchases of apples and raisins show that there may have been more variety at Fanthorp's than in most places on the Texas frontier.

HEYDAY

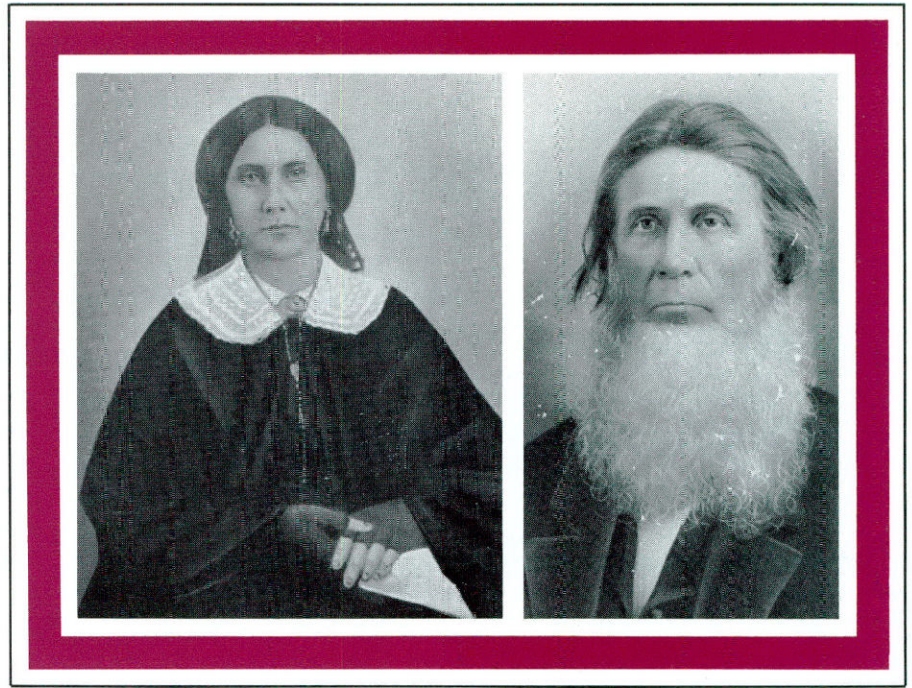
The Ninth Texas Congress convened in Washington-on-the-Brazos on June 16, 1845, to consider the United States' annexation proposal. Kenneth Ander-

Restored to its mid-19th century appearance, Fanthorp Inn was opened in November, 1987.

son, vice-president of the Republic and a prominent lawyer-orator from San Augustine, left the Congress because of illness before it had completed its business. His condition worsened on the trip and he died at Fanthorp's on July 3, 1845. Anderson was buried in the Fanthorp family cemetery on July 4 with full Masonic honors.

During the decade and a half before the Civil War, the new Grimes County seat, named Anderson in honor of the late vice president, developed into a thriving town incorporating the older settlements around Fanthorp's. During Anderson's heyday, Fanthorp's Hotel, as it was now styled, enjoyed the boom, catering to travelers and local customers alike. In the mid-1850s, several stage lines ran through Anderson. From Anderson a passenger could go to Houston, Huntsville, Washington-on-the-Brazos, Springfield or Crockett or eventually to San Antonio, Corpus Christi or Stinson's Ferry on the Neches.

Fanthorp's, beginning September 26, 1848, was a stop on Houston & Brooks stage line from Washington to Huntsville. Between 1851 and 1859, Fanthorp was also an agent for the United States Mail Coach Line running twice a week from Houston to Austin.



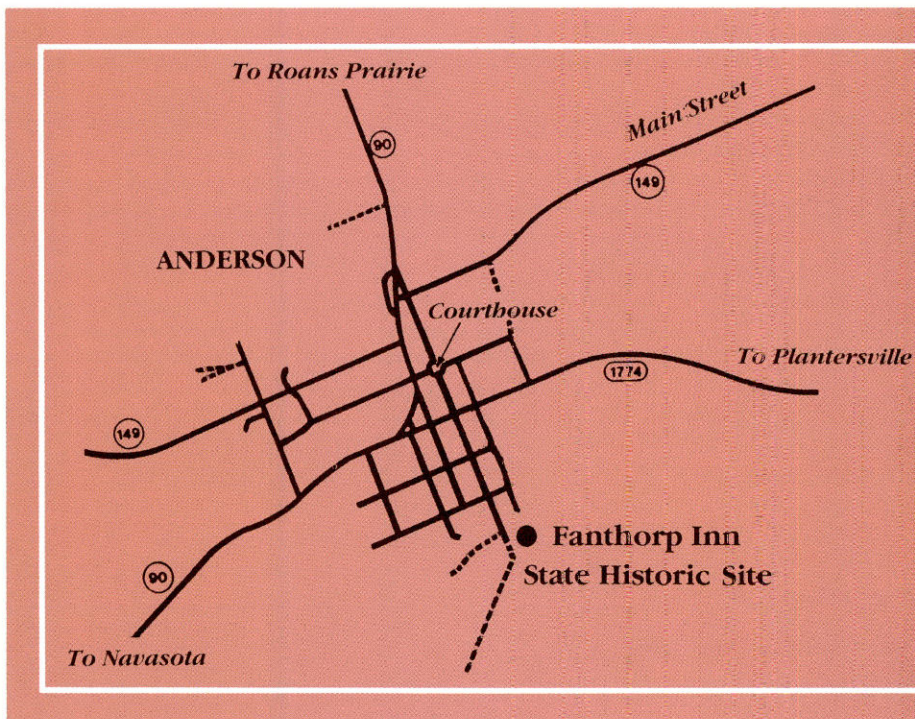
Fanthorp family photograph collection

Rachel and Henry Fanthorp married in 1834, and their hospitable home grew into the popular Fanthorp Hotel.

Through fare was \$15 per person. Leaving Houston at 4:00 a.m. each Wednesday and Saturday, the coach arrived at Austin on Monday and Friday at 9:00 p.m. Another stage line owned by G. W. Grant probably stopped at Fanthorp's Hotel in 1859. This one ran from Anderson to Waxahachie via Kellum's Springs, Madisonville, Leona,

Centerville, Fairfield, Flowerdale and Corsicana, leaving Anderson Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 5:00 a.m. A special coach made the trip daily from Anderson to a nearby popular resort, Kellum's Springs, during "the season."

Fanthorp's accounts during the period enumerated passengers, destinations, fares and collections. One inter-



FANTHORP INN STATE HISTORIC SITE

Location: South end of Main Street in Anderson, county seat of Grimes County.

Days and hours of operation: Open Wednesday through Sunday. Closed Monday and Tuesday. Guided tours conducted from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The tour presents the inn as it appeared in the 1850s, complete with authentic furnishings. Fanthorp's bedroom, the dog-trot, parlor, dining wing and travelers' rooms are included on the tour. Tour guides explain the history of the structure and point out the cemetery and stables, which visitors may explore on their own. Picnic tables are available.

Fees: \$1 for adults, 50 cents for children.

esting, although undated, document listed fares to various places. From Anderson to close-by Navasota, the charge was \$1.25; to Huntsville, \$3.75; to Crockett, \$9.00; to Rusk, \$14.00 and to Marshall, \$24.00. Fanthorp changed horses, provided board and lodging to stage drivers, collected fares and accommodated passengers for meals and overnight. Some stage lines made overnight stops, but many traveled through the night.

Famous Texas names, including Anson Jones, Sam Houston and Henderson K. Yoakum, appear in the register, and local lore tells of more. Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis and U. S. Grant are reported to have stayed here. Zachary Taylor, marching to Mexico in 1846, is said to have camped near Fanthorp's Hotel. He and his officers were treated to an elegant formal dinner in the inn, while his troops were fed under the trees outside. Another illustrious visitor was the Honorable Amelia M. Murray, Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria. Although her book on her travels, "Letters from the United States, Cuba and Canada" (New York, 1856), does not mention stopping in Anderson, a favorite Fanthorp family tradition tells of her greeting Henry Fanthorp enthusiastically as a fellow countryman.

Most visitors at the inn, however, were not famous. In the summer of 1850, when the U. S. Census was taken, the lodgers who considered the inn their home were blacksmith J. C. Dickey; Dr. E. W. Belding; three carpenters, George Wistern, John W. Gray and C. C. Lyton; J. L. Dickson, Morris Levy and Isaac Coleman, merchants; and two stonemasons, Anthony Hopper and J. M. Warren. These men were from many places—northern and southern U. S., Scotland, Poland and Ireland.

Fanthorp's charges in the 1850s were less than in the 1830s, and

The dormitory room is the largest of six refurbished sleeping rooms. Typical of travelers' rooms in 1850s Texas, the plain furnishings include three double beds with cotton mattresses, a tavern table, hidebottom chairs and the ubiquitous spit box. Luxuries like stoves, chamber pots, and wash basins were not provided.

were about standard for the times. During 1847, he charged \$1.00 per day for board and lodging. In 1848 the price was the same; supper only was 25 cents, and a full month's board \$8.33 1/4.

There were other boardinghouses and hotels in Anderson during the 1850s. Fanthorp's, however, was preferred by many for its food, although the fare had changed little since the Republic period. Fanthorp bought raisins, whiskey, molasses, brandy, flour, peppers, port wine, chickens, beef, venison, turkeys, rice, butter, potatoes, tea, mustard, salt, coffee, cheese, sugar and mackerel, as well as candles and soap for his household and probably for his patrons, as well.

"The living at the Fanthorp hotel is entirely different from what I have been used to," New England Merchant

A. S. Beardsley wrote to his family in mid-December, and he went on to describe the food:

"We have in the morning coffee strong enough to bear up an iron wedge and Fresh Pork, Fresh Beef, Roasted & Boiled & for Dinner, we have the same & for Supper, the same. Sometimes we had in addition a little Chicken, Turkey . . . a few times a hard looking king of Apple Pie & sweet Potatoe Pie. I wish I could describe them to you but it is impossible. For Bread, we have warm biscuits & Corn Bread. We have had a few times light Bread. It is a great luxury. Butter we have had none on the table for the last week but that is of no consequence for when we did have it, it was so poor I could not eat it."

Although Beardsley had rued the lack of milk and butter in December, it



Leroy Williamson

was on the table by February, and the coffee was palatable to him with milk in it. Negro slaves did the cooking and used cast iron ovens in a fireplace.

When Beardsley's wife and son came to Anderson that fall, they lived for a time at Fanthorp's Hotel. Mrs. Beardsley was enthusiastic, calling it "an excellent boarding place, as good probably as the South affords. . . . We have a very pleasant Landlady & a house full of servants, anything we want, we can have brought to us in our room by calling for it." In a subsequent letter she remarked, however, that it had been "too cold to write in my room at Mr. Fanthorp's."

The lodging accommodations, unlike the fare, had changed a great deal since the early days. A major enlarging of the inn took place in late 1850 when Fanthorp doubled the size of the inn with a second floor and an addition to his log house. In late 1855, Fanthorp may have put another addition on the hotel, increasing its size even more.

Most inns in antebellum Texas were centers for community social life and Fanthorp's was no exception. Balls and parties were held at the hotel, and Beardsley described one rather lavish affair held there in 1851:

"We had a great Ball at Fanthorp's Hotel Monday the 21st, called the Battle of *San Jacinto* in commemoration of the day. . . . There were probably 150 or more at the ball & Mr. & Mrs. Fanthorp took all pains in their power to get the supper up in good order & style & succeeded beyond my expectations if they had had nice furniture & crockery it would have been hard to beat they had good variety for Texas! & it was well cooked the fair sex present were the most of them good looking & dressed in good style & taste the dancing on the whole was very good."

CIVIL WAR AND LATER YEARS

During the Civil War, the Fanthorp Inn seems to have functioned much as usual, although perhaps at a more hectic pace. Anderson was a center of recruiting in 1861, and according to one witness, recruits were coming in "pretty fast," perhaps inspired by a ball held at the inn on May 1, 1861. Fanthorp also put up Confederate troops. An undated voucher in the inn papers



Property of Alice Garber Buffington, Anderson, Texas

The Fanthorp Inn was a treasured family home, occupied by the Fanthorps' descendants from the 1870s until the 1970s.

records that the "Confederate States" owed Fanthorp \$27.00 for "Board lodging and attention to Privates, Col. A. P. Bagby's 7th R(egiment) 7 M(ilitary) V(olunteers)." The charge was \$1.50 per day, and there were probably 18 privates put up for one day to equal \$27.00

In 1864, about 1,500 Union prisoners camped near Fanthorp's, evidently en route to the Confederate prisoner-of-war camp at Camp Groce. A daybook in the Fanthorp papers from 1861 to 1866 records passengers, destinations and fares and appears to be a continuation of previous records, indicating a continuing trade in the stage line and hotel business.

While the Fanthorp fortunes declined considerably after the Civil War, the inn continued to serve visitors. However, in 1867 yellow fever, the scourge of coastal Texas, hit Anderson. Henry Fanthorp died on October 31, 1867, at age 77, and Rachel died on November 2.

The Fanthorp's only surviving heir was their daughter, Mary Fanthorp Stone. After her parents' death, she and her family occupied the inn as a residence and discontinued its use as a hotel. The inn stayed in the Fanthorp-founded family until Alice and Edward Buffington conveyed the property to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1977, thus ending the six-generation, 143-year family ownership of the structure. **



Leroy Williamson

The Fanthorp family cemetery contains the graves of Henry and Rachel Fanthorp, their children, many of their descendants, and Kenneth L. Anderson, the last Vice-President of the Republic of Texas.

FANTHORP INN RESTORATION IN PROGRESS

by Jim Bigger

The Fanthorp Inn was restored to its appearance between 1850 and 1867, the years it prospered as a popular hotel and social center in Anderson. The two-year project, accomplished by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department craftspeople, involved documenting building and site conditions; salvaging original material for reuse; removing features post-dating the restoration period; reconstructing missing Fanthorp-era features; and reproducing historic woodwork, paint colors and hardware.

The restoration exposed all stages

of the inn's construction history, from its beginning as an 1834 two-room, dogtrot log house to its final evolution as an 18-room hotel. Archaeological investigations performed in conjunction with the restoration yielded numerous period artifacts and other invaluable information on early life and activities at the inn.

Other aspects of the project called for construction of an exhibits barn, stabilization of the kitchen ruins behind the inn and rehabilitation of the nearby Fanthorp family cemetery.



Jim Bigger



Jim Bigger

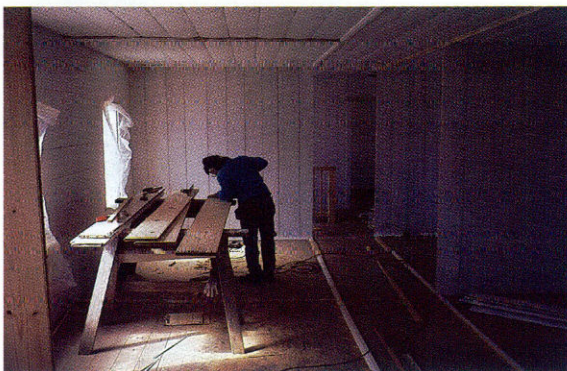


Jim Bigger



Jim Bigger

Post-Fanthorp era chimneys were dismantled and the stone was reused in the reconstructed chimneys (top). Cellar walls were stabilized below ground (left). The original framing was exposed when recent siding was removed (above left). Infill plugs for deteriorated framing members were meticulously crafted and inserted (above right).



Jim Bigger

Six small guest rooms were reconstructed on the second floor in their original locations (above). The completed restoration depicts the inn's heyday during the Fanthorps' ownership. A ribbon-cutting ceremony (right) opened the inn to the public.



Leroy Williamson

Wintering Texas

by Mary-Love Bigony



*W*inter has many faces in Texas. The Panhandle can be buried under a foot of snow at the same time the Rio Grande Valley is basking in 70-degree temperatures. Snow is all too rare in most parts of Texas. Residents in many parts of the state awaken to ice-covered landscapes and cast hopeful glances out the window for snow that more often than not fails to materialize. Because snow is so uncommon over most of Texas, its arrival is usually welcome and it seldom stays around long enough to wear out its welcome.



Wyman P. Meizer

This cottontail seems unconcerned about the snow on its face and around its feet. A stretch of Onion Creek near Austin (below) sparkles in the winter sun.



Leroy Williamson

Wintering Texas



Wyman P. Meinzer

Ice-covered branches glimmer as the sun rises over a North Texas landscape (left). Strawberry cacti weather a rare Big Bend snowfall (below), while a meadowlark surveys its icy surroundings.

Laurence Parent



Wyman P. Meinzer



Laurence Parent



Leroy Williamson

A snow-capped Hunter Peak in Guadalupe Mountains National Park (top) looks like it belongs on a Christmas card, as does the Hill Country scene at right. Even a brown oak leaf (above) sparkles in the wake of an ice storm.



Laurence Parent



Paul M. Montgomery

McKimney Falls (left), in the state park of the same name, stands frozen following a sudden drop in temperature. A coyote wanders the snow-covered Rolling Plains.



Wymar P. Meinzer

A

West Texas landscape blanketed in snow is one of the most beautiful sights of winter, but snowfall in the Trans-Pecos isn't as common as one might think. West Texas air is generally too dry for snow to form, and Arctic cold fronts usually bypass this part of the state. But once every few years conditions are right for snowfall, and the Guadalupe and Davis Mountains become scenes straight from Christmas cards. The Edwards Plateau and North Texas usually get a little snow every year; enjoy it while it lasts, since it will be gone in a day or so.



Paul M. Montgomery

The roar of Gorman Falls at Colorado Bend State Park (above) is silenced by a hard freeze.



Wyman P. Meinzer

Austin's Town Lake (below) is barely recognizable following a rare snowfall. Freezing temperatures can be hard on small birds such as meadowlarks (above).

*I*ce is more common than snow in the eastern and south central parts of the state. Rain turns to ice as it falls on freezing surfaces, adding a holiday sparkle to blades of grass and leafless branches. Many wildlife species can tolerate harsh weather if they are in good condition before freezing temperatures arrive; some succumb to the cold. A turkey strutting along a snowy stretch of ground or a meadowlark crouched in the ice give an animated touch to a frozen scene.

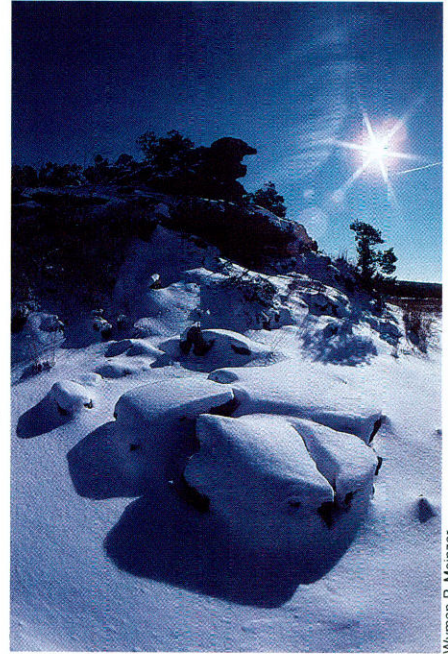


Laurence Parent

Wintering Texas



Wyman P. Menzer



Wyman P. Menzer



Leroy Williamson

The sun bursts upon a fresh North Texas snowfall (above). Snow in the Franklin Mountains left this green-flowered torch cactus (below) shrouded in white. Trees along Onion Creek south of Austin (left) are covered with both ice and snow.



Laurence Parent

Outdoor Roundup

by Jim Cox

Expanded Trout Stocking Program Set for 1988-89

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials said the state's largest-ever rainbow trout stocking program is now underway at 25 public sites and 15 state parks.

More than 300,000 catchable-sized rainbows are being distributed, compared to the 250,000 stocked during the 1987-88 winter stocking period, according to Bill Rutledge, chief of the department's Hatcheries Branch.

Most of the trout were obtained from federal hatcheries, but many were purchased from private hatcheries with funds from sales of \$5 Freshwater Trout Stamps, required in addition to a valid fishing license for all those fishing for trout in Texas waters. Those exempted from fishing license requirements are not required to possess a trout stamp.

The stamps and fishing licenses are available from department offices and retail outlets across the state.

The daily bag limit is five trout, and the possession limit is 10 in all waters. There is no minimum length limit.

No separate fees are charged to fish for trout in state parks, only the normal entry and facility use fees.

The department's popular trout program is operated on a put-and-take basis, with most of the trout being caught by anglers by late spring. Most of the sites were stocked beginning December 1, and periodic stockings continue through February.

State parks being stocked are: Blanco, Bonham, Buescher, Caprock Canyons, Cleburne, Copper Breaks, Daingerfield, Ft. Richardson, Galveston, Garner, Guadalupe River, LBJ, Meridian, Palmetto, Purtil Creek, Rusk and Tyler. To find locations of the parks, write the TPWD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744, or call toll-free 1-800-792-1112 and request the free parks brochure.

Public waters to be stocked include: Casey, Crow, Higgenbotham, Jennings Ribble, McCulloch and Mill Creek lakes in the Lubbock area; Louise Hays Park Lake in Kerrville; North and South San Gabriel Rivers at Georgetown; Salado Creek at Salado; Ascarate Fisherman's Lake at El Paso; Barton Creek in Austin; Boykin Springs Lake in Angelina County; Carrollton Sports Complex Lake in Carrollton; Martin Road Park in Amarillo; Missouri City Park Lake in Missouri City; Nelson Park Lake in Abilene; Oak Grove Park in Plano; Pickens Lake in Sherman; San Antonio River in Breckenridge Park, San Antonio; Sandy Creek in Jasper; Spring Creek in San Angelo; Spring Lake in Hays County and West Lake Park in Dallas County.

Historic Fulton Mansion Open After Repainting

One of Texas' oldest, most elegant houses, the Fulton Mansion State Historic Structure in Fulton, is open again for tours after being closed for repainting.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials said the house received a new coat of paint outside. Inside, the drapery was cleaned and other cleaning and curatorial projects also were done while the mansion was closed.

"The coastal environment is hard on house paint and the paint colors had faded on the outside," said James D. Bigger Jr., architect and restoration project manager for the department's Parks Division. Seven years ago the house was restored to resemble its appearance in the 1880s, he said.

"Even with the faded paint, the external appearance is always accurate historic representation, because during the years when the Fultons lived there the paint faded and had to be renewed from time to time," said Zane Morgan, head of the division's Interpretation and Exhibits Branch.

Fulton Mansion was acquired by the department in 1976 as a significant example of high-Victorian architecture in Texas. "The particular historical significance of the mansion is its Sec-

ond Empire style of architecture, unique method of wood plank construction and its advanced mechanical and utility systems," said Bigger.

Paint analysis has shown that the exterior was a golden yellow with dark brown trim and reddish brown trim on the windows. "We had paint chips studied to determine the right hue and tone for each color," he said. The house was repainted in the gold and browns used for the completed restoration.

Visitors may call 512-729-0386 for a tour schedule.

Biologists Available for Waterfowl Projects

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has announced a new assistance program for persons involved in managing wetlands for waterfowl and other wetland-oriented wildlife.

This assistance is provided by four wetland habitat management biologists, located in the Panhandle, East Texas, the Mid-Coast and Upper Coast areas.

Canada geese and other waterfowl species should benefit from assistance provided by wetland habitat management biologists.



Bill Reaves



Leroy Williamson

The Fulton Mansion is open for tours again after being closed for repainting.

Habitat management information will be available to interested landowners, land managers and hunting lease holders, according to waterfowl biologist C.D. Stutzenbaker.

The biologists offer information by telephone, and in some cases may visit the site to make more specific recommendations. In some instances, detailed management plans can be developed for implementation by the owner or manager.

For information concerning wetland habitat management in your area, contact: Harvey Miller, Lubbock, 806-742-2841; Carl Frentress, Athens, 214-675-8912; David Lobpries, Wharton, 409-532-2170; or C. D. Stutzenbaker, Port Arthur, 409-736-2551.

College Student is Lunker Angler of the Year

Troy Johnson, a University of Texas student from Houston, has been named "Lone Star Angler of the Year" for 1988.

Johnson earned the honor by catching a 16-pound, two-ounce largemouth bass at Gibbons Creek Reservoir on January 15 and donating it to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's "Operation Share A Lone Star Lunker" program.

The lunker program gives fishermen the opportunity to lend 13-pound-plus bass to the department for research and production. Participating anglers receive fiberglass replicas of

their catch, and the fish usually are returned to their lakes of origin after the spring spawning season is over, according to Bill Rutledge, chief of the Fish Hatchery Branch.

Johnson's fish was slightly smaller than the state record 17-pound, 10.72-ounce bass that was 1987's Lunker of the Year, but it was more remarkable in its growth rate and vigor, according to David Campbell, manager of the Tyler Fish Hatchery.

"The fish was only six years old when caught, so its growth rate was unusually fast, to say the least," Campbell said. "Also, it spawned five times, which is by far the most production we have gotten from any of the 20 fish we've had in the program in two years."

Campbell said the multiple spawns in an indoor tank resulted in production of 90,000 fingerling bass. About 500 of these are being maintained for growth studies, another 500 were placed with other Lone Star Lunker offspring for broodfish use, and the remainder were stocked in Lake Long near Austin, Mackenzie Reservoir in Briscoe County and the new Cooper Reservoir near Sulphur Springs.

Johnson requested that his big fish, which was 26 inches long and 24 inches in girth when landed, remain on display in a tank at the Tyler hatchery.

Johnson's name has been enshrined on a massive "Lunker Hall of Fame" plaque in the department's Austin headquarters.

The lunker program is supported by the Lone Star Lunker Foundation, made up of Lone Star Brewery, Skeeter Boat Co., Jungle Labs, Inc. and Honey Hole Magazine. The fiberglass fish mounts are provided by the Texas Taxidermy Association.

"Through the financial support of the Lunker Foundation we are able to promote conservation and the catch-and-release concept while getting outstanding fish for research and production," said Rutledge. "It's been a great program for Texas."

COMPILED BY THE PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT'S NEWS SERVICE



Leroy Williamson

Wild turkeys suffer when pen-raised turkeys are released on the same range. State law now prohibits release of pen-raised turkeys.

Releasing Tame Turkeys Can Harm Wild Flocks

Releases of pen-reared wild turkeys by private individuals in Houston County will delay eastern turkey restoration efforts in that county, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Charles Allen, Wildlife Division Director, said no wild-trapped eastern turkeys will be released for at least one year in those portions of the county where pen-raised birds were released. The department has a policy of not releasing wild-trapped turkeys in any area where pen-raised birds occur.

Pen-raised birds can jeopardize wild eastern turkey flocks in several ways, Allen said. "The pen-reared birds have the potential of introducing domestic poultry diseases into wild flocks, and they can reduce inherent wildness in wild turkeys by genetically polluting the offspring with characteristics that ultimately reduce their ability to survive in the wild. These concerns led to the passage of a state law that went into effect September 1, 1988, prohibiting the release of pen-raised turkeys."

Obtaining wild-trapped eastern turkeys for release in East Texas is expensive, with trapping and transplanting costs ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 per bird.

"To knowingly jeopardize wild-trapped birds by putting them in areas where pen-raised turkeys have been released would not be in the best interest of the sportsmen or the eastern turkey restoration effort," Allen said. "I know that some releases may have been done by well-meaning people, but they need to understand that pen-raised birds are not suitable for introduction to the wild, and can be a real threat to the true wild turkeys."

Temple-Eastex Inc., Champion International Corp. and Kirby Forest Products, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Louisiana-Pacific Corp., have provided financial support for the eastern turkey restoration effort, donating a portion of their income from the Type II public hunting program.

January in . . .

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

Coming up next month are stories on the winter dove season that begins January 7, the Lone Star Lunker program, state record trees in Texas and urban game wardens. We'll see some of the remarkable ways in which animals and birds camouflage themselves in the wild, and we'll visit the Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site in Denison.

HIDDEN WHITETAILS

Article by David Baxter,
Photos by Mike Biggs

Just to look at a whitetail buck, especially one of the so-called trophy ones, how could something that big hide so easily? Here is an animal approaching 200 pounds, with a big set of antlers sitting on top of his head. How can you miss him?

Most hunters seem to overestimate the size of a whitetail. The average buck even on prime South Texas range stands no more than waist high

to an adult. And most hunters underestimate the ability of a buck to hide and sneak through the brush, especially in December after hunting pressure has made them even more skittish.

Whitetails and most other animals had camouflage down pat long before half the state of Texas was dressed in paramilitary chic. They do it with light and shadow and patience.

Of course whitetails are not the only members of the deer family to use camouflage and stealth to survive. While I sat near a wooded draw in the Glass Mountains of West Texas one year, resting after a morning's hunt for mule deer, there came a sound like a kid dragging a stick along a picket fence, making a *thwack, thwack* sound. A bull elk was making the noise as his antlers occasionally hit the branches that formed a canopy above the dry creekbed he was skinking along. He was getting out of our lease, regardless of whether elk season was closed or not.

I've heard similar tales from the Southeastern U.S. of whitetails being driven by dogs; the deer doubled back and passed undetected between the line of hunters and dogs alike.

Whitetails have evolved to blend well with their Texas habitat, whether it is the shadow of the pine trees and cedars or the gray branches of mesquite. There has been many a December afternoon when I stared at a whitish cedar stump under the shade of another cedar, trying to make the stubs of dead branches into antlers. And who knows how many Boone and Crockett racks have gone undetected among the leafless mesquites of South Texas. If they don't





move out into a sendero, it's nigh unto impossible to see them, much less get a decent shot off.

For the past two seasons I have hunted with my now-14-year-old son. As with most adolescents, if there's no action within the first 15 or 20 minutes it's time to plug in the Walkman and tap out a tune on the wall of the deer blind. Along with Def Leppard going through his head, he probably wonders how old dad can stand to sit in one place for so long, especially when it's obvious there is nothing happening out front. But then he will surprise

There is a 10-point buck bedded down in the middle of the sunflowers above. The large photo was taken with a 50mm lens, the inset with a 500mm. The buck at left is easier to spot, although it is taking full advantage of the shadow cast by the surrounding brush. A keen observer should be able to spot him from the sun's glint off his antlers or the twitch of his ears.



me by taking off the earphone just long enough to tell me there is a buck off to the left of a grove of oak trees out about 500 yards. He saw it with unaided 14-year-old eyes because the old man was hogging the 10 by 50s.

Part of my son's deer blind education program is wildlife observation. This includes birds and small mammals as well as deer. The time we spend together at the hunting lease is a valuable tool in his overall education. To use the buzz word of 1980s parenting, it's "quality time." We learn from each other. I tell him to look for the twitch of a deer's ear, the glint of sun on a polished antler, the flick of a tail that reveals a quick glimpse of white. All these indicators can reveal a deer's position in the brush. After a few such sessions his young eyes usually are the first to pick up the indicators.

Whether he knows it or not, he also is learning patience. Patience is a prerequisite for deer hunting in particular and wildlife study in general. He can't spend a few minutes in a blind and expect to see anything—be it deer, rac-

The photo at right has two deer, one bedded and the other standing to the right. A lazy observer might mistake a 12-point buck for a dead cedar limb. The buck above is really tough to spot. The glint of sun off his eye or movement of an ear might be all that gives him away.





One of the exasperating things about whitetail bucks is their ability to stand motionless for a long time if they sense danger. The buck at left is trying to look like a leafless mesquite tree. Perhaps it will be the body outline that gives away a deer's presence, such as in the bottom photo, or the outline of its muzzle and characteristic white band, below.



coon or cardinal. And I suppose I'm learning patience in dealing with a young man.

But perhaps the most important thing he's learned came in a round-about fashion. After staring at something—stump or branch—that looked like a deer, the question came up: why not just fire a round at it? If it was a deer we would have it; if not, well it was just an old stump made into splinters. Now came the lesson young hunt-

ers must learn and old ones reminded of—always be sure of your target. Better to stare at a stump and have the “stump” slip away then put a bullet in anything the identity of which you are uncertain. A lazy naturalist probably will not see much wildlife, but a lazy hunter is a dangerous creature.

Spending a December's afternoon with your child looking for hidden whitetails can teach a person many things. **

The Yellow Goose of Texas

Two weeks before Christmas last year, I was observing and photographing a huge flock of snow geese in Wharton County. Suddenly I caught sight of a large yellow bird in the midst of the blanket of white and black. The bird was as attention-grabbing as a traffic caution sign and about the same color.

It's not uncommon to see birds such as heron and egrets with geese, but I had never seen a bird of this size sporting that color. I needed a closer look, so I went back to the truck for the 25-power spotting scope. To my amazement it was a yellow snow goose. I've seen several freaks of nature, but this had to be the only yellow goose in the world.

The goose was in the midst of 4,000 other geese in the middle of a 160-acre rice field. Rice fields are designed for irrigation and this one was still flooded in mid-December. A canal half full of water led into the field.

I got into waders and strapped 20 pounds of camera and lenses on my back. I needed to get within 60 yards of the yellow goose, but after trudging 400 yards in waist-deep water, the goose was still 150 yards away.

To get an unobstructed view, I had to crawl out of the canal and through the brush to a levee that offered a little elevation. I waited, and finally the flock began feeding in my direction. Shortly, the forward guard was all around me, but then I heard the distant drone of a helicopter. Within min-

utes the entire flock was airborne.

I left the next morning to photograph white-tailed deer in South Texas, so the phenomenon was out of mind for about 10 days. Immediately upon my return, my wife greeted me with, "I know where your yellow goose came from." Seems television had aired the story that Texas A&M University, working in conjunction with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, had painted the goose for a research project. I was anxious to know the whole story, so I contacted the U. S. Fish and Wildlife office in Angleton.

Ann Jennings, a Texas A&M graduate student working on her master's degree under Dr. Douglas Slack, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, supplied the information. According to Jennings, "Much is known about the behavior of lesser snow geese at their breeding grounds in northern Canada; however, only a limited number of studies have been conducted on snow geese wintering in Southeast Texas. Therefore, this project was started with the purpose of studying movements of lesser snow geese and determining whether or not the geese are faithful to one location during the winter."

Jennings said that a significant part of the study is to compare birds that both roost and feed on the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge with birds that roost on the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge and are forced to feed elsewhere.

"Birds on the San Bernard do not have to leave, all the essentials are on the refuge," said Jennings. "Their diet is made up of abundant native grasses consisting mainly of seashore paspalum, saltgrass, bulrush and marsh hay cordgrass. Those on the Brazoria leave the area each day to feed in the surrounding stubble fields of rice, sorghum, corn and soy beans."

Jennings explained that the birds were trapped by firing rocket-projected nets over pads of grit. Eight shots were made between November 27, 1987, and January 5, 1988. As a result, 698 adult, white-phase snow geese, caught on the San Bernard, were dyed pink. On the Brazoria, 588 adult, white-phase, snow geese were dyed yellow. The yellow dye was prepared by mixing picric acid and ethanol, a nontoxic compound that had no harmful effects on the birds' health or behavior and remained until their summer molt.

The snow geese were observed and counted daily on both refuges. The largest number of dyed birds sighted

Standing out like a caution light, a yellow-dyed snow goose is one of 588 geese trapped and dyed last winter on the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge as part of studies to learn more about the waterfowl's movement while on their wintering range in Texas.

Marking techniques track snow geese from the Gulf to the Arctic.



on the San Bernard was 52; 72 were sighted on Brazoria early in the project. The dispersion rate increased and by mid-January only 10 or 12 would be with the flocks.

I suggested that as the feed close by became scarce, the birds found different roost areas near the available feed. Jennings answered, "The rate of decline proved to be about the same on the San Bernard; we cannot say why this early in the project. Sightings were reported as far east as Dell City, Louisiana, and west to Ganado, Texas. A small concentration settled in the Anahuac area, but the majority definitely drifted to the rice country.

"We never saw large groups of painted birds together again after releasing," she continued. "The concept of large flocks staying together through migration from nesting areas to wintering grounds and back hasn't been validated. The entire wintering area could be one big mixing bowl, but nothing is conclusive at this time."

Jennings said the results indicate that snow geese wintering in southeast Texas may rely on a combination of the coastal wetlands and the rice growing area to provide adequate habitat. The information becomes important when combined with knowledge of human population growth and the subsequent development of lands that are crucial to the existence of the lesser snow goose.

Another lucky incident occurred last winter when three snow geese were photographed close enough to read the numbers on the neck bands they were wearing. My curiosity piqued again, I contacted the Bird Banding Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland. Two of the bands were blue, numbered TH34 and TZ94. After a while, Dr. Stephen R. Johnson called me from Alaska.

To my surprise, I learned there are several private organizations that have



permits to band migratory birds, as do various governmental agencies. Johnson, with LGL Alaska Research Associates, Inc., revealed much more about these two birds than I had expected.

"The birds are from the only flock of lesser snow geese that nests in the United States, Johnson said. "All others are Arctic nesting, primarily Central and Eastern Canada and Russia. Recently, a small flock of these birds was discovered nesting on the Sagavanirktok River Delta near Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's North Slope. We have been marking virtually the entire population of these geese annually since 1980. Our banding cycle usually takes about three days to catch and process all the birds beginning the last of July or early August.

Johnson said the colony consisted of about 50 pairs of geese when they started the study, but it has grown to more than 270 pairs. Most winter sightings are from California and New Mexico, with some in Mexico. Sightings from the Gulf Coast are rare. Johnson said the two geese I saw were first banded in July 1987. TH34 was a second year female and TZ94 was a second year male.

"Our purpose in identifying the birds is to enable us to follow them through their annual migration," said

Johnson. "The staging areas, where they feed and fatten prior to both their southern and northern migration, is of primary importance. Great amounts of energy are expended on these trips and the availability of feed and water at these stopover areas is in direct correlation with natural functions such as pairing, mating and nesting."

Just as surprising as Johnson's information was the discovery that the third banded goose displaying a black neck band with AA14 imprinted on it had been marked less than 25 miles from where I photographed it. After a paper trail through Canada and Alaska, I spoke to Dr. William C. Hobaugh, general manager of Southeast Texas Wildlife Foundation in Columbus, Texas.

Hobaugh said the goose was cap-

After the dyed birds were released (above), large groups of them were never again seen together. The idea of large flocks staying together from nesting to wintering grounds has yet to be proved. The two blue-banded birds at left were marked on Alaska's North Slope near Prudhoe Bay. The number "14" on the black-banded bird is just visible at far right. This goose was trapped and marked in 1987 near Garwood, summered near the Arctic, then returned to Texas.

tured with a rocket net over a roost pond approximately five miles west of Garwood, Texas, on March 11, 1987. The thought of where this goose had been and returned in nine months was staggering. Hobaugh said the bird was classified as a second-year male, indicating it hatched the previous summer and was also leg banded with USFWS band #1137-69514.

"This goose was captured as part of a long-term research project I am conducting to help determine the year-to-year fidelity of geese for specific wintering grounds in the rice prairies," Hobaugh said. "In other words, do geese from a specific population winter in the same general area of the rice prairies each year?"

Hobaugh's articles from previous studies provide additional interesting

information. "Lesser snow geese are the most numerous geese wintering in Texas, numbering between 600,000 and 1.1 million birds," he said. "In recent years, more than 75 percent of all Central Flyway geese have wintered in the *coastal* marshes and adjacent rice lands."

According to Hobaugh, the development of the rice industry *inland* has dramatically altered the wintering areas and habits of these birds. The rice-producing areas southwest of Houston have become the most important goose wintering area in Texas.

Why are populations of lesser snow geese declining in the Pacific Flyway at the same time they are on the rise in the Central Flyway? Biologists don't know. The reproduction rate of all snow geese has been poor for two of

the last three years. Could birds from the Pacific Flyway be going to the Central Flyway? Does hunting pressure cause such a change in habit or is habitat and food more available in the Central Flyway than on the West Coast?

Reporting sightings of banded geese can be time-consuming, but the rewards are well worth the effort. Write U. S. Department of Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, Maryland 20708. You will get a prompt reply and your information will be forwarded to the group that marked the bird. They, in turn, will forward to you pertinent information concerning the bird, along with a letter of appreciation.

Who knows, we may find out birds of a feather don't always flock together. **



Gilbert Deals South Texas a

For five days in September, South Texas held its breath as a monster named Gilbert churned its way toward us. We had been hoping for rain to break the drought, but a 175-mile-per-hour hurricane wasn't exactly what we had in mind.

The possibility of hurricanes is a fact of life in coastal Texas. Long-time residents accept this as one of the few downside factors to an otherwise good place to live. After all, you know when

a hurricane is coming and have time to get ready. We don't have volcanoes, earthquakes or tornadoes, which catch you without warning.

This isn't to imply that coastal residents take hurricanes lightly; we have been educated to respect their power and take them seriously. We know the routine by heart—board and tape the windows, put gas in the car, stock up on water and nonperishable foods, get batteries and lantern fuel. It is a drill

that everyone has gone through many times, and most of us have weathered several storms that we talk about almost fondly and use as milestones. Things are recalled as being “before Buelah” or “after Allen.” Each storm has its own personality and is well remembered. It might be said that Texans appear somewhat nonchalant about hurricanes.

But this storm was different. The media worked Gilbert to the hilt. For



Glancing Blow

Article and Photos by
Steve Bentsen

five days we were warned that this was the largest storm of the century and had taken the barometric pressure to the lowest reading ever recorded in this hemisphere. It was a Class 5 hurricane with winds of 175 miles per hour and gusts to more than 200 miles per hour. The storm had already killed scores of people and caused tremendous destruction in Jamaica, Haiti, Grand Caymen, western Cuba and the Yucatan Peninsula. It was expected to

STATE PARKS PROVIDE REFUGE

by Sue Moss

The Parks and Wildlife Department provided hurricane assistance on more than one front as Hurricane Gilbert churned its way toward the Texas coast. While parks up and down the coast secured buildings and equipment and battened down the hatches at the Battleship *Texas*, other parks well inland opened their gates to Texans who had to evacuate their homes.

More than 4,300 evacuees stayed in 24 Texas state parks between September 14 and September 19. Parks with the largest number of hurricane evacuees were Garner, Kerrville, McKinney Falls, Palmetto, Lake Somerville and Falcon. By order of Executive Director Charles D. Travis, entrance and camping fees were waived for the evacuees.

The department received numerous letters of appreciation after Gilbert passed and people returned home. One visitor wrote, "That small gesture of kindness on the part of the parks system helped ease a worrisome and frightening trip." Another let the department know, "I am pleased to find the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department knows the meaning of *Tejas*." **



South Texans braced for the worst as Hurricane Gilbert churned through the Gulf of Mexico. Even though Gilbert made landfall 100 miles south of Brownsville, South Texas suffered heavy rains and damaging winds. Tidal surges on South Padre Island washed out roads, buried cars in the sand and blew out large sand dunes.

strengthen in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. For the next two days the TV showed satellite pictures of a storm that filled the entire Gulf. The area of expected landfall was Brownsville, Texas.


This was not your garden-variety hurricane, and no one had missed that point. The preparations went on as usual and the same spirit of camaraderie prevailed as we all prepared together. But this time there was a sense of urgency. People realized that we might be playing for keeps this time. Preparations completed, there was nothing to do but wait.

We got lucky. The hurricane didn't strengthen and at the last minute it veered to make landfall 100 miles to the south, near La Pesca, Mexico, where it caused extensive flooding and killed hundreds of people. As it turned out, we got a good blow and some badly needed rain, plus a dozen or so small tornadoes.

The next day, South Texas heaved a collective sigh of relief. We counted our blessings and were sad for our neighbors to the south. But we put the plywood and Coleman fuel where we could get to them, because sooner or later there will be another storm that won't miss. **



Droves of reporters and film crews descended on South Texas in anticipation of Gilbert, the largest hurricane of this century. The crew at left, from California, was making a movie on natural disasters. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department game wardens were on hand to assist local law enforcement agencies.



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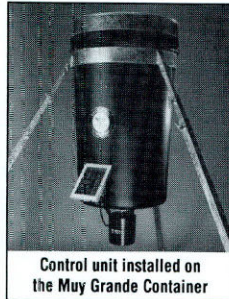
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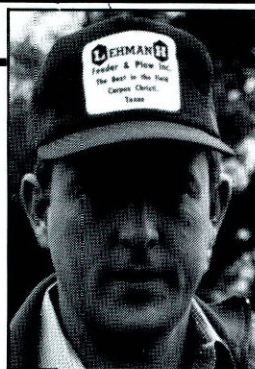
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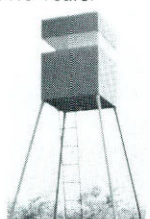
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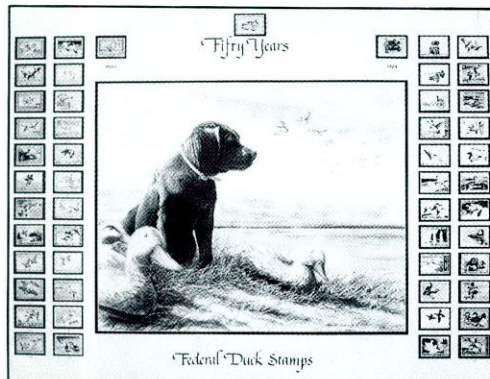
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Letters

What's Happened to the Horned Lizard?

The article "Lone Star Lizards" in the August issue has prompted me to inquire as to what has happened to the Texas horned lizard here in Central Texas. It's been 20 years since I've seen one. They used to be plentiful—you could see one scampering across a hot, sandy road all summer.

Have we been too concerned about things like snail darters and Jane Fonda's whales to notice something disappearing right under our noses?

Arthur A. Geick
Brenham

■ The plight of the Texas horned lizard has not gone unnoticed by biologists who make it their business to study reptiles and amphibians. The horned lizard has generally disappeared from the area between Bryan and Austin, and from the Dallas-Fort Worth area to the Texas coast. This disappearance has occurred within the last 25 years, and there is some connection with the spread of the introduced fire ant, although it is not a direct cause-and-effect relationship. It might be that the use of broadcast insecticides to combat fire ants has destroyed the horned lizard's natural prey base.

Habitat modification also plays a part. It is interesting to note that the Texas horned lizard is far less common than it used to be in northwest-central Texas, the Panhandle and parts of Oklahoma, areas the fire ant has not yet reached but where agricultural use is heavy. Fortunately, the Texas horned lizard remains common in southern and western portions of its range, and is in relatively better shape than many other threatened and endangered species in Texas and throughout the world.

Goose Island State Park

Thanks for a wonderful magazine. After reading and enjoying the Special Coastal Issue (July 1988), we visited Goose Island State Park near Rockport; it was great!

Give the employees at this park a Gold Star. They were very nice and helpful. We caught a good mess of fish there, too.

We highly recommend Goose Island and the surrounding areas to everybody.

Will and Judy Sanders
Stephenville

Lone Star Lizards

I enjoyed reading "Lone Star Lizards" by Mary-Love Bigony in the August 1988 issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*.

It's nice to see the inclusion of nongame animal stories in your magazine. The photographs are excellent, especially the female collared lizard on the August front cover.

Most people probably do not realize that the orange area near the shoulder of many collared lizards actually represents a mass of apparently harmless ectoparasitic chigger mites.

It might be of interest to your readers to include a story on the all-female (parthenogenetic) whiptail lizards of Texas, which clone themselves. I look forward to seeing more amphibian and reptile articles.

Chris T. McAllister
DeSoto

Candid Camera

After reading the October 1988 issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, I would like to take issue with a couple of statements in the "Letters" column on page 48.

C. J. McCoy of the Carnegie Museum said "the bottom right photo on page 29 of the August 1988 issue is a tree lizard" rather than a northern fence lizard as captioned. Despite Mr. McCoy's obvious credentials, this lizard is definitely a fence lizard because it had neither the shape nor the scale pattern and skin folds of a tree lizard. It was also found in deep East Texas, far from the range and habitat of the tree lizard.

In the answer to Mr. McCoy's letter, the editor also stated that "the hummingbird on page 39 of the August 1988 issue is a black-chinned hummingbird, not a ruby-throated." This was a rehabilitation bird that I had held captive for a short time; I know it was a male ruby-throat.

The iridescent gorget of most hummingbirds appears black if the light is not at the proper angle, and this, unfortunately, was the case here.

Although this information is of little use after the fact, I don't want to get the reputation of miscaptioning too many of my photos. Both photos were labeled and captioned correctly, on my material as well as in the magazine.

John L. Tveten
Baytown

Quail Guns

Recently I received a copy of the article, "A Good Quail Gun Is A Joy Forever," by Arturo N. Longoria, which was published in your October 1988 issue.

Since my company, Aspen Outfitting, has been importing and distributing Bernardelli for most of the 1980s, it swells my heart to read such warm words of praise for this product.

Please tell Mr. Longoria that I'd be honored to help him with any Bernardelli needs that he may have in the future. And, if any of your readers inquire as to where they may obtain more information about Bernardelli shotguns, they can call me at 303-925-3406. I'll also be in attendance at the Bernardelli booth at the S.H.O.T. show in Dallas from January 12-14.

We book several January quail hunts between Falfurrias and Encino each year, and we anticipate more quail than usual in this lovely part of Texas next month.

Jon Hollinger
Aspen, Colorado

BACK COVER

The art of flytying has evolved over many centuries, and its originators would marvel at the progress this activity has enjoyed over just the past decade. A wide assortment of colors is characteristic of flytying. Natural color was what gave early flies their magic. The plumes of fruitcrows, blue jays, golden pheasants, peacocks, junglefowl, ibis, cranes, egrets, macaws, wood ducks, bustards and turkeys were highly sought treasures of early tiers. A tour of the American Museum of Fly-fishing in Manchester, Vermont will dazzle visitors with historical glamour and an array of colors. Today, flytying is an art that in many ways can be compared to painting. Both flytiers and painters hope to achieve a certain magic based on combinations of techniques, colors, shapes, textures, shadows, symmetry or exactness. Although fur and feathers continue to dominate flytiers' kits, today's flytiers are using more synthetics and dyes, since it is now illegal to shoot, sell or transport most bird species. (See story on page 2.) Photo by Glen Mills.



