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TEXAS

PARKS & WILDLIFE

APRIL 1997



**Special Texas
Freshwater Fishing Issue**

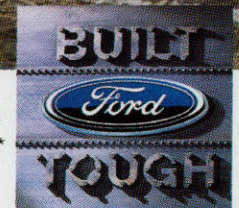
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There is a subdued but perceptible tension in the air as the audience files into the theater, the lights go down, and they wait for the curtain to open. When the massive drapes part, revealing an enormous freshwater aquarium, largemouth bass state record holder Barry St. Clair steps up to speak and every person in the room gasps at the largest bass in captivity.

The subsequent feeding of this immense creature, now weighing somewhere over 19 pounds, is the climax of a tour through the most advanced freshwater fisheries facility in the world.

There is no possibility that in this space I can come close to painting the complete picture of one the neatest places you can go in Texas, or anywhere else for that matter. Thankfully, on the following pages of this special issue, the full picture is revealed as one of our proudest accomplishments.

What I can do is tell you that the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center would not have been possible without a remarkable public/private partnership led by the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas, chaired during the process by Edwin L. Cox, Jr. of Athens and New York City. Cox, who is a for-

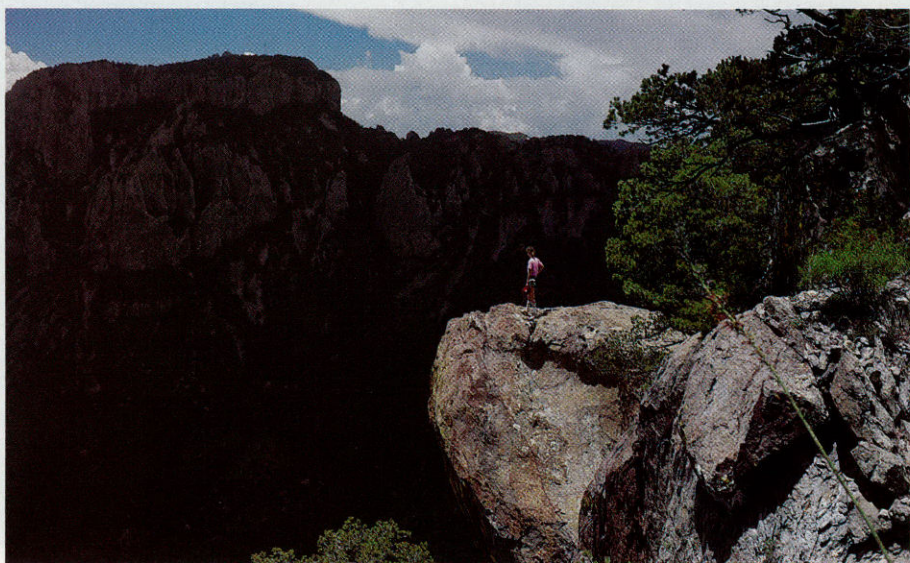
mer chairman of the Parks and Wildlife Commission, marshaled an astonishing array of resources starting with the citizens of Athens who committed more than \$4 million to secure the project. From that strong beginning, the city was joined by a host of other donors led by the Anheuser-Busch Foundation, Zebco/Brunswick, Brookshire Grocery, Texas Black Bass Unlimited and The Dow Chemical Company. Many other individuals, private corporations and foundations joined the brigade, which brought the total private contributions to the center to more than \$5 million. The department used those private donations as matching funds for a \$13 million commitment of Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (Wallop-Breaux) dollars, making the total project worth more than \$18.5 million. Not one dollar of license revenue was used for the construction.

I am grateful for the generosity of these benefactors, who are listed in full on pages 46-47. I am particularly proud and privileged to have announced at the opening in November that the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center is named in the honor of my friend and mentor, Edwin L. Cox, Jr.

ANDREW SANSOM, *Executive Director*

I N M A Y

The spectacular Lost Mine Trail in Big Bend National Park is one of the state's 10 best hiking trails. For others, see our May issue.



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One of the greatest threats to wildlife and native habitats in Texas is the breakup of large rural land holdings. Conservation easements are helping many Texas property owners preserve the special qualities of their land.

SPECIAL FRESHWATER FISHING ISSUE

- 8 Freshwater Fishing Finally Saluted as Part of State's Heritage** Using the new Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens as a guide, we start on a tour of freshwater fishing in Texas. *by David Baxter*
- 12 Take the Plunge** You cannot have a fishery, or even fish, without productive habitats. Texas's fresh waters are a far cry from their original state, with impoundments from the tiny to the mighty altering the aquatic landscape in the past 100 years. *by Jim Cox*
- 22 Getting Hooked** There's no substitute for picking up a fishing rod and actually catching a fish to get a person's attention, especially a youngster. *by Mary-Love Bigony*
- 28 Texas Freshwater Fish** A look at some of the species found in lakes and rivers across the state.
- 34 ShareLunker** This is a program that has, perhaps more than any other in the field of freshwater fishing, done more to promote the catch-and-release ethic. Visitors to the TFFC are treated to a show by a 19-pound-plus bass that came to the center through the ShareLunker program. *by Rob McCorkle*
- 40 Those Who Went Before** The first four inductees into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame demonstrate that fishing has many faces, and many friends. *by Jim Cox*
- 42 The Better Bass** The importance of maintaining high-quality stocks of bass containing genetics of the larger-growing Florida strain has become more important as hatcheries move into a more science-based mode. *by Steve Lightfoot*
- 46 Center Has Long Thank-You List** The TFFC never would have gotten past the pipedream stage without widespread support. *by Jim Cox*

DEPARTMENTS

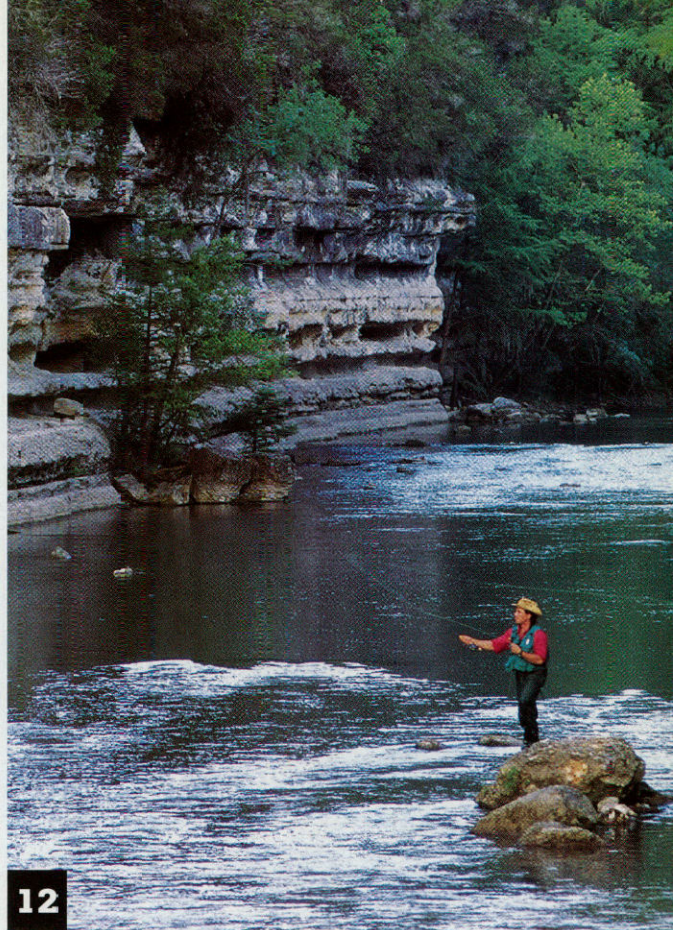
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COVERS

Front Fishing takes on many forms in Texas, and this may be one of the most unusual. Welcome to our special report on freshwater fishing in Texas. Photo © Robert Liles, Canon F1 camera, Canon 400mm 4.5 lens, f5.6 at 1/250 second, Fuji 100 film.

Back A flycaster tests the placid waters of the Guadalupe River. Photo © Rusty Yates, Pentax L45 camera, 75mm lens, f8 at 1/15 second, Fuji Velvia film.

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



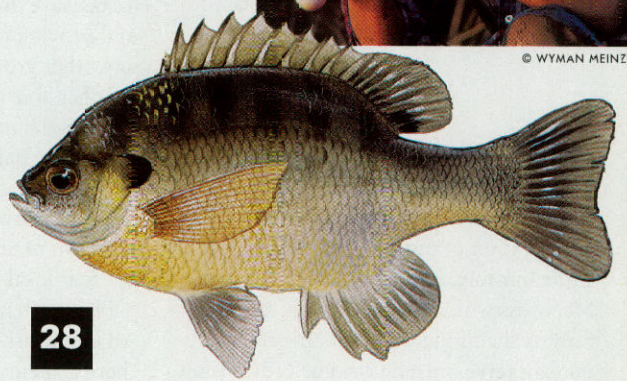
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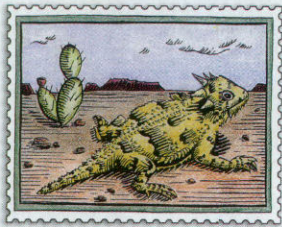


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READERS RESPOND

However strongly I disagree with Karen Moss (Letters, February) I respect, and would defend, her right to hold and express her opinions. I would hope for, but not expect, reciprocal respect from her. Ms. Moss's letter bespeaks a claim of total righteousness for herself and at least implies total depravity for all who disagree. This kind of mindset goes far beyond the issues at hand because it paralyzes responsible discourse and eventual synthesis which are fundamental to a working democratic social order.

Furthermore, Ms. Moss should know that her professional responsibility is to teach her subject, not to use her classroom for advancing some personal agenda.

It seems to me that *Texas Parks & Wildlife* responds remarkably well to the "daunting task" of meeting the interests of its "wide constituency of resource users." And I suppose I'll never understand readers who, like petulant children, cancel subscriptions over single aspects of that response. Please accept my appreciation for a splendid publication.

Frederick W. Rathjen
Canyon

➤ After reading the eighth-grade teacher's letter, it seems to me that we once again have another person expressing her own misguided and misinformed views to our school children. I am certainly glad that none of my children will ever have to tutor under this biased teacher. What a sad day for education.

Mike Ware
Missouri City

What interested me most in Ms. Moss's letter was her apparent intolerance of those of us who are interested in both the preservation of our natural resources and game hunting and fishing. It seems that Ms. Moss would want everyone to think only as she thinks and that anyone who may disagree must be categorically wrong.

The biggest tragedy is that she is permitted to teach her intolerance to

students in the public schools without contradiction. Maybe she should ask a game warden to address her class with the rest of the story.

Keep up the excellent work you do in reporting both sides of the issue.
Michael W. Middleton
Bryan

I believe part of a teacher's charter is to instill curiosity and a desire for learning in students, and to encourage them to objectively explore all facets of any subject. It appears that in her stated goal to "create an awareness and appreciation of nature," Ms. Moss has foreclosed rational, objective thought and has replaced it with an emotional perspective.

As the majority of our society has evolved from rural to urban dwellers we are no longer connected to the land as farmers and ranchers. Consequently, this majority rarely learns through personal experience that every day something dies so that something else may live. Hopefully Ms. Moss understands and teaches the predator-prey relationship, and that hunting is an activity that occurs throughout virtually the entire zoological spectrum.

John Powell
Carrollton

I am a born and raised Texas woman approaching the age of 50. In our generation we usually looked up to teachers with respect, and I could never have imagined any of my former teachers getting graphic and expressing publicly that a magazine article has turned her stomach, much less sign her name to it.

Also, I want to point out that even though she has a right to her own opinion about hunting, it seems that her method of teaching is very biased. Hunters in Texas have done more to protect animals and provide for habitat protection than any other group. Loss of habitat is the number-one threat to wildlife, making hunters the most effective group to help wildlife by habitat enhancement. Hunters also prevent game animals from a cruel death of starvation by maintaining proper densities of animals that can be supported by their local habitat.

I have attended many of the Becoming An Outdoors-Woman workshops, and there is plenty of curriculum for the non-hunter as well as instruction for the women who want to experience the

**T E X A S
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APRIL 1997, Vol. 55, No. 4

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hunting/fishing part. I am sad for her that she could not enjoy such a great and popular national program.

Vernell Schievelbein
 Austin

■ *Debbie Bunch, coordinator of TPWD's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program, called the magazine office to tell us that Karen Moss has never attended a Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshop. Bunch thinks Ms. Moss may have attended a workshop presented by the Texas Outdoor Education Association where BOW brochures were available.*

➤ The teaching profession is an honorable and respected profession. My dad was a school teacher. However, I take issue with Karen Moss and her stand concerning our "bloody sport." If teachers would stick to the facts and not try to interject their own opinions, myths and outright lies, our sport would not be under attack, but praised for its efforts of wildlife conservation.

It was my privilege to sit at breakfast with a professional guide from Colorado in a restaurant in Kansas City. A group of men from Chicago butted in with the statement that they couldn't understand how a person could kill an animal for its meat and/or hide. I told them that a lot of it depended upon the environment a person is raised in. I told them that I had never been to a professional baseball game. This was unbelievable to them and I went on to explain that the amount of trash generated from one baseball game probably would do more harm to the environment than a full hunting season at a deer camp. I have no problem with a professional baseball game, but until you've walked in my shoes in the outdoors, don't knock hunting. I ask that teachers get their facts straight before interjecting opinions.

William T Denson
 Diana

➤ I was dismayed by the letters in your February issue from the middle school teacher who thought your interests were too closely aligned with hunters and the "old timer" who was upset over state license fees.

Regarding the first issue, I believe your publication does an outstanding job of balancing the interests of consumptive and non-consumptive users of Texas's outdoor resources. The name of this

publication is *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, not *Texas Birding*, *Texas Conservationist*, *Texas Hunting*, *Texas Fishing* or *Texas Natural History*. Instead it incorporates a little bit of all of these things. No other magazine so closely represents the broad range of things that I personally enjoy doing outdoors in Texas.

Regarding license fees, as a taxpayer I support efforts of TPWD to make administration of department programs, lands and facilities self supporting as much as possible. License fees for residents are such a small portion of the total cost of hunting or fishing in this state that I really cannot see that being much of an issue anyway. Along those same lines I understand and support limited advertising in your magazine to help keep subscription rates at their present bargain levels.

Bill Katon
 Dallas

■ *Thanks to all who wrote. For more letters on this subject, please visit our World Wide Web site:*
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/news/magazine/contents.htm>.

WHERE'S EZRA?

There hasn't been one word about the folks at Three Corners this year. Ezra, please sit yourself down and tell me what's going on with the good folks down in your neck of the woods. Don't let another month go by without an update.

Betty Bloomer
 Dallas

■ *Ezra Ward and the Folks at Three Corners will return beginning with the May issue. Ezra's last story in the December issue—which, you may recall, told of the disastrous hunting trip involving E.L. Raines, Charlie Thornton and Zeke Warner—so embarrassed those three that*

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they harangued our columnist in public every time they saw him. Ezra responded by sending us a brief note informing us he was taking a hiatus and then disappearing into the seclusion of his remote and inaccessible cabin, which has no telephone and can't even be reached by vehicle. For months, only his wife, Elvira, came to town for necessities. She refused to say anything about her husband's intentions, commenting only that he was "constantly underfoot and driving (her) crazy."

But, like many of the readers we heard from, some of the residents of Three Corners missed Ezra Ward's stories and berated E.L., Charlie and Zeke for their behavior. The trio finally wrote out a grudging apology, which banker A.C. Long slipped into Elvira's hand over at the drugstore. Nobody has seen Ezra yet, but he did write and promise to resume his story-telling in the May issue with a tale about game warden Kevin Blankenship's memorable, day-long encounter with a herd of javelinas. We trust that more will follow.

PASSENGER PIGEONS

➤ Thad Sitton's article "A Shadow Over the Earth" (December 1996) creates in the reader a sense of wonder for the remarkable passenger pigeon. Disappointment follows on realizing that flocks of passenger pigeons cannot be viewed today. I had never read an article that gave me such a strong feeling of sadness for an extinct species. I had mistakenly believed that if a species went extinct in one generation it would not really be missed in future generations. Elsie Gaertner's letter (February) made me feel somewhat better about the possible cause of the extinction. Perhaps, as Elsie Gaertner argues, a natural catastrophe was responsible for the extinction of the passenger pigeon rather than human pressure.

Ed Allen
Lubbock

YEAR-ROUND BLUEBONNETS?

As a native-born Texan from Ferris in Ellis County, I have always marveled at the arrival of the bluebonnets, however short-lived the blooms. I currently am serving in the U.S. Army at Fort Eustis, Virginia. During my annual pilgrimage back to my beloved state I purchased a packet of bluebonnet seeds.

I planted the seeds in a redwood box in early spring. The first blooms appeared in midsummer and they have been blooming

continuously. There were still a few blooms left in January. They receive no special watering or fertilizers. I put them in an unheated garage anytime the temperature falls below 35 degrees and sometimes they go for a week without sunlight. Is this normal for bluebonnets? If so, why is the blooming season so short in the wild?

LTC Raymond C. Singleton
Fort Eustis, Virginia

■ Botanist Jackie Poole: "While your plants do seem to be blooming for a long time without special treatment, you did plant them in Virginia. As I am sure you are well aware, the climates of Texas and Virginia are quite a bit different. Overall, Virginia is cooler and wetter, at least than most parts of Texas. By late spring in most of Texas, rainfall tapers off and the hot, dry summer begins. Through the millennia, bluebonnets have adapted to this Texas climate. They produce a rosette of leaves with the fall rains, overwinter in the spring and go to seed before the hottest and driest weather begins. It's a good strategy. I imagine that your bluebonnets in Virginia felt they had died and gone to Heaven. They were in a continual spring due to Virginia's wetter, slightly cooler climate. Winter never even arrived as they were taken into the garage when it got cold. With this care they may grow for years! If the plants do die, there still is a continual supply of bluebonnets in Texas."

THE SPIRIT OF FISHING

This is a photo of Leslee Tiller of Houston who, on her third fishing trip, caught this 8.75-pound trout north of Rockport. The fish was caught in November on live bait in about three feet of water.

This picture exemplifies the spirit of fishing where a beginner can catch the fish of a lifetime while leaving more experienced fishermen in envy.

John Murphy
Houston



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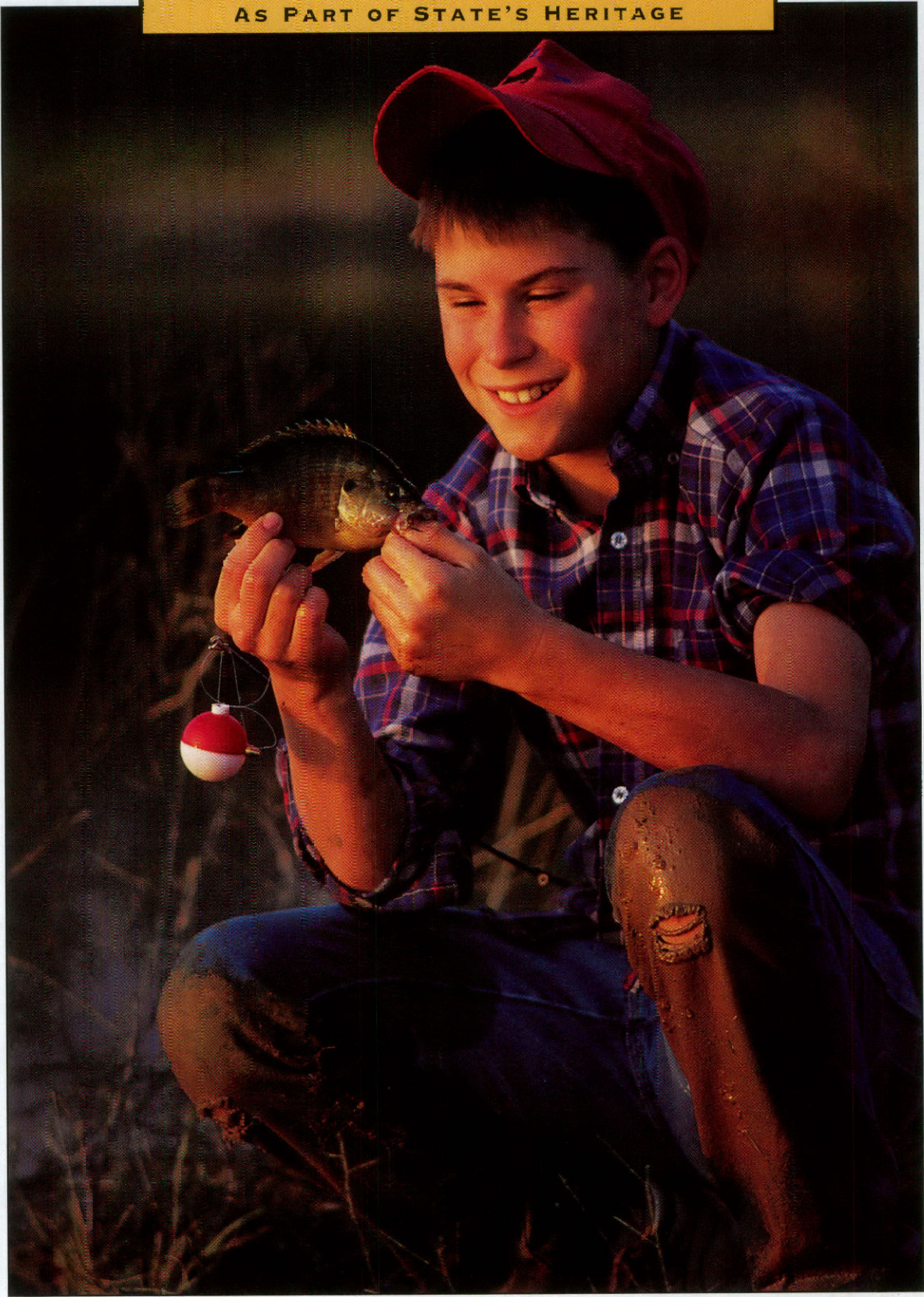
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For the first time ever, a state fishery agency, in cooperation with a vast network of local organizations, governmental entities, donors, volunteers and other givers, has created a knowledge-center complex and hatchery aimed at recognizing why freshwater angling is important, both in cold economic terms and in the warmer context of rich personal experiences that historically have shaped Texans' lives in the outdoors.



Article by David Baxter

Photos by Wyman Meinzer

Excepting the introduction of Florida-strain largemouth bass to Texas waters back in the 1970s, there has been no event with as much significance to freshwater fishing as the opening of the Edwin L. Cox, Jr. Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) in Athens in November 1996. We have used the TFFC as a guide or template to this special issue on freshwater fishing in Texas.

Everything at the TFFC has some significance to freshwater fishing, and much as a visitor to the TFFC might tour its exhibits to gain an understanding of fisheries, we will take the reader on a brief tour of freshwater fisheries in Texas. We start at the entrance as visitors cross over a replica of a Hill Country stream, and begin our journey by trying to understand the basis for all fisheries in Texas—habitat.

Without the state's streams, rivers, ponds and lakes there would be no sport fishery that provides 29 million days of recreation to some 2 million anglers, and pumps some \$858 million into our economy. And that's just the freshwater fishery. Coastal fishing is another story for another time. Our visitor to freshwater fishing and the TFFC will stroll past all major inland aquatic habitats—from rocky western streams such as the Devils River with its gin-clear waters, to languid eastern lakes such as Toledo Bend murky

with the tannin from a million trees.

After we understand habitats, our tour of the TFFC and inland fishing moves to the future of fishing—our kids. Freshwater fishing and the TFFC are made for children. Some of almost every adult's fondest memories are of moments spent with parents or grandparents, cane pole in hand, muddy and wet to the knees on the bank of some pond, a worm on their hook and a smile on their face.

The TFFC revives those memories and sets the foundation for a new generation of anglers with its 1.2-acre casting pond to the rear of the center. The Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas's popular and successful KIDFISH program moved its base of operations from Austin to Athens to be closer to this epicenter of Texas freshwater fishing.

Our children are our future, and fishing can play an important role in making sure that future is a healthy and positive one, but we must not forget those who have helped shape the course of freshwater fishing. The contributions of fishing icons are memorialized at the TFFC lest we forget that world-class fishing takes the efforts of world-class scientists, anglers and everyone who shares this ardor. Perhaps my favorite, because I knew and worked with him, is Bob Kemp. As a regional fisheries director in Tyler, he used personal funds to bring the first Florida bass to Texas, and

the rest is history. Kemp went on to become director of all Texas Parks and Wildlife department fishery operations, and much of what fishermen now enjoy springs in part from Bob Kemp's vision.

Have a seat in the TFFC's theater and come face to face with the vision of Kemp, David Campbell and others in the form of the largest of Texas's largemouth bass. She, as all such lunker bass are females, is a Florida-strain bass that by now probably weighs more than 19 pounds. She came from Brandy Branch Reservoir near Hallsville and weighed a bit under 14 pounds when caught last spring. She was transferred to Heart of the Hills Research Station near Ingram and fattened up before taking residence on center stage at the TFFC. Originally part of the ShareLunker program, this mother of all basses is an example of what can be accomplished when fisheries biologists and fishermen work toward a common goal of improved fishing.

Around the corner from the theater is a window that looks down onto a 24,000-square-foot warehouse-like room with raceways and vats holding forage fish, rainbow trout and bass that are part of the ShareLunker program. This is a window on the domain of hatchery technicians and lab scientists. Whether they are clad in muddy hip boots or white lab coats, these are the folks who for the most part work unseen by the angling public,



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but their work often has impact beyond what shows up in a fisherman's livewell.

Scientists at the TPWD's Heart of the Hills and San Marcos facilities pioneered work in DNA genetic analysis, whereby tissue samples could determine if a largemouth bass was indeed a Florida strain or some more proletarian subspecies that might not ever amount to much. The principles of such DNA analysis have been expanded beyond cold-blooded creatures with scales. Now, a game warden can have scientists examine a sample of dried blood scraped from a pick-up truck bed and learn if it came from a white-faced heifer or a white-tailed deer. You just never know what tangential benefits will come about when you buy a fishing license.

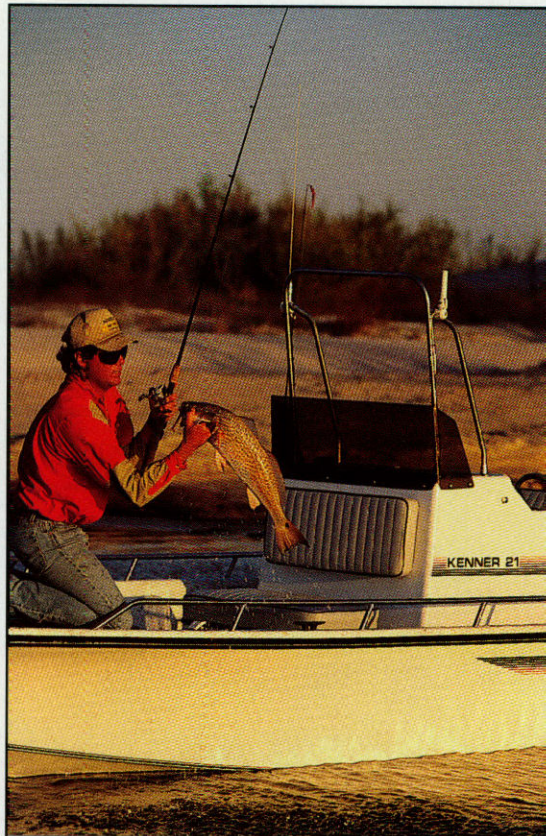
Step out the back door of the TFFC and see earth-movers sculpting hatchery ponds from the East Texas clay. Soon they will brim with largemouth bass and catfish destined for the public waters of Texas for the enjoyment of the fishing public. We hope this tour of the Texas Freshwater Fishery Center and special fishing issue will give anglers and non-anglers alike some insight into the passion of freshwater fishing. ★

VISIT THE TEXAS FRESHWATER FISHERIES CENTER

The Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center is located in Athens, approximately 75 miles east of Dallas.

The center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for senior citizens and \$2 for children.

For more information call 903-676-2277.



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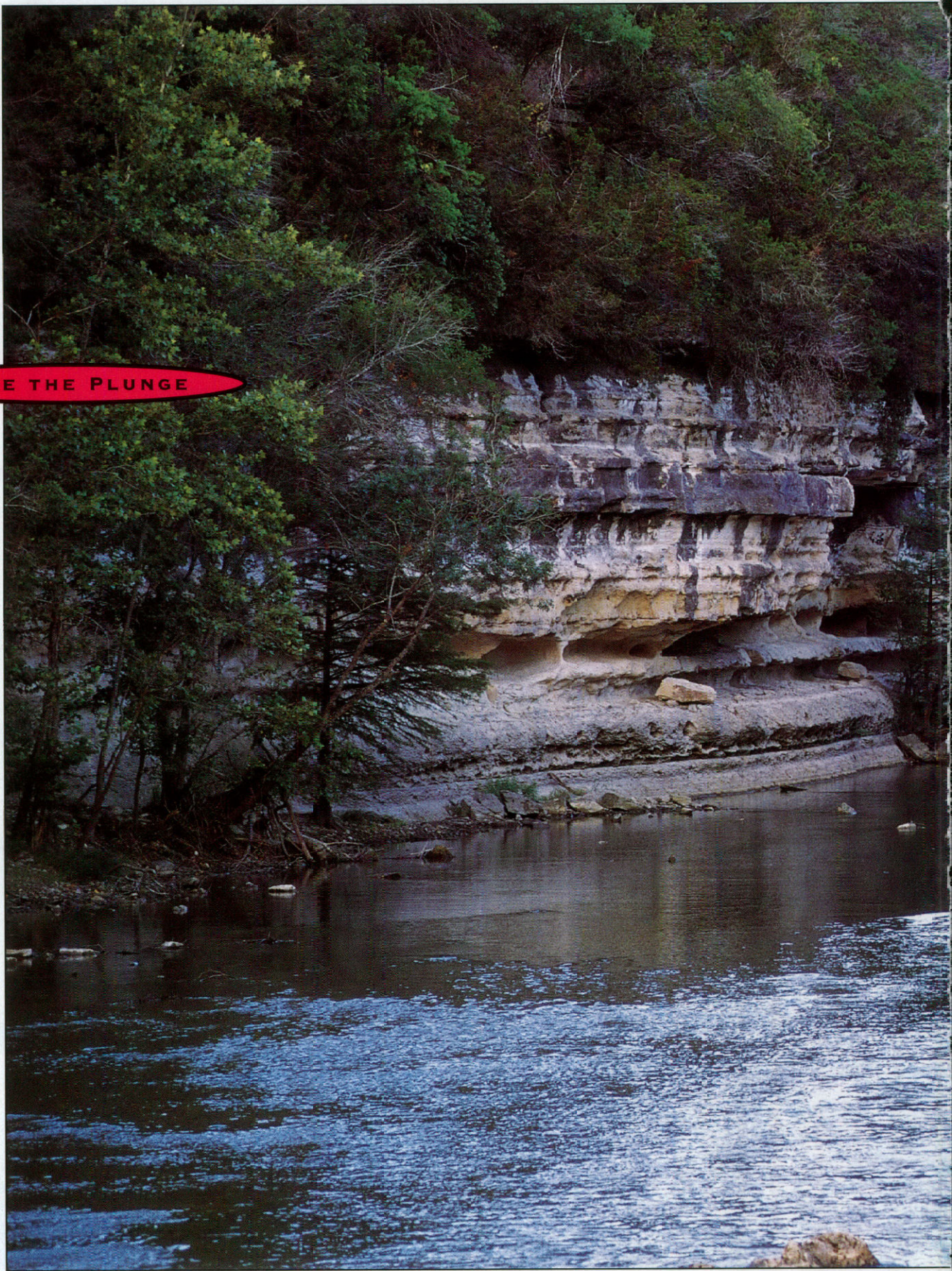
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TAKE THE PLUNGE





EARL NOTTINGHAM

You cannot have a fishery, or even fish, without productive habitats. Texas's fresh waters are a far cry from their original state, with impoundments from the tiny to the mighty altering the aquatic landscape in the past 100 years. Yet, Texas anglers must count themselves lucky to have such tremendous resources. Take a fish's-eye view of the major habitat types that support our fishing milieu as we walk through the Visitors Center.



by Jim Cox

Visitors strolling through the Edwin L. Cox, Jr. Visitors Center can immerse themselves in the biology and ecology of Texas's freshwater habitats without getting their feet wet.

In fact, one would have to don a wet-suit and scuba gear to get a better look at the state's typical stream, pond and reservoir fisheries than you can at this innovative new facility outside Athens.

Your introduction to these habitats starts as soon as you approach the entrance, crossing a footbridge over a clear-water creek. The stream, complete with cypress roots, fallen logs and native streamside vegetation, is a close replica of Onion Creek, which flows through McKinney Falls State Park near Austin.

Once we are past the bridge, we begin the gentle descent into a fascinating fish's-eye view of a stream and its finny inhabitants.

This cross-section glimpse of underwater habitats—utilizing plexiglass windows below water level—brings to life the three major types of aquatic landscapes that support Texas freshwater sport fisheries. The stream meanders and widens into a scene that is familiar to many Texas anglers—the farm pond, colloquially known in rural Texas as the “stock tank.” From there the channel widens and deepens to present a look at our state's system of mighty reservoirs, which not only provide flood control and water supply needs, but also support a multi-million-dollar freshwater fishing industry.

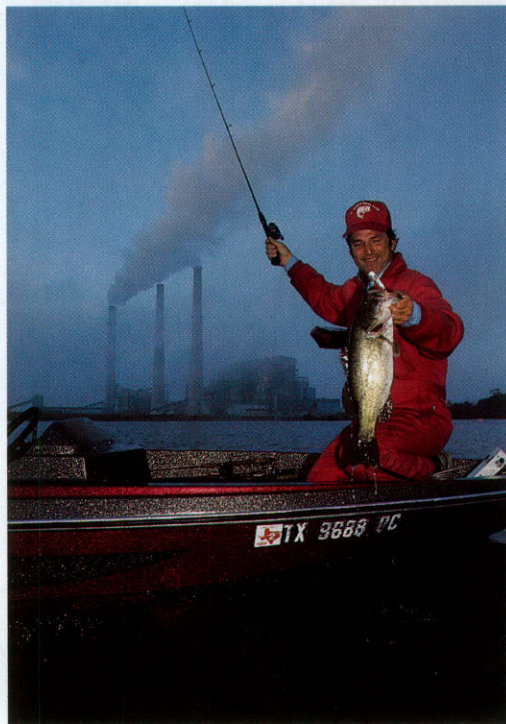
SMALL STREAMS SCARCE IN TEXAS

Texas's topography ranges from mountains and deserts in the west, to coastal plains and lowland swamps in the east, with a host of gradations between. The state's smaller streams reflect this diversity. In the western third of the state, creeks and draws that can be raging torrents after thunderstorms are mostly dry during summers, and many creeks that historically were recharged by permanent springs now are dry because of groundwater pumping and agricultural practices.

Alterations likewise have made the free-flowing “creeks” of the eastern parts of Texas a fairly diminished resource, due to many of the same reasons, foremost of which are pumping, damming, timber clearing and overgrazing by livestock of watershed habitats.

However, in certain geologically

Continued on page 17



© GRADY ALLEN



EARL NOTTINGHAM

Fish habitats in Texas run the gamut from the pristine to the artificial. Electric generating plant cooling reservoirs are in the latter category, but they provide their own brand of bass-fishing action.



A statue on the grounds of the Fisheries Center commemorates the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department game wardens who lost their lives in the line of duty.



© RUSTY YATES

This perhaps could be considered the rarest of fish habitats in Texas—a free-flowing Pedernales River in Pedernales Falls State Park. Thanks to spring waters, Edwards Plateau rivers can maintain permanent fisheries for such favorites as Guadalupe and largemouth bass.

Continued from page 14

blessed parts of Central Texas, clear and clean waters issue forth from subterranean aquifers in the Balcones Escarpment, flowing with varying degrees of intensity over and through limestone-clad basins and populated by a colorful and vigorous community of fishes and other aquatic life. The relative frailty of such streams can be seen at the actual Onion Creek, as it flows past a golf course, a gravel quarry operation and a major city landfill on its way from McKinney Falls State Park to its union with the Colorado River. The creek, in fact, had to be closed to swimming in the park for several years in the early 1980s because of fecal coliform pollution caused by a city wastewater treatment facility that eventually was replaced by more efficient plants constructed elsewhere.

REPLICATING NATURE

The Onion Creek replica at the center was designed from scratch by Scott Horner, a partner in the Seattle-based BIOS, Inc., which has done projects for several major aquariums across the nation. Using color snapshots as a guide, workers fashioned a stream and surrounding banks that are uncannily faithful to the real thing, right down to the streamside vegetation and rocky bed.

The star of the stream display, fish-wise, is the Guadalupe bass. Dubbed the "State Fish of Texas" by the Texas Legislature a few years back, the Guadalupe nevertheless is unknown, or at least mysterious, to most Texans. One reason for this is the fact that it lives in only a handful of Central Texas streams and reservoirs. The fact that it is the only member of the *Micropterus* family of basses (actually members of the sunfish family) that is exclusive to Texas perhaps made it more deserving of the "state fish" designation than basses such as the largemouth, found across wide areas of the nation and even in several foreign countries.

Swimming about in the replicated stream with the Guadalupe are longear



© DAVID J. SAMS

A flyrodder works the currents of the Brazos River near an old bridge. Improved access may be increasing usage of Texas's major rivers by anglers.



© GRADY ALLEN

In a fairly typical East Texas scene, this angler is chest-deep in lily pads. East Texas has become what many experts believe is the best largemouth bass fishing region in the nation.

sunfish, blacktail shiners and gray red-horse suckers. Adjacent to the under-stream viewing windows are interpretive aquaria displaying live blue catfish, creek chubsuckers and several other nongame fishes common to various Texas stream habitats. The stream exhibit was sponsored by Edwin L. Cox, Jr., for whom the entire Visitors Center is named.

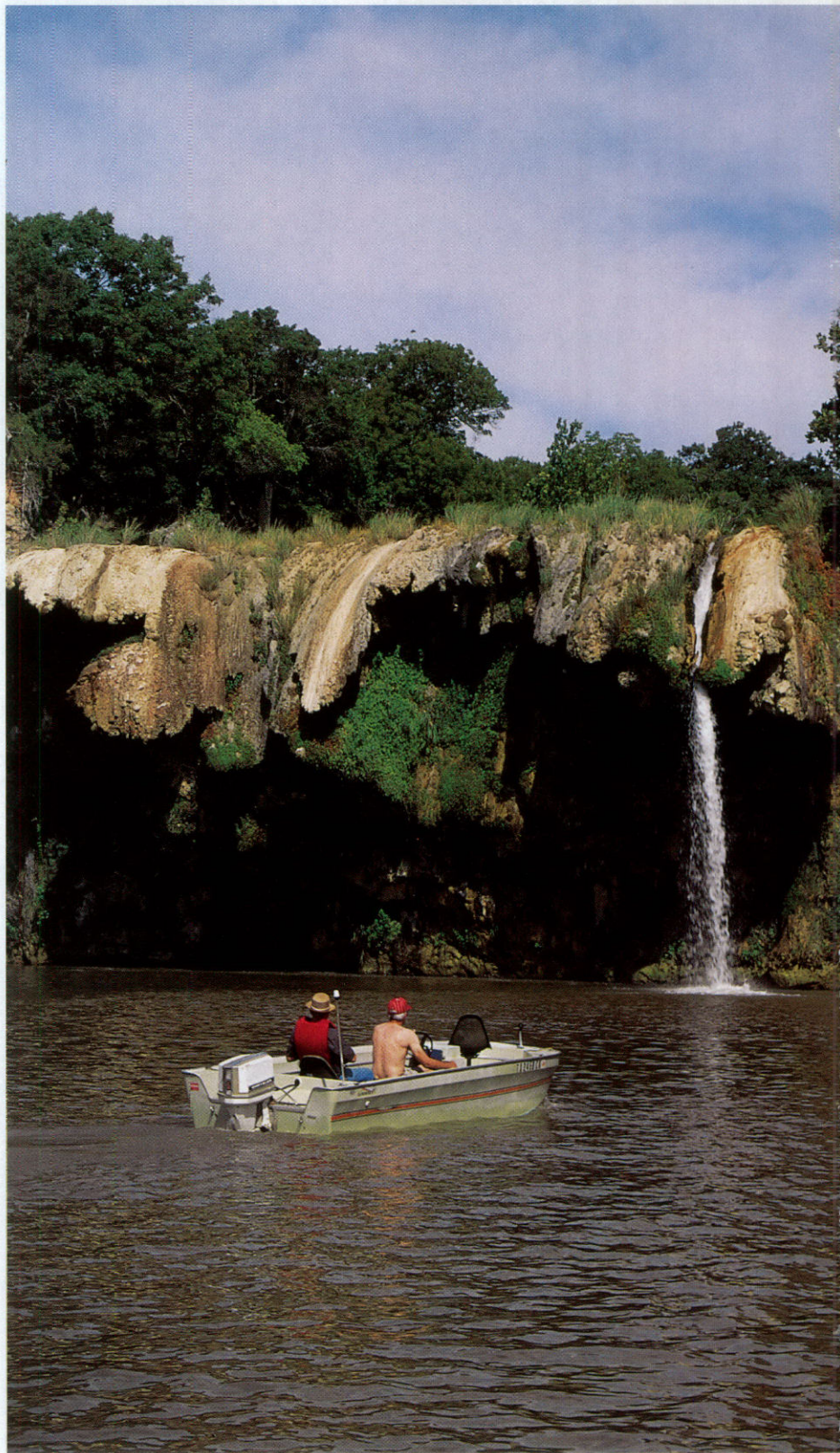
TANKS A MILLION

If you're an adult angler who spent some formative years in Texas, you are very likely to have some vivid memories of fishing in small ponds and lakes. The very first fishing experience for many Texas anglers was dipping an earthworm or minnow in one of the state's thousands of farm ponds. These ponds, or "tanks" serve mainly as repositories for livestock water, although an increasing number of Texas landowners are designing and building ponds with habitat features that are salubrious for growing bass and other game species. In some cases, large ponds, or series of ponds, are being leased to sport anglers, similar to hunting leases.

Those observing the 25,000-gallon pond exhibit at the Fisheries Center, sponsored by Perry R. Bass, may be transported back in time to some of their early fishing trips. The pond has a definite "down home" appearance, with fallen logs, a half-flooded aluminum boat and a variety of native plants, including pondweed, water lilies and cattails. Swimming behind the plexiglas are mainstay species of Texas stock ponds: largemouth bass, channel catfish, bluegills, golden shiners and western mosquitofish. The area of the pond bottom nearest the viewing window has been fashioned into what is hoped will be a spawning area for bluegills.

POND MANAGEMENT

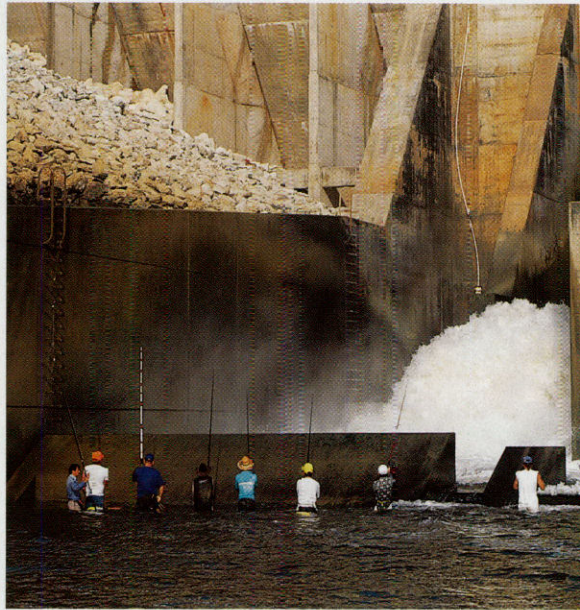
Aquatic weeds are an important, if not absolutely essential, element in game fish production. They provide food for insects and other aquatic organisms



The upper end of Lake Buchanan at the top of the Highland Lakes chain is a popular spot for white bass and striped bass fishing.



© GRADY ALLEN



© GRADY ALLEN

Fishing below dams, especially during spring when fish are attempting spawning runs upstream, are popular for white and striped bass, and even crappie.

that in turn provide food for fish, help stabilize the shorelines and bottom of the pond and keep the water clearer. They also provide escape cover for juveniles of both game fish and the forage species upon which they feed. However, controlling the species and biomass of plants in a pond can be a challenge. For instance, exotic plant species such as hydrilla or watermilfoil can take over a pond, rendering it useless for fishing and actually detrimental to fish populations.

The aquarium exhibits adjacent to the pond show examples of poorly managed and well-managed ponds, and offer management options for weed control. One of these is the much misunderstood use of grass carp. Only genetically altered “triploid” grass carp are legal for release in Texas, and then only with required TPWD permits. Triploid grass carp have three sets of chromosomes rather than the normal two, which render them sterile. The exhibits also give tips on other techniques such as pond renovation and stocking.

THE BIG LAKE CHALLENGE

Texas has only one natural lake—Caddo—but our state ranks second only to Minnesota in surface acreage of inland fresh waters. Major man-made reservoirs are in fact the backbone of Texas’s freshwater sport fishing, and the economic impact of this nationally known fishing resource reaches into virtually every community and city in the state.

Managing sport fisheries on Texas lakes is a formidable challenge, since the habitats, water quality and other environmental factors in these reservoirs in effect make each one unique. Adding to the challenge is the fact that native Texas game fishes, including the popular largemouth bass, evolved as stream species and are not necessarily adapted to big reservoir conditions.

Interpretive displays at the Fisheries Center’s lake explain how the TPWD’s Fishery Division custom-fits management to suit local conditions in each



© CLARY STUDIO, INC

The Fisheries Center's exterior appearance will more closely replicate natural settings once all the native vegetation matures. This is a view of the farm pond portion of the habitats.

reservoir. The stocking of Florida-strain largemouth bass is one management technique that paid off in a big way for most Texas reservoirs—and it was responsible for programs like ShareLunker amassing such large numbers of 13-pound-plus bass. The Floridas, which attain Sumo-sized proportions compared to native “northern” largemouths, have propelled Texas in general—and East Texas in particular—into the forefront of bass fishing nationwide.

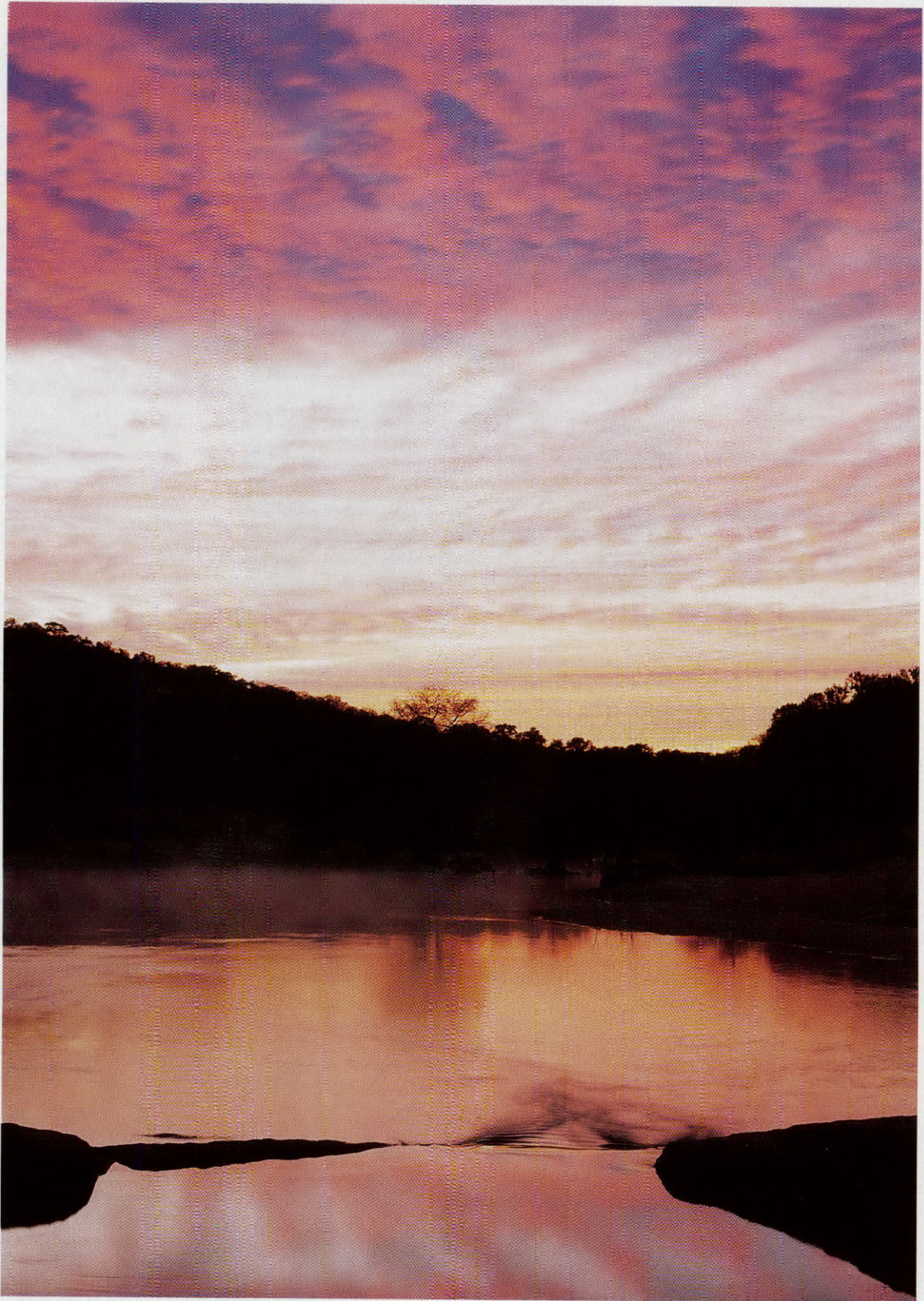
Not all reservoirs in Texas have good bass habitat, however, so fishery managers have turned to non-native species to improve fishing. Striped bass and

striped/white bass hybrids have jazzed up open-water and large reservoir fishing action all across the state, and studies have shown that their presence is not a threat to bass or other native sport fishes. Aquarium displays provide a close look at hard-fighting stripers and their hatchery-produced cousins, the hybrid stripers. Another aquarium display features two other interesting non-native fish—walleyes and yellow perch. These northern fish have been stocked in the Panhandle's Lake Meredith, where cold water and rocky habitats make the imports feel right at home. Smallmouth bass, also on display here, have made an impact at Meredith and at more souther-

ly impoundments such as Lake Whitney in Central Texas.

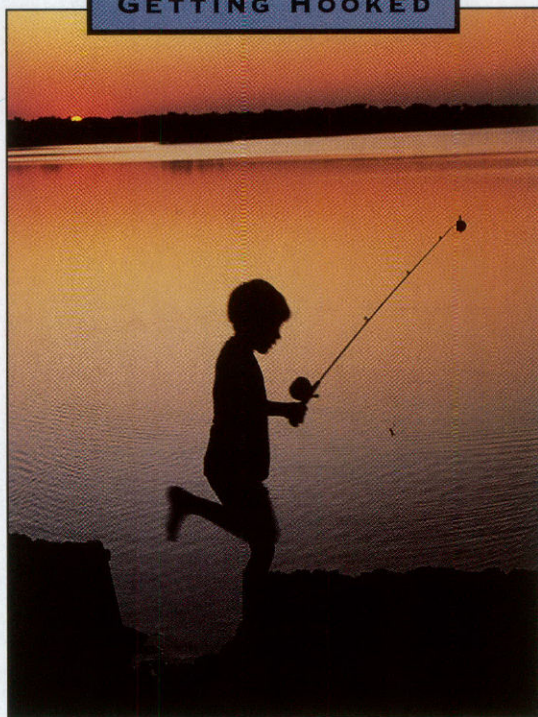
The reservoir display itself is an underwater view of a lake, with typical Texas species in residence: largemouth and spotted bass, white bass, buffalo, freshwater drum, gizzard shad, various gar species and the endangered paddlefish all cruise the deep waters in view of visitors.

Thus the Edwin L. Cox, Jr. Visitors Center is more than just an aquarium—it's a living exhibit that tells the story of how Texas's freshwater fisheries came to be, and how the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is attempting to preserve it for future generations. ★



© RUSTY YATES

GETTING HOOKED



© WYMAN MEINZER

There's no substitute for picking up a fishing rod and actually catching a fish to get a person's attention, especially a youngster. The Zebco Casting Pond and adjacent activity center will be hosting thousands of kids in a year-round program of supervised fishing for rainbow trout and catfish.



by Mary-Love Bigony

Young voices blend in a melody of shouts and laughter around the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center's casting pond. Lines sail through the air and baited hooks hit the water with a gentle plop. This is the future of freshwater fishing in Texas: children experiencing for the first time the thrill

of catching a fish and developing an appreciation for the sport that they could carry with them for life.

The 1.2-acre casting pond, sponsored by Zebco, is becoming one of the TFFC's most popular attractions. Brookshires Grocery sponsors the adjacent Anglers' Pavilion, where group activities are held.

One of the casting pond's main objectives is to provide a youngster's first fishing experience. Volunteers from the community are on hand to teach the young anglers to bait a hook and cast a line, and to make sure the experience is a good one. Children often meet a statewide bass fishing celebrity; Barry St.



© WYMAN MEINZER

Fishing, like many other outdoor activities, can have an extremely positive influence on a young person's life. Introducing youngsters to the joys of fishing is one of the chief goals of the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center.

Clair, whose 18.18-pound largemouth bass from Lake Fork has been the state record since 1992, works at the center and spends much of his time there at the casting pond.

"We started our program on December 8 with a KIDFISH event," said TFFC's Visitor Center director David Mask. "That brought us a lot of volunteers from the community. What we're doing now is trying to rustle up volunteers from bass clubs in the area to help us on a regular basis."

Current plans are to provide group fishing sessions on weekdays and open fishing on weekends. "We're going to stock rainbow trout in the winter and channel catfish in the warmer months," said Mask. He emphasized that a parent or another adult must fish with each youngster. "We want to foster a good fishing experience for both the adult and the child," he said.

Anyone interested in scheduling a group fishing session may call 903-676-BASS. Open fishing sessions start on the hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends. Each session consists of a 10- to 15-minute angler education session covering equipment, tackle, how to fish and catch-and-release. This is followed by a half-hour fishing session.

Efforts to introduce children to fishing gained steam in 1994 with the inauguration of KIDFISH, a Texas program sponsored by the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas to educate and provide hands-on fishing experience to youngsters. Thousands of children have participated in KIDFISH events held throughout the state.

The KIDFISH office in Athens, headed by director Jody Jackson, coordinates program activities in communities all across Texas. For an event to take place, members of the community must form a committee to solicit donations, recruit volunteers and publicize the event. Local youngsters may attend free, although they are encouraged to seek sponsors. Catchable-sized fish are stocked prior to each event. Participants attend a 15-

Continued on page 27



EARL NOTTINGHAM

ABOVE

Barry St. Clair, whose 18.18-pound largemouth bass from Lake Fork is the current state record, frequently helps out with youth activities at TFFC's casting pond.

BELOW

Before or after casting pond activities at TFFC, children and their parents should take the opportunity to learn more about freshwater fishing in Texas at the center's many exhibits.



EARL NOTTINGHAM



STEVE J-ALL TPWD



© KIDFISH

ABOVE

TPWD game warden Stacy Bishop helps out with a KIDFISH event. The KIDFISH program helps communities across the state organize youth fishing events.

LEFT

KIDFISH director Jody Jackson, on the left, knows all about how fishing can bring a smile to a child's face.

RIGHT

Fishing can foster closer family ties when parents and children spend time together outdoors.

BELOW

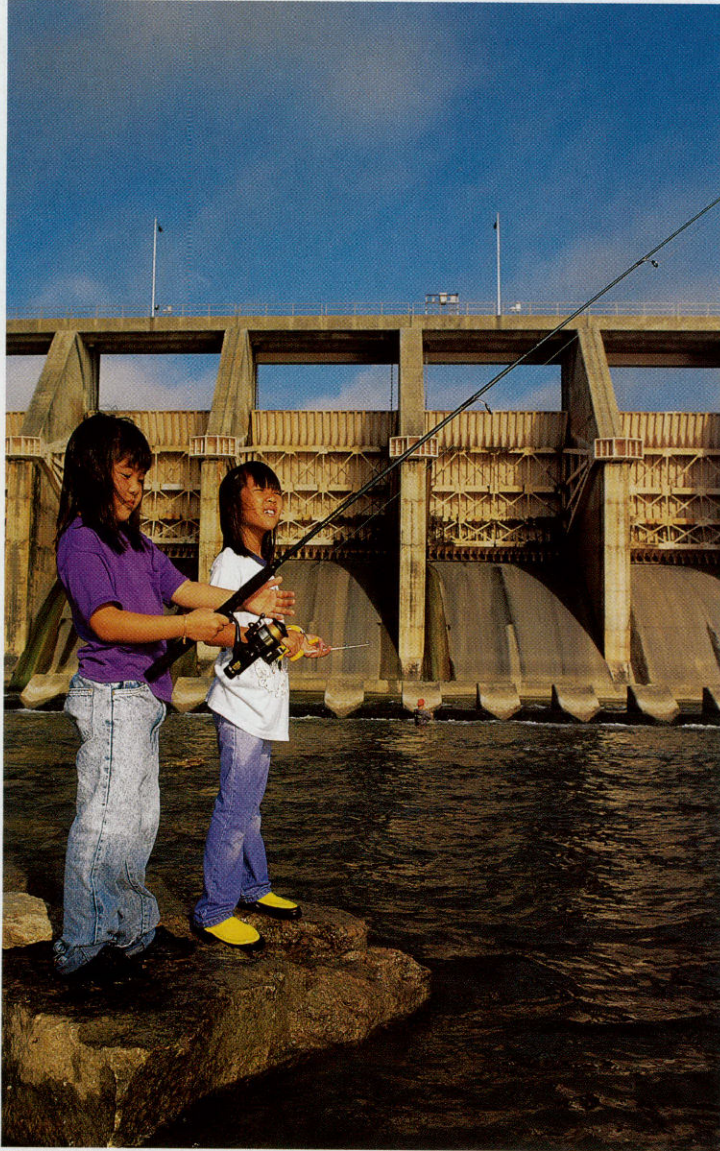
TFFC's casting pond hosts group fishing sessions and open fishing. Call the center for more information.



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EARL NOTTINGHAM



© GRADY ALLEN

Children who learn about the joys of fishing at a young age often carry a love for the sport with them throughout their lives.

Continued from page 24

minute KIDFISH college presentation featuring the basics of fish biology, fishing techniques, ethics and safety. Next comes the fishing, and an awards ceremony concludes each event.

Funds raised by KIDFISH events support Texas Parks and Wildlife Department efforts such as fish stocking and site improvements to community lakes.

For more information about KIDFISH call Jody Jackson at 903-677-4721.

There are a number of other youth-oriented fishing and conservation education programs in Texas. TPWD offers Angler Education, which teaches fish identification, angler responsibilities, fishing techniques and equipment. Another program, "Hooked on Fishing—Not on Drugs," combines angler education with drug prevention and community involvement. Call 512-389-4999 for information on either of these.

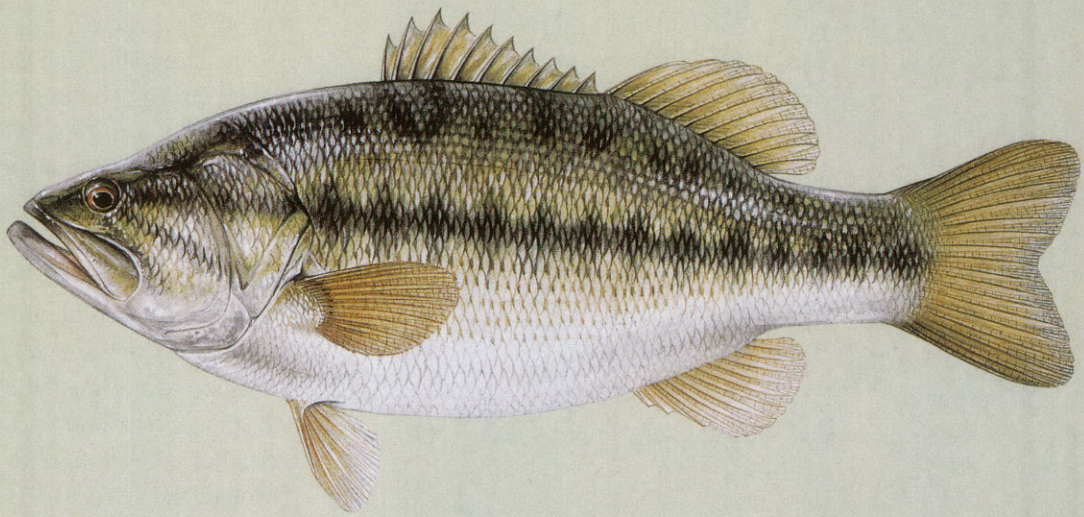
Aquatic WILD is a supplement to the award-winning Project WILD environmental education program. Teachers and youth group leaders take a six-hour workshop covering aquatic topics, which they then integrate into classroom subjects. Call 512-389-4998 for information. Through the "Adopt A Wetland" program, students study a wetland in their own community and conduct water quality testing and other projects. Call 512-980-3221 for information on these two programs.

Aquatic education cooperative efforts also are sponsored by Texas A&M University in College Station (409-845-5785) and by the department's Resource Protection Division in Corpus Christi (512-980-3242).

"Pathways to Fishing," from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is a materials kit that can be used with fishing programs such as those offered by TPWD. Call 512-389-4999 for information. The department's Inland Fisheries Division offers a variety of programs throughout the state to foster an interest in fishing in youngsters, including demonstrations and informational talks. Call your local TPWD office for more information. ★

TEXAS FRESHWATER FISH

Anglers in Texas enjoy pursuing a remarkably varied lineup of fishes, from the smallest sunfish to trophy largemouth bass, to catfish and gar well past the 100-pound level. Here are 17 of the most popular freshwater sport fish species and a few facts about them, taken from the newly revised "Freshwater Fishes of Texas," booklet by Dr. Earl Chilton, to be published in fall 1997. This is an updated version of the popular book of the same title last printed in 1971. Included are descriptions of well over 50 of Texas's most fished-for and interesting freshwater species. The fishes are arranged by family, and the concise, easy-to-read text includes information on distribution, biology and fishing techniques. The beautiful color illustrations make this a publication every fish lover will want to own. Books will be available through bookstores and the Texas Parks and Wildlife catalog.



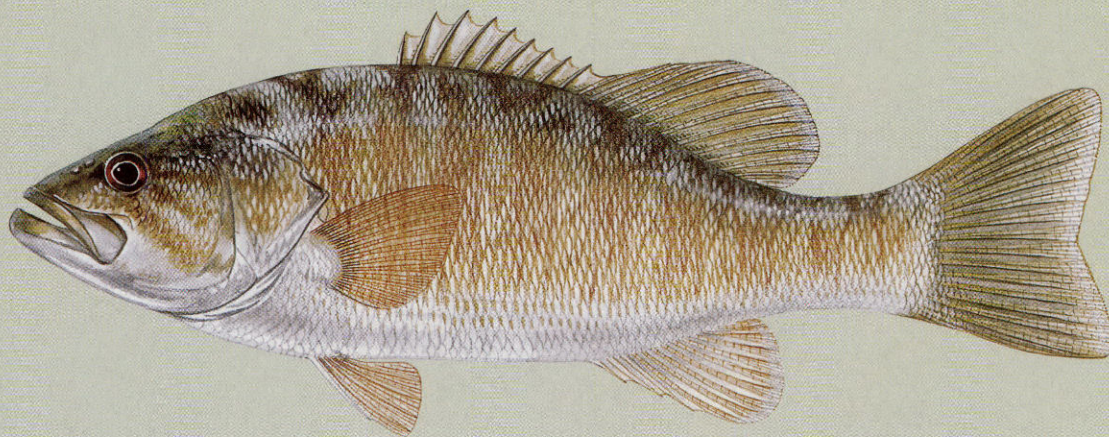
Largemouth Bass
State record: 18.18 pounds

Largemouths are prized for their aggressiveness and power, but they also are intelligent enough to provide a constantly changing challenge to the angler to locate and catch them. There are two basic strains of largemouths in Texas. The "northern" strain is native to Texas waters. Florida-strain largemouths, virtually identical in appearance to the natives, have been introduced throughout most of the state because of their potential for larger sizes.



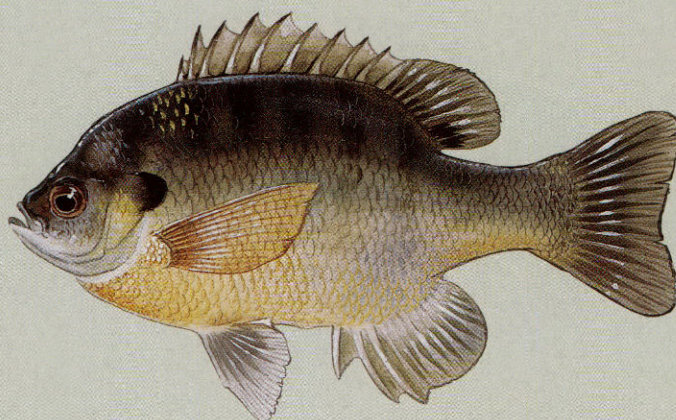
Guadalupe Bass
State record: 3.69 pounds

Named the "State Fish of Texas," the Guadalupe is a true Texas native, found only in the waters of Central Texas. They never will rival largemouths in terms of fishing activity because of the small range and maximum size of about three pounds. Nevertheless, catching these feisty specimens in a clear-flowing Hill Country stream on light tackle can be esthetically uplifting.



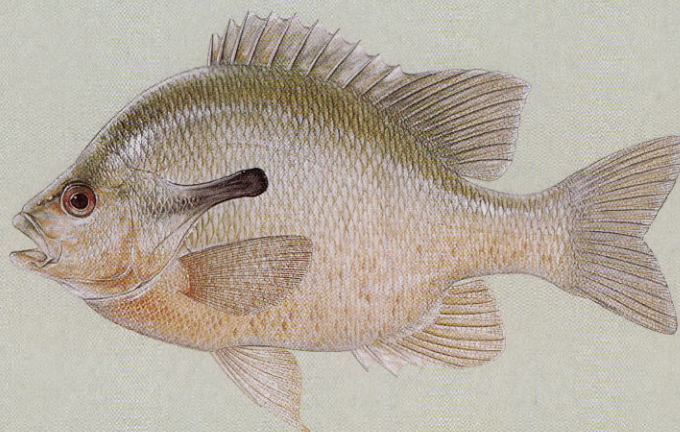
Smallmouth Bass
State record: 7.72 pounds

Smallmouths were not found in Texas before the late Bob Kemp brought them in during the 1970s. They have become established in streams and reservoirs in the northern and western parts of the state. They are especially valuable because they provide a fishery in clear, rocky habitats that are not well-suited for largemouths.



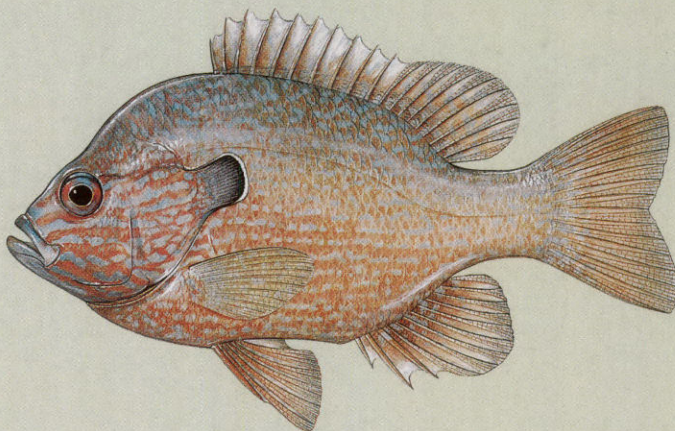
Bluegill
State record: 1.81 pounds

Of all the vast sunfish family, the bluegill probably has provided more fishing thrills to more youngsters just learning to fish than any other species. Found virtually nationwide and in every Texas waterway, these willing biters grow just large enough and are tasty enough to justify a family fishfry.



Redbreast Sunfish
State record: 1.25 pounds

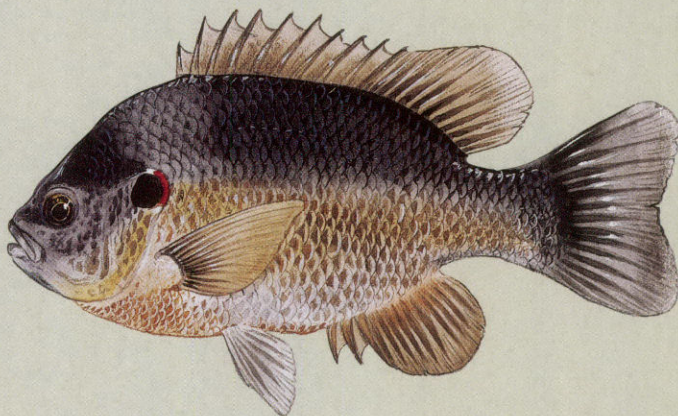
Native to the Southeastern U.S. and Eastern Seaboard, the redbreast sunfish, also commonly referred to as "yellowbelly" sunfish, has been introduced to many East and Central Texas waters. They are popular because of their willingness to strike artificial lures as well as live bait.



Longear Sunfish

State record: .29 pound

Longears are not an important recreational quarry for anglers, but they are perhaps the most colorful of the garish sunfish clan. Males, in fact, can be either bright orange or deep scarlet, the latter inspiring the name "cherry bream." They are found across most of Texas.



Redear Sunfish

State record 2.80 pounds

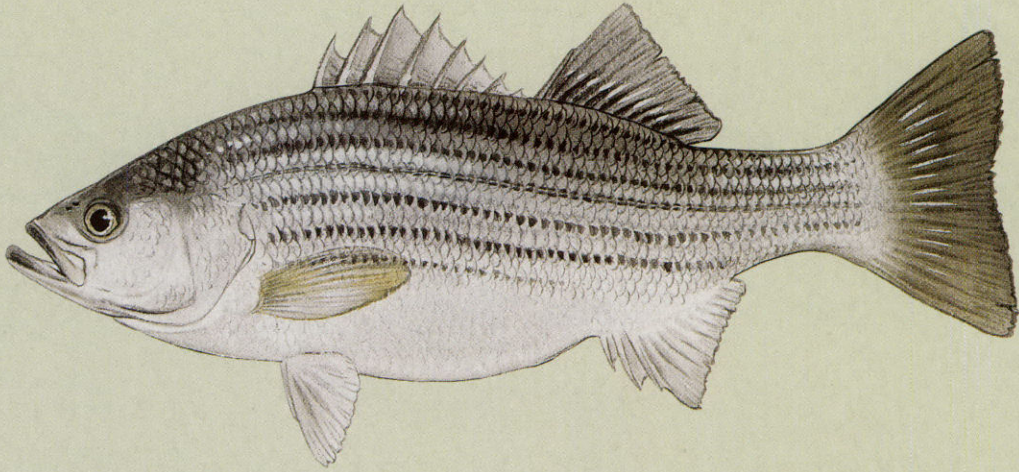
Redears are found in about as many Texas waters as bluegills, but they are not caught as frequently because of their tendency to dwell in deeper waters, where much of their feeding is on the bottom. Nevertheless, redears grow much larger than bluegills, and make up popular fisheries in many lakes and streams, especially in East Texas.



White Crappie

State record: 4.56 pounds

Crappie, also colloquially known as "white perch" in parts of Texas, is your classic panfish. They are found in most lakes and streams, and their willingness to bite a minnow or jig brings anglers out by the thousands, especially during the spring when the tasty fish move into the shallow brush to spawn. Black crappie, in addition to being a bit darker colored, usually are found in slightly clearer waters.



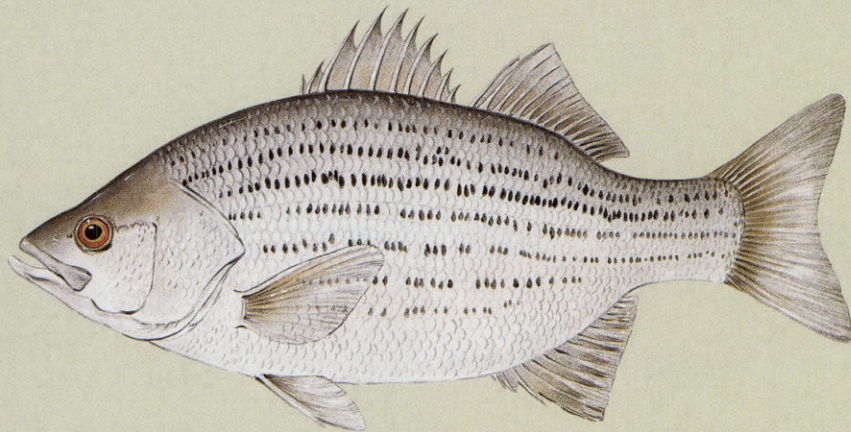
Striped Bass
State record: 50 pounds

The entry of this rapacious predator into Texas was controversial back in the 1970s, as many anglers feared they would compete for forage with, or eat, their favorite game fish. It turns out that stripers have had little impact on other species, and dynamic striper fisheries have become established on many of the state's major reservoirs.



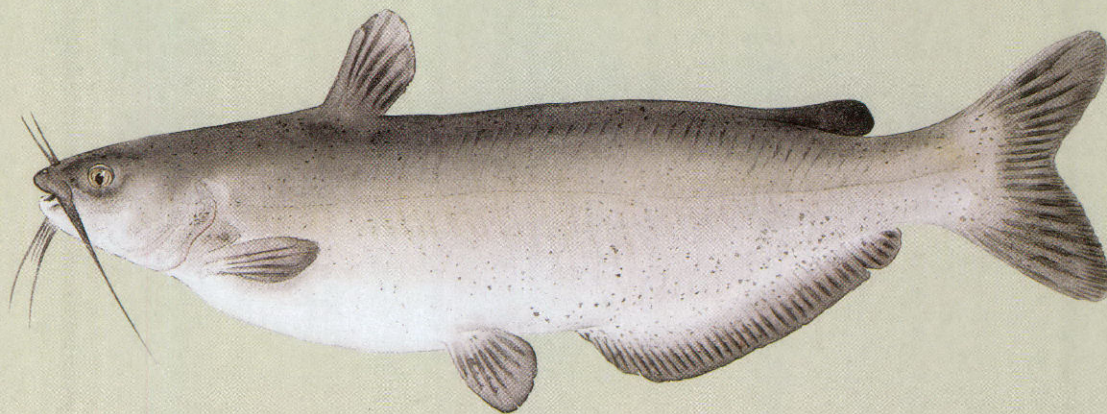
Hybrid Striped Bass
State record: 19.66 pounds

Hatchery-produced crosses between striped and white bass, hybrids are thicker-bodied and more powerful pound-for-pound than stripers, and they grow to much larger sizes than whites. They are especially valuable fisheries in many of the power plant cooling reservoirs across the state.



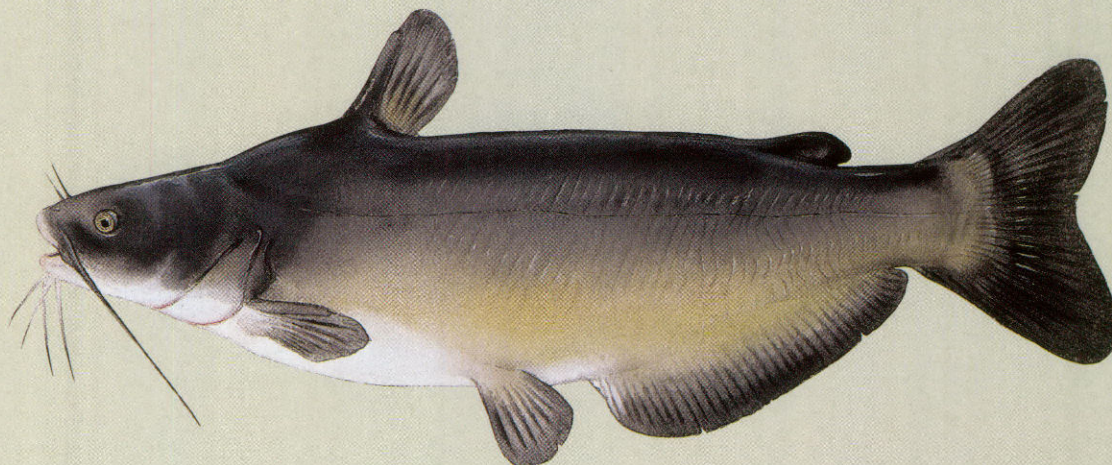
White Bass
State record: 5.56 pounds

In terms of numbers of anglers entertained each year, it would be difficult to call the white bass anything less than spectacular. In the spring, when the whites run headlong up rivers and streams to spawn, white bass fishing can be some of the fastest action available. White bass are not Texas natives, but they have made themselves welcome statewide.



Channel Catfish
State record: 36.5 pounds

These whiskered fish may be more familiar as a dish at the local catfish parlor than as a sport quarry, but in fact channel catfish support a big recreational industry for folks who go after them with trotlines, throwlines and even rod and reel. Baiting areas with soured grain to attract channels has become popular on many lakes.



Blue Catfish
State record: 116 pounds

Blues are similar in appearance to channel catfish, especially during their first few years, but in terms of growth there's a world of difference. Blue cats are known for growing to huge sizes. Although many blues are caught alongside channels by rod-and-reel anglers, most of the huge ones are taken on trotlines.



Flathead Catfish
State record 98 pounds

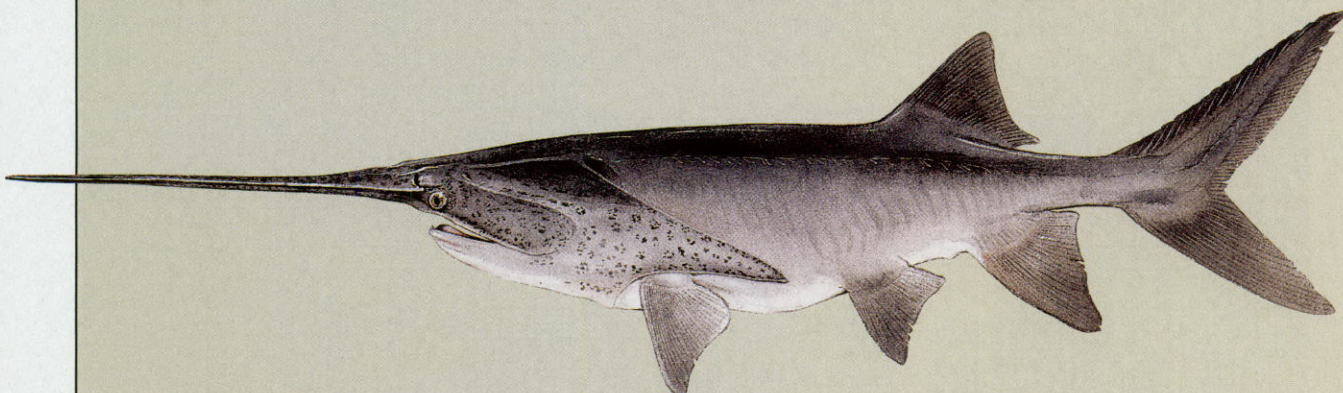
Flatheads are unusual among the Texas catfish clan because they are a true natural predator. While blues and channels will eat such disgusting fare as stink bait, rotten fish or even soap, flatheads eat only live food. Therefore catching them requires live bait. Like blues, flatheads can grow quite large, and they are considered perhaps the tastiest of the three species.



Rainbow Trout *You don't have to go to the Rocky Mountains to have fun catching rainbow trout. In fact, you might be surprised to know they are being stocked right in your town. It's a put-and-take fishery, paid for from sales of state trout stamps. The stockings normally begin in early December and end in February or March.*
 State record: 7.77 pounds



Walleye *The deep, rocky reservoirs of the Panhandle and other northwestern parts of the state are prime for walleyes, which came into Texas during the striper and smallmouth introduction period of the 1970s. They have done especially well at Lake Meredith north of Amarillo, where they are prized as both a sport and food species.*
 State record: 11.88 pounds



Paddlefish *Before the era of dam-building, paddlefish were abundant in Texas rivers. Shortened rivers, heavy harvest for meat and roe and perhaps other factors caused these unique creatures to decline. Still classified by the state as threatened, paddlefish are believed to be making a comeback, thanks to a restocking program that has placed millions of fingerlings in Texas rivers.*



SHARELUNKER

The saga of largemouth bass fishing emerged roughly a quarter-century ago with a frenzy of reservoir construction, especially in East Texas. Then as the Fisheries Division's innovative and science-based management programs came into force, Texas developed as a national powerhouse for bass fishing. Programs like ShareLunker now are fine-tuning the fishery with an eye toward even better bass angling.

© WYMAN MEINZER



© ROBERT LILES

Here is a program that has, perhaps more than any other in the field of freshwater angling, done more to promote the catch-and-release ethic and a general acceptance of a wise largemouth bass conservation attitude than any other ever conceived in the nation.

6

by Rob McCorkle



© DAVID J. SAMS



EARL NOTTINGHAM

TOP
The success of the ShareLunker program can be measured in many ways, but officials are especially pleased that the 245 entries have come from 34 different Texas lakes across the state.

ABOVE
Barry St. Clair enjoys the honor of having caught the largest bass in the ShareLunker program, an 18.18-pounder that also is the current state record.

The Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center sports a dual personality that is part entertainment and education, and part research. At the heart of its research component is the 10-year-old ShareLunker program.

Phil Durocher, Texas Parks and Wildlife's director of Inland Fisheries, goes so far as to say that there wouldn't even be a TFFC if not for the success of the non-profit program operated under the auspices of the ShareLunker Foundation and the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas. It's hard to argue with Durocher.

The program was started in 1986 to encourage Texas anglers to share bass weighing 13 pounds or more caught between December 1 through April 30 with Texas Parks and Wildlife fisheries biologists at the Tyler Hatchery. A total of 246 bass from 34 different lakes have been donated to the program.

The largest so far is an 18.18-pound lunker caught by Barry St. Clair in 1992. A replica of his fish hangs with 10 other finned monsters on a wall in the TFFC Museum and Texas Angler's Hall of Fame. Beneath each fiberglass replica is

information giving the weight, name of the angler and where the fish was caught. A wall of these giants is an impressive sight indeed.

But just what is the ShareLunker program?

By touching one of the three animated cartoon characters on the screen of a nearby kiosk—Ethel the bass, Pauli the paddlefish or Henderson the alligator—visitors receive a brief overview of the ShareLunker program, as well as the Angler Recognition program.

In its simplest terms, ShareLunker is dedicated to conservation and enhancement of the fishing environment in Texas. A plaque at the entry to the TFFC states the program's aim is to promote "education and genetic research to increase the size, production and quality of largemouth bass."

"We had two goals in mind when we started the ShareLunker program 10 years ago—to promote catch and release of big fish and to do some selective breeding research with offspring of these fish to see if we could increase the overall size of a species," Durocher said.

Fisheries biologist and ShareLunker

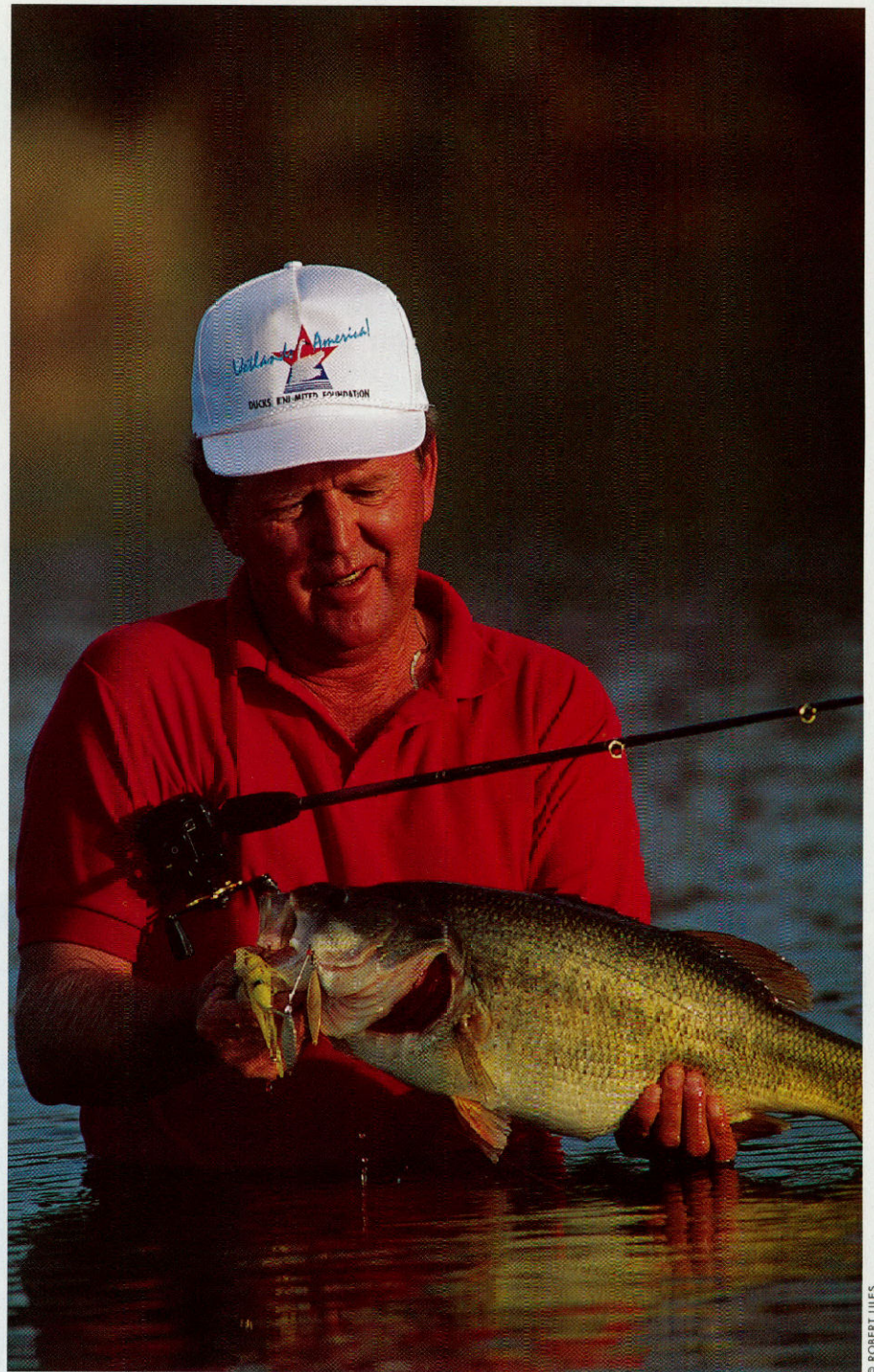
program creator David Campbell, who directs the center's hatchery research, said catch-and-release has been quite successful and has generated good public relations with the fishing community. "The involvement of anglers has been great," he said. "We're realizing that anglers want to be involved in what we're doing."

But it is the biological side of the equation that buoys Campbell's enthusiasm about the ShareLunker program and the promises it holds for enhancing sportfishing in Texas. The TFFC's laboratories and extensive indoor raceways and breeding facilities, according to Campbell, finally will allow biologists to study the genetic aspect of the fish program and determine whether it's feasible to increase the size of bass by selected breeding of lunkers.

"The exciting thing is that we have the facilities here and in the next 10 years we should have the answers to that question," Campbell said. "We've been collecting information from the fish and we won't know the outcome until we do the research. But looking at other animals and results of breeding research, it gives me a good feeling the possibility is there."

The mechanics of donating to the ShareLunker program are fairly simple. The angler who has caught a bass weighing the minimum 13 pounds or more, calls Texas Parks and Wildlife's toll-free pager number, 1-888-221-9867, to report the catch. The pager is monitored 24 hours a day. TFFC staff dispatch a tank truck to the location and transport the fish to Athens. In the lab, a researcher weighs the anesthetized fish and measures its length and girth. A scale is removed from each side of the fish to determine its age and blood is taken from its gill to determine the fish's genetics. A tag also is implanted for identification purposes.

If scientists find the fish is a pure Florida largemouth bass and thus suitable for spawning, a fiberglass replica is made for the angler and the fish is kept for breed-



© ROBERT LILES

ing. If the fish is not suitable for spawning, it is returned to the person who caught it.

Through the ShareLunker program, TPWD fisheries biologists may some day produce the first "super bass"—a superior breed that will secure the state's spot in the pantheon of American bass fishing while guaranteeing excellence in sport fishing for future generations of Texans. ★

Officials believe the 10-year-old ShareLunker program has done more to promote catch-and-release bass fishing than any other factor

Members of the audience often gasp when the 19-plus-pound largemouth bass gulps a koi carp snack from the hand of a dive-suited worker in the Anheuser-Busch Theater Aquarium. This mighty fish symbolizes the state's fascination with, and economic dependence upon, the sport of freshwater fishing.

by Rob McCorkle

Swimming with the fishes holds special significance for 22-year-old Heather Lanman. As one of half a dozen Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center divers, Heather goes eyeball to eyeball with the largest Texas largemouth bass in captivity—the main attraction of the center's Dive Show.

It's the young East Texan's job to don a wetsuit, mask and air tank, and slip into the chilly 26,000-gallon Anheuser-Busch Theater Aquarium that is home to the 19-pound lunker, catfish, sunfish and several other freshwater species. Submerged near a tree branch, Heather answers questions from the audience

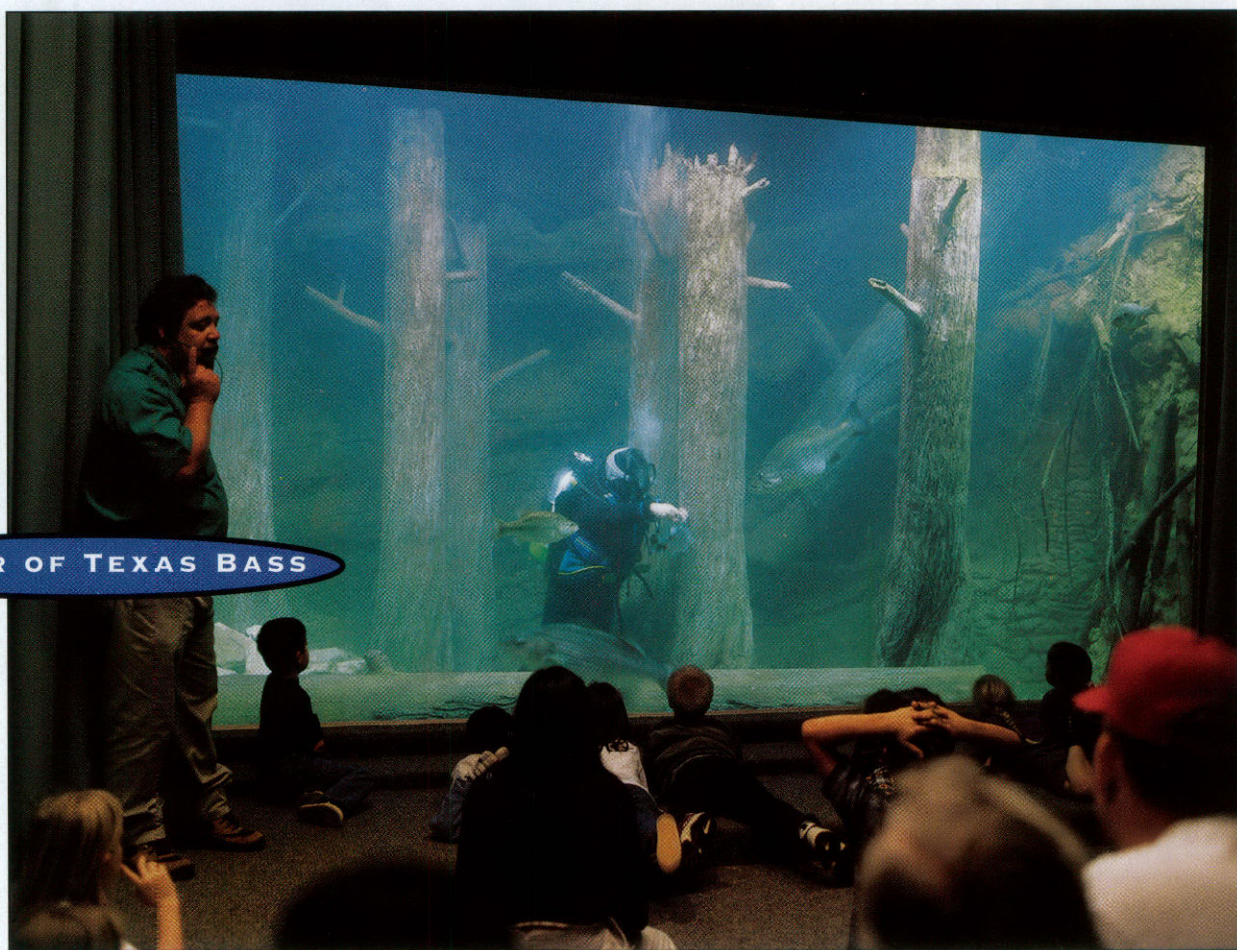
about what's taking place via the theater's special Divelink Communications System. But all communications cease as she plucks a small koi carp from a plastic bag and lets it loose. In a flash, the giant bass snaps up the prey in a furious burst of speed, lips and mouth.

"The audience wants to see the fish eat," Heather said. "When the fish are feeding, the audience seems to be awestruck from what I can see looking out through the aquarium glass.

"She (the bass) gets right in my face, waiting to be fed," the certified diver said of her close encounters with the monster fish. "She's getting sort of lazy and

just watches the bag. When we turn the aerator off at the top, all the fish in the tank know the diver's about to come in and they congregate toward the top of the aquarium. I really like it."

The Dive Show, which takes place at 11 a.m. Tuesday through Friday and at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on weekends, has proved a major crowd-pleaser. The 10- to 15-minute show comes on the heels of a 12-minute video shown in the 150-seat, multipurpose theater. The presentation provides an overview of the TFFC and Texas Parks and Wildlife's fisheries management program. As the screen goes dark, the program focus swings to



EARL NOTTINGHAM



EARL NOTTINGHAM

ABOVE
Replicas of the biggest ShreveLunker fish ever caught are a big attraction at TFFC.

ABOVE RIGHT
The allure of possibly catching a true "trophy-sized" largemouth bass inspires bass anglers to go out in the coldest weather.

RIGHT
Biologists hope the sun is rising on a new era of high-quality bass fishing in Texas.

stage right where the massive aquarium is unveiled as a timer-controlled red curtain retracts.

"You can definitely tell the bass fishermen in the audience," chuckles fisheries biologist David Campbell, head of the center's hatchery program. "For a person used to catching fish who sees this huge fish, it's like, 'Holy cow.' The first thing they want to know is if the window magnifies the fish. It doesn't."

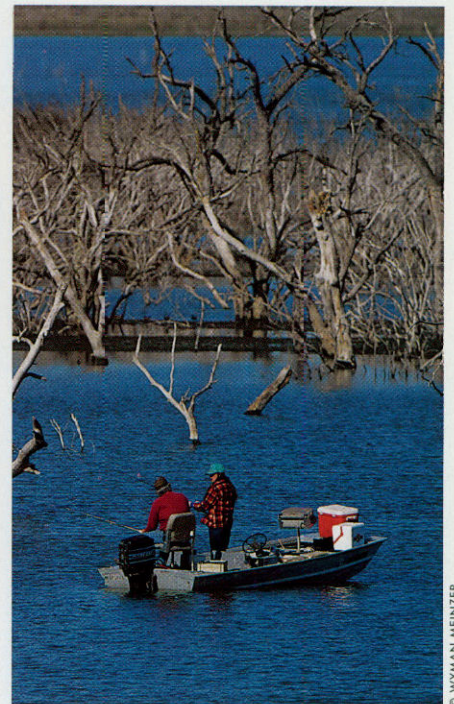
Campbell describes the center's major drawing card as a "first-class hog" who seems to be liking her watery digs. "She's doing very well in the aquarium," he said.

The impressive largemouth was donated to the center through the state's ShreveLunker program, which encourages anglers to loan their catch to the TFFC to determine if it is pure genetically and

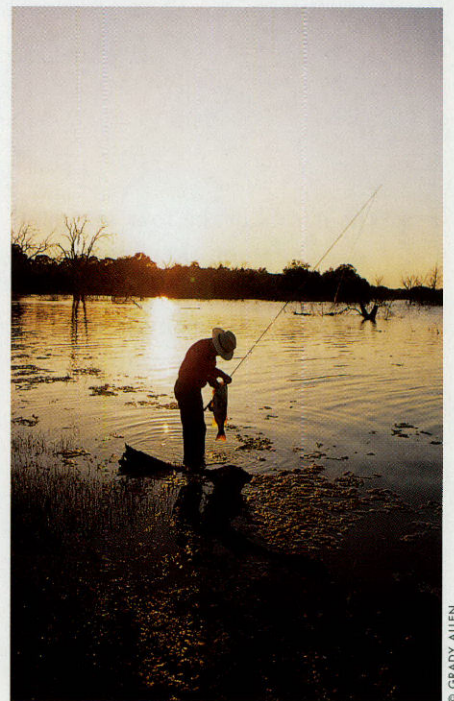
thus worthy of prime breeding stock. The bass that stars in the show tipped the scales at a little more than 13 pounds when caught in Brandy Branch by Longview fisherman Larry Davis last year. She was transported to Texas Parks and Wildlife's Heart of the Hills Research Station near Kerrville, where she was pampered for months before being taken last November to Athens.

Although the fish appears to be eclipsing the 19-pound mark these days, it is unlikely that she'll be plucked from her home for a weigh-in unless biologists feel she's approaching the world record bass size of 22.4 pounds. Such handling, Campbell explained, can easily stress such a sensitive large fish and cause harm.

"After all," Campbell said, "we don't want to lose our star attraction." ★



© WYMAN WEINER

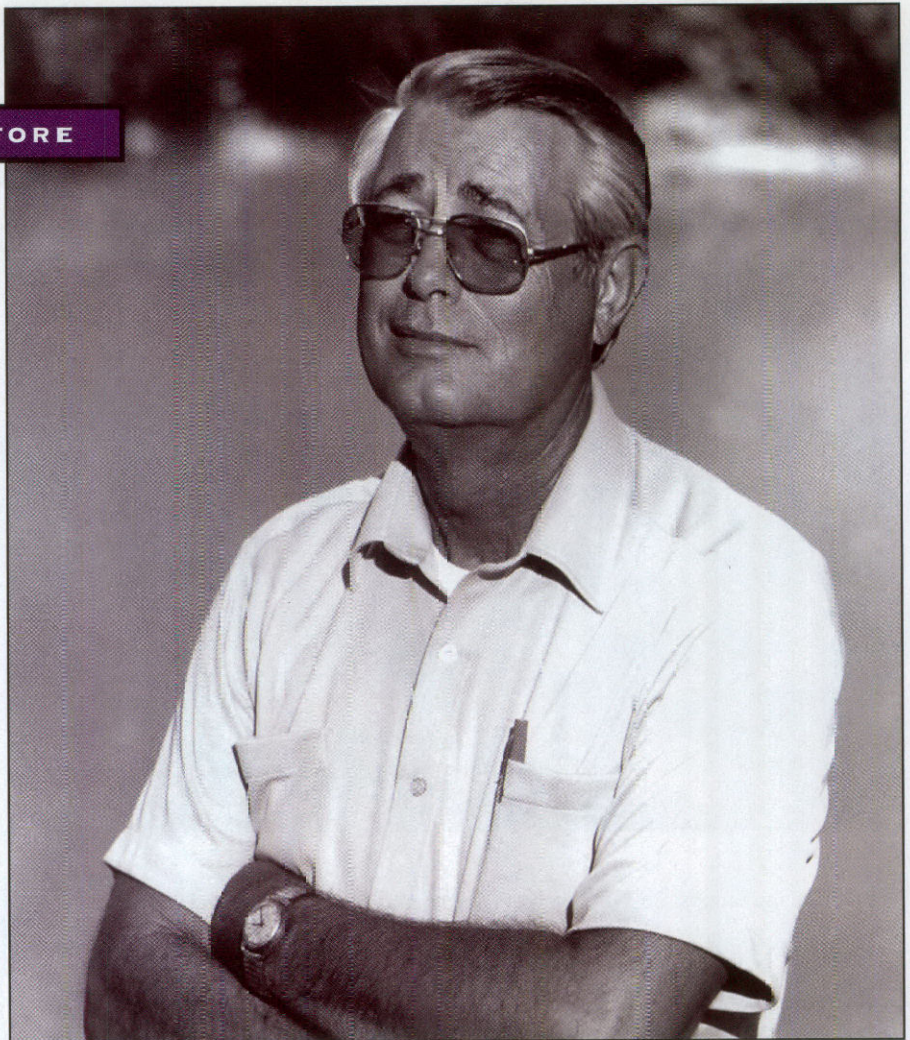


© GRADY ALLEN

THOSE WHO WENT BEFORE

It takes more than science and biologists to create fishing. In fact, there would be no fishing industry if not for the contributions of those who brought the sport to life through participation in its splendors. The first four inductees into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame amply demonstrate that fishing has many faces, and many friends.

by Jim Cox



TPWD PHOTO

The late Bob Kemp ushered Texas into the modern era of fishery science, importing the Florida-strain largemouth bass and developing other non-native species such as smallmouth bass and striped bass.

The names of the four inaugural members of the Freshwater Fisheries Center's Hall of Fame may be unfamiliar to many Texans, but each made significant contributions to the sport of fishing as we know it today. Interactive kiosks at the Fisheries Center offer video presentations on the lives of the Hall of Fame inductees.

BOB KEMP

Any review of the past several decades of fishing, both fresh and saltwater, would of necessity include an overview of the work of Bob Kemp.

Kemp, who was director of TPWD's Fisheries Division from 1973 to 1986, literally thrust the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's fisheries program into the 20th century.

It's an oft-repeated story on newspaper outdoor pages that Kemp, manager of the Tyler State Fish Hatchery during the late 1960s, paid for the first shipment of Florida-strain largemouth bass fingerlings from Florida out of his own pocket. It could be said that Texas's current status as a national leader in bass fishing, the existence of the ShareLunker program and the Fisheries Center itself all could be attributed to Kemp's foresight. By reading the professional fisheries studies of Florida bass, Kemp knew the fish would grow bigger than Texas's native "northern strain" bass, a view not shared by management at that time.

Kemp also pushed hard for the importation of striped bass from the East Coast, with the first stockings in Lakes Spence and Granbury in 1972. Stripers

eventually were stocked in many major Texas reservoirs, and hatchery-produced striped/white bass hybrids were produced and stocked in smaller reservoirs and power plant cooling reservoirs.

Kemp also was a booster of walleyes, a northern fish that has revitalized fisheries at Lake Meredith in the Panhandle and other northerly lakes. Smallmouth bass also made an appearance during Kemp's regime, and the hatchery system produced enough of these northern imports to stock a number of lakes and streams in the western half of the state.

Some of Kemp's most significant contributions came in the field of saltwater fish management. He urged the design of annual statewide saltwater fish harvest and net surveys, which later would become valuable in persuading the Texas

Legislature that changes were needed in coastal fishing laws.

In 1977, the Red Drum Conservation Act was passed, setting both commercial and sport fishing limits on red drum (redfish). Kemp pushed for, and eventually was rewarded by, the Legislature's passing House Bill 1000, prohibiting the sale of red drum and spotted seatrout.

Subsequent legislation placed all authority for managing fish and wildlife resources in all counties with the Parks and Wildlife Commission and increased penalties for the illegal taking of red drum and spotted seatrout.

Kemp also was instrumental in pulling together resources from the Gulf Coast Conservation Association, Central Power and Light and government sources to build the John Wilson Saltwater Fish Hatchery at Corpus Christi, the world's first and only redfish hatchery. The redfish stocking program continues to the present, with expanded facilities.

After chronic heart problems, including a bypass operation, Kemp died less than a year after retiring.

R. D. HULL

Hull's is not a household name, even in Texas, but his invention was the wellspring of one of the most successful tackle manufacturing companies in the nation and, perhaps more important, his reel design opened the door to sport fishing for generations of youngsters.

Hull, who was an avid fisherman, experienced the typical backlash problems encountered by most anglers using revolving-spool casting reels of the day in the 1940s. One day, Hull was in a grocery store when he saw a clerk stripping twine from the end of a stationary spool. This gave him the idea for a fixed-spool, closed-face spinning reel that was to revolutionize casting.

Hull took his idea to the Zero Hour Bomb Co. of Tulsa, Oklahoma, which manufactured bombs for petroleum exploration. Company officials examined his prototype, fashioned from a coffee can and plywood, and adopted the idea. The reel evolved into the pushbutton



© WYMAN MEINZER

Texas anglers owe a debt of gratitude to Bob Kemp, Jackie Hewlett, Floyd Mabry and R. D. Hull for making Texas bass fishing some of the best in the nation and a powerful economic force that provides jobs for Texans.

spincast reel still in use today, and in the process propelled the Zebco Corporation to its present role of prominence in the fishing tackle industry.

JACKIE HEWLETT

Jackie Hewlett, who stood a bit less than five feet tall, nevertheless was a giant in his own right for bass fishing in Texas.

Hewlett and his fishing partner, the late Johnny Mayes, dominated the state bass tournament from 1967 to 1970, winning first, second or third place in the team division every year.

In addition to his tournament success, Hewlett was an unofficial ambassador for a sport that at that time had not reached the popularity it enjoys today. His sister, Dawn Shackelford of Austin, said "I think the fact that his size could have been an inhibitor in his life, and could have kept him from doing a lot of things that he went ahead and did anyway, can be an inspiration to people with disabilities who think they can't get out and fish and do things like that."

Hewlett also collected antique fishing lures, a hobby he pursued with the same enthusiasm he displayed in fishing.

A native Austinite, Hewlett caught his first bass in 1944 at age six from Shoal Creek near Austin's 29th Street bridge. Shackelford said. He continued to fish

tournaments until the early 1970s, when bursitis forced him to do less competitive fishing and more lure collecting.

FLOYD MABRY

Acclaimed as one of the best all-around bass fishermen in the country in the 1960s, Floyd Mabry showed a generation of aspiring bass anglers how to use fishing tackle to the best advantage. From 1963 to 1966, Mabry won the state bass tournament's individual championship three times on three different lakes. The year he didn't win, he still managed to finish second after accidentally cutting some of his fish loose with his boat propeller.

Earl Golding, a veteran outdoor writer with the Waco *Tribune-Herald*, said "Floyd Mabry knew fish. He knew what they were going to do and, you know, fishing with him was just like going to school on bass fishing."

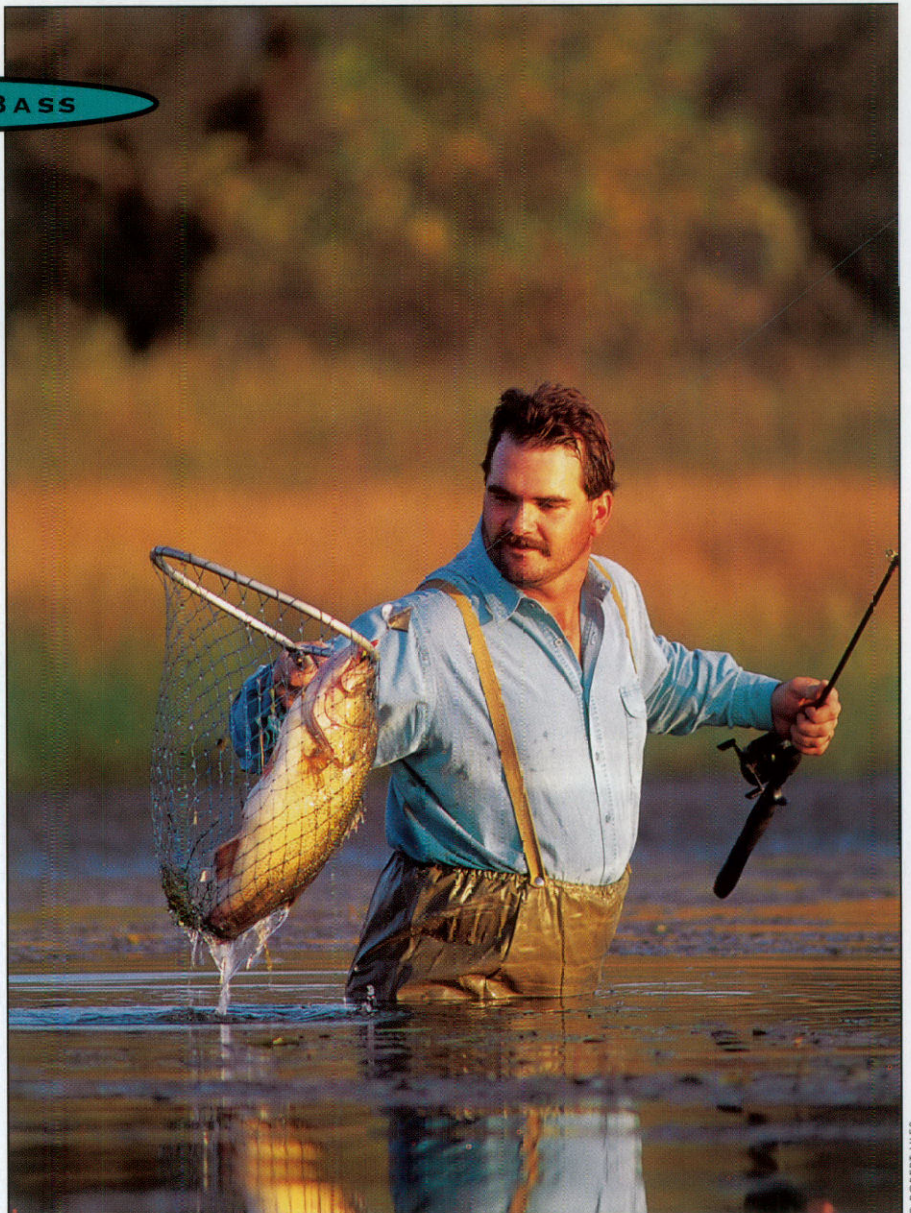
In his later years, Mabry became in effect an ambassador for bass fishing as a traveling representative of Bomber Bait Co., which originated in Gainesville.

His son, Donald Mabry of Gordonville, said, "You could be fishing with him in the boat using the same lure and he would be catching fish and you wouldn't. He just had an ability to do it that I can't explain." ★

THE BETTER BASS

In the old, but not-too-far-distant, days of state fish hatchery operation, producing native largemouth bass and catfish was the main assignment. Little thought was given to the genetic makeup of the limited lineup of fish species being propagated. Now, the importance of maintaining high-quality stocks of bass containing genetics of the larger-growing Florida strain has become more important as hatcheries move into a more science-based mode. Better fish and a wider variety of species to answer the needs of Texas's freshwater fishing scene is one of the prime forces behind the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center's hatchery operation.

by Steve Lightfoot



© ROBERT LILES

Quality-sized bass like the one above are a valuable commodity, fueling an industry that has far-reaching effects across Texas. Good habitat, conservative regulations and strict law enforcement have a lot to do with creating such a fishery. Now science may offer the opportunity to improve the genetics of the fish for better fishing.

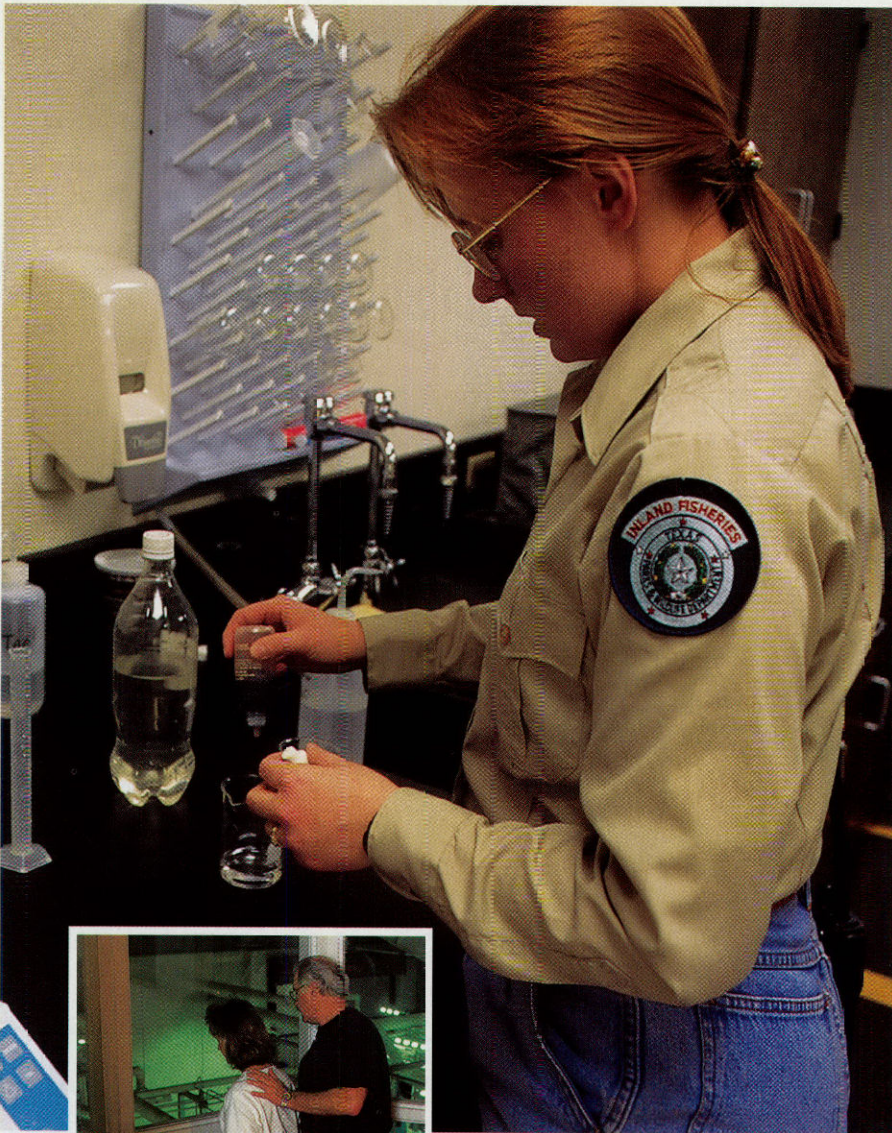
Looking down through the observation window, it's hard to comprehend precisely what's going on in the myriad of blue fiberglass tanks, the maze of white PVC pipelines and stainless steel gauges that make up the nerve center of the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center—the hatchery. If the picture is confusing, imagine what largemouth bass #7F766932D11 must be thinking.

This particular bass, which we'll call D11 for short, is a four- to five-year-old male Florida-strain largemouth bass. He weighed just over four pounds a few weeks

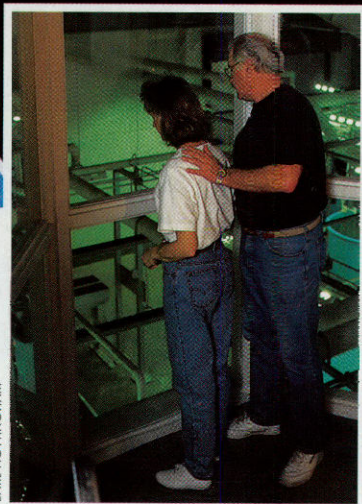
ago when he was taken by a crew of state fisheries biologists from his birthplace at Lake Monticello, located about an hour or so northeast of Athens. D11 was one of several specimens recruited from Monticello to participate in the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Future Broodfish Program. He got the 11-digit identification number when a computer scanner generated the unique combination of letters and numerals on a $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch long reflective magnetic "pit tag," which biologists injected just below his pelvic fin after recording D11's vital

stats. Without a scanner, you wouldn't know D11 from any of the other fish in the Future Broodfish Program, which will identify, reference and pair off some 2,000 bass during the year in an effort to create specific genetic qualities for possible stocking into Texas waters.

This week, D11 will be paired with another recent arrival, #3F90338C121, a 13.93-pound, 10-year-old female Florida bass caught on Lake Fork and loaned to the state through the Budweiser ShareLunker Program. C121 became the 181st trophy bass from Lake Fork to be



EARL NOTTINGHAM



EARL NOTTINGHAM

ABOVE

The Fisheries Center has the technology to identify the genetic characteristics of Florida-strain largemouth bass, with the expectation of producing an even better bass.

LEFT

Spectators view the tank area where selected bass are paired for spawning.

entered in the program, which accepts largemouths weighing over 13 pounds for use in production for the state's fish stocking efforts. C121 was hatched in the same waters where, a year earlier, the ShareLunker program was started with Mark Stevenson's donation of a live 17.63-pound state record bass to TPWD for broodstock purposes.

Since then, more than 3,400 pounds of bass have been donated to the lunker program—nearly 250 bass from 34 dif-

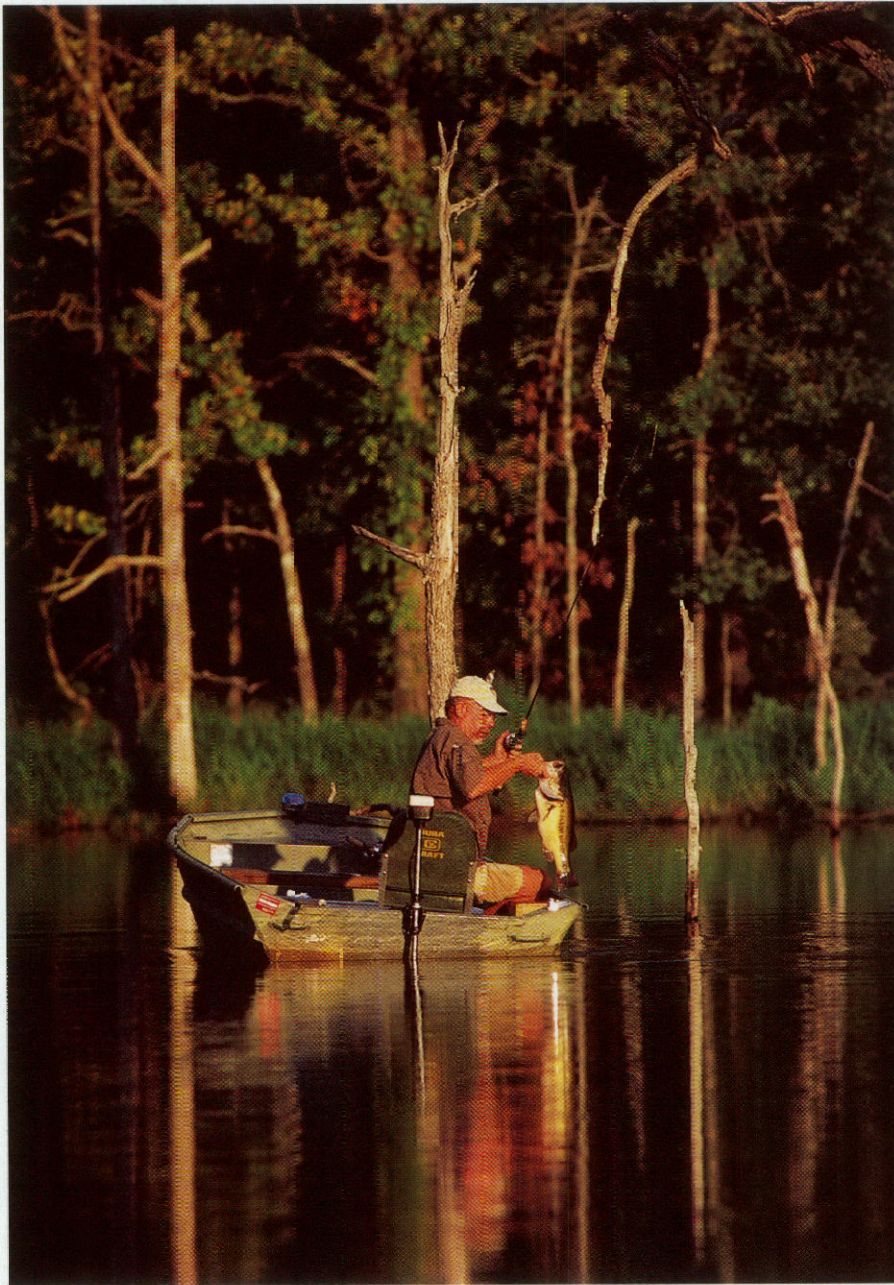
ferent public lakes. The average weight for these impressive trophies tops 14 pounds. Participating anglers who loan their catch receive a fiberglass replica of their fish from ShareLunker Foundation Inc. The ShareLunker program operates under the auspices of the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas Inc. and is sponsored by Budweiser.

Although the trophy bass loaner project has provided the state with some of the best specimens for collecting genet-

ically superior offspring, prior to the new state-of-the-art hatchery facility, the ShareLunker program met with limited success. Collecting trophy bass offspring spawned in captivity at makeshift and outdated accommodations at the state hatchery in nearby Tyler was hit and miss. Not only was lunker mortality high due to stress and other factors not within control of biologists, but successful spawning production was minimal, too. The two prohibitive factors were water temperature and control of photo-period; the driving force behind the spawn.

At the 27,000-square-foot hatchery in Athens, affectionately called the "Lunker Room," biologists control the water temperature and photoperiod in 20 round holding tanks and the six, 74-foot-long raceways where spawning takes place. These tanks have heat pumps to maintain ideal water temperatures and are highly versatile production units that allow hatchery staff greater control over environmental factors that hinder fish production. Approximately 90 percent of the water used in the raceways will be treated and recirculated to optimize production while conserving water usage.

Florida largemouth bass usually spawn between February and April and D11 and C121 will be among the first to take the new hatchery system through the bass production process. Once C121 has spawned over specially designed mats made of artificial turf-like grids, the mats containing the fertilized eggs will be placed upright in 20-foot-long holding troughs. It then will take four to six days for the eggs to hatch, at which time the water level in the troughs will be lowered and biologists will take samples of the offspring fry to determine how many fish have been produced. The fry will be moved outside and placed in one of the two dozen rearing ponds, where they will grow to fingerling size during the next 30 to 45 days. At fingerling stage, about 1³/₄ inches in length, the young bass then are ready to journey to their new homes in lakes throughout the state or go into the broodfish program.



© DAVID J. SAMIS

© ROBERT LILES

THE CYCLE BEGINS ANEW.

For D11 and C121, this will be their only spawn together as biologists attempt to maximize genetic diversity of the state's largemouth bass fishery. In the next tank, a Lake Fork lunker may be paired with a new arrival from Florida, or one from Lake Athens. The next generation of largemouth bass, and possibly the next state or world record, may be produced in these blue fiberglass tanks as researchers strive to improve the genetic makeup of Texas bass.

The hatchery isn't limited just to bass, however. Biologists also are researching other fish species, such as catfish and

threatened paddlefish. Spawning racks, shelves lined with McDonald jars, can be used for hatching between 200,000 and 300,000 paddlefish eggs at a time. These jars facilitate incubation and allow researchers to observe and monitor eggs during the hatching process. Inside those jars may be a new strain of paddlefish capable of better survival in Texas rivers and streams, or a catfish strain that will grow faster and larger.

To the casual observer, the view into the hatchery may look like any other laboratory and research facility. Look a little closer and you'll probably see a future trophy or two. ★

LEFT

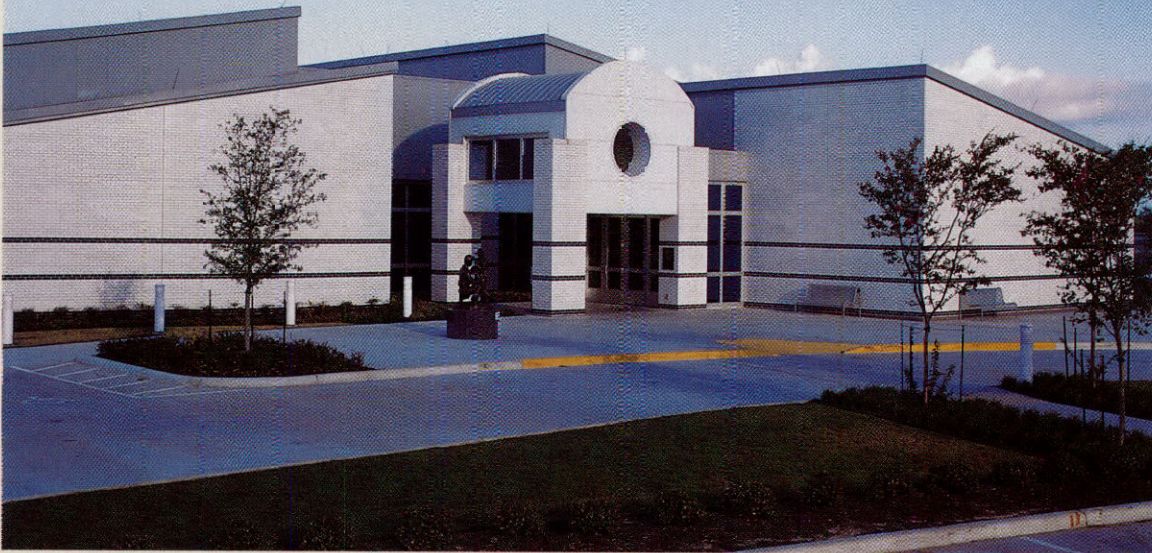
This angler's bass won't make the grade, but fishermen who catch 13-pound-plus largemouths during the spring can donate them for hatchery and research at the Fisheries Center. Fiberglass replicas can be provided, and in many cases the big fish can be re-released into their original waters.

ABOVE

The Fisheries Center also has the capability of possibly improving the genetics of other popular fish such as channel catfish.

SEA CENTER ATTENDANCE EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

BY JIM COX



EARL NOTTINGHAM



EARL NOTTINGHAM

ABOVE

Sea Center Texas is a combination production and educational facility located near Lake Jackson south of Houston, displaying fish in their natural marine habitats as found on the Texas coast.

LEFT

Visitation was surprisingly large for the facility's first year of operation, attracting more than 100,000.

Just as the Fisheries Center at Athens has generated on the freshwater front, Sea Center Texas near Lake Jackson has made an equally auspicious debut in showcasing the state's saltwater fisheries.

The \$13 million facility recently welcomed its 100,000th visitor, which set the stage for a March 7 ceremony dedicating hatchery ponds and the first-year anniversary.


Sea Center combines an extensive indoor aquarium system, with tanks rang-

ing up to 52,000 gallons and hosting mega-sized fish such as 200- to 300-pound groupers, to a hatchery complex that is expected to double the state's red drum (redfish) stocking capabilities. Spawning will occur in a new 20,000-square-foot hatchery building, and grow-out will be in 35 outdoor one-acre rearing ponds.

Sea Center Texas is a joint venture among TPWD, Dow Texas Operations and the Coastal Conservation Association. Dow donated 75 acres of land and GCA raised approxi-

mately \$1 million as the state's part in funds matched by federal monies from the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program.

Sea Center is open Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. For guided tour reservations and directions, call 409-292-0100 or write Sea Center Texas, 300 Medical Dr., Lake Jackson, Texas 77566. ★



CENTER HAS LONG THANK-YOU LIST

BY JIM COX

The Edwin L. Cox, Jr. Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center on the shores of Lake Athens never would have progressed beyond the pipe-dream stage without the efforts of local citizens.

The groundwork for such a project was in effect laid back in 1990 when the voters of Athens authorized a one-half-cent sales tax increase to fund an economic development body, now called the Athens Economic Development Corporation. This step, although unrealized at the time, was a large factor in Athens's economic ability to out-bid other Texas communities for the Center.

THE GOVERNMENTAL ROLE

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials are anxious to point out also that a federal aid program that in their view suffers a lack of recognition for the good

it does has played a major role in this facility's creation. It is the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Sport Fish Restoration Program, and under its auspices the center is recipient of roughly \$13 million in tax funds paid by Texas anglers and boaters who receive the benefits from the state's sport fish development projects. Excise and motor boat taxes, import duties on tackle and boats and special fuel taxes on small engines pay for a wide variety of fishery-oriented projects in the states, including sport fish restoration, wetlands conservation, boating safety, boating access and facilities. "This is an excellent example of a 'user pays, user benefits' program," said Nick Carter, federal aid coordinator for the TPWD.

Once the project got started, the major players in creation of the Center included the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas, which coordinated both private

sector funding and construction management, ShareLunker Foundation, Inc., the City of Athens, Athens Municipal Water Authority and the TPWD.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The list of contributors to the Fisheries Center is as varied as the sport of fishing itself, including everything from multinational corporations to citizens from Main Street. Here is a list of donors and the amounts they have pledged, most of which already has been received.

ANHEUSER-BUSCH THEATER AQUARIUM: \$500,000 from Anheuser-Busch, St. Louis, MO

BROOKSHIRE ANGLER'S PAVILION: \$206,000 from Brookshire Grocery Co., Tyler, which includes donations from eight other businesses, including Salesmark, Flowers Baking, Bryan Foods, Tower



© JYMAN MEINZER

Marketing, McCormick & Co., Frito-Lay, Kraft General Foods and Coca-Cola

ZEBCO CHILDREN'S CASTING POND: \$200,000 from Zebco Corp., Tulsa, OK

HALL OF FAME AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT EXHIBITS: \$150,000, from the Walter and Sheila Umphrey Foundation

POND GALLERY: \$100,000 from Perry R. Bass, Fort Worth

RESERVOIR GALLERY: \$100,000 from Texas Black Bass Unlimited, Dallas

STREAM GALLERY: \$50,000 from Mr. and Mrs. Edwin L. Cox, Jr., Dallas

ALLIGATOR POND AND MARSH EXHIBIT: \$25,000 from Caldwell Zoo, Tyler

ENTRY BRIDGE: \$25,000 from Bass Pro Shops, Springfield, MO

REMOTE PARKING: \$25,000 from Tim and Karen Hixon, San Antonio

GALLERY AQUARIUMS AND INDOOR RACEWAY: \$11,000 from Gary Grant Sales Co., Sachse

STREAM EXHIBIT FOOTBRIDGE: \$10,000 from Power Marketing, Fort Worth

INDOOR RACEWAY: \$5,000 from Parker Drilling Co., Tulsa, OK and \$5,000 from Gary Grant Sales Co., Sachse

SHARELUNKER GOLD DONORS

ROBERT G. BRITTINGHAM, Dallas, \$50,000

RAY MURSKI, Dallas, \$50,000

OSHMAN FOUNDATION, Houston, \$50,000

IN-KIND DONORS

GORDON W. AND PAULINE P. DOPSON, Athens, labor \$5,315

DOW USA TEXAS OPERATIONS, Freeport, \$208,500 pipe system

PRINTCOMM, Dallas, \$5,000 in printing services

TRAMMELL CROW CO., Dallas, \$50,000 in trees

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

THE EFFIE & WOFFORD CAIN FOUNDATION, Austin, \$100,000

FIRST STATE BANK OF ATHENS, \$35,000

VIRGINIA L. MURCHISON, Athens, \$33,334

BANK OF ATHENS, \$33,333

IRVING BASS CLUB, \$4,300

IN MEMORY OF FRED MCBURNEY, c/o TBBU, \$4,100

H.E. BUTT GROCERY, San Antonio, \$2,500

10-K THIRST QUENCHER, New Orleans, \$2,500

ATTWOOD CORP., Athens, \$2,000

KIDD-JONES OIL CORP., Athens, \$2,000

SPRINT UNITED TELEPHONE CO., Kansas City, MO \$1,780

LAKE FORK SPORTSMEN'S ASSN.: \$1,660

FAIRFIELD BASS CLUB, Fairfield, \$1,101

RICHARD M. HART, Dallas, \$1,100

SUGAR FERRIS, BASS 'N GAL, Arlington, \$1,000

GIBSON PRESCRIPTION PHARMACY, \$1,000

TAD DORSEY, Early, \$500

SHIRLEY CREEK BASS CLUB, \$250

MALAKOFF ROTARY CLUB: \$200

GUS T. CANALES, Premont, \$100

TRUETT MICHAEL DURRETT, c/o TBBU, \$100

RELIANCE GAS CO, Athens, \$100

RALPH MCCANN, Dallas, \$100

ST. MATTHIAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, Athens, \$100

LEE R. SLAUGHTER, JR., Dallas, \$100

WILLIAM R. WIGGINS, Dallas, \$100

JOE T. WILLIAMS, JR., Dallas, \$100

IN MEMORY OF COL. JOHN L. MOFFATT, \$50

DAVID S. SIEDAL, Euless, \$25

IN MEMORY OF JOE TANNER, c/o Gayle Barron, Austin, \$25

APRIL

PANHANDLE-PLAINS

APRIL: QUEEN OF THE VALLEY MOTORIZED TOURS *each Saturday and Sunday, Caprock Canyons SP near Quitaque, 806-455-1492*

APRIL 1: PHOTO CONTEST, *Lake Rita Blanca SP near Dalhart, 806-488-2227*

APRIL 5: GREAT TEXAS TRASH-OFF, *Copper Breaks SP near Quanah, 817-839-4331*

APRIL 5: "HIKE THE HILLS," *Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit near Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256*

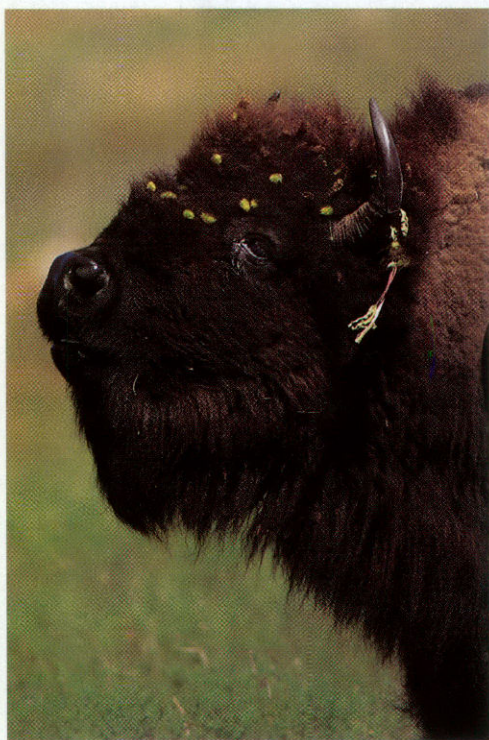
APRIL 5: STAR WALK, *Copper Breaks SP near Quanah, 817-839-4331*

APRIL 5, 19: "CANYON RAMBLINGS," *Caprock Canyons SP near Quitaque, 806-455-1492*

APRIL 11: ARCHEOLOGY AWARENESS WEEK ACTIVITIES, *Lubbock Lake Landmark SHP at Lubbock, 806-765-0737*

APRIL 12, 26: "NOSE-TO-NOSE WITH THE BUFFALO," *Caprock Canyons SP near Quitaque, 806-455-1492*

APRIL 12, 26: WILD BIRD REHABILITATION, *Dinosaur Valley SP near Glen Rose, 210-897-4588*



© ROBERT LILES

Go "nose-to-nose" with a buffalo at Caprock Canyons State Park on April 12 and 26.

APRIL 19, 26: LIVING HISTORY DEMONSTRATIONS, *Copper Breaks SP near Quanah, 817-839-4331*

APRIL 26, 27: INDIAN WARS REENACTMENT, *Fort Griffin SHP near Albany, 915-762-3592*

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

APRIL: TRADITIONAL COWBOY MUSIC CONCERTS, *call for dates and times, Cleburne SP at Cleburne, 817-645-4215*

APRIL: NATURE HIKES AT RIVER LEGACY PARK *each Saturday, Arlington, 817-860-6752*

APRIL 5: KIDFISH KIDS' FISHING TOURNAMENT, *Meridian SP near Meridian, 817-435-2536*

APRIL 5: KIDS FISHING TOURNAMENT, *Meridian SP at Meridian, 817-435-2536*

APRIL 5: CAMPFIRE STORIES, *Cooper Lake South Sulphur Unit near Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256*

APRIL 5: "MIDNIGHT ON THE MARSH," *Cooper Lake South Sulphur Unit near Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256*

APRIL 12: WILD BIRD REHABILITATION, *Dinosaur Valley SP near Glen Rose, 817-897-4588*

APRIL 12: STAGECOACH RIDES, *Fanthorp Inn at Anderson, 409-873-2633*

APRIL 12, 13: SPRING FESTIVAL, *Cedar Hill SP near Cedar Hill, 972-291-3900*

APRIL 18-20: WOMEN'S BASIC FISHING LESSONS AND CAMPOUT, *Meridian SP near Meridian, 817-435-2536*

APRIL 19: WILDFLOWER TOUR, *Meridian SP near Meridian, 817-435-2536*

APRIL 19: SUNSET NATURE HIKE, *Cooper Lake SP near Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256*

APRIL 19: "MARCH FOR THE PARK," *Sam Bell Maxey House SHP at Paris, 903-785-5716*

APRIL 19: EARTH DAY CELEBRATION, *Cooper Lake SP near Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256*

APRIL 24-27: "WILDFLOWER!" *Art and Music Festival, Richardson, 972-680-7909*

APRIL 26: WILDFLOWER HAYRIDE TOUR, *Cleburne SP at Cleburne, 817-645-4215*

PINEYWOODS

APRIL: NATURE ACTIVITIES *each Saturday and Sunday, Brazos Bend SP near Needville, 409-553-5124*

APRIL: HISTORICAL TOURS *each Saturday, Stephen F. Austin SHP near San Felipe, 409-885-3613*

APRIL: APRIL FOLK WEEKENDS *each Saturday and Sunday, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHP at Washington, 409-878-2214*

APRIL: HISTORICAL TOURS OF J.J. JOSEY MUSEUM AND LOG CABIN, *Stephen F. Austin SHP at San Felipe, call for information, 409-885-3613*

APRIL 5: "TROT LINES, DROPLINES, THROW LINES," *demonstration, Martin Dies, Jr., SP near Jasper, 409-384-5231*

APRIL 5, 26: GUIDED NATURE TRAIL HIKE, *Village Creek SP at Lumberton, 409-755-7322*

APRIL 11: NIGHT HIKE, *Village Creek SP at Lumberton, 409-755-7322*

APRIL 12: BIKE TOUR, *Washington-on-the-Brazos SHP at Washington, 409-836-2680*

APRIL 12: JET BOAT AND OUTBOARD RACES, *Atlanta SP at Atlanta, 903-796-6476*

APRIL 12: "TRASH BASH," *San Jacinto SHP near Houston, 281-479-2431*

APRIL 18, 20: SPRING ROUNDUP, *White Oak Creek WMA near Mount Pleasant, 903-884-3800*

APRIL 19: EARTH DAY CELEBRATION, *Brazos Bend SP near Needville, 409-553-5124*

APRIL 19: "FLOATING THE FORKS," *canoe trip, Martin Dies, Jr., SP near Jasper*

APRIL 19: SEMINAR ON WILDFLOWERS, HERBS AND NATIVE PLANTS, *Martin Dies, Jr., SP near Jasper, 409-384-5231*

APRIL 19: CANOEING FRIENDS RIVER CLEANUP, *Martin Dies, Jr., SP near Jasper, 409-384-5231*

APRIL 26: CAMPFIRE STORYTELLER, *Stephen F. Austin SHP at San Felipe, 409-885-3613*

APRIL 26: BIRDING BOAT TOURS AND HIKES, *Martin Dies, Jr., SP near Jasper, 409-384-5231*

GULF COAST

APRIL: BIRD AND WILDLIFE TOURS *each Thursday and Saturday, Fennessey Ranch near Refugio, 512-529-6600*

APRIL 2-17: THE SPORTING ART SHOW, THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, *Rockport, 512-729-5519*

APRIL 5: WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION COURSE, *J.D. Murphree WMA at Port Arthur, 409-736-2551*

APRIL 5, 6, 12, 20: SPRING WALKING BIRD TOUR, *Matagorda Island SP, 512-983-2215*

APRIL 11-12, 18-19, 25-26: HUMMINGBIRD LODGE NATURE TOURS, *Fennessey Ranch near Refugio, 512-729-7555*

APRIL 19: BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO REENACTMENT, *San Jacinto SHP at Houston, 281-479-2431*

APRIL 19, 20: SONGBIRD BANDING, *Peach Point WMA near Bay City, 512-576-0022*

APRIL 10-13: 3RD ANNUAL MIGRATION

CELEBRATION, with birding lectures, seminars and field trips, headquartered at Brazosport Center for the Arts and Sciences, 409-299-3027

APRIL 24-27: TEXAS TROPICS NATURE FESTIVAL, sponsored by the McAllen Chamber of Commerce, with field trips, seminars and photo workshops, 1-800-250-2591

APRIL 26, 27: SONGBIRD BANDING, Guadalupe Delta WMA near Victoria, 512-576-0022

HILL COUNTRY

APRIL: NATIVE PLANT AND WILDFLOWER WALKS, Kickapoo Cavern SNA near Del Rio, call for dates and times, 210-563-2342

APRIL 2, 4, 17, 19: PRIMITIVE CAVE TOUR, Kickapoo Cavern SNA near Del Rio, 210-563-2342

APRIL 5: ARCHEOLOGY WALK, Honey Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-625-6943

APRIL 5: WILDFLOWER DAY, LBJ SHP near Johnson City, 210-644-2252

APRIL 5: ETHNOBOTANY AND PLANT IDENTIFICATION, Honey Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-625-6943

APRIL 5, 12, 19, 26: MONARCH WATCH AND TAGGING, Honey Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-625-6943

APRIL 10, 24: DEVIL'S WATERHOLE CANOE TOUR, Inks Lake SP near Burnet, 512-793-2223

APRIL 12, 26: SIX-MILE HIKE, Pedernales Falls SP near Johnson City, 210-868-7304

APRIL 12, 26: PETROGLYPH TOUR, San Angelo SP at San Angelo, 915-949-4757

APRIL 12, 26: ETHNOBOTANY AND PLANT IDENTIFICATION, Honey Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-438-2656

APRIL 12, 26: BIRDING TOUR, Devils River SNA near Del Rio, 210-395-2133

APRIL 13: HORSEBACK OUTING, Hill Country SNA near Bandera, reservations through Running R Ranch, 210-796-3984

APRIL 17, 19: GREEN CAVE BAT FLIGHT OBSERVATION, Kickapoo Cavern SNA near Del Rio, 210-563-2342

APRIL 18, 19: BAT FLIGHT OBSERVATION, Kickapoo Cavern SP near Brackettville, 210-563-2342

APRIL 18, 19, 20: WOMEN'S BASIC FISHING LESSONS AND CAMPOUT, Meridian SP near Meridian, 817-435-2536

APRIL 19: GEOLOGY WALK AND EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES, Honey Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-625-6943

APRIL 20: BIRDING AND BREAKFAST, Honey



© KATHY ADAMS CLARK

A gray catbird could be one of many species that will be seen at Martin Dies Jr. State Park on April 19.

Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-997-6417

APRIL 20: "MARCH FOR PARKS," LBJ SHP near Johnson City, 210-568-6225

APRIL 19: DINOSAUR WALK, San Angelo SP at San Angelo, 915-949-4757

APRIL 19: RAPTOR DEMONSTRATION BY JOHN KARGER, Honey Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-625-6943

APRIL 19: PREHISTORIC HIKING TOUR, San Angelo SP at San Angelo, 915-949-4757

APRIL 19: BUS TOUR DEPARTING FROM BARTON WAENOCK CENTER, Big Bend Ranch SP, 512-389-8900

APRIL 19: EARTH DAY, Colorado Bend SP near Bend, 915-628-3240

APRIL 19: WILDFLOWER TOUR, Meridian SP near Meridian, 817-435-2536

APRIL 25: OPENING OF EXHIBIT "THE 90-DAY WONDERS," Admiral Nimitz SHP in Freericksburg, 210-997-4379

APRIL 26: "STICKS, ONIONS AND MUD," Honey Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-935-4730

APRIL 26: ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SPRING TRAIL RIDE, San Angelo SP at San Angelo, 915-949-4757

BIG BEND COUNTRY

APRIL: "SAGA OF FORT LEATON," each Saturday and Sunday, Fort Leaton SHP at Presidio, 915-229-3613

APRIL 5: BUS TOUR DEPARTING FROM FORT LEATON, Big Bend Ranch SP, 512-359-8900

APRIL 17-20: SPRING PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP, Big Bend Ranch SP, 915-229-3416

APRIL 17-20, 25-27: SPRING TRAIL RIDE, Big Bend Ranch SP, 713-486-8070

APRIL 26: BIRD WATCHING AND PLANT IDENTIFICATION, Ocotillo Unit of Las Palomas WMA near Presidio, 915-345-2954

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

APRIL 19: BIRDING, Longoria and other units of Las Palomas WMA in Lower Rio Grande Valley, 210-383-8952

APRIL 20: EARTH DAY, Goliad SHP at Goliad, 512-645-3405

APRIL 24-27: TEXAS TROPICS NATURE FESTIVAL, including speakers, programs and field trips to Valley birding areas, sponsored by the McAllen Chamber of Commerce, 1-800-250-2591

APRIL 27: SPRING CONCERT with Bee County

College concert choir and Beeville Community Chorus, Goliad SP at Goliad, 512-345-3405

MAY

PANHANDLE-PLAINS

MAY: QUEEN OF THE VALLEY TRAILWAY TOURS each Saturday and Sunday, Caprock Canyons SP near Quitaque, 806-455-1492

MAY: TRADITIONAL COWBOY MUSIC CONCERTS, call for dates, Cleburne SP near Cleburne, 817-645-4215

MAY 3, 17, 31: NATURE HIKE, Village Creek SP near Lumberton, 409-755-7322

MAY 8: CANYON RAMBLINGS, Caprock Canyons SP near Quitaque, 806-455-1492

MAY 8, 12: BUFFALO SOLDIERS, Copper Breaks SP near Quanah, 817-839-4331

MAY 10: KIDS' WILDERNESS SURVIVAL, Cleburne SP near Cleburne, 817-645-4215

MAY 10: "NOSE TO NOSE WITH THE BUFFALO," Caprock Canyons SP near Quitaque, 806-455-1492

MAY 10, 24: WILD BIRD REHABILITATION, Dinosaur Valley SP near Glen Rose, 817-897-4588

MAY 26: ANNUAL APPRECIATION DAY, Copper Breaks SP near Quanah, 817-839-4331

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

MAY 9: "AN EVENING WITH SUSAN EISENHOWER, TEXAS STYLE," Eisenhower Birthplace SHP in Denison, 903-465-8908

MAY 10: TRACK IDENTIFICATION, Cooper Lake SP near Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256

MAY 17: "FEAST IN THE FIELDS," Cooper Lake SP near Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256

MAY 17: SECOND ANNUAL GRAND SLAM OF BIRDING, Cedar Hill SP near Cedar Hill, 972-293-3871

MAY 24: TNRCC MASTER COMPOSTER REUNION, Cedar Hill SP at Cedar Hill, 972-291-0209

MAY 30: CAMPFIRE STORIES, Cooper Lake SP near Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256

MAY 31: BEAR CAVE HIKE, Cooper Lake SP near Sulphur Springs, 903-945-5256

PINEYWOODS

MAY: HISTORICAL TOURS each Saturday, Stephen F. Austin SHP at San Felipe, 409-885-3613

MAY 9, 23: NIGHT HIKE, Village Creek SP at

Lumberton, 409-755-7322

MAY 10: "SNAKES AT THEIR BEST," Martin Dies, Jr., SP near Jasper, 409-384-5231

MAY 10, 12: "GOOD COOK'S GUIDE TO HARDY PERENNIALS," Martin Dies, Jr. SP near Jasper, 409-384-5231

MAY 10: JET BOAT AND OUTBOARD RACES, Atlanta SP near Atlanta, 903-796-6476

MAY 10: STAGECOACH RIDES, Fanthorp Inn SP at Anderson, 409-873-2633

MAY 10, 17: CHILDREN'S FISHING DERBY, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHP at Washington, 409-878-2214

MAY 17: "FLOATING THE FORKS," Martin Dies, Jr., SP near Jasper, 409-384-5231

GULF COAST

MAY: BIRD AND WILDLIFE TOURS, Fennessey Ranch near Refugio, 512-529-6600

MAY: NATURE ACTIVITIES each Saturday and Sunday, Brazos Bend SP near Needville, 409-553-5124

MAY 11, 17: BEACHCOMBING AND SHELLING TOUR, Matagorda Island SP, 512-983-2215

HILL COUNTRY

MAY 1, 8, 15, 22, 29: DEVILS WATERHOLE CANOE TOUR, Inks Lake SP near Burnet, 512-793-2223

MAY 2, 3, 16, 29: GREEN CAVE BAT FLIGHT OBSERVATION, Kickapoo Cavern SNA near Brackettville, 210-563-2342

MAY 2, 3, 16, 17, 30, 31: PRIMITIVE CAVE TOURS, Kickapoo Cavern SNA near Brackettville, 210-563-2342

MAY 3: "LET'S GO FISHING!," LBJ SHP near Johnson City, 210-644-2252

MAY 3: MACEY'S RIDGE HIKE, San Angelo SP at San Angelo, 915-949-4757

MAY 3, 4: SPRING WALKFEST, Lost Maples SNA near Vanderpool, 210-966-3413

MAY 3, 17, 24: ETHNOBOTANY AND PLANT IDENTIFICATION, Honey Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-438-2656

MAY 9-11: OUTDOOR SMARTS WEEKEND, Meridian SP near Meridian, 817-435-2536

MAY 10: TREE IDENTIFICATION, Honey Creek SNA near Bulverde, 210-438-2656

MAY 10, 24: DINOSAUR WALK, San Angelo SP at San Angelo, 915-949-4757

MAY 10, 24: BIRDING TOUR, Devils River SNA near Brackettville, 210-395-2133

MAY 11: HORSEBACK OUTING, Hill Country SNA

near Bandera, 210-796-3984

MAY 17: SIX-MILE HIKE, Pedernales Falls SP near Johnson City, 210-868-7304

MAY 17: PETROGLYPH TOUR, San Angelo SP at San Angelo, 915-949-4757

MAY 17, 31: BAT FLIGHT OBSERVATION, Devil's Sinkhole SNA near Brackettville, 210-563-2342

MAY 23: WILDFLOWERS AND VINEYARDS, Becker Vineyards at Stonewall, 210-997-6417

MAY 24: COMANCHE TREATY AND POW-WOW, Fort Martin Scott near Fredericksburg, 210-997-4379

MAY 26: MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM, Admiral Nimitz Museum and Historical Center in Fredericksburg, 210-997-4379

MAY 31: WEST CAVE PRESERVE OVERNIGHT, near Austin, 210-855-3442

BIG BEND COUNTRY

MAY 3, 24: BUSTOUR, Big Bend Ranch SP, 512-389-8900

MAY: LIVING HISTORY EVENTS every other weekend, Fort Leaton SHP at Presidio, 915-229-3613

MAY 9-11: DESERT SURVIVAL, Big Bend Ranch SP, 915-229-3416

MAY 17-18: "MAP AND COMPASS," Big Bend Ranch SP, 915-229-3416

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

MAY 3-5: CINCO DE MAYO CELEBRATION, Goliad SP at Goliad, 512-645-3405

SP STATE PARK
SHP STATE HISTORICAL PARK
SNA STATE NATURAL AREA
WMA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA



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CITY/STATION	DAY/TIME
AMARILLO KACV, Ch. 2	Sunday 4:00
AUSTIN KLRU, Ch. 18	Monday 12:00 Saturday 8:00
COLLEGE STATION KAMU, Ch. 15	Friday 11:00 a.m.
CORPUS CHRISTI KEDT, Ch. 16	Thursday 7:30 Friday 11:30
EL PASO KCOS, Ch. 13	Sunday 6:00
HARLINGEN KMBH, Ch. 60 <i>Also serving McAllen, Mission</i>	Sunday 7:30
HOUSTON KUHT, Ch. 8 <i>Also serving Beaumont/Port Arthur, Galveston, Texas City, Victoria</i>	Monday 7:30

KILLEEN KNCT, Ch. 46 <i>Also serving Temple</i>	Sunday 4:00
LUBBOCK KTXT, Ch. 5	Saturday 7:00
ODESSA KOCV, Ch. 36 <i>Also serving Midland</i>	Saturday 7:30
SAN ANTONIO KLRN, Ch. 9 <i>Also serving Laredo</i>	Thursday 12:00
WACO KCTF, Ch. 34	Saturday 3:00

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

Look for These Stories in the Coming Weeks

MARCH 30–APRIL 6: A group of Texans making history come alive; the science of trail building; High Plains game wardens.

APRIL 6–13: Birding in the Rio Grande Valley; a fishing tournament where every kid is a winner; rebuilding Roma on the Texas/Mexico border.

APRIL 13–20: Enjoying the outdoors despite visual impairments; tracking mountain lions; a woman who's made a career of collecting sea shells.

APRIL 20–27: Los Caminos Reales, a historical trade route connecting communities across Texas; coyotes; a ride with game wardens to see how law enforcement works in the woods.

R A D I O S C H E D U L E

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AMARILLO / KACV-FM 89.9 / 9:20 a.m.
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ATHENS–MALAKOFF / KLVQ-AM 1410 / 10:20 a.m.
ATLANTA / KPYN-FM 100.1 / 4:30 p.m.
AUSTIN / KUT-FM 90.5 / 1:58 p.m.; 12:58 p.m. (F)
AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN's Inside Line
512-416-5700 category 6287 (NATR)
BEAUMONT / KLVI-AM 560 / 5:40 a.m.
BIG SPRING / KBST-AM 1490 / 7:35 p.m.
BRENNHAM / KWHI-AM 1280 / 6:50 a.m.
BRYAN / WTAW-AM 1150 / 5:45 p.m.
CARTHAGE / KGAS-AM 1590 / 6:46 a.m.
CARTHAGE / KGAS-FM 104.3 / 6:46 a.m.
CENTER / KDET-AM 930 / 5:20 p.m.
COLUMBUS / KULM-FM 98.3 / 7:20 a.m. & 5:20 p.m.
COMANCHE / KCOM-AM 1550 / 6:30 a.m.
COMMERCE / KETR-FM 88.9 / 10:15 a.m.
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CROCKETT / KIVY-AM 1290 / 5:15 p.m.
CROCKETT / KIVY-FM 92.7 / 5:15 p.m.
EAGLE PASS / KINL-FM 92.7 / 7:15 a.m.
EASTLAND / KEAS-AM 1590 & FM 97.7 / 8:30 a.m.
EL CAMPO / KULP-AM 1390 / 2:05 p.m.
FAIRFIELD / KNES-FM 99.1 / 7:49 a.m.
FT. STOCKTON / KFST-AM 860 / 12:50 p.m.
FT. STOCKTON / KFTS-FM 94.3 / 12:50 p.m.
FREEPORT / KBRZ-AM 1460 / 10:15 a.m. & 7:45 p.m.
GALVESTON / KGBC-AM 1540 / 1:45 p.m.

HARLINGEN / KMBH-FM 88.9 / 4:58 p.m.
HEREFORD / KPAN-AM 860 / 2:50 p.m.
HEREFORD / KPAN-FM 106.3 / 2:50 p.m.
HILLSBORO / KHBR-AM 1560 / 9:30 a.m.
HOUSTON / KTRH-AM 740 / 10:40 a.m.
HUNTSVILLE / KYLR-AM 1400 / 9:30 a.m. & 5:26 p.m.
JACKSONVILLE / KEBE-AM 1400 / 7:25 a.m.
KERRVILLE / KRNH-FM 95.1 / 5:31 a.m. & 11:57 a.m. & 9:57 p.m.
KERRVILLE / KITE-FM 92.3 / 7:32 a.m. & 12:32 p.m. & 5:32 p.m. & 9:32 p.m.
LA GRANGE / KVLG-AM 1570 / 5:45 p.m.
LA GRANGE / KBUK-FM 104.9 / 5:45 p.m.
LIBERTY / KSHN-FM 99.9 / 7:13 a.m. & 2:50 p.m.
LONGVIEW / KBNB-AM 1060 / 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.
MARSHALL / KCUL-AM 1410 / 7:15 a.m.
MARSHALL / KCUL-FM 92.3 / 7:15 a.m.
MCALLEN / KHID-FM 88.1 / 4:58 p.m.
MIDLAND / KCRS-AM 550 / 6:43 a.m. & 1:43 p.m. & 6:43 p.m.
MINEOLA / KMOO-FM 96.7 / 5:20 p.m.
MONAHANS / KLBO-AM 1330 / 8:50 a.m.
NACOGDOCHES / KSAU-FM 90.1 / 3:00 p.m.
PECOS / KIUN-AM 1400 / 10:30 a.m.
ROCKDALE / KRXT-FM 98.5 / 5:04 a.m.
SAN ANGELO / KUTX-FM 90.1 / 1:58 p.m.; 12:58 p.m. (F)
SULPHUR SPRINGS / KSST-AM 1230 / 11:15 a.m.
TEMPLE / KTEM-AM 1400 / 6:50 a.m.

TEXARKANA / KCMC-AM 740 / 12:15 p.m.
UVALDE / KVOU-AM 1400 / 5:33 a.m.
UVALDE / KYUF-FM 105 / 5:33 a.m.
WACO / KBCT-FM 94.5 / 6:20 a.m.
WEATHERFORD / KZEE-AM 1220 / 6:30 a.m. & 8:10 a.m. & 5:15 p.m.
WICHITA FALLS / KWFS-AM 1290 / 6:15 a.m. & 7:45 a.m.

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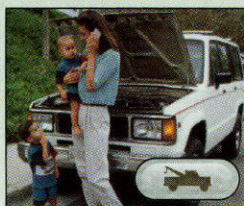
Witness the splendor of the "Jewels of the Romanovs: Treasures of the Russian Imperial Court," at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, May 11-July 13. Plunge 230 feet reaching speeds of up to 62 mph on The Dungeon Drop, Six Flags AstroWorld's newest roller coaster. Opening in May, this coaster is dubbed "The tallest scream machine in Texas."



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Why pay for cellular phone service if you only want it for emergency use?

The SOS Phone offers a 24-hour call center to connect you with your emergency roadside service, 911 service or family members in the event of an emergency.



Press the Tow button and your emergency road service will be dispatched to tow your automobile.

To tell you the truth, I am not interested in owning a cellular phone...except for use in an emergency. What would I do if my car broke down on the interstate or ran out of gas on some deserted back road? How would I get help? Like most women, I have the safety of my children to consider.

Last month, I inquired about cellular phone service. I was surprised to find out how expensive it was, even for the most basic calling plans! I just couldn't justify spending that much for something I may never need. Then a good friend told about a product she thought would solve my problem. It's the SOS Phone—a cellular phone service designed exclusively for emergency use!

What does it do? With the touch of a button, the SOS Phone will connect me to a roadside emergency service, a 911 service or a trained SOS operator, 24 hours a day. If I ever need help, I know it's just a phone call away.

Emergency assistance. By pressing the "tow" button, I'll be connected with my emergency roadside service provider. Or, if I don't have one, the SOS operator can recommend one to me and dispatch them immediately.

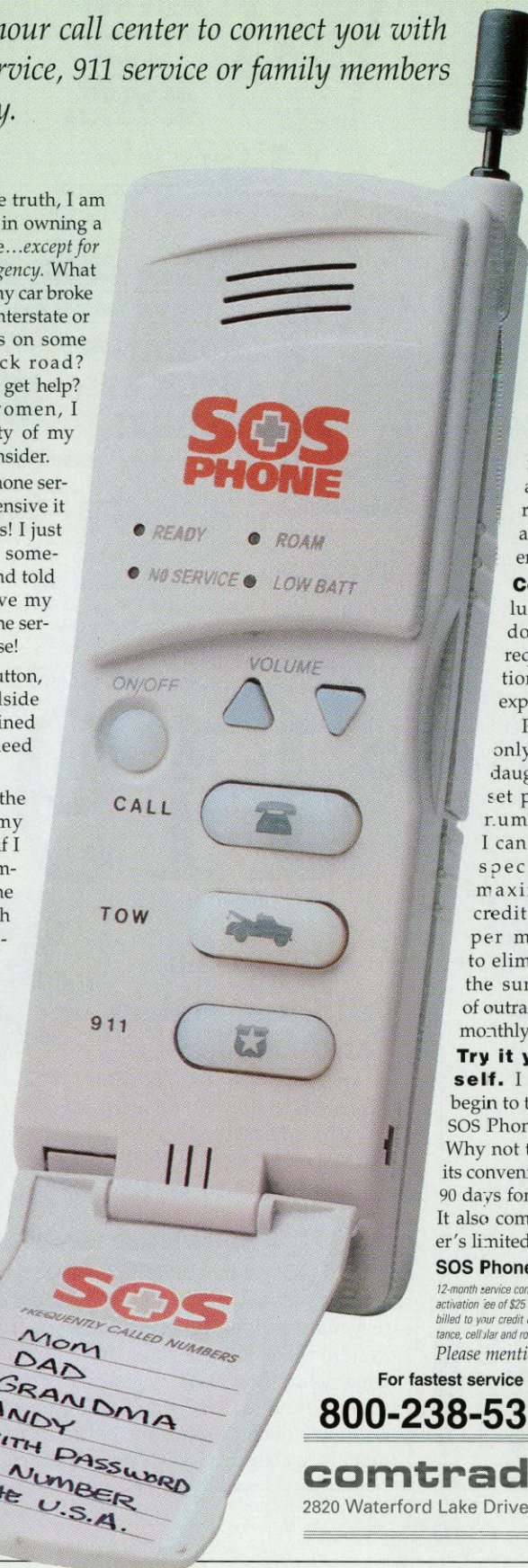


The 911 button will connect you to 911 police or other emergency services, and the call is absolutely free!

The "911" button will connect me to the 911 emergency service in my area—best of all, the call is absolutely free!

Personalized service. Each SOS Phone has a serial number that is recorded at the Call Center, so each time I use my phone, the operators will know that it is me calling, and will greet me by name. Plus, my SOS Emergency Record will appear instantly on the computer screen and the operator will connect me with the person or emergency service I need.

Not just for emergencies. If I just want to call home to tell



my husband that the kids and I are running late, I can! By pressing the "call" button, I'll reach an operator. When I ask the operator to call home, I'll be connected automatically. And because the Call Center has my list of 10 most-used phone numbers, I don't even have to recite the number!

Great for teens. The SOS Phone is also a great thing to have around for my stepdaughter. I can rest assured that she'll always be able to get in touch with us (or an emergency service) if she needs to.

Cost control. Unlike ordinary cellular phone plans, the SOS Phone doesn't have any minimum usage requirements or any other stipulations that could change the price I expect to pay each month.

Plus, without my password, the only non-emergency calls my stepdaughter can make are to our 10 preset phone numbers.

I can even specify a maximum credit limit per month to eliminate the surprise of outrageous monthly bills!





Try it yourself. I can't

begin to tell you how much confidence the SOS Phone has given me and my family. Why not try it yourself? If you don't enjoy its convenience and security, return it within 90 days for a "No Questions Asked" refund. It also comes with a three-year manufacturer's limited repair or replacement warranty.

SOS Phone \$99 \$12 S&H
12-month service contract required for this price. Requires a one-time non-refundable activation fee of \$25 and a monthly charge of \$9.95. Calls made on the Call button are billed to your credit card at \$1.45 per minute. (That rate includes all local, long-distance, cell star and roaming fees.) For outgoing calls only.

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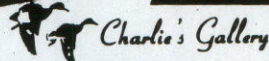
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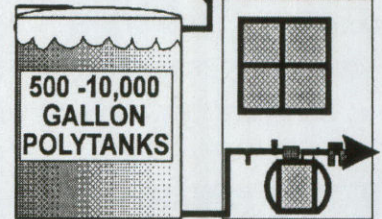


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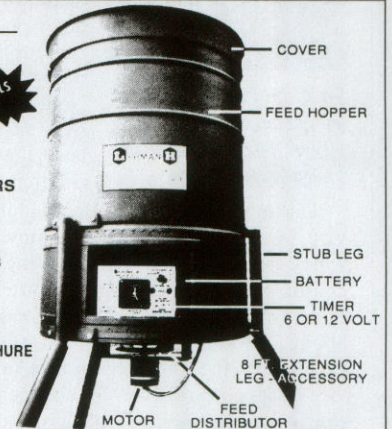
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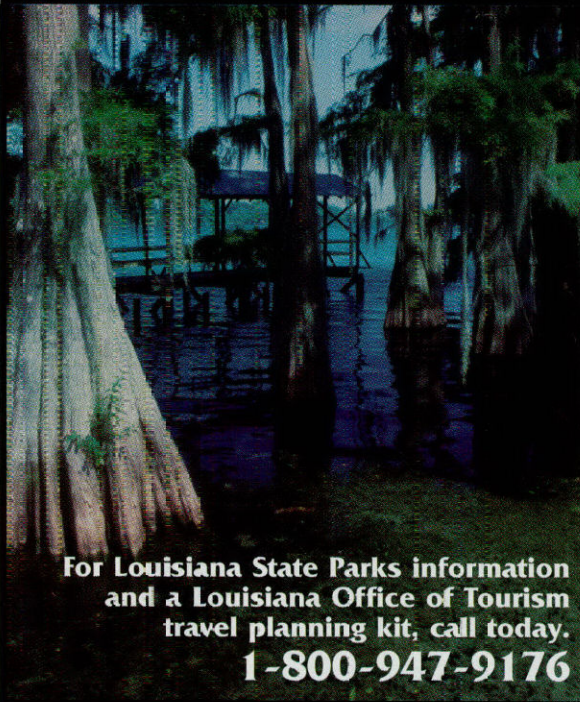
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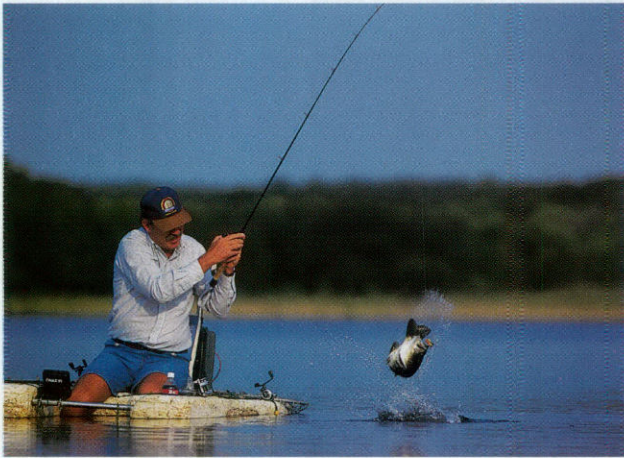




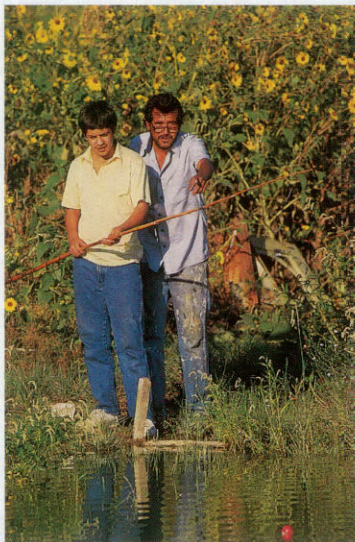
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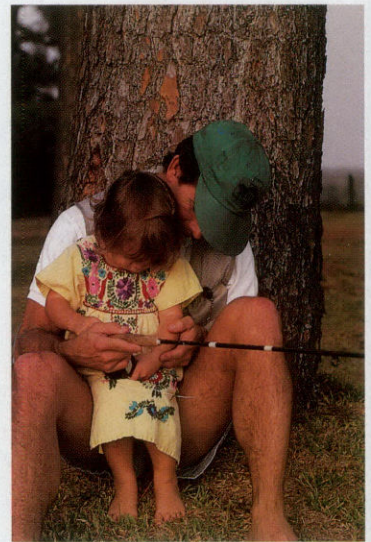
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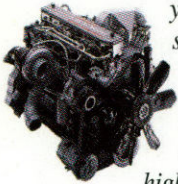
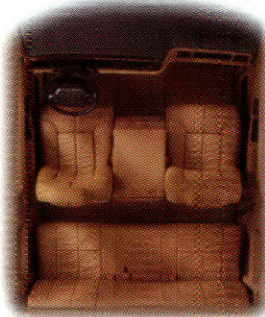
BACK TO BASICS

The soul of freshwater fishing in Texas resides not necessarily with 150-horsepower bass boats and space-age electronics to find and catch a trophy bass. The simple pleasures of bank fishing with live bait, catching sunfish with a youngster or bobbing around on a one-person floater can be just as rewarding, perhaps more so.

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Ram is built for the road. And when the road twists, Ram's rigid ladder frame, refined suspension and precise steering can match it turn for turn. When the road runs rough, Ram's 60-inch springs and staggered gas shocks soak up the big bumps.

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*We calculated resale using avg. trade-in values for '94-'95 full-size models vs. MSRP, published in Jan. '95-Sept. '96 N.A.D.A. Official Used Car Guide® monthly editions. **Comparison of '96 vs. '95 model year full-size pickup sales. †J.D. Power and Associates 1995 & 1996 Automotive Performance, Execution, and Layout Studies,™ based on 27,859 ('95) and 25,492 ('96) consumer responses. ††See limited warranty & restrictions at dealer. Excludes normal maintenance & wear items.

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