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TEXAS

PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

*Enhance This Year's
Dove Adventure*

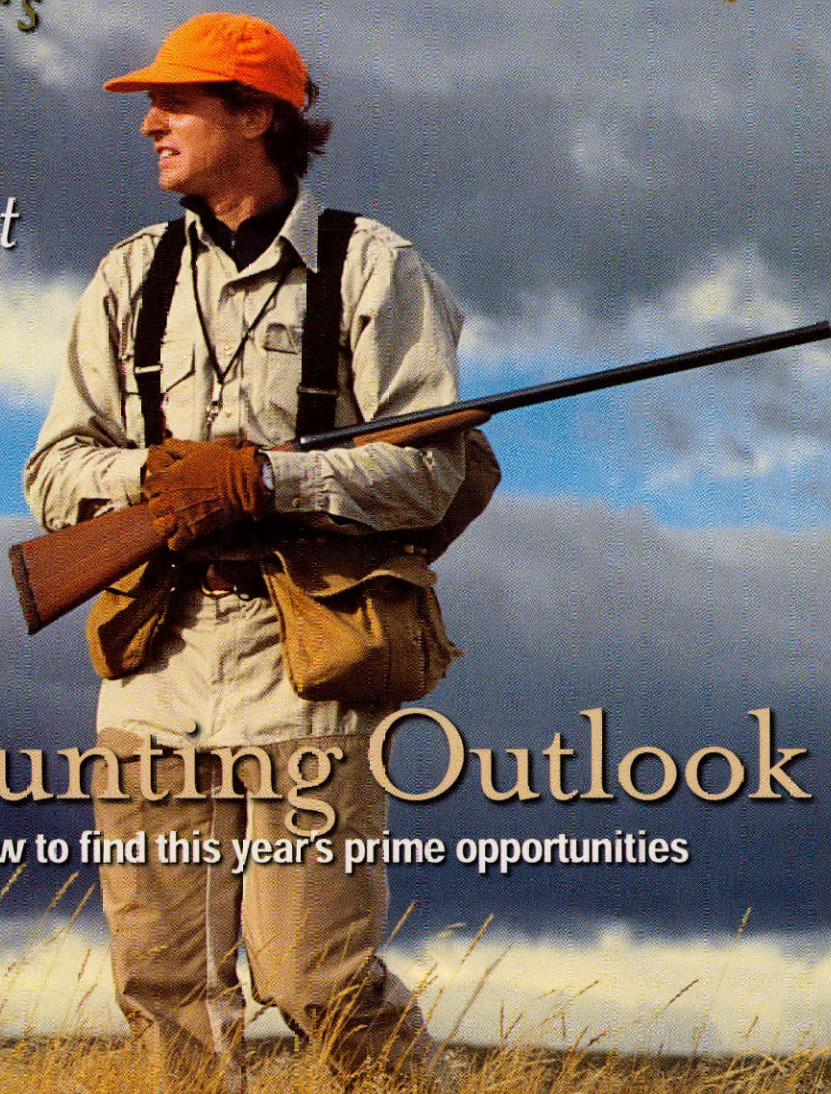
The Heritage Hunt

*Triple Play on
the Texas Coast*

RVing Texas

2002 Hunting Outlook

When, where and how to find this year's prime opportunities



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Covers

FRONT: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists offer comments on the upcoming hunting season, starting on page 20. Photo © Denver Bryan.

BACK: Teal, a 2-year-old black Lab, takes a break following a successful pheasant hunt. Photo © Denver Bryan.

This page: Hunters at sunrise, photo © Denver Bryan.

AT ISSUE

FROM THE PEN OF ROBERT L. COOK

An old friend recently asked me, “Why do you hunt?” After running through the list of obvious reasons, like “to put meat on the table,” “to do my part for conservation” and “to be with family and friends,” I stopped and asked myself, “Why *do* I hunt? What am I hunting for?”

Those are not easy questions, and I have no simple answers. I hunt for many reasons, some of which, on the surface, make little sense. For example, I love to hunt in the rain. Why? I grew up in the drought of the 1950s, and I love a soft, gentle rain. Hunting gives me a reason to be outdoors in the rain. You can't just say, “I like to go out and stand in the rain.”

Like most hunters, I love sunrises and sunsets. You'd think we'd be used to them by now, right? But somehow, being out where you can really see and appreciate a great sunrise is reason enough to hunt.


I love to be out in the brush on a clear, frosty morning so still and quiet that you can hear antlers clashing a mile away. I love to stand on a canyon rim with sleet biting my face, knowing that the game I seek is out there doing its thing, just like it does every day. I love to camp in some remote little clearing in a tent that leaks in a new place every year, sleeping in a bedroll that's too small but toasty warm, hoping I won't see the track of another human for a week. I love to scrunch down at the base of a tree with my favorite old slate turkey call that never sounds just right, and wonder, “Will he come?”

I hunt because I like to watch wild animals interact when they do not know I am there. I hunt because I love to first hear, then see, sandhill cranes headed south kind of sideways, squawking. I hunt because I still get goose bumps when I hear the first bugle of a bull elk from a high meadow in the black timber.

Perhaps the main reason I hunt has nothing to with any of that. Hunting allows me to get away from it all, sort things out with myself, think about what is really important. Perhaps I could do that while hiking, birding or enjoying nature photography, but hunting adds a greater level of personal responsibility to my presence in nature.

Thousands of generations of humans have been hunters. Maybe hunting is instinctive and we can't turn it loose. Armed or unarmed, we are hunters. I suspect those ancient ancestors of ours also enjoyed hearing a gobbler call or seeing a beautiful sunrise. Perhaps they just wanted to get away from it all. Maybe that is why we are who we are today.

Thousands of generations of humans have been hunters. Maybe hunting is instinctive and we can't turn it loose. Armed or unarmed, we are hunters.



Texas Parks and Wildlife Department mission statement:

To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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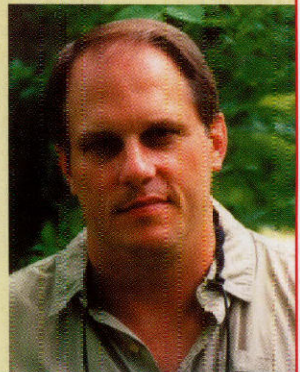
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In the Field

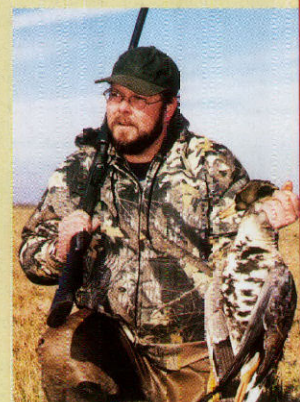
HENRY CHAPPELL is an avid hunter, angler and birder. His work has been published in *Field & Stream*, *Sports Afield*, *Gray's Sporting Journal*, *Gun Dog*, *American Hunter* and many others. His recent book, *At Home on the Range with a Texas Hunter*, explores the relationships between hunter, hunting dog, land and prey. His historical novel, *The Callings*, will be out in September 2002. He and his wife, Jane, live in Plano with their daughter, Sarah, and German shorthaired pointer, Molly. In this issue he writes about mid-September dove hunting.



KEITH MCCAFFERTY, who writes about getting fit for hunting season in this issue, is the health and safety editor of *Field & Stream*. He recently published two books for The Lyons Press, *The L.L. Bean Family Camping Handbook* and *The L.L. Bean Hiking and Backpacking Handbook*. He has contributed to many magazines, literary journals and newspapers, including *Field & Stream*, *Gray's Sporting Journal*, *The Mother Earth News*, *The Double Gun Journal*, *Fly Fisherman* and the *Chicago Tribune*, and is currently writing a mystery novel. This is his first article for *Texas Parks & Wildlife*.



STEVE LIGHTFOOT was born in Dallas, but his passion and appreciation for wild things and wild places was shaped at an early age by his grandfather, with whom he spent time in Cherokee County jerking bluegills from a creek and searching pecan limbs overhead for the shiver of a fox squirrel's tail. He has been with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for more than nine years, and has been published in *Outdoor Life*, *Sports Afield*, *Field & Stream*, *Boys Life* and others. Lightfoot is past president of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association. He lives in Round Rock with his wife, Susan, and their four sons. In this issue he writes about the Land and Water Resource Conservation and Recreation Plan.





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PICKS, PANS AND PROBES FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

FOREWORD

I recently attended the Outdoor Writers of America Annual Conference, held this year in Charleston, West Virginia. I'd like to share with you the honors garnered there by *Texas Parks & Wildlife* contributors as well as those won by other Texas outdoor communicators. First, among our magazine's contributors:

Michael Furtman ("God's Swamp," July 2002) won a first for his book *Duck Country* and a third in the magazine category of Big Game Hunting for "Remorse and Honor," *Outdoor America*, Winter 2001.

Contributing photographer David J. Sams won a second place in the Saltwater category for his photo "Long Cast," *Texas Parks & Wildlife* August 2001; a second in Shooting Sports for "Rain Shot," *Ducks Unlimited* November/December 2001; a third in Boating for "Whitewater," OWAA Spring 2001 brochure; a third in Family Participation for his *Texas Parks & Wildlife* June 2001 cover, "Easy Cast;" a third for his photo "Go to the Pond," *Texas Parks & Wildlife* June 2001 and a third in Shooting Sports for "Pedro's Gun," *Shooting Sportsman* July/August 2001.

Photographer Denver Bryan, whose photo essay on Labrador retrievers will appear in the September 2002 issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, received the following: the President's Choice Award for "Saved Bird," Willow Creek Press Calendar 2001 (this also placed first in Conservation/ Environment); a second to Furtman in the book category for *Labs Afield*; a second in the Family Participation category for his photo "Young Hunters," *Texas Parks & Wildlife* November 2001 and a third in Small Game Hunting for "Days Afield," *Shooting Sportsman* September 2001.

Herman Brune, whose byline will first appear in the next issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, won a third in newspaper humor for "A Tale of Two Fishing Stories," *Colorado County Citizen* October 17, 2001.

Other Texas talent bringing home honors includes:

MAGAZINE: Reavis Wortham placed first in the Humor category with "Shooting Squirrels in a Barrel," *Texas Fish & Game* October 2001 and made off with a second in Shooting Sports for "Totally Retro Hunting with the Longbow," *Texas Fish & Game* October 2001. Kendal Hemphill hooked a third in Humor for "It's a Jungle Out There," *Texas Wildlife* December 2001.

NEWSPAPER: Shannon Tompkins brought home gold twice: in the Take Pride in America category with "Back From the Brink," *Houston Chronicle* January 21, 2001 and in the Technical category for "Coy About Decoys," *Houston Chronicle* April 26, 2001. Joe Doggett won second in the Technical category for "Dove Hunters Can Take Best Shot With a Variety of Guns," *Houston Chronicle* August 23, 2001 and a third in Humor for "Keep Eyes Open for Snakes," *Houston Chronicle* May 13, 2001. Kendal Hemphill earned a second in the Boating category for "Men Overboard," *The Mason County News/San Angelo Standard Times* August 22, 2001.

RADIO: Marty Malin won four second places: in Family Participation for "Buckskin Brigade," *The Wildlife Report* July 2001; in Camping for "Camping USA," *The Wildlife Report* July 2001; in Boating for "Ole and Bess," *The Wildlife Report* August 2001 and in Freshwater Fishing for "Muskie Mania," *The Wildlife Report* September 2001.

We are blessed in Texas to have a both a plenitude of diverse recreational opportunities and talented communicators to encourage us in our outdoor pursuits. Please join me in saluting my esteemed colleagues for their contribution to — and passion for — the Texas outdoors.



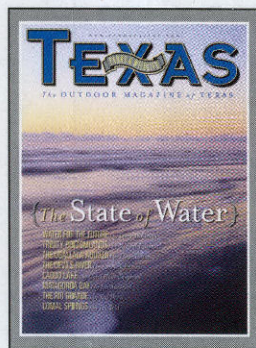
LETTERS

THE STATE OF WATER

EXCELLENT! Excellent! Excellent! Not only was your July issue, "The State of Water," beautifully produced, it addressed one of the most important issues facing our

state. As with many things in life, most folks don't recognize a problem until it affects them or their families directly. Slowly, too slowly, Texans are acknowledging the very real limits of our precious water resources. We are slowly beginning to understand that clean, fresh water is more than just a medium for ski boats and jet skis (although those are valid uses).

Having pursued the beauty and remoteness of many of the Texas waterways mentioned in this issue, I read the wonderful essays



The water issue (July 2002) is a masterpiece; great writing and beautiful photographs. Every responsible Texan should read, study and heed the warnings.

→ Dave Hoke

with a mix of nostalgia, melancholy... and even a bit of "I told you so." Sadly, several of the ecosystems — such as the Rio Grande — face impossible odds of surviving any semblance of their former splendor. Can we salvage some benefit from such travesties by turning our disgust and anger into action? Can we educate and inspire enough Texans so that the Rio Grande is not the first of many such losses in our future?

There is a cruel irony throughout this entire issue. Many of those who are most passionate and vocal about our natural resources are those who spent their youths immersed in them. At the risk of sounding a bit old-fashioned, most kids spent

MAIL CALL

their summers outdoors before the advent of video games and computers. As fewer and fewer of our children develop lifelong ties with nature at an early age, I am fearful that fewer and fewer of tomorrow's adults will be moved to action to protect such blessings as clean rivers and healthy bays. I hope I am wrong.

If you, like me, feel impassioned to do something, there are many ways to make a real difference. There are wonderful conservation organizations you can support. Our natural resources always need lucid and fervent voices lobbying on their behalf, demanding that local governments and businesses (and the private sector) act responsibly. And, perhaps most important, get children involved. Don't have children? What about nieces and nephews, or your neighbor's children? The opportunities to help spark their love of the outdoors are countless — from visits to neighborhood parks and ponds, to camping trips, to hunting and fishing outings. Children are indeed the future of our state and its rich natural resources. If they develop a passion for them, perhaps we can avoid future Rio Grandes. If not, then we'll look back in history at the Rio Grande as the "first of many..."

MURRAY STACY
Flower Mound

THANK YOU for devoting an entire issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* to water issues. I live in Houston and the people here waste a lot of water. I got notice from my apartment management that I would have to start paying for my water. My neighbors were livid. I just smiled and said, "It's about time!"

And what is this nonsense about a 72,000-acre reservoir on the Sulphur River? What happened to no net loss of wetlands? There's no such thing as mitigation for a mature riparian forest. You just can't replace it, or enhance a

"degraded" bottomland forest. I hope you know that duck hunters will fight this to the last.

I keep seeing the word "need" in regards to water. That is entirely inaccurate. Like I said, a lot of water is wasted, especially by sprinkler systems left on all night. I don't care about lawns, golf courses, etc. if it means destroying wetlands.

➔ LAURIS HOLLIS

IFOUND the information in the July issue very informing and alarming. I wish every household in Texas could have a copy of this issue. I am a retired senior citizen very much concerned about the future of the next generations. I am available to help spread the word to make the general public aware of the critical nature of future water resources. Please let me know how I may participate in this effort.

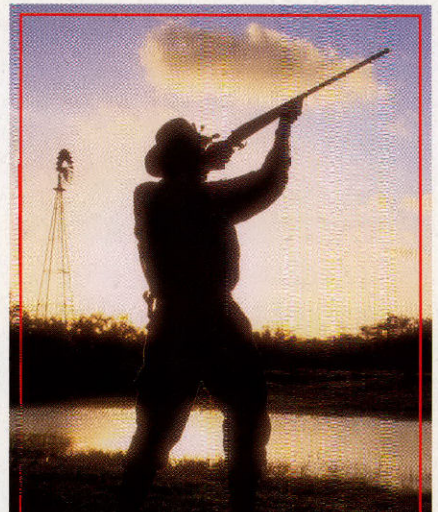
➔ WILEY LEMOINE

FISH TALE

IRECENTLY caught a new lake record for hybrid stripers on Lake Conroe. The fish was 28 inches long and weighed 11 pounds, 6 ounces. The old record was 10.25 pounds, caught 17 years ago.

Even though I have hunted and fished all my life, I do not own a boat and I fish only from the bank or local pier. I was fishing off the Cape Conroe Pier (in our subdivision) all alone that night. Fishing was slow. I had put new 12-pound-test fishing line on my rod. After an hour and a half of fishing, the big one hit. It ran immediately, like a torpedo. The impact of setting the hook broke my fishing rod in half. All I could do was release the drag on my spinning reel and let it run. After what seemed like an eternity, with me desperately trying to reel it in with half of a fishing rod, I pulled the fish in close enough to net it.

Thanks to your magazine for teaching me small and simple



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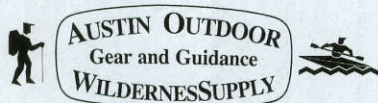
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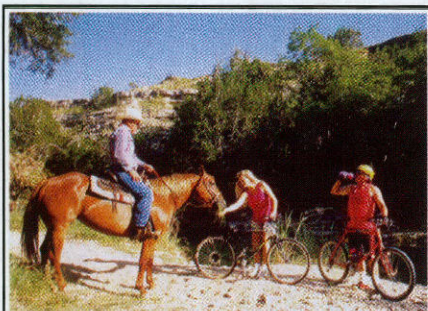
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tricks over the years such as prop-
er knots to tie, I was able to land
this big fish.

JOSEPH ACKER
Montgomery

A PROUD DAUGHTER

I'm Bob Kemp's youngest
daughter, and I just can't tell
you how much our family enjoyed
the article about him, 15 years
after his passing (Legend, Lore &
Legacy, June 2002). He died
when I was 14, an age when I
didn't pay too much attention to
redfish. This article brings back
so many proud memories of
Dad's contributions, and helps
me realize just how much he did
for fishing in Texas. Thank you!

➔ KELLEY KEMP MCDERMOT

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SCOUT

NEWS AND VIEWS IN THE TEXAS OUTDOORS

Radar Angels

There's a new tool for tracking bird migrations: weather radar.

Since ancient times, people have been both enthralled and mystified by the seasonal migrations of birds. Most people have seen the migrations of some species, such as the familiar V pattern of geese and cranes. Until recently, though, very little was known about the migrations of the hundreds of other bird species that migrate almost entirely under the cover of darkness.

In the years after World War II, scientists using radar to monitor weather began detecting migratory birds, which they named "angels" because they showed up as white ghostly images on the screen. The discovery launched an exciting new science of using radar to monitor bird migration.

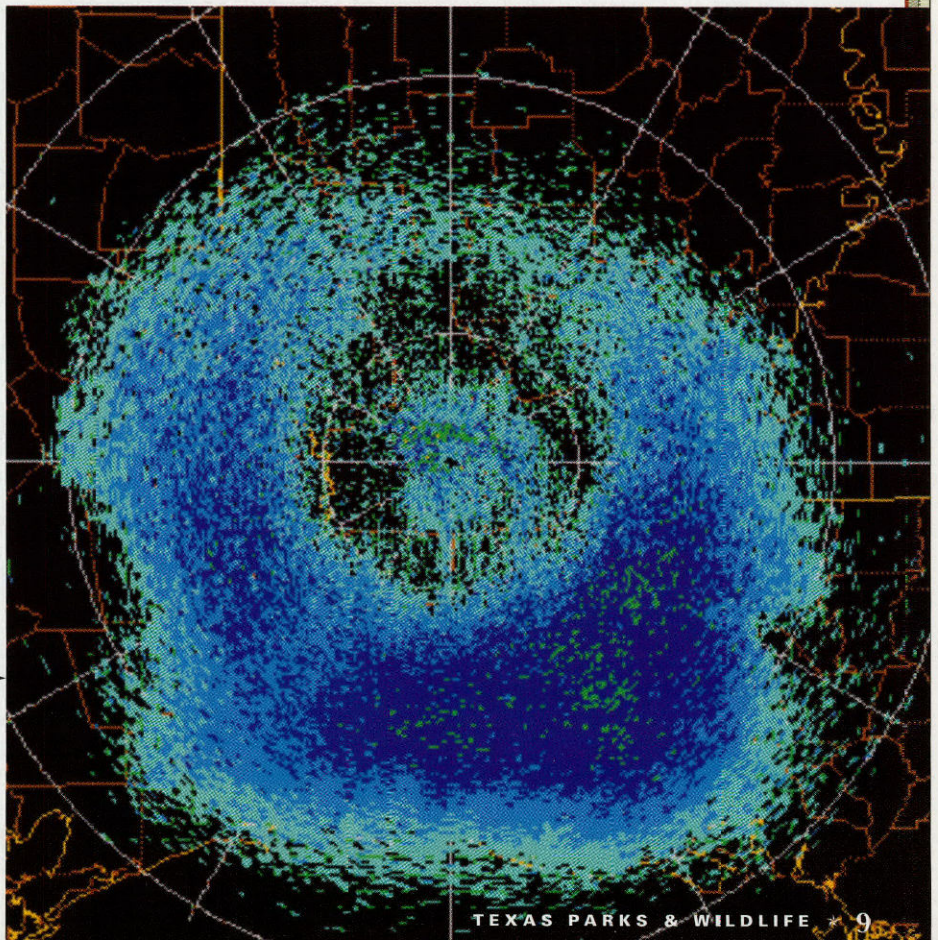
The introduction in 1988 of more sensitive Doppler radar — the so-called Next Generation Radar (NEXRAD) — easily detects targets as small as birds or even monarch butterflies, allowing scientists to see birds migrating in the darkness in much more detail. Now called WSR-88D (for Weather Surveillance Radar), this new technology — available online in real time — allows amateur birdwatchers and scientists alike to monitor

migration in ways that were not possible until recently. Though the images don't reveal what species are involved, they do allow viewers to discern rough estimates of numbers, direction of flight and speed — often alerting observers to potential areas where large numbers of migrants can be seen the next day. One discovery from the new technology: several thousand purple martins leaving a roost in the morning create an expanding ring as the birds depart in all directions.

In the United States, 140 NEXRAD units have been installed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), providing almost complete coverage for the entire country. To learn more about the use of NEXRAD and how scientists use it to monitor bird migration, visit Clemson University Radar Ornithology Lab's excellent Web site at virtual.clemson.edu/groups/birdrad. To monitor current NEXRAD images, visit www.intellicast.com.

— Matt White

In this NEXRAD image over Fort Polk, La., color indicates the density of migrating birds. No birds were detected by radar near to or far from the NEXRAD, resulting in a doughnut-shaped pattern.



New Regs on Border Waters

Fish caught in border waters must conform to Texas limits.

Beginning Sept. 1, 2002, new Texas Parks and Wildlife Department regulations affecting all border waters will state that all fish landed in Texas or possessed in Texas waters must conform to Texas' size and bag limits.

The change was needed to deal with confusion and lack of enforceability when anglers landed in Texas with fish that would fall under another state's bag and size limits. The majority of the enforcement issues were centered around Sabine Lake on the Texas/Louisiana border.

Texas currently has a reciprocal agreement with Louisiana that allows anglers to fish legally in common border waters such as Toledo Bend Reservoir and Sabine Lake with either state license. That agreement will not change.

However, one of the concerns that had developed with a reciprocal agreement, particularly in Sabine Lake, was that it was being interpreted to allow anglers to take both Texas and Louisiana limits of fish in the same day.

The change to the rule should benefit Texas by reestablishing equity among all Texas anglers. It also should improve fish populations by reducing excess harvesting.

"Texas managers have had an interest in improving Sabine Lake fish populations, particularly flounder," says Hal Osburn, director of coastal fisheries. "Previously, 23 percent of the flounder landed from Sabine Lake were under the Texas minimum size limit of 14 inches. This rule change will largely end that harvest and should result in increased

spawning success for recovering flounder populations."

He notes that Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida all have similar landing laws and this rule change makes Texas consistent with other Gulf Coast states.

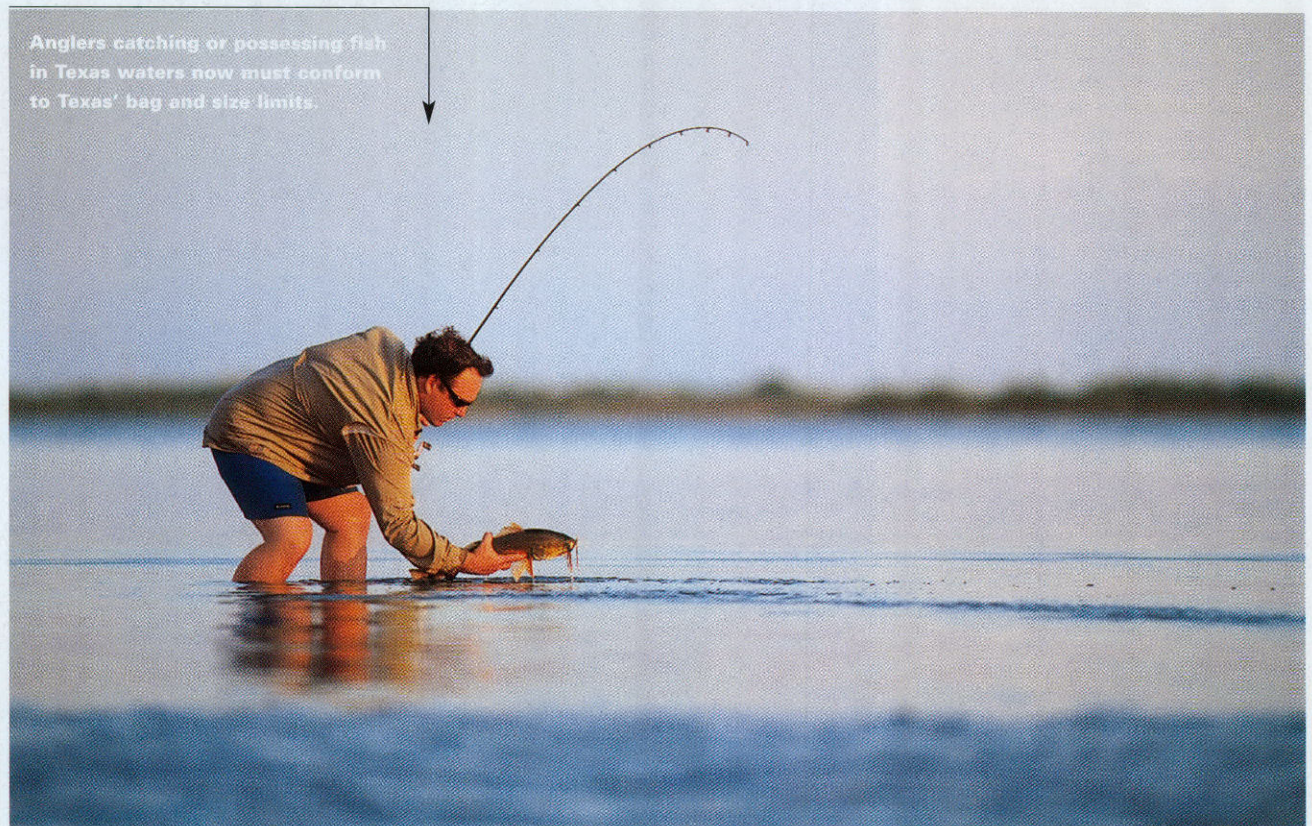
Last year, TPWD outreach efforts showed nearly 80 percent of Sabine Lake anglers would support the rule change.

One complicated part about the rule change is that although people can still fish anywhere in Sabine Lake border waters under the reciprocal license agreement, they must comply with each state's respective size and bag limits while they are fishing in those state waters. In other words, don't fish in Texas waters if you are in possession of a Louisiana limit or you will be in violation of Texas laws.

— Steve Lightfoot

Limits	Texas Bag (size)	Louisiana Bag (size)
Black drum	5 (14–30")	5 (16–27")
Crappie	50 (10")	50 (no limit)
Flounder	10 (14")	10 (no limit)
Spotted seatrout	10 (15")	25 (12")
Red drum	3 (20–28")	5 (16")

Anglers catching or possessing fish in Texas waters now must conform to Texas' bag and size limits.



That Eight-Pointer May Not Be Legal



© MIKE SEARLES

New hunting regulations change the definition of a legal buck.

Hunting forecast: There will be far fewer white-tailed bucks harvested this fall in Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lavaca, Lee and Washington counties. However, next season and ones to follow should see hunters take more and better bucks than ever before.

The reason is a new, experimental set of harvest regulations passed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in April. In these six counties, a legal buck will no longer be any deer with hardened bone protruding through the skin. Instead, to be legal, a buck will have to meet one of the following criteria:

- it will have to have at least one unbranched (spike) antler; or
- it must have six or more points on one side; or
- its inside spread must be 13 inches or greater.

A point must be at least one inch long, and the eight-pointer with a 12-inch spread that was legal last year is not legal this year. Frankly, that's a lot to remember when a buck

Is this a legal buck? Hunters in six Texas counties must acquaint themselves with new regulations before white-tailed deer season opens this fall.

steps out in low light and you are primed to pull the trigger.

That's why TPWD designed an informational campaign to help hunters make the right decisions and harvest only legal bucks. A series of meetings will be held in August and September to inform hunters of the new regulations. Landowners who lease their land for hunting will be asked to let their hunters know of the meetings. Meeting specifics will be announced in local newspapers or can be obtained by calling the TPWD biologist in each county.

TPWD also will print and distribute through license vendors and the meetings an illustrated hunter's guide to legal white-tailed bucks that contains the pertinent information.

The new regulations are designed to correct a severe over-harvest of yearling bucks and, over time, improve the quality and health of the deer herd as a whole. During the three-year term of the program, hunters will be asked to voluntarily bring legally harvested bucks to check stations for data collection. Doing so will enter the hunter in a drawing for a lifetime hunting and fishing license and other prizes.

— Larry D. Hodge



FIELD NOTES

Back to School!

Students won't be the only ones heading back to school this fall. In Texas, you have to hit the books before you can go hunting. Hunters born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, must pass a hunter education safety course to hunt legally in Texas. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has made it easier to attend a course by offering a variety of formats and locations. For more information or for a list of scheduled courses in your area, visit <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/edu/edu.htm> or call (800) 792-1112 and press 6.

Land and Water Plan



Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's new plan will determine the future of outdoor recreation in the state.

What will the Texas outdoors look like 10 years from now? What will you find there? Who will share it with you? How the state meets the outdoor recreation and resource conservation needs of Texas during the next decade could depend largely on a comprehensive plan now being developed by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Last year, the 77th Texas Legislature told TPWD to chart its course for the future and make a plan for conserving natural and cultural resources and providing access to the outdoors. The agency wants its customers to be a part of the Land and Water Resource Conservation and Recreation Plan process.

"This plan will emphasize outdoor recreation access issues, with a focus on the major urban centers," says TPWD Executive Director Robert L. Cook. "It will establish conservation priorities for all parts of the state. It will address water for wildlife, and it will set forth our agenda in water. We haven't had anything like this. This will be the TPWD plan."

The plan also is shaping up to be the most comprehensive overview ever compiled of what Texas has and lacks in natural, cultural, historical, wildlife and outdoor recreational resources. In March, TPWD staff completed an inventory of all lands and waters in Texas. Areas lacking resources will be pri-

oritized based on population needs and conservation goals.

While the science-gathering aspect of the plan may be in full swing to meet statutory deadlines for implementation (the plan must be adopted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission by Oct. 15), Cook says public input will be encouraged and necessary. TPWD held constituency meetings to review and revise a draft outline for the plan. The draft contains five major categories:

- **Texas Today: General Resources, Justification, Issues and Threats.** This section looks at changing demographics, threats to land and water resources and public access.

- **TPWD's Specified Roles Based on the Legislative Mandates, Mission and Demonstrated Needs of the State.** This section seeks to identify TPWD's roles as they relate to state and local parks, wildlife management areas, cultural and historic preservation, water conservation and recreation, and with private landowners and private lands.

- **Inventory Analysis.** This section addresses the conservation needs for wildlife habitat in each ecological region of the state, the recreational needs of major metropolitan areas, the cultural and historic needs statewide and water needs as they relate to natural resources and outdoor recreation.

- **Priorities.** This section will help guide TPWD in developing areas of the state that lack outdoor recreation opportunities and in addressing conservation deficiencies.

- **Recommendations and Implementation.** This section will provide TPWD with direction to meet the plan's objectives.

The current draft outline for the plan is available for review and comment at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/plan/.

— Steve Lightfoot

TEXAS READER

Birds of Northeast Texas

With the publication of his *Birds of Northeast Texas* (Texas A&M University Press, \$34.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paperback), Matt White joins the ranks of other well-known Texas ornithologists — Warren Pulich, Mark Lockwood, Ed Kutac, Ro Wauer and Ken Seyfert, to mention just a few — who have recently published regionally focused Texas bird books.

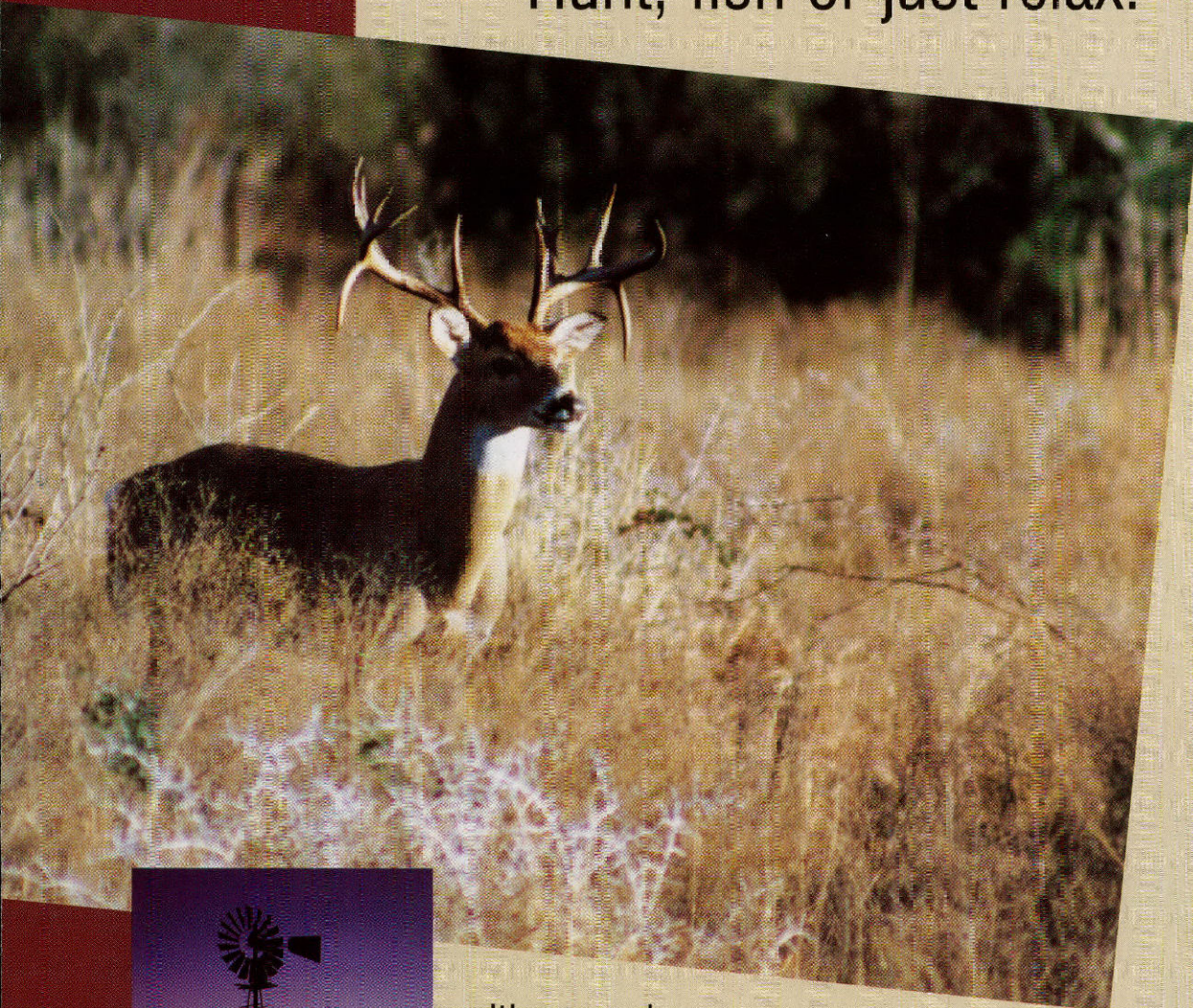
Northeast Texas has not traditionally been a birding hotspot, but this book should convey the importance of this region as a birding destination. Perhaps best-known for its large bodies of water — Tawakoni, Lake O' the Pines, Wright Patman and Caddo — Northeast Texas is a great place to find wintering loons and grebes, waterfowl and vagrant gulls. Rarities include yellow-billed and Pacific loons, harlequin and long-tailed ducks, Sabine's and Bonaparte's gulls.

In an area that includes 10 state parks, several wildlife management areas, large reservoirs, Nature Conservancy preserves, National Grasslands and Army Corps of Engineers land tracts, there is no dearth of great places to find birds. White's 122-page guide covers the status and distribution of the 390 bird species reliably seen in this frequently overlooked part of the state.

— Noreen Jamude



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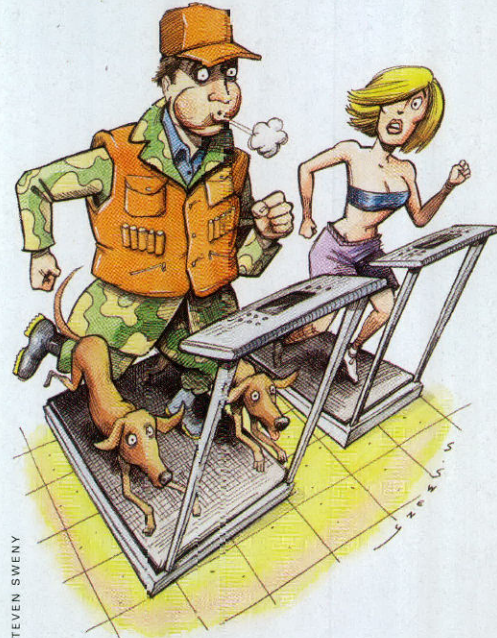
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Fit for the Field

Do you need to get in shape for hunting season?

You bet your life. / BY KEITH MCCAFFERTY



STEVEN SWENY

At my athletic club, we pedal stationary bikes up an imaginary mountain. "Hurt So Good" blares from the boom box as our instructor barks out orders. As I am the lone male in a sea of spandex, one might question if my motive for being here has anything to do with exercise. But each time I rise out of the saddle, a corner of Montana's Bridger Mountain range peeks through the windows. If I want to climb that mountain to hunt elk in November, I have to climb the one that exists in my mind now.

"Whoa!" you say. Wait a minute. I hunt in Texas, and the tallest thing I have to climb is a tower stand in Live Oak County. Why do I need to exercise before deer season starts?"

Well, to pick just one of a dozen reasons, becoming fit is the best way to ensure that you stick around long enough to eat your venison. The average age of the American hunter is climbing, placing more of us in the age bracket where heart attack is a concern. As researchers at Michigan's William Beaumont Hospital discovered, you don't have to hunt bighorn sheep to place yourself at risk. Hunters fitted with heart monitors regularly exceeded

the pulse rate they could achieve on laboratory stress tests just by walking through cornfields, and the pulse of one bowhunter spiked from 78 to 168 in less than a minute when a 10-point whitetail buck appeared underneath his tree stand. While he was sitting still. Such strain is more likely to cause heart attacks among couch potatoes than it is among the physically fit.

But even if you aren't in a high-risk group, an exercise regimen that stresses the three tenets of physical fitness — aerobics, stretching and strength training — will make you a better hunter. How do you find a program you can stick with? The most important ingredients are 1) finding activities you enjoy doing regularly, and 2) staying motivated by working toward a goal. My brother, Kevin, schedules a couple of long-distance races each summer to give him the incentive to run. Another hunting partner enters tennis tournaments. He has to practice, he says, because the alternative is to embarrass himself on the court. Because I find it easier to train with others, I sign up for classes at my health club.

Aerobic exercises include walking, running, swimming and endurance sports such as tennis and soccer. Exercise at least three times per week to bring your heart rate up into a target zone — calculated at 50 to 85 percent of your maximum heart rate (your maximum heart rate is your age subtracted from 220) — and keep it there for 25 minutes. Stretching is a pillar of fitness that doesn't receive due attention, but a flexible hunter is less susceptible to injuries. Simple hamstring stretches such as placing your foot on a rock and bending toward the outstretched leg will help increase flexibility.

Strength training also helps maintain

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bone density among older hunters. You'll get more benefit from free weights, which require smaller stabilizing muscles to work in unison with large muscle groups for balance, than machine weights, which isolate muscle groups during exercise. Those stabilizing muscles also help steady your rifle or smooth that shotgun swing. Remember that strength radiates from the center of the body. Stomach crunches and back exercises are the foundation of any strength-training program. Exercise your upper legs, too. It's the quadriceps muscles at

the front of the thigh that take stress off knee joints during hiking, climbing and lifting.

Regardless of how fit you feel when the season arrives, be careful in the echo of the shot, when the real work of hunting begins. According to the Michigan study, dragging a deer causes more heart strain than any other hunting activity. Invest in a game cart. It's a small price to pay for good health. ★

Listen To Your Body!

Anyone over 40 who has not exercised in sev-

eral years should consult a doctor before starting a training program. Regardless of your age, exercising can result in serious medical problems. Danger signals during cardiovascular workouts may include discomfort in the chest, arms, neck or jaw. Any tightness, burning, aching or feeling of fullness can indicate a coronary blockage. Shortness of breath may point to a heart problem, too, especially if previous training at the same intensity didn't produce the reaction. Bone or joint pain during stretching or strength training also are red flags. At the onset of any of these problems, whether you feel them in the field or in the gym, stop and seek medical help.

FIELD TEST

Chill Out

Keep your cool with the latest ice chests.

/ BY GIBBS MILLIKEN

Want to beat the heat? The latest coolers can keep food and drinks cold even on the hottest Texas days.

One of the best family-size chests is the **Xtreme 5-Day Cooler** (\$45.10, Silver, 50-quart, Model #6263-707, Coleman, (800) 835-3278, <www.coleman.com>). Excellent insulation keeps ice up to five days in temperatures up to 90 degrees. This is also an extremely portable chest: Strong folding-end handles, heavy-

modern-style **Playmate Plus** (\$14.99, 24-quart, Model #6464, Igloo) features a combined handle/lid that rotates open with a convenient thumb-operated auto-locking catch on top. Included is a removable food tray that allows items to stay dry above the ice.

The new soft ice chests — some that can fold to a quarter their original size — are popular with sportspeople and travelers. Even large-capacity containers like the 72-can **Rolling Collapsible Cooler** (\$59.99, Model #72PKCRT, **Glacier Gear**, (800) 676-8634, <www.glaciargear.com>) has smooth roller-blade wheels and a retracting tow arm. It converts quickly to a shoulder bag with a separate expanding front pocket large enough for a folding stove or sports gear and a mesh rear pocket for wet items. A smaller, less expensive folding tote is the **Timber Creek Cooler** (\$10.99, Model #PTQ99-1205B, Academy Sports & Outdoors, (281) 646-5200, <www.academy.com>), which holds 24 drink cans with ice. The twin-zippered top features a bungee-cord keeper system for attaching other items. Add a padded shoulder strap to the end handles to carry it hands-free.



From left: Playmate Plus, Thermolectric PowerChill Plus, Timber Creek Cooler Bag, Rolling Collapsible Cooler, Coleman Stainless Steel Cooler.

duty towing yoke and two 6-inch recessed wheels make it easy to tote and stow. The lid, sturdy enough to sit on, has four offset drink holders and handy ruler for checking game fish lengths.

A more traditional chest is the **Steel Cooler** (\$105.25, 54-quart, Model #6155-707, Coleman) in stainless steel. This classic, high-quality unit has 2-inch-thick insulation and is built to last. As with all stainless products, however, it requires some maintenance and care in handling to prevent dents and scratches.

Igloo set the standard in making the first quality, all-plastic ice chests. Their well-known white coolers, like the huge, 162-quart **Marine Ice Chest** (\$333, Igloo, (800) 364-5566, <www.igloocoolers.com>), originally made for Texas Gulf Coast fishers, is still among the best and most durable, even in direct sunlight. Their smaller, box-type **Igloo Legend Combo** (\$21.99, 40-quart, Igloo) is a great buy that includes a fully insulated ultratherm body and a lid that supports up to 300 pounds. Igloo's

The latest innovation in rigid coolers is the ice-free **Thermolectric PowerChill Plus** (\$132.20, 40-quart, Model #5642A807Coleman). Plug it into your car's cigarette lighter or any 12-volt system and this thermoelectric cooler keeps your food cold or hot for the long haul to the coast. Wet ice and liquids should be kept in sealed containers with this unit to prevent damage to the electrical system. Optional is a separate 110-volt adapter to plug into standard power at home or camp. The unit is compact, lightweight and can be set either vertically or horizontally.

Whether you want to keep your food, drinks or fish cool, improved insulation means you can keep your cool even during a season in the sun. ★

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3 Days in the Field / By Erica H. Brasseux

DESTINATION: FORT DAVIS

TRAVEL TIME FROM:

AUSTIN — 8 HOURS / DALLAS — 9 HOURS / HOUSTON — 10.5 HOURS / SAN ANTONIO — 7 HOURS



Hiding from the Heat

As we turn onto Texas 17, usually a scenic 30-mile stretch between Balmorhea and Fort Davis, clouds of dust funnel and disperse along the desolate rangeland.

Views of the distant mountains that cradle the area are lost in a hazy blanket of yellow. Like Dorothy and Toto, we emerge from the whirling winds into a surreal, Oz-like setting.

Tumbleweeds the size of bowling balls chase each other across the blacktop lane, and a cowboy with a rugged felt hat and a black handlebar mustache bids us “hidy” from his horse. Century-old rock and adobe structures, including a courthouse, bank and four-celled jail, are scattered throughout the town. Reminiscent of a quintessential Western frontier settlement, it’s the highest town in Texas

at an elevation of 5,050 feet and is one of the state’s coolest summer retreats.

After checking into our room at the Old Texas Inn, we familiarize ourselves with the area’s native flora and fauna at the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, a few miles south of Fort Davis on Texas 118. With a 20-acre arboretum, wildflower identification station, hiking trail (great for birders!) and numerous other displays, it’s a wonderful way to spend an hour or the entire afternoon.

We spend the latter part of the day at Fort Davis National Historic Site, located on the edge of town. Covering 474

acres, including several miles of hiking trails, the site is much larger than it appears from the highway, and today we will scout out almost every inch of it. Fort Davis was active from 1854 to 1891, except for the Civil War years, and Buffalo Soldiers served at the fort for almost two decades. Their primary role of safeguarding travelers heading west against the Comanches and Apaches continued until 1881, when the Indian Wars ended in West Texas. When Fort Davis had "out-lived its usefulness" and was abandoned by the Army, it contained more than 60 major adobe or stone buildings, which were preserved by the National Park Service in 1961.

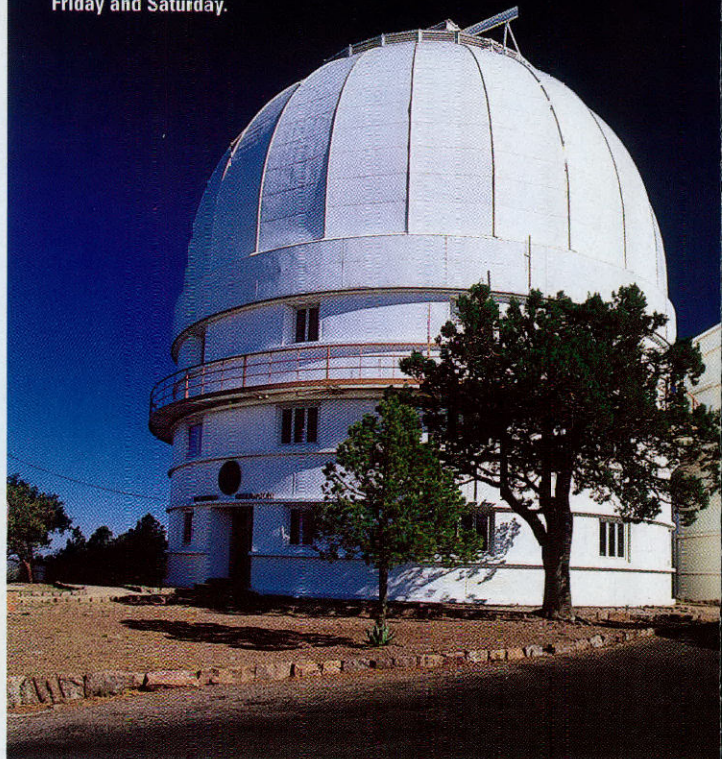
We first make our way to the squad room of the Enlisted Men's Barracks, furnished with iron bunks, footlockers and accoutrements of the some 30 soldiers who once occupied it. A park ranger, dressed in soldier attire, points to one of the beds and suggests that I lie down on the 2-inch thick, straw-filled mattress to see what it feels like. During spring break and summer, park staff and volunteers dress in period-type clothing and provide interpretations in many of the refurbished buildings.

At 4:30 p.m. a bugle call, one of many throughout the day, echoes over the parade grounds, giving the eerie feeling that the ghosts of the 10th U.S. Cavalry are still on post. This tattoo historically was played at around 9 p.m., signaling the men to prepare for bed and to secure the camp. We decide to grab an early dinner and do the same.

AVIAN ADVENTURES

Like an oversized volleyball net made out of spider webs, the thin, opaque bird-catching nets billow and swell in the morning breeze. From frequent sparrows to occasional

McDonald Observatory holds star parties every Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.



hawks, unsuspecting birds fly into and become trapped in the soft lattice, where they later will be rescued and banded by specially trained volunteers

This catch-and-release process is part of a 10-year bird-banding project being conducted at Davis Mountains State Park, located right around the corner from the national park. In the past decade the volunteers at Fort Davis have banded more than 30,000 birds.

About 15 visitors and I follow the volunteers along a path to three different net sites. During the first "pickup" of the morning, we find two white-crowned sparrows and two Lincoln's sparrows attempting to flutter free. With careful precision, the volunteers free the birds and put them into individual white cloth bags to transport them.

Back at the banding station, we all circle around to watch as the volunteers adorn each bird's tiny leg with a new metal "ankle bracelet." The ID band, which helps researchers throughout the United States track the birds' migratory habits, will be recorded before each bird is released.

I am allowed to hold one of the tiny sparrows before setting it free. I carefully cup my hands over the top and bottom of the tiny brown bird, but in a burst of feathers it escapes. Downy fluff hovers in front of me as the sparrow flies to a nearby tree to recover from an eventful morning.

After the banding picnic lunch in tow, we're off to explore the rest of this 2,708-acre state park. A two-mile, ascending hiking trail affords dramatic views of the rugged, mountainous landscape. For the non-hikers, Skyline Drive winds upward along a paved mountain slope intersecting the hiking trail at a breathtaking scenic overlook. We look across to Indian Lodge the park's own hotel, its adobe-style, stark white walls standing juxtaposed against the rugged West Texas landscape.

We push onward another 2.5 miles to the stone tower on the outskirts of the National Historic Site. The two parks are



A Scott's oriole feeds on a century plant in Davis Mountains State Park.

TOP PHOTO © GREG LASLEY/KAC PRODUCTIONS; BOTTOM PHOTO © LARRY DITTO

connected by this 4.5-mile trail, allowing a full day of hiking and sightseeing for the more adventuresome visitors. Perched near the ledge of a rocky cliff, we break for a late lunch. Through binoculars we spot a procession of eight horseback riders playing follow-the-leader along a distant trail. A few local outfitters, including Prude Ranch and Lajitas Stables, offer guided horseback trail rides through the mountains.

We retrace our steps on the path back down to park headquarters as the sun begins its descent into the western sky. A pinkish hue replaces the big, empty blue, and the whole world becomes a little softer around the edges.

STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT

From the supernatural to the scientific, there's plenty of nightlife to be found in the Fort Davis area. At the nearby town of Marfa, where sightings of the mysterious Marfa Lights have been recorded for some 150 years, spectators converge each evening, anxiously awaiting a glimpse of the

mystical light show. Are these colorful illuminations a result of static electricity, or perhaps caused by solar winds? While the speculations are many, the mystery remains unsolved.

But back in Fort Davis there are bigger and better light shows going on at the McDonald Observatory, which holds the title of being one of the world's major astronomical research facilities. Scientists from all over the world reserve time slots years in advance just to use the observatory's powerful telescopes for a week or two. Tonight, we, too, will partake of this celestial experience.

Attending one of the famous Star Parties at the McDonald Observatory, held on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, turns out to be the highlight of this three-day adventure. Tonight more than 300 people, heads tilted back toward the sky, huddle in silence as one of the astronomers points out Venus and Jupiter in the cloudless sky. Later, we'll be able to view these planets and other celestial objects through 10 or so telescopes set up around the property. Tourists who just this afternoon were sporting their short-sleeved T-shirts and hiking shorts are now bundled up in coats. Crisp and cold with no hint of wind, it's the perfect night for a star party.

"Look, Dad, there's more popping out over here," whispers a little girl standing next to us, as more and more stars become visible in the darkening sky. Narrating all the while, the astronomer uses a large flashlight to point out various constellations amid the ever-increasing blanket of glittering stars.

As he points out Orion's belt, a "falling star" shoots across the sky, followed by a breathy "Ahhhhh" from the crowd. Next to me, the girl points where the star has just been. "Do it again, Daddy," she whispers. ☆

For More Information:

Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce, (800) 524-3015;

<www.fortdavis.com>

Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, (915) 364-2499;

<www.cdri.org>

Davis Mountains State Park, (915) 426-3337;

<www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/davis/>

Fort Davis National Historic Site, (915) 426-3224;

<www.nps.gov/foda/>

McDonald Observatory, (877) 984-STAR or (915) 426-3640;

<www.mcdonaldobservatory.org>

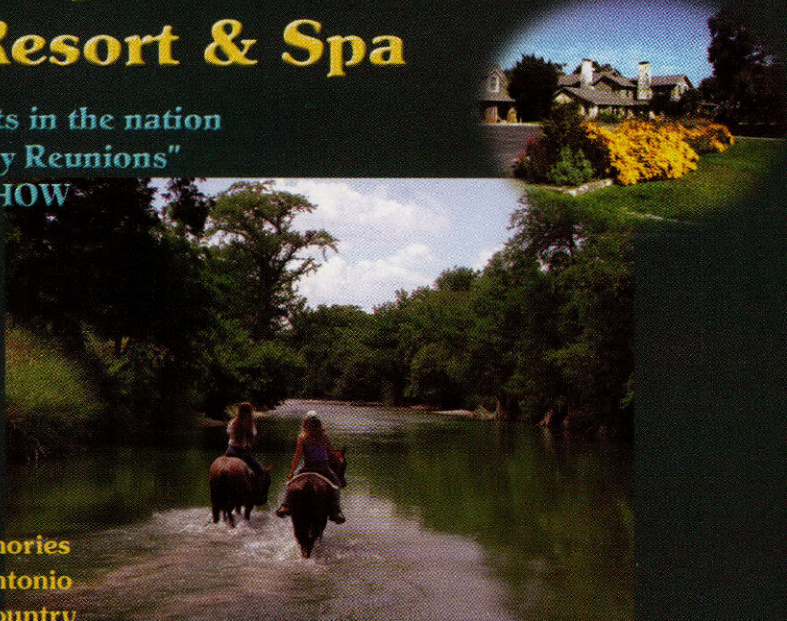
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A decade ago, probably only a handful of people outside the scientific community were familiar with El Niño. Today the effects of this warming of Southern Pacific waters on Texas weather and hunting are common knowledge. During an El Niño episode, most of Texas is likely to be hotter and drier than normal from spring through early fall, though the following winter may be very wet. Lack of rain and the food it produces during the birthing and growing season can reduce wildlife populations and inhibit body and antler growth. That's the bad news. The good news is that a shortage of natural foods means game animals have to move more to fill their bellies and are therefore easier to hunt.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists are acutely aware of the effects of weather on



2002 Hunt

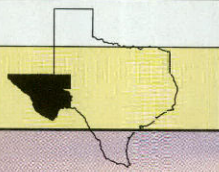
game populations — they see the good, the bad and the ugly daily. Knowing that an El Niño seems to be in the making, all were conservative when predicting hunting conditions for the coming season. Still, most feel the 2002 season will be average or slightly above average, because all but the western and far northern parts of the state received good rains in late 2001 and early 2002. However, in a state that arguably offers some of the best deer, turkey, dove, quail and waterfowl hunting in the nation, an average season can still furnish plenty of excitement. And with just a little rain at the right times, the experts say, the season could be very good in most parts of the state.

Region by region, here's what TPWD biologists had to say after gazing into their crystal balls.

A golden retriever is running through a field of tall, dry grass. The dog is in the foreground, facing left, with its mouth open and tongue out. Its tail is raised and curved. The background is a vast, open field under a clear sky.

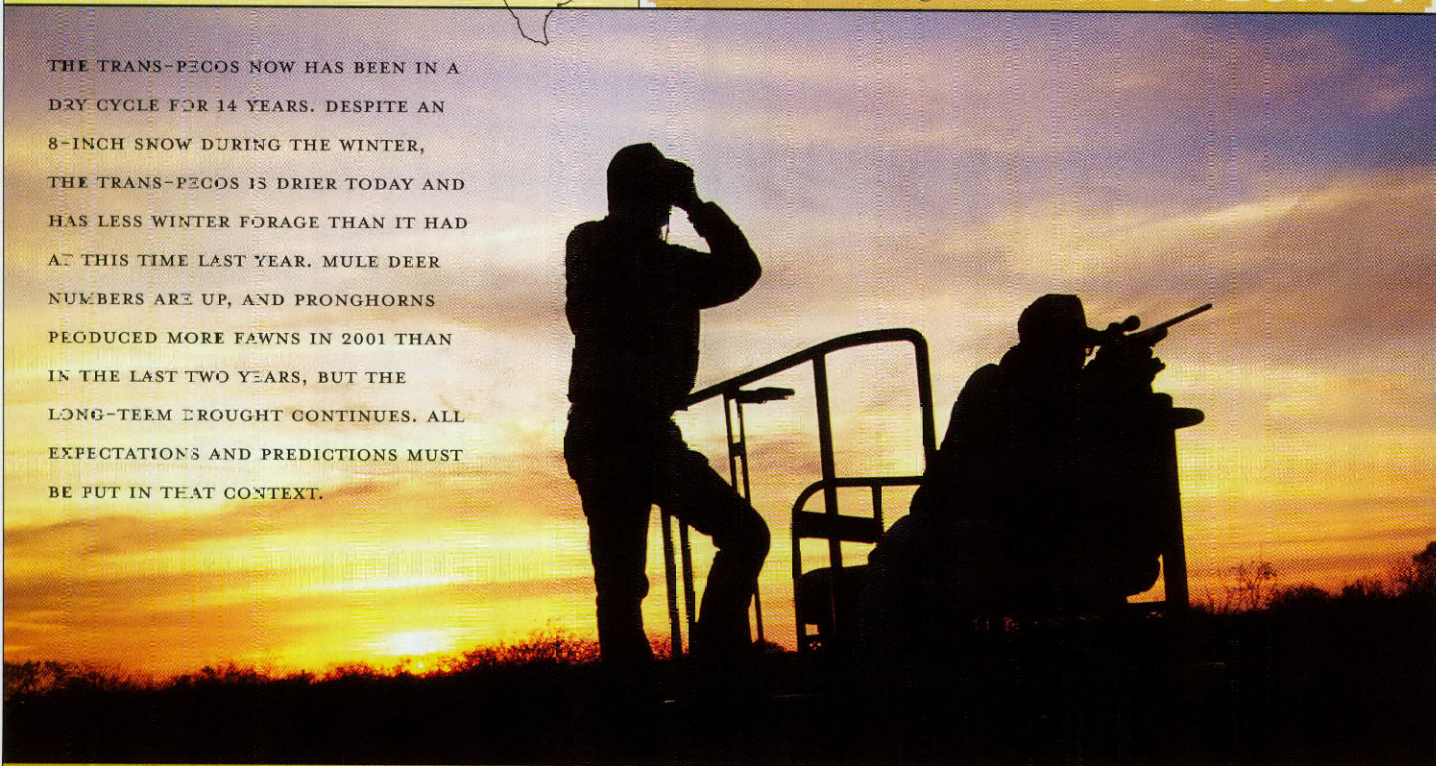
ino Forecast

Edited by Larry D. Hodge



Mike Hobson, District Biologist

THE TRANS-PECOS NOW HAS BEEN IN A DRY CYCLE FOR 14 YEARS. DESPITE AN 8-INCH SNOW DURING THE WINTER, THE TRANS-PECOS IS DRIER TODAY AND HAS LESS WINTER FORAGE THAN IT HAD AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR. MULE DEER NUMBERS ARE UP, AND PRONGHORNS PRODUCED MORE FAWNS IN 2001 THAN IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, BUT THE LONG-TERM DROUGHT CONTINUES. ALL EXPECTATIONS AND PREDICTIONS MUST BE PUT IN THAT CONTEXT.



(SURVEYS INDICATE A HEALTHY INCREASE IN MULE DEER NUMBERS.)

MULE DEER. The mule deer population reached a low of approximately 35,000 animals in 1999 but increased to 99,790 during 2000. Population census surveys during 2001 indicated a 36.2 percent increase in the Trans-Pecos population, for a total of 135,918 animals.

There's more good news. In addition to there being more mule deer on the ground, the buck-to-doe ratio is one buck to every 1.58 does. Landowner emphasis on harvesting only mature bucks has contributed significantly to the excellent buck-to-doe ratio. Harvest data for last season indicated that 57 percent of all mule deer taken were 5½ years old or older. Because the Trans-Pecos has such good age structure in the buck segment of the deer herd areas supporting low numbers of deer that receive rainfall this year will produce quality mule deer acceptable to most hunters.

WHITE-TAILED DEER. Antler drop occurs in West Texas during March and April, and new antlers begin to grow almost immediately. Rainfall received during the spring and summer months affects the quality of antler development. Summer thunderstorms are common on the east side of the district, but in the Trans-Pecos does not receive its summer and fall rains, then we can expect no better than an average hunting season for whitetails.

PRONGHORNS. Like mule deer, Trans-Pecos pronghorns reached their highest population level — more than 17,000 animals — during the three wet years in the mid-1980s. Since that time, pronghorns have suffered a long-term decline in numbers. By 2001, antelope numbered only 5,061 animals. The antelope population has not been this low in West Texas since 1964.

In the mixed prairies of West Texas, antelope live on forbs and browse. "This year, pronghorn antelope are facing some very tough times," says Misty Sumner, TPWD biologist at Kent. "The

higher pronghorn density areas are still extremely dry, with the vegetation seeming almost transparent." Mike Sulins in Marfa says, "Antelope numbers remain low in District 1, and permit issuance probably will not increase substantially for the fall 2002 season. The good news is that 2001 had a good fawn crop compared to the two previous years. A decent number of older bucks seen last year should produce some quality trophies for the 2002 season."

GROUND-NESTING BIRDS. If Mother Nature does her part, 2002 could be a good year for quail and turkeys. Some areas have an abundance of birds, and the stage is set for a better season than last year, weather permitting.

Scaled quail are located in the majority of the district. Gambel's quail can be found along the Rio Grande and adjacent drainages from Presidio to El Paso. Bobwhites occur in the northeastern portion of the district around the Midland/Cdessa/Crane area. Rio Grande turkeys live primarily in southeast Pecos and Terrell counties. Adequate numbers of mature gobblers should be present in these areas.

DOVES. Dove hunting will be spotty this year in many areas of the Trans-Pecos. Winter moisture sufficient for enhanced production of forb and grass seeds has been lacking "At times there are lots of doves in District 1, but they tend to move on quickly for whatever reason," says Tim Bone. "Generally, weather during September and October dictates how many birds hang around." Philip Dickerson, TPWD biologist at Midland, predicts dove numbers will be excellent around that area.

JAVELINAS. Javelinas remain an untapped resource in most areas of the Trans-Pecos. Javelinas can be found from the lower Chihuahuan Desert up to mountain elevations around 4,000 feet.

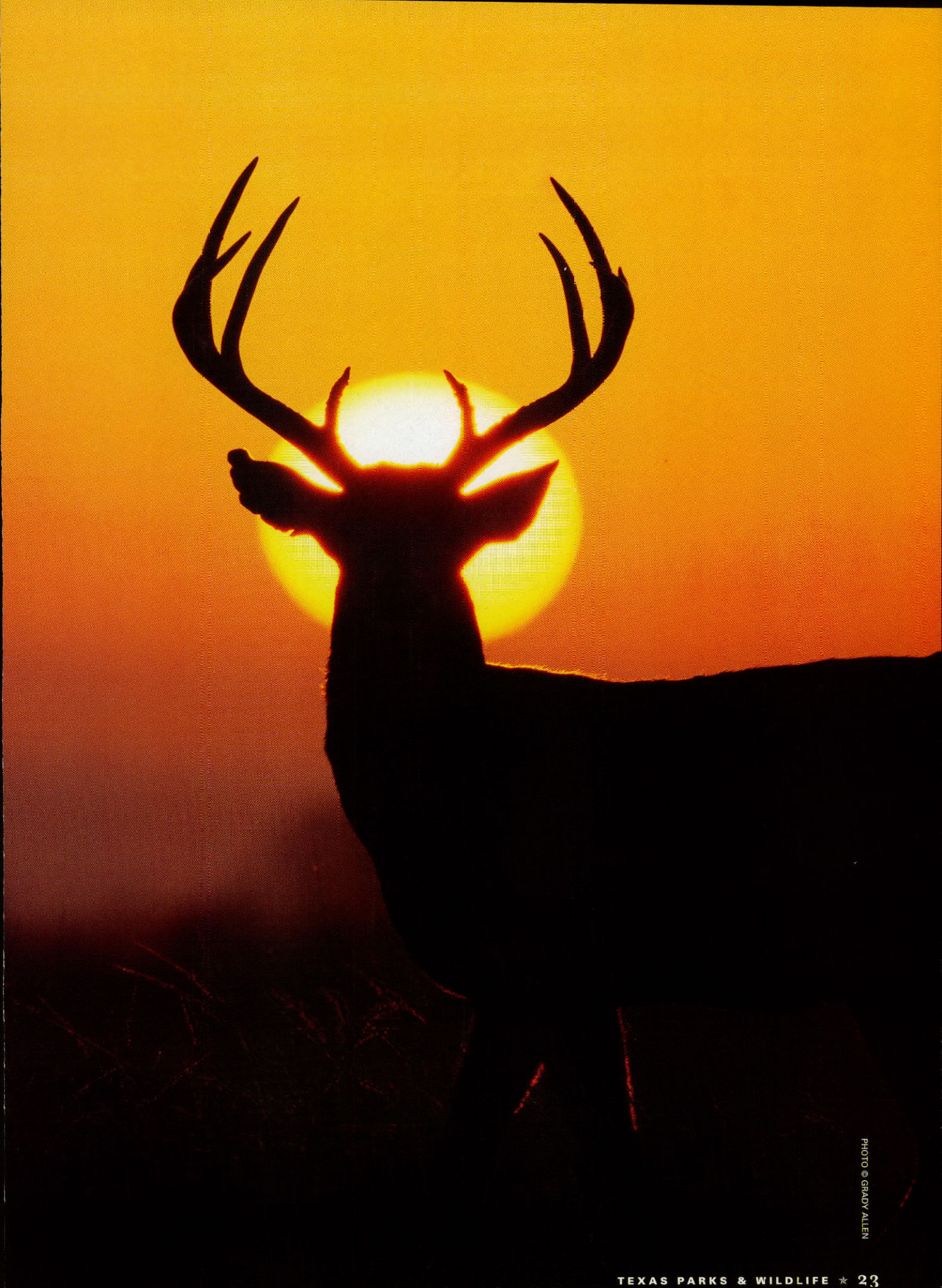
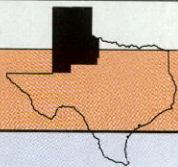


PHOTO © GRADY ALLEN



Danny Swepton, District Biologist



PANHANDLE WILDLIFE ENDURED A WIDE RANGE OF TEMPERATURE AND MOISTURE CONDITIONS DURING THE WINTER OF 2001-2002. RAIN AND SNOWFALL WERE VERY LIMITED IN THE CENTRAL AND NORTHERN COUNTIES, BUT SOME OF THE EXTREME SOUTHERN COUNTIES (SCURRY, HASKELL, JONES AND FISHER) RECEIVED SEVERAL GOOD SHOWERS IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH. WHERE DRY CONDITIONS CONTINUE, WE CAN EXPECT AN AVERAGE HUNTING SEASON.

(WEATHER AND CHANGES IN FARMING PRACTICES HAVE AFFECTED PHEASANT POPULATIONS.)

MULE DEER AND WHITE-TAILED DEER. The ranges of these species overlap in much of the Panhandle, and both deer continue to expand their range. Whitetails in varying densities are now found in many of the High Plains counties because of cover provided by Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands. Mule deer have been reported moving eastward along the drainages to almost the Wichita Falls area.

The 2001-2002 season produced a number of excellent trophies for hunters, even though range conditions were only average in many areas because of low rainfall. However, even with the current dry conditions, it is expected that the majority of deer over-wintered in fair to good condition, because most have access to agricultural areas that supply food. No significant changes in population and antler quality are anticipated for the upcoming season.

PRONGHORNS. Pronghorn populations have remained stable over most of the Panhandle in the last few years. The past two seasons have not produced the horn quality of previous years, but this may be due to heavy hunter harvest of older bucks in some herd units. As with the deer herds, access to winter wheat and other agricultural crops helps offset poor range conditions in many areas. The population and horn quality in the upcoming season should be similar to the 2001 season.

BOBWHITE AND SCALED QUAIL. Bobwhite quail populations in the Panhandle dropped in 2001 to one of the lowest levels recorded since 1977. Range conditions were good until early

June, when rainfall declined rapidly and temperatures rose. Chick survival was poor, and this was reflected in the low hunter success last fall. Unless significant rains are received in April and May to improve ground cover and insect populations, it is expected that hunter success will be poor again this year.

Scaled quail reproduction in 2001 surprised many people. Good to excellent populations occurred in the southern counties and on the northern plains of the Panhandle. Since the population cycles of this species in the Panhandle can vary widely from year to year, it is very difficult to predict hunting prospects for the coming season. However, if poor range conditions continue, the populations should be below the 2001 level.

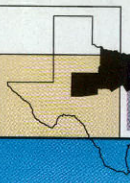
RIO GRANDE TURKEYS. Turkey reproduction in 2001 was good to excellent. This was especially encouraging, since reproduction in many of the southeastern counties had been poor for several years. Even if the hatch is poor in 2002, there should be an adequate carryover of toms to provide good hunting in the coming season.

LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKENS. Prairie chicken populations remain low and, if the dry weather continues, hatching success will be severely impacted.

RING-NECKED PHEASANTS. Along with weather, changes in farming practices continue to affect pheasant populations negatively throughout the Panhandle. The 2001-2002 season was fair to poor, depending on location. Prospects are similar for the coming season.



PHOTO © DAVID J. STARR



Ralph Suarez, Biologist

THE POSSUM KINGDOM WILDLIFE DISTRICT IN NORTH-CENTRAL TEXAS CONTAINS MANY WILDLIFE HABITAT TYPES. THE EASTERN PART OF THE DISTRICT TYPICALLY RECEIVES SIGNIFICANTLY MORE RAINFALL THAN THE WESTERN PORTION. THIS WAS GENERALLY THE CASE DURING THE FALL AND WINTER OF 2001-2002. RAINFALL IN THE WESTERN REGIONS WAS NORMAL TO SLIGHTLY BELOW NORMAL, WHILE RAINFALL IN THE EAST WAS NORMAL TO ABOVE NORMAL. THIS SHOULD HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON WILDLIFE POPULATIONS DURING 2002, ESPECIALLY GAME ANIMALS.



(TEXAS' FOUR QUAIL. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GAMBEL'S, BOBWHITE, MONTEZUMA, SCALED.)

WHITE-TAILED DEER. The large number of fawns produced during the summer of 2001 means there will be many young bucks on the range during 2002. Landowners and hunters seeking to improve the age structure of their deer herd should be selective when harvesting bucks. The 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 deer seasons saw fewer deer than normal harvested on most deer ranges. Many deer did not visit corn feeders on a regular basis because of the availability of native forage; consequently, many deer in all age classes moved into the next older age class. Tag the older bucks and give the young ones time to grow.

In general, deer should be in good body condition, especially if it continues to rain. Antler development should be average on most deer ranges with the exception of properly managed properties, where above-average antler development may be seen. Properties under intense deer management programs should be able to produce some large-antlered deer this season.

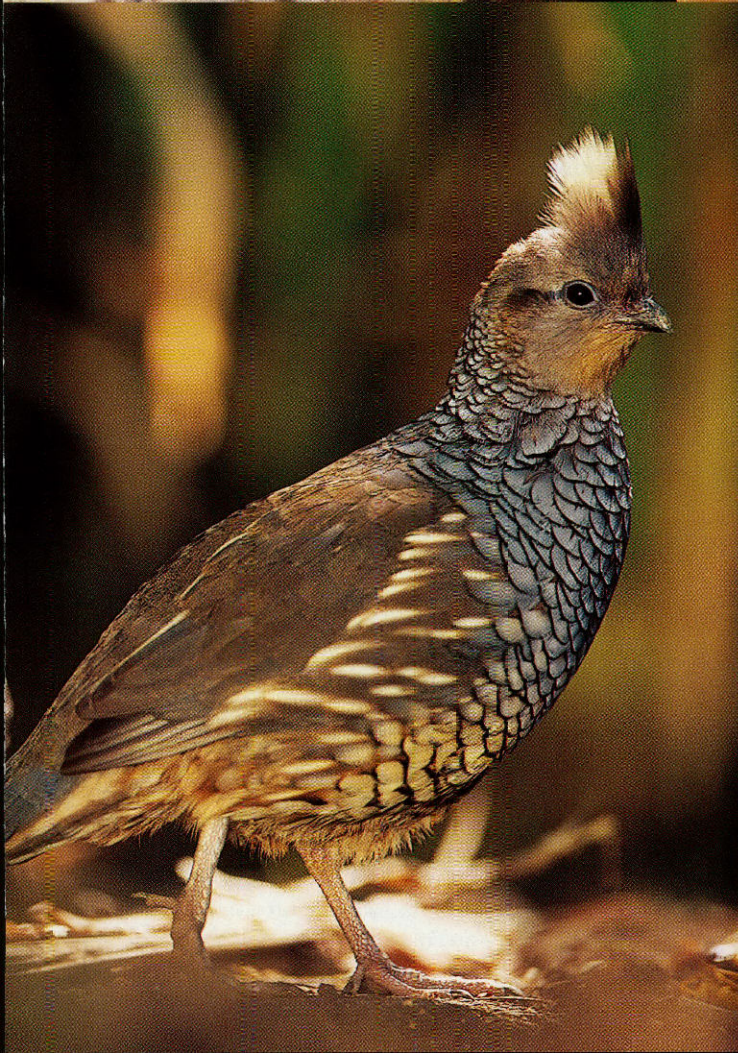
RIO GRANDE TURKEYS. Drier-than-normal conditions have kept turkey reproduction well below average in much of the district since 1997. However, this was not the case during the spring and summer of 2001. Abundant fall and winter rains of 2000 and improved nesting conditions during the spring of 2001 set the stage for one of the largest turkey hatches in recent times.

The large number of turkeys hatched during 2001 has resulted in a very large breeding population this year. With favorable nesting conditions this spring, we again can expect a reasonably good hatch during 2002. Hunters should have plenty of turkeys to hunt this season; however, there may be fewer older birds to harvest until young recruits make it into the older age groups.

DOVES. Mourning dove hunting is very popular in this part of the state and can be very productive in areas with adequate food sources and watering holes. In addition, white-winged doves are now nesting in cities, small towns and some rural areas and are increasing. It is recommended that dove hunters purchase a white-winged dove stamp or Super Comb license when hunting in this part of the state, as whitewings are likely to be part of the bag.

Adequate rainfall during last fall and winter has the potential to create better-than-average early fall dove habitat across most of the district. In some areas, the winter wheat crop is grazed only by livestock and not harvested during the spring, resulting in a food source for doves during late summer and early fall. Some of the best dove hunting is traditionally in mature sunflower fields. Stock ponds and small lakes are also good hunting locations when other sources of water become scarce.

BOBWHITE AND SCALED QUAIL. Quail populations are difficult to predict, even on ranges that are managed with the intent of increasing quail populations. Quail numbers were up slightly during the fall of 2001. The western part of the district reported a large hatch of blue quail during 2001. Hunters reported fair to good quail hunting this winter in the central and western portions of the region. Mild winter conditions have the potential to allow for more quail broodstock to be on the ground for this year's breeding season. If favorable nesting conditions occur during the early part of summer, there is the potential for a good quail hatch for 2002. With a few good rains and some insects for young quail chicks to feed on, quail hunters may be treated to one of the better seasons in recent years.



TOP PHOTOS © GARY GAEREMER/NET; BOTTOM LEFT: MIKE SPARKS/PHOTOGRAPHY; BOTTOM RIGHT © LARRY DITTO

Max Traueef, District Biologist



THE FALL AND EARLY WINTER PERIOD OF 2001 SAW MORE THAN AMPLE RAINFALL FOR MOST OF THE HILL COUNTRY, BUT 2002 BEGAN ON THE MINUS SIDE, WITH MGST AREAS REPORTING RAINFALL TOTALS SEVERAL INCHES BELOW NORMAL FOR THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF THE YEAR.

(THE HILL COUNTRY ENJOYED EXCELLENT TURKEY PRODUCTION LAST SUMMER.)

WHITE-TAILED DEER. Adult buck antler quality and body condition should be about average this fall depending on how the spring and summer weather plays out. The question is whether the wetter-than-normal final months of 2001 laid an adequate foundation for better-than-average antler quality for the 2002 hunting season. My guess is that the dry conditions experienced during the first part of 2002 will result in no better-than-average antlers this fall. Body condition during the hunting season will depend entirely on what happens weatherwise during the spring and summer months.

Deer hunting success during the 2002-2003 hunting season will hinge heavily on range conditions just prior to and during the October through January seasons. Many hunters and landowners reported tough hunting last year due to the good fall green-up resulting from widespread and ample rainfall received from late August all the way through December. A good supply of native groceries, in the form of fresh greens and/or a heavy acorn crop, always means tougher hunting here in the Hill Country.

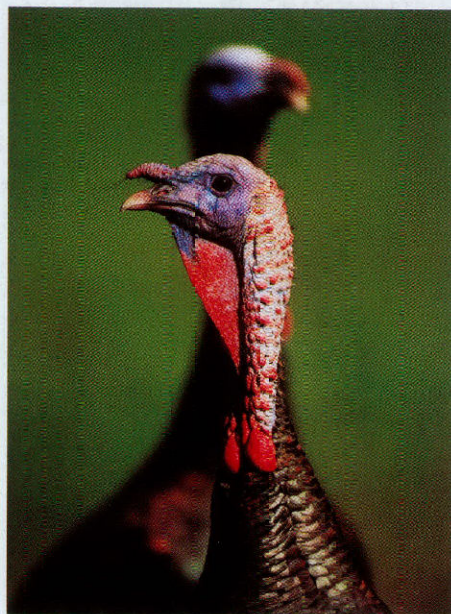
RIO GRANDE TURKEYS. Turkey pro-

duction was excellent throughout the Hill Country last summer, due mainly to the wet spring we enjoyed. Unfortunately, 2002 started off much drier than last year. Unless conditions improve considerably during spring and early summer, I would not expect much of a turkey hatch in 2002. Even so, adequate numbers of adults from the previous year will be available during the 2002 hunting season.

BOBWHITE AND SCALED QUAIL.

Although not known as a big quail area, the Hill Country is home to moderate populations of bobwhites in the north-central counties and scaled quail in the western counties. The 2002-predicted quail hatch and resulting bird availability during the hunting season looks to be about normal at this stage in the game. As with turkeys, though, if rainfall picks up on into the warm months we could be looking at a decent hatch and fall survival.

DOVES. Dove hunting is usually very spotty in our area, and availability of birds hinges heavily on production in other regions of the state and country. The best hunting will be around feeding and watering sites.



2002 HUNTING FORECAST POST OAK SAVANNAH

Kevin Herrimar, District Biologist

THE WINTER RAINS THAT FELL THIS PAST SEASON PRODUCED FAVORABLE RANGE CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT THE POST OAK SAVANNAH HEADING INTO THE 2002 SPRING MONTHS. AS USUAL, THE NORTHERN PORTION OF THE REGION, BETWEEN INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 30 AND THE RED RIVER, RECEIVED MORE RAINFALL THAN COUNTIES FARTHER SOUTH. THE 2001 ACORN CROP WAS AVERAGE TO ABOVE AVERAGE ACROSS THE POST OAK SAVANNAH. THIS, COUPLED WITH THE RELATIVELY MILD WEATHER IN THE FALL AND WINTER OF 2001, BENEFITED WILDLIFE AS WE HEADED INTO THE 2002 SPRING GREEN-UP.

(WATERFOWL HUNTING DEFENDS ON HAVING WATER AT THE RIGHT TIME)

WHITE-TAILED DEER. Preliminary reports indicate that the total deer harvest for the 2001 hunting season in the Post Oak Savannah may have been down slightly from previous years. Plenty of native forage and mild weather conditions made life easier on the deer than on the hunters.

Population data suggest that deer densities across the Post Oak Savannah have remained stable for the past 10 years. Harvest data collected during the 2001-2002 deer season indicated yearling bucks (18 months old) comprised about 39 percent of the total harvest. Also, harvest data from the past few years suggest a trend of increasing numbers of 2½-year-old bucks in the annual harvest. Antler measurements and body weights for yearling bucks in the Post Oak Savannah have been increasing over the past 10 to 20 years; however, there were slight declines in 2001. These health indices probably will rebound in 2002, because the yearling bucks of this coming season were born during the 2001 growing season, when good range conditions prevailed throughout most of the spring and summer.

EASTERN TURKEYS. Our best eastern turkey populations are located in the northern counties

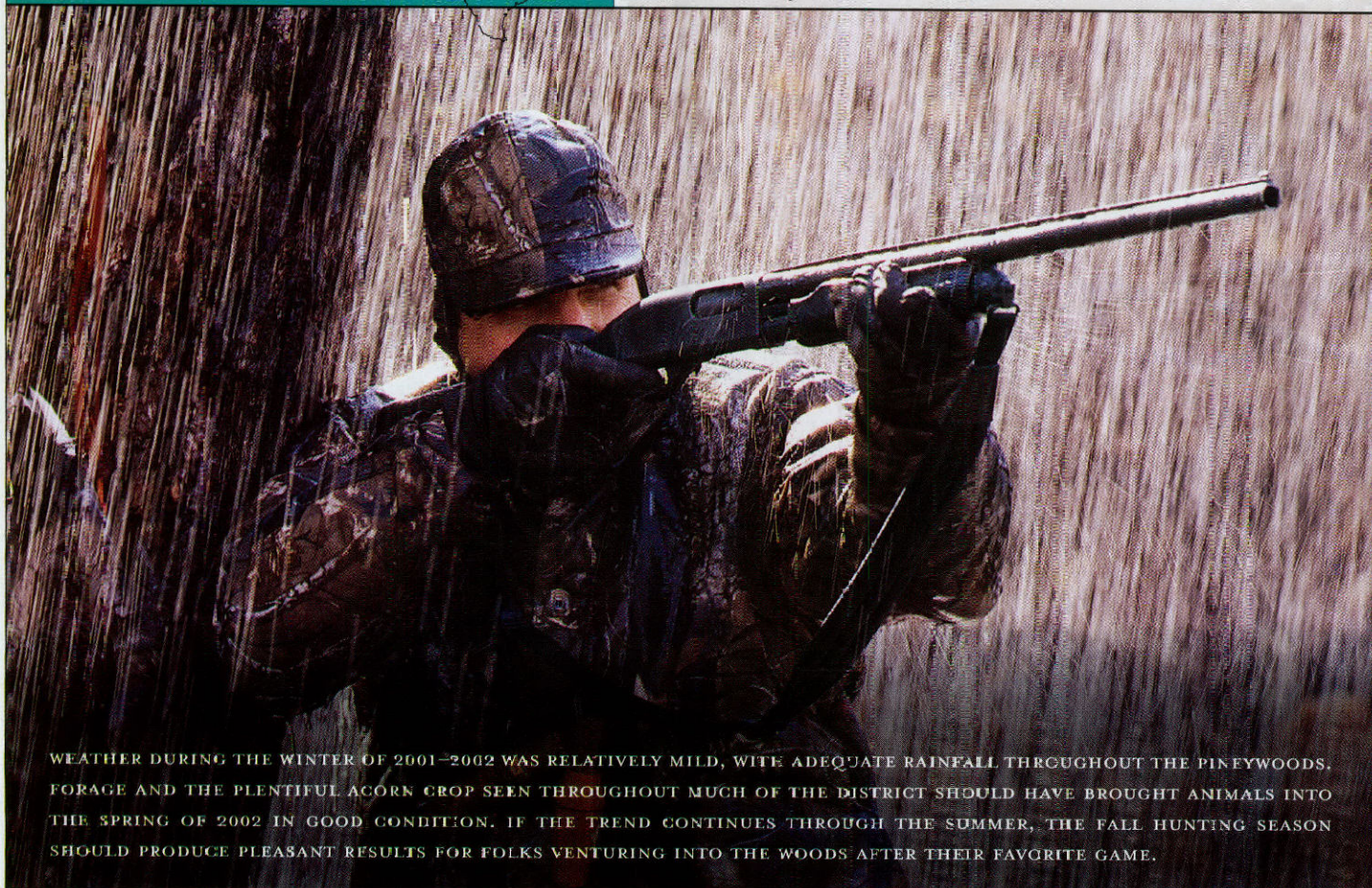
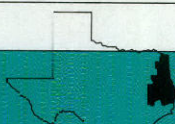
of the Post Oak Savannah. The 2001 turkey hatch was above average and should provide ample hunting opportunity for the 2002-2003 seasons.

DOVES. Good dove hunting opportunities in the district probably will be scattered, with the best hunts located where food, water and cover are in close proximity. A little pre-season scouting will improve your chances for dove hunting success.

SQUIRRELS. Squirrel hunting opportunities for the 2002 season should be better than those experienced in 2001, primarily due to the consistently good acorn crop we saw throughout the Post Oak Savannah in the fall of 2001. Years of good mast production typically are followed by years of good squirrel reproduction.

WATERFOWL. As always, duck hunting in East Texas depends on having water at the right time along with an abundance of preferred foods such as acorns and aquatic plants. When winter rains fill our East Texas bottomland forests and wetlands, duck hunting opportunities increase. Get ahead of the game by indulging in some pre-season scouting while squirrel hunting.





WEATHER DURING THE WINTER OF 2001–2002 WAS RELATIVELY MILD, WITH ADEQUATE RAINFALL THROUGHOUT THE PINEYWOODS. FORAGE AND THE PLENTIFUL ACORN CROP SEEN THROUGHOUT MUCH OF THE DISTRICT SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT ANIMALS INTO THE SPRING OF 2002 IN GOOD CONDITION. IF THE TREND CONTINUES THROUGH THE SUMMER, THE FALL HUNTING SEASON SHOULD PRODUCE PLEASANT RESULTS FOR FOLKS VENTURING INTO THE WOODS AFTER THEIR FAVORITE GAME.

(EAST TEXAS ENTERS THIS WATERFOWL SEASON WITH GOOD HABITAT.)

WHITE-TAILED DEER. Hunters reported having a hard time locating deer during the 2001–2002 season, resulting in a deer harvest somewhat lower than in the previous few years. All indications are that the deer herd is doing well throughout the Pineywoods and increasing slightly in some areas. The low harvest last year should mean there will be additional deer in the woods this year, if habitat conditions are good enough to carry them through the summer.

Harvest of 1½-year-old bucks jumped slightly during the 2001–2002 season, while harvest of 2½ and 3½-year-old deer remained fairly constant. This probably will limit the number of 2½-year-old deer in the woods but should still give hunters the opportunity to look for that wall hanger. Antler size and body weights for deer harvested in 2001–2002 dropped somewhat, but this appears to be an anomaly and should rebound given the good habitat conditions of the past winter.

SQUIRRELS AND SMALL GAME. Squirrel hunters should expect a good year, due to the fairly abundant acorn crop through most of the district in 2001.

The public lands available in East Texas offer hunters good opportunities for hunting a variety of small game in the fall. Different areas offer better chances for different species based on the habitat available. Everything from rabbits to woodcock challenges the Pineywoods hunter.

WATERFOWL. Waterfowl hunting is very weather-dependent. Hunters were able to locate birds in the northern portion of the Pineywoods this past year, but those hunting farther south found it a bit more challenging. The habitat is here if cold weather will push the birds down to us. Scout to find locations with water and duck foods and watch for northerners cold enough to make birds move south.



EASTERN TURKEYS. Public hunting, both on United States Forest Service property and land in the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department public hunting lands program, should provide hunters with good opportunities for a hunt for eastern turkeys next spring. This past year, weather conditions should have allowed for a good reproductive effort and minimal loss of adult birds.

2002 HUNTING FORECAST

Bob Camels, District Biologist

COASTAL PRAIRIES
& MARSHES

THERE ARE BIG CHANGES IN STORE FOR DEER HUNTERS IN AUSTIN, COLORADO, FAYETTE, LAVACA, LEE AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES. DUE TO HEAVY HUNTING PRESSURE ON 1½-YEAR-OLD BUCKS, A THREE-YEAR EXPERIMENTAL REGULATION REGARDING BUCK HARVEST WAS ADOPTED BY THE TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION IN APRIL. HUNTERS NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE NEW DEFINITION OF A LEGAL BUCK (SEE "THAT EIGHT-POINTER MAY NOT BE LEGAL," PAGE 11.) DURING AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, TPWD WILL BE HOLDING TRAINING SESSIONS ON JUDGING LEGAL DEER WITHIN THE SIX EXPERIMENTAL COUNTIES. HUNTERS AND LAND MANAGERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT THEIR LOCAL TPWD BIOLOGIST OR THE DISTRICT 7 WILDLIFE OFFICE AT (979) 968-6591 FOR THE DATES AND TIMES OF TRAINING SESSIONS. OR CHECK THE DISTRICT WEB SITE, <WWW.TPWD.STATE.TX.US/OAK_PRAIRIE>.

IN BRIEF, THE REGULATION DEFINES A LEGAL BUCK DEER IN AUSTIN, COLORADO, FAYETTE, LAVACA, LEE AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES AS A DEER HAVING: (1) A HARDENED ANTLER PROTRUDING THROUGH THE SKIN AND AT LEAST ONE UNBRANCHED ANTLER; OR (2) A DEER HAVING ONE ANTLER WITH SIX OR MORE POINTS; OR (3) A DEER HAVING AN INSIDE SPREAD BETWEEN THE MAIN BEAMS OF 13 INCHES OR GREATER. IN THESE COUNTIES THE AVERAGE SPREAD OF A 3½-YEAR-OLD BUCK IS 13 INCHES, AND THE APPROXIMATE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE TIPS OF A BUCK DEER'S EARS, WHEN IN THE ALERT POSITION, IS 13 INCHES. THIS SHOULD AID HUNTERS IN JUDGING THE SPREAD ON BUCKS.

THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW REGULATION IS TO IMPROVE THE AGE STRUCTURE OF THE DEER HERD BY PROTECTING THE BETTER-QUALITY 1½- AND 2½-YEAR-OLD BUCKS AND HARVESTING THE POORER-QUALITY 1½-YEAR-OLD BUCKS. HARVEST DATA INDICATE HEAVY HUNTING PRESSURE IN MOST COUNTIES WITHIN THE DISTRICT ON 1½- AND 2½-YEAR-OLD BUCKS AND A LACK OF BUCKS IN OLDER AGE CLASSES. RESEARCH ON WHITE-TAILED DEER HAS SHOWN THAT A DEER HERD DOMINATED BY YOUNG BUCKS DOES NOT FUNCTION PROPERLY.

WHITE-TAILED DEER. Excellent winter and spring rains during 2001 provided good forage, browse andawning cover for deer. The good habitat conditions led to very high fawn survival during 2001. This equates to a large number of 1½-year-old bucks available during the 2002 season. Protecting this generation from overharvest as outlined above means hunters will take fewer bucks this season, but the quality of bucks available in future years should improve considerably.



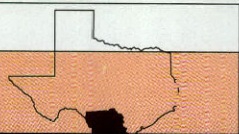
{ALLIGATOR NUMBERS SHOULD BE ABOUT THE SAME AS LAST YEAR }

EASTERN TURKEYS. Turkey numbers appeared to be up last year due to excellent habitat conditions afforded by rains received during the winter and spring of 2001. Landowners reported seeing turkeys in areas where they had been absent for three or more years. An exciting addition to the turkey season in 2003 will be the opening of a spring eastern turkey season in Fort Bend, Brazoria, Matagorda and Wharton counties. Check the 2002-2003 *Outdoor Annual* for details.

BOBWHITE QUAIL. A large portion of the district no longer supports large quail populations due to habitat loss. Most of the remaining quail habitat is found in the southern part of the district including Refugio, Victoria and Goliad counties. The fall quail population is directly related to annual recruitment, as this game bird has a high turnover rate from year to year. Reproductive success is dependent upon habitat quality and climatic conditions. In this area reproductive success is often adversely affected by too much rain rather than too little. Assuming favorable weather conditions, the areas that had a good carryover of brood stock should have decent populations this fall.

ALLIGATORS AND WATERFOWL. James Sutherlin, project leader for the Upper Coast Wetlands Ecosystems Project, and Matt Nelson, wildlife biologist on the Central Coast Wetlands Ecosystems Project, report that the winter 2001 rains put the coastal marshes in good condition. Alligator numbers should be about the same as they were last year.

Waterfowl hunting will depend once again on winter temperatures. Coastal marsh hunters will be dependent on cold weather, forcing the birds out of the rice prairies farther north.



Joe G. Herrera, District Biologist

EARLY FALL 2001 PRODUCED SOME MUCH-NEEDED RAINFALL FOR THE EASTERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN PORTIONS OF SOUTH TEXAS FOLLOWING A PRONOUNCED SPRING AND SUMMER DROUGHT. THE DROUGHT CONTINUED IN THE SOUTHWESTERN AND WESTERN PORTIONS OF THE DISTRICT. THE DRY WINTER, COUPLED WITH SLIGHTLY COLDER THAN NORMAL TEMPERATURES, DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR WILDLIFE PRODUCTION IN SOUTH TEXAS IN 2002. HOWEVER, HUNTERS CAN PROBABLY EXPECT GOOD TO EXCELLENT HUNTING THIS FALL.



(JAVELINAS HAVEN'T BEEN AFFECTED MUCH BY THE DROUGHT.)

WHITE-TAILED DEER. Most deer hunters this fall will find average to above-average numbers of mature deer in the field. Fawns born during the summer of 1997 enjoyed a diversity of forage and excellent habitat conditions. In 2002, these deer will move into the 5½-year-old age class.

Rains in early fall 2001 provided lots of green forage for deer and created problems for hunters. Lush conditions, muddy ranch roads and warm weather did not promote good hunting. As a result, there was a good carryover of 1997 fawns into the 5½-year age class. In addition, those few bucks that survived the poor fawn crops of 1995 and 1996 and hunting seasons since will provide hunters with good numbers of mature bucks 5 to 7 years old with above-average antler quality in 2002.

BOBWHITE AND SCALED QUAIL. Quail numbers remain fair to good in South Texas. Roadside surveys indicate the best hatch in five years. Hunting prospects, though, will vary from one part of the district to another. Areas with quality quail habitat and on properly managed sites will offer hunters better opportunity in 2002 despite continuing dry conditions.

The early fall rains of 2001 prolonged nesting into October and early November in deep South Texas. It would be difficult to determine, though, how many of these late-hatching birds survived over the winter. There appears to be sufficient nesting habitat on better-managed ranches with a good carryover of adult birds. Look for a fair to good hatch in South Texas except for the southwestern and western portions of the district. Quail hunting prospects look fair to good in those areas of the district with a sufficient carryover of birds from 2001 and a decent hatch in 2002.

Scaled quail tolerate more arid habitat conditions, and survey trends indicate that they are on the increase in the southwestern and western portions of the district.

RIO GRANDE TURKEYS. Like quail, turkeys are ground nesters and require ground moisture and cover along with rainfall to promote insect production. Turkey production in 2001 was the third best in the last 10 years. There will be many jakes available to spring turkey hunters in 2003. South Texas had poor hatches from 1998 through 2000. Consequently, there will be fewer "boss gobblers" available to hunters in 2002-2003, but Rio Grande turkey numbers remain stable, and turkey hunting in South Texas should be good to excellent despite past poor production and continuing drought.

DOVES. Mourning dove numbers remain stable in South Texas, while white-winged dove numbers continue to increase. Hunters will find doves in areas that have plenty of food, water and roosting sites. Invariably, hunters in South Texas are disappointed when early fall weather patterns coinciding with the later-opening south zone season scatter the birds by either pushing them farther south or providing standing water in almost any depression on the ground. Hunters in South Texas should take advantage of migratory doves arriving later in the season.

JAVELINAS. One of the few species of game animals minimally affected by continued drought conditions is the collared peccary, better known as the javelina. Hunters will find javelinas anywhere they find prickly pear cactus, a preferred food choice. Interest in hunting javelinas remains low except from hunters outside of South Texas or from out of state. ★



High-Tech Hunting

Whether you're a deep-sea fisher or seasoned deer hunter, a variety of "new and improved" gadgets and gizmos exist to assist you in almost every realm of outdoor activities. One of the most beneficial is the Global Positioning System (GPS). GPS uses satellites to determine locations and elevations of almost any geographic area. With the help of computerized Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping and navigation, locations and elevations can be viewed, color-coded and manipulated to fit the needs of the user. Instead of just having a paper map, the computer interprets data collected by the satellite to create color-enhanced aerial photography and topography maps that are far more detailed, accurate and geographically correct than their hand-drawn predecessors.

GPS devices have been available to the general public for only about 10 years, during which time they have become more user-friendly, mainstream and increasingly popular among a variety of sportsmen.

"You can purchase one of the hand-held GPS units for about \$100," says Stephen Lange, a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department wildlife technician at Old Sabine Bottom Wildlife Management Area. Lange has created specialized aerial and topography maps for roughly half of the WMAs in East Texas. Although most WMA maps are not available for public distribution at this time, they usually are found on display at the on-site field offices. "Using basic latitude and longitude coordinates, you can mark hunting blinds and game trails, and offshore rigs and reefs for fishing and diving. And whether you're going out on a boat or on foot, you can mark your starting location so you'll always know how to get back."

But even sportsmen who do not own a GPS device can benefit from using GIS-generated maps like the ones available at the Old Sabine Bottom WMA headquarters. "We can tailor the maps to fit almost any specific need," explains Lange. "In the fall, for example, a lot of deer hunters come out to the WMA trying to find the oak bottoms, and duck hunters scout for available water sources. The hunting compartment maps we've created can exactly pinpoint those key habitat areas."

GIS mapping techniques are also a helpful tool for private landowners. "If a landowner has a hand-drawn map of his property, I can pull up a GIS

aerial map on the computer, draw in their property boundaries, and actually get a fairly good calculation of the acreage and types of habitats that exist within that acreage," Lange explains.

In support of the East Texas Wetlands Project, a cooperative program supporting waterfowl and wetland conservation on private lands in Texas, the Tyler Junior College GIS Department in conjunction with Texas Ducks Unlimited recently assisted in the production of wetland development plans for more than 20 private properties in East Texas. Maps have been produced by TJC for each project determining site vicinity, site location, wetland enhancement and habitat characteristics.

To request information about map availability in other East Texas WMAs, contact Lange at (903) 881-8233.

— Erica H. Brasseux

Deer Permits for East Texas Landowners

In 1993, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department established the Landowner Assisted Management Permitting System (LAMPS). An average of 50 East Texas counties participate in this program each year, the intent of which is to issue antlerless deer (doe) permits to assist East Texas managers whose goal is to manage deer effectively on their properties. Maintaining the deer herd at healthy levels regarding habitat and buck-to-doe ratios is a vital part of any deer management program. LAMPS provides managers an additional tool to attempt to achieve higher-quality deer herds. Harvest of antlerless deer is an important ingredient of any management program to control the numbers of deer coming into the herd on an annual basis.

Keeping deer numbers near the carrying capacity (a healthy level for the habitat) is necessary for any deer management program. If there are more deer on the property than the habitat can carry, they will overuse the plant species they use as food. Over time, too much use of a given plant species may cause it to disappear.

If does aren't harvested, deer may overpopulate the range and damage the habitat. Less forage means fewer deer — and other wildlife species — in the future. So LAMPS creates a means for landowners to manage their herds for overall wildlife management.

Individual properties generate different results. In Red River and neighboring counties, LAMPS managers reported after this past hunting season that the deer population on their property is now dropping to a more sustainable number. Earlier this year, agents near Leon and Cherokee counties expressed alarm at their doe-to-buck ratio, but the population of does still seems to be rising quickly. One possible reason: harvesting only trophy bucks and not using the LAMPS permits issued to them.

Any landowner (or designated agent of the legal landowner) may apply for LAMPS permits where available. However, applying does not guarantee permits. To qualify for an application, the property must: 1) be in a county in which LAMPS is implemented and 2) meet minimum acreage qualifications. Then, the habitat must meet with established guidelines for maintaining quality herds for that area. The application will include questions about habitat, location and ownership, and will be strictly confidential. Accurate information on the estimated amount and types of habitat on the property is critical in determining permit issuance rates.

The application for general season is Sept. 1 to guarantee a response before the first day of hunting season. For other deadlines and more information, call the LAMPS hotline at (409) 489-0823 or visit the Web site at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/pineywood/regulatory/permits/lamps.htm.

— Danell Reilly

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By Henry Chappell

SOLITUDE in
the *COMPANY*
of *DOVES*



German shorthaired pointer,

Heidi, plucks the mourning dove out of a prickly pear clump, then lopes up the hill toward me. Halfway back, she stops and pricks up her ears. A dove whistles by just above the mesquite 30 yards to my left. I swing hard but never catch the bird. No matter. There'll be others. The dove sets its wings and glides to the edge of a stock tank 80 yards down the gentle, midgrass slope. Heidi watches it light, then trots on up the hill. I accept her gift, smooth its silky breast feathers, then lay it beside three others spread out in the shade beneath a sage bush.

I'm tempted to walk down the hill and flush the dove from the edge of the tank, then hide in the tall grass and sage nearby. The shooting would be easier — doves setting their wings like ducks descending on decoys. But I'll let this one and any others that get past me drink and fly to their roosts. If the weather holds, they should be back tomorrow afternoon. No

sense ruining a good water hole for a few extra birds.

I've heard no gunfire but my own this afternoon. Opening weekend is two weeks gone. The first cool September nights have sent many of the resident doves south. Most of the shooters have abandoned the big sunflower and sorghum fields to wait for deer and quail season. But a few stragglers remain — both doves and hunters. And migrant birds soon will arrive from the Midwest.

In two months, I'll be hunting quail on this piece of West Texas rangeland. There are no domestic grain crops here, no specially planted sunflowers. Just rough, native prairie.

A few hours earlier, Heidi and I had eased along overgrown fencerows and dry creeks, flushing doves from the shade of mesquite, hackberry and oak branches. Most of the birds flushed out of range, but three offered close-in, straight-away shots.

Doves began visiting the tank as the fence post shadows grew long. I tried several spots before I found the main flyway, here, along the edge of a mesquite flat.

I pick loose feathers from Heidi's jowls. She laps water from my palm, then digs a shallow hole and plops down, tongue lolling. I lean back against the trunk of a big mesquite and watch a harrier hovering in the distance. My sweat dries. I could doze.

But Heidi stops panting and pricks up her ears. I finger the safety, watch the sky and listen for whistling wings.

In Texas, dove hunting usually means dove shooting — a party of shotgunners who are positioned around a sunflower field or a grain field, waiting for the doves to fly in to feed. Many of these outings are reunions of family and friends complete with barbecues, spirited competition and good-natured raillery. Others are gatherings of strangers at commercial dove fields. Hot barrels are the rule on opening weekend, and good shots

usually get their limits by mid-morning.

Even purists enjoy these early shoots, but by mid-September some hardcore bird hunters long for more intimate encounters with their quarry. Conventional wisdom says that it takes big grain fields and gunning parties to keep the birds flying. But patient hunters armed with an understanding of the birds' daily patterns can enjoy plenty of shooting and solitude, too.

Both mourning doves and white-winged doves generally follow a daily routine: roost, feed, water, loaf, feed, water, roost. Timing is crucial. Hiding in the middle of the most productive sunflower field in the state at midday is more conducive to sunburn than good hunting.

Doves feed almost exclusively on seeds. They leave their roosts just before sunrise and fly to feeding areas that vary from large grain fields to feedlots to patches of native forbs such as sunflower, ragweed, pigweed and croton.

After feeding — usually before midmorning — they fly to stock ponds, windmill tanks, reservoirs, puddles and other standing water. Doves choose sites with bare ground at water's edge; heavy ground cover conceals predators.

The birds spend the midday hours loafing in the shade of mature trees and other woody cover. Late afternoon — an hour or two before sunset — they head back to feeding fields, then on to water and roost before dark. On rainy, cool or overcast days, doves may leave their roosts later in the morning and return to fields earlier in the afternoon.

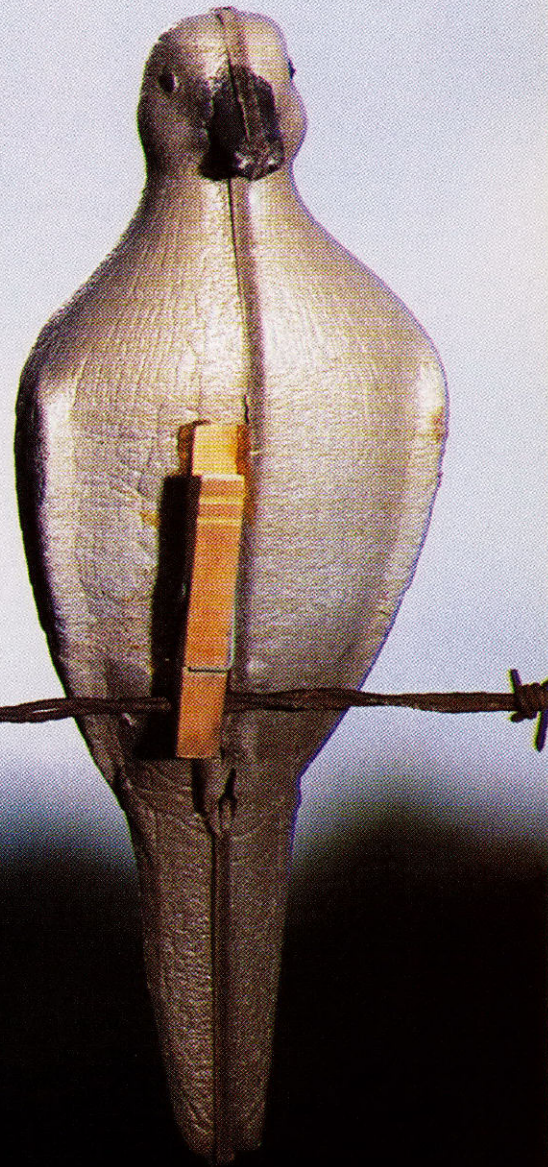
Most mourning doves and whitewings are migratory. With the arrival of the first autumn cool fronts, resident birds typically head for South Texas and Mexico. Juveniles and adult female mourning doves migrate first. Hunting in north and central Texas usually slows in mid-September, then picks up again when nonresident birds from the Midwest pour in ahead of cooler weather.

THINK MAXIMUM VISIBILITY WHEN PLACING DECOYS. DEAD TREES OR BARE LIMBS ARE EXCELLENT SPOTS; IN GENERAL, THE HIGHER THE BETTER. DECOYS ALSO CAN BE PLACED ON FENCES OR EVEN ON THE GROUND. DOVES HAVE EXCELLENT EYESIGHT.

Doves move locally with food availability and shooting pressure. Scouting is critical. Ideally, hunters should drive back roads, looking for concentrations of doves perched on utility wires and fences, then contact the appropriate landowner for permission to hunt. However, many Texans hunt doves on leases, wildlife management areas or other public lands and may not be able to hunt wherever they find birds. Effective scouting, then, becomes a matter of patterning the birds — finding their flyways, feeding fields, water holes and loafing cover on available land.

Scouting begins shortly before opening day and continues through the season. Although binoculars and boot leather are the primary scouting tools, a phone call to a landowner or other local contact can be the most efficient way to learn that local birds have headed south or that migrants have arrived.

A lone hunter confronted with a feeding field larger than a few acres may find that the birds fly in out of shotgun range, feed unmolested, then head for water. Jack Branch, a serious free-lance dove hunter from Plano, encourages hunters to take advantage of doves' tendency to navigate by land features. "If you're trying to hunt a big field by yourself, look for anything different — a power pole, a clump of trees, a low spot — any kind of structure. If there's a long, brushy fencerow or line of trees,



set up at the end of the row. Corners can be good, also. Lacking any kind of structure or obvious flight pattern, hunter in the middle of the field and use available vegetation to break up your outline. If there's a utility pole, swale or tree out in the field, all the better."

Branch often moves several times over the course of a hunt. "After the shooting starts, flight routes can change from one hour to the next," he says. "You've got to be ready to pick up and go to the birds."

Steve Siddons of Fort Worth, another hard-core freelancer, stresses the importance of timing. "You need to be in the field ahead of the birds," he says. "On a hot, sunny day, they might move an hour or two before sundown. But if it's overcast, they'll move earlier. Show up late and spook them out of the field, and the hunt is over."

Doves like company. A half-dozen or so decoys often will draw skittish birds into range. Think maximum visibility when placing decoys. Dead trees or bare limbs are excellent spots; in general, the higher the better. Decoys also can be placed on fences or even on the ground. Doves have excellent eyesight.

Opening-day birds can be incredibly naïve, but they wise up fast. As the season wears on, concealment becomes more important. Drab or camouflage clothing is a must. Whenever possible, keep to the shadows. Use available cover, but make

HEIDI PLUCKS THE MOURNING DOVE OUT OF A PRICKLY PEAR CLUMP, THEN LOPES UP THE HILL TOWARD ME. HALFWAY BACK, SHE STOPS AND PRICKS UP HER EARS. A DOVE WHISTLES BY JUST ABOVE THE MESQUITE 30 YARDS TO MY LEFT.

sure you have a good view and room to swing your gun. A pair of hunters working as a team can position themselves to maintain a 360-degree field of view.

Doves tolerate noise but will flare at the slightest movement. "Keep still until an incoming dove gets within shotgun range," Branch says. "Even then, late-season birds will flare when you swing your gun. Moving hands are like warning beacons."

In fields with standing sunflowers or crops, feeding doves sometimes can be flushed within shotgun range, although the movement may spook incoming birds. Always consider how your movements affect other hunters in the field, and don't put yourself in the line of fire.

Jump-shooting works best during the middle of the day. Strips of trees along the edges of feeding fields and nearby creeks often hold loafing doves. Although a dove usually will flush from a tree on the side opposite the hunter, stealth and persistence nearly always earn a few decent shots. Partners walking along both sides of a row of trees can be very effective. Move deliberately to get as close as possible and be ready to mount your shotgun.

Many freelancers prefer water-hole hunting to all other methods. During extremely wet autumns, the abundance of standing water scatters the doves, and the hunting suffers. But during normal to dry years, hunting over stock tanks may be the lone hunter's best chance for a limit.

Don't succumb to the temptation to set up next to water — a few barrages will chase the birds away for good. Instead, take a stand 80 to 100 yards away, along a flight path. Birds that get past you can drink and then fly to their roosts. Chances are, they'll be back the next afternoon. Decoys placed in bare trees around a water hole often work wonders.

Although doves fly to water after feeding in the morning, they seem to descend on stock tanks in greater numbers just

before sunset. Be sure to quit hunting while the birds still have time to drink. (Shooting hours for doves end at sunset for this reason.) And avoid hunting a tank twice in the same day.

Successful freelancers pack light and stay mobile. Leave the ice chest and case of ammo in the truck. Carry only a box or two of shells in a lightweight vest. Bring plenty of water for yourself and your dog. A canvas stool with a carrying strap will spare your knees. Sunscreen and insect repellent help ensure that you'll be fit to hunt the next day. Twelve-, 16- and 20-gauge shotguns choked, modified or improved cylinder and field loads with an ounce of No. 7 or 8 shot, are the standard tools. Smaller gauges, even in the hands of an expert, can lead to lost birds.

Even well-conditioned dogs can overheat on a September afternoon. Keep your retriever at heel when she's not fetching. Take every opportunity to let her drink or swim. Wipe feathers from her mouth and tongue after every retrieve. Over much of Texas, rattlesnakes are a very real hazard, especially early in the season. Avoid shots that might drop birds into snaky cover. Never send a dog into a thicket on a warm day.

Freelance dove hunters rarely take a quick limit. They prefer solitude or the company of a favorite hunting buddy over fast and furious shooting in a field full of gunners. They'll pick up a bird here and there, move when the doves aren't flying, and rely on their knowledge of the birds' habits. They might work all day for a half-dozen doves — or none at all. That's why they call it hunting. ★



Hunting For Good Hunting

You don't need a lease to enjoy excellent dove hunting in Texas. Each year, TPWD leases units of prime dove habitat throughout the state and makes the land available to hunters with a valid hunting license and \$40 Annual Public Hunting Permit. For the fall of 2002, TPWD expects to offer more than 150 units of public dove hunting leases containing approximately 60,000 acres. Most of the units are between 200 and 400 acres, although a few are much larger. Thousands of additional acres are open to dove hunting by the public on wildlife management areas and other lands through the TPWD hunting program. Purchasers of an Annual Public Hunting Permit receive map booklets showing the locations of all lands open to hunting and applicable regulations.

For hunting regulations and complete information on the public hunting lands program, contact Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, (800) 792-1112, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us>

The 93,323-acre Rita Blanca National Grassland, the 20,324-acre LBJ National Grassland and the 17,785-acre Caddo National Grassland also offer dove hunting. Contact the USDA Forest Service, (505) 842-3292, <www.fs.fed.us>

In *Goodbye to a River*, John Graves defined what it means to know a river—as a real place, as a landscape of memory and imagination, and as “a piece of country, [that] hunted and fished and roamed over, felt and remembered, can be company enough.” Readers who’ve taken that canoe trip down the Brazos with him have long wished to travel other rivers with John Graves. Those journeys now begin in *Texas Rivers*.

This book marries the work of two Texas legends. John Graves brings to *Texas Rivers* his ability to weave history, geography and culture into a vibrant portrait of a land and its people. Through photographs of rare beauty, Wyman Meinzer reveals the rivers as few will ever see them in person, distilling decades of experience in capturing light on film into a tour de force presentation of Texas landscapes.

In essays on the Canadian, Neches, Pecos, Llano, Clear Fork of the Brazos and Sabinal rivers, Graves captures the essence of what makes each river unique. While the Canadian is a river of the plains that runs through big ranch country, the Neches is a forested stream heavily impacted by human encroachment. The Llano and Sabinal remain largely unspoiled, though the forces of change ebb and flow about them. The Pecos shows ripples of its Old West heritage, while the Clear Fork of the Brazos flows through country still living in those times. Meinzer’s photographs offer a stunning visual counterpoint to Graves’ word portraits and, together, they show clearly that rivers have been central to the development of the unique character of Texas.

T E X A S R I V E R S

by John Graves

Photographs by

Wyman Meinzer



John Graves lives and writes in Glen Rose, Texas, in the Hard Scrabble country that has inspired so much of his work. A recipient of many honors for his writing (including a National Book Award nomination for Goodbye to a River), he is a former president of the Texas Institute of Letters and a past holder of both Guggenheim and Rockefeller fellowships. Wyman Meinzer has published numerous books of photographs of Texas and has the distinction of having been named Texas State Photographer by the Texas Legislature. His work appears in magazines nationwide; he is a frequent contributor to Texas Parks & Wildlife and Texas Highways.

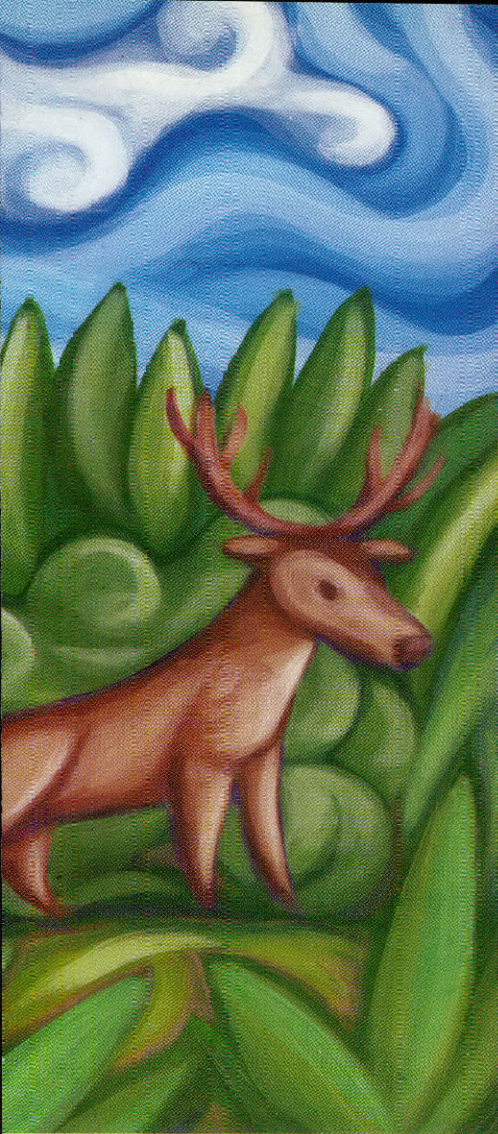
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W. A. Winning Win

SHARING MY TEXAS HERITAGE HUNT TRIP WITH 8-YEAR-OLD
MARIAH DEEPENED THE BOND BETWEEN FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

By Kevin Parker



The old adage “If it weren’t for bad luck, I’d have no luck at all” ran through my head as I filled out the form entering the drawing for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s newly created Texas Heritage Hunt. Two months later, I was astonished to receive a call from Austin informing me I was one of 10 entrants selected for the 2001–2002 hunt.

TPWD designed this hunt to enable an adult to share a first-class hunting adventure with a youth. Although my 8-year-old daughter, Mariah, had no hunting experience and never had expressed an interest in hunting, I wanted to use this opportunity to introduce her to an activity I love. Summoning my Barbie-toting daughter, I asked her in the most neutral way I could, “Would you like to go hunting with Daddy?” Her eyes lit up brighter than the Christmas tree blinking in the corner of the room. Two days later I woke to find Mariah watching the only hunting video we owned, a tape about the whitetail rut I’d received as an early Christmas gift. I am pleased to announce that my 8-year-old daughter has been, from that day forward, fully versed in the

mating habits of *Odocoileus virginianus*.

The big day finally arrived, and both of us were excited beyond description as I picked Mariah up after school for the trip to the Krooked River Ranch near Albany. I brought two bottles of antacid to calm the butterflies. We headed west, the sunset looming ahead and hunting licenses in tow. The 3½-hour drive was punctuated with no fewer than a dozen “Are we there yet?” inquiries. Finally, in the crisp darkness of a December evening, we pulled up to a lodge surrounded by camouflaged jeeps and 4x4 pickups. As we stepped out of the truck, Mariah said, “Look Daddy... The stars at night really are big and bright... deep in the heart of Texas!”

Hosts Roy and Becky Wilson greeted us. I was at ease among wildlife mounts and guests dressed to the hilt in camo, while the shuffleboard, pool and foosball tables told Mariah I had failed to mention all the fun activities that accompany hunting.

After dinner we met our hunting guides and went over the rules that were to govern the next three days. Safety was the overwhelming theme of the discussion, and I appreciated every word, although Mariah was more concerned with how loud guns sound.

At 4:30 a.m. the next morning, I bundled Mariah into an outfit resembling a mummy costume — it was 28 degrees outside — and we headed for breakfast with our guide, Rodger Burney. Rodger had

DURING THE RIDE HOME, MARIAH TURNED TO ME AND SAID, “DADDY, I WANT TO BE YOUR HUNTING BUDDY AND GO WITH YOU ON ALL OF THE HUNTS.”

chosen a hunting spot where the convergence of three ridges overlooked a small bottomland area, and dawn found us stepping gingerly down a rocky trail toward a shooting rest Rodger had erected previously.

After 15 minutes of sitting on the frozen hillside, watching the wilderness come to life around us, Mariah suddenly exploded to her feet and shouted, “DEER!” at the top of her lungs. The large doe walking through the grass 75 yards below us froze in her tracks for a split second before snorting every oxygen molecule from her lungs and bounding into the underbrush. Simultaneously, the grassy area below erupted. White flags fled in every direction. Rodger and I laughed as we realized neither of us had explained to Mariah the need to remain still and quiet while hunting.

Despite the ruckus, we decided to stay a while longer to see if a deaf and blind trophy buck might still be in the area. Within

30 minutes a nice 10-point buck stepped into the opening below, prodding two does ahead of him. Two eight-pointers and a six-pointer soon joined them.

At this point I was in whitetail heaven. By 8 a.m. on the first day of the hunt I’d seen four bucks and at least nine does. I couldn’t believe that I was so calmly passing over a 10-pointer, but I decided to hold out for the nicest buck I could find.

At 9:30 a.m. I realized that my feet were numb. I turned to Mariah and asked how she was doing, but she didn’t have to tell me. I looked into her eyes and saw that she was straining to hold back tears. I didn’t know if the tears were from the cold or if she was worried that she was letting me down, but I realized she had had enough. I told Rodger that I was cold and wanted to head back to the lodge to warm up, and he played along. Mariah’s spirits lifted as soon as we headed back to the lodge.

Mariah never went hunting again during our stay. She did learn the crafty wrist action required for foosball, she became an excellent pool shot, and she developed a feel for the exact amount of sawdust required for a good shuffleboard shot. She also enjoyed playing with the other kids and baking cookies with the kitchen staff at the lodge. It’s amazing how quickly the cold can go away once a little girl learns that there’s a lot more to hunting than she ever imagined.

As for me, my trophy buck is still out there somewhere, but I’m glad to have enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I did finally select a very nice 130-class 12-point buck on the last day after passing on 22 others.

During the ride home, Mariah turned to me and said, “Daddy, I want to be your hunting buddy and go with you on all of the hunts. I really like hunting.” I smiled, knowing I was the luckiest man alive. Then Mariah described how excited Emily, her 7-year-old sister, is about joining us next year. Obviously our Texas Heritage Hunt had worked just the way intended. ★

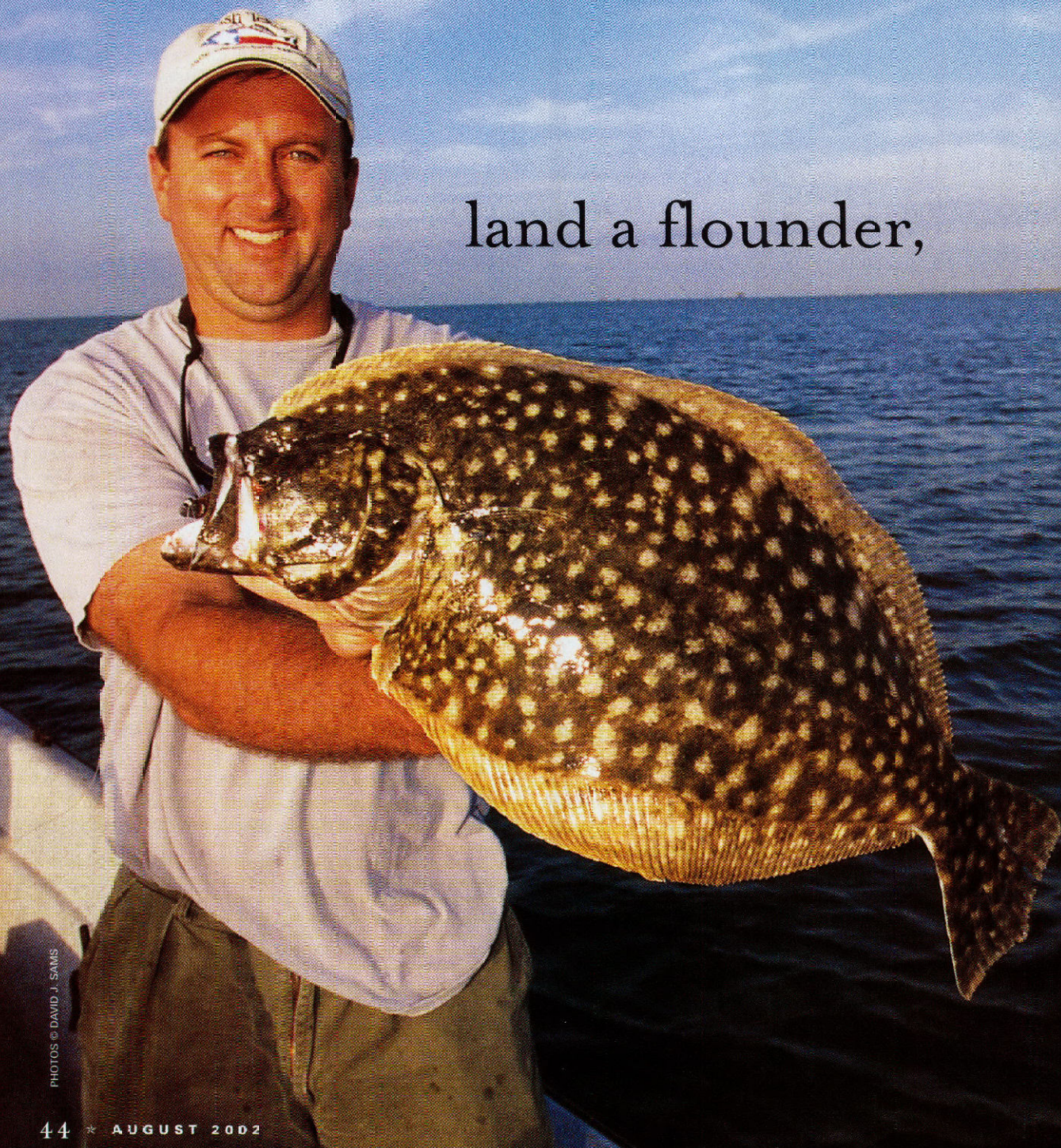
Big Time Texas Hunts

The Texas Heritage Hunt is one of the Big Time Texas Hunts, which are available wherever hunting licenses are sold. They include hunts for white-tailed deer, exotics, waterfowl, upland game birds and alligators, in addition to the Heritage Hunts. Each entry costs \$10, and you may enter as many times as you wish. For complete information on all the hunts, visit <www.tpwd.state.tx.us> and click “Hunting.”

TEXAS

The state's fast-action barrier islands and bays offer abundant opportunities to...

land a flounder,



TRIPLE



a speckled trout and...

PLAY



a redfish in a single outing.



B Y P A U L A . C A Ñ A D A

FLYLINE,

jumping up off the water surface and out toward a vague target, sends a fine spray of salt water into the warm southerly breeze. Approximately 20 yards out, an undersized streamer enters the unseen fray between predator and prey. Despite my best efforts to remain calm, my stripping hand shakes with anticipation.

Strip and pause, strip, strip and pause — each breath of air matches the slowed rhythm of my line hand. Nearby, angling partners bellow with pleasure as fish after fish slaps and misses their oversized walking-baits scurrying across the surface chop.

An extra dose of adrenaline and my peers' incessant cries of excitement make it extra tough to maintain some semblance of self-control. Still, I stay true to the established rhythm — strip and pause, strip, strip and pause.

No matter how much I anticipate the strike, I am always surprised when a fish is fooled into striking my poor imitation of an easy meal. The strike and ensuing battle confirm that the predator on the business end of my presentation isn't like the number of smaller speckled trout I had hooked and landed earlier. No, this fish has enough muscle to keep my six-weight, fast-action rod completely bowed and pulsing with fury.

My friend Larry Bozka glances over to see how the "fly boy" is faring. Surprised, he takes a second, longer look. "That might be a big sow," he assures me. "Take your time with it. Don't blow it."

Although I hear him, I don't pay much attention to Bozka's warning. Fortunately, like an unexpected slap to the face, the big fish's tremendous roll near the surface gives credence to his advice. For added assurance, I quickly double-check my reel's drag setting and begin slowly backing toward the shoreline.

Swayed by the unyielding will of a fast-action rod, the tiring fish makes its way to the bank and my awaiting hand. The telltale yellow-orange coloration around the speck's mouth confirms Larry's suspicions. While running to the bank for his camera

Bozka shouts back, "She will go six, maybe 6½ pounds, if you push it. Not bad for a fly boy."

"Not bad for a fly boy," I mutter. "Indeed!"

A half-dozen fish later, Larry is begging to exchange his bait-cast outfit for my fly rod. "Let me try that for awhile," he pleads.

"Sure," I graciously submit, "for a few casts." Bozka quickly illustrates why he's considered one of Texas' more knowledgeable wade fishermen. Although his backcasts continuously kiss the water and his forward casts fall from the air like dive-bombing terns, the gifted angler yanks a good number of trout from the water. When the action slows to a crawl, Bozka turns and begins casting to a cut draining a pocket of backwater. The Houston angler successfully tricks a redfish and a couple of flounder into eating his weighted Clouser pattern.

To my complete amazement, Bozka has successfully turned a triple play — landing a flounder, a speckled trout and a redfish on an artificial lure — within an hour. Having forgotten about my own triumph and envious of my partner's success, I quickly snatch the fly outfit from his hand and sarcastically note, "Not bad for a fly boy."

Today, triple plays are not that uncommon in Texas. The Lone Star State's many barrier islands and bays have plenty of fishable water that supports good numbers of all three species — flounder, speckled trout and redfish. Anglers knowledgeable of each predator's preferences for habitat and prey type, the influence of tides and the best angling approaches have the greatest chance of completing the coveted triple play.

SUBTLE DIFFERENCES MATTER

The three predators' preferences for habitat and prey often place them in close proximity to each other. When tidal conditions are just right and prey is abundant, all three predators can be caught from the same water using a single bait. However, in most cases, subtle differences in habitat and prey preference separate the three predators, making it necessary to fish different water with a number of techniques.

Sabine Lake is one of the prime lakes for catching flounder, speckled trout and redfish. However, be aware of the new regulations (see "New Regs on Border Waters," p. 10). Skip James, a longtime guide in the Sabine Lake area, confirms the three predators often are active in different water at different times of the day. "Schools of speckled trout in the one- to three-pound class typically are found in open water," says James. "The diet of these younger fish is primarily made up of shrimp. Because shrimp move out from the mud during the low-light conditions of night and early morning, most of the speckled trout's feeding activity occurs during these times."

According to James, flounder are found chiefly in areas

where the water is cooler and levels of dissolved oxygen are higher. In spring, the fish may be found in shallow backwaters and nursery marshes. But in late summer and early fall, the flatfish normally relate to structural features — land points, the mouths of cuts and oyster reefs adjacent to relatively deep water.

Similar to big speckled trout, flounder hold in the deeper water found at the edge of a flat during the day but move fairly shallow during low-light conditions. At night, flounder will move into water only inches deep to ambush prey.

Typically, redfish are more active during the early and late afternoon. When tides are high and shallow flats flooded, small groups and individual redfish can be found actively feeding — cruising and tailing — in the shallowest backwaters. However, like younger speckled trout, schools of redfish often are found cruising the deeper, open water of bays.

Although flounder, speckled trout and redfish often share the same water and prey, the predators do indeed fill different niches in the inshore ecosystem. For example, the three species generally feed and pursue prey at different levels in the water column. Kevin Bowers, a hatchery biologist at Texas Parks and

TRIPLE PLAY TACKLE

FLY FISHING TACKLE

Fly fishers will find a 7- or 8-weight fly outfit and a matching weight-forward, floating line is just right when attempting a triple play. A single-action fly reel with about 150 yards of backing and an 8- to 12-foot, knotless leader tapering down to a 10-pound test tippet will cover most situations.

As Kevin Bowers and Skip James explain in the accompanying story, forage preferences vary between predators and size of fish targeted. Redfish and small speckled trout will readily take relatively small shrimp and crab imitations in natural colors. However, both redfish and larger trout actively feeding in relatively deep water — 3 feet or more — will move to overtake a small popper, slider or large streamer passing nearby.

While flounder will move off the bottom to overtake a fly pattern swimming overhead, most experienced anglers find a bottom-bouncing presentation draws the most consistent results. A weighted, relatively small (1½- to 3-inch) baitfish imitation such as the Rattle Rouser or weighted versions of the Clouser can be bounced or scooted along the bottom. It's important to bring a variety of fly patterns so as to cover the entire water column top to bottom. Also, don't neglect to include lots of color variations of your favorite patterns, including pink, white, chartreuse, brown and green.

CONVENTIONAL TACKLE

As is the case with fly selection, artificial lures should match the forage preferences and feeding behavior of the species being targeted. Three-inch versions of popular plastic baits — such as shrimp tails, twitch baits and swimming baitfish — fished on a ¼-ounce jig-head work well when targeting all three species of predator. However, when targeting aggressive redfish and speckled seatrout in water 3 to 8 feet deep, a variety of plugs and top-water lures produce.

Lures that can be worked on or near the surface, such as walkers, poppers, jerkbaits, lipless and shallow-running crankbaits, will draw strikes from both actively feeding redfish and speckled trout. However, redfish and larger trout are easily spooked when cruising in water less than 2 feet deep. When predators are shallow, long casts and subtler presentations are warranted. Lures such as subtle poppers, walkers, twitch baits and weedless spoons are preferred when fish are shallow.

Redfish and flounder are fairly stout fighters, so a medium-heavy action baitcast or spinning rod is recommended. Rods should be matched with a large-capacity reel capable of holding 120 yards of 12- to 14-pound test fishing line. Speckled trout have softer mouths and so require a medium-light to medium-action, 6½- to 7-foot graphite rod. The longer rod will allow for long casts and act as a shock absorber when a sizable trout makes a sudden turn away from the angler toward deeper water.



Wildlife Department's Sea Center Texas, explains, "While flounder tend to feed near the bottom, speckled trout feed high in the water column and near the surface. Redfish feed on the bottom, rooting forage, in the middle of the water column and on top like speckled trout. Although there are exceptions, you're going to find that this holds true most of the time."

Differences in feeding behavior also extend to the predators' preferences in prey size. Again Bowers explains, "The size of prey a fish will take is typically determined by the size of the predator itself. That's why trophy fishers tend to fish big top-water lures or live croakers when targeting the bigger fish."

Because of the disparity in prey preferences, larger, more mature, fish fill slightly different niches in the ecosystem than do their smaller counterparts. For example, trophy-size speck-

ANGLERS KNOWLEDGEABLE OF EACH PREDATOR'S PREFERENCES FOR HABITAT AND PREY TYPE, THE INFLUENCE OF TIDES AND THE BEST ANGLING APPROACHES HAVE THE GREATEST CHANCE OF COMPLETING THE COVETED TRIPLE PLAY.

led trout and large flounder move fairly shallow during low-light feeding excursions. The big fish move into the shallows because that's where their forage — mostly mud minnows and finger mullet — are found.

"Turning a triple play requires plenty of planning and some luck," Bowers concludes. "The angler should understand the prey and habitat preferences, as well as the feeding behavior of each fish. Often, anglers are required to adopt different strategies and presentations in order to catch all three species."

A WINNING STRATEGY

The first factor an angler must consider when planning a trip is tidal movement. According to both James and Bowers, all three species of fish are most active when water is moving in or out of backwater flats and bays. Conversely, the toughest time to catch all three species is during a slack tide, when water movement is minimal at best.

In order to maximize triple play opportunities, anglers should plan to fish during the eight days adjoining a full moon phase. "Typically, the four days prior to and after the full moon are when we get our biggest tides," James says. "We see tremendous water movement during that period. Again, moving water is the key to catching aggressive redfish and flounder."

An exceptionally high tide will open up habitat that's usually inaccessible to predators during a normal or low tide phase. During a flood tide, redfish especially will feed in flats that are normally too shallow to access. During a retreating tide, flounder and redfish will concentrate at strategic ambush points along ditches and cuts draining shallow flats.

Wind is an important factor in determining the influence a high tide has on an area. For example, a sustained south or southeasterly wind can push an incoming tide another half-foot to foot higher. Conversely, a sustained westerly or north-westerly breeze often will prevent a high tide from reaching the predicted flood level.

A strong wind can push schools of baitfish into the shallows of a wind-swept bank. "That natural phenomenon, a sustained southerly wind blowing baitfish into a north bank and predators taking advantage of it, is a time-tested pattern along the Texas Coast," avers James. "Whether it's the result of a moving tide or a strong frontal system, moving water concentrates baitfish and predators."

A second factor to consider is each predator's period of greatest feeding activity. While speckled trout are most active during

the low-light conditions of early morning, flounder can be caught during mid-morning hours and redfish are somewhat active throughout the day. Again, tidal movement is the key to heavy feeding activity.

According to James, the classic strategy for a triple play is fairly simple. "First thing in the morning," he recommends, "anglers should look for signs of speckled trout feeding in open water on shrimp — gulls feeding off the water surface, an oily slick or shrimp flicking on the surface. And then, depending on the scheduled tides — high or low — you go to where there's moving water. The flounders and reds will probably come on the same pattern. You're going to be casting to structure — a point, reef or cut — near the bank."

Locating areas that hold redfish and flounder isn't too tough. The more likely areas are going to be transition zones between soft and hard bottoms and shallow and deep water. Again, both redfish and flounder can be found relating to points of land, underwater bars, the mouths of cuts and oyster reefs adjacent to deep water.

Beginning in late August and continuing through November, Texas anglers have an excellent chance of catching all three predators on artificial lures. This is a time when days begin to shorten, water cools and redfish, flounder and large speckled trout aggressively cruise flats, shallow points and reefs for baitfish. Successfully turning a triple play is merely a matter of planning and persistence. ★

TRIPLE PLAY STATE PARKS

Reservations are recommended. To reserve a campsite, call (512) 389-8900 or go to the TPWD Web site: <www.tpwd.state.tx.us>. For more information, call (800) 792-1112 or the numbers below.

Galveston Island State Park

Galveston
(409) 737-1222

Campsites with water and electricity, restrooms with showers, screened shelters, multi-use trails, nature center and trail.

Matagorda Island State Park

Port O'Connor
(361) 983-2215

Primitive camping on the beach, a bayside campground, boat dock and boat ramps.

Mustang Island State Park

Port Aransas
(361) 749-5246

Campsites with water and electricity, primitive campsites, shade shelters, restrooms with showers and rinsing showers.

Sabine Pass Battleground State Park and Historic Site

Sabine Pass
(409) 971-2451

Campsites with water and electricity, primitive campsites, picnic sites, restrooms and a boat ramp that provides access to Sabine Lake.

Sea Rim State Park

Sabine Pass
(409) 971-2559

Beachside facilities include campsites with water and electricity, primitive camping, restrooms with showers, visitor center, observation decks, nature and birding trails. Marsh-side facilities include a boat ramp for shallow-draft boats and primitive camping platforms.



PHOTO BY EARRICK STINGHAM



Texas Wheel Estates

FROM FORT DAVIS TO GOOSE ISLAND, RV CAMPERS SEEK TEXAS STATE PARKS FOR AN IMMERSION IN NATURE WITH ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME.

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

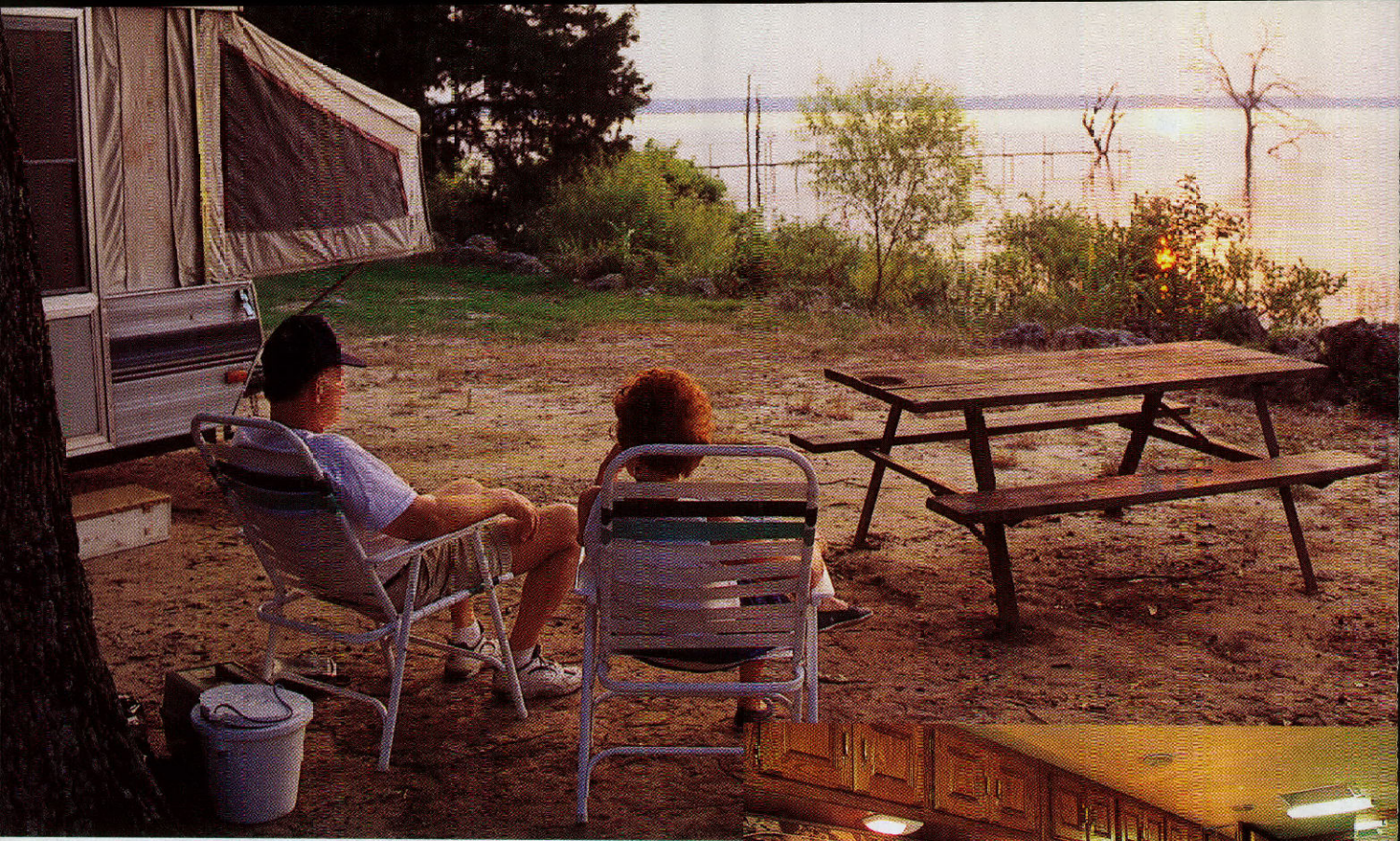
It's nearly 4 p.m.,

and Carrell Drummond stands at the door, peering through the mesquite trees, waiting for his brother-in-law to arrive. Every afternoon, the two men head for the Dairy Queen in Goliad, where they'll sit in a booth, sip cups of steaming coffee, and chat. Back at home, Carroll's wife, June — serenaded by a host of cardinals and mourning doves outside her window — works on some bookkeeping at the dining table. Over on a gray couch, Romeo, the couple's black toy poodle, is snoozing. Energetic and high-strung, he'll soon be ready for June to take him for a walk along the road beneath the trees.

While the Drummonds' daily routine certainly sounds normal, their mode of abode is far from that. What sets this small but comfortable home apart from most? Six large wheels and a diesel engine. For the past five years, the retired couple has lived full-time in a recreational camping vehicle. Hence, their "neighborhood" differs from the norm, too. For the time being, they're parked at Goliad State Park, one of their favorite places to stay.

"Goliad is our home base," explains June, seated in the living area of their 37-foot-long motor coach. "Our son and daughter live in the county, and I grew up in Goliad and Refugio."

Besides being familiar with the area, the Drummonds love the park's quiet, tree-shaded campground and its many conveniences. Twenty "pull-through" sites have water, sewage and 50-amp electric service. The campground is located near the San Antonio River and Mission Espiritu



Santa, the park's historic focal point.

Now and then, the Drummonds think about abandoning such idyllic settings as Goliad State Park and living "normally" again. "A few years ago, we considered living in a house again," June says. "But we decided it was foolish to keep a house when we have our 'condo on wheels.' We call it our 'wheel estate.'"

RVING ON THE RISE

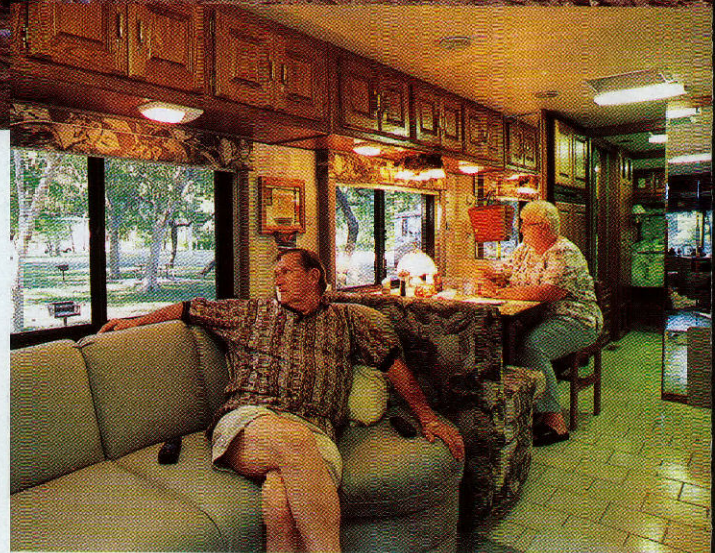
Not everyone claims an RV as their permanent home. But millions of Americans of all ages do own some kind of camping vehicle, which they use for weekend jaunts and/or long vacations. According to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association, 7.2 million RVs — motor homes, travel trailers, fifth-wheel trailers, truck campers and folding camping trailers — are on the road these days.

Industry experts predict that the number of RV owners will likely rise as more and more people choose to travel by vehicle instead of by air, especially in the aftermath of Sept. 11. "Domestic road travel is dominating U.S. tourism," says Ken Sommer, RVIA public relations manager. "Families want to reconnect with the outdoors, spend quality time together and avoid the hassles of flying."

Many of those RVers head for the Lone Star State. "Texas ranks as one of the all-time favorite destinations," Sommer says. "People enjoy the splendid scenery, beautiful coastline and byways, the deserts, plus the many RV campgrounds and state and national parks."

CALL OF THE OUTDOORS

Being close to nature is what many RVers want and find when they park their rig at a Texas state park. That's a big reason why Roger and Trudy Wolfe, who have RVed full-time for nearly two years, continue to visit Goliad State Park regularly. Roger especially enjoys the view of the tree-shaded campground from his couch inside their 38-foot-long motor coach, which integrates



the driver/passenger seats and living areas into one unit.

"How can you not love it here?" he asks, waving his hand toward the open Venetian blinds behind him. "Just look out the window!"

"We watch the birds," Trudy adds. "We've seen a barn owl, a gray fox, and a hawk."

PARK HOSTING

Jim and Mary Young, who hail from Oklahoma, love the salty smell of the sea. So they sign up as park hosts at Galveston Island State Park, where they man the fee booth and live full-time near the beach in a 35-foot, fifth-wheel trailer. (A fifth-wheel, as with other towable RVs — pop-up camping trailers, truck campers and conventional travel trailers — allows them simply to unhitch their camper and take off where they want to go.) "Hosting is a good way to travel and see the country," Jim says. "This way, we can stay longer in an area than if we were vacationing."

When not on duty, the couple heads for the beach and stroll along the shore. Or they explore the park's inland trails in search of wading and flying birds. Boardwalks across the marsh-

es and an observation tower provide more prime places for birdwatching.

At Bastrop State Park, Larry Sutton parks his fifth-wheel RV for as long as six months and works as a park host. Sutton, 72, started RVing full time in 1991 with his wife, Donna. The couple traveled extensively across the nation. After she died three years later, Larry decided to cut back on his driving and become a park host. "Things are different now," he says. "I don't feel like traveling as much, and it gets lonely on the road."

As a park host, Larry works in the park in exchange for a campsite. "I do site checks, help at the office, help with the pool and sell day passes," he says. "In past years, I've cleaned out brush and done repair work at the cabins."

In Sutton's opinion, he gets the better half of the trade. "Just look at the size of my back yard!" he exclaims, nodding toward a dense forest of towering loblolly pines and hardwood trees that tower over his trailer. During the week, Sutton also bicycles along the park's winding roads and hilly trails, and plays several rounds of golf at the park's 18-hole course.

In East Texas, majestic pine trees abound at Mission Tejas



Lakeside parks, opposite, and parks on the beach, such as Galveston Island, previous spread, are favorite destinations for RVers. Many RVs offer all the comforts of home.



Getting Started

Thinking about RVing but never done it before?

Here are some tips to get you started:

Read buyers' guides and RVing books.

Visit an RV dealer and check out some models.

Attend an RV show. You'll find models of every kind all at one location.

Rent an RV and take it on the road for a weekend.

Consider purchasing a used RV.

Talk to state park hosts and other experienced RVers. They've got a wealth of knowledge to share.

State Park, where full-timers Ruth and Randy Compton of Livingston served as hosts earlier this year. Their two-month stay was so relaxing that the couple hopes to return next year.

"The park is a great place to get away from the hustle and bustle of the fast-paced world," Ruth says. Tucked into the northern edge of the Davy Crockett National Forest, the heavily wooded, 363-acre park has more than three miles of hiking trails and a three-acre pond, where visitors can fish for perch and bream. In March, dogwood trees burst into clouds of white blooms.

SHORT-TERM FUN

The fun of RVing is not just for full-timers. Lots of people take their RVs out for weekend trips and/or extended vacations to state parks.



browse through antique stores. At McKinney Falls in Austin, they like to wander along a paved hike-and-bike trail, which loops around part of the park and past Onion Creek. At nearly every campsite, dense stands of live oaks and cedars create an atmosphere of privacy and seclusion.

While most people prefer to travel on their own, others team up with organized RV groups, such as the WesTex Chapter of the Family Motor Coach Association. Every other month, 30 to 40 motor coach owners travel to a predetermined campground in Texas. For three days they socialize, share meals and participate in a schedule of programs, which usually includes arts and crafts. Traditionally, they've held their RV rendezvous at commercial campgrounds; this year, however, members decided to try out a few state parks, such as McKinney Falls and Davis Mountains.

"It's been a new adventure for us, because we've been going to

LEFT PHOTO © DAVID J. SAMS; TOP PHOTO BY EARL NOTTINGHAM; BOTTOM PHOTO COURTESY OF LANCE CAMPERS



State Park Host Program

Interested in becoming a park host? More than 50 state parks across the state have host positions available, either seasonally or year-round. Hosts usually stay at a park for a minimum of one month. They serve about 25 hours a week. Duties include giving information to park visitors, picking up trash and doing light maintenance. To facilitate their volunteer service, hosts are furnished designated campsites with water and electrical hookups.

For more information and applications, contact the park of your choice or write: Volunteer Programs, State Parks Division, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744; (800) 792-1112, ext. 4415, (512) 389-4415; e-mail kev.n.good@tpwd.state.tx.us.

commercial campgrounds since the early '80s," says Herb Currie, who lives in Bryan and is a FMCA national director. "It's easier to maneuver our coaches in the commercial campgrounds, but the aesthetics aren't there. Commercial campgrounds are smaller. The sites are more refined; usually they're asphalt, and they're close together. A state park is more wooded and spread out. Sites are more tucked away."

FAMILY-STYLE RVING

Martha and Jim Roehrick of Deer Park have taken their 16-year-old daughter, Jessica, to state parks since she was 3. In the beginning, the family tent-camped. Now they own a 27-foot travel trailer.

"For years, we have tried to take a friend or two of hers with us so they may experience what we enjoy so much," Martha says. "We've had a ball. It's great for kids. They need to learn that there's a different way to live."

The Roehricks, who purchase a Texas Conservation Passport every year, have visited a number of state parks, including Choke Canyon, Martin Dies, Jr. Fairfield Lake and many others. "We love exploring the falls at Pedernales Falls State Park, and the RV sites are private and close to the river," Martha says. "We've been thrilled by the wildlife at Choke Canyon. The deer, turkey and javelina walked right through a lovely meadow that our RV site backed up to. We love the water and appreciate the RV sites at Inks Lake, Martin Dies and Galveston Island. Lake Texana has pretty sites within walking distance of beautiful trails, and

Fairfield has the most roadrunners we've ever seen."

RVers Charlene and Roy Dequeant of Hankamer often take their grandsons along on weekend excursions. "They take their bikes and rollerblades, then they go do their thing," Charlene says. "I provide plenty of snacks, and we cook over the fire. We've been to Brazos Bend, Garner, Lake Livingston and Lake Texana."

FREE SPIRITS

Unlike most RVers, who make a conscious decision to pull up their roots and become nomads, Dale and Alma Irvin seemingly drifted into full-time RVing. And they're still drifting.

Back in 1997, the couple sold their farm in Arkansas and started traveling with their Australian shepherd, Shep, in a 28-foot fifth-wheel. In 1999, they bought property on Canyon Lake in Central Texas and tried to settle down again, but a year later they sold the place and hit the road again. For the past three years, they've stopped and stayed a few weeks at Goliad State Park, a favorite campground of theirs. It's also where they rendezvous with their long-time friends, Roger and Trudy Wolfe.

"We still haven't decided if we're gonna RV full-time," Dale says with a grin. "We just keep going." ★

SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS is a freelance writer living in Blanco.

Texas Conservation Passport

A Texas Conservation Passport allows the holder entry into all state parks for one year. Passports may be purchased for \$50 each at any state park, with a credit card by calling (800) 895-4248 (press the extension for license purchasing).

For More Information

For Texas state parks information and reservations, call (512) 389-8900, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to noon Saturdays; closed on major holidays. For reservations via Internet, fax, or e-mail, go to <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/admin/res/index.htm>.

RV USA, <www.RVusa.com>. Classified ads, recipes, forums, destination information, products, clubs

RV Site, <www.rvsite.com>. Dealers, campgrounds, associations, forums.

RVer Research, <www.rversearch.com>. Dozens of links to cooking, dealers, forums, classifieds, clubs, events, publications.

The National Recreational Vehicle Owners Club, <www.nrvoc.com>.

For a free video on getting started, call (888) GO-RVING or visit <www.GoRVing.com>.

Texas Recreational Vehicle Association, <www.trva.org>, (800) 880-7303.



Favorite Places

Here's a short list of state parks that are popular with RVers. To learn more about RV facilities in Texas state parks, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/facilities/camp.htm. For reservations, call (512) 389-8900 or go to www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/admin/res/

Abilene State Park (915) 572-3204

Campsites with water and electricity, campsites with water, and campsites with water nearby are available. The park also has a group trailer area (sites with water and electricity) and large trailer sites with water and electricity. Facilities include restrooms with and without showers, trailer dump stations, swimming pool and nature trail.

Bastrop State Park (512) 321-2101

Campsites with water and campsites with water and electricity are available. Facilities include restrooms with showers, picnic sites, dining hall, swimming pool, 18-hole golf course, backpack areas along an 8.5-mile hiking trail and 3.5 additional miles of hiking trails.

Blanco State Park (830) 833-4333

Campsites with water and electricity and campsites with water, electricity and sewer are available. Facilities include restrooms with and without showers, picnic pavilions, playgrounds, a sanitary dump station and a ¾-mile loop trail.

Cedar Hill State Park (972) 291-3900

All campsites have electricity and water and are

located in wooded areas. Facilities include restrooms with showers, picnic sites with tables and grills, two boat ramps, group picnic pavilions, trailer dump stations, 4.5 miles of hiking/backpacking trails and 10.3 miles of mountain bike trails.

Choke Canyon State Park (361) 786-3868

Calliham Unit: Campsites with water and electricity are available. Facilities include restrooms with showers, a trailer dump station, group picnic pavilions, group dining hall, recreation hall, amphitheater, sports complex with a gymnasium, swimming pool with bathhouse, shuffleboard, tennis, volleyball and full basketball courts. Choke Canyon also offers a wildlife-viewing blind, two miles of hiking trails, a mile-long bird trail with feeders, and a wildlife educational center that offers educational programs.

Davis Mountains State Park (915) 426-3337

The half of the park north of State Highway 118 has been designated the Limpia Canyon Primitive Area, a special-use area (special rules apply). It includes 10 miles of backcountry hiking trails and six primitive backpacking campsites. South of State Highway 118, campsites with water, campsites with water and electricity and campsites with water, electricity, sewer and cable TV connection

are available. Facilities include restrooms with and without showers, a picnic area, a playground, an interpretive center, and 6½ miles of hiking trails.

Fairfield Lake State Park (903) 339-4514

Campsites with water and campsites with water and electricity are available. Facilities include restrooms with and without showers, a lighted fishing pier, a fish-cleaning shelter, boat ramps, a trailer dump station, playgrounds, a group dining hall, an amphitheater, 15 miles of hiking and biking trails, a two-mile nature trail and a one-mile birding trail.

Galveston Island State Park (409) 737-1222

Campsites with water and electricity are available. Facilities include restrooms with showers, picnic sites, a fish-cleaning shelter, an interpretive center, four miles of hiking and mountain biking trails, a nature trail and a boat ramp nearby.

Goliad State Park (361) 645-3405

Campsites with water and electricity and campsites with water, electricity and sewer are available. Facilities include restrooms with and without showers, a museum, a replica of a mission, a work-

Continued on page 58



Hill Country Hound

Fred Gipson's *Old Yeller* delivered coming of age in turn-of-the-century Texas Hill Country to generations of youth. / BY JIM ANDERSON

GIPSON SPILLS THE BEANS ON THE FIRST PAGE OF THE BOOK.

He comes right out and tells you the dog is eventually gonna get the old buckshot surprise. But for us underachievers who skipped the book for the movie the suspense was tight. Junior Mints boxes were chewed soggy. After all the talk about "hydrophoby" and then the wolf fight, you could see what was coming but you hoped something you hadn't thought of would happen and Yeller would quit slobbering and get well, like he did after the hog fight. But no. Travis had to choke it back and bust a load on him. He didn't have any choice. Before Fess Parker rode off on the cattle drive, he took the boy aside and told him about being the man of the place so

what else could he do? You can't let Fess Parker down.

When the Disney version of the story was being filmed in 1958, Uncle Walt himself refused a Hollywood contrivance to spare the dog.

"The kids'll cry, but it's important for them to know that life isn't all happy endings."

And this from the guy who had hippos dance a ballet in pink tutus, for Pete's sake. Seems he understood the use of frank realism as well as goofy cartoons.

Gipson had no use for sticky sweet children's books and was opposed to sheltering kids from the hard truths of life.

In 1960 he spoke to an Austin gathering of librarians and PTA members on the matter: "A child may not like such hurts, but they are willing to accept the truth.... With a little explanation and guidance from grownups, children will quickly understand and accept the facts of nature."

He was right about the kids. Of his 12 books, the five he specifically wrote for juvenile readers are the ones he is best remembered for, particularly *Old Yeller*, which is still in print 46 years later and still read by children today.

Fred Gipson was born into the hardscrabble farm life of the Texas Hill Country in 1908, when the last of the old-time cowpunchers and game trackers were still alive and kicking. Comanche arrowheads still lay among the bunchgrass, and woolly frontier tales were still told to wide-eyed boys around campfires. Young Fred soaked it up like a lamp wick and later, when he knew writing was his work, he lit the lamp.

But fame and fortune would be a long hunt. In 1933, at age 25, with \$60 in his jeans, he headed to Austin to attend the University of Texas. Although he left UT in 1937 before he finished his degree, he had distinguished himself in writing classes and columns for the campus paper, the *Daily Texan*.

Drawn back to Mason but still bound to write, he weathered the late Depression years by cranking out newspaper columns and cowboy melodramas for western pulp magazines. In 1940 he married pretty Tommie Wynn, who would

"I THINK THAT BORN INTO EACH OF US
IS A MEMORY OF TIMES LONG PAST, A SORT
OF ANCESTRAL HUNGER FOR THE CALL OF WILD
PLACES AND THE DRIVING URGE FOR AN
UNINHIBITED FREEDOM TO DO WHATEVER
WE'RE BIG ENOUGH TO DO."

become his mainstay, collaborator and mother to two sons, Mike and Beck.

While putting groceries on the table with magazine work, he began to imagine himself a book writer. Through friends, he met a New York literary agent, and a book based on the recollections of an old Wild West showman was commissioned. *Fabulous Empire: Colonel Zach Miller's Story* was published in 1946 to modest success, but the writing attracted attention in the publishing world.

And it gave him the confidence to attempt his first novel. *Hound-Dog Man*, loosely based on an ornery throwback 'coon hunter Gipson had known all his life, was published in 1949 to rave reviews. At 41 he finally had treed the elusive critter called The Novel.

Despite success, Gipson was chronically plagued with self-doubt and depression. However, in 1956, one book came to him as easy as whistling up a dog. A little yarn of farm life in post Civil War Texas was written in a three-month flash of inspiration. His inner boy asserted itself as his truest voice. Although he went on to write other books, it seems nothing again ever came so naturally as did *Old Yeller*.

Gipson's biographer, Mike Cox, first met his subject in 1968 as a young reporter for the *San Angelo Standard-Times*, a newspaper Gipson himself had written for years before. Cox drove out to see what the writer was up to. Life had recently dealt him a run of hard luck, including health troubles, divorce and the suicide of his eldest son, Mike. Cox arrived to find Gipson facing yet another troubling turn: "When I showed up, he had just put his son Beck on the plane for

Vietnam. I think he needed somebody to talk to and saw me as a young writer starting out the same way he had. He was wound up, and I was happy to listen. I'm not a scotch drinker, but I did join him for a few that day." A friendship developed that led to Cox's biography, *Fred Gipson: Texas Storyteller*, published in 1980.

As an outdoorsman and naturalist, Gipson was ahead of his time. When his writing began to pay, much of his earnings went into a 300-acre ranch on the banks of the Llano River and his passion for restoring its native grasses. And he was possibly the first bass angler to fish the Llano with a fly rod.



In a 1962 essay, he summed up his personal philosophy, sounding quite mystical and, again, ahead of his time: "I think that born into each of us is a memory of times long past, a sort of ancestral hunger for the call of wild places and the driving urge for an uninhibited freedom to do whatever we're big enough to do."

His gravestone in the Texas State Cemetery reads simply, "His books are his monument." ★

When the movie *Old Yeller* came to Paris, Texas, fourth-grader JIM ANDERSON and his fellow students were bused from their little country grade school into town for the big event. Anderson is now a freelance writer living in Austin.

shop, an interpretive center, a swimming pool, picnic sites, a trailer dump station, a group dining hall, a playground, a .3-mile nature trail and a 1½-mile river trail.

Goose Island State Park
(361) 725-2858

Shade shelter campsites ("open cabanas") with water and electricity near the day, campsites with water and electricity in a tree-shaded area, and campsites with water in a shady area are available. Facilities include picnic sites (some with shade shelters), restrooms with and without showers, double-lane boat ramp, a lighted fishing pier with two fish-cleaning tables, hiking trails, bird sanctuaries and recreation hall.

Inks Lake State Park
(512) 793-2223

Campsites with water are available. Facilities include restrooms with showers, picnic sites, an amphitheater, lighted fishing piers, a boat ramp, eight playgrounds, a nine-hole golf course and 7½ miles of hiking trails.

Lake Brownwood State Park
(915) 784-5223

Campsites with water and electricity and campsites with water, electricity, and sewer are available, as well as campsites with water in the area. Facilities include restrooms with and without showers, picnic sites, trailer dump station, fish-cleaning facility, a fishing pier with lights, launching ramps, a floating boat dock, 2½ miles of hiking trails, and a ½-mile nature trail.

Martin Dies, Jr. State Park
(409) 384-5231

Campsites with water and electricity and campsites with water are available. Facilities include restrooms with showers, trailer dump stations, group dining/meeting hall, playgrounds, lighted fishing piers, fish-cleaning facilities, boat ramps, 5.3 miles of multi-use trails for hiking, mountain biking and nature/interpretive trails.

McKinney Falls State Park
(512) 243-1643

Campsites with water and electricity are available. Facilities include restrooms with showers, picnic sites, interpretive center, dining hall, amphitheater, 10½ miles of hiking and biking trails, 3½ miles of paved trails and a ¾-mile interpretive trail.

Mission Tejas State Park
(936) 687-2394

Campsites with water, campsites with water and electricity, and campsites with water, electricity and sewer are available. Facilities include restrooms with and without showers, a mission representation, a restored log home, picnic sites, a trailer dump station, an amphitheater, a play-

ground and 3½ miles of hiking trails.

Palo Duro Canyon State Park
(806) 488-2227

Campsites with water and electricity and campsites with water are available. Facilities include a trailer dump station, shade shelters, picnic tables, grills, restrooms and 35 miles of multi-use trails. An outdoor theater, visitor center and horse stables are available inside the park.

Pedernales Falls State Park
(830) 868-7304

Campsites with water and electricity are available. Facilities include restrooms with showers, a trailer dump station, picnic sites, a bird-viewing station, 20 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails, 10 miles of equestrian trails and 14 miles of backpacking trails.

South Llano River State Park
(915) 446-3994

Campsites with water and electricity are available. Facilities include restrooms with showers, a trailer dump station, a picnic and day-use area near the river, five miles of hiking/mountain biking/nature study trails in the Turkey Roost area and bird blinds.

Tyler State Park
(903) 597-5338

Campsites with water and electricity and campsites with water are available. Facilities include restrooms with and without showers, picnic sites, a trailer rally area, trailer dump stations (no sewer hookups), a group dining hall, a two-mile hiking trail, a 13-mile mountain bike trail, a ¾-mile nature trail and a lakeshore amphitheater.

Other state parks with sewer, electric and water hookups include:

- Atlanta State Park: (903) 796-6476
- Caddo Lake State Park: (903) 679-3351
- Cleburne State Park: (817) 645-4215
- Daingerfield State Park: (903) 645-2921
- Eisenhower State Park: (903) 465-1956
- Falcon State Park: (956) 848-5327
- Kerrville-Schreiner State Park: (830) 257-5392
- Lake Corpus Christi State Park: (361) 547-2635
- Lake Whitney State Park: (254) 694-3793
- Lockhart State Park: (512) 398-3479
- Palmetto State Park: (830) 672-3266
- Rusk/Palestine State Parks: (903) 683-5126
- Stephen F. Austin State Park: (979) 885-3613

Other state parks with electric and water hookups only:

- Balmorhea State Park: (915) 375-2370
- Bonham State Park: (903) 583-5022
- Brazos Bend State Park: (979) 553-5101
- Buescher State Park: (512) 237-2241
- Caprock Canyons State Park and Trailway: (806) 455-1492

Cooper Lake State Parks: (903) 395-3100 (Doctors Creek Unit), (903) 945-5256 (South Sulphur Unit)

Copper Breaks State Park: (940) 839-4331
Dinosaur Valley State Park: (254) 897-4588
Fort Griffin State Park and Historic Site: (955) 762-3592

Fort Parker State Park: (254) 562-5751
Fort Richardson State Park and Historic Site: (940) 567-3506

Garner State Park: (830) 232-6132
Guadalupe River State Park: (830) 438-2656
Hueco Tanks State Historic Site: (915) 857-1135
Huntsville State Park: (936) 295-5644
Lake Arrowhead State Park: (940) 528-2211
Lake Bob Sandlin State Park: (903) 572-5531
Lake Casa Blanca International State Park: (956) 725-3826

Lake Colorado City State Park: (915) 728-3931
Lake Livingston State Park: (936) 365-2201
Lake Mineral Wells State Park and Trailway: (940) 328-1171

Lake Somerville State Parks: (979) 535-7763 (Birch Creek Unit), (979) 289-2392 (Nails Creek Unit)
Lake Texana State Park: (361) 782-5718
Lost Maples State Natural Area: (830) 966-3413
Martin Creek Lake State Park: (903) 836-4336
Meridian State Park: (254) 435-2536

Monahans Sandhills State Park: (915) 943-2092
Mother Neff State Park: (254) 853-2389
Mustang Island State Park: (361) 749-5246
Possum Kingdom State Park: (940) 549-1803
Purtis Creek State Park: (903) 425-2332
Ray Roberts Lake State Parks: (940) 686-2148 (Isle du Bois Unit), (940) 637-2294 (Johnson Branch Unit)

San Angelo State Park: (915) 949-4757
Sabine Pass Battleground State Park and Historic Site: (409) 971-2451
Sea Rim State Park: (409) 971-2559
Seminole Canyon State Historic Site: (915) 292-4464
Village Creek State Park: (409) 755-7322

Other state parks with water hookups only:

Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park: (956) 585-1107 (RV facilities scheduled to close permanently in fall 2002)
Lake Houston State Park: (281) 354-6881
Old Fort Parker State Historic Site: (254) 729-5253

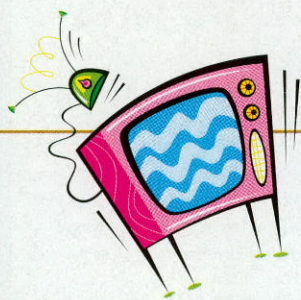
Other state parks with drive-up sites with no hookups:

Big Bend Ranch State Park: (915) 229-3416
Colorado Bend State Park: (915) 628-3240
Devils River State Natural Area: (830) 395-2133
Franklin Mountains State Park: (915) 566-6441



PHOTO BY EARL NOTTINGHAM

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS



THE FRONT LINE OF NEWS AND VIEWS



T E L E V I S I O N

LOOK FOR THESE STORIES
IN THE COMING WEEKS:

July 28 – Aug. 4:

Spiders; Texas game wardens; places to hunt on private lands; Vietnamese adapt to life on the Texas Coast.

Aug. 4 – 11:

Conservation on a Hill Country ranch; enviro-minstrel John Stark; protection against the sun; visually impaired Texans enjoying the outdoors.

Aug. 11 – 18:

Saving coastal sea-grasses; trout fishing on the Guadalupe River; feral hogs; rocks in Big Bend Ranch State Park.

Aug. 18 – 25:

Hill Country swimming holes; people with a passion for peregrines; the value of wetlands; a day on the water with Texas game wardens.

Aug. 25 – Sept. 1:

Making the connection with Big Bend; tips for catch-and-release fishing; beating the odds and technology; saving an ecosystem.



Meet people
with a passion
for peregrines.

Watch the
week of
August 18.

“TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE”

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AMARILLO: KACV, Ch. 2 / Sat. 3:30 p.m.

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KLRU-TOO, Cable Ch. 20 / Tues. 11 p.m.

BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION: KAMU, Ch. 15 /
Thurs. 7 p.m. / Sun. 5 p.m.

CORPUS CHRISTI: KEDT, Ch. 16 / Sun. 11 a.m. /
Thurs. 1 p.m.

EL PASO: KCOS, Ch. 13 / Sat. 5 p.m.
(rotates with other programs; check listings)

DALLAS-FORT WORTH: KERA, Ch. 13 / Fri. 1:30 p.m.
Also serving Abilene, Denton, Longview, Marshall, San Angelo,
Texarkana, Tyler, Wichita Falls, Sherman

HARLINGEN: KMBH, Ch. 60 / Thurs. 8:30 p.m.
Also serving McAllen, Mission, Brownsville

HOUSTON: KUHT, Ch. 8 / Sun. 5 p.m. / Fri. 1 p.m.
Also serving Beaumont/Port Arthur, Galveston, Texas City, Victoria

KILLEEN: KNCT, Ch. 46 / Sun. 5 p.m.
Also serving Temple

LUBBOCK: KTXT, Ch. 5 / Sat. 6:30 p.m.

ODESSA-MIDLAND: KOCV, Ch. 36 / Sat. 5 p.m.

PORTALES, N.M.: KENW, Ch. 3 / Sun. 2 p.m.
Also serving West Texas/Panhandle area

SAN ANTONIO & LAREDO: KLRN, Ch. 9 / Thur. noon

WACO: KWBU, Ch. 34 / Sat. 3 p.m.

Check local listings. Times and dates are subject to change,
especially during PBS membership drives.

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ABILENE: KACU-FM 89.7 / 7:06 a.m. &
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ATLANTA: KAQC Cable Ch. 22 /
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BEAUMONT: KLVI-AM 560 / 5:20 a.m.

BIG SPRING: KBST-AM 1490 / 10:55
a.m., cable ch. 23 / 10:55 a.m., KBST-
FM 95.7 / 10:55 a.m.

BRADY: KNEL-AM 1490 / 7:20 a.m. &
8:50 p.m. (7:50 a.m. Sat.), KNEL-FM 95.3
/ 7:20 a.m. & 8:50 p.m. (7:50 a.m. Sat.)

BRIDGEPORT: KBOC-FM 98.3 / 8:10
a.m. & 5:15 p.m.

BRYAN: KZNE-AM 1150 / 5:45 p.m.,
KAGC-AM 1510 / TBA

CANTON: KVCI-AM 1510 / 6:40 a.m.

CANYON: KWTS-FM 91.1 / noon hour
& 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

CARTHAGE: KGAS-AM 1590 / 6:46
a.m., KGAS-FM 104.3 / 6:46 a.m.

CENTER: KDET-AM 930 / 12:25 p.m.,
KDET-FM 100.2 / 12:25 p.m.

COLUMBUS: KULM-FM 98.3 /
7:20 a.m.

COMANCHE: KCOM-AM 1550 / 6:30 a.m.

COMMERCE: KETR-FM 88.9 / 10:15 a.m.

CORPUS CHRISTI: KEDT-FM 90.3 /
5:34 p.m., KFTX-FM 97.5 / 5:40 a.m.,
KBSO-FM 94.7 / 6:50 a.m.

CROCKETT: KIVY-AM 1290 / 8:15 a.m.,
KIVY-FM 92.7 / 8:15 a.m.

SIGHTS & SOUNDS

CUERO: KVCO-FM 97.7 / 6:50 a.m.
DEL RIO: KWMC-AM 1490 / 5:50 p.m.
DENISON/SHERMAN: KJIM-AM 1500 / 8:55 a.m.
DENTON/DALLAS/FT. WORTH: KNTU-FM 88.1 / 10:30 a.m. & 2:30, 5:50 p.m.
DIMMITT: KDHN-AM 1470 / 12:31 p.m.
DUMAS: KDDD-FM 95.3 / 10:30 a.m. KDDD-AM 800 / 10:30 a.m.
EAGLE PASS: KINL-FM 92.7 / 7:15 a.m.
EASTLAND: KEAS-AM 1590 / 5:51 a.m. & 5:51 p.m., KATX-FM 97.7 / 5:51 a.m. & 5:51 p.m.
EDNA: KGUL-FM 96.1 / 6:50 a.m.
EL CAMPO: KULP-AM 1390 / 2 p.m.
EL PASO: KXCR-FM 89.5 / 12:20 p.m.
FAIRFIELD: KNES-FM 99.1 / 6:47 a.m.
FLORESVILLE: KWCB-FM 89.7 / 1:30 p.m.
FORT STOCKTON: KFST-AM 860 / 7:56 a.m. & 12:50 p.m., KFTS-FM 94.3 / 7:56 a.m. & 12:50 p.m.
FORT WORTH: KTCU-FM 88.7 / 8:50 a.m. & 5:50 p.m.
GAINESVILLE: KGAF-AM 1580 / 7 a.m.
GALVESTON: KGBC-AM 1540 / 11:45 a.m.
GATESVILLE: KASZ-FM 98.3 / 7:24 a.m.
GREENVILLE: KGVL-AM 1400 / 8:15 a.m.
HALLETTVILLE: KHLT-AM 1520 / 6:50 a.m., KTXM-FM 99.9 / 6:50 a.m.
HARLINGEN: KMBH-FM 88.9 / 4:58 p.m.
HEREFORD: KPAN-AM 860 / 2:50 p.m., KPAN-FM 106.3 / 2:50 p.m.
HILLSBORO: KHBR-AM 1560 / 9:30 a.m.
HOUSTON: KCOH-AM 1430 / Saturday 4:30-6:30 a.m.
HUNTSVILLE: KSHU-FM 90.5 / 11:55 a.m., 5:55 p.m.
JACKSONVILLE: KEBE-AM 1400 / 7:15 a.m.
JUNCTION: KMBL-AM 1450 / 6:46 a.m. & 12:46, 5:46 p.m., KOOK-FM 93.5 / 6:46 a.m. & 12:46, 5:46 p.m.
KERRVILLE: KITE-FM 92.3 / 11:51 a.m. & 12:51, 5:40, 8:40 p.m., KERV-AM 1230 / 6:50 a.m. & 12:50, 5:50 p.m., KRVL-FM 94.3 / 6:10 a.m. & 12:50, 5:50 p.m., KRNH-FM 92.3 / 5:31 a.m. & 12:57, 7:35 p.m.
LAMPASAS: KCYL-AM 1450 / 7:10 a.m., KACQ-FM 101.9 / 7:10 a.m.
LEVELLAND: KLVF-AM 1230 / 12:05 p.m.
LUBBOCK: KJTV-AM 950 / 6:50 a.m.
MARBLE FALLS: KHLB-AM 1340 / 7:20 a.m., KHLB-FM 106.9 / 7:20 a.m.
MARSHALL: KCUL-AM 1410 / 6:39 a.m., KCUL-FM 92.3 / 6:39 a.m.
MCCALLEN: KHID-FM 88.1 / 4:58 p.m.
MESQUITE: KEOM-FM 88.5 / 5:30 a.m. & 2:30, 8:30 p.m. M-Th. (5:30 a.m. & 4:45 p.m. Fr.)
MIDLAND/ODESSA: KCRS-AM 550 / 6:15 a.m. & 5:50 p.m.
MINEOLA: KMOO-FM 99.9 / 5:15 p.m.
MONAHANS: KLBO-AM 1330 / 8:50 a.m.
NACOGDOCHES: KSAU-FM 90.1 / 3 p.m.
NEW BRAUNFELS: KGNB-AM 1420 / 6:52 a.m.
OZONA: KYXX-FM 94.3 / 6:46 a.m., noon & 3:46 p.m.

PECOS: KIUN-AM 1400 / 10:30 a.m. & 5:20 p.m.
PLAINVIEW: KKYN-AM 1090 / TBA
ROCKDALE: KRXT-FM 98.5 / 5:04 a.m. & 6:35 p.m.
SAN ANGELO: KUTX-FM 90.1 / 1:04 p.m.
SAN ANTONIO: KSTX-FM 89.1 / 9:04 p.m. Th., KENS-AM 1160 / 7:40 a.m., 12:26 & 5:45 p.m.
SAN AUGUSTINE: KCOT-FM 92.5 / 12:25 p.m.
SEGUIN: KWED-AM 1580 / 7:55 a.m.
SONORA: KHOS-FM 92.1 / 6:22 p.m.
SCHILENBERG: KTXM-FM 99.9 / 6:50 a.m.
SULPHUR SPRINGS: KSST-AM 1230 / 2:50, 3:50 & 11:22 a.m.
TEMPLE: KTEM-AM 1400 / 6:50 a.m.
TEXARKANA: KTXK-FM 91.5 / noon hour
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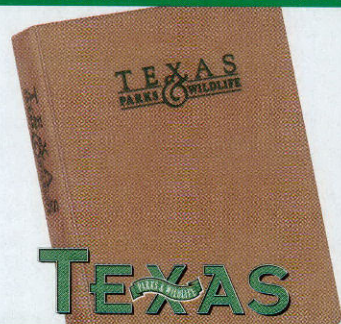
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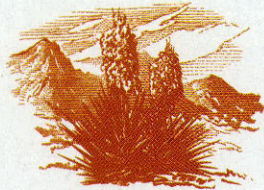
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GETAWAYS

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



BIG BEND COUNTRY

AUG.: Fate Bell Cave Dwelling Tour, every Wednesday through Sunday, Seminole Canyon SP & HS, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

AUG.: Pictograph Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

AUG.: Summer Amphitheater Programs, call for dates, Davis Mountains SP, Fort Davis, (915) 426-3337.

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

AUG.: Desert Garden Tours, by reservation only, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Terlingua, (915) 424-3327.

AUG.: White Shaman Tour, every Saturday, Seminole Canyon SP & HS, Comstock, (888) 525-9907.

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

AUG. 1-31: Fishing on the Rio Grande, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

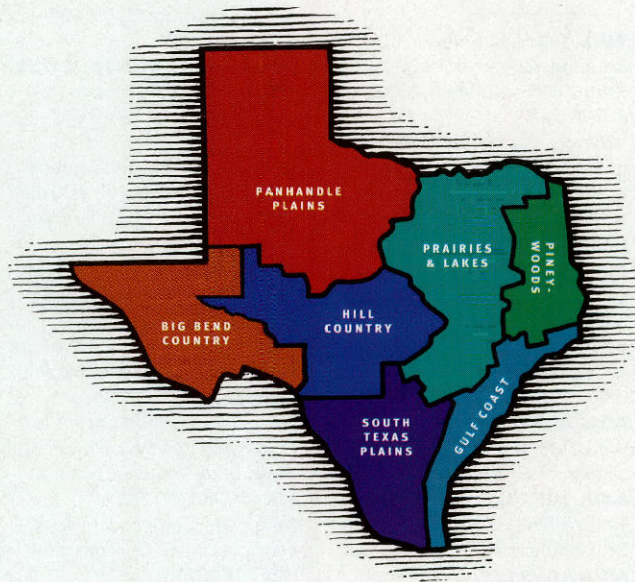
AUG. 1-31: Equestrian Trail, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

AUG. 3-4, 17-18: Guided Tours, Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, (915) 566-6441.

AUG. 3, 17, 31: Trip to Madrid Falls, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, (915) 229-3416.

AUG. 10: Stories of Spirits, Magoffin Home SHS, El Paso, (915) 533-5147.

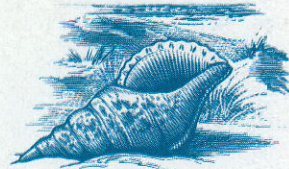
AUG. 16: Bakery Workshop,



Fort Leaton SHS, Presidio, (315) 229-3416 or (915) 229-3613.

AUG. 17-18: Hunter Education Training Course, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Terlingua, (915) 424-3327.

AUG. 18: Bird Identification Tours, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.



GULF COAST

AUG.: Plantation House, Earn and Grounds tours, Wednesdays through Sundays, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHS, West Columbia, (979) 345-4656.

AUG.: Hatchery Tours, every Monday through Saturday, Coastal Conservation Association/Central Power and Light Marine Development Center SFH, Corpus Christi, (361) 939-7784.

AUG. 10, 24: Beachcombing and Shelling Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

AUG. 16: Story Time, Sea Center Texas, Lake Jackson, (979) 292-0100.

AUG. 17: Nighttime Wildlife Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

AUG. 25: History Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

AUG. 31: Walk-a-thon, Lake Texana SP, Edna, (361) 782-5718.



HILL COUNTRY

AUG.: Wild Cave Tour, every Thursday through Saturday, by reservation only, Longhorn Cavern SP, Burnet, (877) 441-2283 or (512) 756-4680.

AUG.: Sinkhole Bat Flight Tour, call for dates, Devil's Sinkhole SNA, Brackettville, (830) 683-2287.

AUG.: Devil's Waterhole Canoe Tour, every Thursday, Inks Lake

SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

AUG.: Group Tours, by reservation only, Longhorn Cavern SP, Burnet, (877) 441-2283 or (512) 756-4680.

AUG.: Hiking Trail, daily, Longhorn Cavern SP, Burnet, (877) 441-2283 or (512) 756-4680.

AUG.: Walking Wild Cave Tour, every Saturday and Sunday weather permitting, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

AUG.: Wild Cave Tour, by reservation only, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, (830) 563-2342.

AUG.: Gorman Falls Tour, every Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

AUG.: Birdwatching, daily except when park closed for hunting, Pedernales Falls SP, Johnson City, (330) 868-7304.

AUG. 2: Range and Wildlife Seminar, Kerr WMA, Hunt, (830) 238-4483.

AUG. 3: Crawling Wild Cave Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

AUG. 3: 15th Annual Texas International Apple Festival, Medina, (830) 589-7224.

AUG. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31: Stumpy Hollow Nature Hike, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

AUG. 3, 17, 24: Go Fishing with a Ranger, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

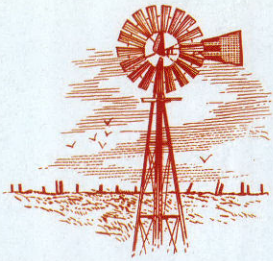
AUG. 9: Freetail Free-for All, Town Lake, Austin, sponsored by Bat Conservation International, (512) 327-9721.

AUG. 10: Sky Watch, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

AUG. 16-18: Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop, Wimberley, (512) 389-8198.

AUG. 24: X Bar Dinner Show, X Bar Ranch, Eldorado, (888) 853-2688.

AUG. 31: Island Assault 1944 Living History Program, Admiral Nimitz SHS-National Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg, (830) 997-4379.



PANHANDLE PLAINS

AUG. 1-6, 8-13, 15-17: "Texas" Outdoor Musical Drama, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 655-2181.

AUG. 1, 8, 15: Family Nature Hike, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.

AUG. 1-17: Annual Summer Art Exhibition, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, (940) 839-4331.

AUG. 3: Sun Fun and Star Walk, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, (940) 839-4331.

AUG. 3: History Hike, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.

AUG. 6, 13: River Walk, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.

AUG. 7: Canyon Heritage, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.

AUG. 10: Storytelling, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.

AUG. 10: Prehistoric Permian Tracks Tour, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, (915) 949-4757.

AUG. 10, 24: Evening Program, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.

AUG. 10, 24, 31: Family Nature Hike, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.

AUG. 10, 31: Campfire Tails, Abilene SP, Tuscola, (915) 572-3204.

AUG. 14: Bat Mania, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.

AUG. 17: Nature Challenge, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.

AUG. 17: Quahadi Society Quarterly Meeting, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, (940) 839-4331.

AUG. 24: Night Noises, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.

AUG. 31: Juniper Hike, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.

AUG. 31: Dark Sky Viewing, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.



PINEYWOODS

AUG. 1-3: Old Settlers' Reunion, Governor Hogg Shrine SHS, Quitman, (903) 763-2701.

AUG. 2, 16: Nature Slide Program, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.

AUG. 3, 17: Steam Engine Shop Tours, Texas State Railroad SP, Rusk, (800) 442-8951 or (903) 683-2561 outside Texas.

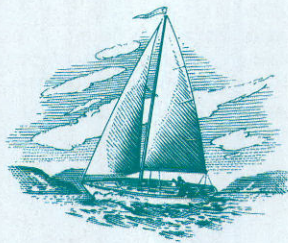
AUG. 3, 17, 24: Guided Nature Hike, Tyler SP, Tyler, (903) 597-5338.

AUG. 4, 11, 25: Walk on the Wild Side, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, (409) 384-5231.

AUG. 10, 24, 31: Guided Nature Trail Hike, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.

AUG. 10, 31: Who's in the Woods, Tyler SP, Tyler, (903) 597-5338.

AUG. 17: Floating the Forks, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, (409) 384-5231.



PRAIRIES & LAKES

AUG.: Evenings at the Amphitheater, every Saturday, Stephen F. Austin SP, San Felipe, (979) 885-3613.

AUG.: Historic and Scenic Tour, available by reservation only to groups of 10 or more, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.

AUG.: Kreische Brewery Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.

AUG.: Weekends at the Farm, every Saturday and Sunday, Washington-on-the-Brazos

SHS, Washington, (936) 878-2213.

AUG. 2: Coyote Howl, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.

AUG. 3: Animal Tracking, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.

AUG. 3: 3rd Annual Summer Star Party, Lake Whitney SP, Whitney, (254) 694-3793.

AUG. 3: Night Prowl, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, (903) 395-3100.

AUG. 3-4, 11, 17-18, 24-25, 31: Inn Tours, Fanthorp Inn SHS, Anderson, (936) 873-2633.

AUG. 4, 11: Kreische House Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.

AUG. 10: Wildlife Detectives Nature Walk, Purtis Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.

AUG. 10: White-tailed Wonderland, Purtis Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.

AUG. 10: Cowboy Campfire-Music and Poetry, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 327-8950.

AUG. 10: Stagecoach Days, Fanthorp Inn SHS, Anderson, (936) 873-2633.

AUG. 10: Sunset Nature Hike, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, (903) 395-3100.

AUG. 10: Poking Around the Pond, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-6505.

AUG. 10-11: Taste of Summer, Sebastopol House SHS, Seguin, (830) 379-4833.

AUG. 10, 17: Nature Walk, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.

AUG. 10-31: Catfish Harvest, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, (903) 676-BASS.

AUG. 17: Snakes Alive!, Purtis Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.

AUG. 17: Outdoor Skills 2-Camping Fundamentals, Purtis Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.

AUG. 17: Venomous Creatures, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, (903) 395-3100.

AUG. 17: Kids' Wilderness Survival, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 328-1171.

AUG. 17: Reptiles of Cedar Hill, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.

AUG. 24: Take a Ride on the Water Cycle, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.

AUG. 24: Walk on the Wild Side,

Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, (903) 395-3100.

AUG. 24: Night Sounds, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 327-8950.

AUG. 31: Penn Farm Tour, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.

AUG. 31: Creatures of the Night, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, (903) 395-3100.

AUG. 31: Neatness of the Night, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-6505.

AUG. 31: Labor Day Fest, Purtis Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.



SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

AUG. 24: Geology and the Edwards Aquifer, Government Canyon SNA, San Antonio, (210) 688-9603.

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



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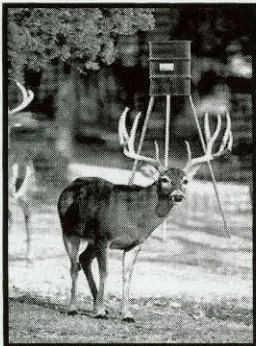


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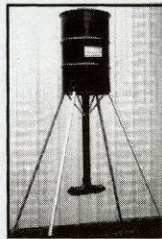
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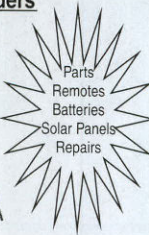
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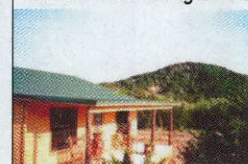
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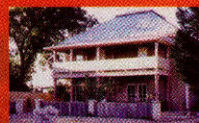
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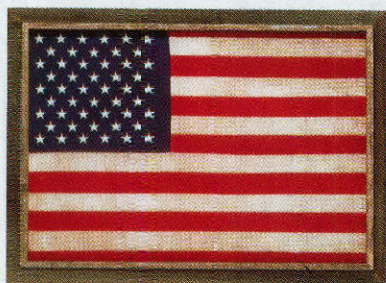


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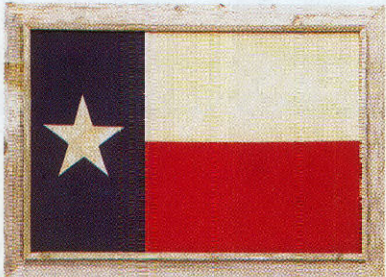


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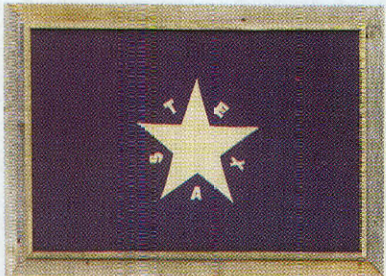
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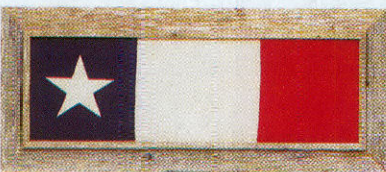
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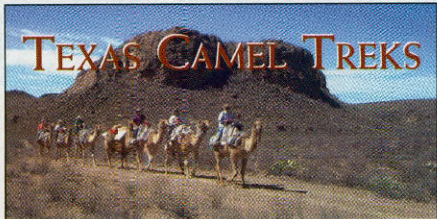
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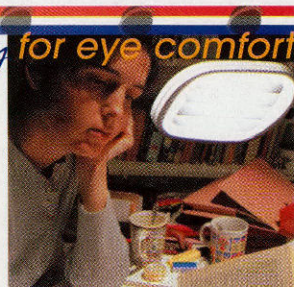
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PARTINGSHOT

Photographer David Sams was staying in a secluded cabin some months back while working on a project to photograph hunting boots. After experiencing a cold and rainy day taking pictures, he returned to his cabin, but decided his work was not done quite yet. "The boot liners were soaked," he says, "and because I like to photograph everything, I snapped a picture of the liners drying out on top of the wood-burning stove that we had in the cabin."





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