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# TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

FEBRUARY 1995





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## *Petersen's 4-Wheel & Off Road* “4x4 of the Year” 1994, 1995.

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# TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

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**4 CHAMPION OF THE TEJANOS** José Antonio Navarro was a witness to some of the most dramatic and significant events in Texas history. Throughout the state's tempestuous colonial period, its battle for independence and entry into statehood, Navarro steadfastly defended the rights and dignity of Hispanic Texans. *by Mary-Love Bigony*

**12 RETURN OF THE APLOMADO** Once common throughout South Texas, the aplomado falcon was all but gone by the 1940s, a victim of pesticides and habitat changes. With habitat in better shape today, efforts are underway to restore this diminutive falcon to part of its historic range. *by Linda Laack*



© RICHARD REYNOLDS

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**18 TEXAS CITY DIKE** Stretching five miles into Galveston Bay, the Texas City Di-ke offers fishing piers, bait houses, a boat ramp and plenty of elbow room. *by G. Elaine Acker*

**24 SPIDERS: TRUTH AND FICTION** Most spiders are harmless to humans, and even the two dangerous ones—brown recluses and black widows—prefer to avoid people whenever possible. *by David Borales*

**28 NATURE'S YELLOWS** Yellow in its many shades adds a splash of brightness to the outdoors.

**42 EAST TEXAS BEAR HUNTS** Black bears were abundant when early East Texas settlers established their homesteads. So popular was bear hunting around the turn of the century, even President Theodore Roosevelt planned a trip to East Texas. The bear hunting era resulted in some unforgettable stories and characters. *by Thad Sittor*

C O V E R S

**Front** As part of our salute to the color yellow this month, here is Taffy, a yellow Labrador retriever, one of a breed of dogs prized for their intelligence and retrieving ability. See our photo feature on the color yellow in nature on page 28. Photo © David J. Sams. Nikon F3 camera, Nikkor 35mm lens, 1/500 second at f5.6, Kodachrome 64 film.



© LAURENCE PARENT

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**Inside Back** Black widows are one of only two spider species in Texas that are dangerous to humans because of their bite. See story on page 24. Photo © Wyman Meinzer. Canon F1 camera, Canon 100 macro lens with ring light, 1/60 second at f11, Fuji Velvia 50 film.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS SIDNEY HOOKS

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**Back** Aplomado falcons may become a familiar sight in South Texas if a restoration program is successful. See story on page 12. Photo © Steve Bentsen. Nikon F4 camera, Nikkor 400 mm 3.5 lens, 1/250 second at f5.6, Fuji Velvia 50 film.

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Not too long ago, I was browsing through an edition of SGB, a trade journal of the sporting goods industry. In a story on optic products (scopes, binoculars, etc.), I came across an estimate that the "birding" market for such products in America is now 60 million strong. Ted Eubanks, who is featured in this month's Outdoor Heritage series, would tell you that the data show that wildlife viewing now is the number-one outdoor recreational sport in the United States.

It seems clear to me from the SGB article that at least one industry believes Eubanks' time has come. A lifetime birder now engaged full-time in the nature tourism business, Eubanks is a man of the future. He can tell you that while Texas ranks first in hunting opportunity in the United States and second in fishing, it also has become the number-one birdwatching destination in the world.

Our lands and waters comprise the richest natural heritage of all the states, and the mix of outdoor pursuits combined with magnificent natural assets have made Texas one of the world's most intriguing destinations.

Texas is a place where adventure is at our fingertips because the state is as accessible as it is vast. Texas is a place of exploration because many of its most exciting outdoor opportunities are little known and challenging to reach. Texas is a place of learning, because its natural wonders include many of the earth's rarest plants and creatures. Texas is a place of unparalleled outdoor sportsmanship. Thus, we are once again positioned to realize a new and exciting prosperity from our abundant natural resources.

In the coming economy, however, we needn't exhaust our natural treasure in order to profit from it. Eubanks and a growing cadre of outdoor entrepreneurs know that the potential of nature tourism in Texas will be realized only if our vision includes sustainability as well as profitability.

This is the essence of the nature tourism challenge. Eubanks and many others have recognized it as an exciting opportunity for our great state. Equally important, it is by definition an affirmation of our goal to protect, to enjoy and to share a marvelous place of unique resources and lasting values.

—Andrew Sansom, Executive Director



© RUSSELL C. HANSEN

### In March . . .

Photographer and engineer Russ Hansen has designed a computer and camera system for photographing birds in flight. Next month we'll show you some of his remarkable photos, and tell you about his system in *Picture This*. Also in March, a canoe trip down the Neches River, wildlife smuggling on the Texas border, Possum Kingdom State Park and poisonous snakebite.

## TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

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# LETTERS

## Readers Respond

The letter from Bob McLeod in the December issue was right on target.

I first became aware of *Texas Game & Fish* magazine in 1945 upon my return from 35 months in North Africa and Italy. The Army taught me how to shoot, *Texas Game & Fish* helped me learn to hunt as a sportsman. Since then my hobby has been hunting and shooting targets, skeet, bench rest and plinking.

The first *Texas Game & Fish* I ever saw was printed in Dallas by my father-in-law. The magazine is printed in Ohio now. My first subscription was in approximately 1946, and you have seen my last.

Gordon Ramsden  
Dallas

■ The magazine is printed by Motheral Printing in Fort Worth, Texas.

Current national campaigns in favor of gun control have nothing to do with the ownership of hunting arms. Rather, they are directed toward restrictions on assault weapons and handguns specifically designed to harm humans.

I doubt that support for TPWD ever lay in the hands of those who believe in private ownership of assault weapons and handguns. Real hunters are not worried about bans on private ownership of these kinds of weapons.

Joe Cummings  
Walnut Creek, California

Bob McLeod is not renewing his subscription because *Texas Parks & Wildlife* does not promote or defend gun owners. This magazine is not the place for that political junk. *Texas Parks & Wildlife* shows me places where I have been, places I would like to go, fishing, hunting, restocking, rivers, trees, streams, waterfalls, dams, lakes, cacti, birds, parks, possums, squirrels, raccoons, deer, turkeys, etc. I own guns for hunting, rods and reels for fishing, boats, camping gear and a camera.

Bob needs to tell his politicians his problems. He will miss a lot of "good stuff" in future issues.

W. Earl Nelson  
Houston

Mr. McLeod makes it sound as if you do not support gun ownership



rights. I always assumed you supported gun ownership because of your articles about hunting.

Glen Croft  
Dayton

■ We are a little surprised this question has even come up, given the number of hunting and shooting sport stories we've done over the years. But just for the record, along with the sportsmen of the country, we support the responsible use of firearms. Reiterating our philosophy about the outdoors, we think there is room for everyone, whether they shoot deer with a rifle or a camera. Many of our readers do both, and understand the greater issue is that if the deer doesn't have a place to live and thrive, it will make little difference how you want to shoot it, for it won't be there.

## Raising Pheasants

The article about ring-necked pheasants by Marian H. Williams (December) brought back many fond memories of my youth in Slaton, Texas. The author's father and grandfather are to be commended for their work to establish pheasants as a game bird.

My father tried to raise pheasants in Slaton in the mid-1940s. We kept the pheasants in a pen and every now and then a West Texas wind would blow the pen's gate open. We would receive telephone calls from all over Slaton saying, "I think one of your pheasants is in our back yard." I was delegated to take my older brother's .22 Remington and carefully harvest the loose pheasants. I was 12 years old at the time and had been taught carefully how to use firearms properly. I would pedal away on my trusty Shelby Flyer

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

with the .22 across the handlebars, returning in a few minutes with another pheasant for Mother to clean and put in the freezer. I'm sure many of our pheasants escaped to the wilds of the South Plains, and I have always thought we played a small part in the establishment of a pheasant population in the Panhandle.

After having raised several hundred pheasants we were down to our last two, both cocks. One was in the "hen house" with the door shut, the other had the run of the pen. Then one day the wind blew the door open, putting the two birds in the same area. I hollered to the rest of the family, but there was nothing to do but watch the darndest cock fight you ever saw. We buried the loser and the victor was our main dish for dinner.

Weldon N. Spears  
Lubbock

## Big Drum

My name is Nicholas Huffeldt and I am nine years old. I caught a 36-inch black drum in Trinity Bay on Friday, September 2, 1994. It fought really hard and took more than 20 minutes to land. I caught it with a tout on my 12-pound-test line and my own small rod.

After we measured it and took its picture we released it. It was the biggest fish I've ever caught, and we forgot to tag it.

Nicholas Huffeldt  
Houston



# Champion of the Tejanos

March 2, 1836, dawned cold and overcast in the village of Washington, on the confluence of the Brazos and Navasota Rivers. As wind whistled past cloths stretched over holes in an unfinished building, a somber mood prevailed among the 59 men gathered inside. The Alamo had been under siege by Mexican troops since February 23, and news from there was becoming increasingly disturbing. Demands the Texans had presented to the Mexican government three months earlier had not been met, so a call had gone out in January 1836 for a delegation to meet in Washington to consider declaring independence for Texas.

The men who met in Washington had come to Texas from all over the United States. Sam Houston was a native of Virginia. George Campbell Childress had come from Tennessee. Thomas J. Rusk had been born in South Carolina and had come to Texas from Georgia. But José Antonio Navarro, representing the citizens of San Antonio de Bexar, had been born in Texas, just 160 miles from where the delegates gathered.

The convention opened on March 1, and the delegates passed a resolution to draft a declaration of independence from Mexico. On March 2 the group reassembled and, following an emotional speech by Sam Houston, voted unanimously to adopt the declaration. The next day they began signing their names to the document. José Antonio Navarro and his uncle, Francisco Ruiz, were the only native Texans to sign.

Contemporaries later said that Navarro “trembled at the thought of having to sanction with his signature

the eternal separation of Texas from the mother country,” according to the forthcoming book “Defending Mexican Valor in Texas” by David McDonald, superintendent of Navarro State

José Antonio Navarro’s remarkable biography spans Texas’s colonial era, its battle for independence from Mexico and entry into statehood; throughout those tempestuous times Navarro steadfastly defended the rights and dignity of Hispanic Texans. He spent his later years in San Antonio, and his home now is a state historical park.

Historical Park, and historian Timothy Matovina. But like many others in the Mexican province of Coahuila and Texas, Navarro had become frustrated by the actions of Mexican dictator Antonio López de Santa Anna and had come to the conclusion that self-rule was the best course for Texas. He aligned himself with the Anglo-American settlers to accomplish this feat, then spent the next three decades

defending the rights of Tejanos—Texans of Mexican or Spanish descent—against exploitation by Anglo-Americans.

José Antonio Navarro was born in San Antonio on February 27, 1795, a time when Spain’s 300-year grip on the New World was beginning to loosen. His father, Angel Navarro, had emigrated from Corsica in 1762. As a foreigner, Angel Navarro was required to submit a declaration to Spanish authorities, and in 1792 he complied with the following: “In view of the fact that you have notified me that I should declare what motive I had to come to these kingdoms, what license I brought and where I am from, I say the following: I am from the island of Corsica, province of Ajaccio, and I left there in 1762. I left my parents without their permission at the age of thirteen or fourteen and embarked for Genoa. After a while I embarked for Barcelona, and from there to Cadiz, always seeking to serve varicus persons to earn my keep, and it was thus that I came to these kingdoms.... I maintained myself six years as a single man and nine years, to the present year, as a married man with two children that God has given me.” Angel Navarro married Maria Josefa Ruiz y Peña of San Antonio in 1783.

José Antonio Navarro attended school in Saltillo at the age of eight or ten. He returned home to San Antonio following his father’s death in 1808, never to receive further formal schooling. But Navarro continued to educate himself throughout his life, and his extensive writings reveal a man of intellect and eloquence. Navarro spoke and wrote only in Spanish. Few English-speaking



COURTESY JOSE ANTONIO NAVARRO STATE HISTORICAL PARK

by Mary-Love Bigony

*Born 200 years ago this month, José Antonio Navarro was about 70 years old when this photo was taken. The Tejano statesman participated in many of Texas's most significant historical events of the 19th century.*

people lived in San Antonio during Navarro's time, and many of the Anglo-Americans with whom he associated, including Stephen F. Austin, spoke Spanish.

Texas was a province of colonial Mexico (New Spain) at the time of Navarro's birth. But Spanish rule was coming to a turbulent end, and as a youth Navarro witnessed violent acts committed by both sides in the struggle. When he was 18, Navarro watched as Mexican rebel Antonio Delgado arrived

in San Antonio following the brutal slaying of 14 Spanish prisoners. "I myself saw the clotting and the blood-stained adornments which those tigers carried hanging from their saddle horns, boasting publicly of their crime and of having divided the spoils among themselves in shares," he wrote years later.

Also in 1813, the army of Spanish General Joaquín de Arredondo defeated the Mexican army and captured San Antonio. "Arredondo entered the city triumphantly," Navarro later would

write, "with his carts laden with wounded and dying. At this point my hand trembles in recording the scenes of horror which they inflicted even on the bitterest enemies of [rebel] Gutierrez, in repayment for his past cruelties. Arredondo avenged himself in the most outrageous manner and indiscriminately ordered the imprisonment of 700 peaceful inhabitants of San Antonio. At the same time he imprisoned 300 unfortunate people in the cells of the Catholic priests.... On the morning of the following day, eighteen of them had perished from suffocation. The remainder were passed before firing squads, from day to day, for no more reason than having been accused of favoring independence."

Following the capture of San Antonio by Spanish troops, the Navarro family and others who had supported Mexican independence fled to Louisiana. Three years later they returned home, but it took until 1821 for Mexican leaders finally to wrest control of their country from Spain. In 1824, the Federal Constitution of Mexico won approval, and the Republic of Mexico became a new nation.

Texas now was part of the Republic of Mexico. But because of its low population, Texas alone did not qualify as a state so it was combined with Coahuila to become the Mexican state of Coahuila and Texas. José Antonio Navarro, then 29 years old, represented the district of

Bexar in the state legislature of Coahuila and Texas when it met for the first time in Saltillo in August 1824.

In the state legislature, Navarro received an appointment to the colonization committee. Due to its isolation, the state was seeing few settlers from within the Republic of Mexico. But Anglo-Americans from the United States were eager to settle in this new territory, and Navarro and others believed Anglo colonization would offer economic benefits and protection from Indian attacks. Navarro had developed a friendship with Stephen F. Austin in 1821, and the two men shared an interest in Anglo-American settlement of the region. As a member of the Coahuila and Texas legislature, Navarro represented the interests of Anglo-American colonists as well as the interests of his own Tejano constituents.

Navarro's term in the Coahuila and Texas Legislature ended in 1828, when he was 33 years old. He and his wife Margarita de la Garza had three children by that time, and upon leaving the legislature he began acquiring and selling land. During the 1830s, Navarro bought more than 50,000 acres, which he sold at a profit in later years when swelling immigrant populations increased the demand for land. He also purchased the 6,000-acre San Geronimo Ranch near Seguin, where he and Margarita reared their five children, as well as a 1.2-acre lot in San Antonio that would be the site of his home during the later years of his life. In 1831, Navarro was appointed land commissioner for the Green DeWitt colony, which settled in an area

west of Stephen F. Austin's "Old Three Hundred" colony on the Brazos River.

In 1833, Antonio López de Santa Anna was elected president of Mexico. The next year he declared that Mexico was not ready for democracy and abolished the Federal Constitution. Anglo-Texan colonists became increasingly angered by the Mexican dictator's actions, and there was considerable resistance to Santa Anna elsewhere, as well.

Following the signing of the Texas

*This house was part of Navarro's 6,000-acre San Geronimo Ranch near Seguin, which he purchased in the 1830s following his service in the legislature of the Mexican state of Coahuila and Texas.*

Declaration of Independence at Washington in 1836, Navarro served on a committee of 21 people who wrote the constitution for the Republic of Texas. In 1838 he served in the senate of the Republic of Texas at the capitol



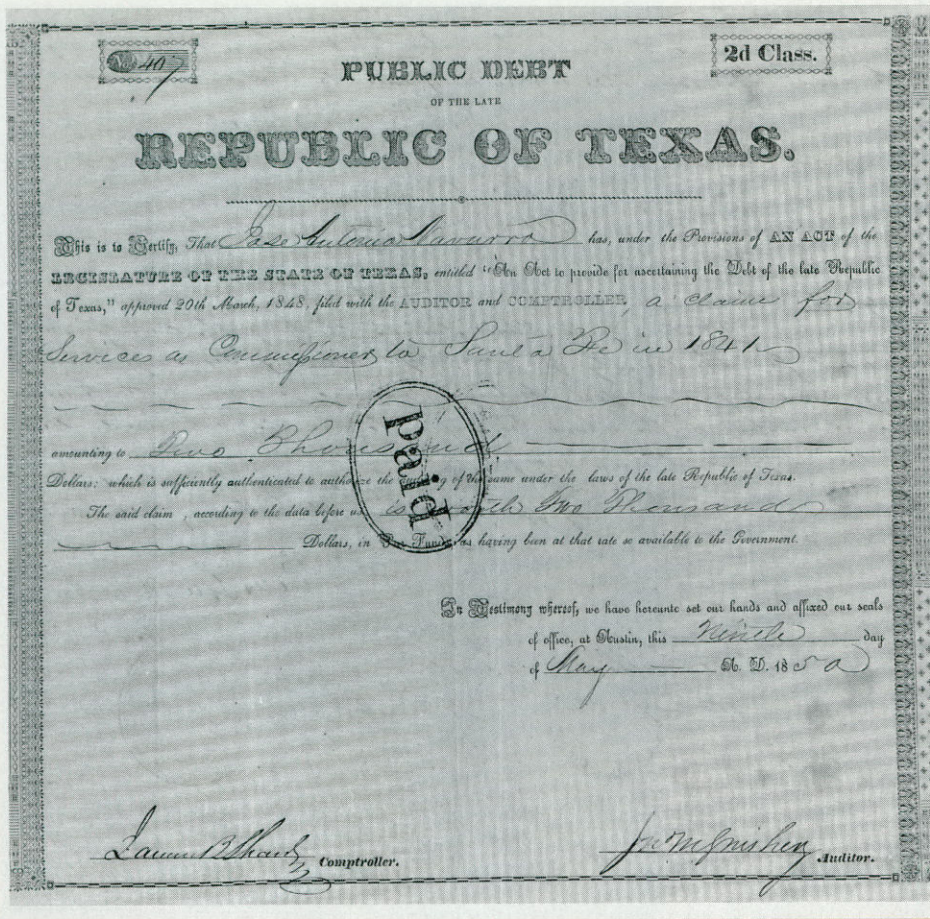
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*J. Antonio Navarro*

INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES

*José Antonio Navarro placed his signature on Texas's Declaration of Independence from Mexico in March 1836.*





This "Public Debt of the late Republic of Texas," signed in 1850, authorized a payment of \$2,000 to Navarro for "services as commissioner to Santa Fe in 1841." Republic of Texas President Mirabeau B. Lamar organized the Santa Fe Expedition and appointed Navarro one of four civil commissioners. The group was captured near Santa Fe and marched to Mexico, where Navarro was convicted of treason and imprisoned for three years. The drawing below by Thom Ricks incorporates Navarro's brand and leg irons symbolic of the time he spent in prison.

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in Houston, where he championed the rights of the Tejanos who had been the original colonists to Texas. According to McDonald and Matovina, Navarro "pleaded in vain for the enactment of legislation which would have aided Tejanos who had no title to their lands, could not speak English and lacked the finances and familiarity with the legal system necessary for lawsuits."

In 1841, still flushed with the success of winning Texas from the Mexican government, Texas President Mirabeau B. Lamar organized the Santa Fe Expedition. His goal was to exercise control over the claimed boundary to the headwaters of the Rio Grande. Lamar appointed Navarro one of four civil commissioners of the expedition.

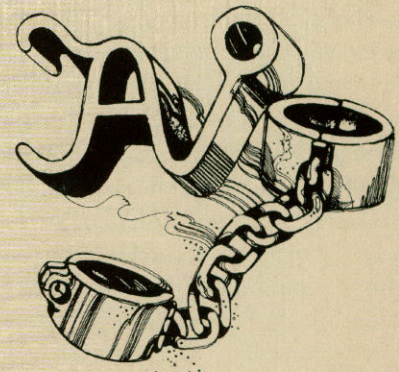
The 321 people making up the Santa Fe Expedition left Brushy Creek near Austin on June 19, 1841. Water was scarce, and the party suffered a number of setbacks, including desertion by their Mexican guide and difficult trav-

eling conditions. In October, the entire group was taken by the Mexican military near Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the prisoners were marched to Mexico City.

In Mexico City, Navarro was convicted of treason and imprisoned. Santa Anna offered him freedom in exchange for renouncing Texas. "I have sworn to be a good Texan, and I will never forswear," said Navarro. He remained in prison until Santa Anna was overthrown in 1844. Navarro returned to Texas a hero. He had signed the Declaration of Independence and had suffered in prison under the notorious Santa Anna.

Political change was headed for Texas again. In 1845 the U.S. Congress approved a resolution that would bring Texas into the Union as a state, and Texas had to present a state constitution for congressional approval by January 1, 1846. Navarro was appointed to the convention that would write the new constitution.

It was during this process that Navarro



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made some of his most impassioned pleas on behalf of the Tejano citizens of Texas. It was widely accepted at the time that African slaves would not have the right to vote, and there was doubt as to whether the right should be extended to Mexican citizens. The proposed wording extended voting rights to the "free white population" of Texas.

A request that the word "white" be deleted was met with the following speech by F.J. Moore of Harris County: "Strike out the term 'white,' and what will be the result? Hordes of Mexican

Indians may come in here from the West.... Silently they will come moving in; they will come back in thousands to Bexar, in thousands to Goliad, perhaps to Nacogdoches, and what will be the consequence? Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty thousand may come in here, and vanquish you at the ballot box."

Another delegate argued that the word "white" didn't mean anything. Navarro responded: "If the word 'white' means anything at all it means a great deal, and if it doesn't mean anything... it is odious and should be left out." The word was struck from the constitution.

Navarro also defended the validity of Mexican land grants, arguing that excessive requirements for land entitlement denied longstanding landowners their legitimate claims. In one particularly heated session, Navarro reacted not with anger but with humor, proposing that holders of Mexican land grants be required "to enclose same land with a stone wall on all sides of eight yards at least."

The people of San Antonio elected Navarro their first state senator, where he continued his advocacy on behalf of "the old settlers of Texas, who are wantonly attacked by those who come into the country with their clean hands, to snatch from them the fruits [of land ownership] acquired by perseverance and fortitude." Navarro County, organized in 1846, was named in honor of the 51-year-old statesman, and the county seat was named Corsicana in honor of his father's birthplace, the island of Corsica.

In 1853, the Navarros sold their San Geronimo Ranch. They built a house

and a two-story building, which they rented as a store, on their lot on Laredo Street in San Antonio. The couple's five children were grown by the time José Antonio and Margarita moved to San Antonio. Son Angel had attended college in St. Louis, Missouri, then went on to law school at Harvard, where he wrote in 1849: "We have very good professors and an excellent library: I have no doubt that this institution affords greater facilities than any other in the country. The country and climate of the north, I do not like at all.... The extreme cold is anything but pleasant." Angel Navarro graduated from Harvard and returned to Texas, where he served two terms in the state legislature and worked closely with Sam Houston.

The Know-Nothing Party, a product of racial and religious antagonism, came to Texas in the 1850s, and in 1854 the party won the San Antonio mayor's race and a city council seat. The Know-Nothings' bigotry threatened not only Mexican Texans but all Texans, and following the elections there was a unity of purpose between many Anglos and Tejanos in San Antonio. Navarro wrote a letter to be read at a public meeting, and it was greeted with "unbounded applause," according to the record:

*Navarro lived in his San Antonio home from 1853 until his death in 1871. His daughter sold the property in 1876, and in the following years the three buildings were used for a variety of purposes, including a cafe in the 1930s, above. The San Antonio Conservation Society bought the site and restored it in 1966.*

"Let us discard all distinctions and jealousy of old nationalities; here we live, here are our firesides; this Government protects and supports us, upholds and guards our rights and privileges. We are covered by the American banner; let us cling to it, and if required sacrifice our lives in defending it." The letter later was published in both English and Spanish newspapers.

San Antonio in the 1850s was a vastly different place from what it had been during Navarro's youth. According to McDonald and Matovina, "Despite the efforts of Navarro and other Tejano leaders to defend their people's interests, Tejano economic and political influence diminished significantly at San Antonio after U.S. annexation in 1845." Tejanos made up less than half the population of San Antonio in 1850, for the first time since the city was established. In 1860, the Tejano population dropped to slightly less than one-third. Tejanos'



land holdings were diminishing as well, as was their political influence. Tejanos held five of eight city council seats in 1845; in 1860 they held none.

Navarro grew concerned that Texas history was being rewritten, highlighting the actions of Anglo-Americans and ignoring Tejano history altogether. The Battle of the Alamo and the Goliad massacre were still fresh in the memory of many Anglo Texans, and there was a great antipathy toward all Mexicans. One popularly held view was that Tejanos were morally and intellectually impoverished before the Anglo-American influence offered them a better life. One 1853 article said that the history of Texas is little more than “pointless power struggles.”

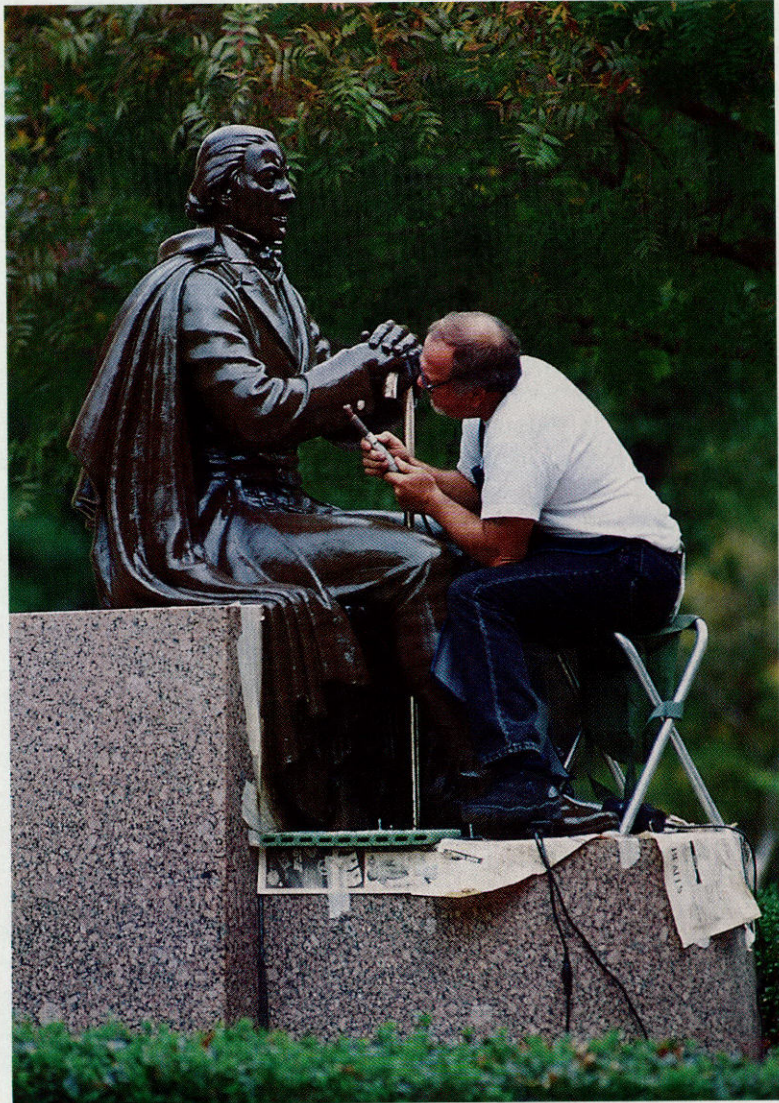
**N**avarro took up his pen. In 1853 and again in 1857 he wrote a history of the revolution to overthrow Spanish rule in and around San Antonio. The articles were translated into English and published in several installments in the *San Antonio Ledger* and other newspapers. In 1869 they were published as a book under the name *Apuntes historicos interesantes de San Antonio de Bexar*, (“Interesting Historical Commentaries on San Antonio de Bexar”).

“The point he made,” said David McDonald of the Navarro House State

Historical Park, “was that Mexicans were brave and courageous people who fought for independence against Spain and made many sacrifices; that there were bloody and terrible struggles, and that Mexicans fought for their independence just as George Washington and the American patriots did.” While

Navarro’s intent was to clarify Tejanos’ role in Texas history, the articles, or *apuntes*, also are a fascinating eyewitness account of a turbulent era.

Toward the end of the 1850s, yet another change was headed for Texas. Rumbblings of secession from the Union were spreading through the South.



© KEVIN PAINTER

*Navarro County was named in honor of the Tejano statesman. This statue of José Antonio Navarro was erected on the lawn of the Navarro County courthouse in 1936, Texas’s centennial year. The statue received a complete refurbishing last year from Corsicana resident Lester Pettengill, pictured here.*

Texans initially were ambivalent, but support for the movement grew and in 1861 a secession convention opened in Austin. Navarro, who had accepted and even promoted the many changes occurring in Texas during his lifetime, adamantly opposed separating Texas from the United States. In 1859, he wrote to Samuel Maverick, declining an invitation to speak at a public meeting but making his feelings clear. He said secession "would be the greatest calamity to our great, glorious and ever to be cherished American Union."

Margarita Navarro died in 1861, and José Antonio Navarro divided the last years of his life between his home on Laredo Street and his Atascosa Ranch. His friend Narciso Leal described him in 1869: "His appearance is of the Spanish type. He has an aquiline nose, a pure ruddy color of face, and the uniform whiteness of his complete head of hair delicately frames his wide forehead."

Navarro died at his home on January 14, 1871, at the age of 75. During his lifetime, Texas had passed from Spain to Mexico, to the Republic, to the U.S., to the Confederacy and back to the U.S. Navarro not only was a witness, but an active participant in this march of historic events. The *San Antonio Daily Herald* wrote upon his death: "To none of her greatest statesmen, nor to her many eminent patriots, is Texas more indebted for her existence as a Republic, than José Antonio Navarro...his memory will be cherished with the fondest regard." His friend Ruben Potter wrote: "Navarro left a name which should be honored...and his heroic deeds should command the admiration of men." ★

## José Antonio Navarro State Historical Park

In 1856, George Kendall, who had been with José Antonio Navarro on the ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition, wrote to Thomas Falconer, another member of the expedition, that Navarro had constructed a "new and very tidy house" on Laredo Street in San Antonio.

Today that "tidy house," where Navarro lived from 1853 until his death in 1871, is open to visitors and offers a peek into the life of a San Antonio family in the mid-19th century. José Antonio Navarro State Historical Park, or "Casa Navarro," is tucked away in the western end of downtown San Antonio near Market Square. The site consists of three buildings made of adobe and limestone surrounding a gracious courtyard where adobe brick-making demonstrations take place.

Exhibits at Casa Navarro detail Navarro's life and historical events in San Antonio during the 19th century. Furnishings in the home reflect those typical of the era. Navarro was known to be a frugal person. His friend Narciso Leal wrote in 1869: "The furniture and various items which make up the furnishing of his home immediately convey the idea that this honorable compatriot is a member of that small body of men whose simple and unchanging customs embodies both knowledge and recreation." Tax records indicate the Navarros owned a piano, and the

home's furnishings include a piano of the period. On a desk is a copy of Navarro's will, in his own handwriting.

The three buildings traditionally have been referred to as the house, the kitchen and the law office. But according to Superintendent David McDonald, only the identity of the house is certain. In 1870, Navarro described the buildings as his house and "the rooms at the corner of Nueva Street." The square, two-story building called the law office or the store more likely was rented to individuals. And the three-room building

### NAVARRO BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

In honor of the 200th anniversary José Antonio Navarro's birth, the San Antonio Guitar Quartet will perform a benefit concert at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, February 26 at San Fernando Cathedral. Donations of \$10 per adult and \$5 per child will benefit the statue fund.

A pre-concert reception and open house will take place from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on February 26 at the José Antonio Navarro State Historical Park, 228 South Laredo. Members of the San Antonio Living History Association will attend in costume. The public is invited to attend, and there is no admission charge.

For information about either event call 210-226-4801.



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*José Antonio Navarro State Historical Park in San Antonio provides information about Navarro's life and career. On the desk pictured below is a copy of Navarro's will in his own handwriting.*

called the kitchen was used as a residence in the 20th century and probably in the 19th century, as well.

McDonald, who has interpreted many of Navarro's writings, is a wealth of information about the Tejano statesman. Most people who come to the site are unfamiliar with Navarro, he said. "I've seen people come in here and say, 'Oh, he signed the Declaration of Independence. He was on our side.' Then people from Mexico come in and say, 'He signed the Declaration of Independence, did he? He was a sell-out.' Both extremes are presumptuous. Navarro was elected by the people of San Antonio to attend the convention in 1836."

Following the death of Navarro's wife Margarita in 1861, their daughter

ter Josefa and her children moved into the Laredo Street home with her father. She inherited the home upon Navarro's death in 1871, and her husband was murdered the same year. She lived there five more years. In 1876, her children grown, she sold the property.

Although the well-built structures never fell into ruins, they were scheduled for demolition in 1960. The San Antonio Conservation Society bought the site and restored it. In 1962 it was registered as a Texas Historical Landmark, and in 1972 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The San Antonio Conservation Society donated the site to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1975.

This year, the bicentennial of Navarro's birth and the site's 20th anniversary as a state historical park, a new addition is coming to the neighborhood. A lifesize bronze statue of Navarro, arm outstretched, will stand at the corner of Commerce and Santa Rosa. Sculptor Jonas Perkins envisions the figure to be pointing

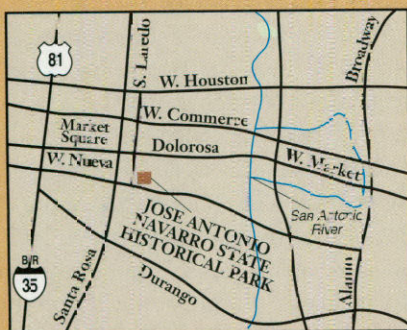


© LAURENCE PARENT

symbolically toward the Mexican history and heritage of Texas that has been ignored or distorted. On the statue's pedestal will be a quote from Navarro's friend Narciso Leal: "Dedicated champion of the peoples' rights."

Casa Navarro is located at 228 South Laredo Street, southeast of Market Square. It is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., February through July. August through January it is open 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children.

For more information call 210-226-4801.



# Return of the **APLOMADO**

*These diminutive falcons have been absent from Texas's coastal prairie for decades, but an intensive restoration effort by the Peregrine Fund organization is bringing them back.*

Article by Linda Laack, Photos by Larry Ditto

**E**ach year, thousands of people head to the Rio Grande Valley to view the spectacular and varied birdlife. With more than 400 species native to the area, it is a birder's paradise. This year, bird enthusiasts will have one more reason to search the skies of deep South Texas, because aplomado falcons are being reintroduced into this part of their historic range.

The strikingly beautiful raptor is a diminutive member of the falcon family, about the size of a common pigeon. Its cinnamon-colored breast and legs and dark abdominal band give it the appearance of a dapper gentleman decked out in a cummerbund. The teardrop-shaped dark line below the eye and the buffy stripe running from the eye to the neck also are distinctive features. This little falcon is likely to be seen perched on a yucca or chasing prey by flying low to the ground and following move for move the flight of smaller birds.

Aplomado falcons once were common throughout the humid prairies and savannas of South Texas, from Brownsville to the Coastal Bend. They also were found in the more arid grasslands of West Texas. Records of early naturalists show that more nests and eggs of aplomados were collected in

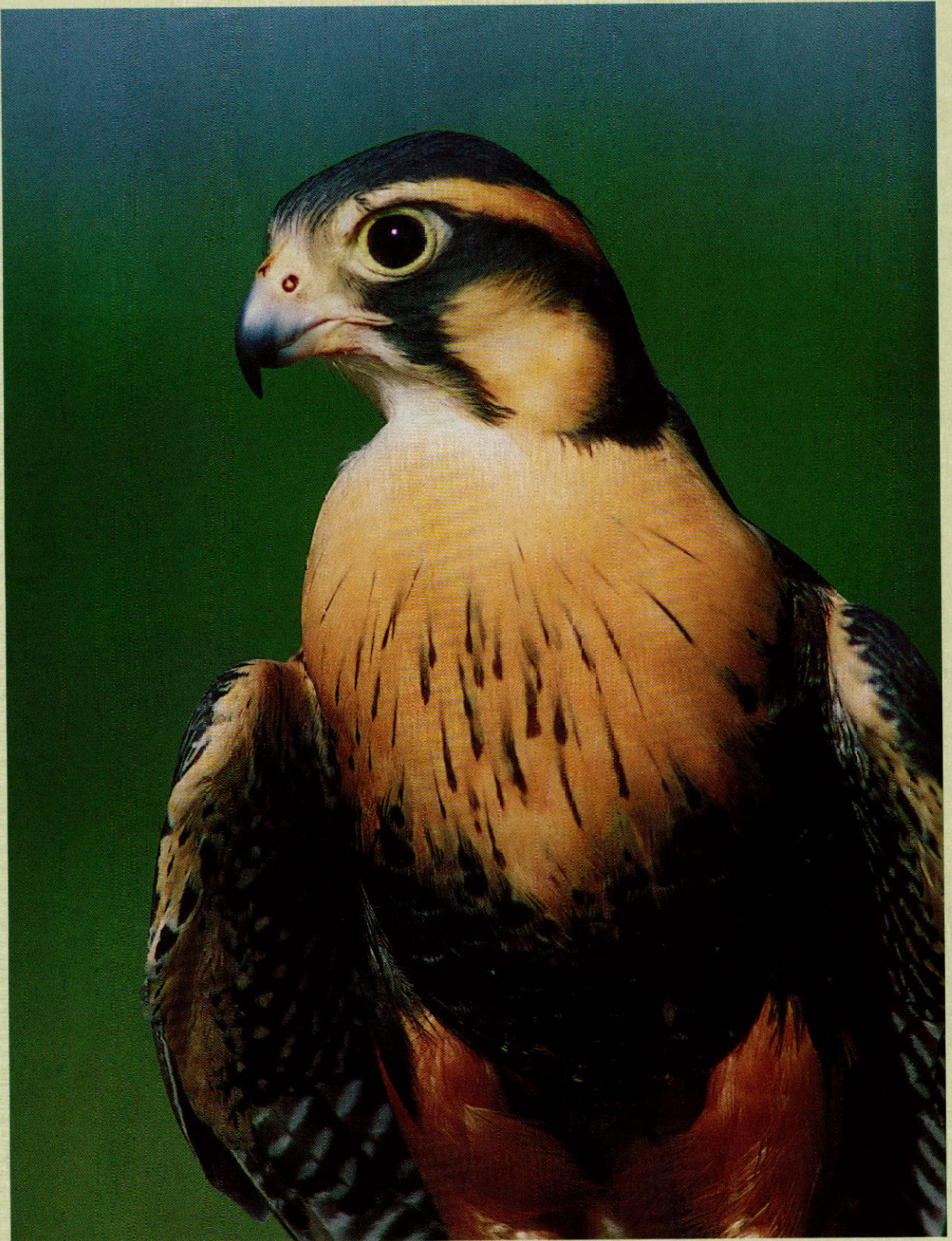
South Texas around the turn of the century than were eggs of either the white-tailed hawk or the crested caracara, two species still common today. So what happened to the aplomado falcon?

It began to decline in numbers around the 1930s and by the 1940s it was all but gone. The last known nest in Texas was found in Brooks County in 1941, although individuals were seen until the late 1950s. The reason for the rapid decline of these dashing falcons is somewhat of a mystery. Several factors, however, have been implicated, including habitat alteration and eggshell thinning from pesticide accumulation. Between 1920 and 1940, much of the Texas Gulf Coast prairie was converted to agriculture. Even the remaining grassland was altered because fire control prevented the spread of natural wildfires upon which many prairie plants depend. Without wildfires many of the native prairies became overgrown with brushy vegetation. In West Texas, overgrazing also took its toll on native grasslands. The drought years of the 1930s and 1940s added to the degradation of these arid grasslands by favoring exotic species of grasses over natives, breaking the complex diversity of natural grasslands.

While the aplomado already was on

the decline from habitat changes, the introduction of pesticides such as DDT into the food chain may have pushed the aplomado over the edge. DDT was used extensively in agriculture during the 1940s and 1950s. As a predator at the top of the food chain, aplomados accumulated pesticides from prey animals such as grackles, blackbirds and larks. This pesticide accumulation probably caused eggshell thinning, so that most eggs broke before they could hatch. Aplomado falcons were not the only species to suffer from this problem. Bald eagles, peregrine falcons, brown pelicans and several other predatory birds also declined during this same period. With the banning of DDT in the early 1960s, many of these species have made remarkable comebacks. Unfortunately for the aplomado falcon, by the time the pesticide problem was improving, aplomados had disappeared from the United States and probably northeastern Mexico as well.

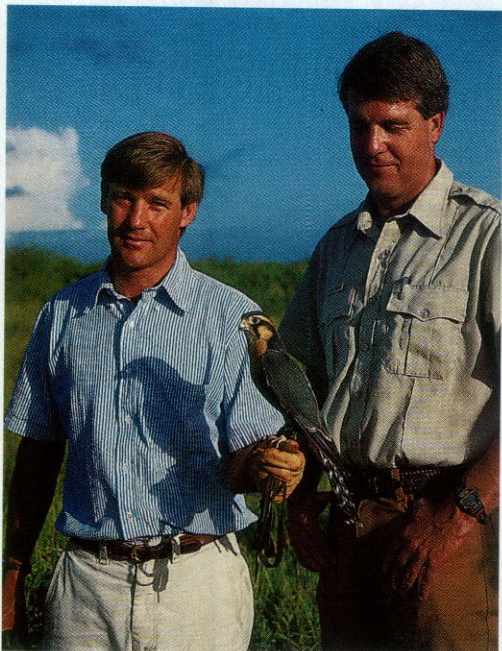
Today, many grasslands are in better health than they were 40 years ago. Range science has shown the importance of fires to grassland systems and many land managers are using fire to control brush. While some of these grasslands are on the mend, one thing missing from the landscape is the aplo-



APLOMADO FALCON

mado falcon, keeping watch over the prairie from its perch on a yucca. This void prompted the Peregrine Fund, a private organization dedicated to restoring birds of prey to their historic range, to bring this little falcon back to Texas.

**T**he Peregrine Fund collected 25 live aplomado falcons from southern Mexico between 1977 and 1988 for a captive breeding program. Under the care of dedicated biologists, the aplomados successfully bred and increased in numbers. By 1985, there were enough aplomados in captivity to attempt some small experimental releases. Twenty-four young aplomados were released on Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge and two private ranches along coastal South Texas between 1985 and 1989. Peter Jenny, vice president of the Peregrine Fund, said "We learned a lot from those first releases. One thing that we had to be very careful of was to release the birds in areas relatively free of the falcon's natural predators, such as great horned owls. Another nemesis of the falcon, which was a surprise to us, was the scissor-tailed flycatcher. These tough little birds would mob inexperienced young aplomados and chase them from the area." At least two of these early released falcons still are seen on



a regular basis, one near Brownsville and another close to Falfurrias.

Peregrine Fund biologists quickly realized that to have a truly successful reintroduction, they needed to release many birds at once so that the falcons could find each other to pair and breed. For several years they retained the young birds born in captivity to increase their breeding stock. Now, after years of captive breeding, they are able to release a larger number of birds. "During the summers of 1993 and 1994 we released 36 young aplomados at two sites on the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge," said Jenny. "For the next few years, we hope to release 20 to 50 birds at a time."

The process involved in releasing the birds is very labor-intensive. Young aplomado chicks, about 30 days old, are flown in by airplane from the Peregrine Fund's breeding facility in Boise, Idaho. They then are placed in a "hacking tower," a specially designed box set on poles about 10 feet off the ground. One side

*Peter Jenny, left, vice president of the Peregrine Fund, and Steve Thompson, manager of the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, examine one of the aplomado falcons released on the refuge. During 1993 and 1994, 36 young aplomados were released at two sites on Laguna Atascosa*



*Range managers use fire to control brush and improve grassland habitat. Such habitat improvement projects paved the way for efforts to bring back the aplomado falcon.*

of the box is screened so the young birds can view their new environment. They are fed from a hole in the back of the box to minimize human contact. While the chicks still are in the box, the two-person falcon crew checks for predators and scares off any owls or coyotes they see roaming the area. After about a week, the falcons are old enough to fledge and the screen is removed. This is the falcons' first taste of freedom and they are apprehensive at first. They tentatively walk out on their front porch and look around. The fledglings flap their wings to test the wind. Gradually, one by one, they fly first to the ground and then to nearby roosts. Soon all the falcons are flying, although they clearly lack the aerial grace of adult aplomados.

The birds' first week of freedom is the most critical. Young aplomado falcons have to learn where to roost at night undetected by predators. Hack site attendant Jorge Montejo Diaz explained that some of the birds will roost atop trees where owls can see their silhouette. Other falcons may roost on the ground and be vulnerable to coyotes. "If it is early in the evening and a falcon roosts poorly, we can flush the bird so that it tries for a better spot," Diaz said. "If it roosts in a bad location



when it is just getting dark, about all we can do is pray and hope the fledgling makes it through the night. The next evening we will stand where the falcon roosted previously to keep it from that area and to encourage it to roost in a safer site." Eventually the birds learn to roost near the trunk of a tree or within the fronds of a yucca, but not before

*Young aplomado chicks from the Peregrine Fund's breeding facility in Boise, Idaho, are placed in a "hacking tower," where they are fed and allowed to examine their new environment before being released.*

giving their worried caretakers a few sleepless nights.

As the aplomados mature they begin to develop hunting skills. Like all youngsters, falcon chicks love to play, and they spend much of the day chasing each other and anything in their path. They have been observed dive-bombing coyotes and following vultures, kites and gulls. These larger animals seem to tolerate the childish antics of the falcons. These games of tag strengthen the fledglings' flying ability and train them to follow their prey closely. Soon they

become agile enough to catch an occasional grasshopper, dragonfly or small bird, although early hunting attempts usually are unsuccessful. It may take several weeks before they regularly catch prey. Meanwhile, the hack site attendants put food out for the falcons, reducing the handouts as the young raptors become more proficient hunters.

On each succeeding day the falcons become more graceful and independent. Usually by the seventh week the young birds no longer are returning to the hack tower. To monitor the success of the reintroduction effort and learn more about where falcons go once they are on their own, each bird is fitted with a tail-mounted radio transmitter so that it can be tracked. New Mexico State University graduate student Chris Perez has the ambitious task of following about 20 independent falcons. "I expect that I will be traveling all over coastal South Texas and probably northern Mexico trying to follow the birds," Perez said. "The range of my radio equipment is only about two miles on the ground, but it's six miles or more from an airplane. I may be flying almost as much as the falcons." Perez hopes to determine the survival of released falcons, what habitats they prefer and what their movement patterns are.

Steve Thompson, manager of Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, is happy to have the falcons return to the refuge. "Resource managers," he said, "spend most of their time simply trying not to lose ground. Seldom do they get the chance to improve a situation for a rare species. It is a great feeling to give a second chance to a beautiful bird like the aplomado falcon. I enjoy watching them flying free in their natural habitat and I'm optimistic that within the next few years, I will be seeing these same birds nest and raise young here on the refuge. That will give everyone involved with this project a sense of accomplishment." ★

*Linda Laack is a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service biologist working at the Laguna Atascosa N.W.R.*



# Birding

A Nature Company Guide

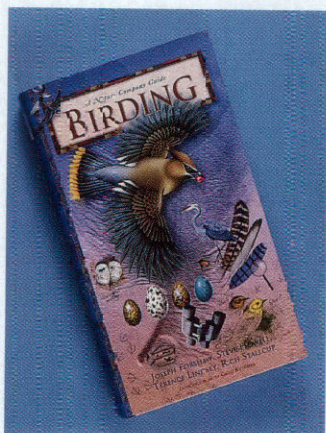
By *Joseph Forshaw, Steve Howell, Terence Lindsey, Rich Stallcup.* Introduction by Greg Butcher. 1994. 288 pages. The Nature Company, 750 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, California 94710. Hardcover, \$24.95.

"Step out your door, almost anywhere in the world, and, within minutes, you will see birds of one kind or another." So begins a new Nature Company guide designed to get readers interested in, and adept at, birding.

More than a field guide, "Birding" is a comprehensive look at the avian world. Concise accounts of bird biology, behavior and life cycles provide a foundation for developing bird identification skills. A chapter called "Birding at Home" offers information about feeders, types of food and gardening for birds. Another chapter, called "Going Birding," offers tips on choosing binoculars and spotting scopes. This chapter also gets you started on ways to identify birds based on their behavior, eye markings, wing bars and calls.

The book's unique habitat bird finder organizes bird profiles according to the types of places they most likely are to be seen. For example, egrets and herons most often are found in wetlands. Cactus wrens and pyrrhuloxias are birds of the deserts. The book offers advice on looking for birds in six types of habitats, all of which are found in Texas: urban areas, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, seashores and deserts. Some 200 bird profiles are included, with illustrations, a range map and field notes on each.

"Birding" is written for the aspiring bird watcher, but even



GLEN MILLS

more experienced birders will enjoy the historical features and the color photographs and illustrations, numbering more than 1,000. A resource directory in the back of the book lists further reading, birding hotlines, birding organizations and a glossary.

"We designed this book to get people excited about birding, to show them the beauty and variety often observed only by the experienced birder," said Catherine Kouts, vice president of product development for The Nature Company. "We want to teach people to love watching birds."

"Birding" is available only at the more than 120 Nature Company stores in the U.S. and Canada. To find the nearest store, or to order the book by mail, call 1-800-227-1114.

*Mary-Love Bigsby*

# Land of Bears and Honey

By *Joe C. Truett and Daniel W. Lay.* Introduction by Francis Edward Abernethy. 1984. First paperback printing 1994. 164 pages. University of Texas Press, Box 7819, Austin, Texas 78713.

Motorists traveling main highways through East Texas easily

could get a superficial impression that this region of thick pine stands, river bottoms and grassy glades remains relatively unaltered. Unlike the Great Plains, where practically every tillable acre has gone under the plough, eastern Texas seems somehow less altered, even pristine in spots. No impression could be further from the truth, because Pineywoods flora and fauna, and the ecosystem itself, have undergone drastic alteration during the past century.

One of the most knowledgeable and articulate observers of these changes is wildlife and forestry consultant Daniel W. Lay, who for 40 years served as a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department wildlife biologist in East Texas. His award-winning book, "Land of Bears and Honey: A Natural History of East Texas," documents the conquest of a wild land first by settlers, and later by dam builders, strip miners, developers, poachers and timber interests.

Co-authored by researcher Joe C. Truett, the book first was printed in 1984. Now being reissued in paperback by the University of Texas Press, "Land of Bears and Honey" has lost none of its impact for those interested in why the region is so vastly different from what it once was.

Lay and Truett were able to blend straight eco-reporting with stories in the historical novel style to give the reader a sense of perspective on how each succeeding generation of intruders managed to degrade the land. They present a sobering roll-call of vanished species once abundant in East Texas: the red wolf, ivory-billed woodpecker, eastern turkey, passenger pigeon, black bear, mountain lion, jaguar and bison, to name a few. Even if some of these species magically

returned to East Texas they would not survive because of habitat destruction. Old-growth longleaf pines, hardwood groves along river bottoms and uplands and patches of native prairie largely are a thing of the past as wildlife-supporting diversity is replaced with even-age pine plantations, cut-over bottoms and coastal bermuda grass, or sunk beneath mighty reservoirs.

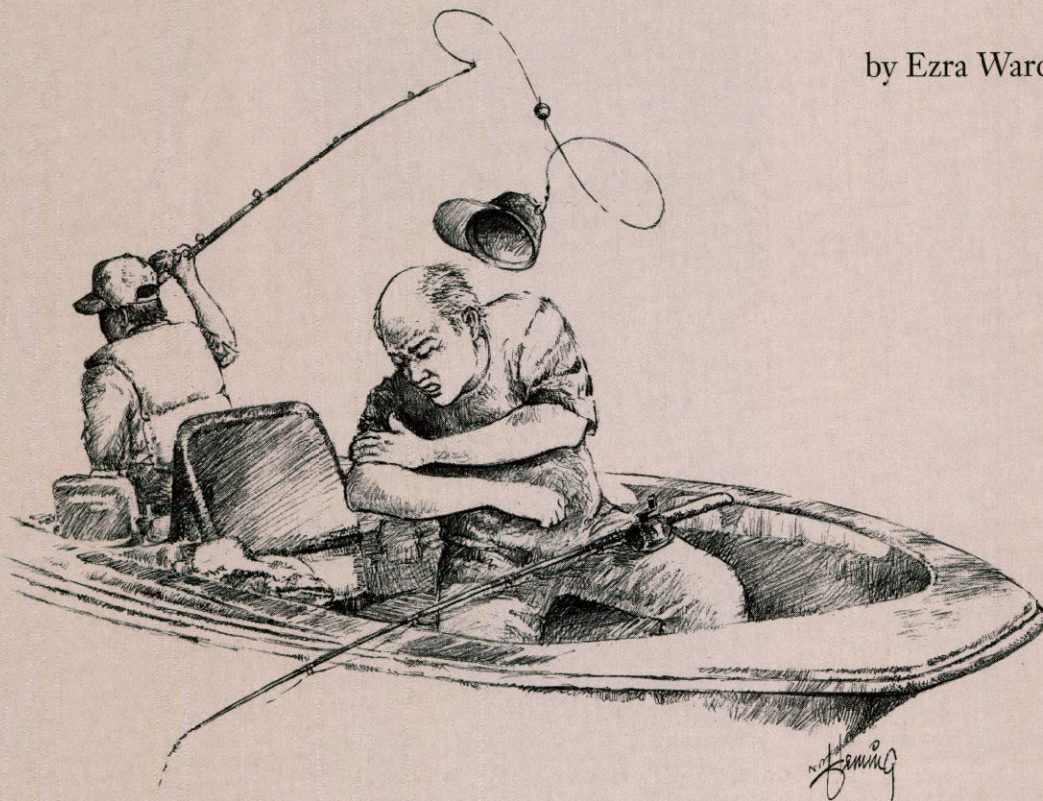
Despite the stark accounting of lost treasures, the authors see a slow but perceptible swing back to a rational treatment of East Texas's natural resources. Some timber companies are saving streamside hardwoods; selective timber harvest is getting some renewed interest as an alternative to clearcuts; a more enlightened hunting ethic has allowed the return of white-tailed deer to abundance, and even may bring the eastern turkey back through restocking and protection.

The authors wonder if the present generation, considered better educated and more environmentally aware than their ancestors, will be able to reverse the destructive attitudes of the past. "More and more today the land is controlled by those who were educated away from Grandfather's knee. This presents at once a hope and a danger for the land. There is hope because what these people learn from the world outside frees them from Grandfather's thoughtless traditions of land abuse. They garner the knowledge to foster a new tradition of land stewardship. But there is danger because Grandfather loved the land in a way that cannot be taught by classroom teachers in a faraway city. If the grandchildren learn of better ways to treat the land, will they also learn to care?"

*Jim Cox*

*It took a duel with treble hooks to convince E. L. and George that they were meant to be fishing buddies.*

by Ezra Ward



market for new fishing partners, and that's how he came to invite George Hancock out one day. They put in early up on the lake and started fishing for black bass along the foot of the limestone cliffs by the old river channel.

They were working their way along the cliffs, casting constantly. E.L. was telling George about all the big blacks he had ever caught and going on about how George might do better if he'd change from a white to a yellow jig; and George, who was just happy to be on any fishing trip, was ignoring him. In fact, George was paying so little attention to E.L. that his casts on the backswing were coming dangerously near his host.

"Say, George, you're getting too close," said E.L. after George's jig popped right by his ear. "Watch me and learn how you should cast from a boat."

But George didn't even turn around, and on his next cast the whipping jig ripped E.L.'s shirt-sleeve from shoulder to elbow and drew blood. E.L. yelped in pain, but still George paid him no mind. "Look what you did!" he shouted then and George finally swiveled around in his seat.

"I didn't do that," George said coolly.

E.L. had just discovered the third reason George Hancock had no close friends, which was his amazing insensitivity to other people.

"Well, who the hell do you think did it?" frothed E.L.

George was unperturbed. "I don't know how you hurt yourself," he said, causing E.L.'s eyes to bulge outward with aston-

*Continued on page 53...*

There were a couple of well-known reasons why George Hancock didn't have a single close friend in town.

First and foremost, of course, was his dog. George Hancock's half-breed German shepherd was the meanest brute that ever breathed. There wasn't a man, woman, child, cat or dog in town who hadn't been scared spitless at one time or another by that dog. Now, the women and children and animals just learned to get where they were going with wide detours around George's house, and they never thought anything else about it. But the average self-respecting male doesn't want to be reminded that he can fear anything. So the men didn't like George's dog, and

the dislike rubbed off on George.

The second main reason George had trouble making friends was envy over the way he made his living. He actually earned a comfortable income from writing a column about beer for newspapers all across the country. Breweries around the world forever were flying George to fabulous places at their expense to try different beers in the hope that he would write something about them. Naturally, George got any beer he wanted for free. But the only time he ever talked any of the Three Corners men into coming over to his place to watch Monday night football, he served them Pearl Light.

So you can understand why George didn't get invited on too

many fishing trips.

E.L. Raines knew all this. But E.L., well, he had a hard time making and keeping friends, too. It was bad enough that he always wanted to talk insurance, which was his business. Even worse, he had a fondness for bragging and carrying on about his fishing prowess. Plus, he would belittle everything his fishing partners did—their choice of bait, hooks, test of line, method of casting and so on. What made these habits all the more obnoxious was the fact that E.L. usually did catch the most fish in any group. Needless to say, not many people who went out for a day on E.L.'s glitter-blue bass boat ever got back in it again.

So E.L. was constantly in the

# Texas City Dike

by G. Elaine Acker

The masts of weathered shrimp boats docked along the dike rock gently back and forth, while the landmark stacks of Texas City's bayfront petrochemical complex stand like statues in the background. Debbie Reynolds, owner of Boyd's One Stop, a local bait camp and seafood market, notes that people often are surprised that an avid fishing community can co-exist with the industrial complex. "I think over the years the chemical plants have become more environmentally conscious," said Reynolds. "Texas City offers many recreational opportunities. You can fish, sail, boat or swim. There's so much to do."



*Shrimp boats, above, are moored at a dock on the Texas City Dike, a jetty that was built for navigation purposes, but which also serves as a recreation area, with boat ramps, bait shops and plenty of space for fishing from the granite-lined structure.*



Unlike most of the narrow rock jetties along the Texas coast, the Texas City Dike offers fishing piers, bait houses, a boat ramp and plenty of elbow room for anglers and picnickers.

Located between Houston and Galveston on Galveston Bay, Texas City is Texas's third largest port. But for recreation, the city's main attraction is the Texas City Dike, which stretches for more than five miles into the bay. Originally built in the early 1900s to protect the harbor channel, the city proclaims the dike is the "world's

longest manmade fishing pier." Bait camps and beaches line the dike, and pink granite boulders separate the roadway from the salt water. Trawlers, tankers, barges, sailboards and sailboats cruise the horizon.

Boyd's One-Stop has been a Texas City favorite for 20 years, and Debbie Reynolds has owned the bait camp for

the past five. Her store, like others along the dike, offers live and dead bait, artificial lures, tackle and picnic supplies. "We have what you want to go fishing," said Reynolds, "and we have what you want if you didn't catch anything!" For hungry fishermen with an empty creel, Reynolds stocks fresh shrimp, crabs, whole fish and fish fillets.



*Built in the early 1900s, the Texas City Dike stretches five miles into Galveston Bay. In the foreground is a 600-foot-long pier that offers some of the deepest-water pier fishing on the Texas coast.*



© RUSS WILKINS



© RUSS WILKINS

Sailboat enthusiasts, left, use the north side of the Texas City Dike to beach their craft between outings on the bay. Above is the anchor from the French freighter *Grand Camp*, which exploded in 1947. The explosion hurled the anchor onto the dike about a half-mile away.

According to Reynolds, light tackle such as trout rods and reels are adequate for wade fishing or bay boat fishing for trout, flounder and redfish. Heavier surfreels are recommended for offshore catches such as king mackerel, ling and shark. "Anytime you can get live bait, that's the best," said Reynolds. "Inshore, you might want to use live shrimp, and offshore, we recommend live mullet." A 600-foot, lighted fishing pier at the end of the dike offers some of the deepest water pier

fishing on the Texas coast, and a boat ramp provides access for those who trailer their boats to the bay.

There are no lifeguards on duty along the dike, and posted signs remind visitors to exercise caution. In particular, swimmers are warned about the dangers of undertows, rip currents and sink holes.

Near the dike, historical parks commemorate Texas City's past, and driving tours include sites such as Victorian homes and early settlements—areas

once frequented by the pirate Jean Lafitte.

Anchor Park marks one of Texas City's greatest disasters, which occurred on April 16, 1947. The French freighter *Grand Camp* exploded, killing 576 people, injuring 5,000 and destroying more than \$67 million in property. The 10,640-pound anchor located in the park was found buried one-half mile from the scene of the explosion.

Bay Street Park marks Texas City as the birthplace of the U.S. Air Force, paying tribute to the First Aero Squadron of the U.S. Army. The first of its kind in the nation, the squadron was stationed at Texas City from 1913 to 1915 during border troubles caused by the revolution in Mexico. Although the pilots and enlisted men were not engaged in combat, they made aerial maps and set flight records for distance and speed.

Most of the flight records set in Texas City today are by the brown pelicans and laughing gulls that pursue shrimp boats across the bay. Like their human counterparts, they fish along the dike, enjoy an ocean breeze and anticipate the flavor of fresh seafood. ★

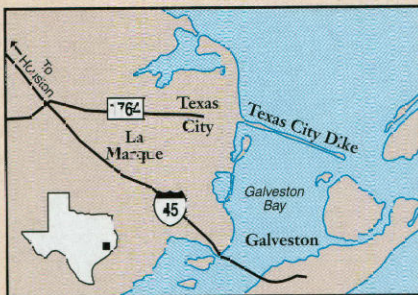
*Elaine Acker is a freelance writer living in Austin.*

## TEXAS CITY DIKE

Texas City is located 31 miles south of Houston. From Houston, take I-45 south to FM 1764 and turn east. FM 1764 dead-ends at Bay Street. Turn right on Bay Street, and

Galveston Bay and the entrance to the dike will be immediately on the left. For more information, write the Texas City Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 3330, Texas City, Texas 77592, or call 409-935-1408 or 713-280-3517.

Boyd's One-Stop is open during the winter from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. and during the summer from 5 a.m. until 10 p.m., weekdays, and 4:30 a.m. until midnight, weekends. For information on Galveston Bay, maps or guide services, call 409-945-4001.



## Off-Season Gun and Scope Care

**A** quail hunter, tired after a day's hunt and in a hurry to get home, slips his shotgun, still warm from firing, into a soft vinyl case, zips the sheath shut and puts it with his other gear in the vehicle. He'll clean the gun tomorrow, he thinks.

If the weather is warm, he may turn on the air conditioner during the trip home. Or the weather may be cool or even cold. Either way, the combination of a warm gun and cool temperature results in condensation. Since the vinyl can't breathe, it traps moisture inside the case. "Unless the gun is cleaned right away, it will take only three or four days for rust to appear," said Dudley Steapp of Mason a gunsmith for 35 years. "And in about a week, there will be pitting."

The weather is a firearm's enemy, even indoors. It makes bad things happen, often when the gun is idle, out of sight. Most hunters know that proper gun care is required before mothballing a firearm for several months between hunting seasons. But let us not forget, maintenance is equally important during the hunting season.

When a rifle gets damp, moisture can settle in hidden places a wipe cloth can't reach. "A soft vinyl case is intended to protect a gun only when traveling to and from hunts," Steapp said. "When you get home, take the gun from the case. It helps to leave the case unzipped during the trip home. This permits any condensation to escape. You shouldn't store a gun in a soft case for any length of time. That's asking for trouble."

When a gun is being used frequently, any evidence of rust the hunter sees usually can be treated before the damage is permanent. But this isn't the rule during

the off-season. Unless you inspect your gun regularly, rusting can accelerate rapidly. How fast it advances will depend on humidity and how the gun was serviced before it was stored. Also, maintenance at season's end will assure the gun is functioning properly when it again is called to duty. If you are experiencing any mechanical problems with a gun, take it to a gunsmith before storing. Don't wait until just before the next season when the rush is on.

According to Steapp, maintenance should include:

### Shotgun

If the gun has a detachable barrel, take it off. This makes cleaning easier. Pay particular attention to the chamber. When the gun is opened in the field, the change of temperature may cause condensation. The print on a plastic shell will mix with this moisture, and this can result in a residue resembling rust. If left uncleaned the residue can lead to pitting, and it also can

cause shells to stick in the chamber. This can be aggravating, especially with an auto-loader when the hard-to-eject shell slows the cycle and the gun jams.

Take a wire brush of the right size (gauge), dip it in bore solvent, and thoroughly swab the bore and chamber using a cleaning rod. Leave the bore and chamber wet with solvent for 15 to 20 minutes—time to dissolve the plastic that has rubbed off from waddings—and then make 10 passes with the brush through the bore before swabbing out the solvent and grime with a cleaning patch. Steapp said the best patch is a piece of regular paper towel, which is just abrasive enough to clean out the solvent. Put a couple of drops of gun oil on a patch and coat the chamber or bore. Don't spray oil, either the petroleum type or a silicone-based synthetic oil, directly into the barrel. If you store the gun vertically, any excess oil may run down onto the stock and stain it.

Most gas-operated repeating shotguns utilize some sort of piston mechanisms that collect carbon. This carbon should be removed after shooting about a half case of shells or before off-season storing. A solvent or lacquer thinner will do a good job. For the trigger mechanism, use a spray cleaner made especially for this sort of thing—a cleaner only, not a lubricant. If the gun has screw-in choke tubes, the tube should be removed from the barrel and the barrel threads and tube threads cleaned to remove grime and carbon. Special cleaners are available for choke-tube maintenance. Wipe external metal parts with a few drops of oil on a rag or use a silicone-based spray, which also is good for wiping the stock and cleaning dirt from checkering. "A silicone-based spray will protect the metal for only about 45 days," Steapp warned. "There are, however, special lubricants made for long-term storage, up to a year."

### Rifle

The same general rules apply for off-season rifle storage, although preparation is a little



GLEN MILLS





BILL REAVES

There are a number of products on the market for cleaning scope and binocular lenses, above. Gunsmiths warn never to use spray penetrating oil-type products around scopes, as they can damage the lens.

different. First, remove the bolt and wipe it with a silicone-base cleaner/lubricant. Clean the face of it where brass particles can collect. An old toothbrush does a good job. Take the rifle out of the stock to see if any rust has invaded metal that is hidden by wood. Clear the bore with a wire brush and solvent, leaving the bore wet with solvent for at least 15 minutes, then swabbing it with a tight-fitting cotton flannel patch. (A piece of paper towel won't work.) Make 10 or more passes through the bore with the

brush. Steapp said a cleaning rod with a rotating handle works best. Without rotation, the brush cleans only the lands on the "rifling" inside the barrel. But with a handle that allows a rotating motion, both lands and grooves are cleaned. Finally, take a loose patch, add a few drops of lubricant and run it through the bore. Don't try to clean the trigger mechanism; leave that to a gunsmith if there is a problem.

It's a good idea to take a gun to a gunsmith for preventive maintenance about every third year. The gunsmith should completely disassemble the shotgun or rifle and clean and oil it to be sure everything is in working order. Special tools and expertise are required in most cases to take a gun apart.

As for scope sights, little off-season care is required. It pays to use some type of caps to protect the lenses from dust. Go to a camera store and buy a soft brush made for cleaning lenses. Trying to clean the glass even with a soft rag when dust is pre-

sent will result in scratches. Otherwise, just wipe the scope housing with lubricant when you wipe the rifle. Never use a spray penetrating oil-type product around scopes. It can ruin lenses and cause mounting screws to loosen.

by Russell Tinsley

### For more information

To learn more about gun safety, care and maintenance, attend a hunter education course. Call 1-800-253-4536 for course information or 512-389-4999 for brochures on gun maintenance and cleaning.

## Boat Registration Shows Upturn

The total number of boats registered in Texas in 1994 appears to indicate the boating industry may be recovering from a slump that occurred between 1992 and 1993.

As of August 31, 1994, the boat registration section of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department counted 601,585 registered craft, up from 588,973 on the same date in 1993—the lowest count in more than 10 years.

The 1994 total still is somewhat below the 10-year average, as registrations held fairly steady at around 606,000 between 1986 and 1991, according to Howard Kidwell, section head.

"There are several ways to estimate boating activity, but it's difficult to distinguish which are new boat sales, renewals or title transfers of used boats," Kidwell said. "However, counting the number of registered boats on a given day each year shows definite trends."

Nationally, Texas ranked fifth in registered boats in 1992, according to figures from the National Marine Manufacturers

Association. Michigan led with 877,581 that year, followed by California, Minnesota, Florida and Texas.

## Zebco Donates Funds For Kids' Casting Pond

Zebco Corporation has donated \$150,000 to the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas Inc. to be used for construction of a kids' casting and fishing pond at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center being built in Athens.

The two-acre pond will be stocked with rainbow trout in the winter, channel catfish in summer and sunfish all year. Volunteers will provide fishing instruction.

Construction of the \$17 million Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center is expected to be completed by summer 1996. It will combine a fish hatchery, laboratory and educational displays of freshwater streams, ponds and lakes. Officials said the unique facility is expected to attract almost a half-million visitors annually after opening.

The Parks and Wildlife Foundation is a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation chartered by the state. Its members solicit funds from individuals and corporate sponsors for projects such as the fisheries center, which could not be financed with state funds. "We are very appreciative of the generous donation from Zebco, a company with deep roots and strong business ties in Texas," said Bill Graham of Amarillo, foundation president. "The foundation is committed to making the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center a reality, and we couldn't do it without the support of private sector partners like Zebco."



GLEN MILLS

Dudley Steapp, left, uses a cleaning rod to swab the bore of a shotgun at his gun shop in Mason. Above, Steapp uses a brush and solvent to clear residue from a rifle bolt assembly.

# SPIDERS

## *Truth and Fiction*

by Dr. David Bowles, Photos by Wyman Meinzer

**T**o some, the sight of a spider evokes feelings of fear and disgust. Many people believe all spiders are poisonous menaces. Nothing could be further from the truth. Spiders of all types are valuable components of the ecosystems they inhabit. They are highly beneficial in controlling insect pests, and their presence in a house or outbuilding should not be cause for alarm.

While most species have poison glands and fangs (termed chelicerae by biologists) they use for killing prey or for defensive purposes, spiders seldom are poisonous to humans. Most spiders are timid and will not attempt to bite, even when handled roughly. Also, the bites of most species deliver insufficient quantities of venom to produce any ill effects.

Although most spiders do not pose a threat from their venom, some can inflict painful bites and therefore should not be handled.

*Although they're intimidating in appearance, tarantulas have a docile nature and a bite little worse than a bee sting. The tarantula has hairs on its abdomen that it uses as a defense, and these hairs can cause intense itching and burning in some people.*

Others can cause less serious localized reactions in certain individuals. Of the more than 2,500 species of spiders found in North America, only two groups, the black widows and the recluses, pose any significant health threats to people.

Tarantulas are our largest and often most feared spiders, because of mis-

representation by the popular press and entertainment industry. But they have a bite little worse than a bee sting. Tarantulas often are kept as pets because of their docile nature, but they do have a trait that may make them unacceptable as pets for children. Tarantulas have hairs on the upper surface of the abdomen that have irritating properties. The spider sheds these hairs as a defense mechanism when it is disturbed. These hairs may cause an intense burning or itching sensation among some individuals if they come into contact with the eyes, nasal membranes or digestive tract.

### **Brown Recluse**

The brown recluse is common in the southern and midwestern United States and it apparently has been introduced into isolated pockets in several western states. Interestingly, the species first was described in 1958 from specimens collected in Austin.

Brown recluses are small-bodied, long-legged spiders ranging in color from light fawn to dark brown; the anterior or head end and the legs are dark brown and the abdomen is tannish. The most distinctive marking of a brown





*The most distinctive marking of the small-bodied, long-legged brown recluse is a dark brown, fiddle-shaped band on the upper body. There are several brown-colored spiders that can be confused with the brown recluse, but only the brown recluse has the fiddle-shaped marking on its back.*

recluse spider is the dark brown, fiddle-shaped band on the upper surface of the body, with the base of the “fiddle” directed toward the head and the neck directed toward the abdomen. There are several brown-colored spiders that occasionally may be found indoors and may be confused with the brown recluse, but only the brown recluse bears the distinctive fiddle-shaped marking on its back.

Brown recluse spiders often are found behind and under furniture, in woodpiles, outbuildings and other secretive

places. They also can be found outdoors under loosened tree bark and under sheltered areas such as overhanging bluffs. The spiders avoid light and usually are sedentary unless disturbed. Brown recluse spiders are tolerant of dry conditions and can survive several weeks with little moisture. In Texas, these spiders are active most of the year, but more so during warmer months. Brown recluse webs are a maze of threads that extend in all directions and lack a definite pattern.

The venom of the brown recluse is

a hematotoxin that kills tissue at the site of the bite. However, an individual’s response to a bite can range from no response to a severe one. Typically, a bite starts as a small but painful blister with the surrounding area becoming swollen two to three hours afterward. Most victims never recall being bitten; at most, they report the bite to be like a pin prick. Other initial symptoms may include restlessness, fever and insomnia. The tissue killed by the venom gradually sloughs away, exposing the underlying muscles.

The damaged area may take upwards of six to eight weeks to heal completely. The result is a sunken scar with a scooped-out appearance. In some cases, particularly when left untreated, the damaged area can be extensive and may require skin grafts. Some individuals also may develop rashes and systemic reactions, but such symptoms usually only occur among extremely sensitive people. Children and the elderly usually are the most sensitive to bites. Deaths from the bite of a brown recluse are extremely rare and result more from secondary infection than toxic effects of the venom. Both sexes of this spider can inflict poisonous bites to mammals.

#### **Black Widow**

The black widow, first described in 1775, is considered the most dangerous poisonous spider in the U.S. Once thought to be a single species, four species of “black widows” now are recognized to occur in the United States. These are the western, northern, southern and brown widow. All occur in

**D**espite their public image, most spiders are harmless to humans. Even the poisonous ones would prefer to avoid *Homo sapiens*.

Texas. They are similar in appearance but can be distinguished through minor differences in the shape of the red hourglass marking on the lower side of the abdomen that readily distinguishes the widows. The southern black widow is considered the most dangerous member of this group because of its relative abundance in the southern United States and the number of bite cases attributed to this species.

Black widows commonly are found in rural areas under debris and sheltered areas such as woodpiles, animal burrows and under water meter covers. They are intolerant of dry conditions and thus are found in areas with high humidity. Their web consists of

very small diameter threads lacking a recognizable pattern. These silken threads are so fine they have been used as crosshairs in optical instruments.

The popular notion that the female black widow is so named because she always kills the male following mating is largely myth. There is little evidence to support this contention, and the outcome probably depends on whether or not the female has eaten recently. Males occasionally mate with more than one female, and some males have been observed killing and eating females. Although females occasionally kill unwary males, this behavior is not unique to the black widow.

Black widow spiders often are viewed

## CHRONICLE OF A BLACK WIDOW BITE

The late Dr. William J. Baerg, a pioneer entomologist and naturalist at the University of Arkansas, was the first person to document the effects of a black widow's bite by allowing one to bite him. From Baerg's publication on this subject, he described the following effects:

*...The first test proved very difficult and ended in failure. It is not always easy to make the black widow bite. The second test (July 10, 1922, 8:25 a.m.) resulted in all I could wish. The spider dug into the inside basal joint of the third finger of the left hand, and held on till I removed her about five to six seconds later.*

*The pain at first was faint but very soon began to increase into a sharp piercing sensation. At the punctures a small whitish area, such as one observes after a bee sting, appeared and a slight swelling in the third finger.*

*In less than one hour the pain had reached the left shoulder and in about 1½ hours the chest was involved; the diaphragm seemed partially paralyzed; breathing and speech were spasmodic. By 1:30 p. m. the pain extended through the hips and legs.*

*At 5:15 I went to the hospital and to bed. By this time I had a severe nausea and the pain extended to all parts of the body.*

*The severe pain throughout the body, but especially excruciating in the left hand, not only kept me awake, but kept me moving throughout the night....*

*On the morning of the next day I took a hot tub bath and found the pain almost completely relieved. The pain in a lesser degree returned half an hour after the bath but subsequent baths brought desired relief. In the evening I was able to eat but the following night my sleep was much disturbed by unpleasant dreams. During the remainder of my stay in the hospital I was relatively comfortable; my temperature fluctuated daily between normal and 99<sup>4</sup>/<sub>5</sub>; the pulse was usually a little above 60. I left the hospital at noon, July 13, and went back to work. Recovery, I realized, was not quite complete; a feeling of wretchedness remained for a couple of days.*

Dr. Baerg's experiences probably represent a typical bite reaction for the average person, but in other individuals the reaction may be more severe.



as major public enemies. However, they are secretive and timid, and usually will not bite humans unless trapped or held. Historically, numerous black widow bites were reported in the U.S., but today the number is very low. This may be due in part to the virtual disappearance of the outdoor toilet that provided excellent insect forage and shelter for these spiders.

Male black widows are not considered a threat to humans, but the bite of the female is considered extremely painful at the bite site as well as in muscle groups throughout the body several minutes after the bite. The initial bite may not be painful. The venom of the



black widow is a potent toxin that affects the victim's nervous system. Swelling usually does not occur at the bite site, and there is no tissue death. Bites, although painful, usually are not fatal if proper treatment is administered. Only four to five percent of black widow bites result in death. Because of the severe abdominal cramping associated with a black widow bite, it occasionally has been misdiagnosed as food poisoning or appendicitis. Intense pain throughout the body follows the bite, and it may subside in a few hours or persist for a day or more. Other associated symptoms may include severe muscle pain and spasms, a rigid

*A red hourglass marking on the lower side of the abdomen readily distinguishes the black widow, above. These spiders are secretive and timid, and usually will not bite humans unless trapped or held. A brown recluse bite, right, starts as a small but painful blister with the surrounding area becoming swollen two to three hours afterwards.*

abdomen, tightness in the chest and breathing difficulties, convulsions, shock and paralysis.

Although antivenin is available for treatment of black widow bites, it must be administered soon after the bite to be fully effective. However, the traditional and effective treatment is an

intravenous solution of calcium gluconate given in conjunction with muscle relaxants and pain killers.

### Preventing Spider Bites

Most spider bites happen through contact by inadvertently pinning the spider against the body in clothing or by placing hands underneath sheltered areas. To prevent such bites, always shake out clothing when camping or in rural areas, wear gloves when working outdoors and thoroughly clean behind and underneath furniture. Never place your hands or bare feet beneath any outdoor structure without looking first. Children should be encouraged to observe spiders but not to touch them.

### Treating Spider Bites

If you think you have been bitten by a brown recluse or black widow spider, or if you have a reaction to the bite of another species of spider, you should seek medical attention immediately. Do not attempt to use home remedies as they may cause even more damage. Remember that spider bites are rarely fatal, and that most victims make a full recovery with proper medical attention. ★

*David Bowles is a biologist with TPWD's Resource Protection Division, stationed in San Marcos.*



# NATURE'S YELLOW

*One of nature's commonest colors lends  
an uncommon splash of brightness  
to a variety of Texas life forms*

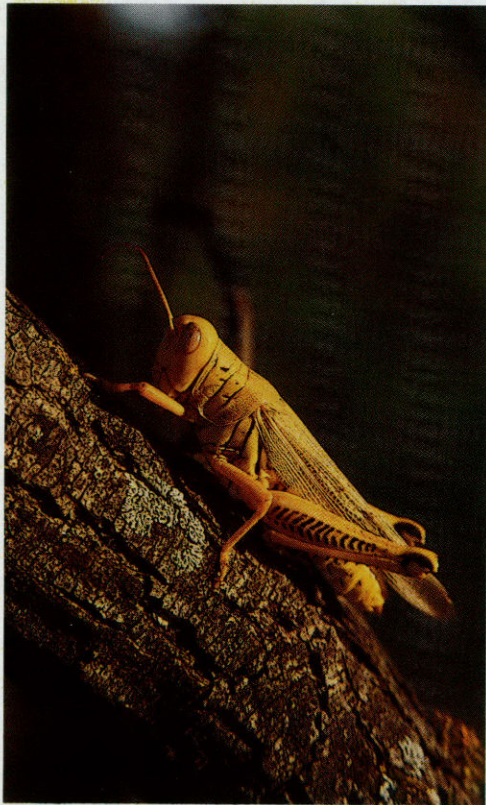


© CARYL R. STYLO

**Y**ellow is everywhere in nature, from subtle highlights on the wings of a giant swallowtail butterfly to a vibrant field of springtime flowers near Crockett in East Texas.

**S**tep outdoors at any time of year, and yellow will be close at hand: plants and flowers, birds, reptiles and fish all can display varying shades of this most primary of primary colors. And the sun does its share by imparting hues of yellow to bits of nature where it is lacking. From lemon yellow to mellow yellow, it's a color that spans the seasons and brightens our days.

**M**argined perityles or rock daisies grow amid basalt and volcanic ash in Big Bend National Park, right. Yellow is a common color for the slant-faced grasshopper, below.



© ROBERT LILES

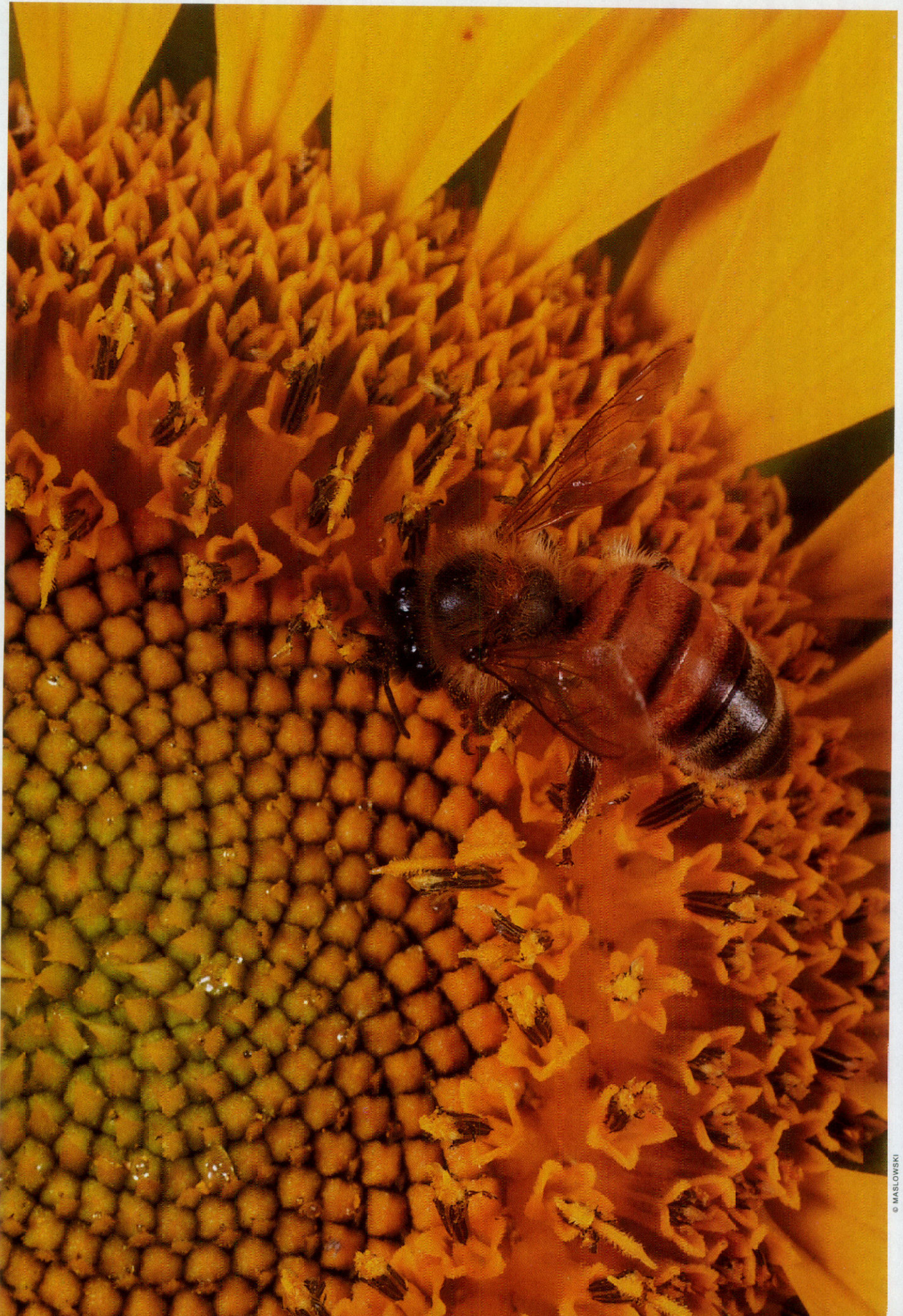


© LAURENCE PARENT

**B**arton Creek near Austin reflects shades of yellow-gold in the setting sun.









© GRADY ALLEN

**C**olors of fall: a whitetail buck amid autumn vegetation, left.

**S**wimming through clear West Texas spring water, this flathead catfish, below, illustrates why these fish are known as yellow cats in the western part of the state.



© DAVID J. SAMS

**Y**ellow on yellow: a honeybee alights on a sunflower, left.

**B**aby mockingbirds open wide, right, exposing their yellow mouth linings to give their parents a target for depositing food.



© ROBERT LILES

**L**ate afternoon sunlight casts a tawny glow over this grassy field in Smith County, below.



© LAURENCE PARENT





© RICHARD REYNOLDS

**C**ordgrass and brush bring muted colors to a winter day at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, above.

**T**he racer's pale yellow underside, right, usually isn't visible when the snake is on the move.

**Y**ellow rocknettle, below, grows on rocky ledges along the Rio Grande, including locations in Big Bend National Park.



© JOHN PESLAK



© RICHARD REYNOLDS

**C**aught on a yellow popper and surrounded by yellow blooms of the American lotus, this largemouth bass has a yellowish tint on its underside, right.





© DARYL R. STYBLO

*Anahuac's wetlands, left, are valuable nursery areas for shellfish and finfish. They also attract a variety of birds, mammals and reptiles.*

where they feed and grow.”

The generous food supply also tempts the wading birds, ducks and geese that utilize the refuge. “The largest number of waterfowl and migratory birds are here from October through March,” said Ciccone. “And the warblers appear in the spring.” During the winter, the refuge and surrounding rice fields attract up to 75,000 wintering snow geese. A total of 22 species of ducks and four species of geese share the area. During the summer, many species avoid the heat, but wading birds and small mammals usually can be observed in the early morning or late evening hours.

The coastal woodlots, with mature oak mottes and salt cedar thickets, provide important springtime habitats for neotropical birds. “Warblers, tanagers and other birds that migrate back to the United States from Mexico and Central America fly

## Refuge Across the Bay

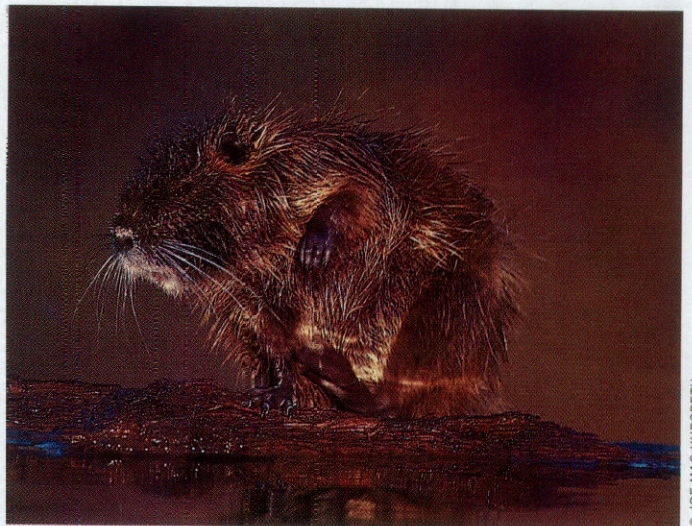
*Houstonians can view almost 30,000 acres of marshes and wildlife at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge—much of it without even leaving their cars.*

The car window frames Shoveler Pond like a postcard. Great blue herons and sleek white egrets wade through the cattails near the gravel road, while a pair of pink roseate spoonbills rests in the distance on the opposite bank. Around the bend, a family of nutrias nibbles the green leaves of the abundant hyacinths, and a baby alligator floats in the shallows.

The wildlife at Shoveler Pond is one of the highlights of a visit to the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Located about one hour east of Houston, the refuge is one of more than 400 National Wildlife Refuges administered

by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Established in 1963, primarily with duck stamp revenues, the refuge has 12 miles of roads that allow visitors to tour nearly 30,000 acres. The wetlands provide valuable nursery areas for marine life and attract waterfowl, neotropical songbirds, small mammals and alligators.

Domenick Ciccone, refuge manager, describes the primitive habitat as a coastal marsh with some coastal or “salty” prairie. “The marsh areas are important for shellfish, such as shrimp and crabs, and finfish species,” said Ciccone. “They spend their early life in the bays and estuaries



© JOE MAC HUDSPETH

*Nutrias find Anahuac's marshes and wetlands to their liking.*

over the Gulf of Mexico non-stop," said Ciccone. "When they hit the upper Texas coast, they're looking for the first available habitat to rest." The refuge brochure lists 255 species considered part of the refuge fauna.

The best opportunities for viewing wildlife are from a vehicle. The creatures seem accustomed to the presence of automobiles and linger very close to the roads. There are limited hiking opportunities, although visitors are welcome to walk along the gravel roads. Park officials warn, however, that hikers should be alert for snakes and alligators. The roads are not suitable for bicycles.

One of the most abundant species at the refuge is the mosquito, and repellent is vital for anyone hiking, fishing or driving with the windows open.

"In 1993, the majority of our visitors were fishermen," said

*The refuge is an excellent place for photographers and birders to find everything from waterfowl in the fall to neotropical migratory birds in the spring.*

## Washington-on-the-Brazos Celebrates Independence Day

A full slate of activities has been planned to celebrate the 159th anniversary of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park on March 4-5. This year also marks the sesquicentennial of the annexation of Texas by the United States.

The Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association is sponsoring the weekend of music, historical reenactments, folkways and crafts demonstrations at the park located between Brenham and Navasota.

Texana Living History Association members will be

dressed as notable figures from the Republic of Texas, and other reenactment groups will demonstrate military skills and early firearm techniques during their portrayals of historical events.

Visitors will be able to purchase 19th century-style crafts, and a "Texas-sized" birthday cake will be shared on Sunday. Food and beverages will be sold both days.

A highlight of the Texas Independence Day celebration will be the opening on Sunday of a traveling exhibit at the Star of the Republic Museum in the park. "Moving the Fire: The Removal of the Indian Nations

to Oklahoma" presents the struggle of Native Americans to retain their heritage following removal from their native lands. The exhibit, created by the State Arts Council of Oklahoma, will continue through March 26, and is the first of three traveling exhibits to be presented in the museum this spring.

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park is located on the south side of State Highway 105 just southwest of Navasota. For additional information on the park or museum, write to P.O. Box 317, Washington, Texas 77880, or call 409-878-2461.

Ciccone. A boat ramp located in the refuge provides access to Oyster Bayou and East Galveston Bay, while wade fishing is popular along the bay shore. Common catches include redfish, speckled trout and flounder.

Visitors are asked to register

at the information booth located at the refuge entrance, but admission is free. Restrooms are provided at the entrance and at two locations on East Galveston Bay. Drinking water is not available. Camping in the area is not encouraged, although primitive camping is allowed along the bay

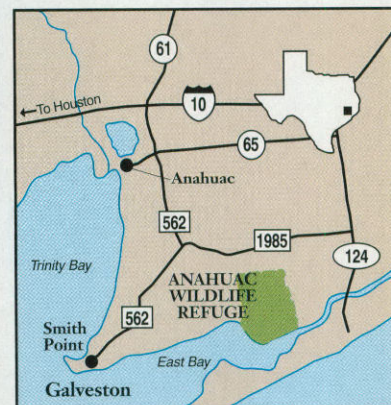
shore for up to three days.

From Houston, take I-10 East to Anahuac, exit number 812 (Texas 61). Follow 61 south for two miles, where the road becomes FM 562. Continue south on 562 for eight miles, then turn east on FM 1985 four miles to the entrance. For maps and information, write to the refuge at P.O. Box 278, Anahuac, Texas 77514, or call 409-267-3337.

*by G. Elaine Acker*



© BILL GRIFFIN





# Plush Photo Blinds

*You don't have to get cramps or frostbite when you convert an RV into a wildlife photography blind.*

Article by Leroy Williamson, Photos by Dave Hastings

If you ever have spent hours in a small photo blind waiting for that once-in-a-lifetime picture, you know how uncomfortable a blind can be, especially when the weather is hot or cold. Photography from a blind can be rewarding, but just think how great that blind would be if it had all the comforts of home.

Perhaps it would be a little eccentric even to suggest that a photographer go out and purchase such a blind, but many photographers already own one with air conditioning, kitchen, sleeping quarters, stereo, TV and a bath. No, it was-

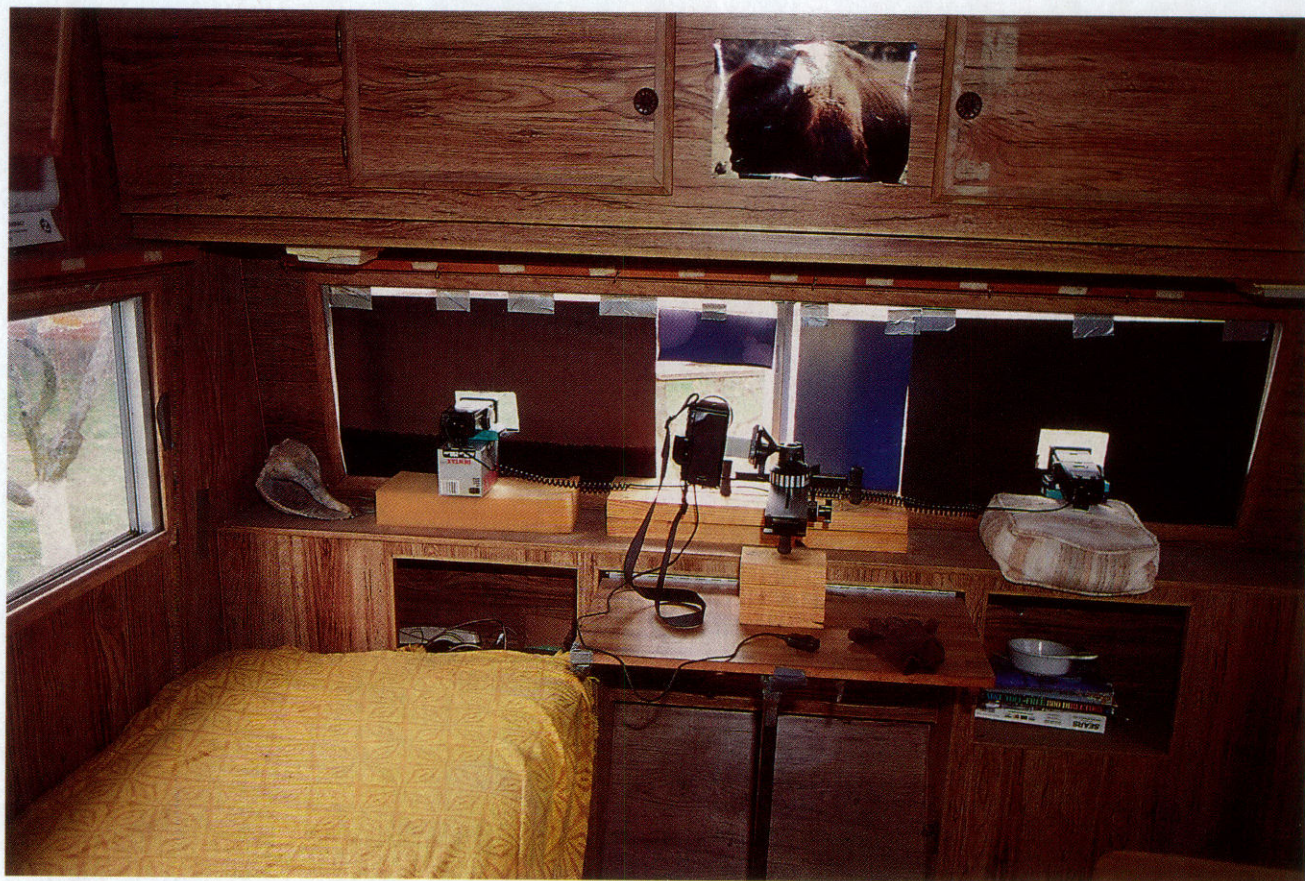
n't purchased to be used as a photo blind. These recreational vehicles were purchased to provide the owner a home away from home when vacation time rolls around, or perhaps a semi-permanent or permanent home for extended trips or full-time travel.

Whatever the case, RV owners have perhaps the most comfortable photo blinds on the market. Tired of taking pictures? Take a nap. Hungry? Prepare a meal. Have to wait a couple of hours for good lighting? Watch a movie. What a life.

While many recreational vehicle

owners are retired and use their vehicles full-time, there's a multitude of RV owners who can use their motor homes only during a two-week vacation and a few weekends during the year. What can you do with a motor home for all those other weeks of the rest of the year? You can turn it into the most fabulous photo blind imaginable.

First, park the RV in a convenient location, next to a tree or bush with limbs just outside the window. Next, install a bird feeder and a bird bath or drinking water and the birds will come. Since the vehicle will be parked for some



PHOTOS © DAVE HASTINGS



*Park your RV near a tree, below, add a bird feeder and the birds will come. Inside the vehicle, left, the photographer has set up his camera and two flash units. Even if birds initially are wary, after a few days they should become accustomed to the RV and the flashes and the photographer will have opportunities to shoot bird portraits such as this one of the blue jay, above.*

time, the birds will become accustomed to it and your comings and goings. Give them two or three days to become acquainted with the new feeder and then shoot away. If the limbs are only a foot or two from the window, some great photos can be made with normal, wide-angle or macro lenses. If the closest limbs are a few feet away, telephoto lenses will be required.

David Hastings of Rhome, Texas, is a photographer who gets excellent results from his RV blind. The only modification David made was replacing two tinted window panes with clear glass, which is relatively inexpensive. The clear glass has no filter factor but it will create reflections unless the camera's lens is against the glass or the interior of the RV is darkened.

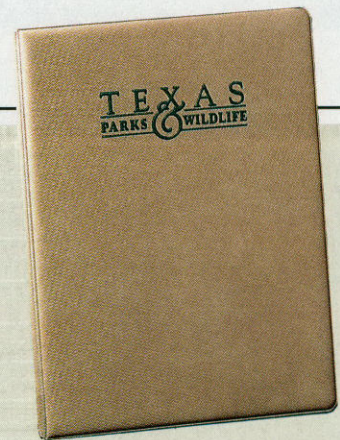
David uses three flashes, two inside the blind and the third, slave-operated, outside in the tree to provide background light. If disturbed at all by the first flash or two, the birds quickly become accustomed to the bursts of light and go about their business of feeding and providing you with great photo opportunities.



While three flashes provide excellent lighting, good pictures are possible with only one flash, or no flash at all, providing the outside lighting is acceptable. By using flash, good pictures can be made any time. Without flash, you'll likely have to contend with shadows created by your luxurious blind part of the day and be hampered by variations of light.

Whatever your equipment, be it the latest state-of-the-art amateur or professional camera, or one of those wonderfully efficient and easy to use point-and-shoot models, excellent pictures can be yours from your photo blind on wheels. ★

*Leroy Williamson is a freelance writer and photographer living in Bartlett.*



#### MAGAZINE BINDERS

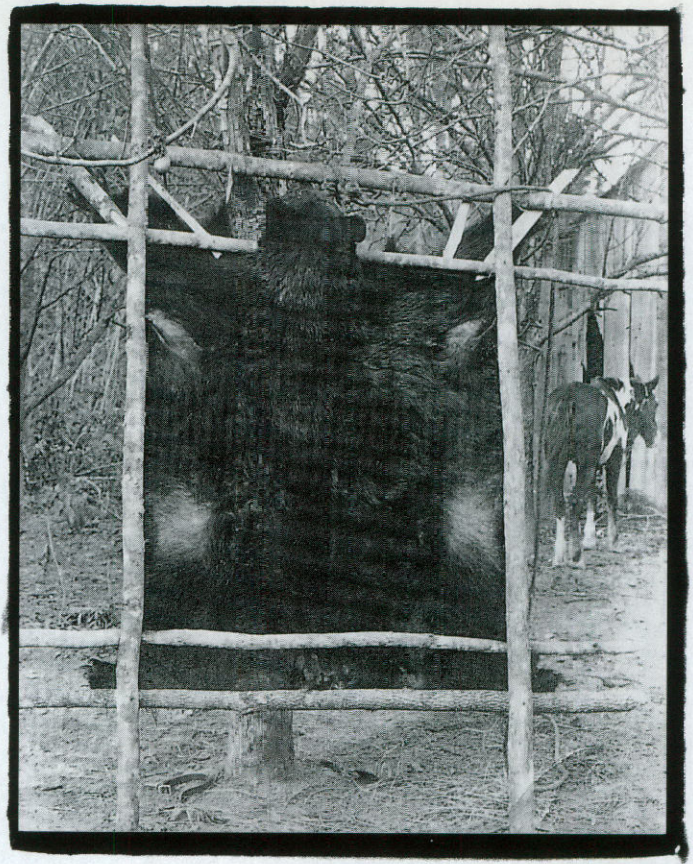
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THE ARRIVAL OF SETTLERS INTO EAST TEXAS MARKED THE DEMISE OF BEARS.

# East Texas Bear Hunts

by Thad Sitton

Conflicts were inevitable when early East Texas settlers moved into bear country. What resulted was a fascinating array of bear-hunting tales and, perhaps regrettably for our generation, no more bears.

**B**lack bears and cougars (“panthers”) were major hunting targets of 19th-century southern woodsmen, and settlers carried this passion for pursuit of the big predators into East Texas.

Bear hunting, in particular, tested the skill, courage and endurance of dogs and men. In “Big Thicket Legacy,” Carter Hart recalled: “Bear hunting is the hardest work a man ever did on earth. We would ride if we could, but lots of times a horse would bog down, bog down anywhere. You had to walk all day in mud, water, and you were in the sloughs, canebrakes, baygalls and palmetto swamps a lot. I’ve come in after dark and not have a bite to eat all day. None of us ever did.”

Black bears ranged through the canebrakes and river bottoms throughout most of East Texas at time of first settlement, but they probably were most numerous in the thickets of Polk, Jasper, Tyler and Hardin counties. A chain carrier helping surveyors establish the first county lines during the 1840s reported seeing “bear tracks as numerous as hog tracks in a hog pasture.”

Bears loved pork and often came around settlers’ houses to attack hogs in chimney corners and hog pens. In Polk County, bears besieged the Bailey household during the time Bailey served in the Confederate Army. On one occasion Mrs. Bailey poured hot grease on the head of an aggressive bear as it dug under the wall of their dirt-floored cabin

trying to get to the lard barrel. Another time she released hogs from the hog pen so they could “rally together” and fight off the bears. Bears were a traditionally popular game animal, highly valued for their flesh and oil, but they also were stock-killing “varmints,” as Vinson Collins of Hardin County testified in F. E. Abernethy’s “Tales From the Big Thicket”:

“Our family’s only source of living was the hogs that roamed the woods and got fat and the wild game that my father killed in the forest.... Thousands of wild bear lived in the Big Thicket and got fat every winter on the mast that grew on the oak trees in the forest. In the summer they would come out of the Thicket to the piney woods and prey on the hogs that ranged there. During the summer months [my father] and his neighbors spent much time hunting the wild bear that came out in the open woods to kill their hogs. In the winter when the bear were fat, they made very fine meat, and my father used to go back in the Thicket to kill them and bring them home for food.”

As this account made clear, Vinson Collins’ father, like many stockmen, engaged in two kinds of bear hunting: varmint hunting in the summer when the bears—hungry, poor of flesh and inedible—pursued his hogs to the uplands, and meat hunting in the late fall to replenish family supplies of bear meat and oil. Evie Brown remembered: “My husband’s daddy, Warren Brown, he wanted to raise hogs. That’s how come him to work on the bear so much, cause the bear eat all his hogs up.”

As in this instance, no sooner did a stockman move into an area than he became a predator hunter by sheer economic necessity, and his stock dogs were pressed into double duty as bear and panther hounds. Most early stockmen could not afford to maintain a separate pack of dogs to use only on bears, so this meant that many times when men went out to work hogs or cattle their dogs would jump a bear, and the day would turn into a bear hunt. Because

predators had to be hunted, stockmen could not afford to let their dogs waste time running deer. Pioneer Frank Herrington explained: “Yes, we had dogs, but we did not let them run anything but vermin. If a dog chased a deer, his owner caught him, then gave the dog about 40 hard lashes with a switch.”

In truth, many stockmen loved to hunt bears and panthers, and for some the hunt became an obsession. Solomon Wright’s grandfather let his dogs run free at night to hunt big game, and he had a rule that whenever they barked “treed” on a bear or panther he would rise from his bed to go and kill it, “... no matter if it was the dead hour of midnight.” In the Trinity bottoms, pioneer Buck Barry “found it necessary to keep a yard full of dogs” to protect his hogs from the bears and panthers. When hogs came in “looking frightened and disturbed I would put my dogs on their back trail, [and] by the time I would find a dead hog, the dogs would

have a panther or a bear up a tree ready for me to kill.” Big predator hunting was a heady business, and other stockmen did the same. Farther south on the Trinity, hog raiser Ab Carter trained a special pack of bear dogs and killed 182 bears between 1883 and 1885.

Near Kountze in Hardin County, stockmen Bud Brackin and Jake Lloyd also were serious hunters of big predators. Brackin trained his dogs to run only bears, and Frank Herrington recalled that “most every winter they would kill about 40.” Brackin is said to have killed 305 bears during his lifetime, virtually all from his “hog range” in the vicinity of Kountze. He began hunting in the fall after bears stopped eating the acorn in its hull and began eating just the acorn—at that point he judged them fat enough to hunt. Bears killed several of his hounds, and his best dog, Joe, once was ripped wide open by one. Brackin pushed Joe’s entrails back into place, sewed him up with a



BEAR MEAT PROCESSING, CIRCA 1906.

rawhide string and nursed him back to health. In later years Brackin liked to say of Joe, "He fought many another bear before he upped and died natural like." At age 70 (so the story goes), Bud Brackin killed his last bear, cured and hung its hide on his garden fence and quit bear hunting. The main reason he stopped was neither conservation nor physical infirmity, but a shortage of bears in the area. Not even Big Thicket bear populations could stand this kind of hunting pressure.

By the 1890s, as the bears diminished due to overhunting, habitat destruction from lumbering and increased food competition by livestock, black bears became prized big game animals and bear hunting a famous sport.

Sawmill owners, county judges, oil men and President Theodore Roosevelt all rushed to take part before the bears disappeared.

Bud and Ben Hooks of Hardin County led groups of bear hunters in the Big Thicket. The brothers had made money in the Saratoga oil fields, then

turned to the serious business of bear hunting. The Hooks had a bear camp near an area known as "the hurricane," where a tornado had cut a swath through the trees, and this served as their base of operations for years. Over time, their hunts took on a characteristic pattern, one typical of bear hunting all across the South. The Hooks and their friends traveled to the camp the day before the hunt with a wagon full of groceries, dog feed and horse feed. The hunters rode horseback with the dogs trotting alongside. The next morning, they saddled the horses, necked up the dogs in pairs (all but Dandy, the "strike" dog), and proceeded to the hunting area to begin the hunt. Dandy, a redbone hound, was extremely valuable for two reasons: he would run nothing but bears and—as Carter Hart, one of the bear hunters, told—"he could smell a trail so cold that no other dog could smell it." The Hooks used Dandy to start the trail, then, when it got hot enough, they released the other dogs, two at a time.

If the Hooks had a larger party of hunters that included some inexperienced ones, they often placed them on "stands"—designated hunting locations—and told them to stay there no matter which way the bear went. If only the experienced regulars were present, each hunter moved on horseback to whatever location he thought most strategic to intercept bear and dogs. Hunters equipped themselves with repeating rifles, "blowing horns," heavy "hack knives" (often made from cross-cut saws and used to slash through canebrakes and brush), and sometimes big hunting knives as well. The latter had been absolutely essential as back-up weapons for self-defense and to dispatch game during the days of single-shot muzzleloaders, and some men still felt uncomfortable without them. (Farther west, earlier hunters even had carried short "bear spears.") With all this gear, bear hunting could be exhausting in the deep mud and dense thickets of southeastern Texas.

Dandy, the purebred redbone hound,

was the exception in the Hooks' pack; most of their "fighter dogs" were cross-breeds with a lot of black-mouthed cur in their ancestries. These dogs were vicious and needed to be, since they had to fight the bear and delay it long enough for the hunters to reach the scene. The Hooks released them two at a time after Dandy "struck," since releasing them all at once could result in a monumental dogfight. Fast and powerful, bears often chose to run through thickets and canebrakes that bruised and lacerated the dogs and wore them down. When dogs caught up with the bear, or the bear decided to stop, the dogs had to be extremely careful how they attacked it. The bear dog had to bite and jump back, bite and jump back; if it bit and held, as a stock dog did to control a feral hog, the bear could twist around inside its loose skin, catch the dog, and most likely kill it. To fight a bear, dogs had to work together. As A. L. Bevil explained: "Some of them would be in front fighting him, and one would catch him from behind, and when the bear would wheel to catch that dog, another one would get him. And they would just keep waiting him and waiting him until he would finally go up a tree."

The Hooks tried many dogs on bear and not all of them worked out; likewise, not all the people who went bear hunting found themselves eager to repeat the experience. Some fighter dogs actually ran away from the bear after release. As Hart said, "After a dog finds out a bear has teeth, if he goes back, he's a bear dog." At the end of the hunt, when a bear treed or stopped to fight the dogs, the nearest hunter rushed in to get a shot before the dogs could be injured, and a man had to be willing to take this chance. Dogs were in the most danger at this point, when they tended to lose all caution and throw themselves on the bear. On one occasion, Carter Hart frantically was crawling a log through a thicket trying to reach the fight when he met the bear coming the other way. He killed it just before it got to him—a bear that weighed 640



**HUNTER A. L. KIENE AND A BEAR SHOT NEAR KOUNTZE.**



**THE BIG THICKET WAS A CENTER FOR BEAR-HUNTING CAMPS.**

pounds on the scales of a Kountze feed store.

Some novice bear hunters found themselves ultimately unwilling to “crawl the log.” One man had long pestered Bill Warren to take him bear hunting, so finally Bill took him. The bear was cornered in a “real tight thicket” and Warren told the man, “Now, if you want to kill you a bear, just crawl in there where them dogs is and kill him.” The man started off, then stopped to remark, “I’m gonna carry that foot to my wife. This is the first bear I ever killed in my life.” Warren replied, “You ain’t killed one yet.” The man “crawled in there a little piece, and directly he come back out and said, ‘Josh, you better go in there, I don’t believe I’m going in there.’”

In December 1906, the Hooks held one of the last bear hunts at their Hurricane Camp; the Big Thicket bears were almost gone. A Kansas City reporter and a photographer were present to record the occasion, as was famous bear and panther hunter, Benjamin V. Lilly. Lilly was a classic example of the stockman-turned-bear-

hunter. An Alabaman by birth and a stock drover by profession, Lilly long ago had left livestock, wife and children to follow the thrill of the chase, gradually moving west in pursuit of the vanishing bears and panthers. He came to Hardin County to renew a friendship with Ben Hooks and to procure a specimen black bear for the United States Biological Survey. Two bears were killed during this hunt, one of them by the big city newsman—to the chagrin of veteran local bear hunters.

By this time bear hunting was nearly at an end in southeastern Texas, and Lilly estimated that no more than 15 bears ranged in the area. President Theodore Roosevelt had planned to come down for a Big Thicket bear hunt at about that time but, to the Hooks’ lifelong sorrow, circumstances intervened, and the president failed to make the trip. A year later Roosevelt joined in a bear hunt on the other side of the Sabine in Louisiana and penned this account for *Scribner’s Magazine* of what it felt like for a stander to await the coming of bear and hounds:

“We waited long hours on likely

stands. We rode around the cane brakes through the swampy jungle, or threaded our way across them on trails cut by the heavy wood knives of my companions; but we found nothing. Until the trails were cut the canebrakes were impenetrable to a horse and were difficult enough to a man on foot. On going through them it seemed as if we must be in the tropics; the silence, the stillness, the heat, and the obscurity, all combining to give a certain eeriness to the task, as we chopped our winding way slowly through the dense mass of close-growing, feather-fronded stalks. Each of the hunters prided himself on his skill with the horn, which was an essential adjunct of the hunt, used both to summon and control the hounds, and for signalling among the hunters themselves. The tones of many of the horns were full and musical; and it was pleasant to hear them as they wailed to one another, backwards and forwards, across the great stretches of lonely swamp and forest.” ★

*Thad Sitton is a freelance writer living in Austin.*

## The Bait That Grows On Trees

*How many catalpa trees do you have in your yard?*

Old-time fishermen from the rural areas of East Texas say that homespun generosity, especially during hard times, has few limits. A man might be willing to share his truck, his tackle, even his wallet with a friend in need—and isn't that what friends are for?

But Mike Leggett, outdoor editor of the *Austin American-Statesman*, found the limits of that generosity as a boy in Carthage. Leggett said that he went fishing with his grandfather once—catalpa worm catfishing, to be exact. His share was one catalpa worm.

"No one shared worms," said Leggett. "I thought it was a big deal to get just one from him. I caught a big catfish with it, too.

There was a single catalpa tree in some company housing owned by United Gas Company in Carthage when I was a kid. There might have been two other trees in the whole town. They were scarce."

According to Leggett, in some East Texas fishing circles a man's worth in the community was determined by the number of catalpa trees in his yard and the number of worms he could produce. "Folks considered catalpa worms almost magical bait, second only to a (highly illegal) crank telephone generator," he said.

What makes this highly prized, "magical" bait so special? Catalpa "worms," the caterpillars of a nondescript gray moth related to the well-known toma-

to hornworm, are one of the most effective baits known for catfish and bream. They occur only on the leaves of the catalpa tree—and never predictably. According to Texas Agricultural Extension entomologist Dr. James Robinson, the onslaughts of parasitic wasps, fire ants, birds and fishermen will completely eliminate the worms in some years. Savvy fishermen have increased the number of catalpa trees in Texas by planting them in hopes of bettering the odds. But this strategy doesn't always work.

The chancy, sporadic occurrence of the worms is why finding a treeful still is such an exciting event.

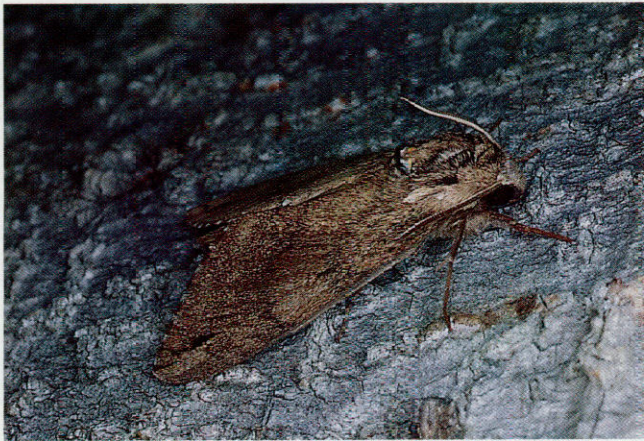
Following its winter hibernation, the catalpa moth emerges from its underground pupa in



*Young catalpa worms and one larger worm, below, strip a catalpa leaf. Catalpa worms (actually caterpillars) are a prized bait for catfish and sunfish in East Texas, where local residents often plant catalpa trees to assure a supply of the worms each spring. Above is a channel catfish that couldn't resist the bait.*



PHOTOS © VINCE BRACH



The drab-looking catalpa sphinx moth emerges from hibernation each spring and deposits up to 1,000 eggs on the leaves of catalpa trees. The resulting caterpillars are a top East Texas catfish bait.

April, flying only at night. One moth will lay up to 1,000 eggs, usually on several different catalpa trees. The caterpillars hatch in about two weeks, remaining clustered for a time before dispersing. In good years, there may be four or five successive broods.

Catalpa worm hunters drive slowly along country roads in May and June looking for denuded trees, since a large brood often will completely strip the leaves to satisfy its

hunger. The mature caterpillars often are three inches in length and sport bold black and green stripes. It is at this stage that they are most coveted.

While live worms will stay fresh for several days in a paper sack in the refrigerator, the inevitable escapes are generally unappreciated by non-fishing spouses. For long-term storage and to promote domestic tranquillity, Robinson freezes his catalpa worms in water in lots of 25 or so. Other

catalpa worm enthusiasts freeze batches in sacks of cornmeal to keep them separated. Thawed-out worms turn black, limp and soggy, but they lose none of their appeal to fish.

Today, most people look to fishing as sport rather than a means to put food on the table. But Robinson remembers when the trotline or throwline harvest was far more critical. "When I was a poor student at Texas A&M University years ago, I fished the Brazos River with catalpa worms to get my supper," Robinson said. "I'd cast worms into the holes in the river where it was so narrow you could step across. There'd often be several catfish in each hole. The first one to bite would always be the biggest."

With today's high-tech tackle and lures, the idea of sitting on a bank holding a line baited with a catalpa worm may seem anachronistic. But the homely caterpillars still catch fish like magic. Besides, in the words of one long-time catalpa worm fisherman, "it just gets in your blood!"

by Vince Brach

## Desert Bighorns Return to Black Gap WMA

For the first time in decades, desert bighorn sheep are roaring the mountainous Black Gap Wildlife Management Area in Brewster County.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists released 20 sheep—16 ewes and four young rams—on the 108,000-acre area during late October as part of an ongoing restoration program.

The sheep were trapped from the Muddy Mountains near Las Vegas, Nevada. They were hauled in a trailer non-stop from Nevada, and all were

in good condition upon arrival, according to Bryan Richards, assistant big game program leader.

Richards said movements of the herd, which included some pregnant ewes, will be monitored by radio telemetry.

The project cost \$10,000, which was paid for by sale of the Governor's Sheep Permit for \$70,000 at the annual meeting of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep. The department received \$63,000 of the bid amount.

The department and sever-

al other groups have been preparing for the bighorn release by installation of water guzzler devices in the Black Gap to ensure that the sheep and other wildlife species have constant water sources.

TPWD personnel recently completed their annual helicopter survey for sheep in five Trans-Pecos mountain ranges, including the Sierra Diablo, Baylor, Beach, Van Horn and Elephant Mountain. Gary Calkins, a department biologist in Van Horn, said 235 sheep were observed, up from 190 in 1993. An estimated 310 sheep roam the five mountain ranges, he said.

# GAME for the TABLE

This latest videotape from the producers of the Texas Parks & Wildlife television series is a hands-on, step by step guide to field dressing a whitetail deer. Guided by biologists Roy Welch and Mike Reagan, viewers will see how the experts prepare their game for the table. Included is information on how to safely approach a shot deer, skinning, quartering and care of the hide. Game Warden Stacy Bishop hosts this valuable tape no hunter should be without. Total running time is 33 minutes.

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# “I strongly believe profit is a powerful conservation tool.”

TED EUBANKS

Ted Eubanks relaxed on the floor of his Austin home reading notes from an interview conducted in 1991. Three years ago, Eubanks was fighting a proposed West Side Airport in Houston that threatened prairie habitat, was concerned with rapid metropolitan growth that would result in increased pollutants, and was struggling to bring ecological tourism to the forefront of Texas's economy. “Things have changed in three years,” said Eubanks. “When you're in this business, you never look back. But it's great to look at this interview and say, ‘we won that one,’ or ‘we did something about that.’ It may not seem like it, but things are changing in Texas.”

Many of Texas's changes are a direct result of Eubanks' involvement. Funding has been withdrawn from Houston's West Side Airport, communities are making long-range growth plans, and Eubanks now sits on the governor's task force for nature tourism, which is writing a master plan for the state of Texas. “I have a strong belief in private sector environmental solutions,” said Eubanks. “Rather than having the government do everything, how do we get local people involved? I strongly believe profit is a powerful conservation tool.”

Currently, Eubanks works with Texas communities, conducting seminars and identifying local natural resources that will enhance their economies. Traditional economic strategies are not sustaining many smaller communities,

by G. Elaine Acker

and one of the alternatives is tourism. “I think we're starting to recognize that this is not the state of our forebears,” said Eubanks. “We're going to have to be innovative and creative in order to be able to sustain ourselves economically. Tourism is now the third largest industry in the state of Texas, but by the turn of the century, we're expecting tourism to be number one.”

Nature tourism has resulted in valuable economic growth for the tiny country of Costa Rica. Costa Rica, which is 13 times smaller than Texas, experienced this growth by protecting 12 percent of its territory in diverse habitats such as rain forests, mangrove swamps and coral reefs. More than 850 species of birds now depend upon Costa Rica's sanctuaries for survival and they attract thousands of tourists to the country every year.

Birds are also important to Texas's future. The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail will be completed in approximately two years and will combine environmental responsibility, local economic growth and tourism. Eubanks developed the idea for the trail in conjunction with Madge Lindsay of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. “We're planning to tie a number of birding sites along the Texas coast into a cohesive, marketable unit that involves the local communities,” said Eubanks. “Texas has

591 species of birds—more than any other state. And some 76 million Americans profess an interest in birds. We feel this is a tremendous economic opportunity, which ultimately translates into a conservation opportunity.”

Eubanks' interest in birds began as a child growing up near the Katy prairie west of Houston. He and his parents spent hours studying nature, and there Eubanks became involved with Texas's natural resources. “I guess in high school I started to understand that there was a relationship between the birds I watched and the environment,” he said. “When something's going awry in the environment, it's often first manifest in birds.”

The brown pelican provides one vivid example. In the late 1950s, the bird virtually disappeared from the Texas coast. Researchers discovered that the pelicans were eating fish that had been contaminated with DDT, a harmful pesticide that caused their eggshells to be very thin. The eggs cracked when the female sat on them, and the birds could not reproduce. In this instance, the pelicans served as a warning system for humans who consumed the same fish.

Although still endangered, the brown pelican is recovering. “The good news is that brown pelicans nested in Galveston Bay last year for the first time in about four decades,” said Eubanks. The bad news is that despite being banned in the United States, the toxic



BILL REAVES

pesticide DDT is still being manufactured here and marketed to Latin American countries.

As a board member of the National Audubon Society, Eubanks represents all of Latin America, as well as chapters in Texas, Louisiana and New Mexico. He also serves as president of Texas Partners in Flight, an initiative to protect neotropical migratory birds that make the annual trek from Latin America to a number of Texas sanctuaries such as Rockport, High Island and Sabine Pass.

His childhood love of birds became a lifetime obsession, and Eubanks shares his wealth of birding experience in "Birds of the Upper Texas Coast," a new book co-authored with Bob Behrstock, which should be published

in 1995. "It's an all-inclusive, everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know book about the birds of the upper Texas coast," said Eubanks. "The seven counties surrounding Houston are incredibly rich and world-famous for birding."

Eubanks' leading role in environmental issues sometimes provokes powerful enemies since the mix of politicians and environmentalists can be like blending crude oil with Galveston Bay. However, Eubanks is difficult to ignore. "It would be easier if I were 25 and wearing shorts and sandals," he said. "The fact that I'm a business person who otherwise lives a fairly normal life is startling to some."

Eubanks favors direct incentives to property owners who choose to enhance their land for the benefit of endangered

species and other wildlife. "If we can pay crop subsidies, I can't imagine why in the world we can't pay for wildlife," said Eubanks. "It makes sense to me. The problem is really social. The problem is economic." The U.S. government pays farmers \$1.8 billion each year not to plant crops on marginal and erosive soils. Texas has 4.2 million acres (a land mass larger than the state of Hawaii) set aside in this program. By comparison, the entire Endangered Species Act receives only \$100 million in funding each year.

Eubanks also advocates increased funding for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "We're going to have to commit some money, buy land and manage that land for biodiversity," he continued. "If private landowners feel overburdened, then they should support that. Until we commit the funds, we will be stuck in the same situation: the federal government, when faced with its mandate (the Endangered Species Act) will have to come into this state and place us under what some people would consider rather onerous restrictions. There's a simple way to fix that. Get the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department out there, and let them do their job."

In the past, environmentalism has not been viewed as compatible with profitability. Therefore, Eubanks believes the political system has been insensitive. "The problem with the environmental community is that we never put our money where our mouth is, politically," he said. "Rather than polarizing these critical issues, we need to start looking for common ground and developing more positive approaches." What can the public do to make a difference? "Vote," said Eubanks without hesitation. "Vote for people who feel these are legitimate issues and who aren't completely bought and sold." ★

*Elaine Acker is a freelance writer living in Austin.*

# OUTDOOR DATEBOOK

## FEBRUARY

Feb.: Gorman Falls tours each Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend State Park near Bend, 915-628-3240

Feb.: \* Mountain bike trail ride each Saturday and Sunday, Devils River State Natural Area near Uvalde, 210-395-2133

Feb.: \* Lower Edwards Plateau Ecosystem Tour each Saturday, Honey Creek State Natural Area near Bulverde, 210-438-2656

Feb.: \* Bald eagle tour each Saturday, Fairfield Lake State Park near Fairfield, 512-389-8900

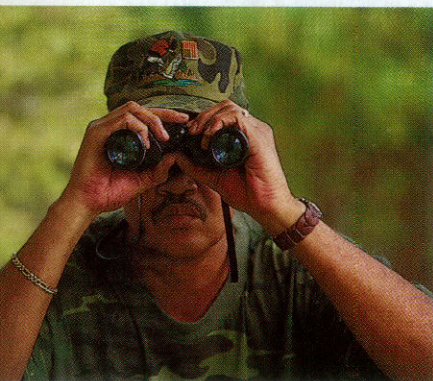
Feb.: Wild cave tours each Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend State Park near Bend, 915-628-3240

Feb. 3: \* Marine ecology program, University of Texas Coastal Studies Lab at Brownsville, 210-350-4490 or 350-4491

Feb. 3-4, 10-11: Sam Bass Treasure Hunt and Mystery Game, Longhorn Cavern State Park near Burnet, 512-756-4680

Feb. 3-4: \* Crane fest, Big Spring State Park at Big Spring, 915-263-4931

Feb. 4: \* Birdhouse Day, Fairfield Lake State Park at Fairfield, 903-389-4514



© BILL GRIFFIN

*Nature will come into focus during a winter bird and nature tour at White Oak Creek WMA on February 18.*

\* The activities marked with this symbol are available to people who have a Texas Conservation Passport, which may be purchased for \$25 at most state parks, Parks and Wildlife offices, Whole Earth Provision Co. locations in Austin, Houston and Dallas and REI in Austin and Dallas.

Feb. 4: \* Winter bird and nature tour, Cooper Lake WMA near Sulphur Springs, 903-884-3833

Feb. 4: Photography tour for beginners, Caddo Lake State Park & WMA, 903-884-3833

Feb. 4: \* Birdhouse day extravaganza, Kerrville-Schreiner State Park at Kerrville, 210-257-5392

Feb. 4: Birdhouse Day, Martin Dies, Jr., State Park near Jasper, 409-383-0144

Feb. 4: \* Fourth annual kids fishing day, Lake Bob Sandlin State Park, 903-572-5531

Feb. 4, 18: \* Bus tour, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 512-389-8900

Feb. 9, 11, 23: \* Primitive cave tour, Kickapoo Cavern State Natural Area near Brackettville, 210-563-2342

Feb. 10: \* Birding tour, Las Palomas WMA Lower Rio Grande Valley Units, 210-383-8982

Feb. 10-12: Geology tour, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 915-371-2202

Feb. 11: \* "Ducks at Dark," Ray Roberts Lake WMA, 817-686-2148

Feb. 11: \* Migratory waterfowl viewing, Fort Parker State Park near Mexia, 817-562-5751

Feb. 11, 25: Bus tour, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 915-371-2548

Feb. 11: \* Birding walk and hatchery tour with slide show, GCCA/CPL Marine Development Center at Corpus Christi, 512-939-7784

Feb. 11: \* Winter bird and nature tour, Pat Mayse WMA near Paris, 903-884-3833

Feb. 12: \* Horseback tour, Hill Country State Natural Area near Bandera, 210-796-4413

Feb. 15: \* Predator calling, Lake Colorado City State Park at Colorado City, 915-728-3931

Feb. 16-18: \* Hiking tour, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 915-424-3327

Feb. 17: \* Bus tour, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 915-424-3234

Feb. 17-19: Sportsman's Extravaganza sponsored by TPWD and the Texas Forestry Assn., Harvey Convention Center, Tyler, 903-566-1615.

Feb. 17-19: Trans-Pecos Rock Art Symposium, Sul Ross State University at Alpine, 512-389-4884

Feb. 18: \* "Calling All Predators," Eisenhower State Park at Lake Texoma, 903-465-1956

Feb. 18: \* Winter bird and nature tour, White Oak Creek WMA near Mount Pleasant, 903-884-3833

Feb. 18: \* Whooping crane tour, Matagorda Island State Park & WMA, 512-983-2215

Feb. 19: \* Beachcombing and shelling tour, Matagorda Island State Park & WMA, 512-983-2215

Feb. 24-26: \* Lighthouse horse ride, Palo Duro Canyon State Park near Canyon, 806-488-2227

Feb. 25: \* History tour, Matagorda Island State Park and WMA, 512-983-2215

Feb. 25: \* Tobusch fishhook cactus, Kickapoo Cavern State Natural Area near Uvalde, 210-563-2342

Feb. 25: \* Bird and nature tour, Choke Canyon State Park Calliham Unit near Three Rivers, 512-786-3868

Feb. 25: \* "Getting Back to Nature," Caddo Lake State Park & WMA, 903-884-3833

Feb. 25-26: \* Useful plants of the Chihuahuan Desert, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 915-477-2236

Feb. 26: José Antonio Navarro Bicentennial Celebration, San Antonio. (See page 10.)

## MARCH

March: \* Bird banding observation each Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, Davis Mountains State Park near Fort Davis, 915-426-3337

March: Boat tour of coastal marsh each Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, Sea Rim State Park near Beaumont, 409-971-2559

March: Wild cave tours each Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend State Park near Bend, 915-628-3240

March: Gorman Falls tour each Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend State Park near Bend, 915-628-3240

March 1: \* Photo contest, Falcon State Park at Falcon Reservoir, 210-848-5327

March 3: \* Marine ecology program, U.T. Coastal Studies Lab at South Padre Island, 210-350-4490 or 210-350-4491

March 4-5: Texas Independence Day Celebration, Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park at Washington, 409-878-2214

March 4: \* State Park Highlight, McKinney Falls State Park at Austin, 512-243-2177

March 4: Bus tour of Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 512-389-8900

March 4: \* Birdwatching tour, Caddo Grasslands WMA near Bonham, 903-884-3833

March 4: \* Outdoor cooking, McKinney Falls State Park at Austin, 512-243-1643

March 4: \* Tobusch fishhook cactus, Kickapoo Cavern State Natural Area near Brackettville, 210-563-2342

March 4, 11: \* Lower Edwards Plateau Ecosystem Tour, Honey Creek State Natural Area near Bulverde, 210-438-2656

March 4, 11, 25: \* Birdwatching, Choke Canyon State Park Calliham Unit near Three Rivers, 512-786-3868

March 5: Cross-country mountain bike race, Palo Duro Canyon State Park near Canyon, contact Hill's



© WYMAN MEINZER

*Cardinals will be one of many species spotted during a birdwatching tour at Pat Mayse WMA on March 11.*

Sport Shop, 806-355-7224

March 8, 9, 22, 23, 25: \* Primitive cave tour, Kickapoo Cavern State Natural Area near Brackettville, 210-563-2342

March 10: Pineywoods deer management techniques, Moore Plantation WMA near Pineland, 409-384-5231

March 10: \* Birdwatching, Las Palomas WMA Lorgonic Unit in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, 210-383-8932

March 11: Guided nature trail hike, Village Creek State Park near Beaumont, 409-755-7322

March 11: Barbecue cookoff, Fort Parker State Park near Mexia, 817-562-5751

March 11: Remote-controlled boat demonstration, Blanco State Park at Blanco, 210-833-4333

March 11: Indian cultural heritage program, Eisenhower State Park at Lake Texoma, 903-465-1756

March 11: \* Native plant walk, McKinney Falls State Park at Austin, 512-243-2177 or 512-243-1643

March 11: \* Birdwatching and nature tour, Pat Mayse WMA near Paris, 903-884-3833

March 11: \* Birding walk and hatchery tour with slide show, GCCA/CPL Marine Development Center at Corpus Christi, 512-939-7784

March 11: Stagecoach Days, Fanchorp Inn State Historical Park at Anderson, 409-873-2633

March 11, 18: "Bat Chat," Lake Mineral Wells State Park near Mineral Wells, 817-328-1171

March 11, 25: \* Boating ecotour, Caddo Lake State Park and WMA, 903-679-3743

# TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

## TELEVISION SCHEDULE

Watch for our companion television series, "Texas Parks & Wildlife," on your local PBS affiliate. All times p.m. unless otherwise noted.

*In stereo where available*

CITY/STATION	DAY	TIME
<b>Amarillo</b> KACV, Ch. 2	Saturday	3:30
<b>Austin</b> KLRU, Ch. 18	Monday Saturday	12:00 5:00
<b>College Station</b> KAMU, Ch. 15	Tuesday	7:30
<b>Corpus Christi</b> KEDT, Ch. 16	Thursday Friday	7:30 11:30
<b>Dallas/Ft. Worth</b> KERA, Ch. 13	Saturday	1:00
<i>Also serving Abilene, Denton, Longview, Marshall, San Angelo, Texarkana, Tyler, Wichita Falls, Sherman</i>		
<b>El Paso</b> KCOS, Ch. 13	Sunday	7:00
<b>Harlingen</b> KMBH, Ch. 60	Tuesday	8:00
<i>Also serving McAllen, Mission</i>		
<b>Houston</b> KUHT, Ch. 8	Monday	7:30
<i>Also serving Beaumont/Port Arthur, Galveston, Texas City, Victoria</i>		
<b>Killeen</b> KNCT, Ch. 46	Sunday Tuesday	2:00 4:00
<i>Also serving Temple</i>		
<b>Lubbock</b> KTXT, Ch. 5	Thursday Saturday	1:00 7:00
<b>Odessa</b> KOCV, Ch. 36	Saturday	7:30
<i>Also serving Midland</i>		
<b>San Antonio</b> KLRN, Ch. 9	Thursday	12:00
<i>Also serving Laredo</i>		

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

### Look for these stories in the coming weeks

**JANUARY 29—FEBRUARY 5:** The art of calling to attract wildlife; horned lizards and efforts to protect them; rock climbing.

**FEBRUARY 5—12:** D-Day and its impact on those who were there aboard the Battleship *Texas*; a fishing tournament where kids win more than prizes; coastal fisheries biologists.

**FEBRUARY 12—19:** A veterinarian whose patients include endangered species from around the world; coyotes according to photographer Wyman Meinzer; xeriscaping.

**FEBRUARY 19—26:** A trip through Texas's historical landscapes; a sporting clays tournament with women who are serious about the sport; mountain biking.

**FEBRUARY 26—MARCH 5:** Growing environmental concerns about the Rio Grande; dinosaurs; urban kids discovering the outdoors.

March 11, 25: Bus tour, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 915-371-2548

March 11: \* "Wings on the Winds of Spring," Fairfield Lake State Park near Fairfield, 903-389-4514

March 11-13: \* Rock art tour, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 915-424-3327

March 12: Guided horseback tour, Hill Country State Natural Area near Bandera, 210-796-3984

March 17-19: \* Geology tour, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 915-371-2202

March 17-19: Ladies' campout, Meridian State Park near Meridian, 817-435-2536

March 18: \* Low impact camping, McKinney Falls State Park at Austin, 512-243-2177

March 18: \* "Hog Wild," program on feral hogs, Fairfield Lake State Park near Fairfield, 903-389-4514

March 18: \* "Cheeper Feeders," Ray Roberts Lake State Park near Denton, 817-686-2148

March 18: Bus tour, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 512-389-8900

March 18: \* Birdwatching tour, Cooper Lake WMA near Sulphur Springs, 903-884-3833

March 18: \* Prehistoric Cultures of Central Texas, Honey Creek State Natural Area near Bulverde, 210-625-6943

March 18, 25: Dogwood rail excursion, Texas State Railroad at Palestine, 903-683-2561

March 19: \* Beachcombing and shelling tour, Matagorda Island State Park and WMA, 512-983-2215

March 23: Wildscape program, Eisenhower State Park at Lake Texoma, 903-465-1956

March 23-April 2: \* Photography seminar, Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area, 915-229-3416

March 24: "Singing With the Birds," Caddo Lake State Park and WMA, 903-884-3833

March 24-26: Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival, contact Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce, 409-234-2780

March 25: \* "Moonshine Over Freestone County," Fairfield Lake State Park near Fairfield, 903-389-4514

March 25: Spring boating tour, Martin Dies, Jr., State Park near Jasper, 409-384-5231

March 25: \* Texas game wardens, McKinney Falls State Park at Austin, 512-243-2177

March 25: Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash, Houston Area, 713, 332-9937.

March 25: \* Wildflower and native plant tour, Choke Canyon State Park Calliham Unit near Three Rivers, 512-786-3868

March 25: Birdwatching tour, Caddo Lake State Park and WMA, 903-884-3833



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March 25: Birdwatching hike, Meridian State Park near Meridian, 817-435-2536

March 25: \* Birdwatching, Las Palomas WMA Ocotillo Unit in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, 915-837-2051

March 25: \* History tour, Matagorda Island State Park and WMA, 512-983-2215

March 25: \* "Snakes Alive," McKinney Falls State Park at Austin, 512-243-2177

March 25: Mass featuring Gregorian chanting, Goliad State Park at Goliad, 512-645-3405

March 25: Kids' fishing day, Blanco State Park at Blanco, 210-884-3833

March 25: Nature walk, Honey Creek State Natural Area near Bulverde, 210-625-6943

March 26: \* Nature tour, White Oak Creek WMA near Mount Pleasant, 903-884-3833

March 26: Mountain bike trail ride, Bonham State Park near Bonham, 903-583-5022



© ROBERT LILES

Learn more about snakes at the "Snakes Alive" program on March 25 at McKinney Falls State Park.

# 500 miles from nowhere, it'll give you a cold drink or a warm burger...

NASA space flights inspired this portable fridge that outperforms conventional fridges, replaces the ice chest and alternates as a food warmer.

By Charles Anton

**R**ecognize the ice cooler in this picture? Surprisingly enough, there isn't one. What you see instead is a Koolatron, an invention that replaces the traditional ice cooler, and its many limitations, with a technology even more sophisticated than your home fridge. And far better suited to travel.

What's more, the innocent looking box before you is not only a refrigerator, it's also a food warmer.

## NASA inspired portable refrigerator.

Because of space travel's tough demands, scientists had to find something more dependable and less bulky than traditional refrigeration coils and compressors. Their research led them to discover a miraculous solid state component called the thermo-electric module.

Aside from a small fan, this electronic fridge has no moving parts to wear out or break down. It's not affected by tilting, jarring or vibration (situations that cause home fridges to fail). The governing module, no bigger than a matchbook, actually delivers the cooling power of a 10 pound block of ice.

## From satellites to station wagons.

Thermo-electric temperature control has now been proven with more than 25 years of use in some of the most rigorous space and laboratory applications. And Koolatron is the first manufacturer to make this technology available to families, fishermen, boaters, campers and hunters—in fact anyone on the move.

Home refrigeration has come a long way since the days of the ice box and the block of ice. But when we travel, we go back to the sloppy ice cooler with its soggy and sometimes

spoiled food. No more! Now for the price of a good cooler and one or two seasons of buying ice, (or about five family restaurant meals), all the advantages of home cooling are available for you electronically and conveniently.

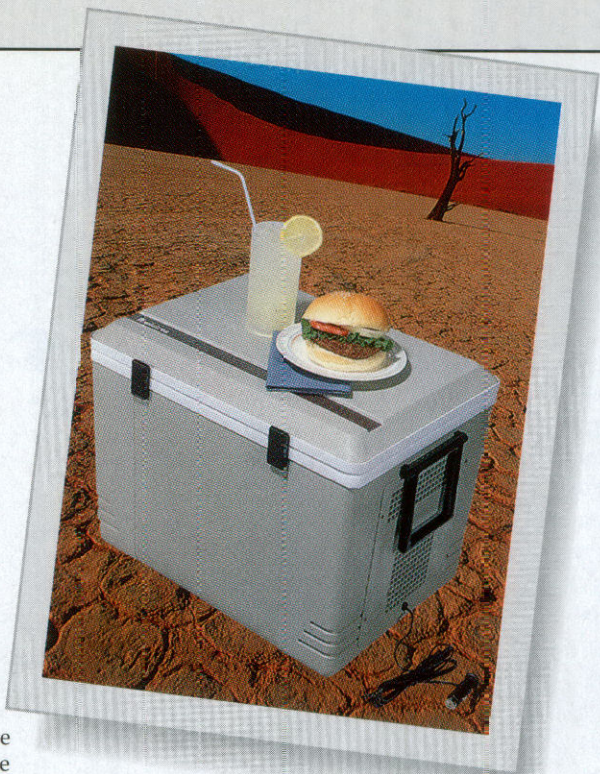
**Think about your last trip.** You just got away nicely on your long-awaited vacation.

You're cruising comfortably in your car along a busy interstate with only a few rest stops or restaurants. You guessed it... the kids want to stop for a snack. But your Koolatron is stocked with fruit, sandwiches, cold drinks, fried chicken... fresh and cold. Everybody helps themselves and you have saved valuable vacation time and another expensive restaurant bill.

**Hot or cold.** With the switch of a plug, the Koolatron becomes a food warmer for a casserole, burger or baby's bottle. It can go up to 125 degrees.

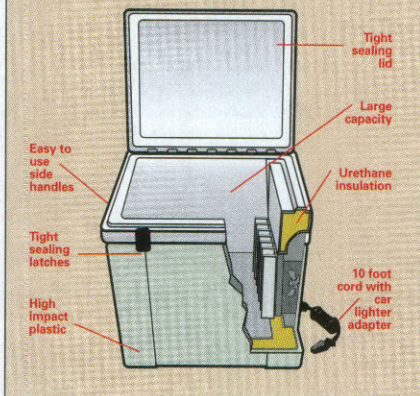
And because there are no temperamental compressors or gasses, the Koolatron works perfectly under all circumstances, even upside down. Empty, the large model weighs only 12 pounds and the smaller one weighs just seven. Full, the large model holds up to 40 12-oz. cans and the smaller one holds six.

**Just load it up and plug it in.** On motor trips, plug your Koolatron into your cigarette lighter; it will use less power than a tail light. If you decide to carry it to a picnic place or a fishing hole, the Koolatron will hold its cooling capacity for 24 hours. If you leave it plugged into your battery with the engine off, it consumes only three amps of power.



### The refrigerator from outer space.

The secret of the Koolatron Cooler/Warmer is a miniature thermo-electric module that effectively replaces bulky piping coils, loud motors and compressors used in conventional refrigeration units. In the cool mode, the Koolatron reduces the outside temperature by 40 degrees F. At the switch of a plug, it becomes a food warmer, going up to 125 degrees.



### Limited time offer.

Because Comtrad is bringing this offer to you directly, you save the cost of middlemen and retail mark-ups. For a limited time only, you can get this advanced, portable Koolatron refrigerator at the introductory price of \$99. Call today to take advantage of this special promotional pricing. Most orders are processed within 72 hours.

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We guarantee your satisfaction with any product from Comtrad Industries. With the Koolatron you get our complete "No Questions Asked" 30 day money-back guarantee. Plus you get a full one year manufacturer's limited warranty. If you are not satisfied for any reason, just return the product for a complete refund.

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- Koolatron (P9) holds 7 quarts.....\$79 \$8 S&H
- Optional AC Adapter (AC 10).....\$39 \$6 S&H

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The versatile Koolatron is available in two sizes. The P24A holds 30 quarts and the smaller P9 holds seven quarts. An optional AC adaptor lets you use them in your rec room, patio or motel room. They plug into any regular outlet.

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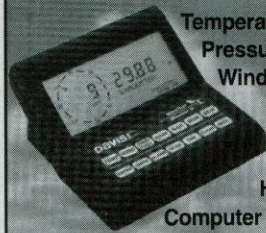
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...Continued from page 17.

ishment, "but there's no reason to carry on like that and try to blame someone else." And George turned around and started fishing again.

E.L. was just sitting there with his mouth open, holding his injured arm, trying to sort this all out, when George's very next cast snatched E.L.'s fishing cap right off his head and pitched it into the water. The hook was still stuck in the cap and George started reeling it back in while E.L., who was speechless, was feeling the top of his head with both hands.

"The wind blew your cap off, E.L.," said George calmly. "Luckily, I've snagged it so I can get it back for you."

E.L. finally moved into action, rummaging through his tackle box and tying on a huge, red-and-white Hula Popper with two ugly treble-hooks dangling off it. George was working his hook out of E.L.'s cap and when he turned to hand it back to him, he saw the Hula Popper and the look on E.L.'s face. "You wouldn't dare!" said George, some emotion at last in his voice.

"The hell I wouldn't!" screamed E.L., and he came at George with the rod and lure like it was a fencing foil. George used his own rod to try to keep E.L.'s away, and for a few brief moments they dueled that way back and forth on the bass boat.

In the end, George lost; and he sat down, disgusted, with the red-and-white Hula Popper imbedded in his scalp. That's where it stayed, too, all the way back to the boat ramp and on into town to old Doc Pennywell's office.

But the funny thing is, E.L. Raines and George Hancock have gone fishing together several times since then. I saw them the other day myself just above the dam. I guess they deserve each other. ★

*If you have an outdoor story you'd like to share with Ezra Ward, jot it down and send it to his attention at Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine, 3000 South Interstate 35, Suite 120, Austin, Texas 78704.*

*But don't be surprised if it looks somewhat different if Ezra decides to use it and you see it in print through the lives and adventures of his characters. Ezra and the folks in Three Corners, after all, have their own way of looking at things.*

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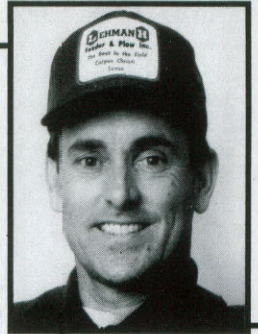
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## Missing Some Issues?

Believe it or not, there are a few TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE subscribers who have kept every issue since the inaugural one published in December 1942. Your collection may not go back that far, but if it's missing some issues you still can fill the gaps by calling toll-free 1-800-937-9393.

Here a few examples of back issues that contain articles and photos that are just as interesting now as they were when first published.

### March/April 1986

The special hard-cover Sesquicentennial issue celebrates Texas' 150th birthday with essays and photos chronicling the changes in land, wildlife, waters and people during the state's first century and a half. — \$8

### August 1990

Diving in the Desert... Spring Power - Wimberley's Cypress Creek... Texas Swimming Holes... Daingerfield State Park... Life on the Lomas - The Threatened Texas Tortoise — \$5

### December 1992

This 96-page Golden Anniversary issue salutes our 50 years of publication with an essay by the renowned writer John Graves and pictures from the state's foremost nature photographers. — \$8

### May 1993

Springtime Pyrotechnics - The Beauty of Spring Storms... Neotropical Birds in Trouble... Gorman Falls... Colorado Bend State Park... Backyard Camping — \$5



# Slip soundlessly into a tangle of trees...

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The cold air stings your face. All around you, trees crackle as the forest settles deep into its winter sleep. You walk slowly, deliberately measuring each step, making sure you see them before they scent you—the prized deer foraging in a tangle of trees. Suddenly, the wind shifts. They sense your presence and flee, swiftly and silently into the forest of frost.

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## Fast Food For Finches

**A** high-rise backyard feeder stocked with sunflower seeds paid off for freelance photographer Joe Mac Hudspeth, who got this shot of two male American goldfinches. These birds can be seen across most of Texas during winter, and they are known to nest in the northeastern part of the state.



© JOE MAC HUDSPETH



