

P400.6
P235
59:3

BIG THICKET BASS // TURKEY HUNTING TALES // TEXAS' PRAIRIE DOGS

WWW.TPW MAGAZINE.COM * MARCH 2001

TEXAS

PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS



*Wild
Beauties
of Texas*



THE RIGHT BOAT AT THE RIGHT PRICE, TRAVIS BOATING CENTER IS CHANGING THE WAY PEOPLE BUY BOATS.



No matter where the fish are, Travis Boating Center can get you to them. As one of the world's largest retail boating chains, you'll find an unequalled selection. You'll also discover that our volume buying means outstanding prices and exceptional value with our exclusive Travis Edition packages, complete with the motor and accessories you want. Plus we can put it all together with attractive financing, tailored to your budget. From state-of-the-art bass boats to bay boats to aluminum fishing boats, the promise land is closer than you think. To get a closer look, see your nearest Travis Boating Center or visit us online at www.travisboatingcenter.com.

PRICES SO HOT YOU'VE GOTTA CALL!

TRAVIS BOATING CENTER

TRAVIS EDITION RANGER R-71

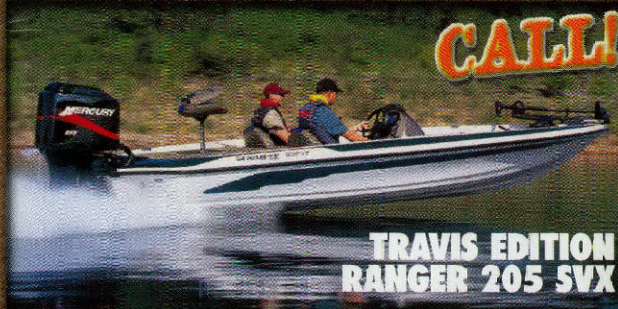
CALL!

LENGTH: 17'1" BEAM: 83" FUEL: 25 GALLONS
 Complete with: Mercury 125 HP and Single Axle Trailer with Matching Spare, Fiberglass Fenders and Cool Hub
 ■ 12/24 Trolling Motor ■ Depth Finder ■ Speedometer and Tachometer ■ High Capacity Bilge Pump ■ Cranking Battery ■ Pultruded Transom ■ No-Feedback Steering

TRAVIS EDITION LOGIC 186 COOL BAY

\$12,995

LENGTH: 18'6" BEAM: 97" FUEL: 37 GALLON
 Complete with: Johnson 90 hp Outboard and Custom Single Axle Trailer ■ Exclusive Roplene Polyethylene Construction ■ Built-In Fuel Tank ■ Storage Lockers ■ Skid Resistant Floor ■ Horizontal Rod Holders ■ Vertical Rod Storage ■ Self-Bailing Cockpit ■ Forward Rear Casting Decks ■ Cup Holders ■ Speedometer, Tachometer, and Fuel Gauge ■ Windshield Grab Rail ■ Limited Lifetime Warranty

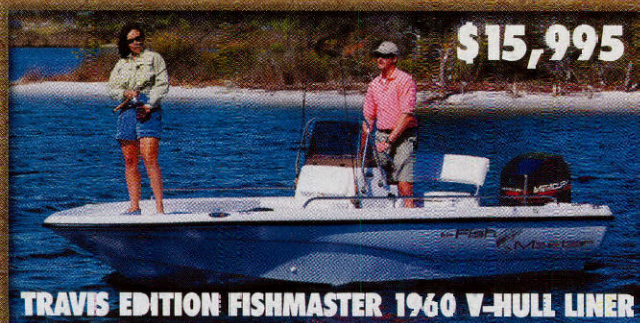


TRAVIS EDITION RANGER 205 SVX

LENGTH: 20'5" BEAM: 92 1/2" FUEL: 47 GALLONS
 Complete with: Mercury 200 EFI, & Tandem Axle Trailer with Brakes, Swing Away Tongue, Fiberglass Fenders, Matching Spare
 ■ Re-circulating Livewell ■ 12/24 Trolling Motor
 ■ Stainless Steel Prop ■ Courtesy Light ■ Competition Steering Wheel ■ Cranking Battery ■ Pultruded Transom

For the Travis Boating Center nearest you, call toll free or go online at:

1.877.923.2628
www.travisboatingcenter.com



\$15,995

TRAVIS EDITION FISHMASTER 1960 V-HULL LINER

LENGTH: 19' BEAM: 102" FUEL: 50 GALLON

Complete with: Mercury 125 hp Outboard, and Custom Single Axle Trailer
 ■ Full Composite Construction w/Fiberglass Inner-Liner ■ Self-Bailing Cockpit
 ■ Anchor Locker w/Overboard Drain ■ Insulated Fishbox ■ Large Lockable Floor Storage
 ■ Custom console w/Recessed Indirect Lighting ■ 14-gal. Livewell w/Raw Water & Circulating Feature
 ■ Removable Cooler w/Stainless Steel Frame & Backrest
 ■ 12 Rod Holders ■ Heavy Duty Brass Thru-Hull Fittings ■ 5-Year Hull Warranty



TRAVIS EDITION PROMASTER 185 POCKET TUNNEL

\$13,595

LENGTH: 18'5" BEAM: 94" FUEL: 40 GALLON

Complete with: Mercury 115 hp Outboard, and Custom Single Axle Trailer.
 ■ Deluxe Instrumentation ■ Aerated Livewell w/RexAir System ■ Self-Bailing Cockpit
 ■ Flip-Back Driver Seat w/Stainless Steel Cooler Base and Removable 94 qt. Cooler
 ■ Bow Cushions w/Storage ■ 12-volt Accessory Receptacle ■ Aluminum Radio Box
 ■ Trolling Motor Receptacle ■ Full Gel Splatter ■ Non-feedback Tit Steering ■ Limited-Lifetime Transom Warranty

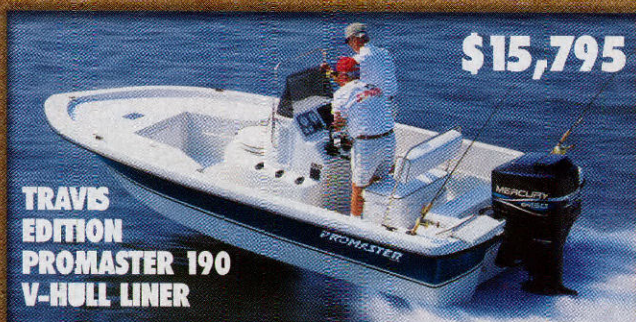


TRAVIS EDITION FISHMASTER 2350 V-HULL LINER

\$22,995

LENGTH: 23' BEAM: 102" FUEL: 87 GALLON

Complete with: Mercury 200 hp Outboard, & Custom Tandem Axle Trailer w/Brakes
 ■ Full Composite Construction w/Fiberglass Innerliner ■ Hydraulic Steering ■ Self-Bailing Cockpit
 ■ 32-gal Insulated Fishbox w/Overboard Drain ■ Custom Console w/14-gal Livewell
 ■ Aft Livewell ■ Raw Water Washdown ■ 10 Rod Holders ■ Heavy Duty Brass Thru-Hull Fittings
 ■ Lockable Rod Storage ■ 5-Year Hull Warranty

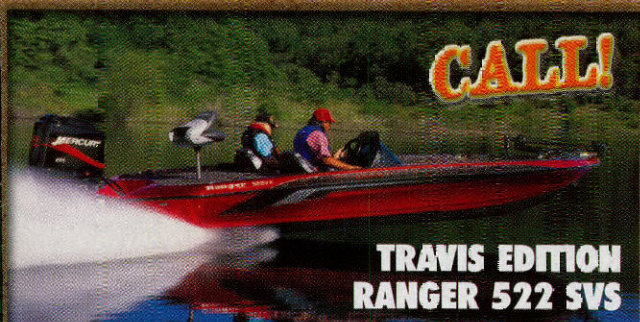


\$15,795

TRAVIS EDITION PROMASTER 190 V-HULL LINER

LENGTH: 18'9" BEAM: 102" FUEL: 60 GALLON

Complete with: Mercury 125 hp Outboard, and Custom Single Axle Trailer
 ■ Deluxe Instrumentation ■ Aerated Livewell w/RexAir System
 ■ Self-Bailing Cockpit ■ Flip-Back Driver Seat w/Stainless Steel Cooler Base and Removable 94 qt. Cooler
 ■ Bow Storage ■ 12-volt Accessory Receptacle ■ Aluminum Radio Box
 ■ Trolling Motor Receptacle ■ Fiberglass Liner & Fiberglass Stringer System
 ■ Limited Lifetime Transom Warranty



CALL!

TRAVIS EDITION RANGER 522 SVS

LENGTH: 22'3" BEAM: 92 1/2" FUEL: 64 GALLON

Complete with: Mercury 225 EFI & Tandem Axle Trailer with Brakes, Swing Away Tongue, Fiberglass Fenders, Matching Spare
 ■ 82LB-24 Volt Trolling Motor ■ Stainless Steel Propeller
 ■ Lockable Rod and Storage Compartments ■ Re-Circulating and Aerated Livewell
 ■ Dual Fuel Tanks ■ Courtesy Lights
 ■ Competition Steering Wheel



TRAVIS EDITION LOGIC 210 CC

\$17,995

LENGTH: 20'6" BEAM: 102" FUEL: 85 GALLON

Complete with: Johnson 135 hp Outboard and Custom Tandem Axle Trailer
 ■ Exclusive Roplene Polyethylene Construction
 ■ Built-In Fuel Tank ■ Storage Lockers ■ Skid Resistant Floor
 ■ Horizontal Rod Holders ■ Vertical Rod Storage ■ Anchor Locker
 ■ Full Stainless Steel Bow Rail ■ Self Bailing Cockpit
 ■ Cup Holders ■ Speedometer, Tachometer, and Fuel Gauge
 ■ Windshield Grab Rail ■ Limited Lifetime Warranty

TEXAS

ELINE *	915-672-2171	HOUSTON	281-55-2328
INGTON	817-265-3232	LEWISVILLE	972-436-2528
TIN	512-250-9000	MIDLAND	915-697-3261
UMONT	409-860-9444	SAN ANTONIO	210-654-8333

OTHER LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT:

■ ALABAMA	■ ARKANSAS
■ FLORIDA	■ GEORGIA
■ LOUISIANA	■ MISSISSIPPI
■ OKLAHOMA	■ TENNESSEE

Note: Boats shown are for illustrative purposes and features may not match. All prices include freight and dealer prep. Exclude TT&L.



C O N T

F E A T U R E S

18 **Texas' Wild Beauties**

By Noreen Damude

Ten reasons why springtime in Texas is enough to make grown men swoon.

30 **Secrets of the Turkey-Hunting Sportswriters**

By Larry D. Hodge

From embarrassing moments to canny tips, seven of Texas' outdoor columnists serve up stories of spring turkey hunts.

38 **The Comeback Kite**

By Matt White

Once destined to go the way of the passenger pigeon, the white-tailed kite has made a stunning rebound.

44 **Wanted: Dead or Alive?**

By Russell A. Graves

The jury is still out among ranchers and conservationists on the fate of the prairie dog.

52 **Big Bass in the Big Thicket**

By Paul A. Cañada

Bass and crappie are among the wild things that lurk in the slow waters amid bald cypresses of Martin Dies, Jr. State Park.

D E P A R T M E N T S

4 AT ISSUE From the pen of the Executive Director

8 MAIL CALL Our readers sound off

11 SCOUT A Texas travel guidebook roundup, plus new coffee table books from two of the state's top photographers.

14 FIELD TEST Gibbs Milliken tests a variety of turkey calls.

16 SKILL BUILDER Judy Bishop Jurek shares simple steps for building a portable blind.

58 **LEGEND, LORE & LEGACY**

Dana Brennan Jones explores the secrets of Jacob's Well.

60 GETAWAYS Events from across the state

63 SIGHTS & SOUNDS Texas Parks & Wildlife's television and radio schedules

72 **PARTING SHOT**

C O V E R S

Front: What is the mysterious wildflower beauty on the cover? For the answer, see the last page of "Wild Texas Beauties," page 29. Photo © Rusty Yates.

Back: Cypress trees, their roots emerging in cone-shaped knees, dot the water at Martin Dies, Jr. State Park in the Big Thicket. Read about the park on page 52. Photo © Lance Varnell.

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

E N T S

MARCH 2001

Government Publications
Texas State Documents

MAR 26 2001

Depository
Dallas Public Library



AT ISSUE

From the Pen of Andrew Sansom

I'm not exactly sure what it is, but there is something about hunting wild turkeys in the spring that lends itself to the proliferation of very tall tales. Actually, I *do* know what it is: It is the remarkable behavior of the gobbler in courtship at that time of year, behavior that is so compelling and exaggerated that just relating the experience would make even the most inarticulate narrator a true storyteller.

Former Governor Ann Richards, in describing her first experience at the sport with legendary caller Tommy Humphrey, spun the best story I ever heard about turkey hunting. I was with her on that memorable day, and I still chuckle whenever I remember Richards' splendid account, which included her own rendition of the alluring hen.



Thanks to the efforts of landowners, hunters and the biologists of Texas Parks and Wildlife, we now harvest more wild turkeys each year than existed in Texas prior to World War II.



Another legendary storyteller who wrote about the governor's hunt was the late Dan Klepper, longtime outdoor writer for the *San Antonio Express-News*, who accompanied us. Dan was a hard-core curmudgeon, but you could read his laughter between the lines. He loved retelling the story until the day he died.

Maybe the reason that the magazine staff chose to recount the turkey hunting stories of outdoor writers in this issue is that for them, writing about turkeys in the spring is like picking low-hanging fruit.

I know that one of the most memorable spring turkey hunts I ever went on was with Mike Leggett of the *Austin-American Statesman*, who called a huge gobbler right up in my lap. So close, in fact, that I probably could have reached out and grabbed him. I would have shot him, except there wasn't enough room between his head and mine for a shotgun and we gave each other such a start that by the time I composed myself, he was gone.

It was a fine outcome: Leggett and I got a memorable experience and a great story and the old gobbler is still out there stalking hens.

Texas turkeys not only make for great funny stories, they make for great conservation stories. Thanks to the efforts of landowners, hunters and the biologists of Texas Parks and Wildlife, we now harvest more wild turkeys each year than existed in Texas prior to World War II. And we've since provided the brood stock for restoring the species in most of the western United States.

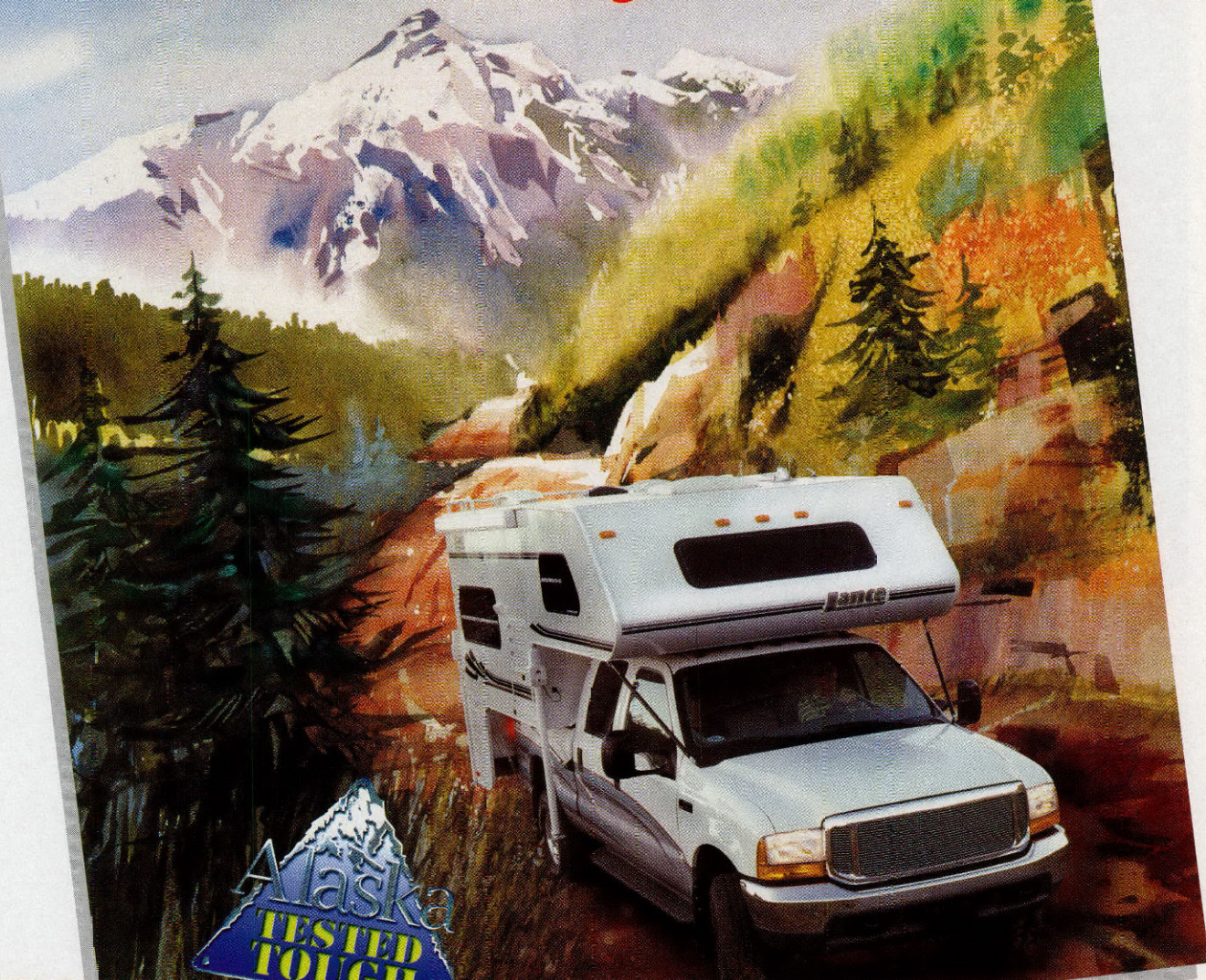
In partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation, we have restored eastern wild turkeys to sufficient levels that there are now spring seasons in 32 Texas counties. They were all but extinct in Texas by 1987, when restoration began in earnest.

On my desk in Austin is a box call, permanently imbued with lore, from that wonderful hunt with Governor Richards. It is not only a symbol of a joyful and memorable experience but also a reminder of the difference we can make in the environment when we care enough to do so.

Andrew Sansom

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE MISSION STATEMENT:
**To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas
 for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.**

Go Anywhere



Alaska
TESTED
TOUGH



The SUV of RVs!

Lance

America's Favorite Truck Camper

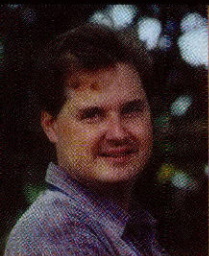
Free! 36-page Buyer's Guide
and dealers nationwide.
1-888-274-2267 or
www.lancecamper.com

TEXAS

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

MARCH 2001, VOL. 59, NO. 3

Noreen Damude, who writes this issue's cover story on Texas' top 10 wildflowers, is currently a freelance writer and endangered species biologist/environmental consultant based in Austin. She specializes in vegetational analysis and management for endangered species on private lands. Damude, who is coauthor of *Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife*, has a botany and zoology background. She has worked as an endangered species biologist and as a nongame and urban biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife. She also served as director of bird conservation for the Texas Audubon Society. She has written articles for the South African Succulent Society journal *Aloe* on succulent plants found in Baja California and northern Namibia. She is looking forward to an upcoming trip to Australia in quest of lorikeets, galahs, fairy wrens and double-wattled cassowaries, not to mention a bevy of incredible marsupials and curious plants, for her life list.



Matt White grew up in the country outside of Greenville, in Hunt County, where he spent countless hours as a youngster roaming the woods. He graduated from East Texas State University with a master's degree in history in 1993 and teaches American history at Paris

Junior College. A contributing editor for *Texas Birds* magazine and subregional editor for *North American Birds*, he is writing a book about the birds of northeast Texas. He lives with his wife and two daughters, Natalie, 3, and Ellie, 1, on the land where he grew up, and he is working to make the area into a bird sanctuary. The white-tailed kite, which he writes about in this issue, is one of his favorite birds.

Judy Bishop Jurek grew up riding horses and raising show steers. She lives in rural Matagorda County with husband John, a dog, cat and small herd of cattle. Hunting and fishing are her true loves, along with good stories relating to both. A field office administrator for Williams Energy Services, she spends her time of in the great Texas outdoors. Currently a freelance writer, newspaper columnist and staff writer for *Texas Trophy Hunter*, her dream is to someday write full time. Judy has contributed several articles in the past to this magazine, including the March 1999 cover story about spring turkey hunting. In this issue she tells how to make a portable hunting blind.



GOVERNOR OF TEXAS

Rick Perry

COMMISSION

- Lee Bass, Chairman Fort Worth
- Carol Dinkins, Vice Chair Houston
- Ernest Angelo, Jr. Midland John Avila, Jr. Fort Worth
- Richard (Dick) Heath Dallas Alvin L. Henry Houston
- Katharine Armstrong Idsal San Antonio
- Nolan Ryan Alvin
- Mark E. Watson, Jr. San Antonio
- Perry R. Bass, Chairman Emeritus Fort Worth
- Executive Director** Andrew Sansom
- Communications Director** Lydia Saldaña

MAGAZINE STAFF:

- Susan L. Ebert Publisher and Editor
- Elaine Robbins Executive Editor
- Mary-Love Bigony Managing Editor
- Larry D. Hodge Wildlife Editor
- Gibbs Milliken Product Editor
- Mark Mahorsky Art Director
- Bill Reaves Photography Editor
- Susanne Harm Circulation Director
- Curtis Moore Business Manager
- Erica House Editorial Assistant

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:

West of Mississippi:

STONEWALLACE COMMUNICATIONS, INC.:
 3000 S. IH 35, Suite 120, Austin, Texas 78704, fax: 512-707-1913
 Jim Stone, Senior Account Executive, 512-912-7007;
 Leigh Anne Jackson, Classified Ad Manager, 512-912-7003;

East Of Mississippi & Automotive Category:

THE NOYD GROUP:

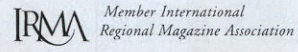
2145 Crooks Ave., Suite 10, Troy, Michigan 48084
 Ron Noyd, 248-643-7240; fax: 248-637-6452

Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine (ISSN 0040-4586) is published monthly by Texas Parks and Wildlife, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744. The inclusion of advertising is considered a service to subscribers and is not an endorsement of products nor concurrence with advertising claims. Copyright © 2001 by Texas Parks and Wildlife. No part of the contents of this magazine may be reproduced by any means without the permission of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. The magazine is not responsible for the return of unsolicited materials provided for editorial consideration. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: \$15.95/year; foreign subscription rate: \$23.95/year.

POSTMASTER: If undeliverable, please send notices by form 3579 to *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine, P. O. Box 17668, Austin, Texas 78760. Periodicals Postage Paid at Austin, Texas with additional mailing offices.

Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine is edited to inform readers, and to stimulate their enjoyment of the Texas outdoors. It reflects the many viewpoints of contributing readers, writers, photographers and illustrators. Only articles written by agency employees will always represent policies of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES
 Subscription inquiries only, please.
PHONE: 800-937-9393
 7 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. weekends



Come Out & Play at a Texas-Sized Event March 16-18, 2001



SPORTS
AFIELD

TEXAS

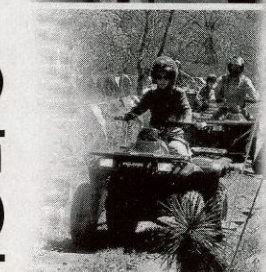
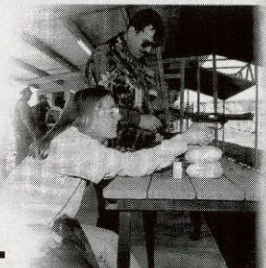
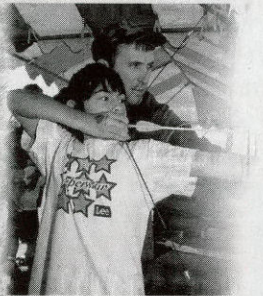
SPORTSMAN'S

F A I R



PRESENTED BY

San Antonio Express-News



National Shooting Complex • San Antonio, TX

**Shooting • Fishing • Archery • Off Road • ATV
Hunting Dogs • Conservation Area • Wildlife Art**

Shoot it, cast it, drive it, experience it. This is one place you can do it all! It's an outdoor adventure your whole family will enjoy. Even the dog.

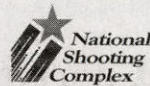
Exhibitor and Sponsor Info: Bob Donohue at (210) 694-0015 or Ext: Events at (818) 763-9221

Volunteer info: In San Antonio - Tamara Trail at (210) 826-2904 or toll-free: 1-800-839-9453

In Proud Partnership with:



Texas
Wildlife
Association



National
Shooting
Complex

MAIL CALL

Picks, Pans and Probes from Previous Issues

FORWARD

LETTERS

Nearly three years ago, magazine staff and other agency personnel identified a need among our outdoors constituents for an annual publication that would provide a handy reference to all of the Texas state parks. It should be smallish, we thought, digest-sized; just right to carry around in a hip pocket, a purse or a vehicle's glove box.

We examined literally dozens of publications produced by other states, as well as the national parks guides produced by Meredith Custom Publishing, and asked ourselves: How can we provide this additional service to our constituents without having to pass the cost along to them?

We turned to the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas, the non-profit organization whose mission is to provide private support for the works of Texas Parks and Wildlife. To our great delight, the Foundation agreed to serve as publisher of *Texas State Parks* and to assist in the acquisition of private sponsors, so that this valuable communication tool could be published at no cost either to the state or to our parks visitors.

Thankfully, we have a motherlode of high-quality state parks articles and photographs that had originally been published in *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. So we went to work to edit, update and redesign these articles for a digest-size format. State parks personnel and the TPW creative services team chipped in with updated lists and locations of all parks in the system and stylish, easy-to-read facilities charts that show at a glance what services are available at each park. The Parks and Wildlife Foundation also commissioned a brand-new illustrated map, keying all parks to their locations and listing addresses and phone numbers. The map will be printed on heavy stock in the center of the publication, so you can easily refer to it time and again.

The publication is divided into seven regions: Big Bend, Gulf Coast, Hill Country, Panhandle/Plains, Pineywoods, Prairies & Lakes and South Texas Plains. We've also included features on the rich ethnic history of our parks, tips on photographing birds by TPW staff photographer Earl Nottingham, a guide to identifying wildflowers and advice on low-impact camping.

Thanks to charter advertisers such as Academy Sports & Outdoors, Chevrolet Suburban, Eagle Optics, Ford Trucks, Haverhills, Lance Campers and WorldCom, 300,000 copies of this 92-page, full-color digest-size magazine will be available beginning mid-March throughout the state parks system. We are deeply appreciative for the willingness of these sponsors to partner with the Parks and Wildlife Foundation on this new venture.

We hope you pick up a copy of *Texas State Parks: Your Free Guide* when you visit the parks! We welcome your feedback on the first issue and will use your comments to make the 2002 version even better.

Susan Short

Crabbers Strike a Chord; Long Live the Longleaf

Your February edition was one of the best I've read, especially Marsha Wilson's "Crabbers Sing the Blues" feature, Andrew Sansom's call to save the blue crab and

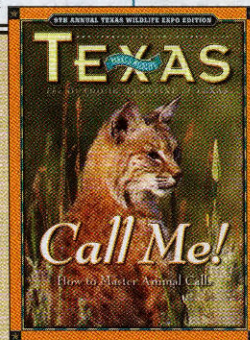
Thad Sitton's article on the longleaf pine forest.

For 60 years, Upland Island Wilderness, the adjoining Catahoula Forest Preserve and Longleaf Ridge east of them have provided stirring scenes for making my life more enjoyable.

In 1981, Andrew Sansom held an important post in Washington, D.C., and helped us save Upland Island as a wilderness. Part of the longleaf forest there burned in 1996, after 62 years without a

fire, but most of the longleaf stands, along with the Catahoula Preserve, and are thriving without either natural or prescribed burns.

The article on longleaf pines described and depicted part of an area called Longleaf Ridge, which several Texas organizations are supporting for preservation as a wild and scenic area in Angelina National Forest, with or without prescribed burns at natural



Thanks to Sheryl Smith-Rodgers' article "In the Eagles' Nest" (October 2000), we had a most delightful Christmas week. Canyon of the Eagles is a superb demonstration of a private venture and a conservation agency working together to preserve Texas at its best.

Joann McLaughlin
London, England

MAIL CALL

fire frequency, intensity and seasonality.

⚡ *Edward C. Fritz*
Dallas

Thank you for the recent article on the Texas blue crab decline. These creatures are near and dear to my heart, not to mention my stomach.

Marsha Wilson's article brings to light the diversity of interests, cultures and industries that TPW deals with on a daily basis.

If you continue to publish articles like "Crabbers Sing the Blues," I'll keep my subscription current. In my opinion, *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine continues to improve with each issue. Through the magazine I am discovering the breadth of subjects that the agency must regulate and monitor.

In 2000, the magazine has made a huge leap from a "good ol' boy" hunting rag to one that shows respect for many disparate interests. Thank you for all the hard work; it really shows.

In addition, I would like to commend all those unsung heroes like Lance Robinson's team and Bobby Miller mentioned in "Crabbers Sing the Blues," whose daily jobs allow every Texan to continue to enjoy the abundance and uniqueness of Texas' outdoor resources.

⚡ *Ranleigh Hirsh*
Austin

Remembrances of Robert Liles

On Christmas Eve I retrieved our mail, walked back into the house, unfolded the new *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine and gasped. My husband and son rushed to my side and we shared a few moments of memories as we read Wyman Meinzer's tribute to our friend, Robert Liles.

Every comment Meinzer made about Robert was true; he was such a special person. We really have not been close to him as an adult, but each time our paths have crossed we've let the

world go by for 20 minutes or so while we visited. That warm smile of his made everyone feel special.

Robert was our first employee when he was only 16, already well over six feet tall and, believe it or not, with a mop of unruly curls. He was our floral shop delivery person until high school graduation at age 18. He became a very special friend during those two years: We were in our mid-20s with two small children and they, too, loved Robert. He was a frequent visitor to our home, seeking hunting information from my husband. The solid character that Meinzer spoke of was already present in this young man. Thank you for acknowledging that good men do still exist and that good boys do, too. We are better people for having known him.

⚡ *Judy and Dub Scott*
Graham

Baum's Away!

Thanks for the article on Doug Baum and his camels (January 2001). Doug had just finished a camel trek in 1999 when I made my first trip to Big Bend Ranch State Park with a group of inner-city teens for a Korima workshop (see "Around the Bend," November 2000). We asked if he would stay overnight to talk with the group and show the camels. He graciously accepted and devoted the evening to the teens.

Not only did they learn a lot about camels but, more important, how much better life is when one can identify a passion and make it one's life work.

⚡ *Marty Coyle*
Houston

We Could Call It South Wyoatana

Ienjoyed your recollection of the 1968 Texas Water Plan (January). As I recall, the *Texas Observer* published an alternative proposal for a Texas Mountain Plan. Noting the serious lack of rugged terrain along the Texas Gulf Coast, the plan proposed to dig up Montana and Wyoming and

EAGLE OPTICS

One of the proud sponsors of the Great Texas Birding Classic and the especially proud sponsor of the Eagle Eyes, a Roughwings team participating in the Classic!



Eagle Optics 10 X 50
Ranger PC

Eagle Optics
Ranger Binoculars

8 X 42, 10 X 42, or 10 X 50
Priced at less than \$500.00!
Compact and standard models also available.

Everything you've always wanted
in a premium binocular - for less!

Phase Corrected Prisms	Exceptionally Lightweight
Waterproof/Fogproof	Fully Multi-coated Lenses
Nitrogen Purged	High Density Optical Glass
Long Eye Relief	Extremely Close Focusing
Rubber Armored	Lifetime Warranty

Free Comprehensive Optic Buying Guide & Discount Price List on all major brands.

(800) 289-1132

Complete Online Buying Guide

www.eagleoptics.com

EAGLE OPTICS

2120 W. Greenview Dr. * Middleton, WI 53562

About Your Subscription

Get the most out of your subscription!

CONTACTING THE EDITORS:

Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine
3000 South IH35, Ste. 120
Austin, TX 78704
<magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us>

USING YOUR MAILING LABEL

Your magazine label is a valuable source of information for you and for us. The second line of the address label indicates your account number, followed by the month and year of your subscription's expiration date.

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS

Call toll free (800) 937-9393 or visit
<tpwmagazine.com>

CUSTOMER SERVICE

(800) 937-9393

7 a.m. - 11 p.m. Mon./Fri.
8 a.m. - 6 p.m. weekends

TEXAS
PARKS & WILDLIFE
The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

MAIL CALL

truck the dirt south. In addition to its aesthetic value, the Texas Mountain Plan touted more practical consequences, such as creating sufficient gradient to clean out the Houston Ship Channel "slick as a whistle."

Maybe the resulting laughter helped produce some of that astonishingly close 6,000-vote margin against the Texas Water Plan.

⚡ *Jim Gerhardt*
Dallas

You've Been Hoaxed!

In 1938, I started school at the Circleville School, which is now the Granger V.F.W. Hall — the dance hall C.F. Eckhardt refers to in "The Great Black-eyed Pea Hoax," (January). My dad hauled cotton in a mule-drawn wagon to the old Loessin gin referred to in the article.

I knew of Elmore Torn and the story of the black-eyed peas. Indeed, I went to Taylor High School (Class of

'50) at the same time as Rip Torn. I learned of the black-eyed pea tradition long before I knew of Elmore Torn.

My Grandfather Stolte came from Germany in 1881 at the age of 26. Grandmother came with her family at age 15 in 1882. Grandfather Dockall came from Czechoslovakia in 1880 at about the age of eight; his wife came from Germany in 1881. Many of these European settlers brought cultural traditions with them.

Since early childhood, I was instilled with the tradition of black-eyed peas and collard greens on New Year's Day. I'm sure it was passed down from my elders, just as I am passing it down to my children and grandchildren today.

The crux of the tradition, I think, is this: If you still had reserves of dried black-eyed peas, pork (or ham hocks) and could rustle up some collard greens, which usually overwinter in Texas, you would be pretty well-assured of having enough to eat until the spring growing season. As with the "Hoax,"

it's supposed to also bring good luck.

Still, the story was right on and I did enjoy it. I'll bet Elmore knew of the tradition beforehand, so his story wasn't entirely hogwash.

Charles Stolte
Taylor

Sound Off for "Mail Call!"

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

Write to us at

Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine,
3000 South IH 35, Suite 120,
Austin, TX 78704.
Or, fax us at 512-707-1913.

E-mail us at

<magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us>.

Subscribe at

<tpwmagazine.com>.

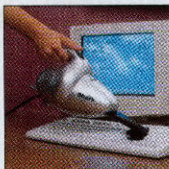
⚡ *Letters designated by this symbol were delivered to us via e-mail. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity.*



New hand-held vac creates ultra-powerful suction...

The Euro-Pro Shark provides the power of an upright in a hand-held vacuum and sucks dirt from places ordinary hand vacs can't reach.

by Mandy Cooper



I'm a neat freak. I admit it. But with a cat, two dogs and two children, it's tough to keep it clean. Everytime I turn around, there's a new mess on the kitchen floor, the living room carpet or the bathroom tile. Thank goodness I discovered the Shark Turbo Hand Vacuum!

Unlike any other. The Shark Turbo Hand Vac easily outperforms all others. With its unique 600-watt motor, it offers powerful suction in a hand-held vacuum. It sucks dirt from corners, crevices and other difficult areas that ordinary

hand vacs miss. Its convenient dustcup design is another great feature—no more hassling with messy replacement bags!

Ergonomic design ensures ease of use.

The Shark comes complete with two accessory brushes and a flexible hose to provide the ultimate in cleaning versatility. Its lightweight design is easy to hold and maneuver around even the tightest of corners. Plus, a convenient shoulder-strap makes cleaning a breeze!

Try it risk-free. You'll be amazed at how much cleaner the Shark Turbo Hand Vac leaves your home. The Shark comes with a manufacturer's one-year limited warranty and TechnoScout's exclusive risk-free home

CLEANING Breakthrough



Unique 600-watt motor gives the shark vac plenty of cleaning power.

trial. If you're not fully satisfied, return it within 30 days for a complete "No Questions Asked" refund.

The Shark Hand Vac \$59.95 \$7.95 S&H
Please mention product code 14921-20235.

For fastest service, call toll-free 24 hours a day
800-992-2966

To order by mail, send check or money order for the total amount including S&H. To charge it to your credit card, enclose your account number and expiration date.

Virginia residents only—please include 4.5% sales tax.

TECHNO SCOUT.com
1998 Ruffin Mill Road
Colonial Heights, Va 23834

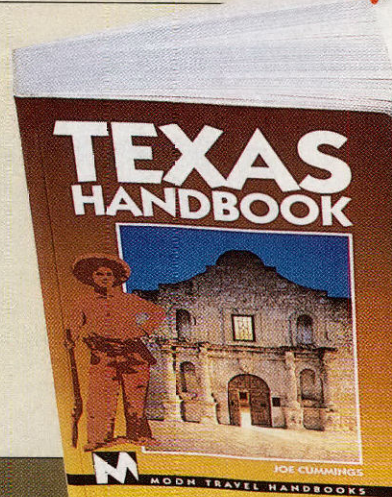
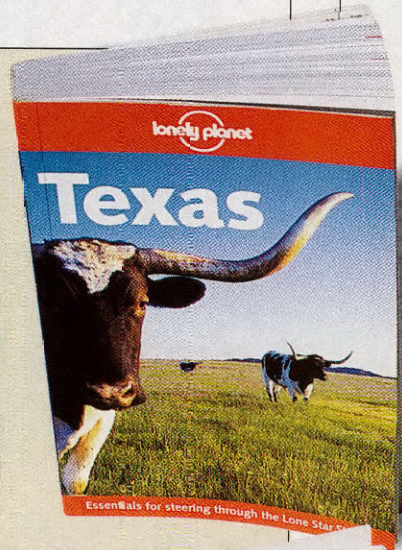
SCOUT

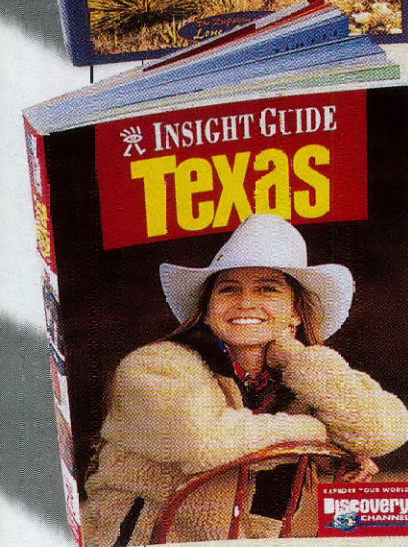
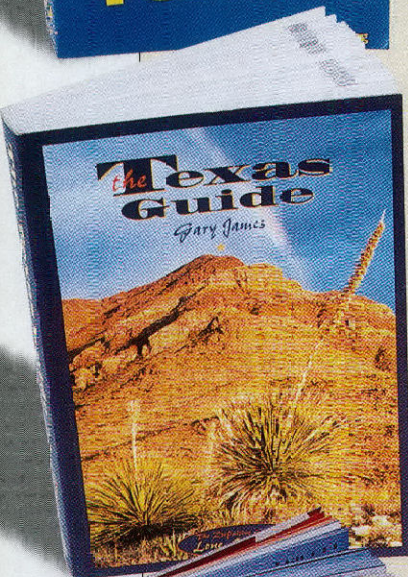
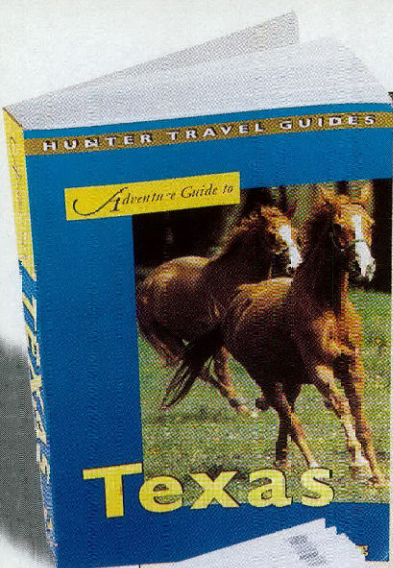
NEWS AND VIEWS IN THE TEXAS OUTDOORS

TEXAS TRAVEL GUIDEBOOK ROUNDUP

Finding your way about the great state of Texas can be an overwhelming experience — it would help if you had a good guidebook. But finding your way through the profusion of Texas guidebooks can be just as overwhelming. Here's my take on the outdoor coverage of five popular travel guidebooks. — Michael Dupuis

Name	Strength	Photos	Coverage
<p>Lonely Planet Texas By Nick Selby, Julie Fanselow and Ryan Ver Berkmoes Lonely Planet, \$19.95</p>	<p>A complete, discerning and slightly irreverent guide to the Lone Star State, and a good guide to the Texas outdoors.</p>	<p>Color plates abound, with plenty of visuals of the Texas outdoors.</p>	<p>State parks, wildlife refuges, natural areas and many other outdoor areas are covered — and good barbecue joints to sustain you along the way.</p>
Outdoors Grade: ★★★★★			
<p>Texas Handbook By Joe Cummings Moon Travel Handbooks, \$18.95</p>	<p>The bible of Texas guidebooks, the <i>Texas Handbook</i> has a whopping 50 pages on Big Bend and environs.</p>	<p>Limited; very few outdoor shots, all in black and white.</p>	<p>The most comprehensive coverage of state parks, wildlife refuges, natural areas and other outdoor areas, as well as cabins and campgrounds.</p>
Outdoors Grade: ★★★★★			





Name	Strength	Photos	Coverage
<p>Adventure Guide to Texas By Kimberly Young Hunter Publishing, \$15.95</p>	<p>Organized around the cities of Texas, but includes most state parks, too.</p>	<p>Very few photos, none in color, few outdoors.</p>	<p>Hit and miss. The <i>Adventure Guide</i> zips, skips and jumps about the state, but that may be just right if you don't want to wade through the <i>Texas Handbook's</i> 556 pages.</p>
Outdoors Grade: ★★★			
<p>The Texas Guide By Gary James Fulcrum Publishing, \$21.95</p>	<p>Evidence of abundant life outside the big cities. Short but plentiful listings are best navigated with the excellent index.</p>	<p>A few small color plates.</p>	<p>Brief but rock-solid coverage. Lists most state parks and wildlife refuges and plenty of boating and fishing opportunities.</p>
Outdoors Grade: ★★★			
<p>Insight Guide Texas AFA Publications, \$22.95</p>	<p>Captures the zeitgeist of Texas people and places with first-rate photos and essays.</p>	<p>A Texas family photo album.</p>	<p>Insightful, as the title says, but the urban emphasis leaves little room for outdoor coverage. Don't expect to find much park facility information here.</p>
Outdoors Grade: ★★			

IF YOU WANT MORE DETAILED OUTDOOR INFORMATION on hiking, biking, hunting and fishing opportunities around the state, check out Facon's series of regional outdoor guidebooks. For in-depth coverage of hiking, hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing on public lands, try the *Official Guide to Texas State Parks* and the *Official Guide to Texas Wildlife Management Areas*, both from Texas Parks and Wildlife Press, 800-747-1726, or order online at <tpwpress.com>.

FIELD NOTES

CELEBRATE THE 165TH ANNIVERSARY of Texas' declaration of independence from Mexico on March 3 and 4 at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park.

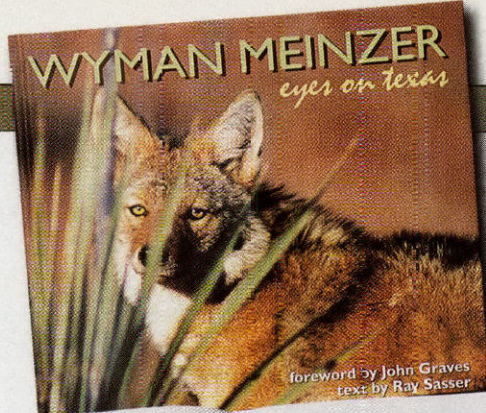
A host of activities will commemorate the gathering of 59 men in an unfinished frame building in the river town of

Washington on March 2, 1836, to declare independence, creating the Republic of Texas.

Both weekend days will feature period music and craftsmen plying their vintage trades, military reenactments and other living history portrayals, as well as food and drink booths. Sunday afternoon is

reserved for a special Texas Independence Day program featuring prominent guest speakers, a musical tribute to Texas heroes and the cutting of a Texas-sized birthday cake.

For more information call 936-878-2214 or go to <www.birthplaceoftexas.com> or <www.tpwd.state.tx.us>.



EYES ON TEXAS

IN 1979, WYMAN MEINZER'S PHOTOGRAPHS were first published in *Texas Parks & Wildlife* by my predecessor, David Baxter, and longtime magazine photography editor Bill Reaves. Baxter described Wyman as "a man with the eye of a 19th-century painter and the soul of a buffalo hunter." Adds Reaves today, "His photos were good then, and they just keep getting better." *Eyes on Texas* (Collectors Covey, 800-521-2403, \$60) is a collection of some of Meinzer's most powerful images.

Wyman discovered photography as a student at Texas Tech University, and there began his sublime mastery of the telephoto lens. Without doubt, the steady hand that has made him a crack marksman has made Wyman a "sharpshooter" with a long lens as well.

As the son of a Rolling Plains rancher, Wyman inherited a deep kinship with the unrelenting plains whose emptiness drove some pioneers to madness. Not Wyman: for several years after college, he lived in a line shack and freely roamed 290,000 acres, often without seeing another soul for days on end. His patience, discipline and passion for his subject were forged in those days. Whether he's shooting landscapes, skies, wildlife, people or hunting and fishing — the chapters into which his photography is divided in *Eyes* — each image is illuminated with Wyman's reverence for light, his unrelenting eye and often his gleeful exuberance as well.

John Graves' preface, "Notes on A Wild Man" is a precious addition, as well as an essay by *Dallas Morning News* writer Ray Sasser. Photo editor Reaves especially favors Sasser's chapter: "He shows the reader the man behind the camera," he says, "and lets you share in the stories and the incredible effort behind the photographs that make them so special."

Eyes on Texas resounds with Wyman's stated mission: "To pay tribute to the very essence of the Texas legacy."

— Susan L. Ebert

ENGULFED

IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO *ENGULFED*:

A Photographic Celebration of People, Places and Fish Around the Gulf Coast (Texas Inprint Photography, 214-361-2276, \$39.95), a new coffee table book of photos by David J. Sams, Doug Pike calls the Gulf of Mexico "the world's best fishing hole." He might well have gone on to call Sams the best of the many photographers who have romanced this natural treasure with their cameras. But he really didn't need to. The photographs speak for themselves.

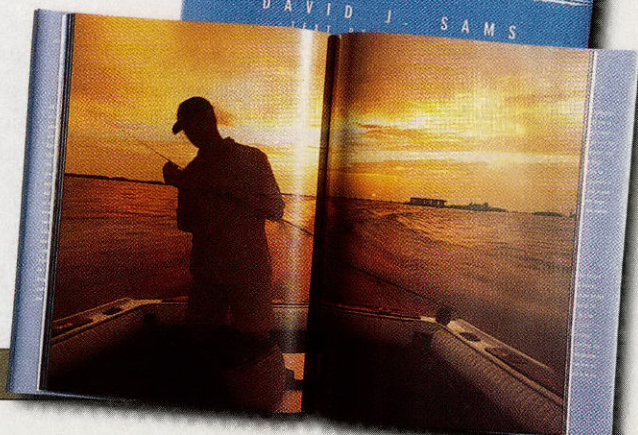
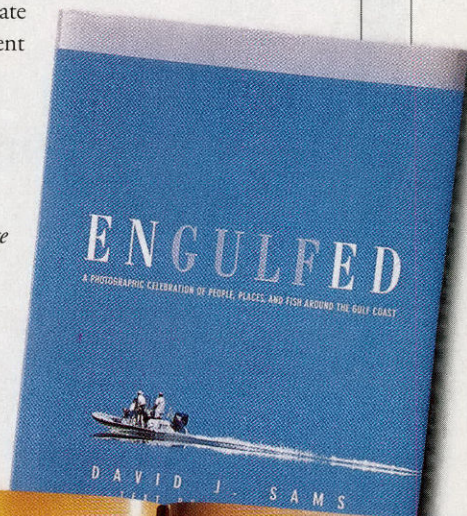
Years of hanging out with Sams and other photographers and watching them work has taught me two things. One, that great photographs are made, not merely taken. And two, that the subject of a photograph is not a thing — it is the light reflected from that thing.

Sams' photos in this book underscore those two points. One secret to Sams' success as an outdoor photographer is being in the right place in the right light with the right equipment. I've hunted and fished with Sams for nearly a decade, and the thing that impresses me most is his ability to see great pictures where most of us see ordinary scenes. In a closeup shot, sunlight flashes off a red drum's tail. A fishing guide steers his boat with his toes while standing atop the console to better see fish. The jaws of a blacktip shark frame Sams' daughter's shark-like expression.

David Sams is that rare commodity: a giant in his field, yet completely unspoiled by success, a genuinely nice guy who also happens to be incredibly talented, an artist whose passion for his work is matched by his commitment to conservation. Texas is fortunate to claim him, but his talent is bigger than Texas. He belongs to the world.

If you love the Texas Coast, you'll love this book.

— Larry D. Hodge



TALKIN' TURKEY

BY GIBBS MILLIKEN

IN SPRING A TOM TURKEY'S FANCY turns to passion, and these normally shy and reclusive birds make the woods ring with gobbles. Convincing a gobbler that you are a hen dying for his attentions is the essence of spring turkey hunting. Calling a gobbler into shotgun, bow or camera range is the ultimate thrill. A vast selection of calls is offered by both large sporting goods manufacturers and small, homegrown operations.

The first step in learning to call is to listen closely to sounds made by wild birds. By far the easiest way to do this is with the aid of experts Jerry Peterson and Gary Sefton on their VHS tape with **Real Vocal Turkeys** (\$14.99, Woods Wise, 800-735-8182). This 80-minute video features both live and imitated turkey voices, the meanings and uses of different calls, when and where to call, and clear instructional demonstrations.

The box call is one of the easiest to learn and use. Hold the box in one hand, lifting the handle of the attached paddle with the other. Movements of varying speeds will produce a variety of calls.

Woods Wise makes the **Mystic Walnut Gobble Box Call** (\$22.99) with a special carbon lid. The same company also makes a sliding rod friction call, the **Mystic Pushbutton Call** (\$19.99), a variation on the box type. It can be used one-handed or anchored in place near turkey decoys and operated by pulling a line attached to the activator rod. It is limited to only a few call variations, but is easy to use.

Slate friction calls are only slightly more difficult to operate. The call is made by rubbing a palm-size sounding plate with a special "tuned" rod, or striker. One of the best of this type is the **Mystic Triple Tone** (\$28.99, Woods Wise) 3-in-1 caller system.

The sound is made by moving the striker over the slate, glass or aluminum surfaces.

Another type of call is the diaphragm call. This reed-like device, which is placed inside the mouth, has the advantage of being small, lightweight, hands-free and inexpensive (\$5.89, Woods Wise). The disadvantage is the time and practice required.

Tube or wing-bone calls are traditionally made from the hollow bones of turkey wings. Wing-bone calls have been found in archaeological sites as much as 8,500 years old. The three bone sections are glue-mounted, telescope-fashion, into each other to form a thin trumpet. Users produce the sounds of a yelping hen turkey by pursing the mouth and sucking in with the lips on the bone tip.

One similar device, the **Wingwood Yelper** (\$25, Morgan, 225-338-1833), improved the wing-bone type by adding a front bell to a walnut wood tube for greater distance. Also available in the tube type is a patented **Morgan Caller** (\$25, Morgan) based on old-time snuff-can patterns but yielding much-improved sounds. It is especially good at producing the most important call, the yelp of the lonesome hen turkey. The downsides to this call are the complicated assembly and the amount of practice required.

Many hunters collect turkey calls as much for their artistry as for their utility. If you want one of the finest hand-made box calls on the market, look to Albert Paul of Greenville, Mississippi. Paul saws the woods, fits the inlays, carves, finishes and then tunes each unit into a fine instrument. They are made only of select air-dried woods and cured for at least two years. Due to their custom construction, his box calls are expensive. In addition to the standard **Field Grade** (\$74.95 Paul's Calls, 800-438-4065) and the premium **Signature Grade** (\$104.95), Paul makes a smaller **Pocket Call** (\$65) for high-pitched yelps, cutts and clucks that have a distinctive drop-off ending. Just what you need to drive a gobbler wild. ★



From top: Paul Signature Grade box call; Mystic Pushbutton Call; Wingwood Yelper; Mystic Triple Tone; Woods Wise diaphragm call; Morgan Caller.

atomic breakthrough

Time zone to time zone... never set your watch again

Atomic digital watch keeps absolute time and date accuracy by tuning in to the official time transmitter.

The world has become a smaller place in the past few decades. Transactions take place across the world in an instant. Having a timepiece that can not only keep perfectly accurate time, but keep track of the time zones can be really helpful and convenient. Now there is a watch that scientifically gives you the right time in all zones.

If you travel this watch is a necessity.

The Atomic Digital Watch from LaCrosse Technology is radio-controlled, maintaining its incredible accuracy by automatically tuning into the official standard frequency and time transmitter in North America. This WWVB radio signal gets its time from the most precise clock in North America based in Colorado, and transmits its signal over a 2000-mile range. The Atomic Digital Watch gives you a selection of 24 time zones, from GMT+12h to GMT-12h with special US time zones displayed with three characters (ATL, EST, CST, MST, PST, ALA, and HAW.) This ultra-accurate radio-controlled timepiece has a perpetual day and date calendar, signal reception indicator and is powered by a 3V lithium battery expected to last three years.

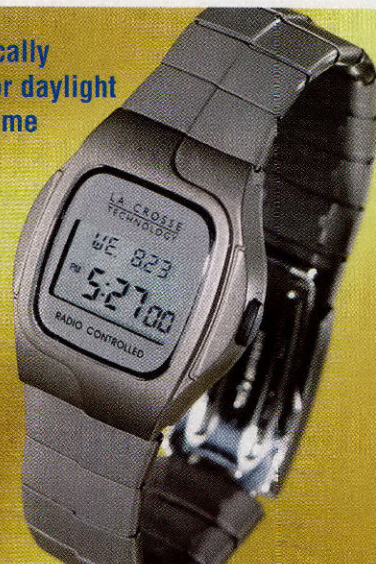
A timely gift. In addition to its accuracy, the watch is water resistant to three bars, or 30 meters, and has a battery-saving "OFF" function.

The stainless steel butterfly clasp and removable links to adjust the band size make it a good fit. This watch is a great gift for anyone who values precision and technology.

Does anyone really know what time it is? Well, the US Government wants to, so they created the National Institute of Standards and Technology, a component of the US Department of Commerce. The Time and Frequency Division, located in Boulder Colorado, maintains the F-1 Fountain Atomic Clock, the nation's standard of time. This clock neither gains nor loses a second in 20 million years. This clock is used to create an international time scale, which NIST distributes through its radio stations.

Wrist-worthy. Now, advanced Radio Frequency (RF) technology is featured in a wrist-worn timepiece for use at home, at the office or on the road. This watch is the next best thing to having your own atomic clock, because it automatically displays the precise accurate time. It never needs to be set, it automatically adjusts itself for daylight savings time

Automatically
adjusts for daylight
savings time
and leap
years



and leap years and it features a variety of practical and convenient features to fit your lifestyle.

Try it for yourself...risk-free.

Advances in electronic technology let you get precise timekeeping at an affordable price. Now, thanks to a factory-direct relationship with the manufacturer of the Atomic Digital Watch, you can try it for yourself with TechnoScout's exclusive home trial. If you are not completely satisfied for any reason, simply return it within 30 days for a full "No Questions Asked" refund. Don't wait. Never be late again.

Atomic Digital Watch • \$69.95 \$9.95 S&H

Please mention product code 12164-20234.

For fastest service, call toll-free
24 hours a day

800-992-2966



To order by mail, send check or money order for the total amount including S&H. To charge it to your credit card, enclose your account number and expiration date.

Virginia residents only—please include 4.5% sales tax.

TECHNOSCOUT[®].COM
1998 Ruffin Mill Road
Colonial Heights, Va 23834

The U.S. Government always knows exactly what time it is...do you?

Does anyone really know what time it is? Well, the U.S. Government wants to, so they created the National Institute of Standards and Technology, a component of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Time and Frequency Division, located in Boulder, Colorado, maintains the F-1 Fountain Atomic Clock, the nation's standard of time. This clock neither gains nor loses a second in 20 million years. This clock is used to create an international time scale, which NIST distributes through its radio stations. Now, advanced Radio Frequency (RF) technology is featured in a variety of timepieces for use at home, at the office or on the road.

PORTABLE BLINDS

Try this quick and affordable do-it-yourself hunting blind.

BY JUDY BISHOP JUREK / ILLUSTRATION BY NARDA LEBO



LOOK IN ANY HUNTING CATALOG, and you'll find various types of portable hunting blinds. There are pop-up tents requiring, as advertised, little time to put up. Then there are blinds made of PVC pipe and fittings with camouflage material draped around them. Both usually have tie-down stakes to use in case of windy conditions.

However, there's no need to invest money that would be better spent on your kid's braces. You can make your own portable blind for just a few dollars, and it will serve the purpose every bit as well as the ones from the fancy sporting goods catalogs.

My personal favorite in a portable blind is simple and easy to make and fairly inexpensive. First you'll need a hunting bucket with a padded swivel seat and a good handle. Next you'll need approximately five to six yards of netting, burlap or lightweight material

in your choice of camouflage patterns. A bag of clothespins (yes, the kind your grandmother might still use to hang clothes on a line outside); a box of sharp stickpins (used on bulletin boards) and a small roll of string round out the list. All these items can be put inside your bucket for easy carrying.

After locating an area you wish to hunt, look for some low brush, a tight group of small trees or something similar. You are looking for a place where you have enough legroom to sit and turn around. A low limb for a rifle rest helps if you will be deer hunting. There's no need for this if you're using a shotgun (turkey hunting).

The camouflage material needs to be draped all around you. Use the clothespins, stickpins and string to attach it to brush, branches or tree trunks. Make it about shoulder height. Rocks or dead wood can be used to

hold the fabric to the ground. Watch out for snakes when picking these up!

If this is a one-time hunt, you don't have to give yourself an entrance and exit. Should you plan to use this place more than once, fix it where you can get in and out of the blind without too much trouble. You may want to flag it in some way, since you could possibly construct it so well you might not find it again.

Dress in camouflage with a face-mask and gloves, sit on your swivel bucket and be still. Use your eyes and ears, moving your head and body very slowly when turning and looking around. With any luck, you'll have a successful hunt. But if the spot doesn't work out, the main attraction of the portable blind comes into play: You can pick it up and move to a new spot in just a few minutes. In hunting, as in real estate, three things rule: location, location and location. ☆



*Reel it
Sabine Lake...*

PORT
Activities

CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
1-800-235-7822

for all the information you need to enjoy the very best fishing and/or birding that can be found on the Texas Gulf Coast.

Bats & Butterflies

Experience the majestic beauty of the Hill Country at **Nature Quest**, April 18-22 in Uvalde County, just 90 minutes west of San Antonio. Choose from bird, bat and butterfly tours and a full schedule of renowned speakers at this premier event.

Call today for FREE event and lodging information.

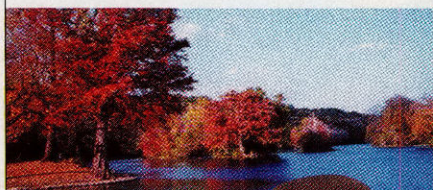
Photo © John & Gloria Tveten

800/210-0380
www.thcrr.com

Texas Hill Country River Region
A Vacation Reason for Every Season

Discover

New Braunfels, Texas, with its old-world charm and family friendly fun. Come enjoy our two clear, clean rivers, our fine restaurants, unique shopping, festivals and celebrations.



Call

1-800-572-2626

or visit our Web

site at www.nbcham.org.



Y Fish Rockport?

Aransas Bay,
St. Charles Bay,
Copano Bay,
Mesquite Bay,
Sundown Bay,
Estes Flats,
Redfish Bay ...



20,000 acres of Wetlands
... the longest fishing pier in Texas,
Professional Guides, Party boats,
Fly fishing, and Kayaking.
Call us~We'll tell you about it all!

ROCKPORT/FULTON AREA CHAMBER of COMMERCE
361-729-6445 or 800-242-0071
www.rockport-fulton.org



GREAT TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC



APRIL 20-29, 2001

Be a part of the biggest, longest and wildest birdwatching tournament in the U.S.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TEAM REGISTRATION MATERIALS:

1-888-TX-BIRDS

WWW.TPWD.STATE.TX.US/GTBC

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

FISHING

Fresh & Saltwater

ORANGE

T E X A S

Located on IH-10 near the Texas-Louisiana border, Orange lies on the banks of the beautiful fish-filled Sabine River. Just a short cruise away, you will find Sabine Lake and the Gulf of Mexico for excellent saltwater angling. For Fishing fun and excitement, call or write for our free brochure.



Tony Houseman State Park & Wildlife Management Area is #1 on the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. Visit the TxDot Travel Information Center by taking exit 880 East to La. Westbound 1st exit off Sabine River Bridge into Texas.

ORANGE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

1012 GREEN AVE. • ORANGE, TX 77630

1-800-528-4906

Fax 409-886-3247

E-Mail: orgcvb@exp.net
www.org-tx.com/chamber



*Ten reasons why springtime in Texas
is enough to make grown men swoon.*

By Noreen Damude

Texas WORLD Beauties

TEXAS IS A LAND OF SUPERLATIVES — and that is especially true in early spring. Starting in late March, fields, prairies, woods, deserts and mountains explode into glorious color. Bluebonnets, pink and yellow evening-primroses and orange Indian paintbrushes blanket fields and roadsides first, followed by phlox, verbenas and winecups. The sight is enough to make otherwise sensible adults abandon their vehicles to traipse through the fields.

With such an embarrassment of wildflower riches, how can we choose the top 10? Only with the caveat that for each flower pictured, there are 10 others we love. Texas is a wildflower wonderland. Enjoy!

PHOTO © EARL NOTTINGHAM



WINECUP

BEAUTIFUL WINE-COLORED BLOSSOMS that grace any wildflower garden, winecups are kin to cotton, okra, hibiscus, hollyhocks, Turk's cap, and rose of Sharon. For many wildflower enthusiasts, winecups win top marks for elegance. Plants respond to extra watering by blooming longer into summer. They are heavily visited by bees, which seek nectar and gather pollen from the flowers. Texas has at least six species of winecups, each a beauty in its own right.

Other Common Names: Slim-lobed poppy-mallow, low poppy-mallow, purple poppy-mallow, buffalo-rose, low winecup, purple-mallow.

Bloom Period: March to June.

Habit: This low, sprawling or trailing perennial wildflower grows from six to 12 inches tall, sometimes to three feet

under optimal conditions.

Habitat: Winecups occur along roadsides, in open woods, prairies, scrubland, thickets and hillsides. Plants prefer well-drained soils of various types, including acid or calcareous sands, loams, clays or gravel. Plants thrive as well in full sun, partial shade or dappled shade.

Range: Winecups occur from North Dakota and Utah south to Texas, where they grow throughout the state. They are most abundant throughout east and central Texas, southward to the Rio Grande. They are less common in the Panhandle and almost absent from the Trans-Pecos.

Medicinal Uses: Native Americans were known to crush the dried roots, burn them and inhale the smoke to treat head colds. Winecup roots were also boiled to make an analgesic tea.

What's in a Name: The genus *Callirhoe* recalls the name of an ocean nymph of Greek mythology. The species name *involucrata* refers to the involucre, or ring of leafy bracts found directly below the petals and sepals, an excellent field mark.

***Lore:** A legend from India recounts how winecups came to be. Once there was a great ruler, well-loved by his people for his wisdom and kindness. One day he fell gravely ill, and his loyal subjects despaired that he would die. The king had a favorite dance called the Dance of the Wine Cup, and he asked his faithful servant, Ivan, to perform it one last time. The dance required the dancer to balance a large goblet full of wine on the palm of his hand while jumping and twirling in the air to the music. Ivan began to dance. Moving with great agility and grace, he danced for several days, refusing to stop. Finally, he collapsed from exhaustion, dropping the fragile goblet, whereupon it shattered, splattering the wine far and wide. Miraculously the king recovered. More miraculously, the next morning the lawn was covered in wine-red flowers in the shape of the goblet Ivan had broken.

*Lore information throughout comes from Elizabeth Silverthorn's *Legends and Lore of Texas Wildflowers*, published by Texas A&M University Press.

TEXAS BLUEBONNET

SPRINGTIME TRANSFORMS THE EDWARDS PLATEAU into a paradise of wildflowers, with the Texas bluebonnet the star attraction. Vast stands of densely clustered flowers cloak meadows, prairies and roadsides in an ocean of blue. In 1901, the Texas Legislature voted the bluebonnet the state flower, and in 1971 the legislation was amended to include *L. texensis* and "any other variety of bluebonnet not heretofore recorded." While Texas hosts a total of six species of bluebonnets, the Texas bluebonnet pictured here is the most widespread and perhaps the best-known. Good late fall and winter rains ensure a profusion of growth in the spring, and some experts believe that cold winter temperatures produce a deeper blue color. Several species of bees, flies and other nectar seekers throng to the sweet flowers. Hairstreaks and elfin butterflies use the bluebonnet as a larval host plant, laying their eggs on stems and leaves.

Other Common Names: Bonnet flower, buffalo clover, Texas lupine, Quaker's bonnets, wolf flower, *el conejo*.

Bloom Period: March to May, peaking around March 20. Hot, dry weather in early spring will shorten their reign.

Habit: This winter annual grows to one foot tall.

Habitat: Texas bluebonnets are most abundant on the limestone hillsides of Central Texas, thriving on well-drained gravelly, clay or calcareous soils in fields, brushlands, on hillsides and slopes. Plants avoid dense shade and hate to get their feet wet for long periods of time.

Range: A Texas endemic, the Texas bluebonnet is found only in the Lone Star State.

Fun Facts: Not only are bluebonnets welcome harbingers of spring, they also rank among our most useful plants by returning nitrogen to the soil. Bluebonnets alert bees that a particular flower has passed its prime by turning the central petal spot from flashy white

to dark red, a color invisible to bees.

Medicinal Uses: Native Americans were known to drink a cold bluebonnet leaf tea to treat nausea and internal bleeding.

What's in a Name: The genus name *Lupinus* comes from Latin *lupus* – *inus*, meaning wolf-like. The species name *texensis* comes from the Latin, indicating where it is found. Most likely, the genus name is based on the misconception that lupines removed nutrients from the soil, just as they believed that wolf packs devoured livestock and game. In fact, lupines, as members of the legume family, enrich soils by returning nitrogen. Bluebonnets were also called buffalo clover because they were thought to spring up in vast, densely packed stands where large herds of buffalo had passed, their feet churning the ground to dust — a good way to get soil-seed contact.



PHOTO © RUSTY VATES

SHOWY EVENING- PRIMROSE

GROWING IN POWDER-PINK PANOPLIES ALONG TEXAS ROADSIDES and open fields, showy evening-primrose creates a dazzling spring display. Exquisite pink baubles flutter to staccato rhythms as they dance in the wind. One of our showiest and most abundant wildflowers, showy evening-primrose continues to flower after rains almost any time of year. Its delicate appearance belies its hardy, drought-resistant nature. With a subtle musky scent characteristic of night-blooming flowers, it slyly opens one blossom at a time per stem to ensure that visiting moths carry pollen to neighboring flowers only.



Other Common Names: Pink buttercup, flutter-mill, pink primrose, Mexican primrose, fairy flower, cowslip, bee blossom, amapola del campo.

Bloom Period: March to July. Given sufficient moisture and moderate temperatures, flowers may bloom throughout the year.

Habit: This perennial wildflower grows to 18 inches. It usually branches and sprawls over the ground. Plants spread underground to form extensive colonies.

Habitat: Showy evening-primrose occurs abundantly in prairies and open woodlands, along roadsides, slopes and ditches throughout Texas. Preferring a wide variety of well-drained soils, it thrives in sand, loam, clay and caliche in full sun or partial shade.

Range: Showy evening-primrose is found from Kansas south to Mexico. While uncommon in the Panhandle, it occurs in all 10 Texas ecoregions.

What's in a Name: The genus name *Oenothera* comes from the Greek, meaning "wine-scenting." In the first century, Theophrastes referred to a plant, probably epilobium, whose juice, when consumed with wine, was reputed to produce sleep. The species name *speciosa* comes from Latin, meaning "showy."

Medicinal and Other Uses:

Native Americans used evening-primrose root extracts as a tea to prevent obesity and promote regularity. Today evening-primrose oil is used in cosmetics such as lipstick and is being studied for its potential to treat burns, skin rashes, asthma, migraines, diabetes and heart disease. Evening-primrose yields an excellent yellow dye.

Lore: Superstitious early settlers believed the evening-primrose had powers to guard against witchcraft. Fairies were reputed to take shelter within its blossoms.

MEXICAN HAT

WITH THEIR JAUNTY TOP HATS BOBBING IN THE SUN, Mexican hats capture the spirit of the Southwest. This common species forms vast colonies across open fields, rich moist prairies, roadsides and ditches, as well as on gravelly limestone slopes.

With its long-headed cone-flower and droopy ray petals, Mexican hat is easy to grow. The flowers attract legions of bees, butterflies and other nectar-loving insects that covet the sweet nectar. Ripe achenes (small, dry one-seeded fruits) are eaten by many species of seed-eating birds.

Best identified by its shape, which suggests a floppy sombrero, Mexican hat varies in both size and color, depending on conditions. Some are entirely yellow, while others are deep reddish brown. Most abundant is a form in which the rays are reddish at the base and golden yellow at the tip. As it matures, brownish disk flowers open progressively upward on the long, pale-green central cone. Generally there is but a single flower on a stem.

In backyard gardens, Mexican hat blooms longer given a little shade. It does not like standing in water, though, so make sure the soil is well-drained.

Other Common Names: Thimbleflower, red-spike Mexican hat, prairie coneflower, upright prairie coneflower, long-headed coneflower.

Bloom Period: April to November, peaking in early June. With sufficient rainfall and mild temperatures, Mexican hats may bloom year-round.

Habit: Perennial wildflower growing from one to three feet high.

Habitat: Occurring statewide, Mexican hat thrives in open, mostly calcareous soils, especially in the western



half of the state. It is found only rarely in extreme East Texas. Plants luxuriate on well-drained sandy, silty, or rocky open ground in both full sun and partial shade. Afternoon shade encourages longer bloom time.

Range: A widespread species in the United States, Mexican hat ranges from Montana south to Mexico.

What's in a Name: Botanical writers disagree as to the origin of the genus name *Ratibida*. The species name derives from the Latin *columnifera*, meaning "bearing columns," a reference to the columnar shape of the elongated seed-heads.



Bloom Period: May to June, often continuing until first winter's frost. In some parts of Texas, they grow year-round, with showiest displays reserved for spring.

Habit: A bushy annual wildflower growing from one to two feet tall.

Habitat: One of the most common Texas wildflowers, Indian blanket grows in rich profusion in open fields, prairies and meadows throughout the state. Flowers frequently occur in pure stands covering hundreds of acres. While these plants thrive on a wide variety of well-drained soils, they shun deep forests and desert habitats.

Range: The state flower of Oklahoma, Indian blanket ranges throughout Texas south to Mexico.

What's in a Name: Despite its French name, *Gaillardia* is native to North America. The genus honors Gaillard de Marentonneau, an 18th-century French magistrate and patron of botany. *Pulchella* comes from the Latin diminutive of *pulcher*, meaning "beautiful."

Lore: As with many of the showiest wildflowers, Indian legends about the origins of the Indian blanket abound. It is told that once there lived an aged blanket maker whose talent for weaving was known across the land. As a final offering to the Great Spirit, the old man wove himself a large ceremonial blanket, blending all his favorite browns, yellows and reds into a beautiful pattern. The Great Spirit was so taken with the beauty of the gift that he became sad when he realized mankind no longer would enjoy the exquisite patterns of the old man's blankets. And so forever after, there came to bloom above and all around the grave a great profusion of flowers in the colors and patterns of his blanket. Spreading like wildfire across the land, they return each year in late spring.

INDIAN BLANKET

JUST AS MASSES OF BLUEBONNETS ARE A SURE SIGN OF TEXAS SPRING, fields of Indian blankets signal that summer is about to begin. Like gaudy Fourth of July pinwheels, the red-and-yellow flowers cover fields and prairies. A marvelously easy wildflower to grow, Indian blanket attracts bees, butterflies and several other varieties of small insects. Ripe seedheads lure many species of seed-eating songbirds, including the flashy painted bunting. A hardy, drought-resistant plant able to thrive in poor soils, it's a good choice for a wildflower meadow. For best results, plant seeds in the fall.

Other Common Names: Firewheel, showy gaillardia, blanket flower, sunburst, bandana daisy, rose-ring gaillardia.

INDIAN PAINTBRUSH

GLOWING WITH THE COLORS OF BRILLIANT SUNSETS, Indian paintbrush sets Texas fields, meadows, prairies and roadsides ablaze in early spring. Interspersed among masses of bluebonnets and showy evening-primrose, they form a millefleurs tapestry or Persian carpet over the Texas prairie. Insects and hummingbirds, both ruby-throated and black-chinned, are lured by showy bracts to explore the nectar deep within the elongated tubular flowers.

Other Common Names: Scarlet paintbrush, Texas paintbrush, Indian pink, painted cup.

Bloom Period: March to May, sporadically until fall.

Habit: This annual or sometimes biennial wildflower grows from six to 12 inches tall.

Habitat: Indian paintbrush thrives in fairly moist sandy loam in prairies, pastures and hillsides, especially along roadsides in the eastern two-thirds of Texas. Plants do best in well-drained sands, loams and clays in full sun.

Range: Indian paintbrush occurs from southeastern Oklahoma down through the eastern part of Texas. Like the Texas bluebonnet, it is widely planted by the Texas Department of Transportation to beautify roadways.

Fun Facts: Indian paintbrush is thought to be a hemiparasite, a partial parasite that feeds on roots of common native grasses and forbs. By penetrating the roots of surrounding plants, it obtains a portion of its nutrients. In certain soils, paintbrushes may concentrate selenium at levels sufficient to poison small grazing animals.

What's in a Name: The genus name, *Castilleja*, takes its name from Spanish botanist Juan Castillejo of Cadiz. The species name *indivisa* comes from the Latin, meaning "undivided."

Medicinal and Other Uses: Native Americans brewed a tea from the flowers to alleviate pain from rheumatism. Plant extracts were used as secret love charms and in large doses to "destroy enemies." Indeed, the plant can be toxic when

ingested in significant amounts. Settlers applied Indian paintbrush poultices to soothe burns and ease the sting of centipedes, in the belief that the plant's color (the red of the bracts) would cure the redness — red dispels red.

Lore: According to one Indian legend, as a young chief sat watching the sunset, he longed to capture the beauty of the colors in art as they changed from rose to crimson to gold. After several failed attempts, he prayed to the Great Spirit for help. He heard a voice telling him to look down at his feet. There he found a graceful plant shaped like a slender brush, wet with paint that matched the colors of the sunset. As he applied the brush to soft buckskin, other brushes sprang up. He worked feverishly to finish his picture, tossing aside one brush after another. The next day, every tossed brush had taken root, dispersing its riot of color across the land.



HORSE MINT

A WIDESPREAD AROMATIC PRAIRIE WILDFLOWER THAT BLOOMS THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER, horsemint does well in mass plantings with Indian paintbrush and native grasses. Typical of members of the mint family, the leaves smell luscious when crushed. Perhaps no other Texas wildflower is easier to grow. Horsemint attracts butterflies, bees and a wide variety of other insects that feed on the copious nectar.

Common throughout Texas, horsemint is best identified by its shape. To some, this attractive member of the mint family resembles a multitiered Chinese pagoda. To others, the individual flowers look like the gaping mouths of fanciful dragons. The two-lipped, white-to-pink flowers, often dotted in purple, grow in three staggered whorls

spaced around the square stem.

Other Common Names: Lemon mint, lemon bee balm, plains horsemint, purple horsemint.

Bloom Period: May to July, occasionally to October.

Habit: This annual and sometimes biennial wildflower grows from one to two feet tall, usually with several stems rising from the base.

Habitat: Horsemint grows profusely in solid stands along slopes, meadows and prairies throughout Texas. Thriving in full sun or partial shade, plants luxuriate in both rocky soils and sandy loams.

Range: Horsemint ranges from Missouri to Kansas, south to Mexico, and can be found throughout Texas.

What's in a Name: Linnaeus named the genus *Monarda* in honor of Nicolas Monardes, a 16th-century Spanish physician and botanist who wrote about medicinal plants of the New World. The species name *citriodora*, comes from the Latin *citrus*, meaning "lemon tree," and *odoro*, "having a fragrant smell."

Medicinal and Other Uses:

Native Americans made a medicinal brew from the dried leaves to relieve colds, fevers, flu, stomach cramps and coughs. When rubbed on the body, the crushed, dried leaves make a fairly effective insect repellent. Members of this genus are still used as teas, herbs or food flavorings.



FLOWERING DOGWOOD

A BOISTEROUS HERALD OF SPRING, flowering dogwood lights up the dark understory of East Texas woods with its fine tracery of blossoms. The tree is just as beautiful in the fall, when it bears clusters of bright scarlet fruit and its leaves turn various shades of pink, red and maroon. The spring azure butterfly uses flowering dogwood as its larval host plant.

Other Common

Names: Virginia dogwood, cornel tree.

Bloom Period: March to May.

Habit: These showy deciduous shrubs to small trees grow from 10 to 40 feet tall.

Habitat: Preferring moist woodlands and thicker edges, flowering dogwood often lines streams and rivulets. As an understory tree, it does best in well-drained, slightly acid soils, including sand, sandy loam and loam, given sufficient moisture.

Range: Native to North America, flowering dogwood is found from Maine to Florida, extending west to East Texas and to the disjunct Lost Pines area in Bastrop County. Widely cultivated as an ornamental outside its natural range, showy dogwood adds drama and beauty to the spring garden.

Fun Facts: Dogwood trails attract many visitors to East Texas each spring. Many birds, from small songbirds to large gamebirds, forage on the berries. Squirrels and white-tailed deer also relish the fruit.

Medicinal and Other Uses: Native Americans gathered the roots of dogwood and extracted the red sap to use as a dye. Some tribes chewed the twigs, and the resulting brushy fiber strands were used as a brush and whitening



agent for the tect. During the Civil War in the South, a root-bark tea substituted for quinine to treat malaria. The ripe berries were also soaked in brandy as a bitter tonic to relieve acid indigestion. When ink was in great demand, the inner bark of the dogwood was used as a substitute.

What's in a Name: *Cornus*, the genus name, comes from the Latin *cornu*, meaning "horn," alluding to the hardness of the wood. The species name *florida* comes from the Latin word meaning "flowering." The plant is said to derive its common name from the fact that the bark of an English dogwood was used historically to treat mangy dogs.



CENIZO

WITH ITS VELVETY GRAY-GREEN FOLIAGE and lavender flowers, cenizo adds a touch of desert charm to any landscape garden. Dense shrubs bloom shortly after rains or periods of high humidity, hence the name “barometer bush.” Cenizo is the larval host plant of the *Theona checkerspot* butterfly.

Other Common Names: Dusty sage, purple sage, Texas sage, Texas silver-leaf, white-leaf, barometer bush.

Bloom Period: March through May. Given sufficient rains and mild temperatures, plants may bloom periodically throughout the year.

Habit: Cenizo is a showy shrub that grows from three to six feet high. It is

often used in backyard landscapes.

Habitat: Cenizo thrives on rocky limestone hills, bluffs, ravines, arroyos and brushlands in South Texas, preferring well-drained limestone soils. Plants thrive in full sun, but will tolerate partial shade. Highly drought-tolerant, cenizo does well in dry conditions but prefers alkaline soils.

Range: Grows most abundantly in the South Texas Brush Country.

What's in a Name: Genus name *Leucophyllum* comes from the Greek *leukos*, meaning “white,” and *phylon*, meaning “a leaf.” The species name *frutescens* means “growing in a shrubby manner.”

Fun Facts: Cenizo shrubs are thickly branched and offer good cover and safe resting sites for birds. Whereas the aromatic leaves are not readily browsed by white-tailed deer, the showy lavender flowers attract several kinds of nectar-loving insects. Cenizo does not transplant well from the wild but can easily be raised from cuttings of the current season's growth. Plants are highly susceptible to cotton root rot.

OCOTILLO

ON THE COVER

OCOTILLO IS A FLAMBOYANT DENIZEN OF THE CHIHUAHUA DESERT LANDSCAPE. Resembling a coach-whip tipped in red tubular flowers, the plant is cloaked in small green spatulate leaves, which it drops during periods of drought. Yellowish-green photosynthetic stems are studded with feisty thorns that thwart the most aggressive would-be foragers. Ocotillo is a marvelously dramatic accent plant highly popular in desert gardens in Central Texas. Ocotillo is a spectacular hummingbird plant and a special favorite of Lucifer hummingbirds in its native habitat. Several varieties of insects, particularly carpenter bees, covet its copious nectar, while several species of seed-eating birds and small mammals eat its seeds. Excellent examples of convergent evolution, these distinctive shrubs recall the strange, totally unrelated plant species of the *Didierea* family, such as the octopus tree and spiny alluaudia, found in the spiny deserts of Madagascar.

Other Common Names: Coach-whip, candlewood, devil's walking stick, palo sante, tlapacoa, rosalillo.

Bloom Period: March to May, but with good rains shrubs will bloom well into the fall.

Habit: A member of the candlewood family, ocotillo is a soft-wooded shrub with wand-like stems from 10 to 20 feet tall. Much branched at the bottom, ocotillo stems trace elegant, sinuous silhouettes against the desert sky.

Habitat: Ocotillo grows commonly on rocky slopes west of the Pecos River. Plants prefer well-drained soils and adapt well to drought conditions, shedding their green leaves during dry periods.

Range: Ocotillo is found in deserts of southern California, Arizona, Texas and Mexico.

Fun Facts: Few plants can survive the severe growing conditions characteristic of ocotillo's desert habitats. During drought conditions the ocotillo drops its leaves, and the greenish stems take over their photosynthetic function. Should the drought become severe, stems turn brown, as though the plants were dead.

In Mexico, ocotillo is used for living fences around the house and yard. Ocotillo is frequently made into walking sticks, hence one of its common names.

What's in a Name: Genus name *Fouquieria* honors a famous mid-19th-century French physician Pierre Eloi Fouquier. The species name *splendens* comes from the Latin *splendere*, meaning "to shine." The common name ocotillo comes from the Spanish diminutive of *ocote*, meaning "little torch-pine."

Medicinal and Other Uses: Native Americans drink a tea made by soaking both flowers and seeds of ocotillo in water. In the Mexican state of Coahuila, natives use the flowers as a remedy for coughs. Powder made from the roots is reported to alleviate painful swellings and relieve fatigue when added to a bath. Stems and branches are sometimes incorporated into adobe bricks for reinforcement. A leather dressing can be made from the wax of the bark. Ocotillo wax was also used for washing clothes before soap became popular. ☆

The mysterious wildflower on the cover of this issue is the maypop passionflower, also known as the pink passionflower or apricot vine. Its Medusa-like blossoms are fringed with wavy, crimped, hair-like floral segments. Rising from the center is a Byzantine-looking gynophore formed by five basally united stamens, overtopped by the three-part pistil. Leaves are long and wide, studded on the stalk with two conspicuous nectar glands. This flower, which was early named flor delle passione by the Italians, was used by Catholic missionaries in South America to teach indigenous peoples a lesson on the Crucifixion. The three stigmas refer to the three nails, the five anthers the five wounds, the corona the crown of thorns. The maypop passionflower blooms from April to September in stream bottoms, pastures and disturbed soils along the Gulf Coast and East Texas, west to the Eastern Cross Timbers.





The Gobb

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2001

Secrets of the Turkey-Hunting Sportswriters

From embarrassing moments to canny tips, seven of Texas' outdoor columnists serve up stories of spring turkey hunts.

By Larry D. Hodge / Illustrations by Fian Arroyo

Propped against a tree with a clear view of a small opening, the hunter produces a series of raspy squawks from a wooden call. Before the last plaintive yelp dies and falls into the carpet of blue-bonnets, an answering gobble raises the hair on the back of the hunter's neck. Within a few minutes a majestic tom turkey appears, tail fanned, wingtips

dragging the ground, head and neck glistening red, white and blue. Following an oblivious hen, he tacks like a sailboat, lunging and turning and drumming to attract her attention.

No other outdoor experience makes you feel more alive, more glad to be alive, and more appreciative of nature's wonders than calling a big, puffed-up tom

turkey to within a few yards — and have him be totally unaware you are there. That's the real appeal of turkey hunting — the secret that draws hunters into the wildflower-covered fields and budding woods, spring after spring. "A lot of what we call hunting is really *pretending* that we are hunting," confides Lee Leschper of the *Amarillo Globe-News*. "We let a guide put out the goose or duck decoys and do the calling and all we do is snoot. But in turkey hunting, we do it all ourselves." The satisfaction that comes from such a hunt is complete.

Not surprisingly, some of the top outdoor writers around the state share those sentiments about turkey hunting. Here's what they have to say.



Forecast

High
65

Low
46

er Gazette

ONE DOLLAR AND FIFTY CENTS

Shannon Tompkins, outdoor writer for the *Houston Chronicle*

Shannon Tompkins has been hunting turkeys about 25 years. "One of my first hunts was a Texas Parks and Wildlife draw hunt on the Kerr Wildlife Management Area," he reveals. "It was my first real exposure to Rio Grande turkeys, and I can't remember all the ways I screwed up.

"You have to realize I grew up duck hunting, where you work ducks over decoys, and they either come in or they leave. I heard a gobbler, set up on one side of a little opening and made a couple of horrid screeches on a diaphragm call. The bird answered a couple of times and then shut up. I sat there for what seemed like a long time but was probably five minutes, squawked again and heard nothing. Not realizing the bird was coming to me, I thought maybe I'd sneak up on him. I stood up and walked across the opening, and all I heard was flopping wings as the gobbler flew off. That was one of the most stupid things I've ever done, but you learn from your mistakes, and that's part of it. The



"You can't use too much gun. I really believe in using the best-quality shot shells, using a turkey choke and spending an afternoon patterning your gun. Turkey hunting is a lot like deer hunting in that you are going for one shot and need to know exactly what your gun will do. Also, get comfortable — the longer you are able to sit still, the better off you will be."

more I read, the more I learned that patience is the biggest skill in turkey hunting. Find a good spot and just sit there."

The first time Shannon took his brother hunting, things went much better. "I walked down into a creek

bottom, set out a decoy and called. A bird gobbled, and five minutes later it was walking in front of my brother, and he waxed it."

Anyone who's done much turkey hunting knows turkeys usually are much harder to come by — and also that the rewards go far beyond bagging a bird. "The worst hunting I ever had required getting up at two o'clock in the morning and driving 240 miles to hunt in a national forest," Shannon recalls. "After I got there I had to hike back into a wilderness area. I never saw or heard a turkey, but it was a gorgeous spring day, and I got to see bald eagles nesting. It was 'bad' hunting, but it was one of my most memorable hunts." ★

Ray Sasser, outdoor writer for *The Dallas Morning News*

Ray Sasser agrees that being outdoors when Mother Nature is wearing her Sunday clothes is reason enough to hunt turkeys in the spring. "I've never had a bad turkey hunt, although I've had several seasons where I was not successful at bagging a bird. If the turkeys aren't playing the game — and they frequently are not — I go fishing or just enjoy being in the woods in April."

Sometimes strange things happen in the turkey woods. Everyone "knows" that you have to be fully camouflaged and remain very, very still to avoid being spotted by turkeys. However, someone failed to explain that to a turkey Ray met in Zavala County one year.

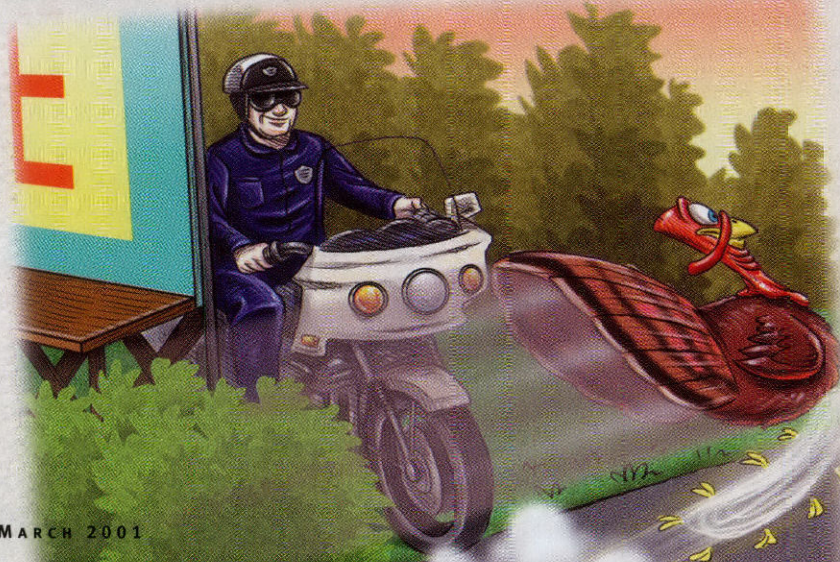
"I went to a likely spot for an afternoon hunt, set a decoy in a *sendero*, and backed up against a mesquite tree to wait for birds to move toward a creek-bottom roosting area," Ray remembers. "I had a paperback book with me, so I got the book out and was reading to pass the time. It was early afternoon and warm, so I had my facemask hanging around my neck and was not wearing gloves. A turkey gobbled about 200 to 300 yards across the creek bottom, and I called back. Nothing hap-

"I don't believe in turkey hunting secrets. We tend to make turkey hunting sound like some kind of magic, sort of like fly fishing. In truth, anyone can learn to fly fish, and anyone can learn to turkey hunt. The secret is that there are days when anyone can call a turkey, and there are days when nobody can. The trick is to keep trying until you're successful."

pened, so I picked the book up and began reading again. That's when I heard a gobbler drumming behind me. A mature bird walked within 10 yards of me sitting with no facemask and a book in my ungloved hands. He went to the decoy, circled it as if puzzled by its presence, then walked away. There was one small bush about 25 yards away, and the turkey walked behind that bush, giving me time to lay my book

down, pick my shotgun up, and make the shot when he walked out from behind the bush."

Calling a bird into range can be one of turkey hunting's greatest challenges — or not. "One of my most memorable hunts was on the North Fork of the Guadalupe River at a spot called the Boneyard," says Ray. "I'm told it is the site of the last major Indian fight in Kerr County. Indians ran a herd of stolen horses off a cliff rather than let the settlers take them back, and that's where the Boneyard gets its name. But it's also one of the biggest winter turkey roosts in Texas. I killed a nice gobbler there in a misty rain one April morning, but to say I called that bird would be like saying that car horns attract traffic on I-35." ★



Russell Smith, outdoor writer for the *San Angelo Standard- Times*

A former police chief turned outdoor writer, you might think Russell Smith would hunt turkeys using a .38 Special.

You'd be wrong. His weapon of choice is a bow. However, his turkey hunting method may be a holdover from lying in wait for speeders behind billboards: He uses a dark blind.

A dark blind is simply a framework of some sort that supports a piece of black plastic with a covering of brush or heavy burlap over it. Just one opening is left, big enough to shoot through. "Even though turkeys have great eyesight, they can't see you inside the blind, because you are in the dark," Russell explains. This allows the bowhunter to draw without being seen.

However, Russell likes the dark blind for another reason. "It's a great way to let a child take a bird," he says. "They can hunt this way before they learn to sit still. It allows anyone to get within 10 yards of a turkey."

Hunting from a dark blind does have its disadvantages. "Once I was in a dark blind hoping that one of the gobblers I could hear in the distance would come in," he recalls. "What I didn't realize was that a big white-tailed doe was nosing around outside. She stuck her nose into a crack in the blind, and when she caught my scent, she snorted and wheezed. It was pretty exciting."

Like many hunters, Russell took his first turkey in the fall as the centerpiece for Thanksgiving dinner. "I started spring turkey hunting about five years ago," he says. "The only thing more exciting is having a bull elk come in on you. It is something to see 700 pounds of animal standing there looking at you. Spring turkey hunting is much the same. It opens a whole new window into the excitement of the outdoors. It's the best way I know of to let a gun hunter know what a bowhunter goes through. Every nerve in your body is alive. All the emotions swell up in your body. It happens pretty fast when it finally comes down to the bird coming in." ★

"One of the things I always forget is that when you are calling, the birds don't always answer. I always think they will come from the way I think they will. I've been surprised more than once by a bird right beside me that came in without my seeing him."



Mike Leggett, sports reporter for the *Austin American-Statesman*

Mike Leggett has hunted both Rio Grande and eastern turkeys for more than 15 years, and his reasons are simple. "It's the most fun you can have outdoors."

While Mike avers there is no such thing as a bad turkey hunt, he does admit that turkeys have some pretty slick tricks up their drumsticks. One even became invisible in front of Mike's son. "I had my son sit on the ground, and I sat on a rock behind him. I called two gobblers up a road, and when the first gobbler got within about 33 yards, I whispered to him to shoot. Nothing happened. I kept whispering, 'Shoo!' and finally the gun went off and the turkey ran out of sight. I said, 'You missed the turkey.' He said, 'I know I did; I couldn't see him.' I had forgotten that I could see the turkey from atop the rock I was sitting on, but he was on the ground. So I asked him why he shot when he couldn't see the turkey, and he said, 'Because you told me to.' We've

laughed about that turkey for years."

Missing turkeys could be a generically transmitted trait, based on Mike's first turkey hunt for easterns. "I'd worked hard to locate a gobbler, got in early and started calling. I knew I had him coming, but he caught me between two trees, on my knees, with my shotgun on the ground in front of me. I can still see that turkey ducking his head just as I started to shoot. I shot a big pine tree right behind him. It was two more years before I killed my first eastern." ★

"Very aggressive calling works best for me with Rio Grandes. I do run some off, but even if I spook one, there is another I can find somewhere else. Easterns are not as vocal; they have to be more cautious in those big woods. When gobblers are strutting but not gobbling, they are with hens. Call the hens. If you get her to answer, make whatever sound she makes, and she will come and bring the gobbler."

David Sikes, outdoor writer for the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*



David Sikes confesses to being a turkey-hunting neophyte, having pursued gobblers in the throes of passion for only three years. However, he's already been exposed to the best and the worst of turkey hunting. "The best hunt I had was also one of the first. They say if you have beginner's luck, you'll be spoiled for life, and that's what happened to me. I was with someone who

Lee Leschper, outdoor writer for *the Amarillo Globe-News*

Lee Leschper has been hunting turkeys since 1987. He remembers the date well because in 1986, when he was supposed to go on his first spring turkey hunt, his mother died the day before the season opened. "Now that anniversary, the opening of the season, always has an extra meaning for me," he says.

Bittersweet though the opening of the season is, turkey hunting has furnished Lee with some of his most cherished

memories of time spent outdoors. Perhaps in compensation for the sadness he's felt, the turkey hunting gods have sent Lee more than his share of humorous happenings. "At one camp, we had a cook who always talked about seeing turkeys around the camp while we were out hunting. We didn't believe him until the day that we saw it for ourselves — while we were out hunting, they'd be hanging out on the roof of the cabin."

knew what he was doing. He called the bird, and I got the shot. However, I've also been hunting several times when I wound up sitting under a tree they were roosting in, and they flew down and walked away without my being able to get a shot. It's frustrating to be so close you can hear their footsteps in the leaves and not be able to turn around so you can see them."

David knows from experience that turkeys will pick up on any movement, no matter how small. "I'd read something Shannon Tompkins wrote about a turkey being able to see a person's eye at 100 yards, but I didn't believe it — until I was sitting in a tripod blind surrounded by brush, with some jakes 50 yards away. I just barely moved to bring the camera up to take a picture, and all five flew off. It was quite a sight — but I didn't get a picture of it. I still think of that every time I'm trying to take a picture of a turkey: At 50 yards, don't flinch!" ★

"Start turkey hunting with people who know what they are doing, so you won't have to go through such a long learning curve. Until I started turkey hunting, I didn't really think camouflage was all that necessary. And you have to stay so still."

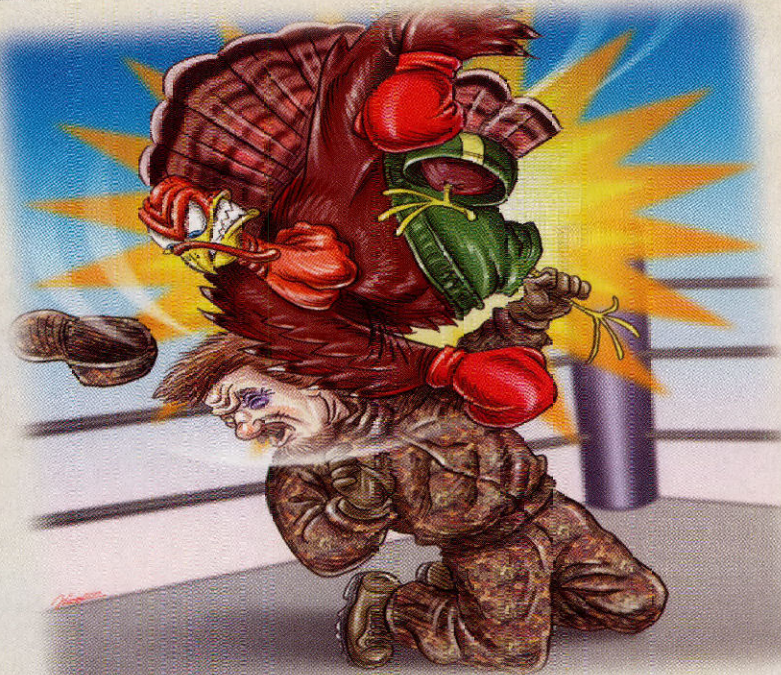
Lee is still unsure whether those were the smartest or the dumbest turkeys he ever saw.

Lee is certain whose lack of intelligence was showing the time he rolled a turkey and then ran up to it and picked it up by a leg while it was still flopping. "He wasn't nearly as dead as I thought he was," Lee laughs. "He wound up whipping the tar out of me with his wings."

For Lee, as for many turkey hunters, sometimes the best hunts end with the score turkeys 1, hunter 0. "My best hunt ever was on a 57,000-acre ranch in Collingsworth County. Turkeys spread out all over that country during the spring mating season. We spent most of

the day hunting them like you hunt mule deer — spotting them a quarter or half a mile away, then sneaking up close enough to call to them.” No turkey fell for the ruse, but Lee says, “There’s no way you can have a bad spring turkey hunt — the country’s too pretty.” ★

“Few people write about hunting in the afternoon. But toms almost always will have hens with them in the morning, and in the afternoon they are more likely to come to the call. Listen to real turkeys and learn the cadence of the calls, which I think is more important than the sound. You can learn more in a couple of hours of listening to real turkeys than you can by listening to all the tapes in the world.”



Ron Henry Strait, outdoor editor for the San Antonio Express-News

Ron Henry Strait has been hunting turkeys — not very successfully — for more than 10 years. Like many hunters, he is as interested in seeing what the turkeys will do as he is in hunting them. As a result, he’s seen turkeys do some strange things.

The strangest bird was what he now calls the phantom turkey. “I was hunting with the late Dan Klepper. Dan was hidden in some brush, doing the calling, and I was supposed to be the shooter. There was no response to the calling for about an hour, and then the biggest turkey in the world crossed an opening about 30 yards away from us. I couldn’t move to get my gun up until he went behind a bush. I got ready to shoot and waited for him to come out from



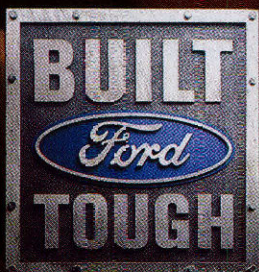
behind the bush, but he never reappeared. He must have dissolved into the dirt — or maybe it was a phantom turkey and really wasn’t there.”

Recall the dumbest turkey of his acquaintance on a hunt near Sisterdale. “I was sitting in a ground blind on a warm, foggy morning,” he says, “and I nodded off. Something woke me up, and there was a turkey standing there less than four feet away, watching me

take a nap. It was a hen, so I just let it walk away.” ★

“In South Texas, you can actually start calling gobblers toward the end of the general deer season, in mid-January. In Brooks, Kenedy and Kleberg counties, the fall turkey season runs until nearly the end of February, and the turkeys are gobbling.”

KING RANCH COVERS 825,000 ACRES OF SOUTH TEXAS.

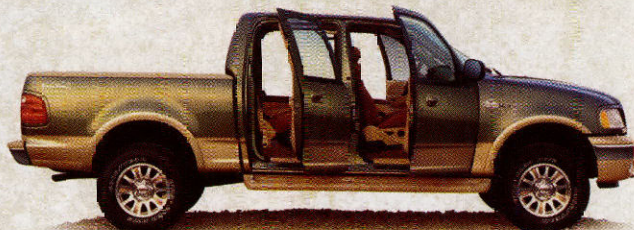


KING RANCH F-150 SUPERCREW

LEATHER-COVERED FRONT AND REAR CAPTAIN'S CHAIRS AND CONSOLES | AVAILABLE BED EXTENDER
6-DISC CD CHANGER | AVAILABLE POWER MOONROOF | 3 LIMITED EDITION 2-TONE PAINT SCHEMES

AND THE INSIDE OF ONE VERY SPECIAL TRUCK.

WHEN CAPTAIN KING FOUNDED HIS RANCH ALMOST 150 YEARS AGO, HE BUILT IT TO LAST. THAT SPIRIT STILL SHOWS IN THE INDESTRUCTIBLE LUXURY OF THE LEATHER GOODS MADE FOR THE KING RANCH SADDLE SHOP. IT'S THE KIND OF HERITAGE ANY TRUCK WOULD BE PROUD TO CARRY ON. BUT ONLY ONE IS FIT FOR THE JOB: THE NEW KING RANCH F-150 SUPERCREW.



For more info, call 1-800-FORD-115 or visit www.fordvehicles.com



The C om

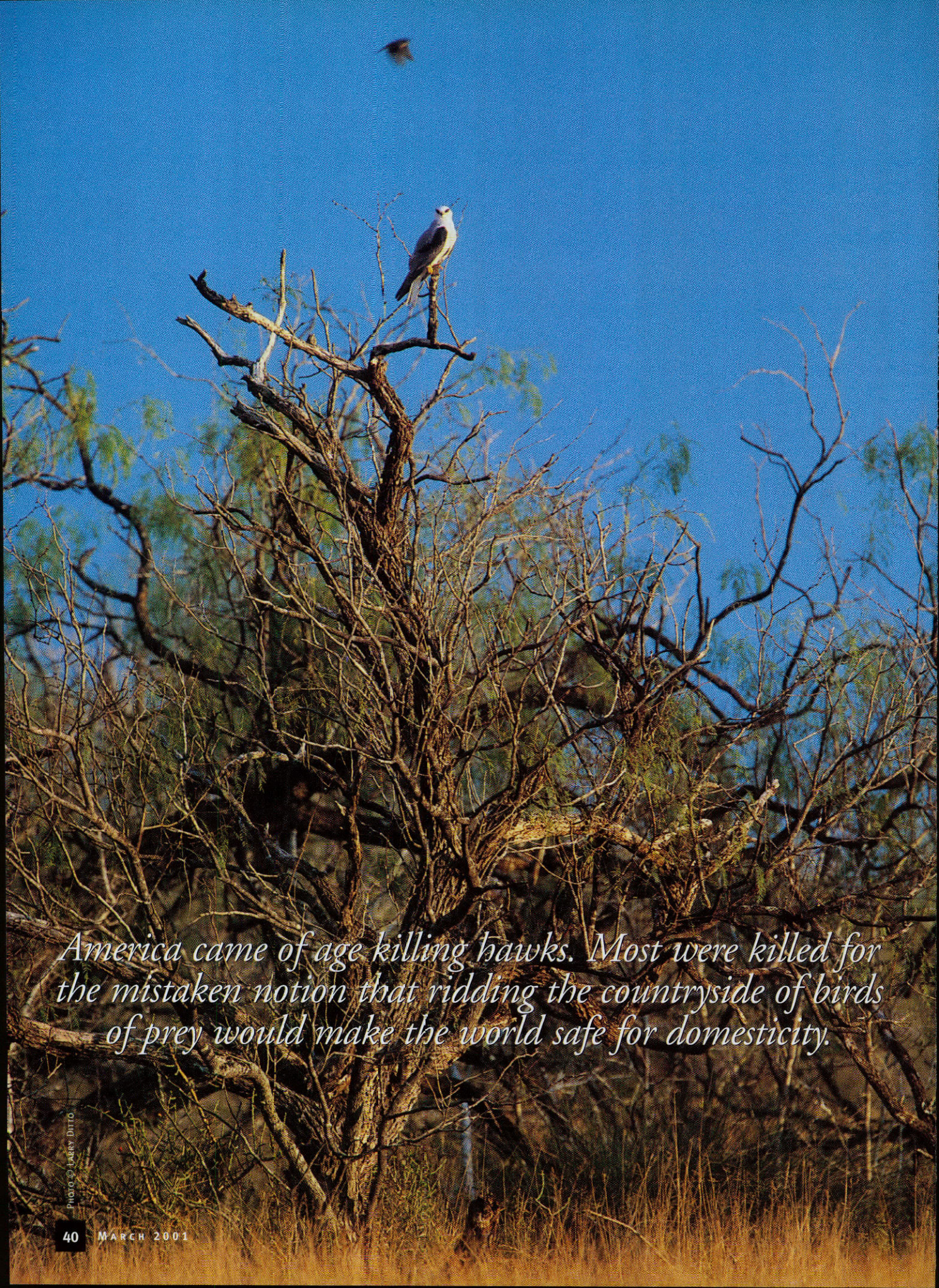
Once destined to go the way of the passenger pigeon,

By Matt White

Rebound Kite

the white-tailed kite has made a stunning rebound.

TODAY THE WHITE-TAILED KITE IS A FAMILIAR SIGHT in Texas throughout most of the coastal plain, where it is often seen coursing low over the fields and marshes, or hanging like a helicopter on the wind. It hasn't always been so. When Arthur C. Bent published his famous *Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey* in 1937, he explained that this elegant and profoundly attractive bird, formerly known as the black-shouldered kite, had been nearly wiped out of the United States. Bent added that efforts to find them in Texas



America came of age killing hawks. Most were killed for the mistaken notion that ridding the countryside of birds of prey would make the world safe for domesticity.

had been unsuccessful. The tone of his work conveys a regrettable sense of loss for a bird that was nearly impossible to find — except for a few places in California.

The outlook seemed so bleak back then that a few people were already writing requiems for the doomed species that once graced the skies of the southern United States from Florida to California southward into South America. It seemed as if the white-tailed kite were destined to go the way of the dodo, or the passenger pigeon.

And then, almost miraculously, in the 1950s they began making a comeback, first in California and then a few years later in Texas. Today they are back in full force, probably more common than ever before. They are once again gracing the skies and adding excitement to the landscape wherever they are found.

Only slightly larger than the familiar kestrel, or sparrow hawk as some call it, the white-tailed kite is ghostly by comparison. The white head and breast make it quite conspicuous. The long pointed wings, as well as the back, are light gray, and in flight it often resembles just another one of the thousands of gulls that flock to the beaches near the coastal plain. But when perched, these birds display prominent black patches on the folded wing — often called shoulders — unlike any gull. The white tail is usually angled downward as it hovers, gracefully searching for its next meal.

Young birds are painted with golden brown speckles across the back, though the dark shoulder patches are already visible. Some white feathers are already present on the face, and the white breast and throat are adorned with a brown partial necklace. Perhaps their most haunting feature, though, is their piercing eyes, which appear dark from a distance and give them an intense stare.

The story of their decline is a sad one, but one that needs telling. It is also an especially gripping one, because their rebound fills us with a sense of wonder. Of course, almost everyone loves a story with a

happy ending. But how is it that a bird, seemingly on the brink of extermination, could make such a remarkable comeback, especially in the face of such overwhelming odds against it?

The answer is truly an American tale, one that perhaps says more about us than we care to admit. America came of age killing hawks. From colonial times well into the 20th century, fewer pursuits were considered nobler. Most were killed for the mistaken notion that ridding the countryside of birds of prey would make the world safe for domesticity. Hawks of

all kinds were unpopular primarily because some may occasionally prey upon small farm animals, such as chickens, or game birds such as quail and waterfowl. Shooting hawks provided sport, or just target practice, for young boys and old men alike in an era that offered few other national pastimes. In some areas the slaughter was relentless, as gunners lined up along mountain ridges in the eastern United States to ambush the birds as they migrated south en masse for the winter. In a few places hunting clubs were established with the singular goal of wiping out every single hawk and removing other undesirable birds such as jays and crows from the countryside.

The white-tailed kite was doubly disadvantaged. First, its beautiful white plumage made it an easy target and an even better trophy. Second, it was not widely distributed, and its numbers in the United States were low. Nesting birds were particularly easy to kill because they were quite unwary at that time. Therefore these majestic birds were nearly gone before anyone realized they were worth saving. And they may have continued their decline had a curious thing not happened.

The most crucial factor in this turnaround was the



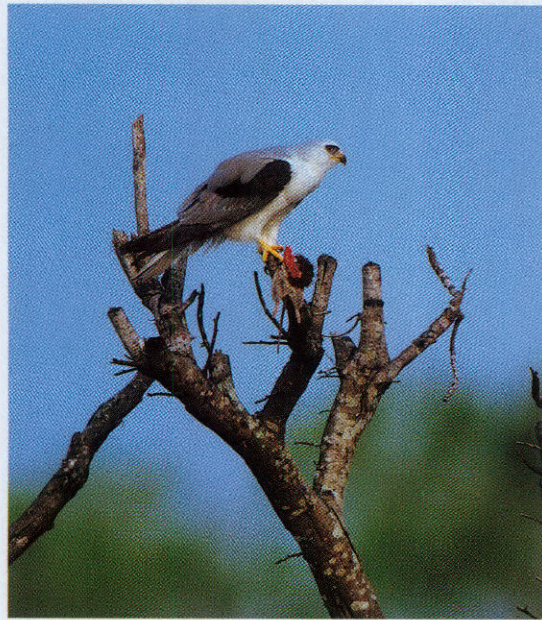
When hover hunting, the white-tailed kite holds its wings high and beats them vigorously. When diving toward the prey, the bird lifts its wings and appears to float toward the ground.

introduction of irrigation in the normally dry deserts. Although this new practice radically altered many aspects of the natural habitat there, it worked like magic for the kites and helped to fuel their remarkable recovery — which began first in California. White-tailed kites need water, which the irrigation canals provided. The concentrations of mice that were attracted to the grassy margins of the canals and the fields were beneficial to the kites by providing them with an easy source of food. In addition, massive deforestation for agricultural purposes in Central America — often in the form of slash-and-burn — proved beneficial to the birds by creating thousands of acres of suitable open habitat there.

It has been suggested that this population explosion in California and south of the Rio Grande in Mexico helped fuel their recovery in Texas, which was first evident by the late 1960s. By the 1970s, white-tailed kites once again were nesting in Texas —



The kite's beautiful white plumage made it an easy target and an even better trophy.



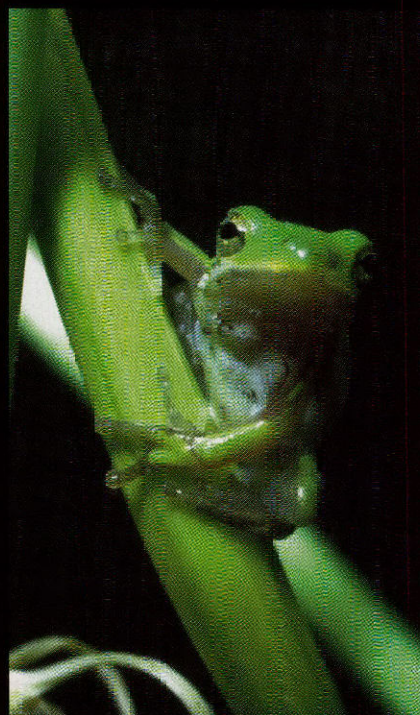
primarily along the coast. Over the next several decades they continued to nest, and slowly their numbers began to grow. Today white-tailed kites are fairly common in the grasslands along the coast, and they have spread inland to several parts of the state as well.

The next time you visit the Texas coast, take a second look at the ghostly white-tailed kite. Remember that the tale of this bird that you see resting on power lines or telephone poles or flying low over the sand dunes could have had a much less happy ending. Happily, peregrine falcons and bald eagles also have made a comeback in recent years, but the struggle to save those species involved a great deal of expense and governmental protection. The time to save a species is before it becomes threatened or endangered. Unfortunately there are a number of plants and animals in Texas that may not be so lucky. ★

Where to Watch Kites Fly

ALTHOUGH THEY ARE MAINLY DISTRIBUTED along the Gulf Coastal Plain (where they occur year-round), a few white-tailed kites regularly wander well into the interior of the state in late winter and spring — causing great excitement among the birders who see them. Although generally not considered migratory in the strictest sense of the word — like ducks, geese and other migratory birds — their movements inland do appear to be seasonal. Look for them in the vicinity of large, open pastures (where mice are abundant) from about late January through May — or even later occasionally. They may remain to nest well away from the coast — in fact, the first nest of this species to be described to science came from just north of the Red River in Oklahoma in 1860. Oddly, it would be more than 100 years before another pair was found nesting in that state. As their numbers have rebounded, so too have the number of birds wandering well away from the coast. Away from the immediate coast, the number of confirmed cases of nesting is still quite small, though perhaps the recent increase elsewhere will return these elegant and graceful raptors to the grasslands across the state, where they belong. — M.W.

TEXAS CONSERVATION PASSPORTSM



**Free
entry
at more
than
120
state
parks.**

The Texas Conservation Passport is your pass to state parks and more: Your \$50 membership helps support Texas State Parks, plus you'll receive quarterly listings of special events. Available at any state park.

For more information, refer to the reader service card between pages 64 and 65, call toll-free or visit the TPW Web site.

(800) 792-1112 / www.tpwd.state.tx.us

TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

WANTED:

DEAD OR ALIVE



THE JURY IS STILL OUT AMONG RANCHERS AND CONSERVATIONISTS ON THE FATE OF THE PRAIRIE DOG.

“A

RE ALL THE HOLES CONNECTED?” asks Kyle, a high school junior, as he kicks dirt off a tall, volcano-like mound, whose center hole descends for about a foot underground before curving out of sight beneath the red Panhandle dirt.

“No,” I reply, looking toward the burrow at the fresh claw marks that signal diligent work by a resourceful prairie dog. “Each hole may have an entrance and an exit, but that’s about it. The holes aren’t connected to any extent at all. In fact, that is one of the many misconceptions that people have about prairie dogs.”

From there I begin to dispel a few of the myths that permeate prairie dog country to a group of eight students who are members of my Advanced Wildlife Management class. As I talk, the teenage students look around skeptically, yet I can see their interest in the small rodents begin — just as it does every time I bring students here. For the past three years, I have used this long and nar-

row, 13-acre prairie dog town about a mile north of the high school as my classroom for about two months every spring.

Using all sorts of tools, the students measure the town’s size and shape, test the soil and forage quality, and record the various species of plants and animals within the town’s limits. Although they perform a variety of experiments each year, the purpose of all the work has a singular impetus — to study the effects

of prairie dogs on the ranchlands of the red rolling plains north of Childress.

The preliminary findings, to the chagrin of some, show that the prairie dog’s effect on the quality of the soil and forage on this small piece of real estate is positive. To me it seems reasonable that the prairie dogs enhance the shortgrass prairie. After all, the black-tailed prairie dog was once an important component in the creation and maintenance of a huge ecological com-

plex for the millions of bison that roamed the fringes of the 100th meridian. To some, however, the findings don’t prove a thing. The results of the students’ work directly contradict what their eyes tell them — that the prairie dog is a detri-



By Russell A. Graves



published the survey in the 1902 United States Yearbook of Agriculture. The report was damning for the black-tailed prairie dog. Merriam said that the nation's 63 million acres of prairie dog habitat reduced the usefulness of rangelands by 50 to 75 percent. Moreover, he concluded that 256 prairie dogs consumed as much grass in one day as a 1,000-pound cow — a statistic which, although wrong, is still quoted nearly 100 years later.



Since then, studies have shown that a prairie dog consumes about 25 pounds of dry matter a year — compared to 30 pounds a day for a cow. Using these numbers, it takes 429 prairie dogs to consume as much as one cow does in a day. To put that in perspective, using known population density averages, it would take a prairie dog town a little more than 100 acres to consume as much as a cow in a day. That's assuming that both a prairie dog's and a cow's diets are identical,



which they are not. Nonetheless, with the Merriam report, anti-prairie dog sentiment was set into motion and gained the backing of the federal eradication programs.



Twenty years after Merriam issued the first report on the prairie dog's perceived destructiveness, government researchers W.P. Taylor and J.V.G. Lofffield fed the anti-prairie dog flames when they released a document that stated that the prairie dog is "one of the most injurious rodents of the Southwest and plains region."

ment to the range because of its incessant foraging and supposed cattle-crippling burrowing.

In the time between the Merriam

A CENTURY OF DESTRUCTION

In 1902, federal employees for the Bureau of Biological Survey, the precursor to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, were in Texas surveying the extent of the black-tailed prairie dog's range. What they discovered was amazing: a town that was approximately 100 miles wide and stretched from San Angelo north about 250 miles to Clarendon — a whopping 16 million acres. It was estimated that the number of prairie dogs living in this megalopolis stood at 800 million.

and the Taylor/Lofffield reports, prairie dog acreage decreased by one-quarter. In 1922, government agents poisoned one million acres of prairie dog habitat in the Texas Panhandle, killing off 90 percent of the dogs. In 1935 the United States Bureau of Biological Survey reported that "the last extensive dog town in the Plains Area [Texas] passed out of the picture."

C.F. Merriam, the director of the bureau, ultimately

During the 1940s the Bureau of Biological Control was moved from under the administrative control of the United States Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior. With the move, the bureau's budget for nuisance animal control programs nearly dou-

bled to \$4.7 million. In the 1960s, nearly 6.5 million poison baits were placed on federal land to control nuisance animals such as prairie dogs and coyotes.

By the close of the 20th century, several groups saw the warning signs of the prairie dog as a species in trouble and began to take steps to halt its decline.

SPECIES AT THE CROSSROADS

"Prairie dogs are a nuisance as far as I'm concerned," says Rick Elliott, manager of the sprawling TV Ranch north of Childress. Elliott, an affable, middle-aged cowboy who oversees crossbred cattle among the mesquite and prickly pear of northwest Texas, holds the same views as most of his contemporaries who share the big ranch country with prairie dogs.

"On our place they are in competition with the cattle. They are constantly clipping the grass off at the ground, and their holes can be dangerous to our livestock, including the horses." Elliott says that although he has never had any animals injured by the prairie dog burrows, they are still a concern to him. "I had a horse fall in a badger hole and roll over on me a while back, and any holes in the pasture worry me."

Elliott concedes that, despite the perceived danger of the burrows, his cattle like to hang around the prairie dog town on the ranch. "You'll see cattle grazing in the town because it is all fresh growth. The grass is pretty short, though, and the cattle aren't getting very much."

Because of the competition, Elliott says the ranch has plans to eradicate the town.

If he poisons the town, Elliott would be well within his rights under Texas law. Texas Parks and Wildlife lists the black-tailed prairie

dog as a nongame species, and the agency is prohibited by statute from listing the prairie dog on the state endangered species list (although federal listing is still a possibility). As such, the animal can be destroyed at any time. Moreover, according to Texas Health and Safety Code statutes, prairie dogs are classified as a nuisance species. As such, the state is given full authority to cooperate with federal authorities in controlling the prairie dog in order to protect rangelands, livestock and crops. (No control by state or federal agencies is currently taking place.)

Although the black-tailed prairie dog has plenty of detractors, it also has its share of supporters who point to the ecological benefits of the burrowing rodent.

The black-tailed prairie dog is considered by some to be a keystone species. Because of the ecological niche it occupies, the prairie dog — and the burrows it produces and vegetation it stimulates — supports a variety of wildlife, from rattlesnakes, horned lizards and burrowing owls to prairie dog predators such as the coyote and ferruginous hawk. By some counts, a large prairie dog town helps support approximately 120 vertebrate species and numerous invertebrates. For healthy plains ecology, the prairie dog is an important piece of the puzzle.

Research at Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota has shown that

"PRAIRIE DOGS ARE A NUISANCE AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED," SAYS RICK ELLIOTT, MANAGER OF THE SPRAWLING TV RANCH NORTH OF CHILDRESS.



PHOTO © MIKE SEARLES/PHOTOGRAPHY

BECAUSE OF THE ECOLOGICAL NICHE IT OCCUPIES,
THE PRAIRIE DOG — AND THE BURROWS IT PRODUCES
AND VEGETATION IT STIMULATES — SUPPORTS A VARIETY
OF WILDLIFE, FROM RATTLESNAKES, HORNED LIZARDS AND
BURROWING OWLS TO PRAIRIE DOG PREDATORS SUCH
AS THE COYOTE AND FERRUGINOUS HAWK.



large plains ungulates such as the pronghorn antelope prefer to graze in the middle of vast prairie dog town complexes. In fact, in the study cited, pronghorns grazed at the town's center 461 out of 905 feeding times recorded and at the town's edge 185 times. In all, the antelopes chose to eat in or in direct proximity of a prairie dog town 71 percent of the time.

On the surface of this complex issue, it seems that the prairie dog should be a welcome inhabitant of the plains. Yet as history shows, its persecution over the last 100 years is nearly unprecedented — save for the bison's quick extermination in the 1870s.

When the French explorer Louis Verendrye first dubbed the rodent *petit chien* (little dog) in the Dakotas in 1742, prairie dogs inhabited an estimated 111 million acres. In the ensuing two and a half centuries, the total acreage has been reduced to a paltry estimated 677,000 acres of occupied habitat — a 99 percent reduction.

In Texas, early 20th-century estimates place the prairie dog in the western and northern fringes of the Edwards Plateau, the plains areas of the Trans-Pecos and the High and Rolling Plains. At that time, as many as 800 million individuals were thought to have occupied more than 57 million acres in the western half of the state, although there is little hard data to confirm these numbers. By 1977, only 90,000 acres of prairie dog habitat remained, and as of 1991, that number had been reduced to 22,650 acres.

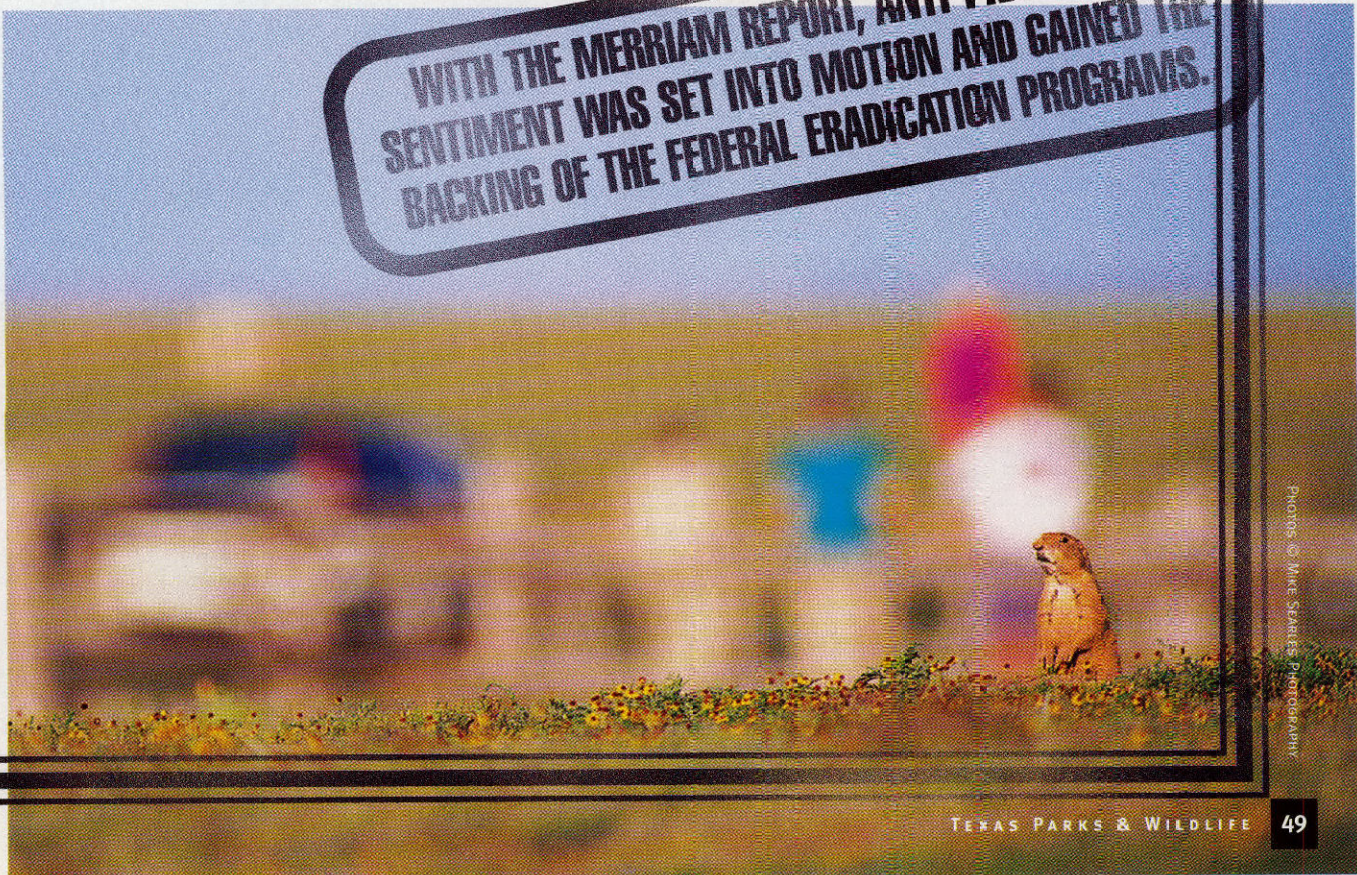
Yet while prairie dog numbers have decreased dramatically, many people in the Great Plains still perceive the

prairie dog as both an abundant and a nuisance species. A recent Colorado News poll found that 59 percent of respondents regarded prairie dogs as pests. In and around towns like Childress, Lubbock or Canadian, some folks can't comprehend how a seemingly abundant animal can be in trouble. However, the statistics of their decline are alarming.

While researching my upcoming book *Prairie Dog: Sentinel of the Plains*, I talked to many people regarding



WITH THE MERRIAM REPORT, ANTI-PRAIRIE DOG SENTIMENT WAS SET INTO MOTION AND GAINED THE BACKING OF THE FEDERAL ERADICATION PROGRAMS.



their perceptions of prairie dogs. Time and again, most related to me that they generally were opposed to prairie dog colonization due to the danger burrows posed to cattle and horses. When questioned further, they revealed that they'd never had any livestock injured but had always heard that it could happen. It seems, consequently, that much of the knowledge and attitudes about prairie dogs are passed down from generation to generation and are at best anecdotal.

In places, a fear of prairie dogs exists because they can serve as a vector for the bubonic plague. Since prairie dog towns are fragmented and not contiguous like they once were, an outbreak of the plague can be devastating to the prairie dog. The disease can decimate a town of all its inhabitants. However, documented reports have shown that the likelihood of humans contracting the plague from prairie dogs is extremely rare.

The varied opinions about the rodent put it in an enigmatic position: People who have been around prairie dogs either love them or hate them, with rarely any middle ground. As such, what does the future hold for this denizen of the plains?

A PROMISING FUTURE?

In the summer of 1998, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) filed a petition with the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to place an emergency threatened species listing on the black-tailed prairie dog. Under the Endangered Species Act, a threatened status means that a species could become endangered in the foreseeable future and gain a measure of federal protection. (The ESA still allows for control of the animal if they pose a threat to agricultural interests.)

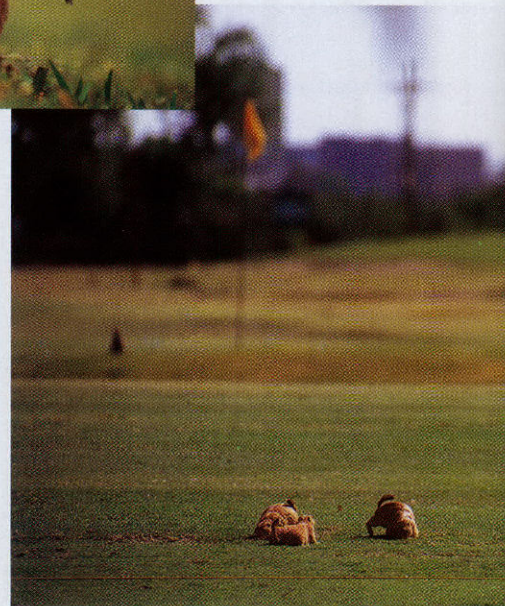
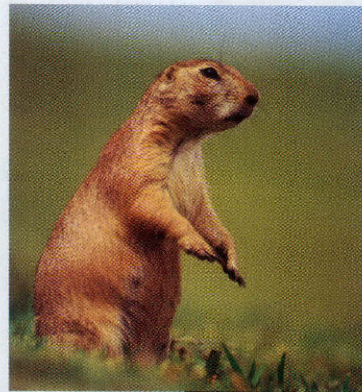
The NWF contended that an emergency listing was warranted because, if the USFWS took their time studying the plight of the prairie dog, uncontrolled poisoning and shooting was bound to take place as landowners sought to rid their land of the rodents and get out from

under any regulatory restrictions should the threatened status be granted.

After a 90-day review of the petition, which is required by federal law, the USFWS concluded that the prairie dog deserves to be listed as a threatened species. But it decided that instead of federal protection under the ESA, it would put the prairie dog on the candidate precluded list, which requires annual reviews due to budgetary and staffing shortages. The USFWS recommended that the 11 states that have wild prairie dog populations develop management plans for saving the imperiled species.

In the spring of 1999, the Colorado Division of Wildlife set in motion a series of meetings that would bring together private, state, federal and tribal entities to develop a range-wide plan for the conservation of the prairie dog. Texas has cooperated with the interstate group and has established its own state working group made up of representatives from state and federal agencies, including the farm bureau, conservation groups, private landowners, and livestock and agricultural groups. "Texas Parks and Wildlife is a member of a working group that is developing a management plan for the prairie dog at the state level," says Dr. Paul Robertson, program leader of the Nongame and Rare Species section of Texas Parks and Wildlife. The primary responsibility of the state group, the

Texas Black-Tailed Prairie Dog Working Group (TPDWG), is to help develop a management plan using input from all



interested groups and working in cooperation with the interstate group.

Among the goals of the TPDWG is to educate the public about prairie dogs as well as develop management guidelines that conserve prairie dogs at long-term sustainable levels while respecting the rights of private landowners. Some thoughts that are circulating as to how to encourage landowners to manage prairie dogs on a sustainable level include farm subsidies, tax incentives and conservation easements.

If the right steps are taken to conserve the species, the prognosis for recovery is good. "Prairie dogs are a resilient species," points out Robertson. "They have what you'd call 'bounce' in political terms. Give them a few years, and they'll usually bounce back."

To give the rodents a chance to bounce back, smart management decisions on their behalf must be implemented, according to Robertson. He is optimistic about state wildlife agencies calling the shots on how to manage the plains rodent. "We think that the state and private landowners can do a better job of managing prairie dogs if it's not listed. Listed species often encounter special regulatory problems that hamper their management on a state-to-state basis. Private land states such as Texas have different management problems than states with a lot of public land."

One of the key tools at the disposal of Texas wildlife officials is the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). This Texas Parks and Wildlife program can give landowners a reason to manage the prairie dog at a sustainable level. "The Landowner Incentive Program is designed specifically for wildlife and unique and declining habitats that are at risk," says Robert Sullivan, wildlife diversity biologist and LIP coordinator for the Panhandle. To be eligible for LIP and receive the cost-sharing benefits of the program, landowners must have at least one rare and declining plant or animal species on their land. "We make recommendations that will allow landowners who are interested in these rare resources to continue to earn a living and augment their income through

nature tourism and still do good things for the rare resources." Sullivan, who is based in Canyon, says that Texas landowners are absolutely essential for conserving ecologically sensitive wildlife and its habitat. "The objective," he says, "is to maintain essential components of the shortgrass prairie ecosystem, while simultaneously maintaining the size of existing prairie dog colonies so that populations remain healthy and viable for many years."

"PRAIRIE DOGS ARE A RESILIENT SPECIES," POINTS OUT ROBERTSON. "GIVE THEM A FEW YEARS, AND THEY'LL USUALLY BOUNCE BACK."

Is there hope for the prairie dog as a species? Early indications lean toward the affirmative, but it is still unclear how sustainable their future as a species will be on the plains. The key to solving the whole problem seems to be finding a middle ground that both sides can agree on. Sullivan remains positive about the strategy of the working group and the role of both public and private entities in solving the complex matter. "There are many cultural, environmental and economic factors that make this a volatile issue. Everyone needs to be willing to listen to logic and try to understand the problem and not just have a knee-jerk reaction to the issues at hand."

For now, most on the side of the prairie dog agree that much more research should be done on exactly how prairie dogs affect rangelands — especially in Texas.

Here at the prairie dog town north of Childress, things are starting to get interesting. We have just finished collaring some cattle with high-tech global positioning collars and are about to turn them loose. Every 15 minutes the collars will turn themselves on and fix the bovines' exact latitude and longitude for up to a month. Then we can overlay the plotted points on a map and see how often the heifers ventured into the prairie dog town to graze.

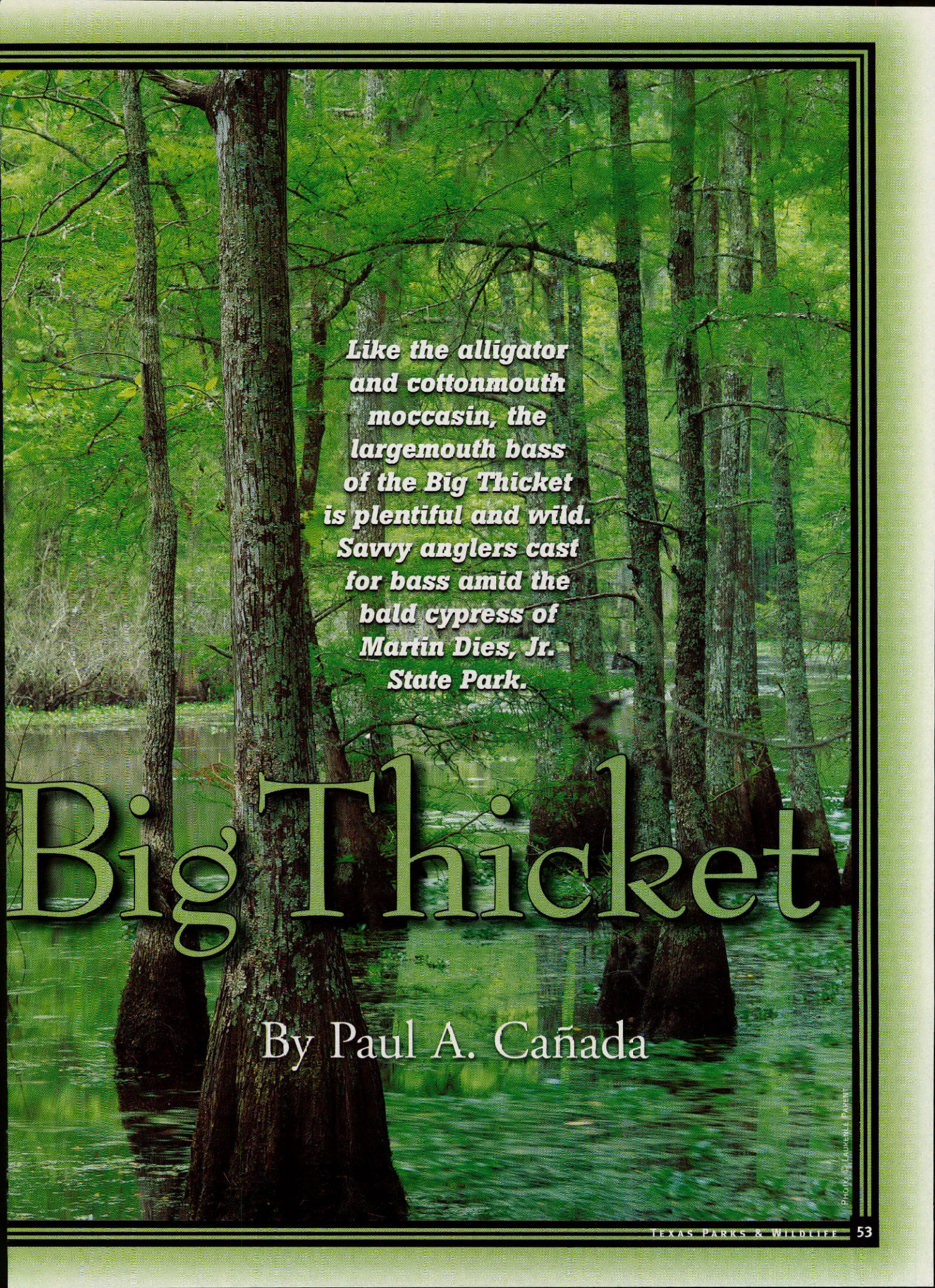
Sounds crazy, doesn't it? For the prairie dogs, this high-tech experiment may tell us volumes about their interaction with cattle and rangelands. I can't wait to see how it turns out. ★

Agricultural science teacher RUSSELL GRAVES is the author of Prairie Dog: Sentinel of the Plains, due out in fall 2001 from Texas Tech University Press. He directs a wildlife management class on prairie dogs near Childress. For more information about their research, see <www.childressisd.net/wildlife>.



Big Bass *in the*

Photo © David J. Sams



*Like the alligator
and cottonmouth
moccasin, the
largemouth bass
of the Big Thicket
is plentiful and wild.
Savvy anglers cast
for bass amid the
bald cypress of
Martin Dies, Jr.
State Park.*

Big Thicket

By Paul A. Cañada

The loud thumping of a lone woodpecker echoes eerily through the great stands of bottomland hardwoods. Through the watery maze of bald cypress, draped with Spanish moss,

two kayaks slide along silently. An alligator nearly 10 feet long slips from a muddy bank and into Bee Tree Slough. One angler directs his cast to a stand of bald cypress. A large popper — adorned with colorful neck hackle — sits at the base of a knobby cypress knee. The kayaker, fly line cradled in his fingers, keenly watches the fly. A quick strip or two and again the fly angler goes on point.

As folklore tells it, the eyes of the Big Thicket are always watching. Certainly, the oversized popper doesn't go unnoticed. Inches below the waterline, a three-pound largemouth bass noses toward the lure. Patiently, the curious predator waits.

Giving up on the cast, the angler sighs and makes a single, obligatory strip of the line. Immediately, the bass moves to overtake the intruder. With a great swirl of water, the bass and fly turn toward the mangled roots of the giant cypress. With his rod pointed directly at the chaos, the angler strips a full arm's-length of line. Reluctantly, the stout fly rod bows to the bass' broad shoulders and will. Eager to throw the angler's bug, the largemouth makes a single, awkward jump through the air. Again, the large female bass turns toward the tangled roots and, as often happens, a brief moment of indecisiveness results in failure. The leader snaps, and the big bass is lost. With every jump and sound, the largemouth reminds us of the Big Thicket's mighty resolve.

Saving "America's Ark"

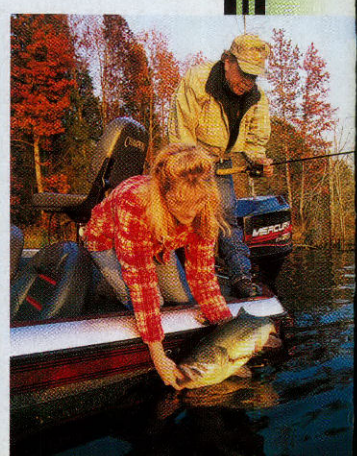
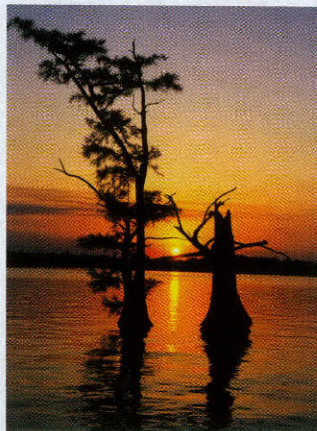
The Spanish considered the Big Thicket's dark forest of hardwoods, creeks, sloughs and swamps to be impenetrable. Not surprising, as the mysterious bottomlands have given birth to tales of monsters and heroes alike. Today, the thousands of acres of diverse biological resources that make up the Big Thicket —

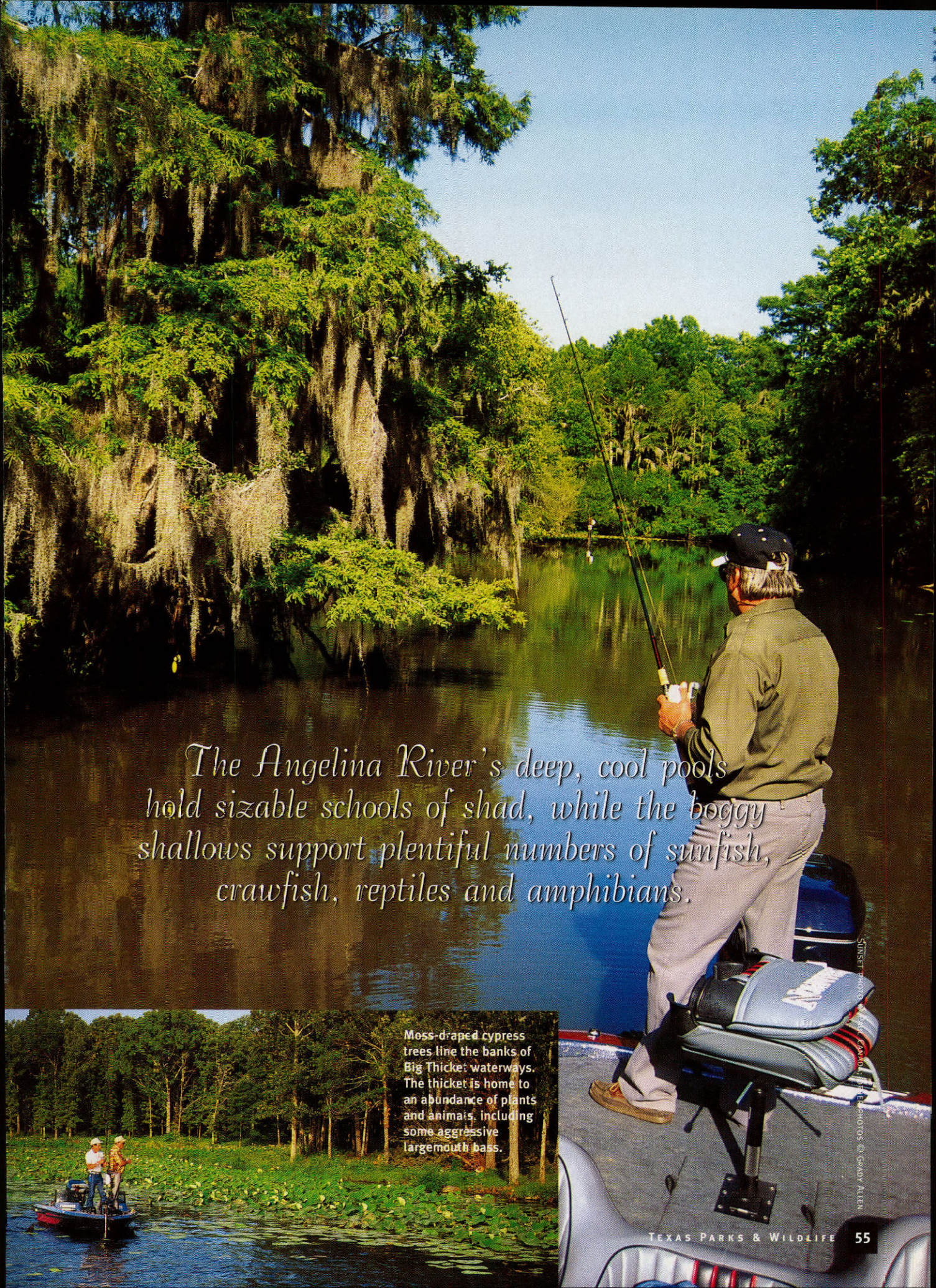
nicknamed "America's ark" by environmentalists — are an international, national and state treasure. As untamable and impenetrable as the Big Thicket appears, it hasn't been able to turn back the unrelenting lumber and petroleum industries. Prior to the 19th century, the Big Thicket covered an area of more than 3.5 million acres. In 1936, H.B. Parks and V.L. Cory's "Survey of the East Texas Big Thicket Area" estimated the total acreage to be approximately a million acres. Today, optimistic estimates list the Big Thicket at less than a few hundred thousand acres.

Parks and Cory's report documented the Big Thicket's plight and called for the protection of remaining acres. Some 40 years later, in 1974, the U.S. Congress passed legislation that created the Big Thicket National Preserve. Currently, the preserve covers nearly 100,000 acres, and another 4,600 acres are protected by the Alabama-Coushatta tribal government.

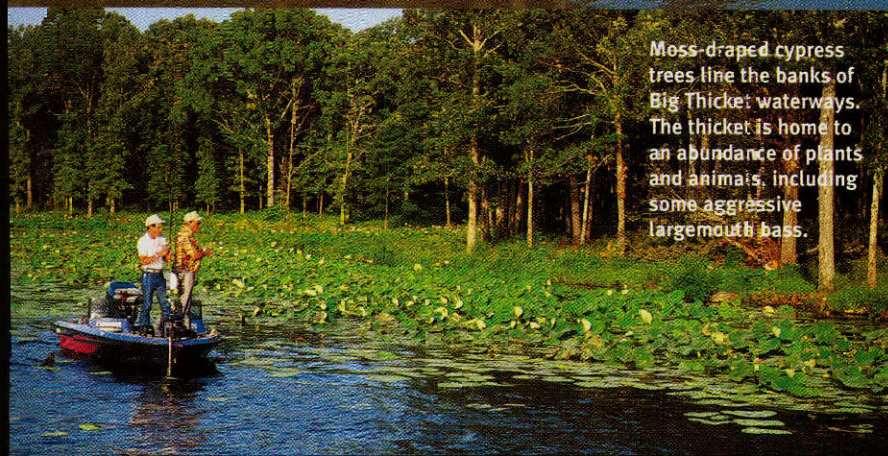
Four ecological zones — southeastern swamps, eastern forests, central plains and southwestern deserts — merge into one geographic area in the Big Thicket. Nearly 85 species of trees, four carnivorous plants and more than 1,000 flowering plants — including 20 orchids — are found there. Rarely seen mammals, such as the mountain lion, river otter, flying squirrel and bobcat are said to roam freely in the region's dense forest. Reptiles such as the alligator, soft-shelled turtle, alligator snapping turtle, hognose snake, milk snake, canebrake rattlesnake, copperhead and cottonmouth moccasin move through the bottomlands. Birds include the bald eagle, great horned owl, Florida barred owl, swallow-tailed kite, sharp-tailed sparrow, red-cockaded woodpecker, wood duck and brown-headed nuthatch.

Located just north of the Big Thicket National



A man in a green jacket and cap is fishing from a boat on a river. The river is surrounded by dense, moss-draped cypress trees. The water is calm and reflects the surrounding greenery. The man is holding a fishing rod and is looking towards the water. The scene is peaceful and scenic.

The Angelina River's deep, cool pools hold sizable schools of shad, while the boggy shallows support plentiful numbers of sunfish, crawfish, reptiles and amphibians.

A smaller boat with two people is on a river. The river is filled with lily pads and is surrounded by dense trees. The scene is peaceful and scenic.

Moss-draped cypress trees line the banks of Big Thicket waterways. The thicket is home to an abundance of plants and animals, including some aggressive largemouth bass.



Preserve, Martin Dies, Jr. State Park protects another 705 acres adjacent to B.A. Steinhagen Lake. Years before the U.S. Congress acted to set aside the Big Thicket National Preserve, local state senator Martin Dies, Jr. had the foresight to lobby for a state park in the Big Thicket. In 1967 Texas Parks and Wildlife agreed to take control of the Dam B Park, created when the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers impounded the confluence of the Neches and Angelina rivers. The commission renamed the Dam B State Park to honor Senator Dies' efforts to give Texas its own place in "America's ark."

The Angler's Last Wilderness

Like the alligator, cottonmouth moccasin and wood duck, the largemouth bass of the Big Thicket is plentiful and wild. Arguably the most accessible fishing found in the Big Thicket is associated with Martin Dies, Jr. State Park and the adjacent Angelina-Neches/Dam B Wildlife Management Area. The state park is on the eastern shore of B.A. Steinhagen Lake, approximately an hour north of

worms to be the productive lures for taking the impoundment's largemouths. When fish are extremely difficult, bass anglers can try pitching a whacky-rigged worm or jerk worm to the knees and bases of the larger cypress. For the most part, the best time to fish Steinhagen is in spring and summer, when water depth and clarity are ideal.

The impoundment does hold some impressive fish. The current record is a 12-pound largemouth bass that was caught by Henry Smith in May 1992. The impoundment is one of the few places Texans can fish for the toothy and aggressive chain pickerel. Like the largemouth, the chain pickerel is found in both B.A. Steinhagen and the Angelina River.

Sam Rayburn guide and pro tournament angler Shane Allman has logged many hours fishing and hunting the area's backwater. The young outdoorsman explains, "I started fishing and hunting B.A. Steinhagen and the Angelina River when I was in college and have continued to do so over the last five years. I like to fish the lake in spring and early summer, and I take to the river in mid-

The best time to fish B.A. Steinhagen is in spring and summer, when water depth and clarity are ideal.

Beaumont and two hours northeast of Houston.

The park offers excellent reservoir and river fishing relatively close to each other. B.A. Steinhagen is a shallow 15,000-acre impoundment dominated by stands of cypress and large flats filled with aquatic vegetation. The aquatic vegetation — chiefly water hyacinth and American lotus — has all but choked access to northern portions of the reservoir, according to park manager Ellen Buchanan.

"Recreational opportunities in the northern portion of the lake have been suffering from excessive growth of hyacinths and lotus," says Buchanan. "We don't have money in the budget to treat it, so it's choking the shallow flats. Still, the southern portion of the reservoir is very fishable and supports a strong largemouth bass population."

While bass will hold along the edges of hyacinths and lotus, the better bass fishing is in the larger stands of bald cypress. B.A. Steinhagen's largemouths relate mostly to the woody knees of these bottomland trees. Successful anglers find flipping and pitching jigs, Texas-rigged lizards and

summer when water is regularly released from Sam Rayburn Reservoir."

When given a choice, Allman is normally found floating the Angelina River below Sam Rayburn Reservoir. He boasts of the river's natural beauty. The Angelina's heavily forested banks, clear water and white sandy bottom make it one of East Texas' greatest treasures.

Access to the Angelina is surprisingly good, so Allman fishes the deep river from the same 20-foot bass boat he launches on Sam Rayburn. Ramps and parking are located directly below the dam, at the Highway 63 crossing and in Bevilport. The float between the dam and Highway 63 is approximately seven miles long, while the section between the crossing and Bevilport is 11 miles long.

When water is being released, anglers will find aggressive bass shallow and holding tight to bankside timber. Because of the cover, anglers will want to use normal baitcast equipment to deliver jigs, worms, spinnerbaits and buzzbaits. "It's almost awkward how you catch most of



these fish,” explains Allman. “When the fish are holding tight to the shallow cover, you don’t really want to downsize your line or lures. Although the Angelina’s water clarity is exceptional, the bass are fairly aggressive and the cover is thick.”

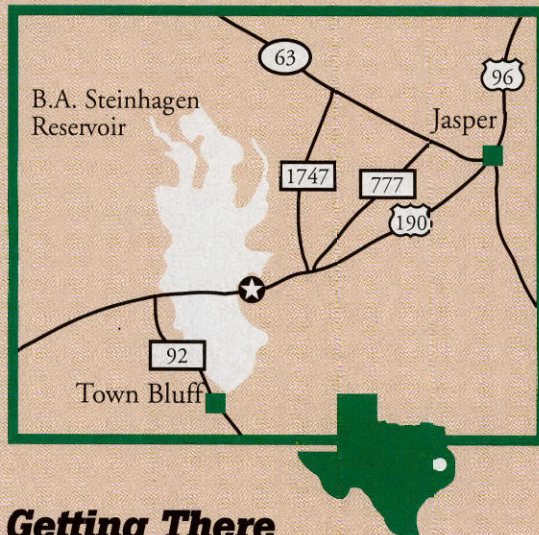
In summer, when water is being released, the better fish are concentrated in eddies created by bankside cover, channel bends and midstream structure. The eddies provide bass relief from the currents. Also, food swept downstream by the current is typically pushed into the backwash areas of the eddies. Anglers find that dragging a Carolina-rigged worm, hopping a jig or swimming a crankbait through the deeper holes is an excellent way to draw bites during non-discharge periods.

Although the Angelina’s journey between Sam Rayburn Reservoir and B.A. Steinhagen lake is brief, the danger of getting lost in the Big Thicket is great. Both Buchanan and Allman urge anglers to take care when venturing out and away from the main river channel. “There are sloughs and potholes adjacent to the river itself that hold good numbers of bass,” verifies Allman. “While you might be tempted to squeeze through the cypress to get to them, I wouldn’t recommend it. It’s extremely easy to lose your orientation in that backwater.”

One of the better ways for anglers to get to know the Angelina, Bee Tree Slough and B.A. Steinhagen is to take advantage of the canoe trips led by Martin Dies, Jr. State Park personnel. Buchanan says, “Every third Saturday of the month we lead a group of canoeists through the swampy bottomlands of the Angelina and Neches rivers. On those trips, we often take the folks through Bee Tree Slough, which connects the arms of the two rivers. The canoeists get to see how truly untamed a backcountry swamp is.”

The state park’s interpretive programs and guided canoe trips play an important role in educating Texans about the Big Thicket’s biodiversity. Silently pulling through the backwater of Bee Tree Slough, canoeists and kayakers have excellent opportunities to witness the Big Thicket’s wildlife. Large alligators are seen lazily cruising the slough, while wood ducks with chicks boldly swim within view of approaching canoes and kayaks. The awe-inspiring sights and sounds of these backwater areas leave anglers reminiscing of times long ago, when largemouth bass were primarily found in the pristine and untamed rivers and bottomlands of the Big Thicket. ★

PAUL A. CAÑADA writes for national and international publications from his home base in Fort Worth.



Getting There

The natural beauty and plentiful recreational opportunities make Martin Dies, Jr. State Park one of Texas Park and Wildlife’s more prized jewels. “This park is popular with families mainly because of the excellent camping facilities,” says park manager Ellen Buchanan. “We also offer a lot of family-oriented activities.” Anglers head to Martin Dies not just for largemouth bass, but also for panfish like crappie and sunfish.

Facilities include campsites with both water and electricity, screened shelters, a group dining and meeting hall, restrooms with hot showers and trailer dump stations. Recreational facilities include boat ramps, lighted fishing piers and fish-cleaning stations, and playgrounds. Other amenities include a well-stocked state park store, an amphitheater with stage and a nature center.

Families will enjoy hiking the park’s four-mile, multi-use trail or the two-mile nature/interpretive trail. Visitors can rent bicycles, canoes and flatbottom boats. Many species of forest birds make the Big Thicket their home, and several migratory species pass through. The 300-foot bridge that spans the gap between the Walnut Ridge Hiking Trail and the Angelina-Neches/Dam B Wildlife Management Area is an excellent area to view bald eagles.

Although Martin Dies, Jr. State Park has a healthy population of alligators, don’t count on spotting one. “Many folks tell us they have been coming for years and still haven’t seen an alligator,” Buchanan says. “Alligators are shy creatures, so you have to be very observant if you hope to see one. If you’re willing to slow down and quietly observe, you can see alligators, deer, raccoon and other of our resident creatures.”

For more information about the park, call 409-384-5231 or visit the TPW Web site for the park, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/martindi>. To reserve a campsite call 512-389-8900 or go to the reservations Web site, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/admin/res>.

—P.A.C.

Map © Texas Parks and Wildlife Press, Official Guide to Texas State Parks.

The mysterious depths of this subterranean cave offer an irresistible lure to divers. Some of them never come back.

By Dana Brennan Jones

Jacob's Well

A diver pauses in Jacob's Well's second chamber, above, before entering the narrow opening to the third chamber, right.

TWENTY YEARS AGO DON DIBBLE ALMOST DIED at Jacob's Well. One of the highest-ranking scuba instructors in the country, Dibble ventured into the deep, dark hole to recover the bodies of two divers who had perished. At 90 feet, just outside the fourth chamber and at four times surface pressure, an avalanche of gravel swept him farther into the chamber, pinning him under a layer of rock. Thanks to his diving partner, Calvin Turner, Dibble was saved from becoming Jacob's Well's seventh victim. The perils of Jacob's Well, Don Dibble's rescue and resuscitation, and his four months of recovery became the subject of a *Reader's Digest* article.

"It was a hell of a way to gain fame," Dibble says. The skeletal remains of one of the original victims, Kent Maupin, were finally recovered last October — 21 years after he and another diver disappeared. Until the recovery, "a few bones were found and sometimes pieces of a wetsuit would surface," says Dan Misiaszek, a specialist in underwater crime preservation, member of the San Marcos Police Department and commander of the San Marcos Area Recovery Team (SMART). But a recent geological shift allowed the rescue team to enter the fourth chamber, where they found Maupin's remains.

"Two people died in one day. They were from a Houston diving club," says Misiaszek. The victims were all recreational divers; no certified cave divers have ever drowned in Jacob's Well.

The legacy and lure of this deep blue hole on Cypress Creek in Hays County inspired Stephen Harrigan to write his 1984 novel *Jacob's Well*, a fictional story of three scuba diving adventurers drawn to the mysteries and dangers of this subterranean passage. The lure of underwater exploration has culminated in the death of several divers trying to find the source of the well's artesian waters. While 12 have died here, according to Harrigan's extensively researched and fact-based novel, at least eight deaths have been proven in recent history, according to Misiaszek.

Jacob's Well, now closed to diving, is not the longest or deepest cave in Texas: it has been explored only to a depth of 120 feet. Honey Creek in Comal and Kendall counties is the longest, at 20 miles. Sorcerers Cave in Terrell County is the deepest, at 558 feet. In fact, in a state where the karst limestone topography and geological structures lend themselves to caves, Jacob's Well doesn't even make the top 50 list.

But the cave's uncharted interior makes it a challenge many divers can't resist. The stair-step shaft continually narrows downward. The first drop is at 30 feet, followed by another 30-foot drop. At this point, sunlight and algae end, and divers

must use battery-operated lights to find their way. Salamanders, catfish and crawfish appear at about 70 feet. At about 90 feet, cave explorers must scrape their bellies along the sand and then pull or push their scuba equipment, slithering through a narrow tunnel. Here an abundance of smooth, round rocks indicate that turbulent, high-pressure waters once flowed through here.

Jacob's Well falls within the Balcones fault zone. Once at the corner of four original Texas land grants, it was bought by Jacob DeCordova in 1849 from a grant to W. R. Baker. DeCordova then sold the land to James Montgomery, who in turn sold part of the tract to William C. Winters in 1856. William Moon, the county sheriff, and William Winters operated a mill on the banks of Cypress Creek. According to one legend, they named the spring for its abundance of clear water, "like unto a well in Bible times."

Trinity Spring, which flows through Jacob's Well, emerges to feed Cypress Creek. Even during the great drought of the

1950s, when the state's annual rainfall was 75 percent of normal, water flowed from the spring. But the flow does fluctuate with rainfall levels, according to David Baker, who owns 30 acres adjacent to the well and creek. "The U.S. Geological Survey came out a couple of years ago," he says. "In the spring it was flowing at 53 cubic feet per second, or 34 million gallons per day. After a dry June, it was 10 cubic feet per second. Last June it stopped for the first time, which was pretty amazing."

Baker is executive director of Wimberley Valley Watershed Association (WVWA), a group of

more than 100 volunteers concerned about watershed encroachment by subdivisions above Cypress Creek abutting Jacob's Well. In 1999, six acres around Jacob's Well were dedicated as a preserve. The creation of an education center around the artesian spring is underway. The area, managed by the watershed association, is classified as an Ecological Laboratory by Hays County. It serves as a research base for graduate students in aquatic biology at Southwest Texas State University and for Wimberley school groups.

Baker and his Hill Country stewards want to preserve the qualities that attracted people to this region in the first place — the free-flowing springs, wildlife and solitude. "The desire to leave our children a healthy and beautiful landscape — a place that regenerates and nourishes the spirit — is a powerful force," he says. For the divers who continue to be drawn to explore the mystery of its murky depths, Jacob's Well is a powerful force as well. ★

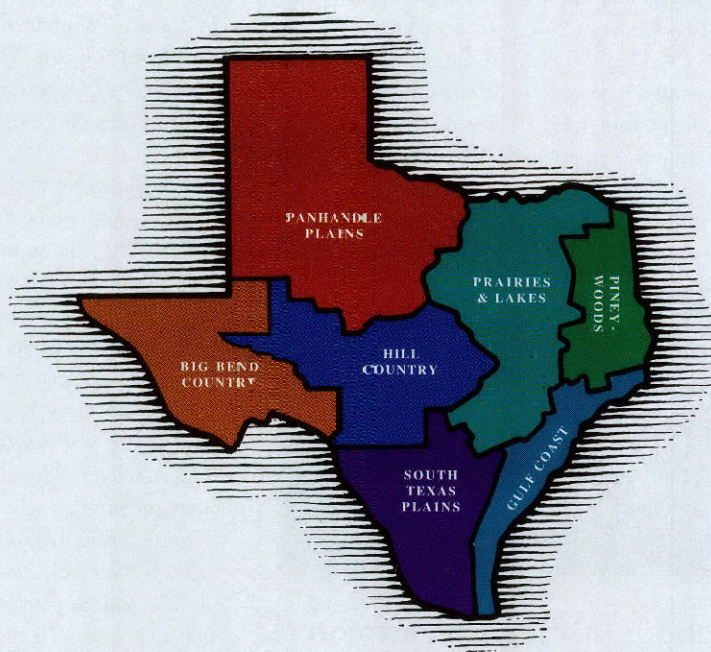
DANA BRENNAN JONES writes a weekly column and lifestyle features for the New Braunfels Herald Zeitung.



At about 90 feet, cave explorers must scrape their bellies along the sand and then pull or push their scuba equipment, slithering through a narrow tunnel.

GETAWAYS

From Big Bend to the Big Thicket and the Red to the Rio Grande



BIG BEND COUNTRY

MARCH EVENTS

March: Desert Garden Tours, by reservation only, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Lajitas, 915-424-3327.

March: Bird Banding, call for dates, Davis Mountains SP, Fort Davis, 915-426-3337.

March: Bouldering Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, also available Wednesday through Friday by advance request. Hueco Tanks SHP, El Paso, 915-849-6684.

March: White Shaman Tour, every Saturday, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 1-888-525-9907.

March: Phantom Cave Springs and San Solomon Cienega Tour, every Saturday. Balmorhea SP, Balmorhea, 915-375-2370.

March: Pictograph Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, Hueco Tanks SHP, 915-849-6684.

March: Fate Bell Cave Dwelling Tour, every Wednesday through Sunday, weather permitting, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 915-292-4464.

March 1-30: Trail Ride, Black Gap WMA, Brewster County, 915-376-2216.

March 2-4: Desert Survival Workshop, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 915-229-3416.

March 3, 4, 17, 18: Interpretive Tour, Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, 915-566-6441.

March 9-10, 11-12, 14-15: Camel Treks, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 254-675-4867.

March 10: Upper Canyon Tour, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 915-292-4464.

March 10: Stories Of Spirit, Magoffin Home SHP, El Paso,

915-533-5147.

March 11, 18: Big Bend Lecture Series, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Lajitas, 915-424-3327.

March 18: Bird Identification Tours, Hueco Tanks SHP, El Paso, 915-849-6684.

March 24: Presa Canyon Tour, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 915-292-4464.

March 30-31: The Nitty-Gritty of Adobe, Fort Leaton SHP, Presidio, 915-229-3613.

March 30: Interpretive Mountain Bike Ride, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 915-229-3416.

APRIL EVENTS

April: White Shaman Tour, every Saturday, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 888-525-9907.

April: Trail Ride, call for dates, Black Gap WMA, Brewster County, 915-376-2216.

April: Fishing on the Rio Grande, call for dates, Black Gap WMA, Brewster County, 915-376-2216.

April: Fate Bell Cave Dwelling Tour, every Wednesday through Sunday, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, 915-292-4464.

April: Pictograph Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, Hueco Tanks SHP, El Paso, 915-849-6684.

April: Bird Banding, call for dates, Davis Mountains SP, Fort Davis, 915-426-3337.

April: Desert Garden Tours, call for dates, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Lajitas, 915-424-3327.

April 1: The Beautiful Solution to Affordable Housing, Fort Leaton SHP, Presidio, 915-229-3613.

April 6-8, 9-10, 13-15: Spring Trail Ride, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, 281-486-8070.

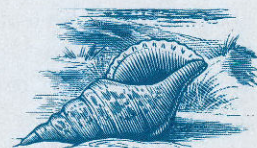
April 6-8: Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop, Prude Ranch, Fort Davis, 512-389-8198.

April 7: Desert Landscaping I, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Lajitas, 915-424-3327.

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

April 14: Stories of Spirits, Magoffin Home SHP, El Paso, 915-533-5147.

April 15: Bird Identification Tours, Hueco Tanks SHP, El Paso, 915-849-6684.



GULF COAST

MARCH EVENTS

March: Plantation house, barn and grounds tours, Wednesdays through Sundays, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHP, West Columbia,

979-345-4656.

March: Nature Programs, every weekend, Brazos Bend SP, Needville, 979-553-5102.

March: Tours, Visitor Center tours every Tuesday through Friday, hatchery tours by reservation only, Sea Center Texas, Lake Jackson, 979-292-0100.

March: Weekend Nature Programs, every weekend, Lake Texana SP, Edna, 361-782-5718.

March: Bird Walks, every Wednesday through Saturday, Goose Island SP, Rockport, 361-729-2858.

March 2: Intracoastal Whooping Crane Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, 361-983-2215.

March 3, 4: Whooping Crane Bus Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, 361-983-2215.

March 3, 31: Wild Boar Safari, Fennessey Ranch, Refugio, 361-529-6600.

March 10: History Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, 361-983-2215.

March 11: 17th Annual Old Car Picnic, San Jacinto Battleground SHP, La Porte, 281-479-2431.

March 17, 24: Spring Nature Tours, Fennessey Ranch, Refugio, 361-529-6600.

March 23, 24, 25: Beach-combing and Shelling Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, 361-983-2215.

March 30 - April 1: 5th Annual SandFest - Sand Sculpture Competition, Port Aransas, 361-749-2500.

March 31: Ranching Heritage Event, Fulton Mansion SHP, Fulton, 361-729-0386.

March 31: 8th Annual Rivers, Lakes, Bays 'n Bayous Trash Bash, San Jacinto Battleground SHP, La Porte, 281-479-2431.

March 31: Bird Banding, Nannie M. Stringfellow WMA, Brazoria County, 409-244-7697.

March 31: Trash Bash, Armand Bayou Nature Center, Houston, 281-474-2551.

March 31: Spring turkey season opens in 32 South Texas counties, 512-389-4505.

APRIL EVENTS

April: Plantation house, barn and grounds tours, Wednesdays through Sundays, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHP, West Columbia, 979-345-4656.

April: Weekend Nature Programs, most weekends, Lake

Texana SP, Edna, 361-782-5718.

April: Guided Bird Walks, Wednesday through Saturday, Goose Island SP, Rockport, 361-729-2858.

April 7: Volunteer Work Day, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, 361-983-2215.

April 7, 21: Spring Migration Birding Count, Fennessey Ranch, Refugio, 361-529-6600.

April 14: Photography Seminar, Fennessey Ranch, Refugio. 361-529-6600.

April 15: Easter Day Activities, Lake Texana SP, Edna, 361-782-5718.

April 21, 22: Migratory Bird Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, 361-983-2215.



HILL COUNTRY

MARCH EVENTS

March: Geology Program, every Thursday, Longhorn Cavern SP, Burnet, 877-441-CAVE.

March: Birding Tours, by reservation only, X Bar Ranch, Eldorado, 888-853-2688.

March: Nature and Historical Tours, by reservation only, X Bar Ranch, Eldorado, 888-853-2688.

March: Ranger Talk, every Saturday, McKinney Falls SP, Austin, 12-243-1643.

March: Honey Creek Canyon Walk, every Saturday, Honey Creek SNA, Spring Branch, 830-438-2656.

March: Campfire Programs, every Saturday, McKinney Falls SP, Austin, 512-243-1643.

March 2: Texas Independence Ceremony, Texas State Cemetery, Austin, 612-463-6023.

March 3: Crawling Cave Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

March 3-25: Walking Cave Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

March 3-25: Gorman Falls Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

March 10: Austin Organic Gardeners Club plant sale, Austin, 512-477-8672.

March 15: Thunderstruck Under the Tailbone: Sexuality in the Republic of Texas, Landmark Inn SHP, Castroville, 830-931-2133.

March 17: Enchanted Rock Trail Project Day, Enchanted Rock SNA, 512-445-3862.

March 17: Rocks & Fossils, Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve, Austin, 512-327-7622.

March 17-18: West Texas Heritage Days, Fort McKavett SHP, Fort McKavett, 915-396-2358.

March 19: Austin Fly Fishers meeting, Austin, 512-916-4393.

March 24: Star Party, Fort McKavett SHP, Fort McKavett, 915-396-2358.

March 24-25: Introduction to Birdwatching, Pedernales Falls SP, Johnson City, 830-868-7304.

March 31: Spring turkey season opens in 25 South Texas counties, 512-389-4505.

APRIL EVENTS

April: Wild Cave Tour, call for dates, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

April: Gorman Falls Tour, every Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

April: Walking Cave Tour, every Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

April: Birding at Kickapoo, call for dates, Kickapoo Cavern SP, Brackettville, 830-563-2342.

April: Stumpy Hollow Mystery Hike, every Saturday, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223.

April: Geology Program, every Thursday, Longhorn Cavern SP, Burnet, 877-441-2283 or 512-756-4680.

April: Birdwatching, daily, Pedernales Falls SP, Johnson City, 830-868-7304.

April: Guided Tour, every Saturday, Honey Creek SNA, Spring Branch, 830-438-2656.

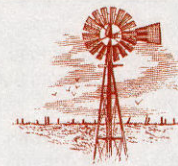
April 7: Spring turkey season opens in 119 North Texas counties, 512-389-4505.

April 7, 14: Crawling Cave Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.

April 12, 26: Devil's Waterhole Canoe Tour, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, 512-793-2223.

April 19: Castro's Texas Land Grants, Landmark Inn SHP, Castroville, 830-931-2133.

April 21: Earth Day Celebration, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, 915-628-3240.



PANHANDLE PLAINS

MARCH EVENTS

March: Nature Programs, call for information, Abilene SP, Abilene, 915-572-3204.

March: Llama Treks, by reservation only through Jordan Llamas, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-651-7346.

March 3, 17: Family Nature Hike, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, 806-455-1492.

March 3, 17, 31: Petroglyph Tour, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

March 10, 24: Springtime Birding, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, 806-455-1492.

March 10, 24: Dinosaur Walk, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

March 17: Wildscaping with Native Plants, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, 806-455-1492.

March 17: Longhorn and Bison Seminar, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

March 24: Bird and Bat House Building, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, 806-455-1492.

APRIL EVENTS

April: Llama treks, by reservation only through Jordan Llamas, San Angelo State Park, San Angelo, 915-651-7346.

April 7: Volunteer Day, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, 806-455-1492.

April 7: Owl Calling, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, 940-839-4331.

April 7: Evening Birding, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, 806-455-1492.

April 7: Great Texas Trash Off, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, 940-839-4331.

April 7: Family Nature Hike, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, 806-488-2227.

April 7: Spring turkey season opens in 119 North Texas counties, 512-389-4505.

April 7, 14: Petroglyph Tour,



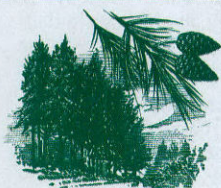
San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

April 14: Night Noises, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, 806-488-2227.

April 14, 28: Dinosaur Walk, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, 915-949-4757.

April 15: Easter Sunrise Service, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, 940-839-4331.

April 15: Sunrise Service, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, 806-488-2227.



PINEYWOODS

MARCH EVENTS

March 2, 16: Slide Show, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

March 3: Rail Fan Weekend, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 972-820-6000.

March 3: Fly Fish 2001, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, 903-670-2227.

March 4, 11, 25: Walk on the Wildside, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

March 10: 108th Anniversary Celebration, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 800-442-8951 or 903-683-2561.

March 10, 17, 27: Campfire Programs, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

March 10, 24: Guided Nature Hike, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

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

March 23, 30: Dogwood Railroad Excursions, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 800-442-8951 or 903-683-2561.

APRIL EVENTS

April 1, 8, 15, 29: Walk on the Wildside, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

April 6: Slide Presentation, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

April 6, 7, 8: Dogwood Steam Train Excursions, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 800-442-8951 or 903-683-2651 outside Texas.

April 7: Spring turkey season opens in 119 North Texas counties, 512-389-4505.

April 12, 19, 20, 26, 27: School Steam Train Excursions, Texas State Railroad SHP, Rusk, 800-442-8951 or 903-683-2651 outside Texas.

April 14: Campfire Programs, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, 409-384-5231.

April 14, 28: Guided Nature Trail Hike, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, 409-755-7322.

April 16: Spring turkey season opens in 32 East Texas counties, 512-389-4505.



PRAIRIES AND LAKES

MARCH EVENTS

March: Historical Tours, every Sunday, Stephen F. Austin SHP, San Felipe, 979-885-3613.

March: Historic and Scenic Tour, by reservation only to groups of 10 or more, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHP, La Grange 979-968-5658.

March: Campfire Programs, every Saturday, Stephen F. Austin SHP, San Felipe, 979-885-3613.

March: Kreische Brewery Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHP, La Grange, 979-968-5658.

March 2: Toast to Texas, Sebastopol SHP, Seguin, 830-379-4833.

March 3-4: Texas Independence Day Celebration, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHP, Washington, 936-878-2214.

March 3: Fly-Fish 2001, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, 903-676-BASS.

March 4, 11: Kreische House Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHP, La Grange, 979-968-5658.

March 4, 18: Forestry Hike, Stephen F. Austin SHP, San Felipe, 979-885-3613.

March 31: Texas Colonial Heritage Festival, Stephen F. Austin SHP, San Felipe, 979-885-3613.

March 31 – April 1: Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas, Chappell Hill, 800-225-3695.

APRIL EVENTS

April: Historic and Scenic Tour, by reservation only to groups of 10 or more, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHP, La Grange, 979-968-5658.

April: Guided Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, Fanthorp Inn SHP, Anderson, 936-873-2633.

April: Kreische Brewery Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHP, La Grange, 979-968-5658.

April: Easter Egg Hunt, call for more information, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHP, La Grange, 979-968-5658.

April 1, 8: Kreische House Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHP, La Grange, 979-968-5658.

April 7: Guided Nature Hike, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, 903-395-3100.

April 7: Spring turkey season opens in 119 North Texas counties, 512-389-4505.

April 7, 14, 21: Birds of the Brazos Hike, Stephen F. Austin State Historical Park, San Felipe, 979-885-3613 x27.

April 7-8: Lessons from Lydia, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHP/Barrington Living History Farm, 936-878-2213.

April 14: Easter Egg Hunt, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, 903-945-5256.

April 14: Easter Egg Hunt, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, 903-395-3100.

April 14: Easterfest, Purts Creek SP, Eustace, 903-425-2332.

April 15: Easter Egg Hunt, Eisenhower Birthplace SHP, Denison, 903-465-8908.

April 15: Easter Sunrise Service, Fanthorp Inn SHP, Anderson, 936-873-2633.



SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

MARCH EVENTS

March: Kiskadee Bus Tour, every Tuesday and Friday,

Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, 956-519-6448.

March 4, 18: Bird Identification Tour, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, Calliham, 361-786-3868.

March 16-18: Texas Sportsman's Fair, National Shooting Sports Complex, San Antonio, 210-979-8080.

March 16-18: A Day at the Range, Women's Shooting Sports Foundation, National Shooting Sports Complex, San Antonio, 210-979-8080.

March 20-22: Youth Shooting Sports Event, Chaparral WMA, Artesia Wells 830-676-3413.

March 24-25: 16th Annual Goliad Massacre commemoration, Presidio La Bahia, Goliad, 361-645-3752.

March 31: Spring turkey season opens in 25 South Texas counties, 512-389-4505.

APRIL EVENTS

April: Kiskadee Bus Tour, every Tuesday and Friday, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, 956-519-6448.

April 21: Run, Walk, or Bicycle Across Dam, Choke Canyon SP/South Shore Unit, Three Rivers, 361-786-3538.

State Parks Offer Public Hunts

A number of state parks offer special permit hunting. The specially controlled public hunts are scheduled for Monday through Friday, a slow time at most parks.

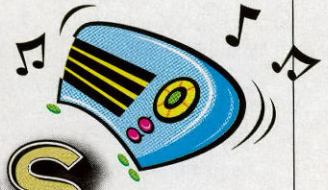
The following schedule lists the times and dates when public access is restricted. Call the park directly to make sure it will be open on the day you want to visit. Or call Texas Parks and Wildlife's information line, 800-292-1112, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Press 3 for park information or 5 for public hunt information.

April 25-27, May 2-4
Colorado Bend SP
915-628-3240

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



SIGHTS AND SOUNDS



The Front Line of News and Views

TELEVISION

Look for These Stories in the Coming Weeks:

Feb. 25 – March 4: Ocelots in Texas; feral hogs; weekend deer hunt; singing game warden.

March 4 – 11: Wildlife management areas and their role in research; the art of bow hunting; a WMCA group goes on a nature field trip.

March 11 – 18: Unearthing Texas' rich archeological history; history of the white-tailed deer in Texas; an Internet field trip.

March 18 – 25: Teens learn about hunting and fishing at Parrie Haynes Youth Camp; raising genetically superior bass; the importance of deer management.

March 25 – April 1: The environmental importance of Caddo Lake; butterflies; a nurse who uses flowers and gardening as a rehabilitative tool.

"TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE"

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



See efforts underway in South Texas to study the elusive ocelot. Watch the week of Feb. 25.

- Amarillo:** KACV, Ch. 2 / Sat. 5:30 p.m.
- Austin:** KLRU, Ch. 18 / Sun. 10 a.m. / Mon. 12:30 p.m. KLRU-TOO, Cable Ch. 20 / Tues. 11 p.m., 12 p.m.
- Bryan-College Station:** KAMU, Ch. 15 / Thurs. 7 p.m.
- Corpus Christi:** KEDT, Ch. 16 / Sun. 11 a.m. / Thurs. 10 a.m. / Friday 11:30 p.m.
- Dallas/Fort Worth:** KERA, Ch. 13 / Fri. 1:30 p.m. Also serving Abilene, Denton, Longview, Marshall, San Angelo, Texarkana, Tyler, Wichita Falls, Sherman
- El Paso:** KCOS, Ch. 13 / Sat. 5:30 p.m.
- Harlingen:** KMBH, Ch. 60 / Tues. 8 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. 4 p.m. Also serving Temple
- Lubbock:** KTXT, Ch. 5 / Sat. 6:30 p.m.
- Odessa-Midland:** KOCV, Ch. 36 / Sat. 5 p.m.
- San Antonio & Laredo:** KLRN, Ch. 9 / Thur. noon
- Waco:** KWBU, Ch. 34 / Sat. 3 p.m.

Schedules are subject to change, so check local listings.

RADIO

"PASSPORT TO TEXAS"

Your Radio Guide to the Great Texas Outdoors

Join Joel Block weekdays for a 90-second Journey into the Texas Outdoors. Producer Kathleen Jenkins. Check this listing for a station near you or tune in on our Web site: www.passporttotexas.com

- Abilene:** KACU-FM 89.7 / 7:06 a.m. & 1:44, 6:01 p.m.
- Amarillo:** KACV-FM 89.9 / 9:20 a.m.
- Austin:** KUT-FM 90.5 / 1:58 p.m., (12:58 p.m. Fr.), KVET-AM 1300 / 6:15 a.m. (Sat.) • *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 / 6:40 a.m.
- Brady:** KNEL-AM 1490 / 7:50 a.m. & 8:50 p.m., KNEL-FM 95.3 / 7:50 a.m. & 8:50 p.m.
- Bridgeport:** KBOC-FM 98.3 / 8:45 a.m. & 5:25 p.m.
- Bryan:** WTAW-AM 1150 / 5:45 p.m.
- Canton:** KVCI-AM 1510 / 6:40 a.m.
- Canyon:** KWTS-FM 91.1 / 6 a.m. – 9 a.m. hours
- Carthage:** KGAS-AM 1590 / 6:46 a.m., KGAS-FM 104.3 / 6:46 a.m.
- Center:** KDET-AM 930 / 5:15 p.m.
- Coleman:** KSTA-AM 1000 / 5:15 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

SIGHTS & SOUNDS

p.m., KFTX-FM 97.5 / 5:35 a.m.

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

Cuero: KVCQ-FM 97.7 / 8:20 a.m.

Denison/Sherman: KJIM-AM 1500 / 9:04 a.m.

Dimmitt: KDHN-AM 1470 / 12:31 p.m.

Dumas: KMRE-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 / 11:14 a.m., 2:14 p.m., KEAS-FM 97.7 / 11:14 a.m. & 2:14 p.m.

El Campo: KULP-AM 1390 / 2:00 p.m.

El Paso: KXCR-FM 89.5 / TBA

Fairfield: KNES-FM 99.1 / 6:49 a.m.

Floresville: KWCB-FM 89.7 / 1:30 p.m.

Fort Stockton: KFST-AM 860 / 12:50 p.m., KFTS-FM 94.3 / 12:50 p.m.

Fort Worth: KTCU-FM 88.7 / 8:50 a.m. & 5:50 p.m.

Freeport: KBRZ-AM 1460 / 10:15 a.m. & 7:45 p.m.

Gainesville: KGAF-AM 1580 / 7:00 a.m.

Galveston: KGBC-AM 1540 / 1:45 p.m.

Hallettsville: KHLT-AM 1520 / 8:20 a.m., KTXM-FM 99.9 / 8:20 a.m.

Harlingen: KMBH-FM 88.9 / 4:58 p.m.

Hereford: KPAN-AM 860 / 2:50 p.m., KPAN-FM 106.3 / 2:50 p.m.

Hillsboro: KHBR-AM 1560 / 9:30 a.m.

Houston: KBME-AM 790 / 11:30 a.m.

Huntsville: KSHU-FM 90.5 / 11:55 a.m.

Jacksonville: KEBE-AM 1400 / 7:25 a.m.

Junction: KMBL-AM 1450 / 6:46 a.m. & 3:46 p.m., KOOK-FM 93.5 / 6:46 a.m. & 3:46 p.m.

Kerrville: KRNH-FM 92.3 / 5:31 a.m. & 12:57, 7:35 p.m.

Lampasas: KCYL-AM 1450 / 7:10 a.m., KACQ-FM 101.9 / 7:10 a.m.

Levelland: KLTV-AM 1230 / 12:06 p.m.

Lubbock: KJTV-AM 950 / 6:50 a.m.

Malakoff: KLVQ-AM 1410 / 6:45 a.m.

Marshall: KCUL-AM 1410 / 7:10 a.m., KCUL-FM 92.3 / 7:10 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. Fr.)

Midland: KCRS-AM 550 / 6:43 a.m. & 6:43 p.m.

Mineola: KMOO-FM 99.9 / 5:10 p.m.

Nacogdoches: KSAU-FM 90.1 / 3:00 p.m.

Ozona: KYXX-FM 94.3 / 12:09 p.m.

Palestine: KLIS-FM 96.7 / 6:20 a.m.

Pecos: KIUN-AM 1400 / 10:30 a.m.

Point Comfort/Port Lavaca: KAJI-FM 94.1 / TBA

Rockdale: KRXT-FM 98.5 / 5:04 a.m. & 5:50 p.m.

San Angelo: KUTX-FM 90.1 / 1:58 p.m. (12:58 p.m. Fr.)

San Antonio: KSTX-FM 89.1 / 9:04 p.m. Th., KENS-AM 1160 / 7:40 a.m., 12:30 & 5:45 p.m.

Seguin: KWED-AM 1580 / 7:55 a.m.

Sonora: KHOS-FM 92.1 / 12:09 p.m.

Sulphur Springs: KSST-AM 1230 / 4:45 p.m.

Texarkana: KTXK-FM 91.5 / noon hour

Uvalde: KVOU-AM 1400 / 5:33 a.m. KVOU-FM 105 / 5:33 a.m.

Victoria: KVRT-FM 90.7 / 5:34 p.m., KTXN-FM 98.7 / 6:45 a.m.

Waco: KBCT-FM 94.5 / 6:10 a.m.

Wichita Falls: KWFS-AM 1290 / 6:15 & 7:45 a.m.

Yoakum: KYKM-FM 92.5 / 8:20 a.m.

"Passport to Texas" is available at no cost to stations across the state. For information contact Donna Endres at 512-454-1922, fax 512-454-2552, or write to P.O. Box 5966, Austin, Texas 78763, e-mail <passport@io.com>.

THIS SERIES IS MADE POSSIBLE
IN PART BY GRANTS FROM



THE DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY

Now on "Travel Texas"

Join host Joel Klein on "Travel Texas," KENS-AM 1160 in San Antonio at 11:05 a.m. on the third and fourth Thursdays of each month for more about the stories in this issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife*. Hear interviews with the authors, behind-the-scenes information and more.

TEXAS

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

Get FREE Information From Our Advertisers!

Simply circle the numbers corresponding to advertisers from whom you wish to receive information on the reader service card to the right of this page. Drop the postage-paid card in the mail and we'll do the rest!

- Eagle Optics, pg. 9,** (800) 289-1132 <www.eagleoptics.com>
- Lance Campers, pg. 5,** (888) 274-2267 <www.lancecamper.com>
- New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, pg. 17,** (800) 572-2626 <www.nbchamb.org>
- Orange Convention and Visitors Bureau, pg. 17,** (800) 528-4906 <www.org-tx.com/chamber>
- Port Arthur Convention and Visitors Bureau, pg. 17,** (800) 235-7822 <www.portarthurtexas.com>
- Rockport-Fulton Area Chamber of Commerce, pg. 17,** (800) 826-6441 <www.rockport-fulton.org>
- Spin-Cast Wildlife Feeders, pg. 70,** (800) 950-7087 <www.spincafeeders.com>
- Texas Hill Country River Region, pg. 17,** (800) 210-0380 <www.thcrr.com>
- Texas Conservation Passport, pg. 43,** (800) 792-1112 <www.tpwd.state.tx.us>
- Travis Boating Center, cover 2 - pg. 1,** (877) 923-2628 <www.travisboatingcenter.com>

Goods and Services for the Outdoor Enthusiast

OUTDOOR

MARKETPLACE

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION & MECHANICAL SPECIFICATIONS: 512-912-7003

★ **Historic and** ☆ **Hospitality Accommodations**



of Texas (HAT) includes the state's finest historic bed & breakfasts, country inns, guesthouses and distinctive hotels. The HAT seal of approval means that the property is not only beautiful but unique, sparkling clean, and full of Texas charm. For a full listing of HAT accommodations, visit us at www.hat.org or call 1-800-HAT-0368.

THIS MONTH'S INNSIDER CHOICE is the **Schildknecht-Weidenfeller House**, one of the choicest pioneer limestone homes in Fredericksburg. The house, located one block off Main Street in the heart of the Historic District, accomodates parties of one to ten.

SCHILDKNECHT-WEIDENFELLER HOUSE
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
(830) 997-5612
www.schildknecht.com



SCHILDKNECHT-WEIDENFELLER HOUSE
FREDERICKSBURG TX

THE INNSIDER

HISTORIC ACCOMMODATIONS OF TEXAS

BELLVILLE

- ★ **Texas Ranch Life** Restored historic Texas homes on 1100 acre Bellville ranch. Weekend rental includes bass fishing. Trail and chuckwagon rides, cutting, bird/coyote/raccoon hunting, and cowworks available.
www.texasranchlife.com 866-TEXASRL

BRENHAM

- ★ **Ant Street Inn** "One of the best B&B's in Texas" — *Southern Living*.
www.antstreetinn.com 800-329-4943

- ★ **Mariposa Ranch** Cabins, fireplaces, Jacuzzis-for-two, "Enchanted Evening" packages
Southern Living
www.mariposaranch.com 877-647-4774

COMFORT

- ★ **Meyer B&B** On Cypress Creek, Hill Country, Mid 1800's Stage Stop, Texas Landmark.
888-995-6100

CONROE

- ★ **Heather's Glen B&B**
Restored Victorian Mansion.
www.heathersglen.com 800-66-JAMIE

DEL RIO

- ★ **Villa Del Rio** Historic Mexico border villa, lush acreage, by Texas' oldest winery.
www.villadelrio.com 800-995-1887

FORT DAVIS

- ★ **Old Schoolhouse B&B** Restored 1904 adobe schoolhouse. Gracious rooms. Sumptuous breakfasts.
www.schoolhousebnb.com 915.426.2050

FREDERICKSBURG

- ★ **Schildknecht-Weidenfeller House** 1870's German limestone house in Historic District. Private. Accommodates one-ten in one party. Antiques, handmade quilts. Fireplace, cellar, porch.
www.schildknecht.com 830-997-5612

- ★ **The Luckenbach Inn Bed & Breakfast** "Go Back Well-Fed & Rested." Fireplaces, whirlpool tubs, country breakfast.
www.luckenbachtx.com 800-997-1124

- ★ **Settler's Crossing** "One of America's Top 10 Bed and Breakfasts" — *Travel & Leisure* magazine. Fireplaces, antiques, jacuzzis.
www.settlerscrossing.com 800-874-1020

- ★ **The Deforge Place** *Experience the personal touch!* 1898 Victorian historically-themed rooms, private baths, full breakfasts.
www.delforgeplace.com 800-997-0462

- ★ **Das Garten Haus** Traditional B&B with exceptional breakfasts, helpful hosts, private suites. New Orleans style courtyard and gardens.
www.dasgartenhaus.com 800-416-4287

GRUENE

- ★ **The Lamb's Rest Inn** Located on the Guadalupe River. Featuring garden with fountain, pool and hot tub, private balconies and fireplaces. Delightful breakfast often served al fresco.
www.bbhost.com/lambrestbb 888-609-3932

JASPER

- ★ **Lake Sam Rayburn/Swann Hotel B&B.** Fishing, Boating, Birdwatching. Full Breakfast.
www.swannhotel.com 877-489-9747

KINGSLAND

- ★ **The Antlers B&B** Turn of the century railroad resort on Lake LB.
www.theantlers.com 800-383-0007

LIVINGSTON

- ★ **The Milam Home B&B** Beautifully restored, exceptional B&B. Hub for historic East Texas.
www.bbhost.com/milamhome 888-551-1173

LOST MAPLES

- ★ **Texas Stagecoach Inn** Miles from nowhere, in the middle of the surrounding country...
www.bbhost.com/txstagecoachinn 888-965-6272

MARATHON

- ★ **The Gage Hotel** A historical treasure in a legendary setting. 37 traditionally decorated rooms, landscaped courtyards, year-round swimming and in-room fireplaces.
800-884-GAGE

NEW BRAUNFELS

- ★ **Historic Kuebler-Waldrip Haus & Danville Schoolhouse** 43 acre deershaven near Gruene. 10 beautifully decorated rooms, private baths, whirlpools, TV's-VCR's, delicious breakfasts, Complimentary refreshments. Featured, Houston chronicle.
www.cruising-america.com/kuebler-waldrip 800-299-8372

- ★ **Aunt-Nora's Countryside-Inn** Honeymoon/Anniversary getaway. Elegant, spacious private cottages. Great hill country views.
www.auntnoras.com 800-687-2887

- ★ **Hunter Road Stagecoach Stop** Enjoy Texas hospitality and history at an 1850's Pioneer Homestead nestled amidst: antique roses and herbs. For reservations
800-201-2942

FREDERICKSBURG TRADITIONAL

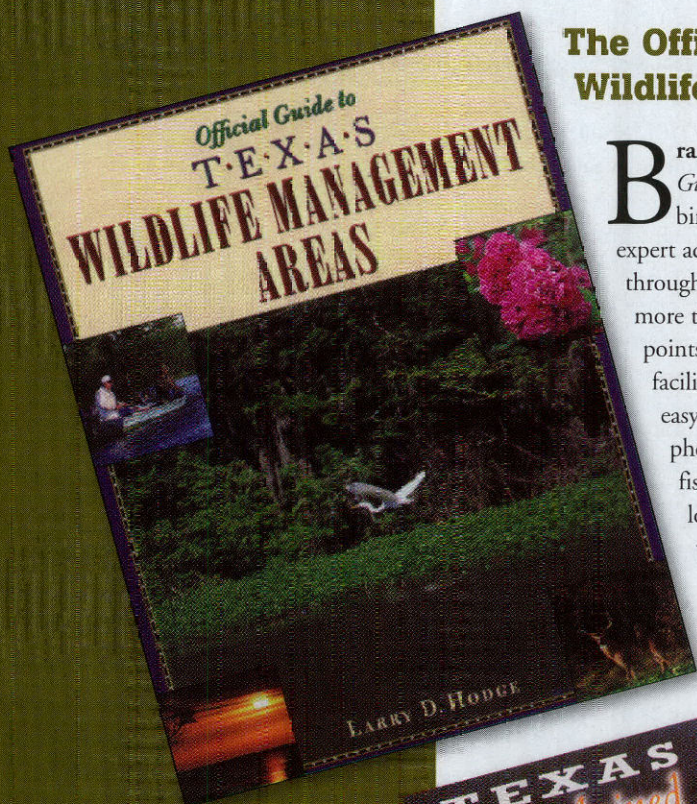
BED & BREAKFASTS

Hill Country Hospitality and Style

1-800-494-HOST

www.fredericksburgtrad.com

Shop Texas Parks & Wildlife P



The Official Guide to Texas Wildlife Management Areas

Brand new! This exciting new companion book to the *Official Guide to Texas State Parks* is a must-have for hunters, anglers, birders and mountain bikers. Larry D. Hodge has collected expert advice from guides, biologists and wildlife technicians throughout the state on each of the state's 51 WMAs — covering more than 1 million acres — including history, geography, local points of interest, nearby lodging, recreational activities and facilities and wheelchair accessibility. Handy locator maps and easy-to-follow driving directions are included, and full-color photographs enhance the descriptions. Detailed hunting and fishing sections include professional pointers on the best locations and techniques for hunting and fishing for a variety of species. Available after November 1, 2000. Photographed and written by Larry D. Hodge.

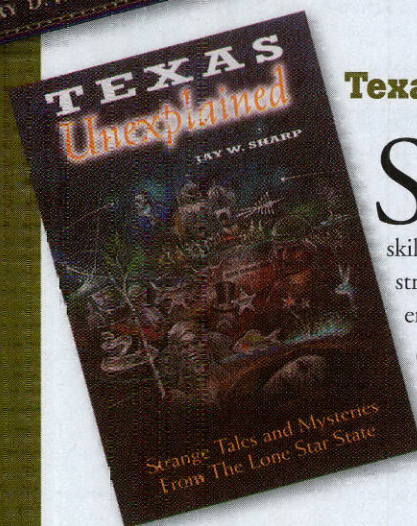
©2000, Texas Parks & Wildlife Press,
8 1/2" x 11", 275 pp., color photographs
throughout, ISBN 1-885696-35-3, \$29.95, paperback

Texas Parks & Wildlife Press

now has **2** easy
ways for you to shop
our complete catalog
of books —

shop online at
tpwpress.com

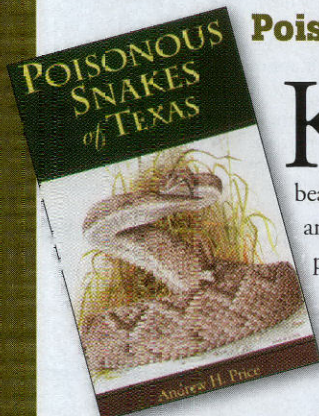
or just call
800-747-1726



Texas Unexplained

Settle in with a dozen fascinating, suspenseful tales of Texas' ghosts, strange lights, spirits, apparitions and baffling sounds. Author Jay W. Sharp skillfully employs a range of styles, from straightforward to personalized to humorous, to enliven these mystifying tales.

©1999, Texas Parks & Wildlife Press, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2",
134 pp., b&w illustrations,
ISBN 1-885696-34-5, \$14.95, paperback

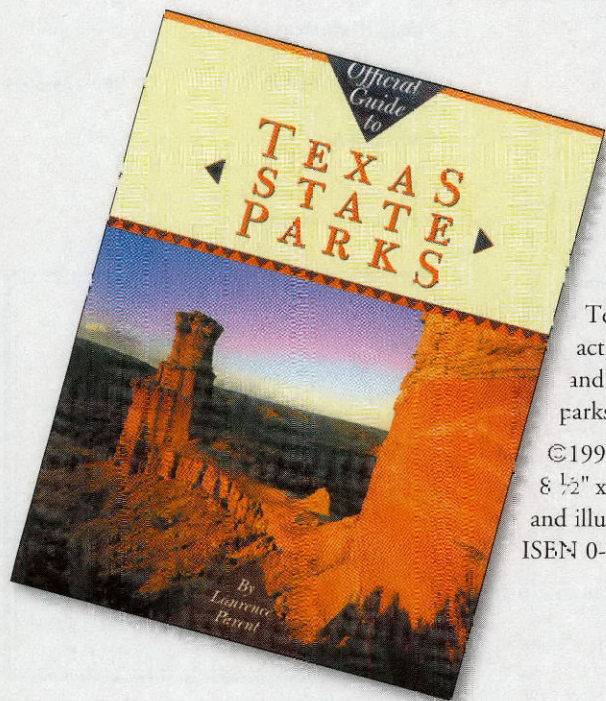


Poisonous Snakes of Texas

Know your snakes! Andrew H. Price, TPW herpetologist, details 15 species and subspecies of poisonous snakes native to Texas, with state distribution maps and beautiful full-color photographs. Included are the latest first-aid and medical approaches to snakebite, plus tips for snakebite prevention.

©1998, Texas Parks & Wildlife Press,
5 1/4" x 8", 112 pp., color photographs,
ISBN 1-885696-22-1, \$13.95, paperback

ess online at <tpwpress.com>!



The Official Guide to Texas State Parks

Whatever your outdoor passion, you'll find a state park in Texas where you can pursue your adventure! This book is the only official and complete guide to the state parks of Texas! Loaded with detail on history, camping, lodging, recreational activities, addresses and phone numbers and illustrated with lavish photos and locator maps, this is the indispensable travel guide to Texas' state parks. Photographed and written by Laurence Parent.

©1997, Texas Parks & Wildlife Press,
8 1/2" x 11" in., 216 pp., color photographs
and illustrations,
ISBN 0-292-76575-4, \$19.95, paperback

Children's Corner

Learn About... Texas Insects!



An exciting new book now joins Texas Parks & Wildlife Press' acclaimed "Learn About..." series — *Learn About... Texas Insects!* This educational activity book features the most numerous and easily observed of Texas' animal residents. Children from six to twelve can enjoy the marvelous world of "bugs" — that great host of hopping, crawling, flying, and buzzing creatures more properly called insects.

Youngsters can color detailed line drawings of the most common and most unusual Texas insects. The accompanying easy-to-read text gives important facts about insects' roles in nature. Interspersed throughout are instructive games and suggested activities. BONUS FOLD-OUT! A 17" by 22" coloring poster.

©1999, Texas Parks & Wildlife Press, 8 1/2" x 11",
60 pp., b&w illustrations, ISBN 1-885696-27-2,
\$7.95, paperback

Also available in this series:

Learn About... Texas Birds	\$7.95
Learn About... Texas Dinosaurs	\$7.95
Learn About... Texas Indians	\$7.95



HISTORICAL ACCOMODATIONS

☆ **Castle Avalon** Romantic bed and breakfast surrounded by 160 acres of Texas Hill Country. www.castleavalon.com 877-885-4780

PITTSBURG

★ **Carson House Inn** Historic Victorian home features guest rooms & fine dining restaurant. Antiques & rare curly pine trim. www.carsonhouse.com 888-302-1878

ROCKPORT

HOOPES' HOUSE
ROCKPORT, TEXAS
800-924-1008
www.hoopeshouse.com



NATIONALLY HISTORIC VICTORIAN HOME.
EIGHT ROOMS EACH WITH PRIVATE BATH.
FULL BREAKFAST INCLUDED. CALL FOR BROCHURE.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Bastrop-Moonshadow Cabins Romantic getaway, piney wood, 2bedroom/1bath, fireplace, kitchen, hot tub. www.moonshadowcabins.com 888-326-2226

KJC Ranch Please visit our unique Guest House N.W. of Llano, TX. www.kjcranch.com 888-887-5557

Kerrville-Turtle Creek Lodge. Sleeps 2-18, creek swimming, fishing, peaceful, children/pets welcome. www.turtlecreeklodge.com 210-828-0377

KNOLLE FARM AND RANCH
Bed, Barn, and Breakfast

Upscale inn on historic ranch near Corpus Christi. Superb birdwatching, horseback riding, canoeing, fishing, gourmet meals and picnics.
(512) 547-2546 • www.knolle.com

Pittsburg, TX-Cozy Cabin Rental Great for family fun or romantic getaway. www.benbrad.com 903-856-6839

Rio Frio Lodging Furnished vacation homes & cabins in the Hill Country. Birding & Nature Tours. www.friolodging.com 830-966-2320

Weslaco-Tropical B & B. Full Breakfast; Wildlife Refuge Parks; Mexican Shopping. tropicalb-b@juno.com 956-968-9646

Terlingua Ranch Resort Adjoins Big Bend National Park. Motel, RV, campsites, restaurant, pool. Quiet, remote, peaceful. www.terlinguaranch.com 915-371-2416

X Bar Ranch Nature Retreat Trails, horseback riding, biking, birding, private houses, cabins, camping. www.XbarRanch.com 888-853-2688

BAT TOUR

Hill Country Outdoor Adventures Sunset Bat Flight, BIRDING & Wildlife Nature Tours. www.friolodging.com/adventures 830-966-2320

BIRDING

Historic Sierra Motel EST 1939. Accommodations, Ranch Tours, Bird & Game Viewing. Beautiful Mountain Scenery. Box 417, Sierra Blanca, TX 79851 email: james@sbint.net www.sierrablancamotel.com 800-960-3705

Hummer House Largest hummingbird feeding/nesting site. Observation room viewing birds, deer, turkey. Dan Brown, Box 555, Christoval, TX 76935. www.hummerhouse-texasgems.com 877-255-2254

REAL ESTATE

Galveston Home. 150-foot waterfront, on lagoon, concrete bulkhead with dock & boat slip. 1 mile off ICW. Large deck on front with view of bird estuary. Large deck on back covering patio, with hot tub. 3br/3ba d/s living & dining. Efficiency apt. downstairs. Weekend and Weekly rentals available. Call 409-771-5101

Wetland Reserve 743 acres, 720 in Wetlands Reserve. Wonderful for waterfowl, hunting or birding. 21 acre Hillside overlooking reserve. Ideal building site. 1 hour north of Austin. Owner 254-758-2334

Own a Week on the Great TX Coastal Birding Trail-right on the Beach!

Spectacular birding location - 1 & 2 Bdrm Units, fully furnished.
RCI & II - Exch. \$1000. - 1450. 888-652-7696

South Texas Ranch

Low fence 200 acre-60 mi. W. of Corpus. Deer-Quail-Dove & Hog traps. Trailer, windmill, potable water, pond-tropical fish.
FINANCING - FIRM \$153,900.
Vance Wilson-Broker
956-542-7161
Fax 956-542-5029

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Personalized Bootjack
Bronze, aluminum, or cast-iron-metal base. Leather strapping on yoke. Leather footplate with brand, logo, initials or name burned into leather.
Crawford & Company
Box 126 • Uvalde, TX, 78802 • Call Toll Free 888-301-1967



PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Truly Texan Custom-made furniture, Texana t-shirts and cards, unique services and gifts direct from Texas companies. www.trulytexas.com

Texas Historical Flags Any flag of any kind, Custom flags and flagpoles. www.eagle-mtn.com 800-385-5605

Sporting Art Originals & Prints. Cowan, Dearman, Crowe, Barnes, Booth. Your Texas Sporting Art Headquarters. www.sloangallery.com

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY
WORKSHOP TAUGHT BY
WYMAN MEINZER

MAY 25-28, 2001
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
AT JUNCTION
CONTACT
(915) 446-2301
MARTHA RICHARDSON
@TTU.EDU



Oak Wilt Specialists of Texas, Inc.™

Oak Wilt Prevention and Treatment

"Specialized rock saw suppression trenching, Alamo tree injections and disease management."

www.stopoakwilt.com

(512) 842-TREE (512) 632-0832

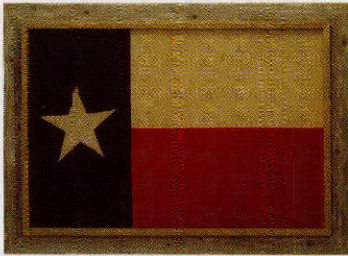
"Specializing in Hill Country Intensive Ranch Management Programs"

Ad Space Available For May and June issues

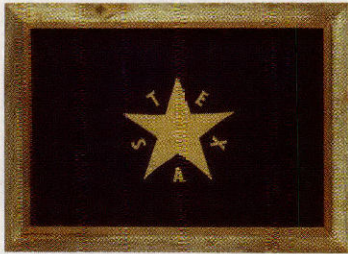
Contact Leigh Anne Jackson
512-912-7003



PRODUCTS AND SERVICES



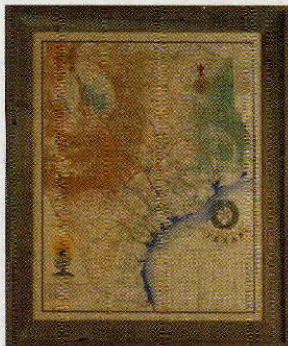
Texas Flag (28"H x 40"W)



First Republic of Texas Flag (28"H x 40"W)



1845 Republic Map of Texas



1836 Revolutionary Map of Texas

Your Purchase is an Investment in the Preservation of Texas History.

Map Price (framed in weathered wood) Buy 1 Map \$145.00 each Buy 2 Maps \$135.00 each Unframed Map 32"x37" \$45.00 each or Both Maps for \$80.00

Flag Price (framed in weathered wood) Buy 1 Flag \$159.00 each Buy 2 Flags \$149.00 each

Toll Free 1-877-465-6563

1511 Bingle Suite D7 Houston, TX 77055 www.twelvegauge.com 713-465-6563

TEXAS COMFORT

Large Flag Throw \$49 - 48"x68"
Small Throw \$30 - 35"x48"
Flag Pillow \$13

LOCATED IN THE HOUSTON GALLERIA
800.989.8377
visit our web site @ www.

TEXAS TERRITORIES.COM

LAND AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Practical, effective, and sustainable solutions for your land management needs.

- Habitat evaluation and management
- Wildlife counts, censuses & surveys
- Prescribed fire plans
- Pond design & construction management
- Native & exotic vegetation management
- Sedimentation and erosion control
- GIS and GPS services
- Wildlife management use property tax assistance

1-512-327-1180
LOCMIS-AUSTIN, INC.
www.lcomisaustin.com

TEXAS MINT 2001

Texas 2001 Dollar

1 oz .999 Silver Proof-like Coin	\$22.95
1 oz .999 Gold Numbered Limited Edition Coin	\$395.00
Silver Eezel	\$17.50
Silver 18" Diamond Cut Necklace	\$24.50
Texas Residents 8.25% Tax	
Shipping & Handling	\$2.95

Texas Mint 2000 P.O. Box 1371 Whitney, TX 75692
Toll Free: 1-877-339-6468 www.TexasMint2000.com

Native Planting Seeds for Wildlife Habitat

- Perennial Grasses & Legumes
- Food Plots
- Nesting Cover
- Drought Resistant

BAMERT SEED COMPANY
SPECIALIZING IN NATIVE GRASSES

DIRECT FROM OUR FARM TO YOU!

Muleshoe, TX (806) 272-5506
1-800-262-9892
www.bamertseed.com
email: natives@bamertseed.com

New! Your own weather forecaster!

Our new Vantage Pro weather stations offer forecasting, on-screen graphing, and multiple alarm settings.

- Monitor temperature, wind, UV, rain, barometric pressure, humidity, and more.
- Quick-view icons and moving ticker tape display show the forecast.
- Over 80 graphs give instant analysis of highs & lows and historical data.
- Up to 70 alarms notify you of critical conditions.
- Optional data logger and PC software for even more analysis.

Wireless or cabled, starting at just \$495! Order now, or ask for your FREE catalog.

Davis Instruments
3465 Diablo Ave, Hayward, CA 94545
800-678-3669 • www.davisnet.com



FISHING

DSP GUIDE SERVICE

Professional Guide Service
Lake Fork, TX

www.lakeforktrophybass.com
doug@lakeforktrophybass.com

Or Call Doug Shampine at (903) 474-0508

GREG GATES
GUIDE SERVICE
Trophy Stripers

LAKE WHITNEY

www.greggates.com

Single Fishermen
Large company trips
5 boat Fleet

817-926-0114



BUCK'S South Texas Guide Service

Trout • Redfish • Flounder • Black Drum



Baffin Bay

FREE LODGING
AVAILABLE UPON
REQUEST

Rt 3 Box 475 Alice, TX 78332
www.fishing-baffinbay.com

(361) 668-6161 • (361) 664-8544 Home • (361) 739-7817 Mobile

Bill Carey's

STRIPER EXPRESS

Guide Service

- 5-Boat Fleet
- 5 Tons Caught Yearly
- 34 Ft. Boat for Groups
- Gift Certificates

LAKE TEXOMA 903-786-4477
www.striperexpress.com

HUNTING

Rosebud Chukar Farm

Specialize in hatching eggs.
Ship anywhere in the U.S.

254-583-4306

Rt. 2, Box 210, Rosebud, Texas 76570
email: rosebudchu@aol.com

Duck Stamp Prints

Texas Duck Stamp Prints,
Texas Saltwater, Texas Quail,
Texas Wild Turkey,
GCCA, Federal
John Cowan Prints
All Years



FREE
CATALOG

Charlie's Gallery

P.O. BOX 11056 • SPRING, TEXAS 77391-1056
(281) 370-6945 • Serving Texas Collectors Since 1980
www.charliesgallery.com

HUNTING

SUPER STAND™

Guaranteed Five Years!

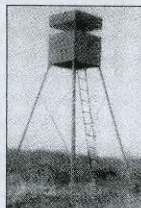
SINCE
1983

HEIGHTS

10, 12, 13,
15, 17 & 20 Ft.
Eye Level

Camo Covers
& Roof
Available

Adjustable
Top Rail



Patented

Top Closes Down!

AVAILABLE:
4x4 and 4x6 models
6 ft. thru 20 ft. heights
Ground Stands
Builders Kits



"BOSS" Tripod

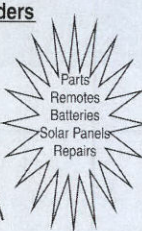
Exclusive Split Beam Leg
Design Creates the Strongest
Most Rigid Tripod Stand on
the Market

BIG-MAC Feeders



55 Gal.
14 ft. Tripod
Winch Feeder
Shown

Also Available:
50 lb. thru 750 lb. Capacities
Ladder Feeders • Tailgate Feeders
Protein Feeders



Parts
Remotes
Batteries
Solar Panels
Repairs

Chas-Mac, Inc. 2124 Marnel • Houston, TX 77055 • 713-461-9163 • Fax (713) 461-5229

The very latest poop on Spin-Cast Feeders....



\$119.95
MK-6 model (shown)

\$159.95
MK-6Solar model (not shown)

\$129.95

Spin-Cast Wildlife Feeders

5680 Randolph Blvd
San Antonio TX 78233

Phone: 210-653-7514 (Info)
210-653-3641 (Fax)

1-800-950-7087 or 8087
[Toll free for orders]

www.spincastrfeeders.com

email: spincast@spincastrfeeders.com

Free Catalog Available

© Spin-Cast Inc 1999

6V/12V Remote
Control



\$129.95
MK-2 model (shown)

\$169.95
MK-1 model (not shown)

Scratch
& Sniff

AUTOMATIC GAME FEEDERS



- 24-Hr. Quartz Timers
- Digital Timers
- Photocell Timers
- Batteries
- Solar Chargers
- Many Accessories
- Repairs (All Brands)
- Dealer Inquiries Invited

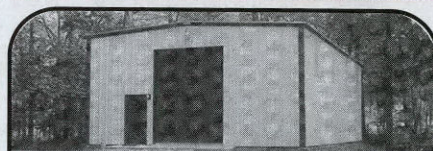
MAGNUM
HUNTING PRODUCTS
MORE FOR YOUR BUCK

219 Brand Lane, Stafford, TX 77477
(281) 261-0803

FREE BROCHURE
www.mag-hunt-pro.com

3-YEAR WARRANTY

BUILDING



HERITAGE BUILDING SYSTEMS

Established 1979

800-643-5555

BUILD IT YOURSELF AND SAVE

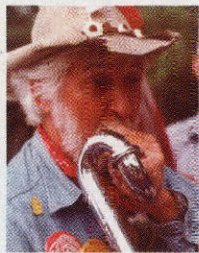
30 x 40 x 10	\$4,889
40 x 60 x 12	\$7,595
50 x 75 x 14	\$11,695
60 x 100 x 16	\$18,295
80 x 100 x 16 w/col	\$21,995

Commercial all steel buildings and component parts from America's largest distributor since 1979. Any size is available featuring easy bolt up rigid frame design for industry, office, mini-storage, shop, farm and all steel homes. Call us today for a free information package and quote on the best buildings made.

800.793.9208 Se Habla Español!
Mini-Storage Buildings@
metalbldg.com



TOURISM



EVERYBODY'S A MUSICIAN IN LUCKENBACH

It doesn't make any difference if you're picking guitar or playing the plumbing. At Luckenbach, it all sounds good!

EVERYBODY'S **SOMEBODY**
IN LUCKENBACH.

www.luckenbachtexas.com
Call Toll-Free 888-311-8990

RESERVE SPACE TODAY

For June 2001 Fish Texas Edition

Contact Leigh Anne Jackson
512-912-7003

www.visitbigbend.com
1-877-BIG BEND
The complete information resource
for the Big Bend area

CANYON of the EAGLES

LODGE & NATURE PARK

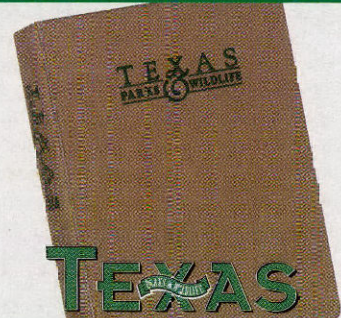
940 acres of Texas Hill Country,
Lodge & Conference Center,
Camping, Astronomy and
Vanishing Texas River Cruise.
canyonoftheeagles.com

800 977-0081



BINDERS

GET IT TOGETHER



MAGAZINE BINDERS

Psst — this is your *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine collection speaking...and we'd just like you to know we're tired of lying on top of each other, getting all dusty and crunched up!

So get it together — one of these nifty binders will hold two years of us — that's a whole year's worth — in perfect order! Each well-crafted, durable binder is only \$10, or order three for only \$25. Please add \$5 shipping and handling per order.

Please, credit card orders only:
call 512-912-7000 with your MasterCard,
VISA or Discover card handy. Order today!



AGE DEFIANCE Breakthrough

Feel young, look young with Pro hGH

Pro hGH is a revolutionary dietary supplement that can recover your health, looks and zest for life.



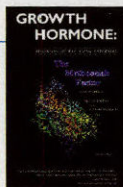
For years, experts have known the link between levels of Human Growth Hormone and aging. Pro hGH is designed to help you feel and look better than ever.



How would you like to have more energy and endurance? What about new hair growth with restored hair color, and healthier skin? Even experience increased muscle mass, reduced body fat, faster healing of injuries and enhanced immune functions? These are just some of the results obtained in patients taking Pro hGH. Best of all, no side effects have been experienced. All you have to do is take two effervescent tablets a day. No

injections, no hassles...it couldn't be easier. **Turn back the clock...naturally.** No product works for everyone, but Pro hGH is designed to naturally offset and in many cases reverse some

of the concerns that accompany the aging process. Pro hGH offers advanced support for the body's production of IGF-1, an important factor in growth, repair and maintenance of all tissues. Like other endocrine hormones (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone) hGH declines in production as we age. It is secreted by the pituitary gland, but after the age of 30, the amount produced declines about 14 percent every 10 years. Pro hGH is a breakthrough way of reversing this natural process safely and naturally. It comes in effervescent tablets that dissolve in water to create a delicious drink. It features the Chaperon Molecule™ delivery system to ensure maximum absorption. **It's yours to try risk-free.** Why not take advantage of this advanced technology for yourself, in the privacy of your own home. Pro



Bonus Gift!

The most comprehensive and practical guide to using growth hormone therapy **FREE**—a \$12.95 Value!



Turn age into a state of mind

hGH is now available to you with TechnoScout's exclusive risk-free trial. If you are not completely satisfied for any reason, simply return the unused portion within 30 days for a full "No Questions Asked" refund.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food & Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat or prevent disease.

Pro hGH (4-week supply of tablets)

..... \$79.95 \$11.95 S&H

Please mention product code 15172-20236.

For fastest service, call toll-free 24 hours a day

800-992-2966

To order by mail, send check or money order for the total amount including S&H. To charge it to your credit card, enclose your account number and expiration date. Virginia residents only — please include 4.5% sales tax.



PARTING SHOT

After a fresh snowfall last Christmas, Russell Graves found this prairie dog sunning itself near its burrow. A hawk flew over and scared a nearby burrowing owl, which fled to the closest burrow — where the prairie dog also was hiding. “For a few seconds,” said Graves, “both the owl and the prairie dog were in the burrow. The owl emerged first, then looked back as if to say, ‘Are you coming out or not?’ The prairie dog peeked out, and I snapped the shot.” Graves said that he had never before seen the two creatures associating with one another. “In a moment of danger, though, they did what they had to do to survive.”



This grille cooks.

Behind the familiar Dodge Ram grille lurk two of the most capable engines available in truckdom. The High-Output Cummins Turbo Diesel, and the Magnum® V-10.

The High-Output Cummins churns out 505 lb-ft of trailer towing torque. Since its power heats up early and never seems to quit, the Cummins Turbo Diesel is ideal for slow roasting lesser trucks on a long, steep grade.

*If you like cooking with gas, we suggest the Magnum V-10. It was the very first 10-cylinder engine available in a pickup. And with a searing 310 horsepower and 450 lb-ft of torque, it's still the most powerful V-10.**

*Properly equipped, with the High-Output Cummins, a Dodge Ram can tow up to 15,150 lbs. With the Magnum V-10, it can tow up to 13,450 lbs. Either way, that's a lot of groceries.***

Dodge Ram  Different.

800-4-A-DODGE or www.4adodge.com



*305 HP/440 lb-ft torque in California. **See dealer for details. Always use seat belts. Remember, children 12 and under in the front seat only with the passenger airbag turned off.

