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PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS



America's Retriever

A SALUTE TO THE WATERFOWLER'S BEST FRIEND

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For the latest and greatest parks and wildlife information, check out our Web site <www.tpwd.state.tx.us>



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PHOTO © DAVIDSAMS.COM

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BACK: The handsome wood duck is a year-round resident of East Texas. Photo © Joe Mac Hudspeeth, Jr.

This page: Decoy © Russell A. Graves.



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AT ISSUE

FROM THE PEN OF ROBERT L. COOK

If you are reading this, you're probably what we would call an "Outdoors Person." Maybe you're a camper in our Texas state parks. Maybe you enjoy fishing, or maybe you hunt. Maybe you like to hike or bird in wild places. Maybe you just like to know that those places are out there and that they will always be out there.

One of the important issues that we must address concerns the future of hunting in Texas. According to the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, put out by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a smaller and smaller percentage of the population in our great state are hunters. Our Wildlife Division is currently working cooperatively with the Texas Wildlife Association and other support organizations to understand why people hunt, why they stop hunting or why they have never hunted. With this information, they will strive to stabilize and, hopefully, increase the number and percentage of people who enjoy the incredibly wonderful hunting opportunities in Texas. As hunters and anglers pay the lion's share of the cost of conservation, all of us interested in Texas' natural resources should understand and support the efforts to preserve Texas' hunting heritage.

However, this issue is not just about hunters. A smaller and smaller proportion of the state's population goes fishing each year. Fishing license sales have declined from a high of 1.8 million in 1982 to 1.5 million in 2001. Our fisheries scientists are already working on this issue. And the same situation is true about our state park users where, again, fewer Texans visit our state parks annually. State park visitation was down more than 7 percent from 2000 to 2001, and more than 20 percent over the last five years.

Our charge is to be proactive and address these issues head-on. We must identify and, where feasible, remove obstacles to hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, birding, nature photography and all outdoor pursuits. In many cases, the obstacles are the same for campers or mountain bikers or birders as they are for hunters. The bottom line is that people are just too busy, or they think they are too busy. Some say that enjoying the outdoors is too expensive.

I believe that most people who do not get out and enjoy the outdoors simply do not know about the incredible fun, excitement, peace and quiet that is out there waiting for them. We should encourage Texas' private landowners in their efforts to provide outdoor recreation opportunities of all types to the citizens of Texas, in addition to those opportunities funded by the state. The more the citizens of Texas learn about the outdoors, the more they will understand, appreciate, use and support the conservation of our natural resources.

Please join us in this effort. You are among Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's most active and avid outdoorsmen and women; the mentors, the advocates. Take someone hunting, fishing, camping, birding or simply hiking in the woods. Get your family involved in the outdoors. Get your neighbors and your friends involved.

They will love it, and they might even "get hooked" on the outdoors.

We must identify and, where feasible, remove obstacles to hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, birding, nature photography and all outdoor pursuits.



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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The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 2002, VOL. 60, NO. 9

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CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Grady Allen, Wyman Meinzer, Earl Nottingham and David J. Sams

EDITORIAL OFFICES:

3000 South IH 35, Suite 120, Austin, Texas 78704

Phone: (512) 912-7000 Fax: (512) 707-1913

E-mail: magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us

ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES:

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In the Field

CARL FRENTRESS and JOE KRAAI,

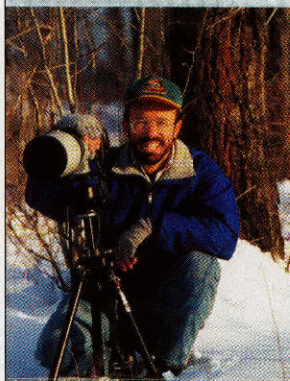
regional waterfowl biologists in East Texas for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, collaborated on this month's feature about hunting ducks on reservoirs. Frentress has more than 30 years' service with TPWD. Kraai has been with TPWD for three years, but has a lifelong affiliation with the agency because his father, Joe Kraai, was a 30-year employee with the Inland Fisheries Division. Frentress, a 1968 graduate of Texas A&M University, was reared on a farm near Athens in Henderson County. Kraai, a native of Canyon in Randall County, is a 1998 graduate of Texas Tech University and is completing his master's degree at Texas A&M. Both authors are avid duck hunters.



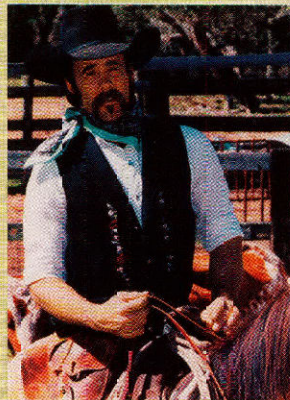
DENVER BRYAN

 is a wildlife biologist by training and an outdoor photographer by avocation. He specializes in photographing wildlife, fly fishing and hunting, and his work appears regularly in such magazines as *Field & Stream*, *National Wildlife*, *Smithsonian*, *Time*, *Gray's*

Sporting Journal and many others. He has a particular fondness for waterfowling and Labrador retrievers, having photographed two books on Labs entitled *Labs Afield*, portions of which are excerpted in this issue, and *The Life Of A Lab*. Both books were co-published by Ducks Unlimited and Willow Creek Press. More of his photos can be seen at <www.denverbryan.com>.



HERMAN W. BRUNE

 runs a cow/calf operation, raises cutting-bred horses and writes for the *Colorado County Citizen* in Columbus, Texas. He also hosts a Saturday morning radio program, *The News from the Camphouse*, on KULM-FM 98.3. Brune spent 10 years packing mules and guiding hunters in the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana. He is a former PRCA saddlebronc rider and he and his daughter reside at the headquarters of the family estate in Shaws Bend. In this issue, he writes about the Texas Coalition for Conservation.

MAIL CALL

PICKS, PANS AND PROBES FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

FOREWORD

I know a secret about waterfowlers; a good enough one to entice me to join their ranks. As you'll see in this issue's cover story, "Special Delivery," duck hunting is a splendid excuse to launch a sunrise and pass a day's time around peaceful waters in the company of a fine dog. We thank photographer Denver Bryan and writer E. Donnell Thomas for this masterful tribute to working Labrador retrievers.

The intensity, intelligence and athleticism of these dogs is a joy to witness. Many of you know this already, as our recent subscriber study shows us that nearly a third of you own hunting dogs.

Curiously, it was my interest in birding that first fed my interest in duck hunting. No doubt, because ducks presented such a challenge for me to identify properly, especially on the wing, during my countless fishing and birding forays along the Texas Coast. Then I discovered I was not unique among our readership. According to our new study, many *Texas Parks & Wildlife* readers have come to an interest in waterfowling along a similar path: those of you readers who identify yourselves as birders are 21% more likely than average to be waterfowl hunters! Plus, those of you identifying yourselves as birders spend 15 days annually, on average, pursuing hunting activities — as many as do all hunters!

Odd ducks? Not necessarily. Nearly half of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* readers who are birders identify yourselves as hunters as well. You represent the masters and the mentors among TPWD's constituency — the most devoted sons and daughters of the Texas outdoors — and as such participate in a diverse range of outdoor activities.

Here's a brief overview of your favorite activities:

- 77% fish
- 59% hunt
- 56% camp
- 55% visit Texas state parks
- 37% pursue outdoor photography
- 31% bird

You take actions as a direct result of reading the magazine:

- 58% discussed an article or referred someone to it
- 41% visited a state park
- 29% purchased a fishing license
- 27% purchased a hunting license
- 25% purchased an item from an advertiser

Your top 10 magazine topics, in rank order, are: wildlife (97%), natural history (95%), state parks (95%), environmental issues (86%), how-to articles for adults (86%), fishing (84%), camping (80%), hunting (76%), outdoor adventures (62%) and birding (61%).

Many of you enjoy diverse and multiple activities. Challenge yourselves to add a new one this year; it can only increase your enjoyment of the outdoors.

Although I enjoy other hunting opportunities, I have yet to go duck hunting. That's fixing to change. Now that "duck fever" has grasped me, I'll be trying my hand at this new challenge when teal season opens on Sept. 14, 2002, for a nine-day season and when duck season opens in October.

And I'll hope to be hunting with a dog as elegant as are the three gracing this month's cover.



LETTERS

IT'S FLOODING DOWN IN TEXAS...

What great reading it was to go back to your "Floods" story in the March 2002 issue. What happened last July is exactly as your writer, Todd Votteler, detailed. Our thoughts go out to those affected.

CHRIS ARCENEUX
Kingwood

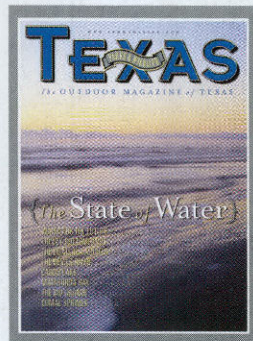
My children and I checked in at Garner State Park on Monday, July 1, 2002. We set up our tents at location No. 8 alongside the hills, about 200 yards from the Frio River. We grilled hot dogs and sat around the campfire roasting marshmallows, anticipating a perfect evening.

About 11 p.m., the rains began. As we sought refuge in our tents, the rain became more intense. The thunder was amplified as it echoed through the hills. The rains continued all night, seeping through the fabric of the tent.

I finally got up at 8 a.m. and when I

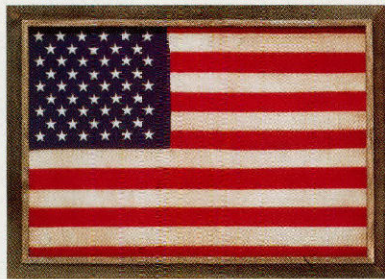
emerged from the tent, the Frio River was a mere 20 feet from the tents! The raging river had taken two-thirds of the campgrounds overnight. I grabbed the kids and loaded them into my truck and left the campsite. I left behind the tents, food, utensils — everything! — because I knew the Frio River had not crested yet. I drove up to the pavilion area for safety, as did other visitors to the park.

I was amazed to see the raging river nearly up to the pavilion level. Under

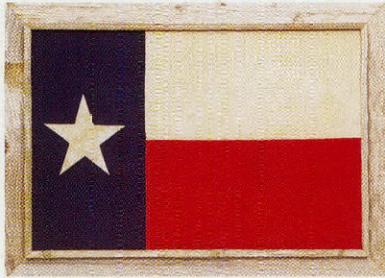


Your July issue, *The State of Water*, brings one of my dearest issues, the Ogallala Aquifer, to the forefront. I have not been able to understand why the plunder of this aquifer has received so little attention and so much silence. It is my prayer your issue will help others care enough to preserve our waters.

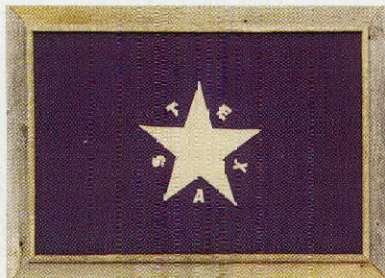
Linda McGonagill
Muleshoe



United States (28"H x 40"W)



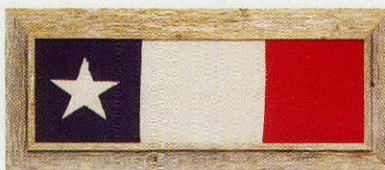
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normal conditions it is nearly 40 feet below. The Frio River had taken everything in its path: campers still attached to vehicles, pop-up campers, tents, debris, everything.

After the river receded, the devastation made it look like a war zone. The screened shelters were smashed along the rocky beach area. The stone building near the dam was completely flattened. The tennis courts were destroyed. Mud and debris were strewn throughout the park where the river rampaged through early that morning. It was an incredible sight.

I have been taking my children to Garner State Park for the past five years and this trip will certainly go down in the "family history books!"

ERNIE ESCOBAR
Houston

BUT WE DID EDIT YOUR LETTER!

Your August edition was a total joy to read and a joy to look at as well. The pictures were great and real. I am afraid that many editions in the recent past have looked to me like you were trying to see just how wild modern photo technology can foul up reality. Please continue to entertain us and educate us in this natural resource.

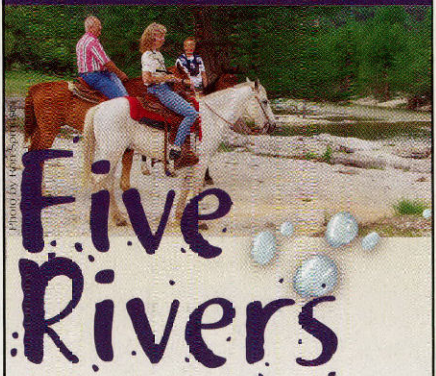
R. L. WRIGHT
Victoria

PUBLISHER & EDITOR SUSAN L. EBERT RESPONDS: *We do appreciate your comments, but must set the record straight on your comment about manipulating photography. We respect the work of our talented photographers and the unsurpassed splendor of the Texas outdoors, and do not manipulate photographs, except when used in a deliberate photo illustration such as the one with "Luck, Be a Lady" on page 46 of this issue.*

MALAISE FROM MALAYSIA

Congratulations on an excellent July issue! I am a Texan currently living in Malaysia and I count the days until my dad from Midland sends me my Texas fix — which comes in the form of the great Texas magazine triad: *Texas Monthly*, *Texas Highways* and *Texas Parks & Wildlife*. Usually, *Texas Parks & Wildlife* is the last of the three to get read. There is usually only one article that is truly

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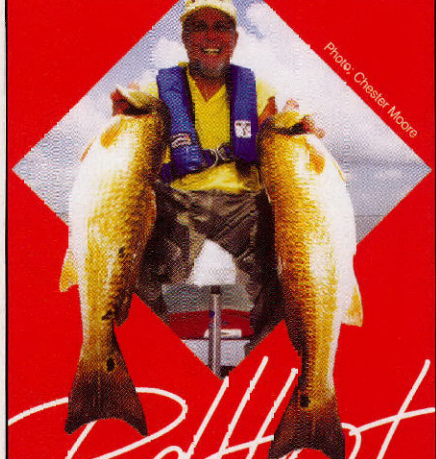
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about Texas; the rest of the magazine has been relegated to mundane hunting articles, in an unimaginative attempt to sell more issues. And the "Parting Shot" is typically the only photograph that attempts to portray the true majesty of Texas PARKS or WILDLIFE — as opposed to predictable photos of Texas hunters holding a gun.

The State of Water issue is the best issue in years; in fact, I couldn't believe it was *Texas Parks & Wildlife* as I was reading it. This is a clear change in quality! Don't revert to the obvious sell-out of catering to hunters with your typical subpar articles. If I weren't a Texan I would have cancelled my subscription two years ago.

AJ KULLMAN
Malaysia

LOOKING TO THE SEA?

I live in Lavaca County and the Urbanites are after my groundwater, with the blessings of the State of Texas.

The best solution to the depletion of Texas' surface and groundwater supplies lies off the coast. In an article appearing April 5, 2000, edition of *The Wall Street Journal*, J.D. Beffort, a desalination expert and planner with Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), said, "If desalination works, Texas would have the ultimate sustainable water source: the Gulf of Mexico."

In Tampa Bay, Fla., they expect to turn seawater into fresh water for about the same cost as fresh raw water, about \$2 per 1,000 gallons.

A desalting plant could be built in two to three years instead of the 20 years it takes to build a reservoir under the best of conditions.

DAVID L. MYERS
Hallettsville

¡AGUA NO MÁS!

We have been subscribers since 1965, and this is your best, most important issue to date. The July 2002 issue, expanded to 116 pages, should be required reading for every bureaucrat and candidate for elected office in Texas. Environmental sciences, as taught in every middle school in Texas, should have a curriculum set with this issue as the text. Congratulations to Susan and the entire magazine staff,

the contributing writers and the talented photographers for an informative and revealing insight into this politically delicate topic.

The only thing, in our opinion, more emotionally saddening than walking across the dry, windswept sandbar that now blocks the one-time *grande river*, which provided vital freshwater inflows to the once-nutrient rich and productive estuaries of the lower Laguna Madre, would be the disheartening thought of walking rather than floating our beloved Santa Elena Canyon.

We look forward to your next installment on the subject of water, "Agua Dos." Perhaps additional water-related topics such as subsidence due to pumping of groundwater and heretofore-untapped water sources such as desalination could be addressed. Again, thank you for this enlightening and compelling issue.

STEVE AND CLAUDIA ZILIOX
Houston

ERRATA: On page 20 of the July 2002 issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, the November 2001 statement in the "Texas Water Timeline" was incorrect. The statement should read, "The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority Board of Directors authorizes a water right application for the diversion of unappropriated flows from the Guadalupe River upstream of the GBRA Salt Water Barrier" rather than "The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority applies for all the remaining unappropriated flow of the Guadalupe River." TPWD regrets the error.

Sound off for "Mail Call!"

Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine welcomes letters from our readers. Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number.

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SCOUT

NEWS AND VIEWS IN THE TEXAS OUTDOORS

What Makes a Leader?

Was Fleet Adm. Chester Nimitz a great commander? Should Gen. Douglas MacArthur have been court-martialed? Why did Adm. William H. Halsey desert the landing at Leyte?

To provide insight into the leadership styles of the commanders in the Pacific during World War II, the National Museum of the Pacific War will present as its annual symposium, "The Commanders: A Study in Leadership," Sept. 28-29 in Fredericksburg. Scholars from throughout the country will join veterans in making the presentations.

The National Museum of the Pacific War, formerly the Admiral Nimitz Museum, is the only museum in the continental United States dedicated to telling the entire story of the war in the Pacific during World War II.

Among the leaders to be discussed are presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman; admirals Nimitz, Halsey and Ernest King; generals MacArthur and George Marshall; China-Burma-India commanders general Joseph Stilwell and Claire Chennault; and Chinese

president Chiang Kai-shek. Japanese commanders to be discussed include Gen. Hideki Tojo and Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto.

Joining the museum in sponsoring the event are the Admiral Nimitz Foundation; T.R.U.E. Research Foundation; Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; St. Edward's University; Fredericksburg Independent School District; MacArthur Memorial, Norfolk, Va.; the United States Naval Institute, Annapolis; and the Marine Corps Historical Center.

The symposium is open to the public and will be held at Fredericksburg High School, Highway 16 South and Stadium Drive. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Cost is \$40 per person for members of the Admiral Nimitz Foundation and \$50 for non-members. Meals are not included. With advance registration, the public also may purchase box lunches for \$8 per person and tickets to a Saturday night dinner with panelists for \$35 per person. For registration information, phone the Admiral Nimitz Foundation at (830) 997-8600.

The National Museum of the Pacific War is a state historical site managed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and supported in part by the Admiral Nimitz Foundation.

— Shirley Will

The National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, shown here, will sponsor the September symposium.



Land Matters

The Texas Coalition for Conservation rides a wave of public support.

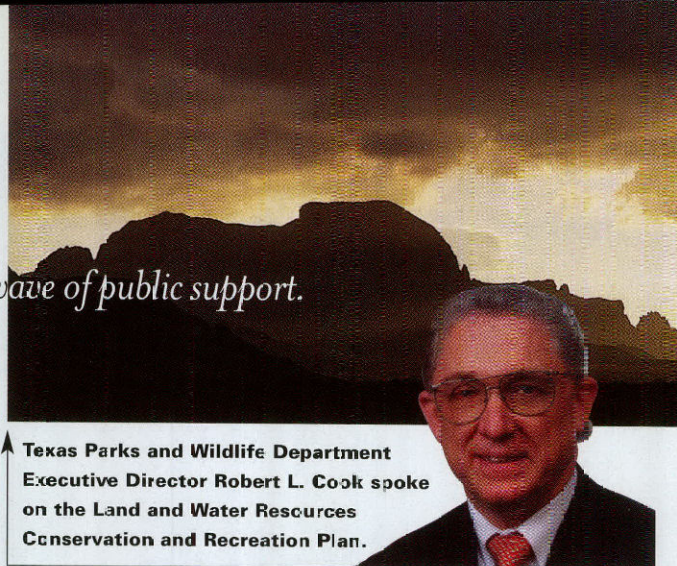
The Texas Coalition for Conservation (TCC) intends "To preserve and protect Texas' natural and environmental heritage through education and partnership with citizens and institutions dedicated to conserving our lands, wildlife, water and open spaces." Speakers at a May 21 conference held in Tyler reiterated these convictions throughout the day.

George Bristol, president of TCC, spoke about the future of conservation and the environment. "Texans approve of or approve the concept of conservation," he said. "A survey shows that 100 percent of the public believe in water conservation, 98 percent said everyone should have the opportunity to visit state parks, 93 percent approve of fishing and 72 percent approve of hunting. The public support is there, and the support is strong to finance conservation.

"The keys to conservation issues are public awareness, youth education and involvement and landowner participation," Bristol added. "Water is going to be a priority issue in the future."

TPWD Executive Director Robert L. Cook drove these beliefs home in his lecture on the Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan being developed by TPWD.

"If TPWD is going to make a significant dent in natural resource conservation, it will have to be done with the help of private landowners in Texas," Cook said. "If we are going to improve



Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Executive Director Robert L. Cook spoke on the Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan.

water quality and quantity in our rivers, it is going to have to be through work with landowners on the upper drainages. Private landowners already provide a great deal of recreation access. TPWD can provide only a small portion of the outdoor recreation opportunities in Texas."

Cook pointed out that 75 percent of Texas' population live in a metro-triangle and a 60-mile buffer around that triangle, running from San Antonio to Houston to Dallas/Fort Worth. However, only 24 percent of the publicly accessible lands in Texas are within that area. "We need to provide our youth with information about conservation," he said. "We need additional public sites near metro areas. We need to give our children places to get outdoors, places to get away."

The plan also addresses freshwater conservation, supply, recre-

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(pighk•kans•ah•pi•tæh•vew•ews)

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ational use and quality. "Fresh water reaching the estuaries on the coast is a major concern," Cook said. "We must have adequate fresh water going down our streams, or freshwater fishing and fishing on the Gulf Coast as we know it will be gone."

Cook said the 10-year plan should be adopted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission by Sept. 1. "Water quality will be one good measurable indicator to judge its success," he said.

Julie Shackelford, state director of the American Farmland Trust, addressed the purchase of development rights (PDR), an agreement by which landowners are compensated not to develop their property. The intent is to keep larger tracts intact. "What happens to landowners affects the face of Texas," she said. "Texas is losing its western mystique. Notice the I-35 corridor. Estate taxes are the primary reason for land sales. A PDR is one way to pay taxes and to keep farmers and ranchers on their land. It also protects water and wildlife habitat."

Carl Frentress, TPWD waterfowl biologist, discussed the eco-

logical benefits of wetlands, as well as their importance to migratory waterfowl.

Doug Evans, director of parks and recreation for the city of Grapevine, and John Crompton, distinguished professor, Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M University, discussed the value of open spaces. "Eighty-four percent of Texans live in or near cities," Evans said. "Parks help juvenile crime prevention, economic development, education, public health and preservation of cultural and natural resources."

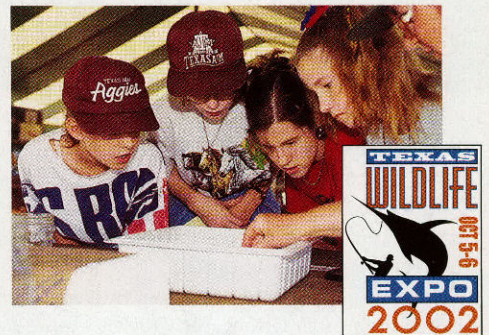
"Clean parks are an asset to the property values of a community," Crompton agreed. "There are no great cities in this world that don't have a great park system. Likewise, there are no great states that don't have great parks."

Future conferences are planned for Dallas and Houston. Contact the Texas Coalition for Conservation at 8812 Mesa Drive, Austin, TX 78759, (512) 476-7055 or (512) 349-2449 or via e-mail at <TxCoalition@aol.com>. —Herman W. Brune

FIELD NOTES

EXPO 2002

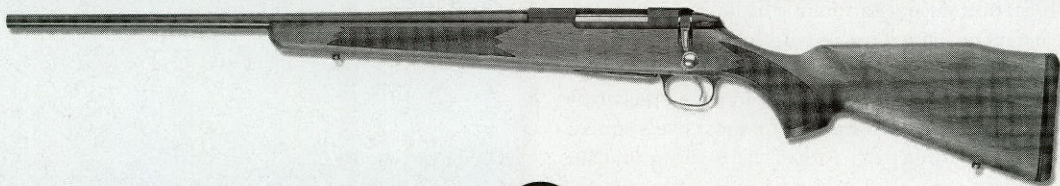
On Saturday and Sunday, October 5 and 6, TPWD headquarters in Austin will be transformed into the site of the largest event of its kind in the nation. From camping and outdoor skills to shooting sports and fishing, from mountain biking to paddlesports, Expo visitors have an opportunity to try their hands at two full days of fun in the outdoors — all for free! Look for the new "Design With Nature" area this year, which will showcase the wildscape program, solar energy applications and rainwater collection techniques. Call (800) 792-1112 or visit <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/expo/expo2002/> for more information.



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(lwoa•tayt•tah•vah)

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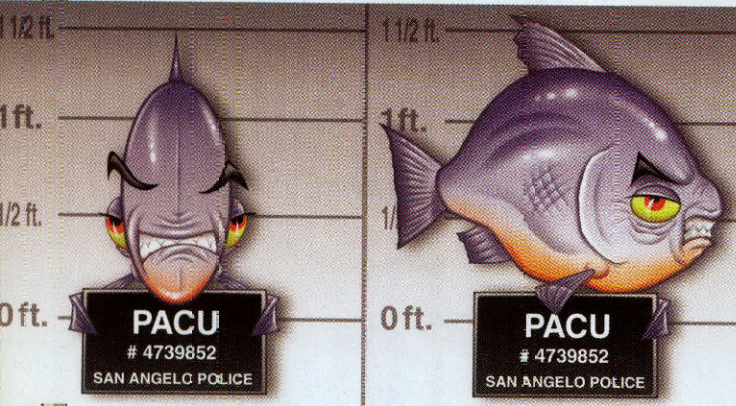
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Illegal Exotica

Is it a piranha? No, but this and other exotic fishes are a lurking threat in Texas waters.



"I caught a fish that has teeth!" is an interesting way to start a phone conversation. With their next breath, these arm-chair ichthyologists indicate they're sure they've caught a piranha. You can sense their concern about the carnage these feared, flesh-eating fish could cause.

After calming them down, I step the callers through a description of their catch (invariably, grayish-colored with occasional red-colored belly, general oval shape, and obvious teeth). Next comes my deflating opinion that the fish they caught is not a piranha, but a pacu.

What's a pacu, they ask?

Pacus are a group of fish related to piranhas that are native to the same areas of South America. Although pacus have a varied diet and can be aggressive, they are not known to attack large animals or humans. According to the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey, pacus have been found in 18 U.S. states.

Piranhas can be distinguished from pacus by examining their lower jaws. (Don't try this at home with a piranha!) A piranha's lower jaw projects well beyond its upper jaw and is much more massive in appearance than a pacu's.

Bob Howells, TPWD's exotic species expert at the Heart of the Hills Research Station near Mountain Home, says only two piranhas have been confirmed in the wild in Texas. An angler from Boerne City Reservoir caught the first in the early 1980s. In 2000 another was found dead, floating in Lake Nasworthy near San Angelo. Home aquariums are the most likely source of piranhas, pacus and some of the other exotic fishes that are captured from Texas waters.

Piranhas and many other exotic fishes cannot be legally possessed in Texas because of the detrimental and possibly irreversible impacts these species could have on Texas' native fishes and aquatic environments. While pacus can be legally kept in a home aquarium, the introduction of any exotic fish in Texas waters without a permit is illegal.

Most anglers are familiar with the spread of common carp, a native of Asia introduced into this country from Europe around 125 years ago. In recent years, a whole new cast of exotics has appeared — snakeheads, walking catfish, tubenose goby and others. With the globalization of trade and ease in purchasing

fishes from around the world, brought about by the Internet and improved methods of transportation, what new species will appear in the future? Exotic fishes may be great for your home aquarium, but they have no place in the aquatic environment of Texas.

For a list of fishes and other aquatic organisms identified as potentially harmful in Texas, go to the TPWD Web site at <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fish/infish/regulate/exotics.htm>. For information on the problems caused by exotic organisms, see the U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resources Division's site at <<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/>>.

—Ken Kurzawski

Barging the Texas Coast

Live the Huck Finn life in comfort.

Eddie Conrad, owner of Compass Marine, a successful marine towing company, started RiverBarge Excursions with the idea that people would like the easygoing, watch-the-world-go-by pleasures of barge life. The result is the *River Explorer*, a 730-foot-long excursion barge nicely outfitted with 98 windowed state-rooms, a restaurant and two bars.

In January and early February every year, the *River Explorer* makes weeklong excursions up and down the Texas portion of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, a man-made channel that hugs the Gulf coastline from Florida to Brownsville. The Galveston to Port Isabel trip passes through the peaceful bays, lagoons and tidal flats of the coastal estuary habitats, including the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, winter home of the only surviving migratory flock of whooping cranes. Bird and wildlife-watch-

Get an up-close look at birds and other wildlife along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway from the 730-foot excursion barge, *River Explorer*.



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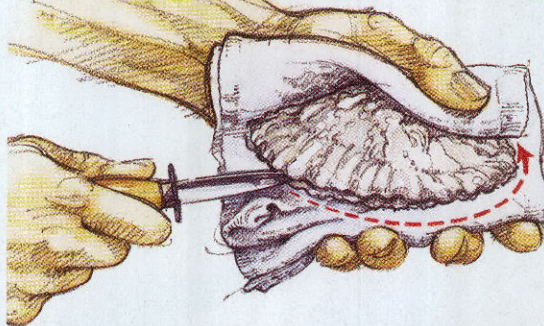
Here are the ins and outs of opening an oyster.

BY ELAINE DIRICO / ILLUSTRATION BY NARDA LEBO

It is often speculated who had the courage to eat the first oyster. My suspicion is that upon watching the sea otters or a sea bird relishing an oyster, it took little courage at all to follow suit. Otters are uniquely equipped for opening oysters, though. It takes a little equipment and a little experience for us lower life forms.

The single most important piece of equipment is the oyster knife. I have used (and broken) many kinds of knives, and there is good reason to buy the real thing. Not only is it easier on your tableware, it is much less likely to go through a valued piece of your own anatomy. Of course, faced with oysters and no oyster knife, improvisation is called for. The best second choice I have found is a wide-blade screwdriver. A third fallback is the trusty church key, but I find that more kitchens have oyster knives than church keys of late.

Twist the oyster knife with increasing pressure until the hinge just gives and the top shell loosens.



Gloves are optional. I like one for the left hand, which I use to hold the oyster, being right handed. A folded towel can work as well, and I usually use both. A large, shallow bowl on the work surface saves the oyster liquor.

To address the oyster, hold it hinge up, using the towel to grip. Insert your oyster knife into the hinge and twist with increasing pressure until the hinge

ing from the topside deck or glass-enclosed lounge is one of the passengers' favorite pastimes. During one sunny day this past January, passengers were able to spot 56 of the rare whooping cranes, almost a third of the migrating population, plus thousands of other birds.

The barge provides a view of remote stretches of the coastal estuary habitats that otherwise would be difficult for most people to access. In addition to glimpses of the endangered whoopers, wildlife-watchers spot everything from roseate spoonbills to bottlenose dolphins, Caspian terns to peregrine falcons, tri-color herons to redhead ducks. (Rooms are provisioned with binoculars.) And sunsets and sunrises are made more dramatic by wide horizons and expanses of smooth water.

Shore stops include ground transportation and admission to the attractions of Galveston, Corpus Christi and South Padre Island. Elderhostel groups often are on board enjoying natural history seminars. River Explorer's meals and service are infused with an easy southern charm, and the overall style of the experience is deliberately more casual than most vacation cruises. Travelers looking for a relaxing week of sightseeing in rare wildlife habitats and historic Texas coastal communities will enjoy the RiverBarge experience. For more information, call (888) 282-1945 or visit <www.riverbarge.com>.

—Jim Anderson

TEXAS READER

STATE on the PLATE

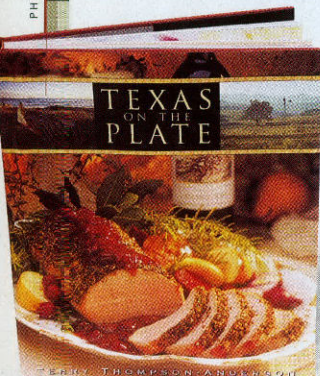
There are two kinds of cookbook addicts: the practical and the romantic. The practicals' cookbooks are actually in the kitchen, stained and few in number. Ahh, but the romantics — we keep our cookbooks on the bedside table, shelved everywhere and ultimately stacked against the wall. *Texas on the Plate* (Terry Thompson-Anderson with photography by Ralph Smith and Bob Parvin, Shearer Publishing, \$34.95) is one of those rare jewels that delights both breeds.

The first thing you notice is how beautiful the book is. My usual urge is to hit the index, looking for things that actually reside in my refrigerator, a good sign that the book is useful. But halfway to the index, I spot a photograph of shrimpers on the Gulf Coast, hauntingly familiar. The book is a celebration of the diversity of Texas that makes us so chauvinistically Texan despite our disparate backgrounds. From the Riverwalk to the Dallas monoliths to the Valley, landscapes and peoplescapes fill these pages.

So it is gorgeous, but can this dog hunt? Indeed it can! The recipes are as diverse as the photographs and, like the shrimpers I thought I recognized, I could swear "Lick the Bowl Ice Cream" has been in my family for years. Unlike many lovely cookbooks, these recipes are complete and well-executed, and the author's history as a cooking teacher shines through. As a cookbook reader of the cover-to-cover romantic species, I relished the "chat" before each recipe, replete with anecdotes and history.

Rare is a page in this book without a lovely photograph of Texas or Texans or a tantalizing dish. There are challenging new culinary combinations and techniques and there are recipes as comfortable and familiar as a chenille robe. At \$34.95, it is pricey for the practical sort of cooking, but with its compendium of Cajun, Tex-Mex, haute cuisine and especially game recipes, it is likely to be my gift of choice for expatriate Texans, come Christmas. Be careful who you send it to, though, because once read, they're likely to head Texas' way, fork and knife in hand.

— Elaine DiRico



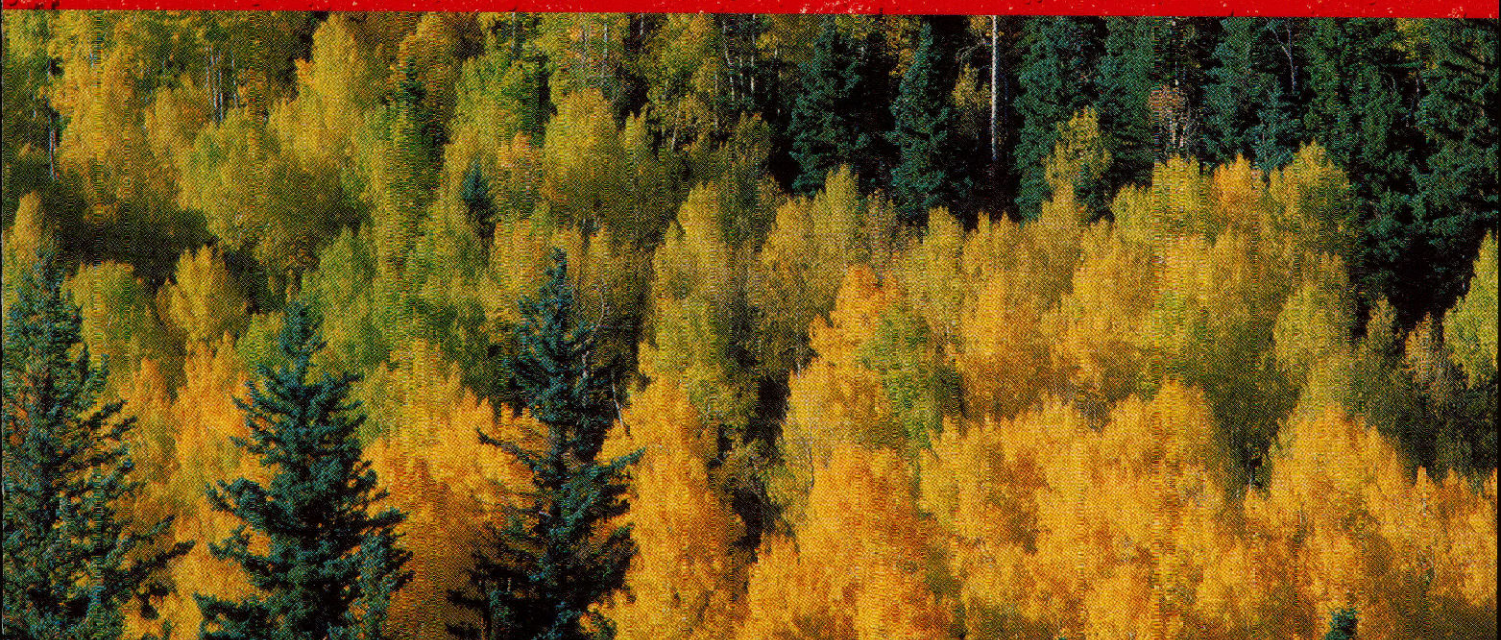


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just gives and the top shell loosens. Slip the knife along the inside of the flatter shell until you feel an obstruction. This is the adductor muscle. Cut it, careful to avoid slicing into the flesh of the oyster. Remove the top shell, and slip the knife under the oyster to detach it from the bottom. Remove any stray shell fragments.

There are some shortcuts for shucking oysters. Grilling is my favorite. Just lay the oysters on a hot grill for a few minutes with the cupped bottom shell down. Watch carefully, and remove them with tongs just as they open. Open and clean. The grill imparts some flavor and cooks the oyster a bit. It also has the advantage of fewer fragments of shell to discover.

Another shortcut is to place the oysters in an ice chest or freezer for half an hour. Be careful not to leave them any longer,

as frozen oysters are impossible to open and turn to mush when they thaw. But 20 to 30 minutes is enough to relax the adductor muscle, making the whole procedure easier.

Now you have the blank canvas for your masterpiece! Add spinach, cracker crumbs, garlic, Parmesan cheese and Tabasco, pass them under the broiler until they turn golden, and you have Oysters Rockefeller. Roll them in seasoned crumbs and brown them quickly, serve on a bun with shredded lettuce, tomato, onion and tartar sauce and you have a Po' Boy. Hide them in a pot of hot gumbo and let them poach, or stew them in cream for New Year's. However you finish them, there is nothing that evokes the sweetness and flavor of the Texas Coast better than our oysters. ★

FIELD TEST

Shooting Vests

The right vest can make hunting or field shooting more enjoyable. / BY GIBBS MILLIKEN

Competition Vests

Vests for skeet, sporting clays and other field shooting competitions are different from hunting vests, which have attached bird bags. More tailored in style, they often sport shoulder padding and quilted leather front panels. The field trial and bird shooting vests are more utilitarian, with soil-proof bags and accessories like back-mounted water bladders, dog control transmitter attachments and optional bright orange panels.

Competition vests are made by most of the major arms manufacturers. The **Browning Deluxe Mesh Vest** (\$93, men's, various colors, Model #305-002, Browning, (800) 333-3288, <www.browning.com>) is excellent in design and construction with left or right notch-cut shoulder pad that features a unique inside pocket which can be fitted with a special gel **Reactar Pad** (\$18, #309-002, Browning). It reduces recoil by 30 percent and is included with the Browning Deluxe Mesh Vest. It also has four front shell pockets for spent shells and, in a neutral tan and sage color, can double as a hunting vest. The **Ladies' Browning Classic Mesh Vest** (\$62, Model #305-09840, Browning) also has the Reactar Pad feature, but it must be purchased separately. It is a lightweight 60/40 cotton-polyester blend with split side vents for comfort. Both of these vests offer good ventilation for year-round shooting comfort in the Texas climate.

One of the finest classic-styled clay, trap and skeet vests is the **Beretta Dual Tone** (\$175, Beretta, (800) 528-7453, <www.berettausa.com>) with dark brown leather padding and trim over a loden green cotton canvas front and nylon-mesh back with adjustable waist straps. It is available in either right- or left-hand shoulder/chest pads in both men's and women's sizes. U.S. designer Bob Allen also makes a great **Mesh Shooting Vest** (\$103-\$119, Model #260M, Boyt Harness Co., (800) 550-2698, <www.boytharness.com>) in a light, khaki cotton twill and mesh with black, top-grain leather quilted gun pad

and edging. Other features include large front shell pockets, a rear reloader pouch and choke tube holders.

Hunting Vests

Hunting vests like the **Remington Camo Mesh Field Vest** (\$49.99, Model #17120, Mossy Oak Break-Up pattern, Remington Clothing, (800) 243-9700) are reasonably priced and loaded with practical features. This tan model has two front-loading bird pockets that feed into the rear pouch, spill-proof front shell pockets with interior loops and recoil padded shoulders. The large, expandable, rear blood-proof bird bag is zippered so it can be fully opened for cleaning. For the minimalist, a very basic unpadded vest is the **Browning Wingshooters Mesh Vest** (\$54, in various colors plus Mossy Oak Break-Up Camo, \$68, Browning). With a comfortable two-way zippered closure, this simple vest has two front pockets and a rear bird bag. The nylon fabric is Teflon-treated and feather-light.

Some hunters prefer the adjustability of a strap-type vest instead of the fixed full-body design. Perhaps the finest currently on the market is the **Quilomene Vest** (\$149.95, Wild-Hare/Quilomene, (800) 523-9453, <www.wildhareintl.com>). It is a rugged, nine-pocket, high-tech design made especially for serious upland game bird hunters, but works well under most field conditions. A special pouch between the shoulders holds a hydration bladder with a siphon hose so both you and the dog can have a drink on a long hunt. An extra-large divided rear bag can easily carry big birds or other gear to balance the front shell pockets and clip-on accessories like a dog control device, two-way radio, flashlight or callers. This vest can be widely adjusted to shift any weight into balance on the hips.

It is important to note the pockets or shell holders should be just the right size, flexibility and fabric weight. Extra stiff or undersized pockets can be uncomfortable to reach into and can rub inside the arms with the gun at ready. But pockets that are too large and soft will sag, fold closed and bunch shells in a lower corner. The ideal is a vest that is pliable and cool, with the correct freedom of movement and fit for your body shape and size. ★

From left: Quilomene strap vest with hydration system, Remington camo mesh field vest, Beretta Dual Tone competition vest.



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Do I have to have a mastectomy?

How will I look after surgery?

Is the cancer going to spread?

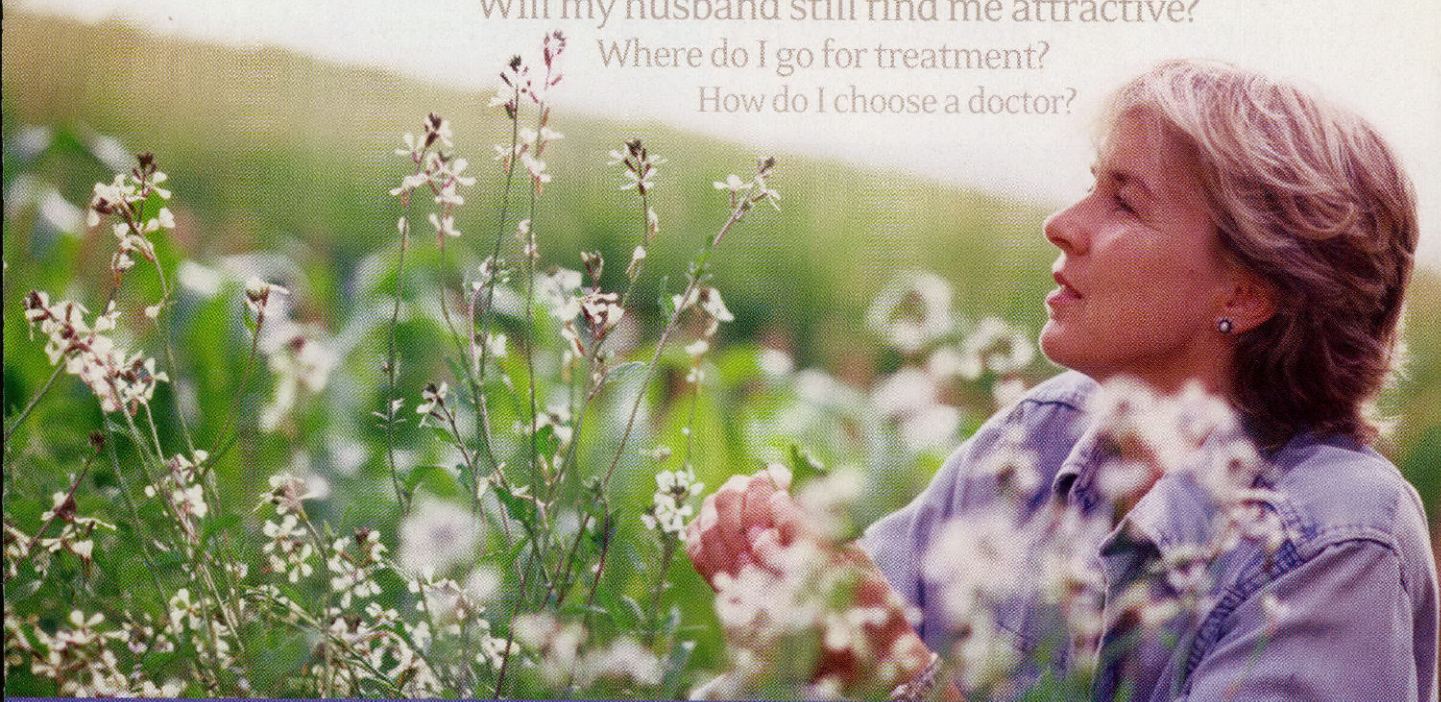
Will I have to have radiation?

Do I need chemotherapy? Will my hair fall out?

Will my husband still find me attractive?

Where do I go for treatment?

How do I choose a doctor?



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3 Days in the Field / By Larry D. Hodge


DESTINATION: CANADIAN

TRAVEL TIME FROM:

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HOUSTON — 10.5 HOURS / SAN ANTONIO — 7 HOURS / EL PASO — 9.5 HOURS

Falling for Canadian

I have forgotten how long dawn lasts in the flat country of the Panhandle, and how the dry prairie air deceives you about the temperature.



Interrupted during its bath, this ferruginous hawk expresses displeasure.

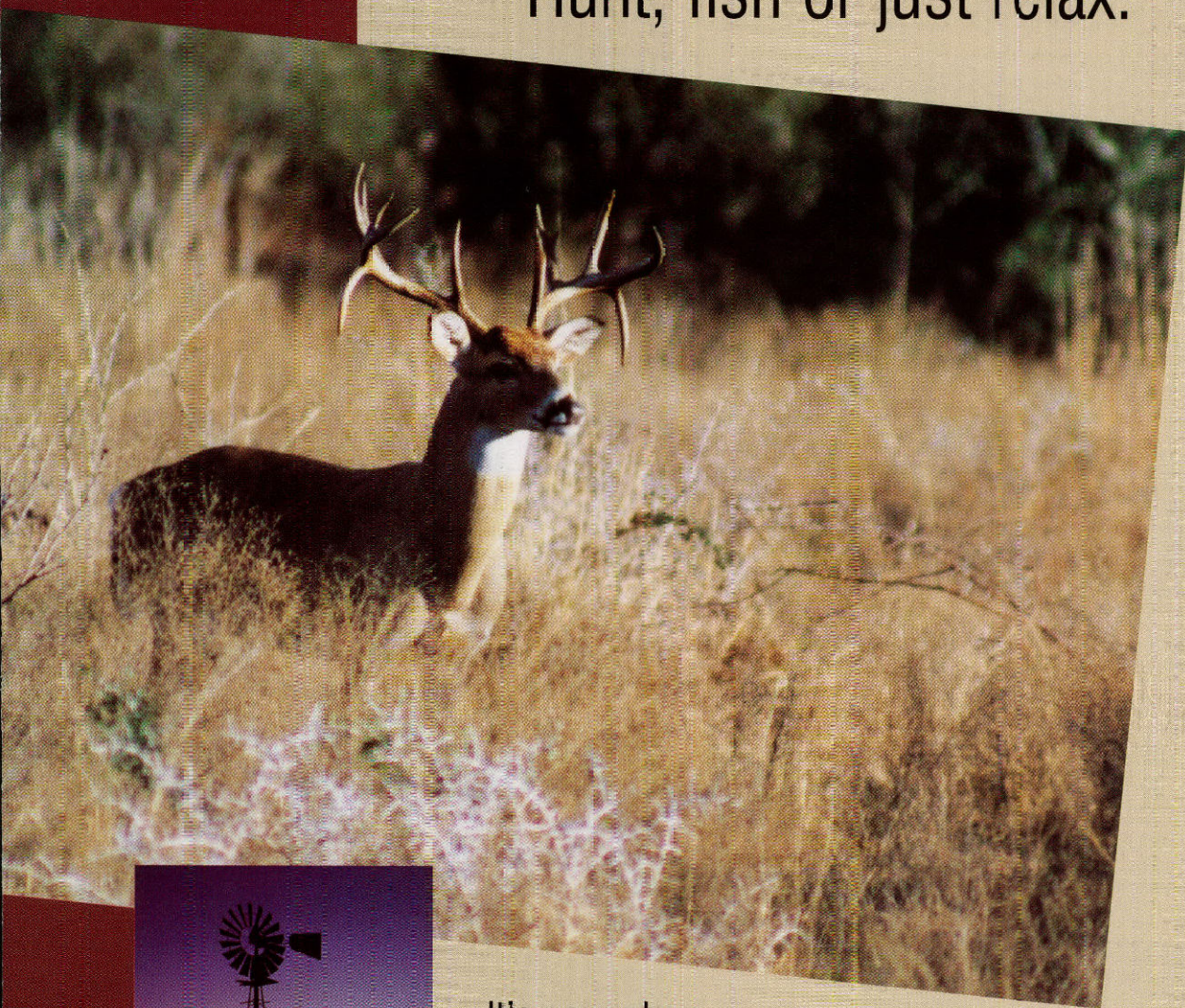
I have been roaming the Gene Howe Wildlife Management Area near Canadian in the soft light of dawn for what seems an impossibly long time before the sun vaults into the sky. I'm here for the annual Fall Foliage Festival, which is scheduled to catch the cottonwood trees that unfurl a ribbon of gold across the top of Texas.

I drive up on 17 Rio Grande turkey hens sleepily picking at gravel in the middle of FM 2266 and spend a while photographing them against the backdrop of cottonwood trees with leaves turning into golden nuggets in the sun. As I kneel beside my camera tripod watching the turkeys lazily mill about as though sleepwalking, I find my fingers burrowing into the pockets of my insulated vest, seeking warmth. When I get back into my truck and look at the thermometer, it reads 36 degrees.

I'm back in the Panhandle, it's October, and while all is far from being right in the world, I wouldn't change a single thing in the little corner of it where I am right now. Well, maybe one thing. This part of Texas doesn't have all the sandburrs in the world, but there were not many left over for the rest of creation after they were distributed here. My knees still smart from the half-dozen burrs that pinned my jeans to my legs when I rose.

I ease down the blacktop as the sun draws the color from the trees in the Canadian River bottom to my right. The highway travels the transition zone between sometimes marshy bottomland next to the river and sandsage-covered sand hills to the north. The Canadian could be described as other Plains streams have — an inch deep and a mile wide, too thick to drink and too thin to plow — but such aspersions spring from human preju-

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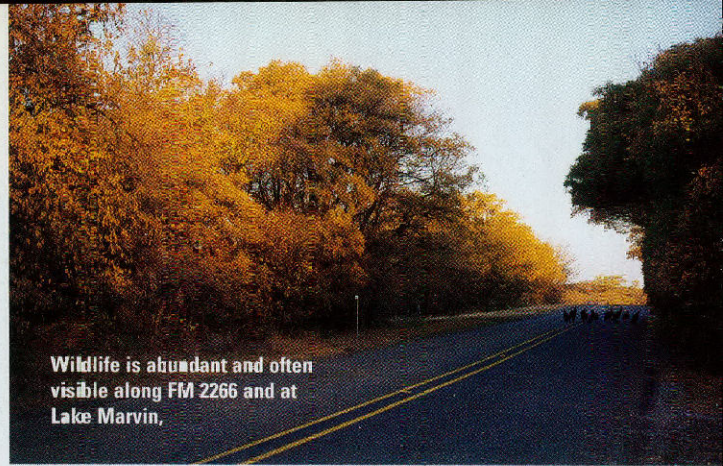
dice and ignore the rich wildlife habitat such streams nourish. White-tailed deer flick their tails nervously at me as I roll past. They are heading back into the thick brush of the bottoms to bed for the day. I'll go chasing them with bow and arrow later.

Late in the day I head for the prairie dog town in Gene Howe's Middle Pasture. (Obtain a map of the WMA from the sign-in booth at area headquarters on FM 2266. The road to the prairie dog town enters the De Arment Pasture half a mile east.) As I draw near, about to pass by a windmill that feeds both a watering trough and, through its overflow, a small dirt pond, a ferruginous hawk flushes from the pond and flies a short distance before landing in the sagebrush. He does not reappear, and I think it odd enough to warrant investigation. Camera in hand, I follow, and he flushes again but soon drops back to the ground. I jog toward the spot where he disappeared and almost stumble into him. No more than eight feet away he steps from behind a sagebush, opening his beak and spreading his wings in a defensive posture. You have not been the subject of a steely-eyed "Back up, Buster," glare until you have cornered a wet, 2-foot-tall hawk.

It's obvious this bird is unable to fly, and I'm afraid he might be injured. I shoot some pictures before heading back to report the sighting to wildlife technician Bob Rogers. We return and find no hawk; Bob speculates the bird had been bathing and was simply too wet to fly. I'm agog at finding a beautiful hawk in its bath and then running it down on foot. This rarely happens to me.

Sitting outside the WMA office later that afternoon, a squirrel scolding incessantly from a nearby tree spoils the tranquility. I look for the source of his irritation but see none. Suddenly, about 10 minutes later, another squirrel sprints down the trunk of a fallen tree near me — with a bobcat in hot pursuit. Both dart into tall grass; I hear a scuffle, and no squirrel climbs any of the trees in the vicinity. The bobcat has his supper, and it's time for me to seek mine, though I'm already sated on the day's sights and sounds.

The next morning, from atop a sand hill in the De Arment pasture, I watch the sun rise. I'm hoping to see the trees in the river bottom



Wildlife is abundant and often visible along FM 2266 and at Lake Marvin.

catch fire and line the river's course with yellow flame, but fog foils me. It's 35 degrees, and the fog masses and moves in as I watch. This isn't the fog of Carl Sandburg creeping in on little cat feet. This fog is a snake, winding its way between the hills in serpentine stealth and swallowing the trees. Even so, I get lucky again. Three white-tailed deer materialize as though made from fog themselves and pass within easy camera range.

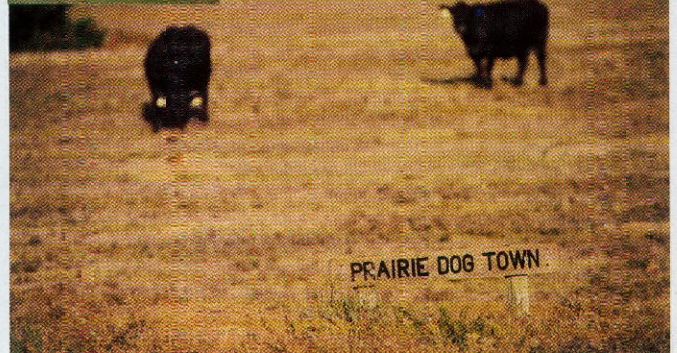
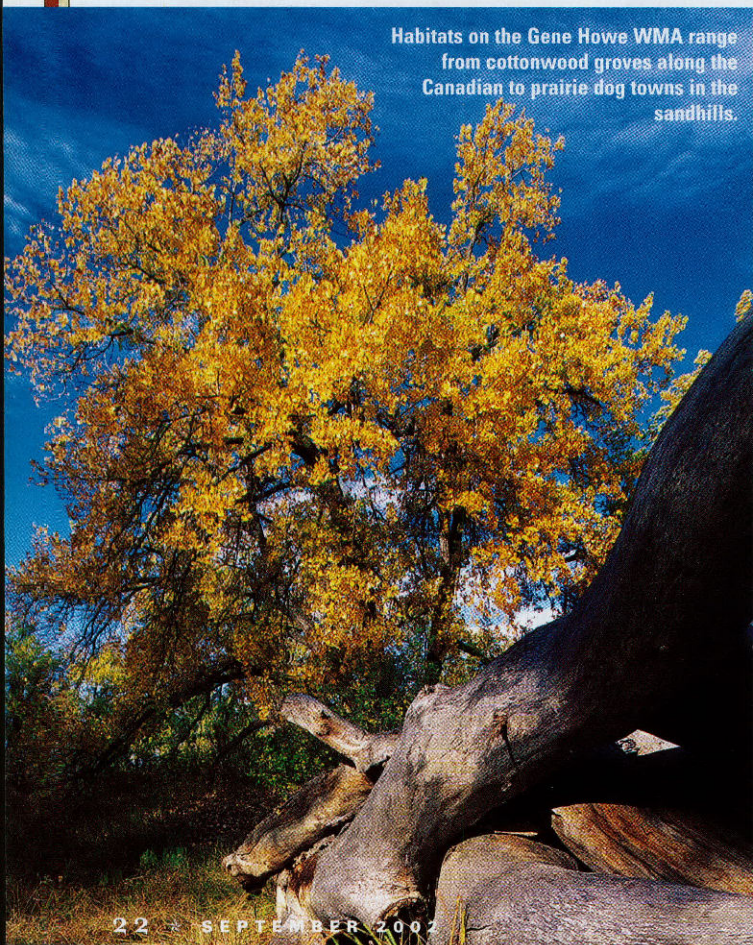
Once again I'm tempted to trade camera for bow, but instead I head for Lake Marvin National Recreation Area on the Black Kettle National Grasslands, some six miles east of Gene Howe WMA on FM 2266.

Black Kettle was a chief of the Cheyenne Indians who avoided death in the Sand Creek (Chivington) Massacre but was killed by troops led by George Armstrong Custer in 1868. The recreation area centers on a small artificial lake surrounded by wetlands, trees and brush. Most prominent are the cottonwoods, some as big as 21 feet around at the base. The ridges in their rough bark are on the same large scale, and buffalo loved to rub on the trunks. Early settlers said buffalo hair piled ankle deep in the bottoms around the trees. I would like to have seen it.

The lake is haven for waterfowl in the winter, and as I step out of the truck I can hear Canada geese honking. I estimate a million American coots dot the surface — only a slight exaggeration — and I smile as they bob for food beneath the surface, popping back up bottoms first sometimes, little butts surrounded by circles of ripples. But bigger ducks attract my attention, and as soon as I train binoculars on them I start seeing green heads: mallards, along with green-winged teal, pintails, gadwalls and wigeons. Duck season opens this weekend; I have my shotgun, waders and calls in the truck, and maybe some ducks will come visit me on the Gene Howe before I leave.

For now the ducks must remain a dream denied, so I strike out down one of the

Habitats on the Gene Howe WMA range from cottonwood groves along the Canadian to prairie dog towns in the sandhills.



PRAIRIE DOG TOWN



hiking trails that radiate from the camping area. There is no wind, but the dead leaves on the ground rustle constantly, and brush and trees seem to bustle. It's birds, hundreds and hundreds of birds, and one extremely anxious cottontail rabbit. Robins by the hundreds and a variety of warblers and sparrows decorate the trees and shrubs. Canada geese honk from the lake, and above me others arrive in V formation. And everywhere are those golden, glowing leaves pasted to a veil of blue.

That afternoon I finally give in to the urge to hunt. Camo-clad and bow in hand, I spend a few hours exploring the thickets along the river in the Bunkhouse and West Bull pastures on Gene Howe WMA. As the sun westers low, I earn an unexpected trophy. Crouching and worming my way through a tangle of undergrowth, I look up. There against the backdrop of the bluest of blue skies stands a cottonwood with leaves the goldest of golds. The rich contrast of saturated colors stops me in my tracks. I return to the truck and swap bow for camera. The deer will be here next year, though I may not. Thanks to photographs, memories of these leaves, and this day, will never fade. Shortly the sun gives me the day's final gift, a sunset any painter of western landscapes would have been proud to claim, set to the music of coyotes howling up a crescent moon.

My final day begins with a trip into the sandhills of the Gene Howe WMA to call coyotes. Within an hour, at three different stands, four coyotes come into camera range, deceived by the squalls of what they think is a rabbit in pain.

"Sucker," I think to myself as I snap photos of a beautiful coyote standing broadside 40 yards away. Then, thinking back over the pleasures of the last two days, I realize the coyote is not the only one who's been seduced. ★

For More Information

The annual Fall Foliage Festival takes place in Canadian and at Lake Marvin the third weekend of October. For dates and a schedule of events, contact the Canadian-Hemphill Chamber of Commerce at (806) 323-6234, <www.canadiantx.com>.

The Gene Howe Wildlife Management Area is about six miles east of Canadian on FM 2266. For information call (806) 323-8642. The area is profiled, along with 49 other WMAs, in the *Official Guide to Texas Wildlife Management Areas*, available from the University of Texas Press at (800) 252-3206 or <www.utexas.edu/utpress>. All users must register at the sign-in booth at area headquarters on FM 2266. A wildlife-viewing blind and nature trail are located in the West Bull pasture.

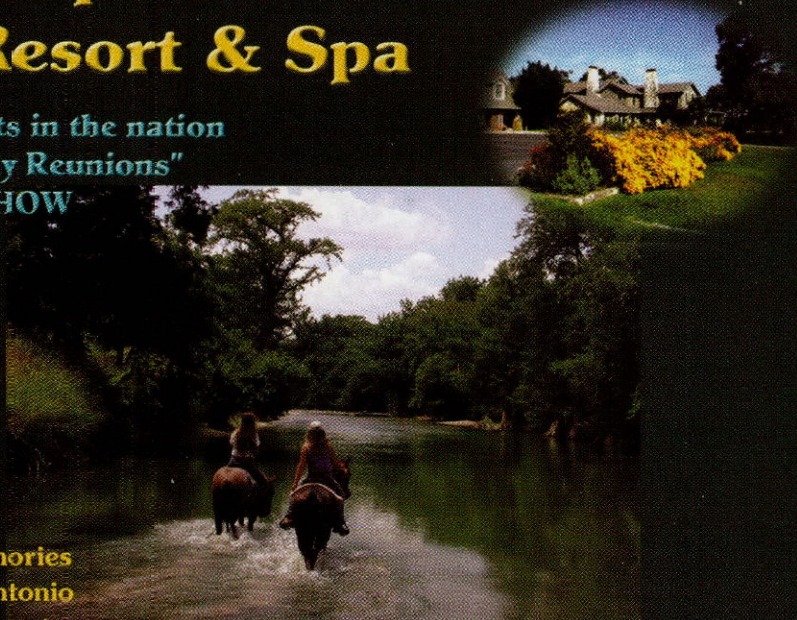
The Black Kettle National Grassland is open year-around; a fee is charged for camping. For details call (580) 497-2143.

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SPECIAL



*makes no distinctions. Downed birds become
satisfaction derives from the process rather than the contents.*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DENVER BRYAN

TEXT BY E. DONNALL THOMAS JR.

DELIVERY



LABRADOR RETRIEVERS & WATERFOWL *form an inseparable combination.*

Each complements the other and neither reaches its full expression in the human heart alone. They share common habitat in space and time: wetlands and stubble fields, dusk and dawn. Waterfowl define the world the Lab was born and bred to occupy.

Today's hunting Labs come in a variety of colors, from basic black to chocolate and multiple shades of yellow. While most owners think they know just what a Lab should look like, those opinions turn out to be utterly arbitrary in the field. What matters isn't the color of the dog's coat but the dog's determination. Jet black or honey blonde, Labs will rise in the dark, wait patiently on the blind's floor, crouch beside you while the birds work the decoys, and hit the water like a warm-blooded missile when the shooting is done.







(LEFT) Alert, eager eyes trained skyward... they know there's another retrieve out there somewhere.

(ABOVE) No breed waits for the arrival of game with the dignity of the Labrador.

(BELOW) Experienced waterfowlers all must learn to appreciate the art of waiting, and so must their dogs.





(ABOVE) Nothing brings out the best in a retriever like the swell of the surf and the pulse of the running tide.

(BELOW) The important transactions between hunters and dogs take place during the quiet hours.

After all, it's just the two of you aligned against the splendid loneliness wild places provide.

(RIGHT) Poodles can swim in swimming pools, but it takes a Lab to mix it up with water moccasins and snapping turtles.







(LEFT) While ducks on the wing require no elaboration of their natural grace, dead ducks always look best framed by the face of an attentive Labrador retriever.

(RIGHT) Despite the camaraderie of the duck blind, waterfowling remains a solitary undertaking. Not surprisingly, duck hunters tend to be solitary people, unaccustomed to intrusions of privacy. But Labs always remain welcome in the inner circle, an enduring tribute to the breed's personality.



Denver Bryan is an internationally published photographer who specializes in wildlife, fly fishing, outdoor recreation and Labrador retrievers. An ardent waterfowler and Lab owner for 20 years, Bryan's work has appeared on more than 100 magazine covers and has grazed the pages of such publications as *National Geographic*, *Audubon*, *Time*, *National Wildlife*, *Ducks Unlimited*, *Smithsonian*, *Field & Stream* and many others. For more on Bryan's photography, see his Web site at <www.denverbryan.com>.

E. Donnal Thomas Jr. writes regularly about the outdoor life for a number of publications, including *Grey's Sporting Journal*, *Alaska*, *Ducks Unlimited*, *Big Sky Journal*, *Sports Afield*, *Fly Rod and Reel*, *Retrieve Journal*, *Shooting Sportsmen*, *Outdoor Life* and *Fly Fishing Salt Waters*. The author of eight books, he recently completed *The Double Helix*, a detailed account of bowhunting in Africa.

Bryan and Thomas collaborated on *Labs Afield: Hunting with America's favorite retriever* (\$29.50, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.).

BIG WATER



PHOTO © RUSSELL A. GRAVES

R D U C K S

DUCK HUNTERS ON EAST TEXAS' BIG RESERVOIRS ARE REWARDED WITH NUMEROUS SPECIES OF BOTH DABBLING AND DIVING DUCKS — PLUS PLENTY OF LOCATIONS REACHABLE ON FOOT AS WELL AS BY BOAT.

*By Carl Frentress and
Kevin Kraai*



On weekend mornings during duck season in Northeast Texas,

the same scene plays out on numerous "big water" reservoirs. Long before dawn, boat ramps come alive. Beams of light rake the darkness. Outboard motors growl and churn. Dogs bound in and out of trucks and boats, eager for the coming hunt. Hunters check and recheck gear before motoring cautiously into the tail end of the night, following sometimes known and oftentimes unknown pathways to the shallows where ducks dwell.

THE REWARD FOR HOURS of preparation and lost sleep arrives on cupped wings beginning at dawn. It may be mallards descending through standing timber or gadwalls and green-winged teal working a shallow shoreline. Lesser scaup, ring-necked ducks and canvasbacks circle. Lower their landing gear and settle over deeper water, tails wagging. Whatever the species, big water means big fun for duck hunters.

It has been so only in fairly recent times. When Texas entered the drought of the 1950s, it had only 62 major reservoirs. Only Caddo Lake existed as a large natural water body. (Although often billed as the only natural lake in Texas, it, too, is held in a larger-than-natural pool by a low dam near Mooringsport, La.) After the flood of reservoir construction that followed the drought, Texas could boast more than 200 major reservoirs and nearly as many square miles of inland water as any other state

in the lower 48. The paradox is that the taking of land for reservoirs frequently destroyed substantial amounts of duck habitat. But the conversion of once-private property to public status rendered acreage accessible to more people, including duck hunters. Accordingly, the hunting and fishing public responded immediately to recreation areas nonexistent in earlier times.

Ten major reservoirs in Northeast Texas impound nearly 5 million acre-feet of water at normal levels. (These reservoirs are Cooper, Wright Patman, Tawakoni, Lake Fork, Cypress Springs/Monticello/Bob Sandlin, Lake O' the Pines, Caddo, Cedar Creek, Richard Chambers and Palestine.) That seems like a lot of duck habitat, but only a small amount of the vast acreage of these impoundments provides habitat of sufficient quality to attract ducks.

Because habitat conditions and duck behavior can change unexpectedly, most proficient big-water hunters do a lot of exploring and scouting. Frequent scouting is essential during rainy seasons, when runoff into reservoir basins can turn areas

that are flooded infrequently into duck hunting hot spots. Hunters who know how to “read” a lake and its varying conditions stand a much better chance of having a good hunt.

Hunters must look for the same thing ducks are seeking: places where food is abundant and accessible. Here’s where a little knowledge of lake history and how duck foods grow can be helpful. As a lake fills for the first time and creates shallow flooded areas, conditions briefly mimic the natural process that produces high-quality habitat attractive to wintering ducks. Shallow flooding of fields during the warmer months allows underwater plants to grow; in the fall, flooded standing timber gives ducks access to fallen acorns. New reservoirs undergo a brief spurt of rich food production, but after a while nutrients are leached from permanently flooded soils and the quality of duck habitat declines. Therefore, the pattern of post-impoundment history is a brief abundance of ducks followed by reduction to a generally modest number. Hunters who do not understand this process may continue to hunt the same areas without realizing the ducks have simply gone to places where the groceries are better.

Hunting location affects whether you encounter dabbling ducks or diving ducks. Shallow shorelines or coves with water only a foot or so deep attract dabbling species such as mallards, gadwalls or green-winged teal. More open, slightly deeper water will hold diving ducks such as lesser scaup, ring-necked ducks and canvasbacks. When these divers are feeding on submerged vegetation such as the hydrilla beds common in East Texas reservoirs, wigeons and coots will glean scraps of vegetation released by the feeding divers. Goldeneyes, buffleheads, ruddy ducks and red-breasted mergansers also are found in the open water of a reservoir’s main pools.

Since dabbling ducks prefer shallow water, getting to them may present a challenge. Some waterfowling adventurers load themselves, their dogs and their gear into canoes, pirogues, kayaks or

small johnboats and then paddle, drag, shove, skid and, when necessary, carry all the above accoutrements to the secret pockets where ducks are expected to visit.

Lack of a boat is not necessarily a handicap. Walk-in hunters can access shallow backwaters not reachable by watercraft, thus decreasing the competition for hunting spots often associated with big public waters. Serious duck hunters are known to rig small trailers they can pull behind mountain bikes. Others wear lightweight chest waders conducive to long walks and load backpacks with an assortment of gear such as lightweight decoys, coats, stools, ammunition, warm drinks and snacks. Using a strap to carry a firearm leaves chilled hands free to carry a flashlight to illuminate secret paths and trails.

★

Hunting locales on Northeast Texas reservoirs are scattered and variable in quality. Off-season information gathering is a good way to prepare. Maps and aerial photographs are excellent resources for identifying and exploring potential duck hunting locations. Lake maps and brochures can be obtained at offices located at each reservoir. The project offices of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have maps of Corps lakes in Texas. With a visit to one Corps project office you can obtain maps for several lakes of interest. Other reservoirs are owned and operated by river authorities or water supply districts. The local offices of the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have recent aerial photographs. An inquiry to the appropriate NRCS office can provide the opportunity to study aerial photographs for any given reservoir and its environs. Topographic maps and modern

HAVING TWO OR THREE CALLERS OFTEN WORKS BETTER THAN ONE PERSON ALONE. YOU ARE COMPETING FOR BIRDS IN THE AIR, AND YOU HAVE TO MAKE THOSE BIRDS COME TO YOU.





Top row, from left: American wigeon, canvasback, northern pintail.
Bottom row, from left: American coot, wood duck, mallard.

road atlases also are useful references.

While the best information is that which you gather and constantly update yourself, here are a few pointers about specific lakes to help you get started. Note that some of these lakes are at least partially included in a TPWD wildlife management area; a \$40 Annual Public Hunting Permit is required when hunting within the WMA.

- Caddo Lake: Permanent blinds are allowed in the non-WMA part of the lake, but they must have existed on Oct. 16, 1992, under provisions for preservation of cultural heritage blinds. Therefore, no new permanent blinds are allowed. "Most of the ducks will be in open pockets in the timbered areas," says TPWD biologist Charles Muller. "Use a camouflaged boat, tie up to a tree, set out decoys, and hunt out of the boat."

- Cooper Lake: Access is both by boat and by foot, but hunting is allowed only along the lakeshore and in a nearby wetland unit on the Cooper WMA. The best waterfowl hunting is during rising water levels and cold snaps. The most successful hunters hide camouflaged boats in flooded timber. The upper end of the lake has lots of standing timber and is dangerous to navigate in the dark unless you know the lake well. A good way to scout is to go bass fishing; the lake record largemouth tipped the scale at more than 15 pounds. Waterfowl hunting ends at noon each day.

- Lake Tawakoni: Both boat and walk-in access are available. The shallow shoreline of this lake is very marshy in wet years, making for good hunting using natural cover. In dry years the lake may recede a quarter of a mile or more from the normal shoreline, making walk-in hunting impractical.

- Pat Mayse Lake: Although the lake is no giant, it is long and narrow, and there are many coves where creeks enter the lake.

Waterfowl hunters can hunt out of a camouflaged boat or hide a boat around a point and walk back to the point to hunt.

- Toledo Bend Reservoir: This lake is one of the better examples of how important water levels are to waterfowl hunters. If the lake level is between 169 and 170 feet, the marsh in the southeastern part of North Toledo Bend Wildlife Management Area will have water. If the water level is 172 or above, you can get into the marsh with almost any boat, but if it is 170 or lower, you will need a very shallow-draft craft. Walk-in access is available on the northwest end of the impoundment.

Hunting ducks on big water requires some adjustments. Mike Barnett of Centerville says the most important thing is the size of the decoy spread. "Increase the number of decoys from the one or two dozen you would use in a cove to six to 10 dozen," he advises. "Also, scouting is very important on big lakes. Find where the birds naturally like to go. Hunt weekdays rather than weekends when possible. However, if you must hunt on a crowded weekend, stay longer than you would on a weekday. Hunters leaving will move birds around, and they may come to you."

Decoys are effective and are a necessity for consistently successful hunts on large reservoirs. Buy the best quality decoys you can afford. Ducks have excellent vision, and they see in color. For this reason, blemish-free decoys that closely resemble real birds are the most productive. When ducks consistently flare as they approach decoy spreads, hunters should check for glare or off-color blemishes among the decoys. Of course, ducks also detect other unnatural features such as faces and hands without camouflage, shiny metal surfaces, discarded shotshell boxes and the like. Ducks just don't take chances. Good decoys and effective camouflage are essential to overcome this wariness.

Duck Identification 101

Identification of ducks is mandatory for waterfowlers since bag limits vary for different species. With the birds in hand, identification usually is easy, even if printed field guides are needed. On the other hand, identification of ducks in flight is considerably more difficult. Hunters employ various signals to identify ducks in flight. Field marks, flight patterns, vocalizations and habitat preferences offer useful clues for identification. An excellent guide for this purpose is *Waterfowl Identification: The LeMaster Method*, by Richard LeMaster (Stackpole Books, \$9.95.)

Generally, dabbling ducks have wing beats slower than the rapid blur characteristic of diving ducks. Attention to subtle differences is also necessary. For instance, gadwalls and wigeons are dabbling ducks of about the same size and may be encountered in the same habitats. Both have distinct white patches on their wings. This field mark is easily visible on the trailing edge of gadwall wings or the leading edge of wigeon wings. This important visual cue often can be seen easily and quickly as ducks circle decoys.

Boating Basics

Hunting ducks on big water is not necessarily dangerous, but it does require extra caution. Operating a boat in the dark requires knowledge of boat trails, shoals, flooded stump fields, falling timber hazards, old fences, unmarked channels and creek fords. Fog or rain can increase the difficulty. Tim Fulcher, a veteran duck hunter at Lake Fork, uses a wide-beam johnboat to cross open water and reach shallow hunting locales. "The shallow-draft johnboat can handle rough water, but it also has the capability to travel into areas normally inaccessible to bass boats," says Fulcher. "Avoiding bass fishers is as important as not crowding other hunting parties." Fulcher also notes that choosing a launching ramp as near as possible to the hunting site reduces the long runs across potential timber and shoal hazards. "Safety and courtesy are as important to an enjoyable outing as finding ducks," he adds.

Loaded for Ducks

As a rule, 12-gauge shotguns offer a greater latitude of distance effectiveness on ducks than do smaller gauges. Furthermore, chokes less than full usually give better results. Most non-toxic shot — required for all waterfowl hunting — is very hard and does not deform much, if at all, when fired. The rounder pellets fly straighter, which leads to better patterns from more open chokes. The medium shot sizes (2s to 6s) are preferable because there are more pellets in the pattern.

Patterning guns and loads is the only realistic method to evaluate effectiveness. At least three patterns should be fired onto three separate pattern sheets to allow for variations. Count the pellet strikes inside a 30-inch circle over the dense portion of the pattern. According to research conducted by Tom Roster at CONSEP, the number of pellet strikes within the 30-inch circle required to assure clean kills ranges from a minimum of 85 for large ducks to 135 for small ducks. These densities typically can be achieved with an improved cylinder or modified choke, but the point of patterning is to determine what your gun will do with a particular load.

Mike Barnett manufactures duck calls and his son, Andy, has been the Texas state champion duck caller. They call differently when hunting big water. "Calling has to be done louder," says Mike. "Early in the season, I get a lot more aggressive because you are in competition with a lot of other hunters. You have to sound like more than one duck. Having two or three callers often works better than one person alone. You are competing for birds in the air, and you have to make those birds come to you. Later in the season, very soft calling or none at all will work better because ducks have been subjected to aggressive calling all season."

Dave Morrison, TPWD waterfowl program leader, points out one of the most enjoyable aspects of hunting ducks on big water.

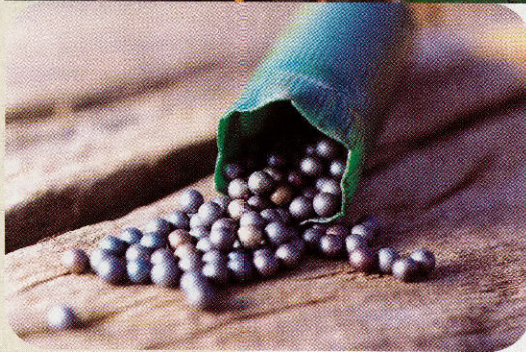
"Mostly you will be hunting diving ducks, and they respond really well to calls," he says. "Ring-necked ducks will probably make up most of your bag, and they are really good eating."

Ironically, most hunters pay far more attention to their gear than they do to the single most important factor in duck hunting success: their shooting skill. Tom Roster travels the country teaching shotgunning under the auspices of the Cooperative North American Shotgunning Information Program (CONSEP), which is funded by various conservation agencies, including the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "Shooting test after shooting test reveals that it takes the average duck hunter six shots to bag a duck," says Roster. "This means that the average duck hunter brings home only about four ducks for every box of 25 shells. Poor shooting skill is the No. 1 problem. Second is shooting beyond one's maximum shooting skill distance." Roster emphasizes the importance of patterning one's shotgun to find the most effective load. A series of videos that can help you become a better shooter is available from CONSEP by calling (541) 884-2974.

To a certain extent, situations encountered in big-water duck hunting have the potential to compromise good shooting behavior. The open expanse of water and sky can make it difficult to judge distances. Shooting at ducks at ranges beyond which clean

kills can be made is called sky-busting. Avoid this by placing decoys no more than 35 yards from your blind and not working birds until they are over the spread. (Getting ducks to decoy is, after all, the essence of duck hunting.) Also, pass up going-away shots: vital areas are much easier to penetrate when birds are head-on or crossing.

While hunting ducks on large reservoirs presents a special set of problems, doing so does allow hunter access to reasonable numbers of birds. With dedication, ingenuity, study and diligence, hunters can find productive duck hunting opportunities on the large reservoirs that have come to characterize much of the landscape of Northeast Texas. ★





PAINTING BY ROB FLEMING, TPWD

**“THE LAND HAS GOT TO SUPPORT YOU,” SAYS JESS WOMACK. “WE HAVE FUN HERE,
 BUT WE HAVE TO MAKE SOME MONEY SO WE CAN AFFORD TO HAVE THE FUN.”**

benefits wood storks, American white pelicans and a host of other species. Alligators thrive in the wetlands, and wild turkeys and white-tailed deer roam the uplands, which contain huge live oaks as well as extensive areas of brush typical of South Texas. “If I had to describe this place in one word, that word would be diversity,” says Homestead.

Diversity characterizes not only the habitat types on the ranch but also the way the Womacks manage the recreational uses of the land. “The land has got to support you,” says Jess Womack. “We have fun here, but we have to make some money so we can afford to have the fun.” The Womacks still run cattle on the ranch using a rotational grazing program. They also lease deer, waterfowl and feral hog hunting and sell alligator tags to hunters. The main waterfowl impoundment is licensed as a fish farm and produces crayfish, catfish, alligator gar and blue crabs. Youth hunts for deer and feral hogs help control populations.

The Womacks’ future plans for the ranch include producing seed for restoration of native grasses such as Indian grass and eastern gamma grass. Through TPWD’s Landowner Incentive Program, 2,000 acres of mesquite-infested uplands will be converted to open grasslands for possible future reintroduction of Attwater’s prairie chickens. Another priority is the restoration

of cleared river bottom into hardwood forests.

The Womacks’ success is often the topic of conversation in the old McFaddin general store, which has been converted into a café popular with locals, many of whom are relatives. “My cousins all thought I was crazy to begin with, but they are beginning to come around to our point of view,” Jess Womack says. “We have several cousins who are trying to tie together on the prairie chicken project, and some other cousins are beginning to do the same things with their property that we’ve done with ours. They see that it is the right thing to do.”

Doing “the right thing” is important to the Womacks. “We have been given this land to take care of and be stewards of,” says Lou Womack. “We think it is right to leave it better than we found it for our children and for future generations of Texans.”

“I feel our greatest reward for doing this is that our children would rather be here than just about anywhere else,” adds Jess Womack. “Every one of our four children has expressed an interest in keeping the ranch and maintaining it in the form we are putting it into now. We are looking forward to that fifth or sixth generation making a living off this land, and we hope we will be able to do it with these various programs and just a little luck from Mother Nature.” ★



FOR BASIC WOODSMANSHIP, PATIENCE AND DISCIPLINE —
AS WELL AS A HUNTING EXPERIENCE WITHOUT A HEFTY PRICE TAG —
HUNTERS OF ALL AGES CAN APPRECIATE SQUIRREL HUNTING.

SIMPLY SQUIRRELS

BY HENRY CHAPPELL / PHOTOS BY GRADY ALLEN

The sounds affect me still: bits of husk and shell falling through leaves, tiny incisors chiseling the hull of a nut, the swish of a branch that could be just breeze in the treetops, but isn't. I may not hear my pulse as I did when I was 12, sitting with my back against a beech tree, waiting for shooting light. But I'll draw a quick breath and hold it for an instant, listening.

MY HUNTING LIFE BEGAN with these sounds. And an aching neck and eyes dry as parchment from searching the treetops for that suspicious hump on a limb, a shaft of sunlight on silver bristles or the involuntary flick of a tail.

Later, my teenage friends and I eased my father's dented aluminum fishing boat into quiet coves, then climbed the wooded hills in the predawn darkness. Most days we collected more poison ivy welts than squirrels, but we learned stealth and patience, beech from hickory, and that there was nothing to fear in dark woods. In short, we learned to be hunters.

I've since taken up more complex and expensive kinds of hunting, yet the early autumn sound of a squirrel cutting a pecan still moves me as much as clacking antlers or the sound of wings slicing air over a decoy spread. Squirrel hunting was simple, restorative and nearly always good.

Fortunately for woods-loving Texans like me, it still is.



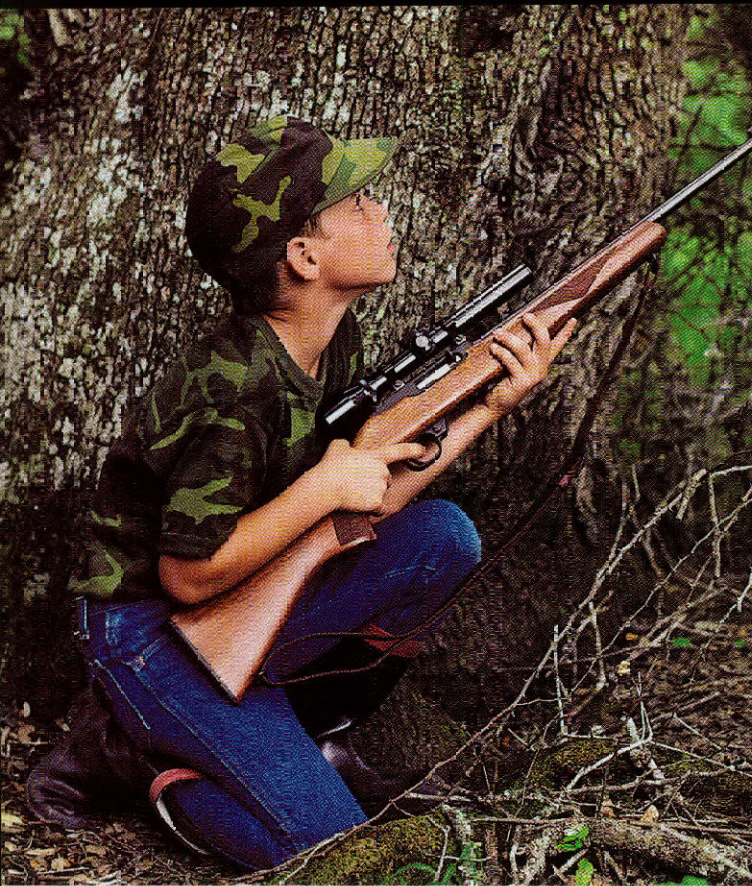
Texans hunt two squirrel species: the gray or cat squirrel and the larger fox squirrel. Both are abundant, widespread and largely ignored. "Squirrel hunting here in the Pineywoods is mostly overlooked," says Gary Calkins, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Pineywoods district leader. "I wish more hunters would take an interest in it. It's fun; it's inexpensive; it's readily available."

Pineywoods and Post Oak Savannah counties hold a May squirrel season, a fall/winter season running October through January, and a short youth-only season in late September. In general, the limit is 10 per day and 20 in possession in counties east of Interstate 35. Some counties in other regions allow squirrel hunting year-round with no bag or possession limits. Consult TPWD's 2002-2003 *Outdoor Annual* for details.

Most experienced hunters consider the gray squirrel the quicker and warier of the two, but neither is a pushover. Backwoods squirrels can be as skittish as deer and turkeys.

Calkins recommends that hunters concentrate on edge or transition areas where mature pines mix with hardwood bottoms. Pines should be old enough to provide a fairly open canopy and produce a high volume of cones. The hardwood bottoms provide mast during the fall and winter months and leaves, forbs, buds and insects during the spring and summer. Squirrels also relish domestic grain. Never pass up a wooded strip along the edge of a maize field.

Successful hunters scout just before and throughout hunting season. Squirrels move with food availability. Food production can vary greatly from year to year with rainfall, summer temperatures and other factors. Different species of nuts and fruits ripen at different times of the year. Squirrels may feed on blackberries in May, sweetgum fruit in September and white-oak acorns in November.



BE ALERT FOR RUSTLING IN THE CANOPY. THE SOUND OF CUTTING OR FALLING HUSKS OR A SQUIRREL'S SHARP WARNING "BARK."

A stand of blackjack oaks that yielded a limit last year may be devoid of acorns this year.

After locating fresh cuttings — chewed husks, hulls and nutmeat — most hunters either move slowly through the woods, stopping often to listen and look (still hunting) or find a vantage point and wait quietly for the squirrels to appear (stand hunting). The conditions determine the best method to use. At times, a combination of the two approaches works best.

Stand hunting starts half an hour before sunrise. Sit still and wait for the woods to come alive. Action will come quickly if it comes at all. If you drop a squirrel cleanly, mark the fall and stay put. Squirrels are bothered little by gunfire. Another one may appear shortly.

Still hunting can be very effective when damp ground allows quiet walking or when squirrels are scattered due to very abundant or very scarce food. If in doubt, slow down. Stop every few steps to look and listen. Scan the ground and tree trunks as well as the branches. Squirrels often perch on stumps and logs to feed. Frightened squirrels sometimes chatter out on limbs or move around a tree trunk opposite danger. If a squirrel disappears in a tree, find a good vantage point and wait; it may peep over a limb to see what spooked it, or it may lose its nerve and bolt. If that fails, move slowly around the tree watching for movement or keep still while a partner moves to the other side of the tree.

Be alert for rustling in the duff or canopy, the sound of cutting or falling husks or a squirrel's sharp warning "bark." Keep to the shadows. Watch for fresh sign. Take a stand at promising sites.

When the action slows, homemade or commercially available calls that imitate a squirrel's scolding bark will sometimes coax a reply or movement.

Squirrels are tough. Shotguns choked modified to full and high brass shells loaded with number-six shot work well. Some purists

THE TALE OF TWO SQUIRRELS

The gray squirrel's name describes it well: gray on top with buff underfur often showing on the back, shoulders and head; white underside; long, bushy tail with silver-tipped gray hairs. Grays run 16 to 20 inches in length and weigh about a pound.

Although gray squirrels are found in dense woodlands throughout the eastern third of the state, the Pineywoods in far East Texas hold the highest concentrations. The Post Oak Savannah region just to the west holds good numbers as well. Grays prefer mature hardwood bottoms and dense upland forests.

The fox squirrel is gray on top with rust or cinnamon feet and underside and a bushy cinnamon and black tail. Young hunters who've toted half a limit back to camp may question the species' small game designation. The burly rodents weigh as much as two pounds and reach 27 inches in length.

Fox squirrels thrive in relatively open, mixed hardwood and pine forests. Although the greatest numbers are found in the Pineywoods and Post Oak Savannah regions, they're common in open woods, suburbs and city parks over the eastern two-thirds of the state. The plump larcenist laying siege to your bird feeder? Probably a fox squirrel.

Although fox squirrels are more adaptable than grays and inhabit a larger portion of the state, their population has declined in parts of their traditional Pineywoods range due to timber industry practices. According to Gary Calkins, the conversion of open pine and hardwood forests to dense, even-age pine plantations tips the ecological balance in favor of gray squirrels.

Both species nest in holes in tree trunks and build leaf and twig nests in the branches of trees. Fox squirrels typically have two litters a year; breeding activity peaks in January and February and again in May and June. Gray squirrels breed throughout the year; however, breeding peaks in July and August and again in early winter. Both have a gestation period of about 45 days and give birth to three or four blind and naked young. The young remain in the nest seven to eight weeks and are weaned at about two months of age. Young fox squirrels are on their own after three months; gray squirrels remain in family groups until about six months of age.

Squirrels forage most actively during the first hour or so of daylight and just before sunset. Mast, buds, fruit, seeds, insects and amphibians make up the bulk of their diet. Squirrels are prolific, though accidental, tree planters. They bury nuts and acorns for winter use, then relocate them by smell. Fortunately, they recover only a small percentage.



Gray squirrel



Fox squirrel

GOING PUBLIC

Some of Texas' best squirrel hunting can be found on public land. Pineywoods district leader Gary Calkins recommends Caddo Lake WMA, Alabama Creek WMA, Moore Plantation WMA and the Angelina Neches/Dam B WMA. The Crockett, Angelina, Sam Houston and Sabine national forests offer good hunting as well.

In the Post Oak Savannah Region, district leader Kevin Herriman recommends the Old Sabine Bottom WMA, Pat Mayse WMA, Engling WMA, Keechi Creek WMA, and White Oak Creek WMA. On the latter, the first two weeks of October are reserved for squirrel hunters.

For information on public hunting, youth hunts, permits and regulations, contact Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, (800) 792-1112, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us>.



prefer scoped .22 rifles loaded with long-rifle, hollow-point cartridges. Remember, though, a .22 bullet can carry hundreds of yards. Never shoot a rifle into the treetops. Always ask yourself where the bullet might go if you miss.

Wear camouflage or drab clothing where it's legal. Blaze orange may be required while hunting on public land; check with the proper authority.

Of course there's more to squirrel hunting than taking game. "I can get more squirrels still hunting, but I seldom hunt that way," says Donny Lynch of Marshall. "I use dogs. I enjoy training dogs, working dogs and living with dogs. I'm just a dog hunter."

When he isn't guiding anglers on Caddo Lake or Lake O' the Pines, Lynch is likely in the woods with his squirrel dogs — a cur, Molly and two rat terriers, Chance and Minnie. "All I want the dog to do is to bark just enough to show me the tree the squirrel is in," says Lynch. "I don't want her to get on a tree and hammer it like a coon dog. If she makes too much racket, the squirrel will be gone by the time I get there."

Curs, or "cur dogs," as enthusiasts call them, (not to be confused with mongrels) are versatile hunting dogs bred to trail large game and tree raccoons, squirrels and opossums. Most are of hound and sporting breed lineage. Although several strains are recognized by the United Kennel Club, many of the curs that are treeing squirrels in the South today are products of careful local breeding. Lynch's cur, Molly, was bred from an old line developed especially for squirrel hunting in the Pineywoods.

Feists are lively, small- to medium-sized treeing dogs, mostly of terrier lineage. Several strains are officially recognized, but throughout the rural South, "feist" or "fice dog" usually means any small dog that trees squirrels. Lynch's two rat terriers hunt at a dead run, trailing by both sight and scent.

Lynch prefers to work his dogs during the May hunting season and early in the fall season. "All my life," he says, "I've heard that the dog hunting is best after the leaves are off the trees so you can see the squirrel. But that's a myth. The more leaves on the tree, the

THROUGHOUT THE RURAL SOUTH, "FEIST" OR "FICE DOG" USUALLY MEANS ANY SMALL DOG THAT TREES SQUIRRELS.

more likely it is that a squirrel is going to stay put."

A treed squirrel can be tough to find. Lynch frequently relies on a hunting partner (often his wife, Lucille) to move to the opposite side of the tree and shake a bush to spook the squirrel into motion. "If that tree has a vine on it and you shake it, that cat squirrel is fixin' to do something," Lynch says. Sometimes I'll shake a vine and four or five squirrels take off, and the next thing I know, I'm out of shells."



Want to pass the hunting tradition on to the next generation without ruining your budget? Take a youngster squirrel hunting. There's no better way to teach basic woodsmanship, patience and discipline. TPWD makes it easy with annual youth-only (under 17) and youth/adult hunts held on several East Texas WMAs.

"We hold youth hunts at the Angelina-Neches/Darn B WMA, and over the past few years I've seen a dramatic increase in interest," says Calkins. "It's good hunting, and you don't need a high-dollar lease." Little wonder squirrels attract serious hunters of all ages. ★

HENRY CHAPPELL'S novel, *The Callings*, is due out this month from Texas Tech University Press.

CONTACTS

SQUIRREL DOGS:

United Kennel Club: <www.ukcdogs.com/curfeists.html>

CALLS:

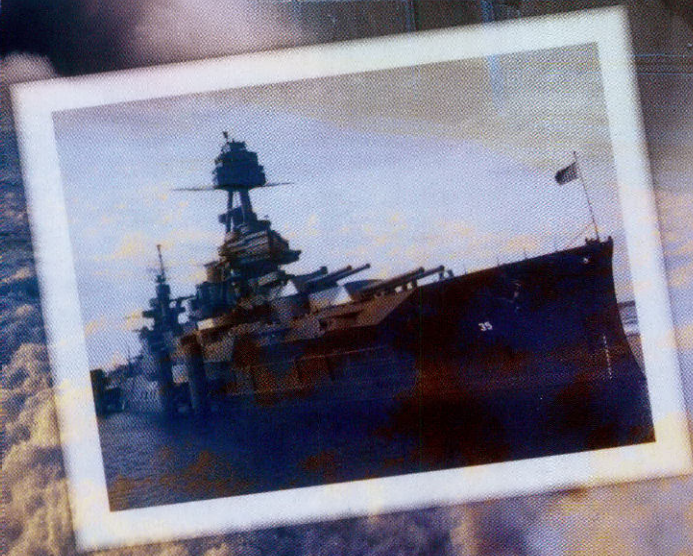
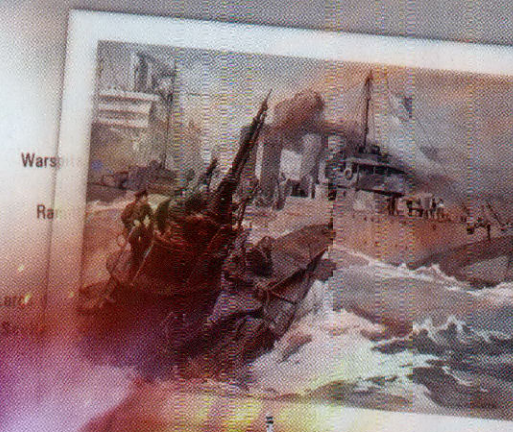
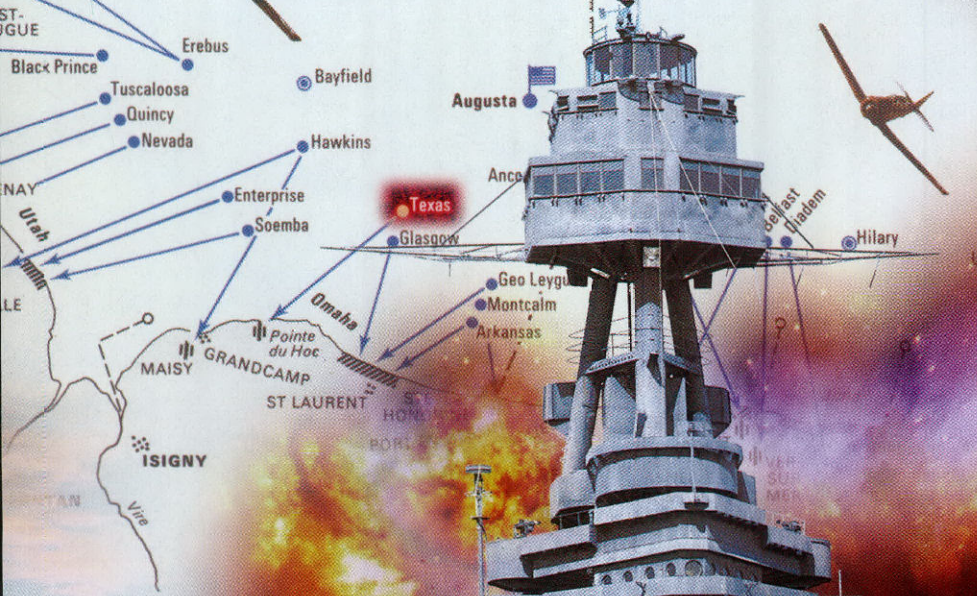
Knight & Hale, (800) 501-9357, <www.knight-hale.com>

Cabela's, (800) 237-4444, <www.cabelas.com>

Bass Pro Shops, (800) EASSPRC, <www.basspro.com>

Western Task Force
(American)

Eastern Task Force
(British)





LUCK, BE A LADY

In 35 years of duty on the world's seas and service in two world wars, the Battleship *Texas* was stalked by U-boats and ravaged by mines, artillery, kamikazes and dive bombers while posting miraculously low loss of life among her many crews.

By Jim Anderson
Illustration by David Peters

At about 1315 hours on the afternoon of June 25, 1944,

in the English Channel off Cherbourg, Chaplain Moody thought his number was up. The Battleship *USS Texas*, in concert with several other American warships, hurled big-gun vengeance on the fortified German defenses along the French coastline. The Allies desperately needed the harbor at Cherbourg, and the Germans were equally desperate to hold it. The battle to liberate Europe, launched less than three weeks earlier on D-Day, had only just begun.

The chaplain watched from the elevated vantage of the navigation bridge as a sobering number of enemy guns returned fire. Too many shells exploded too close, battering the ship with shrapnel and flooding the decks with seawater. He paused with his hand mike, searching for the right words. Along with his clerical duties he had taken another, not strictly official, role: he was allowed to use the ship's loudspeaker system to narrate battle action for the hundreds of men whose jobs kept them below decks. For boys who grew up listening to baseball play-by-play on the radio, the chaplain put pictures to the sounds raging above their heads.

The loudest hellfire came from the *Texas*' five pairs of colossal guns firing explosive shells 14 inches in diameter, weighing 1,500 pounds and capable of striking targets up to 15 miles away. For those working below, layers of steel plate muffled the thunder somewhat, but the recoil of the big fourteens sent shudders through the bones of the ship, shattering paint and nerves alike. The German guns were zeroing in on the attacking vessels, seeming to direct especially deadly attention on the *Texas*. Moody laid down his mike to speak to Christensen, the helmsman at the wheel. Capt. Baker and Lt. Harper stepped off the navigation bridge onto an observation platform for a better view of the battle. As Moody resumed his place near the aft bulkhead, a German shell found its mark. "There was a tremendous explosion in the forward part of the bridge," he says. "It seemed to me as though the whole thing had just flown up. The mike was knocked out of my hand. My helmet flew off. I was slammed up against the bulkhead, the chart table. Everything went black."

An enemy shell had struck the armored conning tower directly below the navigation bridge and glanced upward, detonating just beneath the deck of the bridge. The half-inch steel deck plates blew apart in a murderous hail of shrapnel and torn rivets. Men standing in the forward part of the bridge took the blast in their feet and legs and were thrown against the steel overhead. Seconds later

Moody opened his eyes to find himself alive but surrounded by bloody carnage. "All I remember is that as soon as I came to... I felt the impact of a man who had been blown three or four feet right up against me. As he started to fall, I caught him in my arms and lowered him to the deck."

Moody snapped out of his shock and began giving first aid, along with others on the scene. Several men were gravely wounded, the worst being Christensen, who lay unconscious, his legs in bloody shreds. Moody applied tourniquets and injected morphine, then grabbed a phone dangling by its wire.

"I picked it up and jiggled the button. And the operator answered... I said, 'The bridge... we've been hit. Get some medics and stretcher bearers, and get some help up here as soon as you can.'"

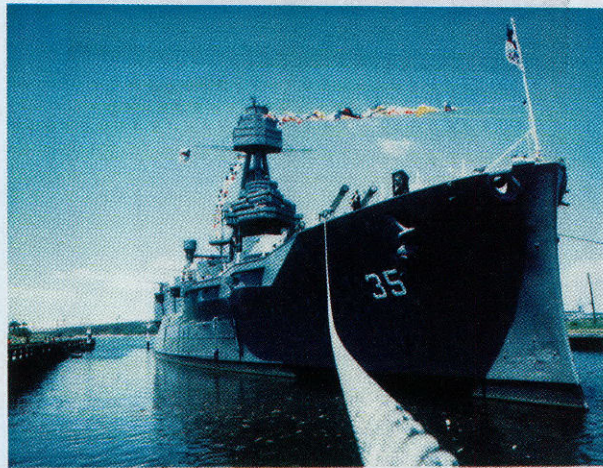
The wounded were rushed below as the shelling continued. Seaman Umholtz, one of those who survived, came aboard years later and toured sick bay: "We kept on firing for about three or four hours afterwards. They had us down here on the bottom decks, the officer was taking care of me. We kept firing. Some of these old rivets was popping out of the overhead down there... we was firing so damn fast it was popping rivets."

Meanwhile, a seaman named Robbins had scribbled a few quick notes in his diary: "We are in one hell of a hot spot... hit on our signal bridge... doctors and medical men taking care of casualties... seems that the concussion from our guns that are continually firing is tearing the damn ship apart."

In his postwar memoirs, a German commander of one of the supposedly invincible Cherbourg batteries wrote, "I thought the American Navy was going to kill us all."

Finally, word came that ground forces could deal with the remaining German emplacements, and Adm. Bryant ordered the damaged ship back to port in England. Surgeons and medics worked on through the night. One man lost both his legs but survived. Several others were variously maimed but also recovered. But despite heroic efforts, Christensen died that same day.

After doing what he could to console the wounded, Moody went late and weary to his bunk, haunted by the words of the 91st Psalm: "A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." It had come nigh him all right, but it had passed him by.



*SHE WAS BUILT IN THE SHIPYARDS
OF NEWPORT NEWS, VA., LAUNCHED
IN 1912 AND COMMISSIONED
BY THE NAVY IN 1914.*

NATIONAL HISTORIC
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING LANDMARK

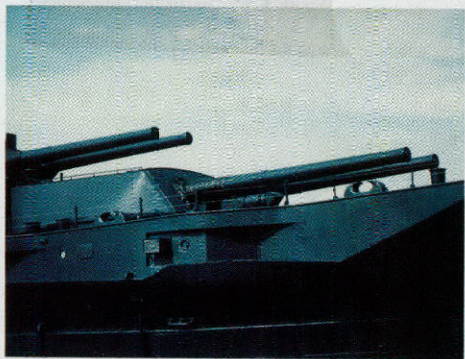
USS TEXAS

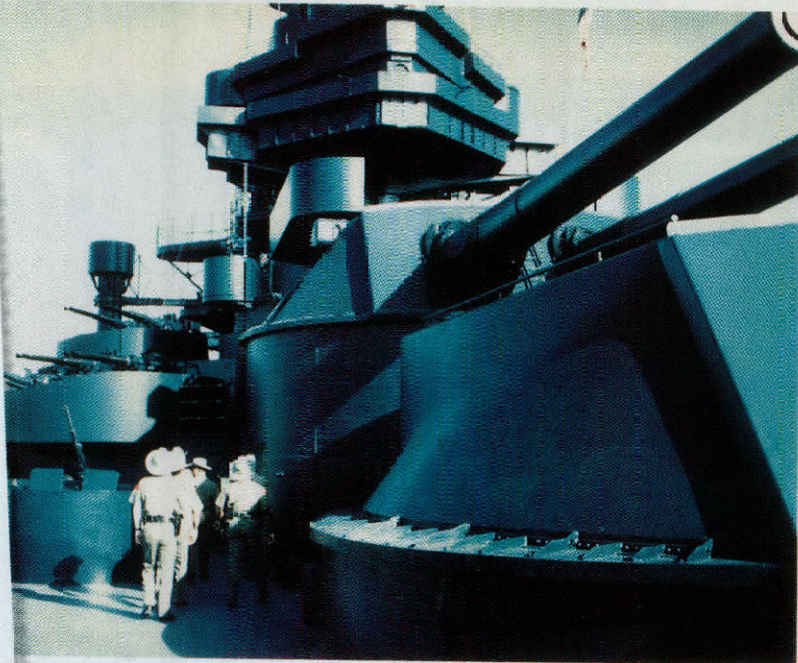
LAST STEAM ENGINE DRIVEN BATTLESHIP
FIRST STEEL HULL STEEL FRAME STEAM ENGINE
LARGEST AFOAT (17,000 TONS) AT COMMISSIONING (1914)
NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING & DRYDOCK CO.
U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF SHIPS
THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS-1975

WELCOME ABOARD

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THE BATTLESHIP TEXAS COMMISSION





NAVIGATING THE TWISTS OF FATE

War writes these kinds of stories by the thousands, and certainly the *Texas* had seen heavy action before, including the invasion of North Africa in 1942 and D-Day at bloody Omaha, where she pounded the German defenses for 12 days while taking aboard wounded Army Rangers from the grisly beach landings. But in retrospect the episode off Cherbourg is especially noteworthy for the astounding fact that, in all her 35 years of active duty upon the world's seas, through two world wars, stalked by U-boats, plagued by mines, artillery, kamikazes and dive bombers, Helmsman Christensen was her one and only fatality in battle. (Accidents claimed a few lives, and there was one suicide.)

She was built in the shipyards of Newport News, Va., launched in 1912 and commissioned by the Navy in 1914. (The faint stamp of Carnegie Steel can still be found on structural beams.) At the time, her five pairs of 14-inch guns made her the most powerful weapon in the world. Ironically, her coal-fired boilers and steam-driven piston engines were outdated technology from the start but were still practical for efficiency's sake. (Her boilers were converted to oil-fired in the 1920s. Many other improvements and armaments were added over time to keep her battleworthy.) She survives today, by various twists of fate, as the oldest of her kind still afloat and a unique artifact dating back to Teddy Roosevelt's "Big Stick" era.

The *Texas* benefited from a series of lucky coincidences. During World War I, she served 13 months in the North Atlantic as a part of the Allies' Grand Fleet, but due to flukes of timing and weather, was never able to fully engage the German fleet before Armistice. (A fate that Capt. Victor Blue and his men, who had itched for a fight, did not consider particularly lucky.) After World War I, she would have been scrapped if not for an international arms treaty prohibiting the building of new warships, making existing ships valuable assets. By 1940 she was a relic, but another war required her services.

When the U.S. fleet was attacked in 1941 at Pearl Harbor, many

ships were destroyed or badly damaged, but the *Texas* happened to be stationed in Maine awaiting convoy duty. Then, after surviving the invasions of North Africa, Normandy and southern France, she was dispatched to the Pacific theater, where she was a key force in the invasions of both Okinawa and Iwo Jima. At Okinawa, Capt. Baker kept his men on General Quarters (battle stations) for 57 days straight, which caused much grumbling but undoubtedly saved the ship from a kamikaze hit. Dozens of the suicide planes dove on the *Texas* and all were shot down, some within yards of the deck.

After the war, one of the few surviving German U-boat captains claimed he had the *Texas* dead in his torpedo sights in 1941 but was denied permission to fire by his admiralty.

Her last close call came in 1948. She was mothballed in Baltimore and destined for destruction by gunnery practice but concerned Texans launched a drive to save her. She became the nation's first memorial battleship, dedicated on April 21, 1948. In 1983, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department was

given responsibility for the ship as a state historic site. Now time itself is her only enemy. Ensuring her survival is a never-ending task.

SHE SURVIVES TODAY, BY VARIOUS TWISTS OF FATE, AS THE OLDEST OF HER KIND STILL AFLOAT AND A UNIQUE ARTIFACT DATING BACK TO TEDDY ROOSEVELT'S "BIG STICK" ERA.

GLOWING TOILETS, TWO-BIT HAIRCUTS AND POLKA TORTURE

Every step now taken aboard the *Texas* is a step back in time. Every cramped passageway leads to memories. Her old sailors still come aboard, fewer each year, to look into their own past and tell their stories.

Retired Rear Adm. (formerly Lt.) Harper added his witness to the battle stories, but a visit below deck made him recall certain peculiarities about the toilets:

"You know, we all spent a lot of time in the head at night, since many of us had never been to sea before. All those little phosphorescent things that lit up in the sea. It looked beautiful in your seawater toilet." (Toilets were flushed with a constant stream of seawater. Phosphorescent microorganisms appeared seasonally.)...

and this Bryant was one sharp son of a gun. He had all the German plane silhouettes pasted to the backs of the toilet doors. So if you're sitting on the throne, you could look at nothing but the silhouettes of German aircraft."

It's a cliché but true — a ship is like a town. Below decks, the *Texas* had a post office, dentist's office, barber shop, tailor shop, laundry, cafeteria, canteen, brig (jail), sick bay and even a soda fountain, called a "geedunk" stand. Sailors made purchases with "chits," coupons bought from the ship's service store. Haircuts were a quarter, smokes were a nickel a pack, ice cream was a nickel a cup — and postage was free. (The average enlisted man's pay was about \$25 a month.)

For fire precaution, the galley was on the main deck and food was sent below by dumbwaiter. Maybe it's nostalgia, but vets still praise the food. Seaman Temple even liked the beans: "I don't remember any bad food... I still like my beans... red navy beans... beans and cornbread every Wednesday and Saturday for breakfast... Our pancakes were always called 'bumpers.' We had pancakes once a week."

Seaman Umholtz liked everything: "I liked them powdered eggs. Every two or three weeks we'd get fresh eggs. But I liked them powdered eggs. Anybody that thinks they didn't eat good in the Navy is crazy... You'd be surprised at the menu we had at Christmas... turkey. Everybody was eating poor, but we had turkey and ham. The bakery was very good."

However, battle fare was another matter, as noted by diarist Robbins, around midnight on Aug. 15, 1944, during the relentless bombardment of southern France: "All we've eaten is something they called sandwiches and some funny looking liquid they said was coffee. You'd never be able to tell what it was by tasting it. I ate it though and will have to do it a lot more yet." Bravery came in various forms.

Even in the worst of times, there were moments of respite outside danger zones. Harper liked to get above it all: "My favorite off-duty daytime retreat out of the eyes of everybody was the top of the tripod. At the top of the foremast, which was a flat deck up there, and it was 144 feet above sea level. I would go up there and lie down and get a tan... My boss knew where I was, but I was off duty."

And there were a few record players on board, which may or may not have been a good thing, according to Harper: "About 700 sailors came on board with the 'Beer Barrel Polka' record by the Andrews Sisters... which is a wonderful recording, but they were going constantly. And everybody was getting crazy, the admiral, and the captain, and the officers... So finally they sent out a notice, 'All Beer Barrel Polka records are to go over the side at ten o'clock tomorrow.' So they were thrown over the side like Frisbees. Well, a couple of days went and it was quiet. Pretty soon we hear 'Beer Barrel Polka' hitting again. Well, they finally had a search of the ship. They got every one of those damn records, including three of mine." Sacrifice also came in various forms.

A BIG STEEL MELTING POT

It would be 50 years yet before they were told they were the "Greatest Generation." Back then, they were who they were — big-city wiseguys, small-town Joes, slow-talking farm boys, fraternity swells and knucklehead dropouts — all cramped together in suffocatingly close quarters. Privacy was virtually nonexistent.

Bunks were called "racks" for good reason. Men were bunked four or five high, like so much cargo, in every available space, with hardly enough room between for a man to turn over. Where there wasn't room for bunks, hammocks were slung from hooks. The billeting scheme seemed to follow the canned sardine example. Men who skipped too many showers risked a vigilante scrubbing by offended shipmates.

Considering the ethnic and cultural stew, it seems they mostly got along. Basic training helped conform behavior somewhat, but

no doubt there was friction that didn't make the official records. Theft and fighting were fairly routine but order was generally maintained. Perhaps it was because the brig cells were tiny, dark closets of solid steel with a bucket for a toilet, bread and water for rations, and a Marine guard with a .45. Or perhaps it was because war does indeed inspire camaraderie. To be among the vets when they meet in reunion is pretty convincing proof of the latter.

These men saw history being made faster than it could be recorded, and some have an ability to capture remarkable moments in a few words. Captain's Marine Orderly Fletcher remembers overlooking Iwo Jima from the ship, just after the Marines finally took the island: "The chaplain came on the PA system and said, 'Attention all hands. Look toward Mount Suribachi...'. So we looked... you could see the flag go up over there... And that was a spine-tingling thing... it's something I'll never forget."



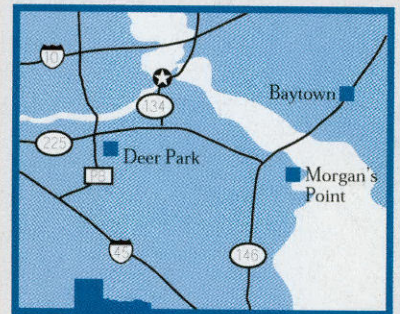
Having worn many coats, mostly gray, the old ship now appears as she did during her late Pacific period, dressed in a handsome deep blue called "Measure 21," which was meant to camouflage her details from enemy pilots. Her interior furnishings show the particulars of shipboard life during World War II, like scenes frozen in time. Display and archival work is ongoing, and maintenance is a perpetual chore. The work of her staff, contributors and volunteers will never be finished.

And still, nobody knows why ice cream was called "geedunk" or why candy was called "pogey bait." And nobody knows why, with potential disaster dogging her around the globe for 35 years, so few lives were lost. There must be a lot of luck in the old lady. ★

JIM ANDERSON is a freelance writer based in Austin.

Getting There

The Battleship *Texas* State Historic Site is adjacent to the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site, about 22 miles east of downtown Houston, between Pasadena and La Porte. From Houston's I-610 Loop, drive east on Texas 225, exit on Texas 134, turn left and follow the signs. Visiting hours are daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call (281) 479-2431 or visit <www.tpwd.state.tx.us>.



Supplemental funds for maintenance and restoration of the ship are provided by the Battleship *Texas* Foundation, a nonprofit organization dependent on private donations. For information, call (281) 542-0684.

Texas Trivia

- The Battleship *Texas* is as long as the San Jacinto Monument is tall — the ship is 573 feet and the monument is 570 feet. Coincidence? Apparently so.
- The *Texas* was the first ship with 14-inch guns and the first with commercial radar. Well before aircraft carriers, it was one of the first ships to launch an aircraft; a Sopwith Camel biplane once took off from a perch atop the forward gun turret, using the ship's speed to increase the lift of its prop.
- In 1942 the young Walter Cronkite, covering the invasion of North Africa for Associated Press, was a guest aboard the *Texas*.
- Rudy Valee, the popular crooner of the '30s and '40s, served aboard the *Texas*.
- On June 5, 1944, the day before D-Day, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower gave a pep talk to the seamen, marines and rangers aboard the *Texas*. The young Seaman Robbins, whose war diary became more detailed later, kept it brief that day: "6/5/44 — Ike came aboard and gave a speech."

LEGEND, *Lore* & LEGACY

CRESTED CARACARA



PHOTOS BY LAURA OTTO

Although their populations had once been in decline in Texas, the crested caracara is now thriving and may indeed be expanding its range. / BY MATT WHITE

AT ONCE BOTH COMICAL AND CAPTIVATING, the crested caracara commands attention. Sporting a bright red face and a blue-gray bill, this unusual member of the falcon family wears a dark cap that contrasts with its white head and neck. Unlike other falcons, the caracara has a naked face, a trait it shares with the vultures, which allows it to dine on carrion without soiling or compromising its facial feathers. Handsomely decked out in a black coat with a white tail, its costume and posture — somewhat akin to a bridegroom — also add to its appeal and distinction. Its antics, though, as it struts about on its long legs searching for insects, are truly remarkable, especially for a bird of prey.

In flight, the caracara (which is nearly the size of the familiar red-tailed hawk) is equally attractive, with white patches on the end of each wing that flash as it cruises low over its favored brushlands and prairies. All too often, though, a crested caracara appears like a phantom and then disappears just as quickly as it wings toward some unseen destination. Although it flies determinedly — usually just over the trees — the caracara spends much of its time on the ground, where it is harder to spot. Therefore, it is more likely to be discovered resting on a fence post, a hay bale or the top of a tree — or dining on a dead animal with a group of vultures.

In addition to scavenging on carrion, caracaras hunt a variety of small mammals, turtles, rodents and snakes, as well as birds and insects. Not one to pass up a good meal, these clever creatures also are known to dig up freshly laid turtle eggs from the sand.

Caracaras are widespread in Central and South America from Tierra del Fuego north to Texas. They range northward almost to the Red River — a fact that is not well-known and is not yet reflected by bird field guides. They are absent generally from the Panhandle and the Pineywoods of deep East Texas, and are scarce in the Trans-Pecos. In Texas, the heart of their range seems to be from the Rio Grande Valley north along the coastal prairies and then northward along the eastern edge of the Edwards Plateau through the Post Oak Savannah and Blackland Prairie.

During the last half-century or so, their populations experienced some noticeable declines in Texas and Florida. Today, however, that trend has been reversed, and caracaras are doing quite well. In fact, they may be increasing their range somewhat. It has been suggested that perhaps they are more common now than they ever have been. This success may be related to the fact

that caracaras have few natural predators, and the establishment of roads has undoubtedly provided these highly opportunistic birds of prey with a steady source of dead animals upon which to feed.

Caracaras are seen most often in pairs or small family groups. They apparently mate for life, remaining together within their territory throughout the year. They also gang up in concentrations occasionally numbering more than 100 birds. Although they are generally not migratory in a strict sense, they are prone to wander — a phenomenon that often is especially noticeable with juvenile birds. There is some evidence that a small influx of such wandering birds reaches the northern portions of their Texas range each spring.

The origin of the caracara's name is a subject of debate. According to many sources, the name is said to derive from a Guarani — an indigenous tribe from South America — rendition

of the bird's cry. Others suggest that none of the harsh grating calls of these interesting hawks even remotely resemble *cara cara*. They suggest that the Spanish word for face — *cara* — which on these birds is brightly colored, may be, in fact, the root of their name.

Although the crested caracara is well-known by naturalists, it suffers from an identity crisis, being easily mistaken for a member of the eagle family because of its black body, white head and tail. Throughout Texas it is popularly called the Mexican eagle — a nickname that is so firmly established it seems unlikely that any effort to purge the moniker from our vocabulary will be successful.

Yet herein lies part of its lore. It is widely believed, and even asserted in many authoritative references, that the crested caracara is an eagle and is the "National Bird of Mexico." This

story may have originated because, according to some versions of an old legend, in 1325 A.D. the ancient Aztecs located the city of Tenochtitlan on a hill where Mexico City now stands because of an omen provided by a caracara sitting on a cactus and eating a snake. Today, some people claim that the caracara is the central figure on the Mexican flag, while others strongly disagree, claiming in fact that the golden eagle is the subject of the legendary omen and is indeed Mexico's national bird.

Regardless of the origin of the name, or whether or not this bird should be the national bird of Mexico, its presence in Texas adds zest to the landscape. ★

MATT WHITE is the author of *Birds of Northeast Texas*, due out this month from Texas A&M Press.



THE ORIGIN OF THE CARACARA'S NAME IS A SUBJECT OF DEBATE. ACCORDING TO MANY SOURCES, THE NAME IS SAID TO DERIVE FROM A GUARANI — AN INDIGENOUS TRIBE FROM SOUTH AMERICA — RENDITION OF THE BIRD'S CRY.

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.

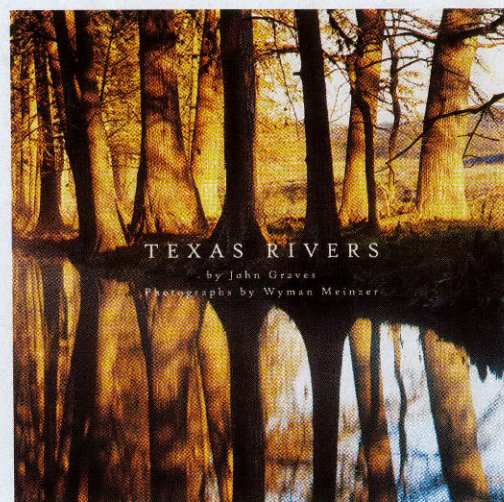
In essays on the Canadian, Neches, Pecos, Llano, Clear Fork of the Brazos and Sabinal rivers, Graves captures the essence of what makes each river unique. While the Canadian is a river of the plains that runs through big ranch country, the Neches is a forested stream heavily impacted by human encroachment. 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

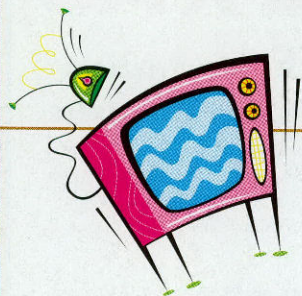
Wyman Meinzer



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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(800) 252-3206, M-F 8:00 - 4:30

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:

Sept. 1 - 8:

Bats helping farmers; calling crows; Goliad State Park's rich cultural history; public hunting on private lands.

Sept. 8 - 15:

Cultural history in the classroom; outdoor survival kit; a desert oasis at Balmorhea State Park; a helping hand for striped bass; roadrunners.

Sept. 15 - 22:

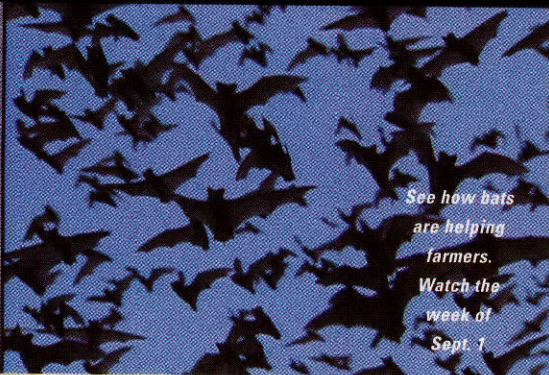
Visit a flower garden in the Gulf of Mexico; pheasant sounds; bug-eating plants; hunting traditions.

Sept. 22 - 29:

The spiritual side of birding; picking a canoe or kayak; concrete and columns at the Sebastapol House State Historic Site; desert survival; Devil's River.

Sept. 29 - Oct. 6:

Searching the skies at McDonald Observatory; squirrel sounds; San Antonio's Casa Navarro; outfoxing turkeys; hummingbirds.



See how bats are helping farmers. Watch the week of Sept. 1.

"TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE"

Winner of 12 Emmy Awards, our television series is broadcast throughout Texas on local PBS affiliates. In stereo where available.

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

AUSTIN: KLRU, Ch. 18 / Sun. 10 a.m. / Mon. 12:30 p.m. / 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.

R A D I O

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Your Radio Guide to the Great Texas Outdoors

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<www.passporttotexas.org>

ABILENE: KACU-FM 89.7 / 7:06 a.m. & 1:44, 6:01 p.m., KWKC-AM 1340 / 6:28 a.m.

ATLANTA: KAQC Cable Ch. 22 / 8:15 a.m.

ALPINE: KSRC-FM 92.7 / 9 a.m.

AMARILLO: KACV-FM 89.9 / 11:20 a.m.

AUSTIN: KUT-FM 90.5 / 1:04 p.m., *Austin American-Statesman's* Inside Line 512-416-5700 category 6287 (NATR)

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

BRYAN: KZNE-AM 1150 / 5:45 p.m.

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.

COLEMAN: KSTA-AM 1000 / 5:05 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.

CUERO: KVCO-FM 97.7 / 6:50 a.m.

SIGHTS & SOUNDS

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., KFST-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.
HASKELL: KVRP-FM 97.1 / 9:30 a.m. M-F; KVRP-AM 1400 / 9:30 a.m. M-F
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.
LAREDO: KHOY-FM 88.1 / 2 p.m. M-F
LEVELLAND: KLVT-AM 1230 / 12:05 p.m.
LUBBOCK: KJTV-AM 950 / 6:50 a.m.
MADISONVILLE: KMVL-AM 1220 / 7:45 a.m., KMVL-FM 100.5 / 7:45 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.
MCALLEN: 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. Friday)
MIDLAND/ODESSA: KCRS-AM 550 / 6:15 a.m. & 5:50 p.m., KOCV-FM 91.3 / 7:37 a.m. Monday-Friday
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.
SCHULENBERG: 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
UVALDE: KVOU-AM 1400 / 8:30 a.m. KVOU-FM 104.9 / 8:30 a.m.
VICTORIA: KVRT-FM 90.7 / 11:30 p.m., KTXN-FM 98.7 / 6:50 a.m.
VICTORIA-GANADO: KZAM-FM 104.7 / 6:50 a.m.
WICHITA FALLS: KWFS-AM 1290 / 6:15a.m.
YOAKUM: KYKM-FM 92.5 / 6:50 a.m.

"Passport to Texas" is available at no cost to stations across the state. For information fax (512) 389-4450 or write to 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744, e-mail <info@passporttotexas.org>

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SEPTEMBER HUNTING SEASONS

SEPT. 1:

Dove season opens in the North and Central zones.

SEPT. 7, 8, 14, 15:

Dove season in the Special White-winged Dove Area in the South Zone.

SEPT. 14-22:

Statewide teal season.

SEPT. 14-29:

Statewide rail and gallinule season.

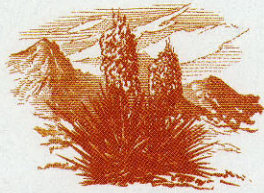
SEPT. 20:

Dove season opens in the South Zone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE THE TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE OUTDOOR ANNUAL OR CALL (512) 389-4505

GETAWAYS

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



BIG BEND COUNTRY

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

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

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

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

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

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

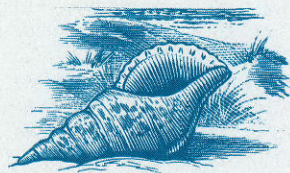
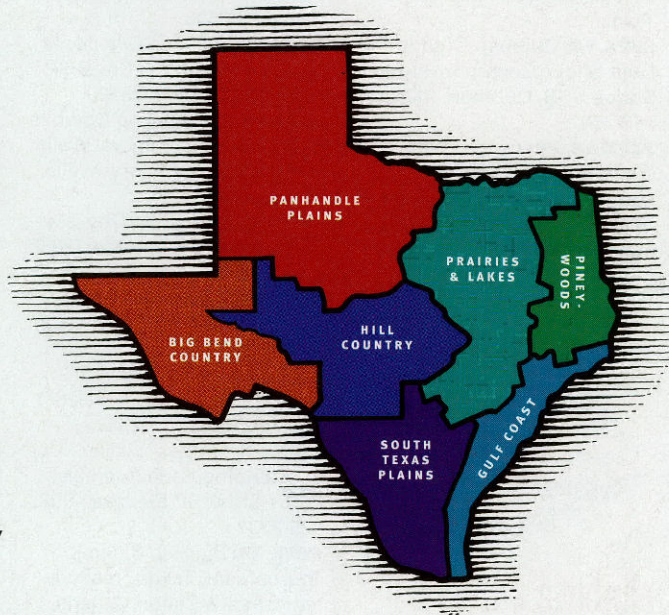
SEPT. 1-30: Fishing on the Rio Grande, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

SEPT. 6: Birding Workshop, Fort Leaton SHS, Presidio, (915) 229-3416 or (915) 229-3613.

SEPT. 7-8, 21-22: Guided Tours, Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, (915) 566-6441.

SEPT. 14: Stories of Spirits, Magoffin Home SHS, El Paso, (915) 533-5147.

SEPT. 15: Bird Identification Tours, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.



GULF COAST

SEPT.: Plantation House, Barn and Grounds tours, Wednesdays through Sundays, Varnier-Hogg Plantation SHS, West Columbia, (979) 345-4656.

SEPT. 7-8: Dick Dowling Day, Sabine Pass Battleground SP & HS, Sabine Pass, (409) 971-2559.

SEPT. 11-12, 16-19, 23-26: Annual Alligator Check-in, J.D. Murphree WMA, Port Arthur, (409) 793-2551.

SEPT. 13-15: Hummingbird Hayride Tours, Fennessey Ranch, Bayside, (361) 529-6600.

SEPT. 14, 28: Beachcombing and Shelling Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

SEPT. 20: Story Time, Sea Center Texas, Lake Jackson, (979) 292-0100.

SEPT. 21: Annual Fall Beach

Cleanup, Sea Rim SP, Sabine Pass, (409) 971-2559.

SEPT. 21: Texas Adopt-a-Beach Cleanup, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

SEPT. 21: Texas Adopt-a-Beach Cleanup, Galveston Island SP, Galveston, (409) 737-1222.

SEPT. 22: History Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

SEPT. 28: Fall Migration Hawk Watch, Fennessey Ranch, Bayside, (361) 529-6600.

SEPT. 28: Nighttime Wildlife Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.



HILL COUNTRY

SEPT.: Birdwatching, daily except when park closed for

hunting, Pedernales Falls SP, Johnson City, (830) 868-7304.

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

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

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

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

SEPT.: Devil's Waterhole Canoe Tour, every Thursday, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

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

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

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

SEPT. 1-2: Island Assault 1944 Living History Program, Admiral Nimitz SHS-National Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg, (830) 997-4379.

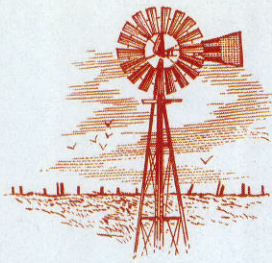
SEPT. 6: Range and Wildlife Seminar, Kerr WMA, Hunt, (830) 238-4483.

SEPT. 7: Crawling Wild Cave Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

SEPT. 7, 14, 21, 28: Stumpy Hollow Nature Hike, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

SEPT. 8, 14-15: X Bar Mountain Bike Races, X Bar Ranch, Eldorado, (888) 853-2688.

SEPT. 28-29: The Commanders, Admiral Nimitz SHS-National Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg, (830) 997-8600.



PANHANDLE PLAINS

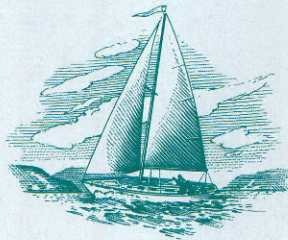
- SEPT. 1:** Night Noises, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.
- SEPT. 6:** Storytelling Concert, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.
- SEPT. 7:** Lone Star Legacy Celebration, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.
- SEPT. 7:** Sun Fun and Star Walk, Copper Breaks SP, Quannah, (940) 839-4331.
- SEPT. 7:** Night Noises and Hike, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.
- SEPT. 7:** Longhorn and Bison Seminar, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, (915) 949-4757.
- SEPT. 7, 21:** Family Nature Hike, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.
- SEPT. 14:** Canyon Ramblings, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.
- SEPT. 14:** Nature Challenge, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.
- SEPT. 14, 28:** Campfire Tails, Abilene SP, Tuscola, (915) 572-3204.
- SEPT. 21:** Evening Program, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.
- SEPT. 28:** Anniversary of the Battle of Palo Duro, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227 Ext. 49.
- SEPT. 28:** Harvest Saturday, Big Spring SP, Big Spring, (915) 263-4931.



PINEYWOODS

- SEPT. 1, 8, 15, 29:** Walk on the Wild Side, Martin Dies, Jr. SP,

- Jasper, (409) 384-5231.
- SEPT. 6, 20:** Nature Slide Program, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.
- SEPT. 7:** Starlight Steam Train Excursion, Texas State Railroad SP, Rusk, (800) 442-8951 or (903) 683-2561 outside Texas.
- SEPT. 7, 21:** Steam Engine Shop Tours, Texas State Railroad SP, Rusk, (800) 442-8951 or (903) 683-2561 outside Texas.
- SEPT. 14:** Quitman Outdoor Quilt Show, Governor Hogg Shrine SHS, Quitman, (903) 763-2701.
- SEPT. 14, 28:** Guided Nature Trail Hike, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.
- SEPT. 21:** Floating the Forks, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, (409) 384-5231.



PRAIRIES & LAKES

- SEPT.:** Evenings at the Amphitheater, every Saturday, Stephen F. Austin SP, San Felipe, (979) 885-3613.
- SEPT.:** Kreische Brewery Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.
- SEPT. 1:** Weekends at the Farm, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHS, Washington, (936) 878-2461, ext. 245.
- SEPT. 1:** Cowboy Campfire-Music and Poetry, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 327-8950.
- SEPT. 1, 8:** Kreische House Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.
- SEPT. 7:** Sunset Nature Hike, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, (903) 395-3100.
- SEPT. 7:** Night Sounds, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 327-8950.
- SEPT. 7:** Star Party, Lake Whitney SP, Whitney, (254) 694-3793.
- SEPT. 7:** Coyote Howl, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
- SEPT. 7-8, 15, 21-22, 28-29:** Inn Tours, Fanthorp Inn SHS,

- Anderson, (936) 873-2633.
- SEPT. 14:** Lost Wonders of East Texas, Purts Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.
- SEPT. 14:** Guided Nature Hike, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, (903) 395-3100.
- SEPT. 14:** Hike of the Day, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-6505.
- SEPT. 14:** Stagecoach Days, Fanthorp Inn SHS, Anderson, (936) 873-2633.
- SEPT. 14:** Wildlife Detectives Nature Walk, Purts Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.
- SEPT. 14:** Storytelling Down in the Holler, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 327-8950.
- SEPT. 21:** Armadillo Odyssey, Purts Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.
- SEPT. 21:** Reptiles of Cedar Hill, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
- SEPT. 21:** Outdoor Skills 1 – Fire Building, Purts Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.
- SEPT. 28:** Outdoor Skills 2 – Camping Fundamentals, Purts Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.
- SEPT. 28:** Big Fish Bluegill Tournament, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, (903) 676-BASS.
- SEPT. 28:** Snakes Alive!, Purts Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.
- SEPT. 28:** Kids' Wilderness Survival, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 328-1171.
- SEPT. 28:** Penn Farm Tour, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
- SEPT. 28:** Talala Trail Walk, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.
- SEPT. 28-29:** Harvest Festival, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHS, Washington, (936) 878-2461 Ext. 245



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- SEPT. 8:** Birding on Grandparents' Day, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, (956) 585-1107.
- SEPT. 28:** Hummingbirds and

- Butterflies in Your Backyard, Goliad SP, Goliad, (361) 645-1228.
- SEPT. 28:** Mist Netting for Eats, Government Canyon ENA, San Antonio, (210) 688-9603.

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

State Parks Offer Public Hunts

A number of state parks will offer special permit hunting this fall. As in the past, the specially controlled public hunts are scheduled for Monday through Friday, a slow time at most parks during fall and winter. Most parks will be open on Saturdays and Sundays for camping, picnicking and similar activities.

The following schedule lists the times and dates when public access is restricted. Call the park of your choice directly to make sure it will be open on the day you want to visit. Or call Texas Parks and Wildlife's information line, (800) 792-1112, between 8 a.m. and 5

Sept. 3-6, 9-13, 16-20, 23-27:
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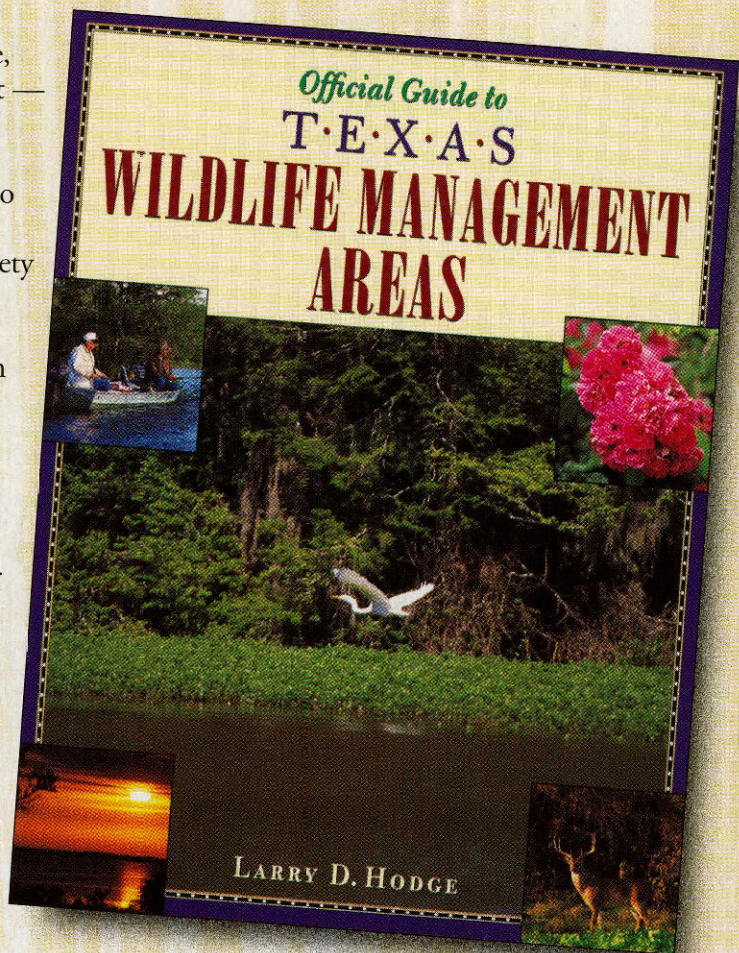
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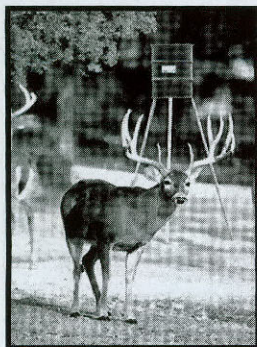
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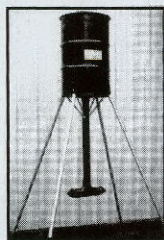
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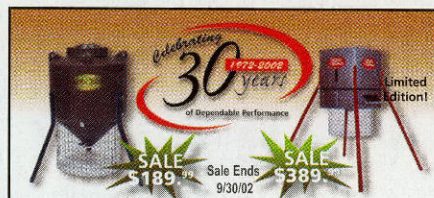
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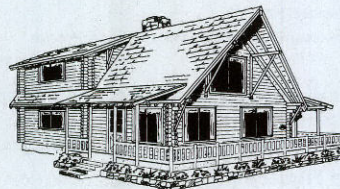
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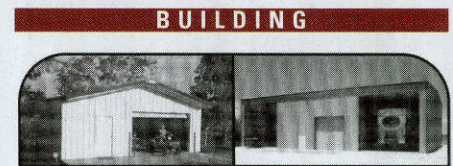


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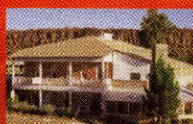
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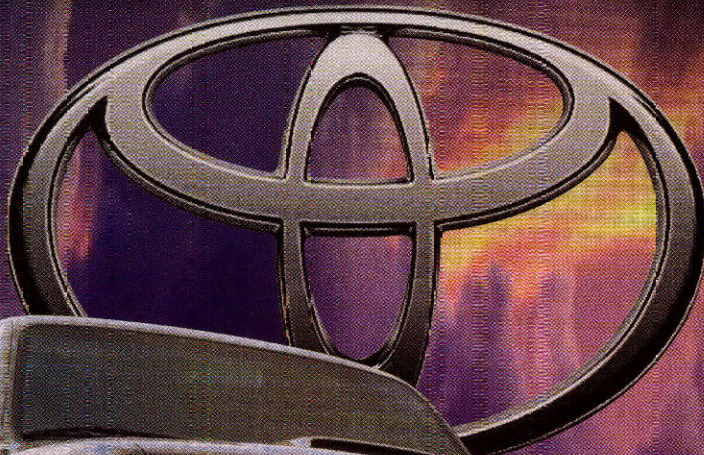
Austin diver Will Mitchell spotted this 4-inch longlure frogfish last July on his way back to the mooring line following an afternoon dive from the *M.V. Spree*. This was the first-ever sighting of this species at the Flower Garden reefs. Since the Flower Garden mooring buoys were installed in 1990, thousands of divers have visited these reefs, the northernmost in the continental United States, but no one had seen a longlure frogfish. "What caught my eye," says Mitchell, "was the outline of the frogfish as it sat on a piece of sponge. Its color blended in so perfectly, but its image looked out of place on the sponge."



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