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# TEXAS

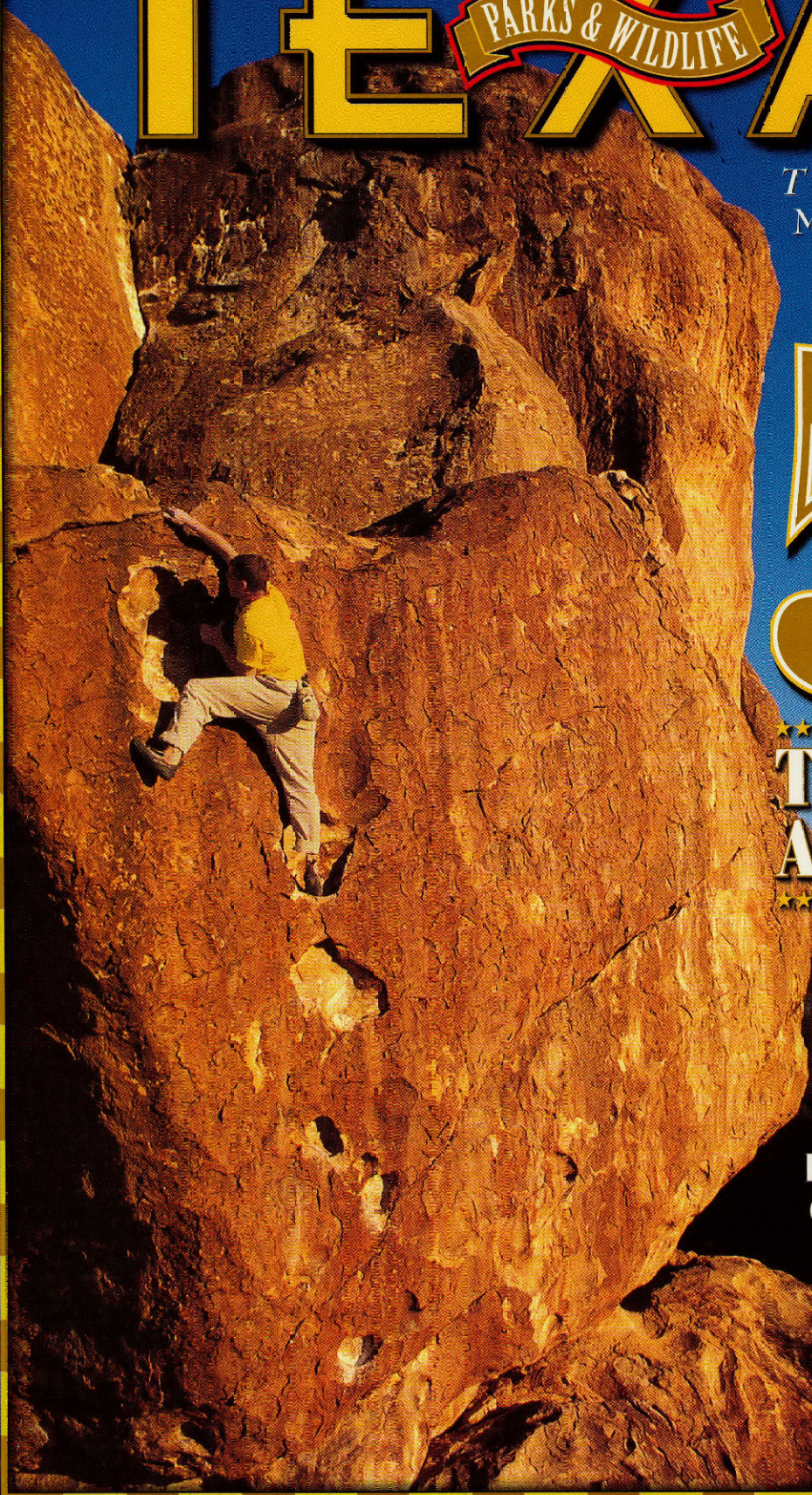
PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR  
MAGAZINE of  
TEXAS

# 50

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OCTOBER 2001

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By the staff of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine

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For the latest and greatest parks and wildlife information, check out our Web site <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)>.



# AT ISSUE

From the Pen of Andrew Sansom

**W**e gathered on the steps of the First Baptist Church in Nederland and paid tribute to a Texas game warden who gave his life in the line of duty. Officers from law enforcement agencies all over Texas stood erect as taps was played over the body of our colleague, Michael Pauling.

Sometime after midnight last August 2, Warden Pauling pulled over to the side of the road near Port Arthur to render aid to a woman in distress.

What happened next is still the subject of an intense investigation, but Warden Pauling is dead and the man who allegedly killed him in the middle of the night has been charged with capital murder.

You may ask, as I have — and as every other employee at Texas Parks and Wildlife has — how such a horrific thing could happen to a good man who loved to hunt and fish and whose principal responsibility was to protect the natural resources of Texas from those who would abuse them.

The men and women who wear the insignia of the Texas Game Warden are on the front lines in the struggle to make sure those resources are there for us to enjoy and will always be there for our children.

The tragic death of Michael Pauling is an unspeakably painful reminder that although the law enforcement officers of Texas Parks and Wildlife are at the leading edge of conservation in Texas, as state peace officers they are sworn to uphold the law and to keep the peace, wherever that solemn duty may take them.

It took Michael Pauling into harm's way and now he is gone.

Hundreds of his fellow law enforcement officers, in their khaki uniforms, were there at the church to honor him, and to ensure that his sacrifice and the risk of their daily lives will not be forgotten.

*Andrew Sansom*

**The tragic death of Michael Pauling is a painful reminder that, although game wardens are at the leading edge of conservation, as state peace officers they are sworn to uphold the law, wherever that solemn duty may take them.**



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# TEXAS

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

OCTOBER 2001, VOL. 59, NO. 10

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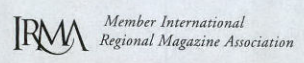
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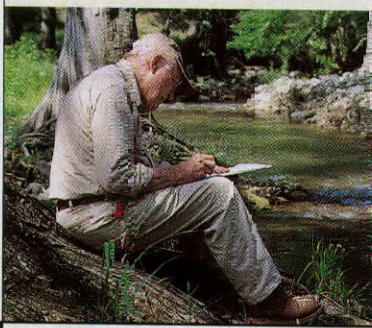
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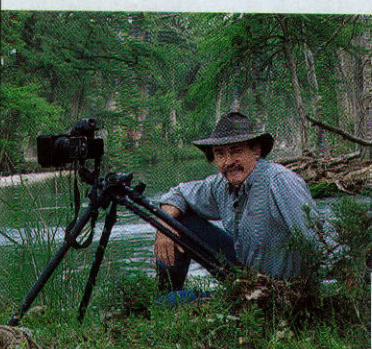


A native Texan who wandered rather widely through the world when younger, **John Graves** has spent most of the past 40 years on his rough and rocky stock farm in Somervell County. Among his books are *Goodbye to a River*, *Hard Scrabble* and *From a Limestone Ledge*. About the current series of river essays for this magazine he says, "It's been a rich experience, boning up on these waterways, visiting them and writing about them. I'm



getting a little old for some of the field work, but when your partner is a dynamo like photographer Wyman Meinzer, you don't have to worry about that."

**Wyman Meinzer** of Benjamin, native Texan and consummate adventurer, has traveled across Texas, taking photographs, for more than two decades. His images have appeared in *Smithsonian*, *Natural History*, *National Geographic*, *Audubon* and other magazines. The river series on which Meinzer and Graves are collaborating for this



magazine will appear in a forthcoming book. The Sabinal, in this issue, is next-to-last in the series. The Texas Legislature has named Meinzer State Photographer of Texas.

**Macarena del Rocío Hernández**, who writes about *El Chupacabras* in this issue, is a staff writer at the *San Antonio Express-News*. Hernández, who grew up in the border town of La Joya, has written for the *New York Times*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and several newspapers in Northern California. She worked as a writer for <Latino.com> and



has taught English at La Joya High School. A graduate of Baylor University, Hernández also holds a master's degree from the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley.

IN THE FIELD





# MAIL CALL

Picks, Pans and Probes from Previous Issues



FORWARD

LETTERS

**T**HIS MONTH'S "50 GREAT TEXAS OUTDOOR ADVENTURES" is our gift to you — one that's been nearly a year in the making. It's been the topic of many lively editorial meetings as well as many letters and e-mails from readers, TPW staff, freelancers and nature tourism professionals as we winnowed an astounding list of recreational opportunities down to the 50 suggestions in this issue.

There's no month more appropriate than October to highlight outdoor adventure: As we go to press, the Hill Country has been drenched in several inches of quenching rains, boding well for wildlife, and for our inland and coastal fisheries. Whether you hanker to hunt whitetails, waterfowl or upland game birds, to cast to a lunker bass, feisty striper or bull red; whether you choose to witness the fall migration of birds and butterflies or to paddle riverways, seagrass flats or the Rio Grande; whether you plan to hike through the blaze of Lost Maples, horseback ride the Big Bend canyonlands or bike through the Lost Pines; whether you choose to ponder pictographs of ancient cultures, antebellum plantation life or a soldier's rigors at the early frontier forts — October beckons with cooler temperatures and an abundance of choices. So grab your "50 Adventures," and head outdoors!

Plus — did you know October offers two weekends of free outdoor adventure, unique to Texas Parks and Wildlife?

The first is the Texas Wildlife Expo, held October 6 and 7 at the Texas Parks and Wildlife headquarters in Austin. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, Texas Wildlife Expo is a hands-on, free adventure fair where visitors can fish, shoot, kayak, rock climb, bird, mountain bike, see and touch wildlife, explore our natural and cultural history and learn how to help conserve wild Texas. Plus, Expo exhibitors include gear manufacturers, outfitters and tourism representatives from around the state: use the Texas Wildlife Expo visit to plan your vacations throughout the year and across Texas!

The second big outdoor weekend in Texas is Lone Star Legacy Weekend, October 20 and 21, celebrating our outdoor legacy with free admission to all Texas state parks, as well as participating TPW fish hatcheries and wildlife management areas. You'll find listings of special Lone Star Legacy Weekend events in "Getaways," beginning on page 58 of this issue.

So mark your calendars for these two Texas-sized free weekends: Texas Wildlife Expo, October 6 and 7, and Lone Star Legacy Weekend, October 20 and 21. See you there!

*Susan Stewart*

## Teacher Learns a Lesson

**I** read with keen interest Marty Kufus' article "When Lightning Strikes" (August 2001). I had a close call with lightning several years ago while walking to the parking lot at the community college where I teach part time. It was raining hard enough that evening for me to use an

umbrella, which I held aloft in my right hand while I carried a briefcase in the other. As I approached the parking lot I became aware of an odd sensation: static electricity was enveloping me. I stopped walking and the electricity became more intense each second, as if I were being squeezed to death in an invisible giant fist. I felt like prey.

A rainy night and this electricity means lightning, I reasoned. I quickly threw my

umbrella out in front of me and two thin blue crooked electrical charges followed the umbrella as it left my hand. When the point of the umbrella hit the pavement, the lightning struck behind me about a half mile.

The next instant everything was normal. My umbrella was undamaged, my hand was not burned, but I did sit for a while in

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Thank you for Phil H. Shook's article "Trail of Lights," (September 2001). I plan to forward the article to a paddling friend.

*Michael Portman, Laredo*





## OUTDOOR MEMORIES ARE PRICELESS AND THIS WEEKEND THEY'RE FREE!

At Texas Parks and Wildlife, we think everyone should experience the wonders of the great outdoors. Things like hiking. Fishing. Biking. Hunting. Rock climbing and birding. And getting to know our wonderful cultural resources and historical sites. So, we're designating the weekend of October 20-21 as Lone Star Legacy Weekend, when you and your whole family can get free admission to any Texas State Park and many of our fish hatcheries and wildlife management areas as well. For more information on the weekend's special activities, log on to [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us) and click the Lone Star Legacy button. And while you're visiting, you can learn about Lone Star Legacy, a fundraising campaign to ensure that our natural and cultural treasures will be there for future generations to enjoy.



Lone Star Legacy.

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OCTOBER 20-21

## MAIL CALL

my car with my knees knocking. I am extremely happy to be able to share this event with others.

*Larry M. Beachum  
Dallas*

### Harvester Ants and Horny Toads

May I add another theory to the disappearance of the "horny toad?" As a youngster growing up in a small town in Central Texas during the early '20s, one of the pleasures of summer was going barefoot. The principal hazards of this pleasure were goat-head burrs and "red" (harvester) ants, both of which were plentiful. We took great pleasure in capturing horny toads when we visited relatives on a ranch a few miles out of town, bringing them home with us, then releasing them after we tired playing with them. Lawns were not much admired nor cultivated in the sandy land of that town, but were very conducive to the growth and health of burrs and red ants, both of which were plentiful at that time, much to our sorrow and pain.

Years later, my father mentioned that he had not seen a red ant in years in any part of the town where he at one time had observed many red ant hills. He attributed the disappearance to the countless numbers of horny toads we had imported and released as barefoot boys.

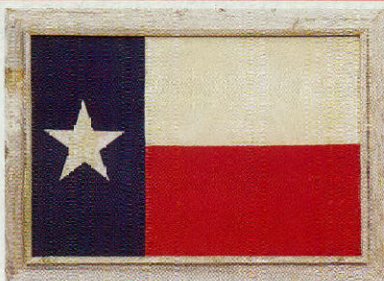
*Hal Wallis  
Dallas*

### Kayakers and Power Boats

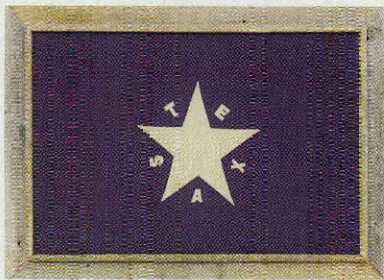
I really enjoyed Sally Bickley's article about Goose Island (2001 *Texas State Parks Annual*, available free at Texas state parks). However, there is one statement she made that I think needs more elaboration. She stated in the article that "It is the responsibility of the kayaker to watch for power boats, especially coming in







Texas Flag (28"H x 40"W)



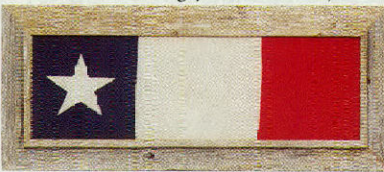
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and out of channels and keeping out of their way."

Even though this statement is prudent advice for the kayaker's survival, it should be pointed out that in actuality, it is the power boater who is responsible for avoiding running over non-motorized craft. There is no way that a kayaker can maneuver out of the way of a speeding motor boat. If the bow of the motor boat is sticking up too high for the operator to see, he should slow the boat down immediately so that he can see.

People new to power boating should be encouraged to take the Coast Guard Power Squadron Safe Boating Course.

Mark Olsen  
Austin

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Texas Parks and Wildlife offers a boating safety course, as well. It is available at sites across the state, and as either a home study or online course. Call (800) 792-1112, ext. 61, or visit <tpwd.state.tx.us/edu> and click on "Boater Education."*

### Labeling Wildlife

My family enjoys your magazine. Your pictures are as good as those in *National Geographic*. Your writers, however, are much better. Your magazine is entertaining and educational. The only blemish is that I occasionally have difficulty locating the names of the fish or bird being featured. On some occasions the animal's name is not given at all. It would be appropriate for every picture to be labeled boldly so young people would have less difficulty ascertaining the pictured animal's name, such as widgeon, hooded merganser, etc. This should be applied even to your front and back page. Other than the above mentioned, you folks have a good magazine.

H. K. Rupp, III  
Beaumont

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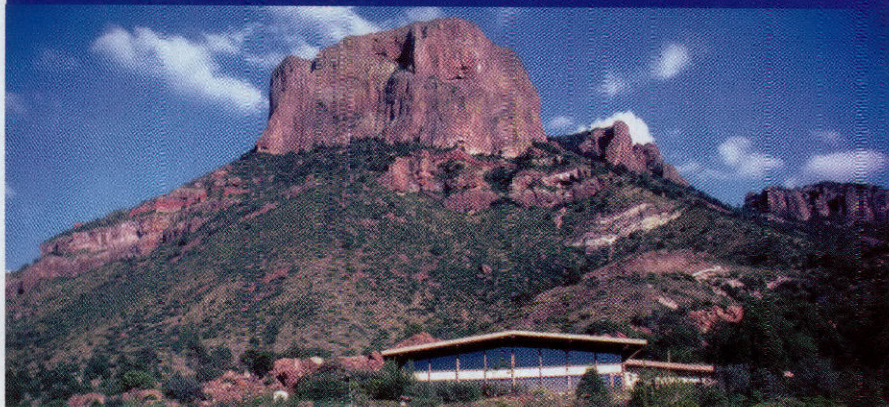
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## MAIL CALL

### Suitable for Framing?

I have enjoyed *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine for many years. You do a great job. The August 2001 issue had what I thought was a great picture of a small boy carrying his young lab pup either to or from a hunting adventure. This picture would have been great for framing, but the address label is printed at the bottom and thus is unsuitable for framing. Can the mailing address be done some other way and not be printed over the picture?

Larry Cervenka  
Angleton

SUSAN L. EBERT REPLIES: Larry, you're not the first one to ask this question. By using inkjet technology to address magazines to our subscribers, we save nearly \$50,000 a year over doing the removal paper labels. So, I'm afraid they're here to stay — especially as we face escalating postal costs. Here's a thought: Buy a copy at your local newsstand for \$3.95, or order a single newsstand issue for \$5.00 (use MasterCard, VISA or Discover!) by calling us at (512) 912-7000. The newsstand version does not need to be inkjetted for mailing, so there's no box on the back cover image.

### Coexisting with Others

I am an avid hunter and fisherman. I learned hunting and fishing from my father, grandfather and several uncles. From about the age of 6, my cousins and I accompanied our fathers and grandfather on many hunting and fishing adventures. We often played the part of retriever on dove and quail hunts.

I received my first shotgun for Christmas at the age of 12. I was taught how to properly handle the gun and safety from the same people.

As my brother and cousins all received shotguns we became a real hunting club. We enforced hunting







## MAIL CALL

regulations amongst ourselves — with the toe of a boot applied to the seat of the pants — to the point of making one lad cry because he shot at a dove during quail season.

We fished the many stock tanks around us, first with cane poles and, as we got older, with rods and reels.

I have learned that a casual walk along a quiet trail, watching birds and squirrels at a feeder, photographing deer or admiring wildflowers can be as exciting as putting a gunsight on a big buck.

Now, having told all of this, I want you to know that I find much enjoyment from reading *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine, even the articles about activities that I do not do.

Just because I do not participate in some activities does not mean that other people do not have the right to enjoy them. So please, leave the magazine as it is so every can enjoy it and also see what other people enjoy.

That way we can all get along together and maybe understand each other a little better.

Also, I very much enjoyed the article "Web Master" by Sheryl Smith-Rodgers (September 2001).

As a child I was also scared of spiders and still do not find them among my favorites of the animal world. However, I do make an exception of the garden spider.

Over a period of several years I have watched these spiders build their webs under the eaves of a building where I work. One particular spider that I feed stayed so healthy that she laid three egg sacks that year.

I thank you for including this type of article in the magazine and cite it as another reason *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine is so well rounded and diversified.

Larry J Shaban  
Bellevue

### Out of Range

In answer to letter from Jerome R. Blackstone (September 2001), that jaguarundi was not the only one out of its habitat! As my granddaughter got in the car one day, one ran out from under it and ran between her legs. We didn't get a good look that time but saw it twice again and looked it up in the animal book also. I mentioned it to a man who has a business in town and he said he, too, had seen it but was afraid to say anything because he didn't know what it was. At the time, we were living on a ranch 20 miles out of Seymour in North Texas, 10 miles from the highway and about a mile from the Brazos River. We saw deer, turkeys and bobcats all the time and even saw a mountain lion twice. We miss living there, but had to move to town for health reasons.

Wanda Irby  
Seymour

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## MAIL CALL

### Why the Change?

**W**hat has happened to your magazine? We took *Texas Parks & Wildlife* about 10 years ago and it always talked about the state parks, lakes, animals, etc. Now it seems to just be a hunting magazine.

If I wanted a hunting magazine I would subscribe to *Field & Stream*. I know my opinion doesn't amount much, but as soon as this subscription ends, no more. Well, thanks for listening!

⚡ Joe Hurtik

*SUSAN L. EBERT REPLIES: We're sorry, Joe, that our magazine has disappointed you. No magazine — even one as diverse in its topics as this one — can be all things to all people. Hunting is an integral part of our mission of conservation and, for many of us, of our heritage, and we will not walk away from that. Still, to be fair: the August 2001 issue that you complain about*

*here, our annual hunting issue, carried 16 pages of hunting features and 20 pages of non-hunting features. "Scout" and "Legend, Lore & Legacy" added seven more non-hunting pages. We track our editorial mix conscientiously so as to provide the greatest service to our readership and their many outdoor passions. We're sad to see you go; you're one fewer voice singing in our chorus of outdoorsmen and women.*

### Ocotillo or Not?

**Y**our March 2001 issue has been open on my dining room table all these months now to write about one of the wildflowers pictured.

On page 29 you have a photograph that is identified as ocotillo. Try as I might, even with a magnifying glass I can't make it look like an ocotillo: it just looks like a sumac that's lost its leaves. Is this photograph correctly identified?

Earl Wylie  
Houston

*THE EDITORS REPLY: It's an ocotillo, all right; they bloom well before the foliage develops. The vivid, flame-orange flowers add a stunning exclamation point to the top of the bare stalks.*

### Sound off for "Mail Call!"

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## SCOUT

NEWS AND VIEWS IN THE TEXAS OUTDOORS

WILD LIFE

## GUESTS IN THE GULF

*Sperm whales are showing up off the Texas coast, and eager scientists are tracking them with Ahab-like obsession.*

THE RECENT DISCOVERY OF HUNDREDS OF SPERM WHALES within miles of the Louisiana and Texas coasts has launched research projects that will put researchers eye to eye with these creatures over the next three years.

For scientists tracking the habits of these whales, the Gulf of Mexico has become a laboratory. While one crewmember runs the trolling motor in the stern of a 21-foot research vessel, another uses a 30-foot pole to place a suction cup tag on the top of a whale weighing upwards of 40 tons.

"The biggest reaction we have ever had from the whale is a tail slap, and that is pretty exciting from an animal that is 60 feet long," says oceanographer William Lang.

If all goes well, the tag will remain on the whale for up to nine hours before it floats to the surface and is recovered, recording in precise detail the depths the whale dives, the sounds it makes, as well as what the whale hears.

Scientists studying the whales say each tag that is recovered represents a "whole career on a hard drive" because there is so much information on it.

Dr. Bernd Würsig, director of marine mammal research at Texas A&M-Galveston, says sperm whale activity has been noted in the Gulf dating back to the 1980s, but only in recent years has it been determined that many of them return year after year and, in some cases, remain year-round.

An area 65 to 100 miles offshore of Brownsville is one of

three areas in the Gulf where the whales are known to congregate, Würsig says.

Scientists first discovered the whales through aerial and shipboard surveys. Many of the whales were then photographed and later reidentified later by studying the configuration and markings on their tails. Studies are underway to obtain genetic information from the animals to see if they are different from whales found in the North Atlantic.

The sperm whale, made famous in Herman Melville's

*Moby Dick*, is the largest of the toothed whales, with adult males known to reach lengths of almost 60 feet and to weigh up to 68 tons. The hunting of sperm whales primarily for the oil produced from their thick blubber dates back to the late 17th century. Hundreds of thousands were harpooned in the oceans of the world with a peak harvest in 1963-64 of 29,300 animals. In 1971, the first International Whaling Commission restrictions

were enforced, and by 1984 all commercial sperm whale catches were banned.

One of the reasons the sperm whales have gathered in the Gulf, Würsig says, is the abundance of squid, one of the staples of the deep-diving mammals. He notes, however, that there does not seem to be sexual activity or calf-rearing taking place in the Gulf. "So the assumption is that they must interact with animals outside the Gulf."

—Phil Shook







## CONSERVATION

# ARK ANGELS

*Coastal rescue centers save stranded sea creatures.*

A 7-year-old bottle-nosed dolphin washes ashore in Galveston, sick and emaciated. After a quick call to the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network, volunteers arrive on the scene, turn her upright in the surf, and wait for the rescue vehicle. This dolphin has fared better than most: Out of the 150 marine mammals that strand each year in Texas, nearly 95 percent wash ashore dead.

Most are bottle-nosed dolphins, but occasionally melon-headed or sperm whales beach themselves. The animals strand for many reasons, including disease, parasites and collisions with boats. "Dolphins have been found with toxins up to 100 times the amount that would kill a cow," says Lance Clark, state operations coordinator for the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

While the stranding center rehabilitates stranded dolphins, ARK specializes in sea turtles and large waterbirds.



"One cause of sea turtle strandings is entanglement in monofilament line," says director Tony Amos. "But many are found dead on the beach with no obvious sign of injury." Last winter, 65 sea turtles washed ashore due to colder than normal ocean temperatures. Texas Parks and Wildlife offered tanks for the turtles at a nearby hatchery.

For those fortunate marine animals that are nursed back to health, ARK and the Marine Mammal Stranding Network release most back to the wild. If you find a stranded marine mammal, call (800) 9MAMMAL. To volunteer or to make a tax-deductible donation, visit <[www.tmmmsn.org](http://www.tmmmsn.org)> or call (409) 740-4455. To report an injured or sick sea turtle or sea bird to ARK, call (361) 749-5793 or (361) 224-0813. To make a tax-deductible contribution to ARK, send a check "For the ARK" to: University of Texas Marine Science Institute, 750 Channel View Dr., Port Aransas, TX 78373.

— Wendee Holtcamp

# HAWK WATCH

*As many as 5,000 hawks a day stream overhead at Smith Point.*

EACH FALL, thousands of migrating hawks descend upon the upper Texas Coast on their way to Mexico and Latin America, a journey that may cover 3,000 miles or more. One of the best places to observe broad-winged, white-tailed and many other species of migratory hawks as they sail overhead is Smith Point in the Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area. In late September, birders there may see as many as 5,000 broad-winged hawks in a single day.

The annual Smith Point Hawk Watch, now in its 11th year, runs through November 15 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory and Hawk Watch International sponsor the event in conjunction with Texas Parks and Wildlife and private companies. Volunteers count the raptors as they fly over the area. During slow times, birders can see other migrants such as hummingbirds, swallows and shorebirds.

"During September and October is usually when the watchers get the best counts," says TPW wildlife biologist

Amos Cooper. "You can see hundreds or even thousands of birds at once just soaring all over the place." Annual counts fluctuate between 26,000 and 47,000 migrants.

Dick Benoit, volunteer field coordinator for the Smith Point Hawk Watch, has participated in the Smith Point watch for six years. With so many different birds flying through at various times, seasoned watchers like Benoit consider such things as weather conditions to predict what birds will fly over on certain days.

"With our records, we know what species are moving at what time," Benoit says. "For example, if it is late September and the wind is coming out of the north, we can tell that it will probably be a big day for broad-winged hawks."

Bird counts are not only enjoyable for people — they're also beneficial for birds. "The counting of a population lets people know the status of the species," says Benoit. "If something is going wrong in the food chain, counting will help you identify the problem and address it before it's too late."

— Garland Levitt





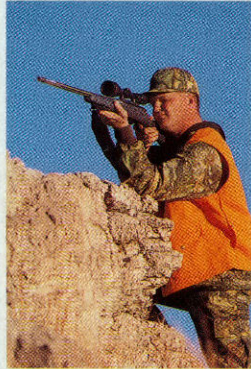
## Online Hunter Education

THE TEXAS HUNTER EDUCATION ONLINE STUDY course is such a success that the National Shooting Sports Foundation and International Hunter Education Association are using it as a model to develop a national program.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife hunter education staff has revolutionized training by developing an independent study package in cooperation with *Outdoor Life* and the Nevada Division of Wildlife. Texas further developed an online version of the home study.

After taking the home study or online course, potential hunters must complete a hunter skills course to gain certification. In Texas this takes four to eight hours to complete. For more information, see the TPW Web site, <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)>, or call (800) 792-1112, ext. 62.

— Steve Hall



### FIELD NOTES

#### Mark Your Calendar!

DOZENS OF SPECIAL ACTIVITIES will kick off the second year of TPW's Lone Star Legacy Weekend, October 20-21. Enjoy free entry to all state parks, participating wildlife management areas and fish hatcheries. In an effort to raise private money to preserve the state's natural and cultural resources, donations will be accepted, and overnight camping fees will still apply. For a complete list of Lone Star Legacy Weekend activities and participating facilities, visit <[tpwd.state.tx.us](http://tpwd.state.tx.us)>, call (800) 792-1112 or see Getaways on page 58.

### TEXAS READER

## TLALCOYOTE

WHILE LOOKING for his father's milk cows in the thorny South Texas brush, young Rogelio Ramirez is snatched from his father's ranch by marauding Comanches. His pluck as a captive leads the Comanche to name him Tlalcoyote, the badger.

Tlalcoyote comes of age in Comanche war camps, at the hands of a sadistic Louisiana pirate to whom the

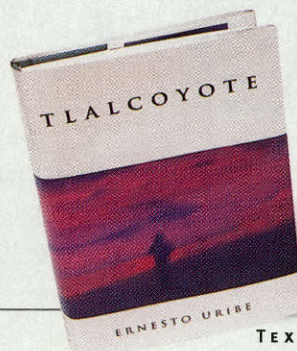
Comanche later trade him, as a slave on a Louisiana cotton plantation and in the rich decadence of New Orleans. Throughout his misadventures, his *puha*, his strong personal magic, a multicultural mixture of Spanish catholicism, Comanche beliefs and voodoo — keep him alive by a hair's breadth.

Ernesto Uribe brings early 19th century history to life through the eyes of our fiery young

hero. Uribe himself grew up on horseback, popping cattle out of the brush on a South Texas ranch where his family has raised beef since 1755. Educated in the public schools of Laredo, he later earned a master's degree from Texas A&M. This is his first book.

*Tlalcoyote* is available at <[Xlibris.com](http://Xlibris.com)> and by calling toll-free (800) 795-4274.

— Susan L. Ebert



ERNESTO URIBE

### IN MEMORIUM

## GAME WARDEN Michael Pauling

On August 2, 2001, Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Warden Michael Pauling of Port Arthur became the 14th Texas game warden to die in the line of duty.

Pauling is remembered by friends, coworkers and family as a dedicated, compassionate professional. "He cared about the job, was passionate about it, enjoyed it, and did it well. I think that is the greatest tribute that can be paid to him," says Chester Moore, Jr., outdoors editor of the *Port Arthur News*.

Pauling's fellow wardens recall his commitment to serving the public. "He was all game warden," says Johnny Longoria. "He dedicated his life to this job and paid the ultimate sacrifice." Roy Lawrence, TPW's director of field operations for law enforcement, recalls a poignant conversation he had with Pauling's father. "I told him Mike was a good officer, and he responded, 'He was a good son.'"

Michael Pauling is survived by his wife, Stephanie, and sons Christopher and Philip of Port Arthur; parents James G. and Mildred Pauling, Sr., of San Antonio; and brothers James Pauling, Jr., of Biloxi, Mississippi, and Jerry Don Pauling of San Antonio.

Pauling was a graduate of Texas A&M University and served 12 years in the United States Army as a medical services officer, reaching the rank of captain.

The Hardin and Jefferson County 100 Club and Operation Game Thief are providing financial assistance. Contributions may be sent to Michael Pauling Fund, Operation Game Thief, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744.



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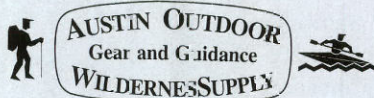
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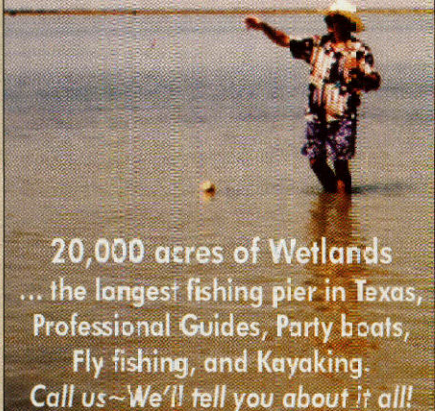
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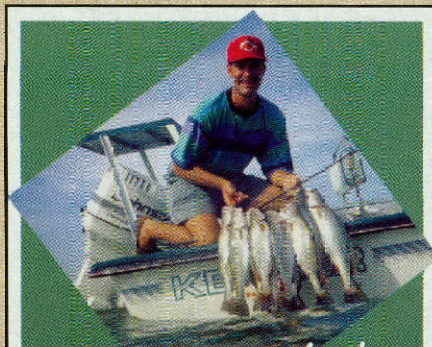
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## FIELD TEST

# Compound Hunting Bows

*The new compound hunting bows are short, fast, smooth and full of gizmos.*

BY GIBBS MILLIKEN

THE SUDDEN *TWANG!* of the bowstring is a sound you don't want to hear when hunting. This sound travels faster to the prey than the arrow, allowing spooked animals to "jump the string" and escape.

The building of a quieter, faster, more vibration-free bow is the ultimate goal of archery manufacturers. In this quest, the modern compound bow looks very strange and futuristic compared to its recent forebears.

The major advantage of the compound bow is the let-off feature, which allows the archer to draw a powerful weapon, and then have the pulling weight — usually between 40 and 80 pounds — suddenly reduced at the fully drawn position. Most models relieve the pull by 60 to 80 percent of the rated shooting weight, giving the archer time to select a target, aim and release at precisely the right moment. This innovation has opened up bow hunting to women, youth and the physically challenged.

One of the best of the current production models for this year, according to pro shooters and the owners of several Texas archery shops, is the

**Mathews SQ2 Bow** (\$659, Mathews Inc., (608) 269-2728, accessories not included). This excellent 31-inch brush or blind bow has most of the desirable features — it's small, lightweight, quiet and easy to shoot. Two internally mounted harmonic dampers are an integral part of the riser construction, and a Zebra String using special twist technology allows for consistent peep-sight alignment.

The newest contender in the ultrashort category is the 31-inch **Buckmasters G2 Bow** (\$499, Buckmasters, (352) 376-2327, accessories not included). It has all the features of the Mathews SQ2 plus a split-limb configuration to further lighten the unit and Sims Limb Saver technology built into the aluminum-titanium riser. In field tests, this bow performs exceptionally if equipped with an optional swing-arm cable guard, and is an easy long-hold on target with a 75 percent let-off.

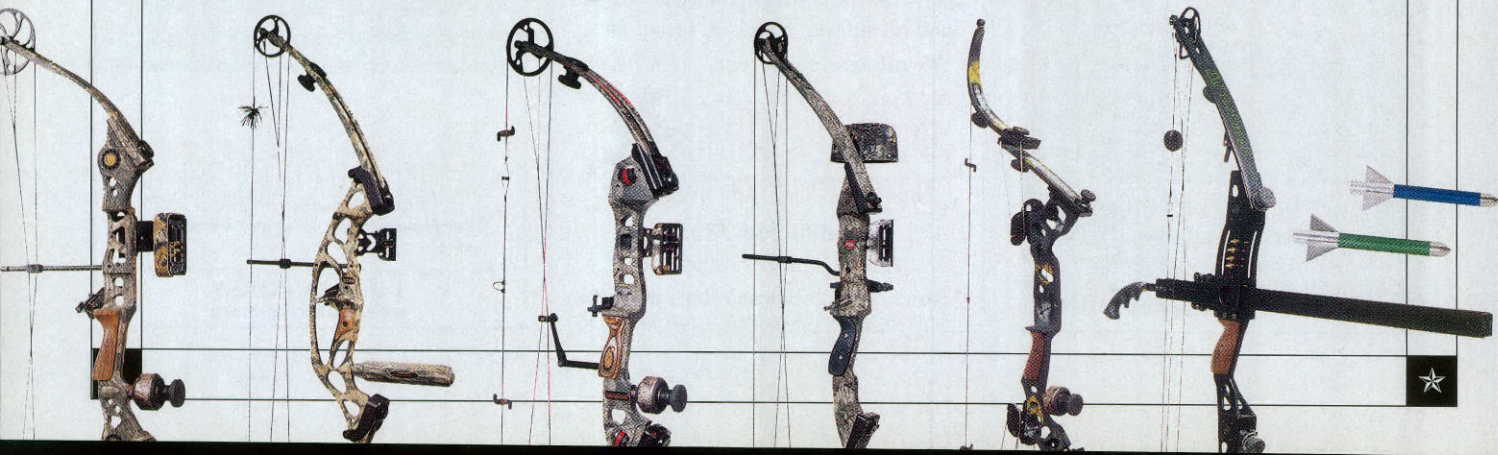
Only slightly longer is the 36-inch **Hoyt VorTec** (\$599, Hoyt USA, (801) 363-2990, accessories not included). This bow uses light,  $\frac{3}{4}$  split-limbs, moderate reflex riser

geometry with a radical arc brace behind a very small handgrip.

Currently the most innovative and radical design is a bow Rambo would be proud of: the **AccuRest DC Bow** (\$599, AccuRest (847) 487-0636, tubular arrow rest and release included). It combines a modern compound bow with a tubular guidance system, 4-inch steel-fletched hunting arrows, internal sight pins and mechanical release, all in one unit. There's no torque, no wobble in the arrow, no spine corrections and no stabilizer (the guidance tube acts as a stabilizer).

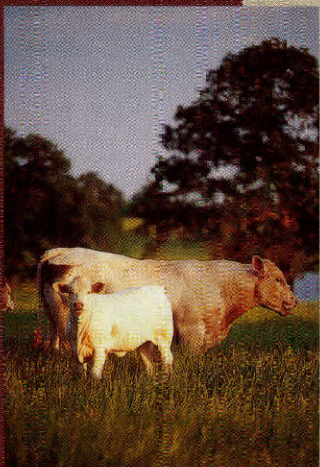
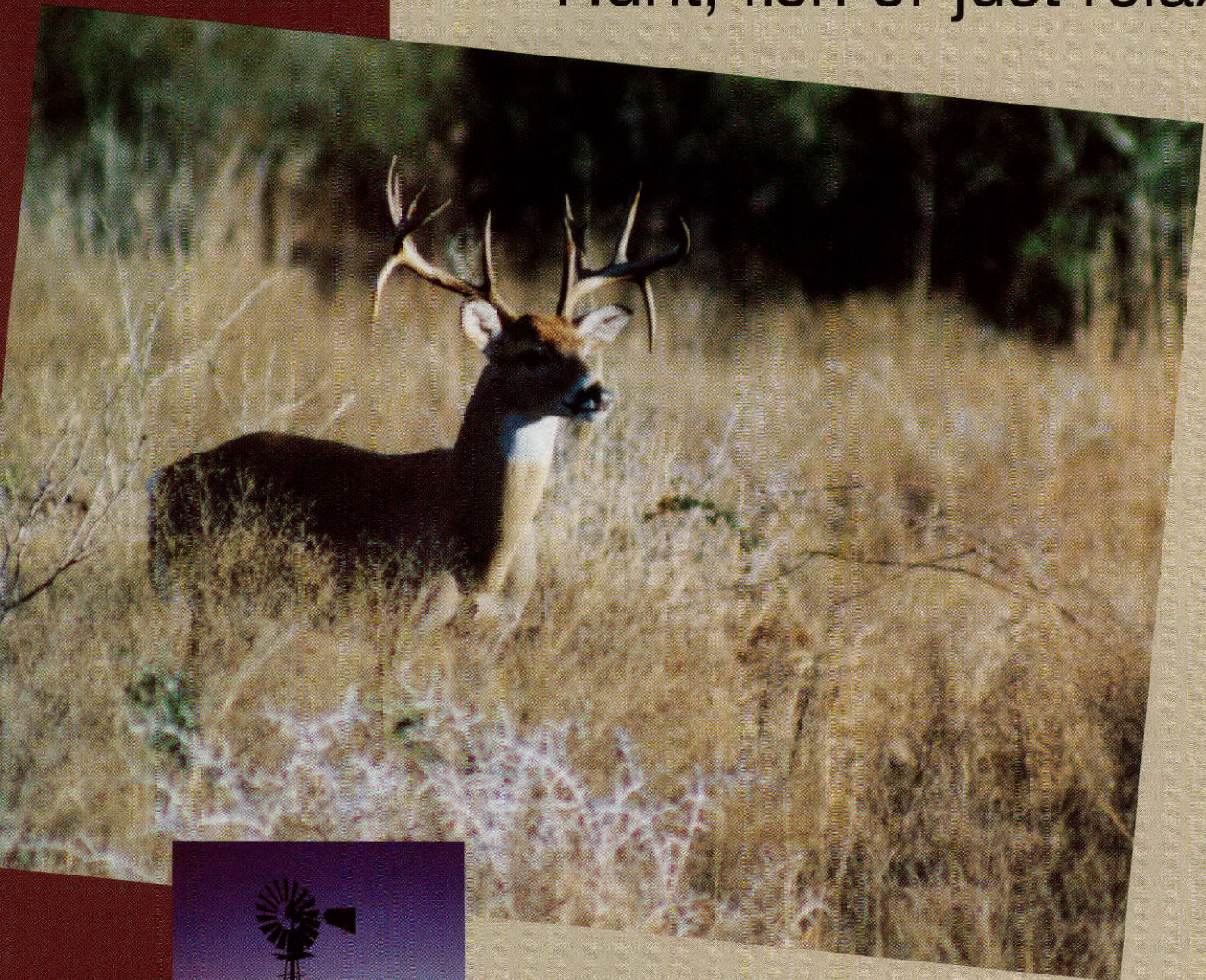
Perhaps the finest design of all is the 43-inch **Oneida Black Eagle** (\$595, C. P. Oneida, (231) 743-2427, accessories not included). It is the only internal cable designed with four cams, producing excellent performance in a distinctive Turkish style. The bow is smooth-shooting and accurate, with an 80 percent let-off at full draw. Lightweight and quieter, this new Eagle is a major improvement over past models. With additional limb damping plus string-mounted "catwhiskers," it is an ideal choice for both hunters and bow fishers.

Archers searching for quality at less expense may want to try the **PSE Sidewinder Package** (\$359, P.S.E. (520) 884-9065, accessories included). This fast, 38-inch, single-cam bow has a 75 percent let-off and comes with illuminated sight, prong arrow rest and bow quiver. Sold only in selected archery pro shops, it is a good choice for the new archer looking for a good hunting setup at a reasonable price. ★  
**From left: Mathews SQ2; Hoyt VorTec; Buckmasters G2; PSE Sidewinder; Oneida Black Eagle; AccuRest DC Bow and 4-inch fletched arrows.**





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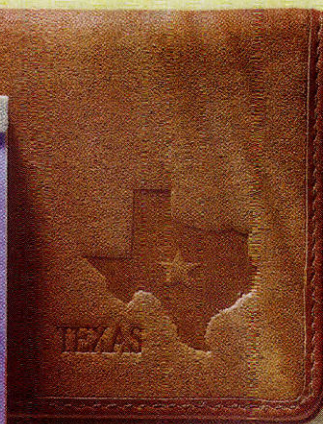
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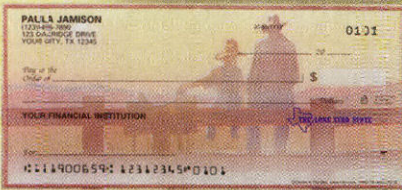
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SKILL BUILDER

# Backpacking 101

*Seven must-know tips for beginners.*

BY ERICA HOUSE

**W**HEN I REMEMBER our family camping trips, I have to laugh. Complete with a kitchenette, shower and toilet, these motor home trips were hardly “roughing it.”

These days I opt to backpack. Unlike car camping, backpacking offers encounters with crowd-shy wildlife and gains you access to remote areas. But backpacking requires planning and efficient packing. Here are seven tips to get you started:

## 1. What to Pack

Leave the cooler, blow-up mattress and unnecessary gadgets at home. Pack only the essential items, including plenty of drinking water or a purification device, food, knife, layers of clothing, rain gear, hiking boots, maps, compass, first-aid kit, flashlight and batteries, waterproof matches, sunscreen and insect repellent.

Think nonperishable, lightweight and/or even freeze-dried when it comes to food. Astronaut ice cream and military MRE pouches don't make your taste buds do back flips?

Try pasta with powdered sauces, jerky or beans and rice!

Packs should weigh 30 to 40 percent of your body weight, a majority of this weight being water. Set the heaviest weight low in the pack and in the middle close to the frame.

## 2. Equipment

**Packs.** Internal frames are generally more comfortable and less likely to chafe, but because airflow between you and your pack is restricted, they can be uncomfortable in hot climates.

**Sleeping bag.** Bivy sacks (or bivouac sacks) are waterproof one- to two-pound bags that are a favorite among backpackers, though any lightweight bag with appropriate temperature ratings will do.

**Tent.** Bivy shelters resemble a sleeping bag with poles and provide a shielded headspace to block out bad weather and insects. Lightweight, easy-up tents or hammocks will also work.

**Stove.** Most primitive sites prohibit open fires, so call ahead or bring a small multi-fuel stove and plenty of fuel, just in case.

## 3. A Word on Water

“If you can replace something in your pack with an equal amount of weight in water, do so,” says survival skills expert David Alloway.

Depending on the terrain, one gallon of drinking water per person per day is recommended. This does not include water needed for cooking and cleaning. Carry a water purification system or boil water if a source is available.

## 4. Planning Your Route

A three- to five-mile course per day is a good starting point. Most backpackers carrying a full load walk about two miles per hour, with an additional half-hour for every 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Many parks require permits, so call ahead.

Leave your route and expected time of return with someone back home. Often people wait until dark to report missing hikers, setting daylight searches back almost 12 hours. Instead, Alloway suggests, set your return time at least a few hours before sunset. One- or two-night trips provide great trial runs for your first weeklong adventure.

## 5. Ask the Experts

Organizations such as Sierra Club, <[texas.sierraclub.org](http://texas.sierraclub.org)> and outdoor retailers post notices of workshops on their bulletin boards. Also helpful is the Great Outdoor Recreation Page, <[gorp.com](http://gorp.com)>.

## 6. Camp Hygiene

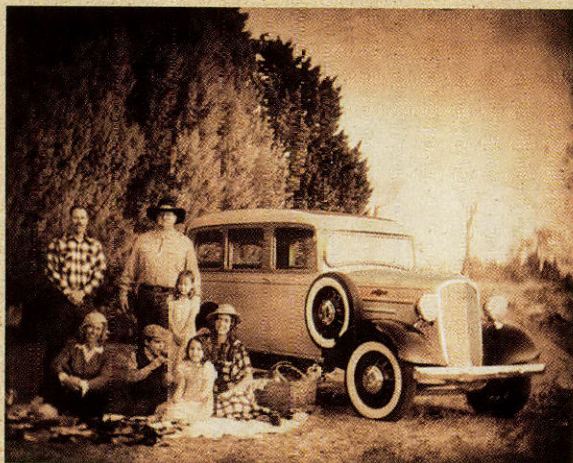
Policies vary, but most sites require that you bury fecal material 100 yards from camp at least two feet deep, burn toilet paper in the hole and recover it. Others say to carry out all toilet paper, so plastic baggies are a must! Bathe and wash dishes away from camp, and use biodegradable soap at least 100 yards from water sources.

## 7. Detering Animals

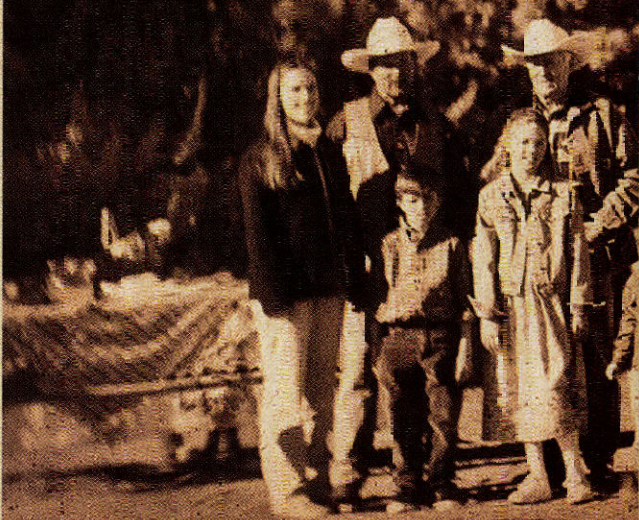
To keep raccoons from visiting your camp, hang food and trash from a tree, or bury it at least 100 yards from camp. (Check park restrictions on digging, and retrieve it before you leave.) Store odorous materials from toothpaste to leftovers in airtight containers at least 100 yards away. ★



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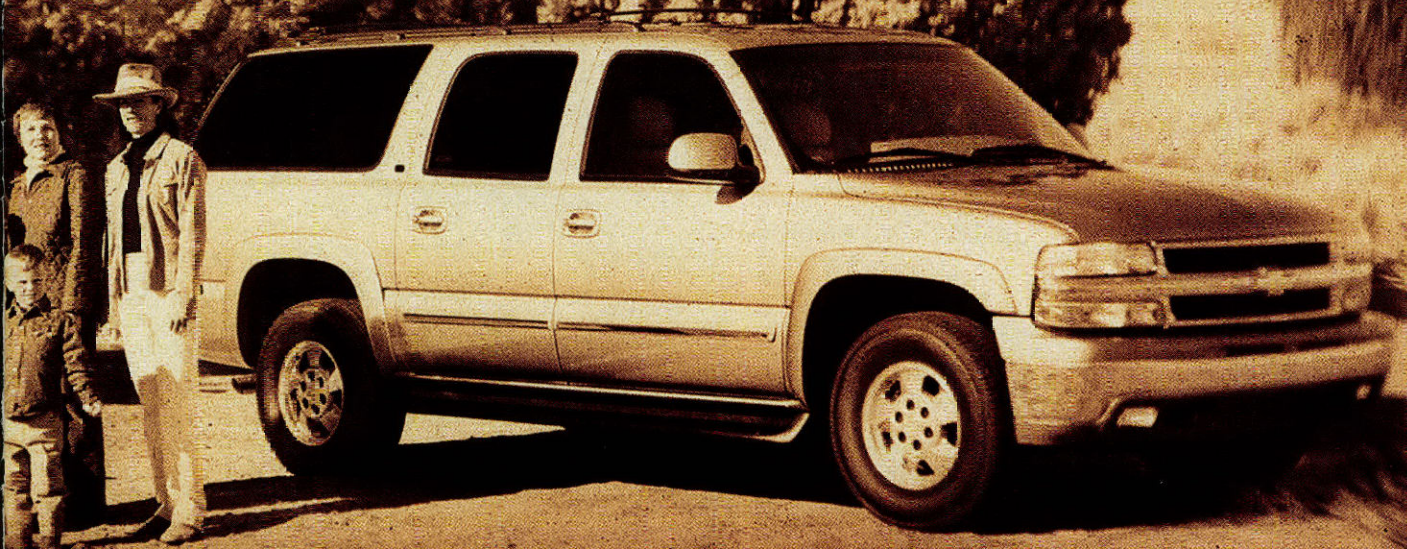
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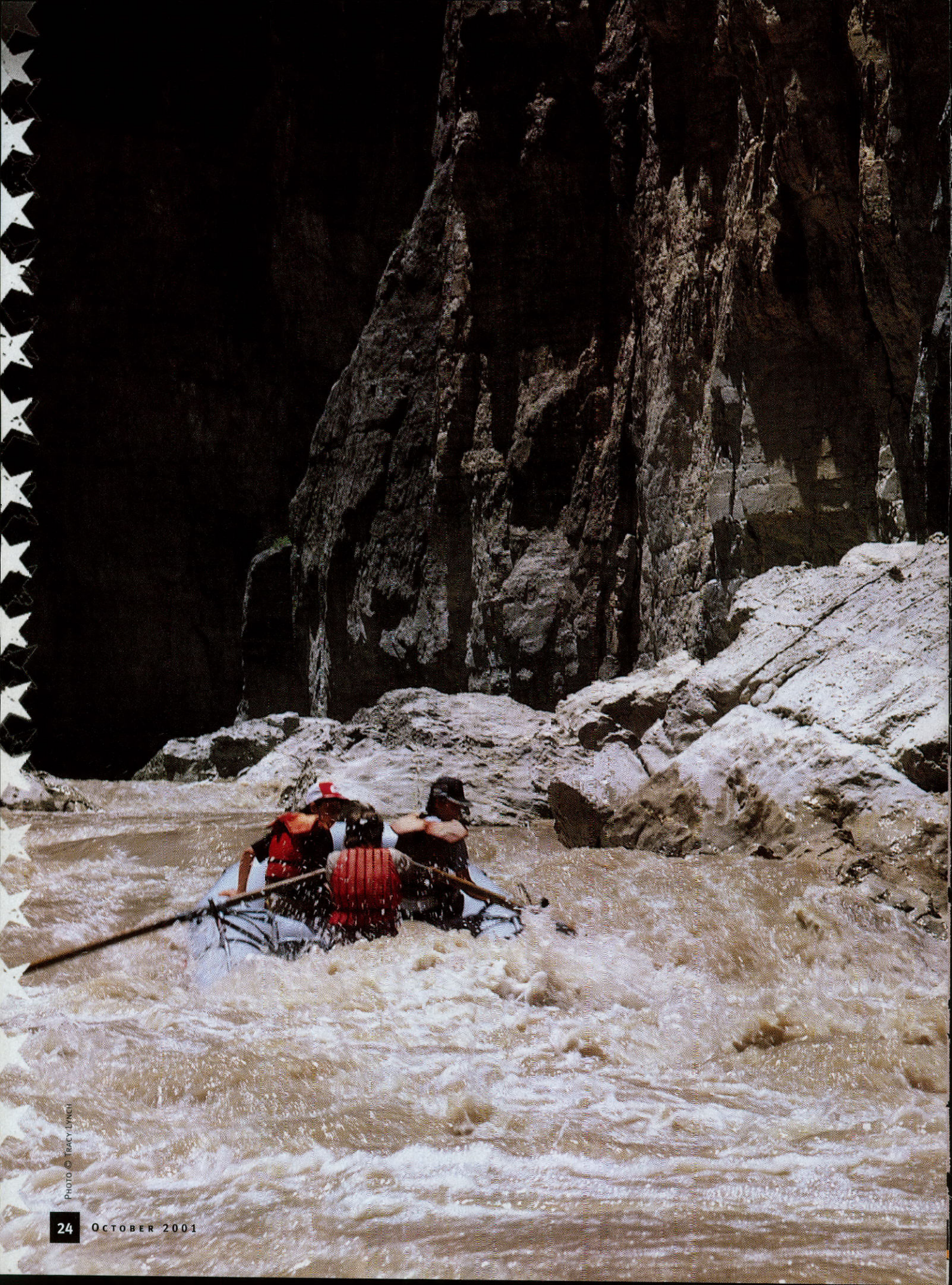


PHOTO © TRACY LYNCH



THE DIVERSITY OF THE TEXAS LANDSCAPE is rivaled only by the diversity of Texas' outdoor recreation opportunities. Whether you're hankering to fish, hunt, hike or saddle, Texas delivers. You can pursue fabled Hill Country bucks or heart-pounding bass action on Lake Fork. You can view bats by the thousands, hummingbirds by the hundreds or photographs of the ancients. You can float through deep Rio Grande chasms or seek the solace of an East Texas cypress slough, gaze across hun-

dred of miles of high Caprock or an expanse of Gulf Coast shoreline. You can traverse the trails on mountain bike, on horseback or even atop a camel. And that's just for starters!

The Texas wilds beckon to the adventurer in all of us. So lace up your hiking boots! Grab your fly rod, binoculars or snorkel! We've gathered up 50 favorite hikes, hunts, bike routes, float trips, fishing spots and other assorted adventures to whet your appetite for the great Texas outdoors.



## GREAT TEXAS OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

### FROM THE STAFF OF TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

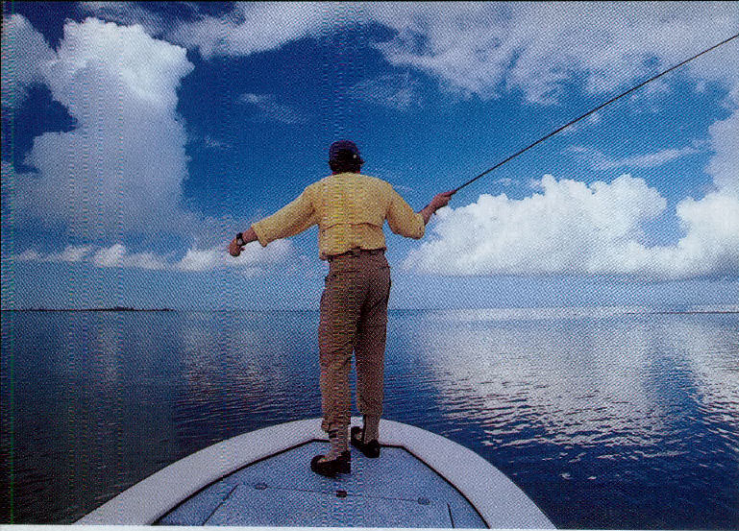
**1 Raft the Rio Grande**  
Rafting the Rio Grande in Big Bend provides the perfect venue for experiencing Texas-size adventure and magical solitude amid 2,000-foot-tall canyon walls. The river bends like an elbow, cradling the desert and the Chisos Mountains, giving the southwestern corner of Texas its name.  
"It's not enough just to drive through," says Jan Forte, 18-year guide and owner of Big Bend River

Tours. "No one can hear the whisper of the land from inside a vehicle. To experience the magic, you need to raft through some of the most spectacular scenery in America."  
Guided excursions range from a half day to 21 days, and include boats, gear and food. Reservations are recommended and must be made well in advance for spring break trips.  
**Santa Elena Canyon:** The most popular of the trips this

portion boasts the famous Rock Slide rapid, a class III-V adventure.  
**Colorado Canyon:** The area's only volcanic canyon, formed from lava flow and erusive rock, this section has several easy rapids.  
**Mariscal Canyon:** Taking you along the most southern boundary of Big Bend National Park, this 10-mile adventure explores the park's most remote canyon.  
**Boquillas:** With walls rising to 2,600 feet, Big Bend's deepest

canyon offers an easy three-day float.  
**Lower Canyons:** A wide variety of rapids, scenery and natural hot springs make this 87-mile stretch a true wilderness adventure.  
**How to Get There:** Big Bend National Park is 78 miles south of Alpine on TX 118. **Best Time to Go:** Skip summer. Crowded during spring break, Thanksgiving and Christmas. **Contact:** Visit <[www.visitbigbend.com](http://www.visitbigbend.com)> or call (877) 244-2363.





## 2 FISH THE TEXAS COAST

As the shallow-draft boat drifts slowly across Estes Flats near Rockport, you lob the live shrimp under a popping cork into the bay and begin alternately jerking it toward you and reeling in slack. Suddenly the cork disappears into the chop and you reel in line, but you feel nothing — until the redfish that had gulped the shrimp while speeding toward you turns, and nearly yanks the rod from your grasp.

Redfish and speckled seatrout lure anglers to the Texas coast year-round. Coastal bays and estuaries produce abundant shrimp, crabs and baitfish, and predatory species throng to the feast. Flounder, black drum, sheepshead, crevalle jack and dorado commonly gobble baits, along with an occasional tarpon. Many anglers use boats, but others wade shallow flats or fish from piers or the beach.

From Sabine Lake near Port Arthur all the way to South Bay off Port Isabel, coastal anglers have hundreds

of bays, coves and inlets to fish. Public and private boat ramps and fishing piers abound. Deep-sea fishing trips also are available. Consider hiring a guide; it's a good way to get sea legs under you before venturing out on your own.

**How to Get There:** Choose your favorite coastal spot. **Best Time to Go:** Fishing is more consistent in summer, but the weather is delightful in fall and winter. **Contact:** Begin your search for a place to fish at <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fish/coastal.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fish/coastal.htm)>. Lists of fishing guides can be obtained from the chambers of commerce in Port Aransas, (800) 452-6278, <[www.portaransas.org](http://www.portaransas.org)>; and Rockport, (800) 242-0071, <[www.rockport-fulton.org](http://www.rockport-fulton.org)>. The Coastal Bend Guides Association Web site, <[www.cbga.org](http://www.cbga.org)> lists guides by section of the coast from Port O'Connor to Port Isabel. A listing of guides by town is at <[rampages.onramp.net/~johna/coastal.html](http://rampages.onramp.net/~johna/coastal.html)>.

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## 4 HUNT HILL COUNTRY WHITETAILS

Take rugged, scenic hills and valleys and put a deer behind almost every bush, and you have the Texas Hill Country. Texas has the largest herd of white-tailed deer in the nation, and nearly one third of them live in the Hill Country. Not surprisingly, this is where about one-third of the deer hunters in Texas go to pursue them each fall. Heavily armed, camouflage-clad men and women, driving four-wheel-drive vehicles, invade the country west of Austin on opening weekend in a Hill Country version of *The Longest Day*.

Relatively small landholdings translate to abundant places to hunt. Leases generally are small and affordable, places where your whole family can hunt, camp and enjoy the outdoors. While most of the land is season-leased, day-hunting operations are plentiful. You can pick up a doe hunt at bargain rates, an ideal way to introduce a novice to deer hunting. A limited number of deer hunts on TPW

wildlife management areas are available through public drawings.

**How to Get There:** I-10, U.S. 281, TX 29, and TX 71 all penetrate the heart of the Hill Country, which begins just west of Austin and north of San Antonio. Counties with the highest deer populations include Llano, Gillespie, Kimble and Mason. **Best Time to Go:** For quiet time in the woods, go during the October bow season. Bucks will be most active during the rut, which peaks during the second half of November. **Contact:** Information on leases and day hunts is available from Hill Country chambers of commerce: Llano, (915) 247-5354, <[www.llanochamber.org](http://www.llanochamber.org)>; Fredericksburg, (830) 997-6523, <[www.fredericksburg-texas.com](http://www.fredericksburg-texas.com)>; Brady, (915) 597-3491, <[www.bradytx.com](http://www.bradytx.com)>; Mason, (915) 347-5758. Also try <[www.texashunting.com](http://www.texashunting.com)> and <[www.hillcountryhunting.com](http://www.hillcountryhunting.com)>. For information on public hunts call (800) 792-1112, <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hunt/hunt.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hunt/hunt.htm)>.

## 3 HIKE THE LOST MINE TRAIL

Camera shutters click anxiously as hikers round yet another scenic bend of the 4.8-mile, round-trip trail. "Is it worth going all the way to the top? Does the view get any better than this?" they often ask themselves. Save your film. Indeed it does.

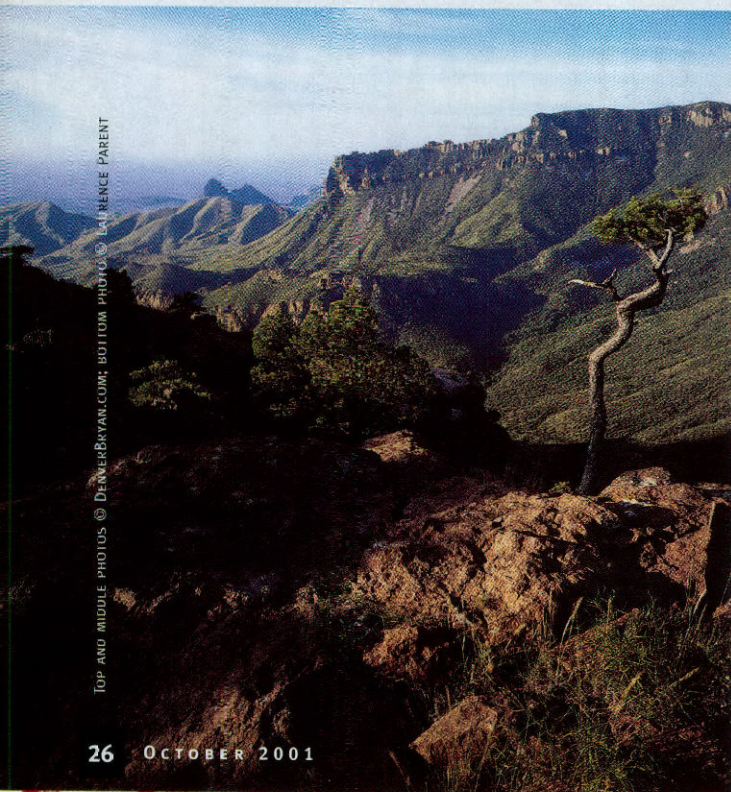
The Lost Mine Trail in Big Bend National Park, which starts at 5,600 feet and heads upward along the northern slope of Casa Grande, is best known for its numerous spectacular overlooks. Juniper Canyon overlook, touted as one of the finest in the park, is located one mile from the trailhead. But don't stop there.

Along the way, the trail offers quiet encounters with an untouched community of wildlife and vegetation, including Mexican drooping juniper, flowering royal sage bushes, and many other plants unique to the high country of West Texas. Large blue Mexican jays flit and chatter noisily among the oaks and pines. And keep an eye out for common ravens, red-tailed hawks, rock squirrels and white-tailed deer.

More than 30 rest stops and a water bottle later, the trail's finale bestows a breathtaking view of Lost Mine Peak from a promontory high on the ridge separating Pine and Juniper canyons. More than a scenic overlook, the trail's end offers plenty of romping ground for the inquisitive explorer, private retreats for quiet meditation or basking in the sun — and a true sense of awe for all who experience its magic.

**How to Get There:** Big Bend National Park is 78 miles south of Alpine on TX 118. **Best Time to Go:** Wildflowers abound in spring; avoid summer. **Contact:** Park services, (915) 477-2251, <[www.nps.gov/bibe](http://www.nps.gov/bibe)>.

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TOP AND MIDDLE PHOTOS © DENVER/BRYAN.COM; BOTTOM PHOTO © LAURENCE PARENT





## 5 MOUNTAIN BIKE CAPROCK ▲ CANYONS TRAILWAY

The ballads of Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Joe Ely celebrate soaring across the Rolling Plains in a pickup truck or train. They obviously haven't seen this country by mountain bike. This 64-mile, converted rail-trail has a gravel surface that lets you fly through the wide-open spaces at 15 miles an hour, with nary a car in sight.

For beginners, the best stretch is the five-mile route from Monk's Crossing to the 700-foot-long historic Clarity Tunnel, home to a colony of Mexican free-tailed bats. (Save your steam — and water — for the five-mile return trip!)

But we think the most spectacular segment is the 17-mile, one-way trip from South Plains to Monk's Crossing. Park at Monk's Crossing and catch a ride to South Plains. From there, the route starts in the cotton fields of the High Plains but quickly turns into classic John Wayne scenery. Pedal through the red rock of the Caprock Escarpment, soar over the beautiful Quitaque Creek valley and then head through the Clarity Tunnel. Along the way, you'll cross steep canyons and lovely cottonwood creeks. Keep a sharp eye out for mule deer, antelope, white-tailed deer and bobcats.

Although you'll be satisfyingly far from the madding crowds you might share the trail with hikers and horseback riders. To make the pioneer experience complete, bring a bedroll and camp along the Trailway.

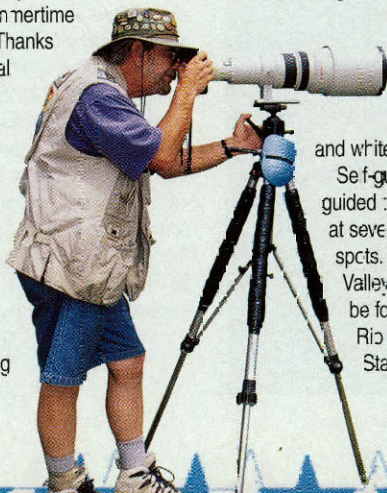
**How to Get There:** Caprock Canyons State Park (and Trailway headquarters) is 100 miles southeast of Amarillo on FM 1065, 3.5 miles north of Quitaque. The Trailway is three miles south of the park. **Best Time to Go:** Spring and fall. **Contact:** Caprock Canyons State Park and Trailway, (806) 455-1492, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/caprock/caprock.htm>. For a shuttle contact Caprock Home Center, (806) 455-1153.

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## 6 BIRD THE RIO ▼ GRANDE VALLEY

Serious birders have known for a long time that the Rio Grande Valley is hot — and not just because of summertime temperatures. Thanks to its subtropical location, the Valley hosts birds that reach the northernmost limits of their range in this southern tip of Texas.

...like hummingbirds flitting



from flower to flower, birders race from spot to spot in hopes of catching a glimpse of species found nowhere (or hardly anywhere) else in the United States — the great kiskadee, ringed

kingfisher, brown jay, white-colored seedeater, hook-billed kite and white-tipped dove.

Self-guided as well as guided tours are available at several Valley hot spots. Virtually all of the Valley specialties can be found at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, (956)

## 7 CANOE CADDO LAKE ▼

More Old South than traditional Texas, Caddo Lake is a mysterious maze of bayous and sloughs in northeastern Texas. Towering cypress trees dripping with silky strands of Spanish moss line the lake, as do ghost towns dating back to the days of the Republic of Texas. Cypress knees protrude above the water's surface like gnomes guarding the lake.

Canoeists can launch at Caddo Lake State Park or at several other locations around the lake. Caddo's channels, or "boat roads," can offer a glimpse of some of the area's wildlife. You might see a beaver splashing the water with its tail as a canoe glides by, or turtles sunning themselves along fallen logs. Alligators are known to lurk in the dark water. Songbirds fill the woodlands in spring and summer; ducks and geese spend the fall and winter. Come nightfall, owls begin to hoot and frogs start to sing, but the

wise canoeist will be back at camp by that time.

The scenery at Caddo — unlike many parts of Texas — changes with the seasons. Spring brings flowering redbud trees, fragrant white dogwood blossoms and fresh, vibrant green leaves on the cypress trees. Blooming water lilies and lotus dot the water's surface. The cypress trees' leaves turn red and yellow in the fall, and sweetgums and red maples paint the countryside in warm hues.

**How to Get There:** Caddo Lake is about 170 miles east of Dallas.

**Best Time to Go:** Spring and fall.

**Contact:** Caddo Lake Chamber of Commerce, (866) 282-2336, <www.caddolake.org>; Caddo Lake State Park, (903) 679-3351, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/caddo/caddo.htm>; Caddo Canoe Rentals, (903) 679-3743, also offers barge tours of the lake, which include Caddo-area history.

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585-1107. The park, which is headquarters for the new World Birding Center (scheduled to open in 2003), offers the Kiskadee Bus Tour every Tuesday and Friday. At Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, (956) 787-3079, birders can prowl an extensive trail system and take advantage of guided tours, canoe trips and other activities. The lush Sabal Palm Grove Audubon Center and Sanctuary, (956) 541-8034, contains native vegetation and a full complement of Valley birds.

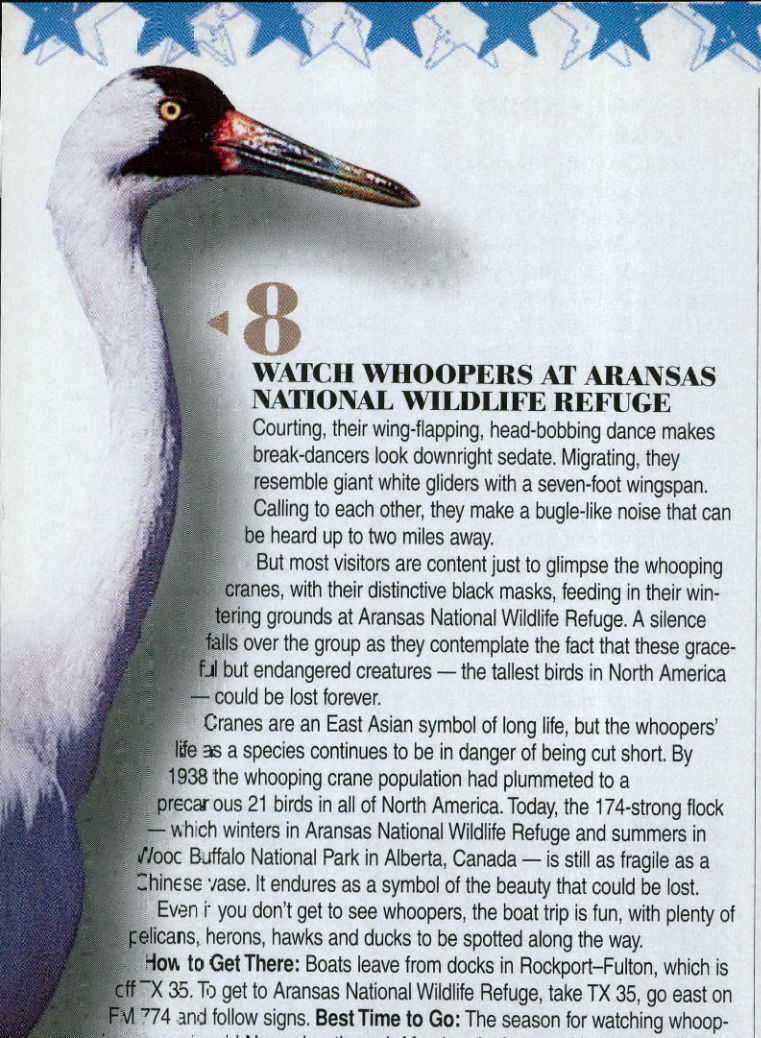
Harlingen's Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, November 14–18, features field trips, tours and seminars. Other events to put on your calendar are McAllen's Texas Tropics Nature Festival, March 21–24, and the

Texas Audubon International Birding Festival in July.

**How to Get There:** The Rio Grande Valley is roughly 250 miles south of San Antonio. **Best Time to Go:** The birding is good year-round, but you may want to avoid the heat of summer. **Contact:** Mission Chamber of Commerce, (800) 580-2700, <www.missionchamber.com>; Brownsville Convention and Visitors Bureau, (800) 626-2639; Weslaco Area Chamber of Commerce, (956) 968-2102, <www.weslaco.com>; McAllen Convention and Visitors Bureau, (877) 622-5536, <www.mcallenchamber.com>; Harlingen Chamber of Commerce, (956) 423-5440.

TOP AND MIDDLE PHOTOS © LAURENCE PARENT; BOTTOM PHOTO © GRADY ALLEN





# 8

## WATCH WHOOPERS AT ARANSAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Courting, their wing-flapping, head-bobbing dance makes break-dancers look downright sedate. Migrating, they resemble giant white gliders with a seven-foot wingspan. Calling to each other, they make a bugle-like noise that can be heard up to two miles away.

But most visitors are content just to glimpse the whooping cranes, with their distinctive black masks, feeding in their wintering grounds at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. A silence falls over the group as they contemplate the fact that these graceful but endangered creatures — the tallest birds in North America — could be lost forever.

Cranes are an East Asian symbol of long life, but the whoopers' life as a species continues to be in danger of being cut short. By 1938 the whooping crane population had plummeted to a precarious 21 birds in all of North America. Today, the 174-strong flock — which winters in Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and summers in Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta, Canada — is still as fragile as a Chinese vase. It endures as a symbol of the beauty that could be lost.

Even if you don't get to see whoopers, the boat trip is fun, with plenty of pelicans, herons, hawks and ducks to be spotted along the way.

**How to Get There:** Boats leave from docks in Rockport-Fulton, which is off TX 35. To get to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, take TX 35, go east on FM 774 and follow signs. **Best Time to Go:** The season for watching whooping cranes is mid-November through March only. Aransas National Wildlife Refuge is open year-round. **Contact:** V. Wharf Cat, (800) 782-BIRD; Pisces, (800) 245-9324; or contact the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce, (361) 729-3445, <www.rockport-fulton.org>, for other private boats. Contact the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge at (361) 286-3559 or <http://southwest.fws.gov/refuges/texas/aransas.html>.

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# 10

## WATCH HUMMERS IN ROCKPORT

It's the hummingbird version of packing for a tropical vacation. Drove of ruby-throated hummingbirds dart from flower to flower and feeder to feeder each September on the Texas Coast, fueling up for an arduous 500-mile migration across the Gulf of Mexico. Those that arrive safely get to spend the winter in tropical locations in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

Tens of thousands of the diminutive birds pass through the Texas Coastal Bend each fall. Hovering on wings beating an incredible 40 to 80 times per second, the tiny birds — weighing just 1/8 ounce — feast on enough nectar to increase their body weight by 50 percent. They spend a few days in the area resting up for the long flight.

Where can you see this phenomenon? Fly to the Hummer/Bird Celebration at the coastal towns of Rockport and Fulton in September. Local homes and businesses that

maintain hummer-friendly habitats welcome visitors to their yards, which often buzz with 100 or more hummingbirds at a time. Maps are available for a self-guided tour. Programs and workshops include hummingbird banding demonstrations, photography and wildscaping your yard to attract hummingbirds. Field trips include bus tours of outstanding birding sites and boat trips into the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to enjoy shorebirds and water birds.

**How to Get There** Rockport and Fulton are about 20 miles northeast of Corpus Christi and 170 miles southeast of San Antonio. From Corpus Christi, take US 181 to TX 35. Go north on SH 35. **Best Time to Go:** The Hummer/Bird Celebration happens each year in mid-September. Dates for 2001 are September 13-15. Dates for 2002 are September 12-14. **Contact:** Rockport-Fulton Area Chamber of Commerce, (830) 825-6441, <www.rockport-fulton.org>.

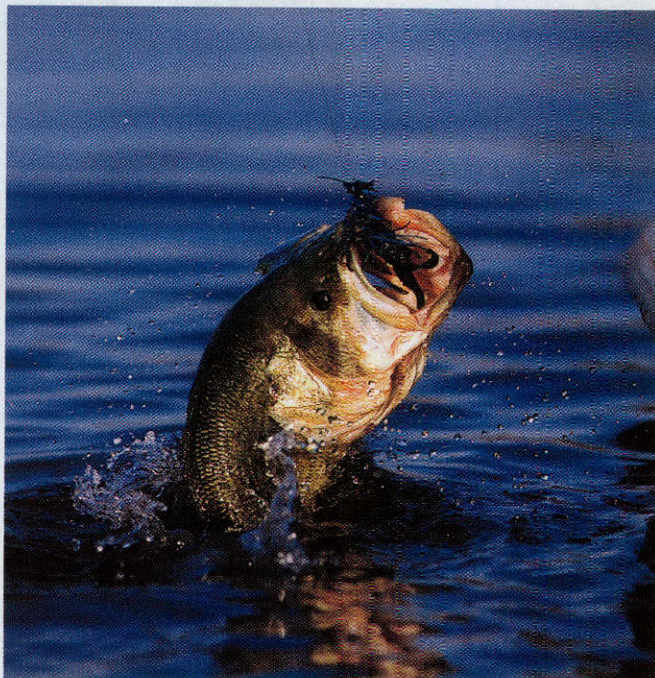
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# 9

## FISH FOR TROPHY BASS AT LAKE FORK

What brings people from as far away as Japan to fish Lake Fork? Well, it doesn't hurt that of the 50 biggest largemouth bass caught in Texas (all over 15 pounds), 36 came from this Northeast Texas reservoir. If you want to catch the largest bass of your life, Lake Fork should be on your itinerary.

Stringent harvest limits and Florida bass stockings in the early years have made 27,700-acre Lake Fork the great big bass lake that it is. The standing timber and dozens of coves make the lake one of the "fishiest" places you'll ever see; some particularly good areas to zero in on include Birch, Mustang, and Little Caney creeks and Penson Bay. Lakeside establishments skirt the lake, providing everything from a place to stay to the latest hot bait for catching that



next state record largemouth bass.

**How to Get There:** Lake Fork is about 75 miles east of Dallas off US 69 within the triangle formed by the towns of Yantis, Alba and Quitman.

**Best Time to Go:** The biggest bass generally show up in January through March, but big bass have been caught year-round. If you want to get in on the great spring fishing, make reservations early. **Contact:** For a map and listing of recreational facilities, contact the Sabine River Authority, (903) 878-2262, <www.sra.dst.tx.us/basin/recreation.asp>. For lodging information, contact the Quitman Chamber of Commerce, (903) 763-4411, <www.quitman.com>; or the Sulphur Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau, (903) 885-6515, <www.sulphurspringstx.com>.

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HUMMER © LARRY DITTO; WHOOPER © GREG W. LASLEY/KAC PRODUCTIONS; BASS © DAVID J. SAMS





## 11 DRIVE CATTLE AT BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK

If scenes from *Lonesome Dave* whet your appetite, participating in a fall roundup beneath big West Texas skies is an adventure you won't want to miss. Help ranch cowboys and Mexican *vaqueiros* drive, pen, vaccinate and brand longhorn cattle for a true taste of Texas' Western heritage. Help work the longhorns — rounding them up and driving the herd. Nighttime brings cowboy poetry readings and campfire music. You're guaranteed to take home a saddlebag of memories.

**How to Get There:** The park is four miles southeast of Presidion on FM 170. **Best Time to Go:** Roundups are available on fall weekends. **Contact:** Big Bend Ranch State Park, (915) 229-3416, <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/bigbend/bigbend.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/bigbend/bigbend.htm)>.

## 12 FLOAT THE BRAZOS RIVER

Lined in parts by towering limestone cliffs, the Brazos River is a Texas favorite for canoeing and kayaking with opportunities for fishing and birding. A popular course for a leisurely two-day float (about 20 miles) starts at the bridge on TX 13 below Possum Kingdom Dam and ends at the bridge on FM 4. Primitive camping and guided tours are available.

**How to Get There:** The best sections for recreation are below Possum

Kingdom dam on TX 16, 90 to 100 miles west of Dallas. **Best Time to Go:** Year-round. **Contact:** Rhinoceros Ridge Outfitters, (254) 697-3666, <[www.rhinoridge.com](http://www.rhinoridge.com)>; Adventure Video, (817) 738-5596.

## 13 HUNT TURKEYS IN THE SPRING

Come-hither calls. Mecho posturing. Flagrant displays of raw physical attraction. No, you're not at a singles bar. You're spring turkey hunting, and your role is to convince a hopped-up tom you are a comely hen

in the throes of passion. Calling in a gobbling tom is the most exciting hunting experience you're likely to have, and you get to do it when spring wildflowers are at their peak.

**How to Get There:** Various areas in the Hill Country and South Texas. **Best Time to Go:** Spring turkey season generally runs from early April through mid-May. **Contact:** Lease information is available from chambers of commerce such as Llano, (915) 247-5354, <[www.llanochamber.org](http://www.llanochamber.org)>; Fredericksburg, (830) 997-6523, <[www.fredericksburg-texas.com](http://www.fredericksburg-texas.com)>; and Brady, (915) 597-3491, <[www.bradytx.com/hunting](http://www.bradytx.com/hunting)>. For public hunting information, contact TPW at (800) 792-1112 or <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hunt/hunt.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hunt/hunt.htm)>.



## 14 BIRD HIGH ISLAND IN THE SPRING

Imagine driving nonstop from Big Bend to Amarillo, never seeing a restaurant or a motel, just endless highway. Just when you think you can't go on, Amarillo looms into view and you see a friendly-looking diner with a neon "Open" sign and a cozy motel next door.

This must be something like the

way migrating songbirds feel when they see the oak groves of High Island after flying nonstop over the Gulf of Mexico.

High Island has a higher elevation than the surrounding coastal plain, so it's the first thing migrating birds see. When weather conditions are right, exhausted birds literally "fall out" of the sky, filling the trees.

**How to Get There:** High Island is 30 miles northeast of Galveston on TX 124. **Best Time to Go:** Mid-April to mid-May, after a cold front accompanied by rain. **Contact:** Houston Audubon Society, (713) 932-1639, <[www.houstonaudubon.org](http://www.houstonaudubon.org)>.

## 15 DIVE SAN SOLOMON SPRINGS

Second only to your bathtub in visibility, San Solomon Springs, a 1.75-acre oasis nestled deep in the heart of West Texas, is arguably the best freshwater dive site in the state. Located at Balmorhea State Park, the springs, bubbling forth some 20 million gallons of crystal-clear water every day, hosts a variety of fish and vegetation. Don't dive? No problem. The pool also caters to swimmers and snorkelers.

**How to Get There:** Four miles west of Balmorhea, off TX 17. **Best Time to Go:** Year-round. The water is always 75–77 degrees. **Contact:** Balmorhea State Park, (915) 375-2370, <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/balmorhea/balmorhea.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/balmorhea/balmorhea.htm)>. Dive rentals: Toyahvale Desert Oasis Dive Shop, (915) 375-2572, <[oasis@overland.net](mailto:oasis@overland.net)>.



## 16 FISH FOR STRIPERS ON LAKE TEXOMA

Lake Texoma's 89,000 acres have more striped bass per acre of water than any other reservoir in Texas —

CATTLE DRIVE © D. K. LANGFORD; GREEN-BACKED HERON © LARRY DITTO; HUNTER © DAVID J. SAMIS; STRIPER © GRADY ALLEN



maybe even the entire United States. Excellent spawning conditions in the Red and Washita river arms of the reservoir produce a striped bass hot spot that draws anglers from all over. Chase down those strippers on your own, or hire one of the many fishing guides that work the lake.

**How to Get There:** Lake Texoma straddles the Texas/Oklahoma border north of Dallas/Fort Worth. **Best Time to Go:** The best fishing is in April and May along the river channels, and in October and November for surface-schooling fish. **Contact:** Eisenhower State Park, (903) 465-1956, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/eisenhow/eisenhow/htm>, has excellent camping facilities. Lodging, fishing guides and other local information can be obtained from the Pottsboro Area Chamber of Commerce, (903) 786-6371, <www.pottsborotx.virtualave.net>, or from the Lake Texoma Association, (580) 564-2334, <www.resourcedesignassoc.com/laketexoma/articles/lta.html>.

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Buescher State Park, (512) 237-2241, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/buescher/buescher.htm>.

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**18 WATCH DOLPHINS**

Dolphins are such curious, friendly creatures, and they approach boats so willingly, that it's a question of who is watching whom. Wear reflective sunglasses, and you may find yourself nose-to-nose with dolphins admiring themselves in the lenses. You'll melt when mom pushes baby up for a look. The biggest surprise? The delicate pink color of dolphin tummies.

**How to Get There:** Various towns. **Best Time to Go:** Year-round. **Contact:** Galveston Harbor Tours, (409) 765-1700, <harbortour@aol.com>; Dolphin Watch Nature Tours in Port Aransas, (800) 211-9227; the Dolphin Connection in Corpus Christi, (361) 776-2887; and Breakaway Cruises on South Padre Island, (956) 761-2212, <www.breakawaycruises.com>.

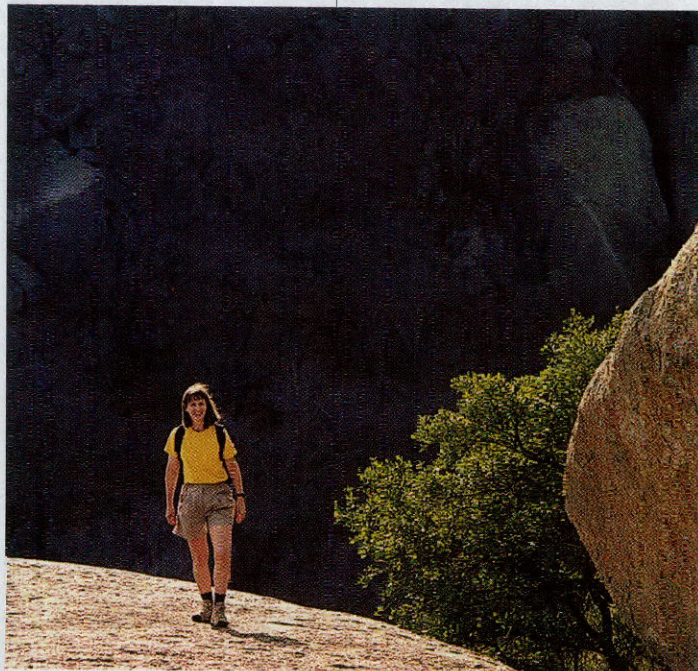
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Llano River State Park, (915) 445-3994, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/llano/llano.htm>; Texas Parks and Wildlife, (800) 792-1112, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us> Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited, (330) 606-0737, <www.gru.org>.

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18 miles. **Best Time to Go:** Temperatures are most pleasant in spring or fall. Go early: The park closes when the parking lot is full. **Contact:** Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, (979) 247-3903, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/enchant/enchantd.htm>.

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**20 HIKE ▲ ENCHANTED ROCK**

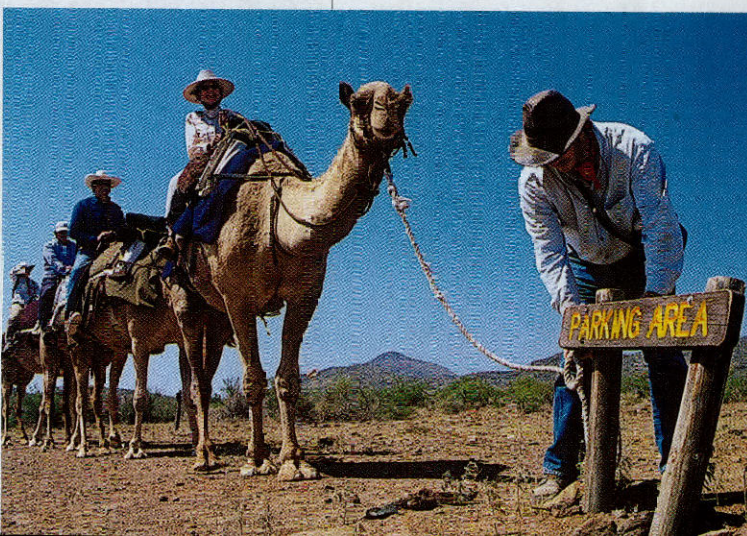
Enchanted Rock's pink granite dome beckons as you drive along FM 965. Of several hikes in the park, the shortest — but steep — hike to the summit entices visitors first. As you begin the ascent, you clamber over lichen-encrusted granite boulders. Then the dome itself looms above. You'll be a bit winded when you reach the top, but the 360-degree view of the rolling Hill Country makes the effort worthwhile. Four miles of trails around the dome are equally enchanting.

**How to Get There:** From Fredericksburg take FM 965 north for

**21 CAMEL TREK AT BIG BEND RANCH ▼**

Ever yearn for a Lawrence of Arabia experience? Now you can have one without ever leaving Texas. Experience Big Bend Ranch State Park Sahara-style on an adventurous, two-day camel trek. Treks are limited to six participants and include two guides and meals. No experience with camels needed.

**How to Get There:** Big Bend Ranch State Park is four miles southeast of Presidio on FM 170. **Best Time to Go:** Treks are scheduled during March and September. Call well in advance. **Contact:** Texas Camel



**17 CYCLE BASTROP AND BUESCHER**

Bike under a canopy of towering pines at Bastrop and Buescher state parks. Park Road 1C, a 13-mile paved road connecting the two parks, offers breathtaking scenery as it meanders through the rolling hills and loblolly pines of Central Texas. Narrow, curvy roads (shared by motorists and hikers) and hilly terrain provide a challenging course for intermediate to advanced cyclists.

**How to Get There:** Bastrop State Park is one mile east of Bastrop on TX 21. Buescher State Park is two miles northwest of Smithville on TX 71, then north on FM 153 for one-half mile. **Best Time to Go:** Spring and fall. **Contact:** Bastrop State Park, (512) 321-2101, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/bastrop/bastrop.htm>, or

**19 FLY FISH HILL ▲ COUNTRY STREAMS**

Undammed and spare of access, the Llano offers isolation, superb scenery and tough-fighting Guadalupe bass. The Guadalupe hosts hordes of stocked rainbow trout, brown trout and fly fishers between Canyon Dam and New Braunfels.

**How to Get There:** Access the Llano at highway crossings in Llano, Mason and Kimble counties or through South Llano River State Park near Junction. The Guadalupe has private access points as well as public access at crossings and through TPW-leased land between Canyon Dam and New Braunfels. **Best Time to Go:** December through March on the Guadalupe, February through May on the Llano. **Contact:** South

HIKER © LAURENCE PARENT; ANGLER © DAVID J. SAMS; CAMELS BY EARL NOTTINGHAM



Corps, (254) 675-HUMP,  
<texascamel.corps@hcomp.net>.



## 22 FISH THE RIGS

Above you, a massive oil rig looms like a skyscraper in a vast prairie sea. Below you, tiger sharks, Spanish and king mackerel, and Warsaw grouper swim in the sea, ready for action. Fishing off an oil rig is one of the most exciting experiences available anywhere to ocean anglers. "When you're rig fishing, you can see the entire food chain," says outdoor writer Chester Moore. "It's like looking at a science experiment."

**How to Get There:** Boats depart for the Gulf oil rigs from Galveston, Sabine Pass and Freeport. **Best Time to Go:** Year-round, but summer has biggest diversity of fish. **Contact:** Galveston: (409) 763-5326, <gcc@galveston.com>; Port Arthur, (409) 963-1107, <pac@portarthurtexas.com>; Freeport, (979) 265-2505, <bportinfo@brazosport.org>.

## 23 HUNT DUCKS IN FLOODED TIMBER

If you think doves fly fast and crooked, try drawing a bead on a wood duck threading its way through bottomland oaks. Then mallards circle in and descend vertically through the tree-tops like falling leaves. Duck hunting doesn't get any better than this, and East Texas ponds, creeks, reservoirs and wildlife management areas offer plenty of places to hunt.

**How to Get There:** Check the *Public Hunting Lands Map Booklet*, available to purchasers of an Annual Public Hunting Permit, for locations of WMAs. **Best Time to Go:** More ducks will be present later in the second split of the duck season, in December and January. Try to go a few days after a cold blast freezes open water farther north. **Contact:** Get basic facts on WMAs at: <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wma/wmalist.htm>.



## 24 WALK IN A DINOSAURS' FOOTSTEPS

On a day more than 100 million years ago, a herd of nine huge, four-footed dinosaurs slugged through the mud, trying to escape danger — in the form of a smaller, faster, two-footed predator.

The tracks left on that day later turned to stone, and today 21st-century children marvel at the giant footprints in Dinosaur Valley State Park.

**How to Get There:** From Dallas, take US 67 to Glen Rose. Turn right on FM 205 for 4 miles to Park Road 59. **Best Time to Go:** Year-round. **Contact:** Dinosaur Valley State Park, (254) 857-4588, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/dinosaur/dinosaur.htm>.



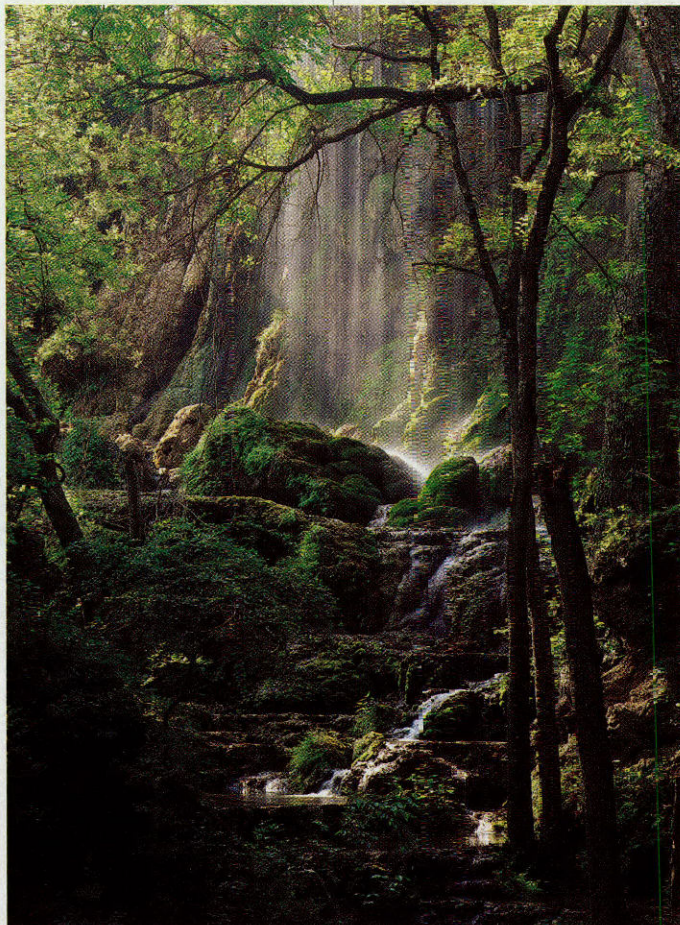
## 25 SEE A PICTOGRAPHS AT HUECO TANKS

Hueco Tanks State Historical Site was the Days Inn of prehistoric times. Fortunately for modern-day visitors, its early guests left behind a collection of pictographs that's one of the best in the world. You'll see an impish horned dancer, a Mesquero rain god, to name just a few. To see the pictographs, you must join one of the twice-daily week-end guided tours; call for reservations. Tour size is limited.

**How to Get There:** From El Paso, take US 62/180 east for 25 miles, then head eight miles north on RR 2775. **Best Time to Go:** Skip summer. **Contact:** Hueco Tanks State Historical Site, (915) 857-1135; <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/par/hueco/hueco.htm>.

## 27 FLOAT THE COMAL RIVER

Row, row, row your boat (or float your inner tube) gently down one of Texas' most pristine, spring-fed rivers. The Comal River is a natural hub for outdoor adventures, so grab your kayak, canoe or tube, and jour-



## 26 HIKE GORMAN FALLS

It's not exactly Bali Hai, but Colorado Bend's veil of falls and quivering maidenhead ferns are about as close as you can get in Texas. On a 90-degree day, the cooling mist itself can feel like paradise. Access to Gorman Falls is by guided tour on weekends only.

**How to Get There:** Lampasas is 65 miles northwest of Austin, off Highway 183. From Lampasas, take FM 580 west 24 miles to Berd. Follow signs four miles to the park entrance. Another slow six miles on a gravel road gets you to park headquarters. **Best Time to Go:** Tours are at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. on Sunday. **Contact:** Colorado Bend State Park, (915) 628-3240, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/colorado/colorado.htm>.

ney its 2½-mile course through the Texas Hill Country.

**How to Get There:** The Comal River is located in New Braunfels, 20 miles south of San Marcos off I-35. River access is at Landa Park. **Best Time to Go:** Water is 72 degrees year-round. **Contact:** New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce (303) 572-2626, <www.nbcham.org>.

## 28 CRUISE LAKE AMISTAD

Can't afford an international vacation this year? Think again. Visit Lake Amistad, Texas' biggest, clearest lake, and float over the Mexican border for a true Tex-Mex adventure. You won't even need a passport! Surrounded by dramatic limestone cliffs and caves, the lake is a mecca for fishing, diving and houseboating.

**How to Get There:** Lake Amistad is located 10 miles north of Del Rio

RIG AND DINOSAUR © GRADY ALLICH; PICTOGRAPHS AND GORMAN FALLS © LAURENCE PARENT



on US 90. Large boat ramps and marinas are at Rough Canyon (US 277) and Diablo East (US 90). **Best Time to Go:** Skip summer, and avoid spring break, when numerous college students head to Ciudad Acuña for mid-semester fiestas. **Contact:** Amistad National Recreation Area, (830) 775-7491, <www.nps.gov/amis.index/htm>.

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**29 CAVE CRAWL AT COLORADO BEND** ▼

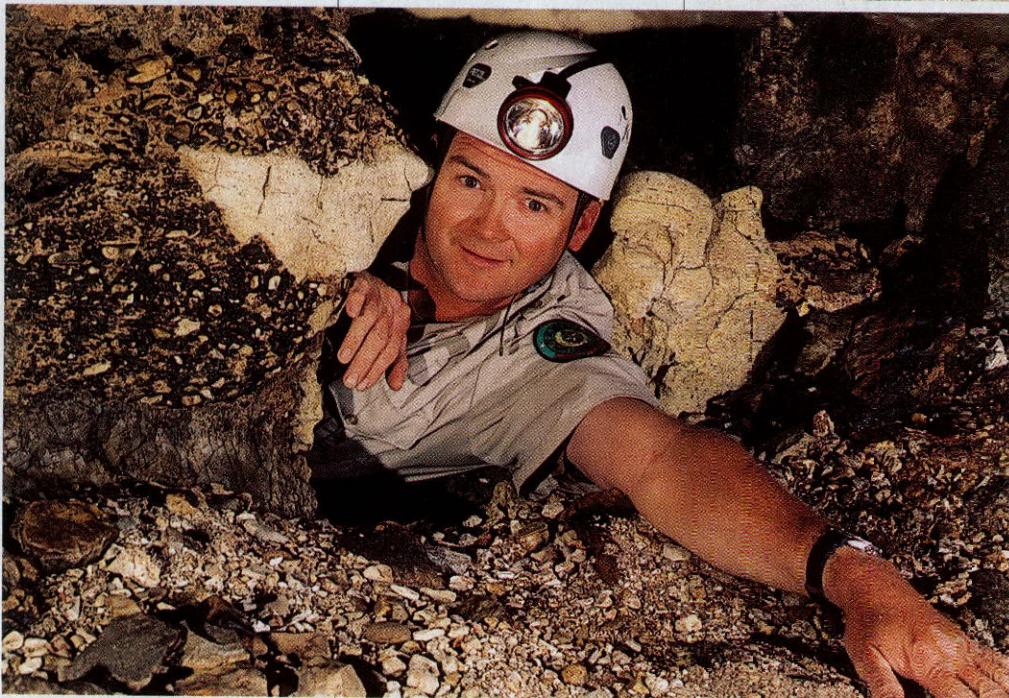
Sometimes, you have to get down and dirty. Geared with hiking boots, flashlights, knee and elbow pads, visitors shimmy through tight crawl spaces as they navigate the park's two limestone caves. Because the caves are fragile and dangerous, unescorted entry is prohibited. No

stompin', hat-tippin', real-life cowboy adventure. Help the folks at Elkins Ranch move a herd from the floor of Palo Duro Canyon to lush pastureland on the canyon's rim. Included are riding instructions, basic cowboy skills, meals and some of the most spectacular scenery in the Texas Panhandle.

**How to Get There:** The ranch is 25 miles south of Amarillo off TX 217, next to the entrance to Palo Duro Canyon State Park. **Best Time to Go:** Cattle drives are offered in September and October. **Contact:** Elkins Ranch, (806) 488-2100, <www.amarillo-cvb.org/elkins.html>.

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**31 BIKE CEDAR HILL STATE PARK** ▶

On weekends Cedar Hill State



ends are crowded. **Contact:** Pedernales Falls State Park, (830) 868-7304, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/pedernal/pedernal/htm>.

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**33 EXPLORE MATAGORDA ISLAND STATE PARK** ▼

Ever dreamed of spending a long weekend on a virtually uninhabited island? Matagorda Island, one of the emptiest, most isolated sections of the Texas Coast, offers extensive fishing, swimming, surfing, sunbathing, hiking, birding and mountain biking opportunities along 40 miles of Gulf beach. No cars are allowed on the island, which makes it perfect for exploring along dirt roads and paths.

experience is necessary, and walking tours are available.

**How to Get There:** Lampasas is 100 miles northwest of Austin, off US 183. From Lampasas, take FM 580 west 24 miles to Bend. From there, follow signs four miles to the park entrance. Another slow six miles on a gravel road gets you to park headquarters. **Best Time to Go:** Guided tours are offered the first weekend of each month. **Contact:** Colorado Bend State Park, (915) 628-3240, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/colorado/colorado.htm>.

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**30 DRIVE CATTLE AT ELKINS RANCH**

Saddle up, buckaroos, for a boot-

Park is the site of the biggest gathering of pink tricycles in Texas. But there's also a smorgasbord of off-road biking opportunities for all levels of cyclists. The park's most popular trail is a collection of three single-track trails that take you through dense woods, then into the open for a breathtaking view of native tallgrass prairies and Joe Pool Lake.

**How to Get There:** The park is 10 miles southwest of Dallas on FM 1382. **Best Time to Go:** Spring and fall. **Contact:** Cedar Hill State Park, (972) 291-3900, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/cedarhill/cedarhil.htm>. To check trail conditions (recommended during the rainy season), call (972) 291-3900.

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**32 TRAIL BIKE PEDERNALES**

With almost 20 miles of well-marked trails, including the popular 7.5-mile loop known as Wolf Mountain Trail, Pedernales Falls State Park is a favorite among hikers, backpackers and off-road cyclists. "Wolf Mountain is technically easy and scenic, yet doing two laps (15 miles) will give me a good workout," says Austin mountain biker Jim Cuprisin. "It's one of my favorite trails in the Texas state parks." Bring your swimsuit and cool off in one of the swimming holes.

**How to Get There:** The park is 32 miles west of Austin on US 290, then six miles north on FM 3232. **Best Time to Go:** Spring and fall; week-





**How to Get There:** Park headquarters are in Port O'Connor at the intersection of 16th Street and Maples. The park is just a ferry ride away. **Best Time to Go:** Year-round. A passenger ferry runs on Thursday through Sunday and holidays. Many bird species migrate to Matagorda in winter. **Contact:** Matagorda Island State Park, (361) 983-2215, <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/matagisl/matagisl.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/matagisl/matagisl.htm)>.

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**34 DIVE THE SAN MARCOS RIVER**

The Galapagos of the Hill Country? Well, close. While you won't see any giant tortoises or sea lions, the San Marcos River is teeming with rare and endangered species found nowhere else in the world — including blind and San Marcos salamanders, fountain darters and Texas wild rice. Night divers may encounter freshwater eels and giant prawns up to 20 inches long. Because of the rare habitat, diving at San Marcos Springs, located above the dam, is allowed on a highly restricted basis. Other sections of the river are accessible to anyone.

**How to Get There:** San Marcos is 25 miles south of Austin off I-35. River access is at Sewell, City and Rio Vista parks. To get to Aquarena Center from I-35, take exit 206 and continue heading west on Aquarena Springs Drive until you see the center on your right. **Best Time to Go:** The water is a temperate 72 degrees year-round. **Contact:** San Marcos Tourist Information Center, (512) 393-5930. Rentals available at local dive shops.

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**35 TAKE PHOTOS FROM HORSEBACK**

When in Texas, do as the cowboys do: sleep in a ranch bunkhouse, eat country-style dinners, enjoy campfire entertainment and, best of all, capture your adventurous vacation on film! Guides Peggy Parks and Jim Carr, both accomplished photographers, lead daily and weekend tours through the high country of the Chihuahuan Desert. Steep-walled canyons, cascading waterfalls and blooming flora provide excellent backdrops for both novice and expert photographers.

**How to Get There:** Big Bend Ranch State Park is four miles southeast of Presidio on FM 170. **Best Time to Go:** Tours are offered November 2-4 and 5-7. Call for additional dates. **Contact:** Call Carr at (281) 486-8070, Parks at (512) 398-7627, or visit <[www.pandjtriltours.com](http://www.pandjtriltours.com)>.

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**36 STUDY PICTOGRAPHS AT SEMINOLE CANYON**

You have to travel to southern France to see pictographs as impressive as the ones at Seminole Canyon. Fate Bell Shelter, which overlooks the Pecos River, houses a stunning mural complete with shamans, deer, panthers and arrows. Even if the cosmology it depicts is too far outside your world view, it's easy to picture the long-vanished person who spray-painted an outline of his hand.

**How to Get There:** The park is 45 miles west of Del Rio on US 90, nine miles west of Comstock. **Best Time to Go:** Tours to Fate Bell Shelter are offered Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. **Contact:** Seminole Canyon State Historical Park, (915) 292-4464, <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/seminole/seminole.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/seminole/seminole.htm)>.

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**37 HIKE LOST MAPLES**

Texans craving a fix of New England-style fall color flock to Lost Maples on autumn weekends, making it about as tranquil as I-35 at rush hour. While it's a great show when the bigtooth maples turn brilliant shades of red, yellow and orange, we recommend a weekday visit. Or, better yet, go in the spring, when you can hike through a canopy of brilliant green and have the sweet

tune of the songbirds all to yourself.

**How to Get There:** From Vanderpool, take RR 187 north five miles. **Best Time to Go:** Spring and fall. **Contact:** Lost Maples State Natural Area, (830) 966-3413, <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/lostmap/lostmap.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/lostmap/lostmap.htm)>. For fall foliage updates, call (800) 792-1112, select 3, then 1.

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**38 FLOAT THE FORKS**

Early settlers to southeast Texas encountered a thick, tangled wilderness teeming with wildlife that became known as the Big Thicket. Visitors to Martin Dies, Jr. State Park can get a glimpse of that wilderness on the Floating the Forks

canoe tour, offered the third Saturday of each month.

Birds are abundant, especially during migration. Keep an eye out for bald eagles, swallow-tailed kites and alligators.

**How to Get There:** The park is some 150 miles northeast of Houston. From Houston take US 59 north to Livingston, then take US 190 east to Jasper. **Best Time to Go:**

Year-round. **Contact:** Martin Dies, Jr. State Park, (409) 384-5231, <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/martindi/martindi.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/martindi/martindi.htm)>.

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**39 TRAIL RIDE AT LAKE SOMERVILLE**

Finding a place to take your pet or



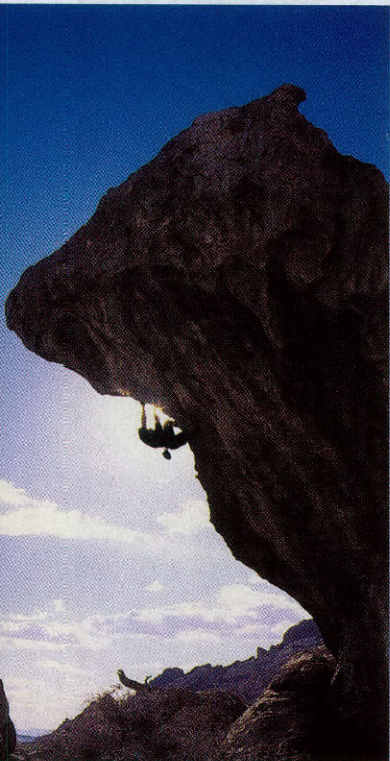
CANOEISTS © DAVID J. SAMIS; LOST MAPLES © LAURENCE PARENT



vacation can prove challenging, especially when your pet is three times bigger than the average person. But Lake Somerville State Park is a regular Motel 6 for horses, with campgrounds complete with water troughs and horse pens. A 22-mile, multi-use trailway, connecting the units of the park, provides a scenic loop around the undeveloped west end of the lake.

**How to Get There:** The park is in the Post Oak Belt, 30 miles northwest of Brenham. **Best Time to Go:** The park is carpeted with wildflowers in spring. **Contact:** Birch Creek Unit, (979) 535-7763, Nails Creek Unit, (979) 289-2392, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/lakesome/lakesome.htm>. Visit <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/admin/equest.htm> for a listing of other equestrian-friendly state parks.

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**40 CLIMB HUECO TANKS ▲**  
Hueco Tanks is a must-see for its 5,000 prehistoric pictographs. But towering cliffs, challenging overhangs and numerous boulders also make it an international hot spot for winter rock climbing and bouldering. Bouldering tours are available by reservation, and no experience is necessary. Reserve tours in advance.

**How to Get There:** From El Paso, take US 62/180 east for 32 miles, then head eight miles north on RR 2775. **Best Time to Go:** Spring and fall weekends. Camping is seasonal, so call ahead to check availability. **Contact:** Hueco Tanks State

Historical Park, (915) 857-1135, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/hueco/hueco.htm> or Robert Rice Outfitters, (915) 855-0142.

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**41 BIRD THE RIO GRANDE**  
Birders rave about Friends of the Wildlife Corridor's canoe trips down the Rio Grande just below Falcon Dam. Paddle down the slow, wide river through a long-lost world of wooded islands and fragrant flowering huisache. Sightings of red-billed pigeons, brown jays and wild muscovy ducks allow birders a two-for opportunity to check off their U.S. and Mexico life lists.

**How to Get There:** Call for meeting place. **Best Time to Go:** Fall, winter and spring. **Contact:** Friends of the Wildlife Corridor, (956) 783-6117, <www.corridorfriends.org>.

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**42 HUNT PHEASANTS IN THE PANHANDLE**

Pheasants are a heart attack in the grass. They hide and run as long as they can in the cover of Panhandle fields, then flush with roaring wings and mind-numbing cackle, trailing two feet of tail feathers. Second perhaps only to the wood duck among Texas game birds in the gaudy beauty of its coat, this Asian import is a must for every wingshooter.

**How to Get There:** Head for the North Star. Stop when you get to Lubbock or Amarillo, which seem to be just short of the North Pole during December northers. **Best Time to Go:** The season opens the second Saturday in December and runs for 16 days. **Contact:** For outfitters and community hunts: <www.amarillo.com/visitamarillo/pheasant.html>.

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**43 STARGAZE AT MCDONALD OBSERVATORY ▶**

No, the star parties at McDonald Observatory near Fort Davis aren't a chance to spot Sandra Bullock. So leave the Bob Mackie gown at home and bundle up in jeans and a warm jacket (year-round — the nights are chilly at this elevation) for stargazing at 6,800 feet. Line up an hour after sunset to peer through telescopes at planets, moon, nebulae, galaxies or star clusters. "Give me land, lots of land, under starry skies above..."

**How to Get There:** From Fort Davis, take TX 118 north 16 miles to Mount Locke. **Best Time to Go:** Star parties are held Tuesday, Friday and Saturday nights. Best when there's a

moonless sky. **Contact:** McDonald Observatory Visitor Center, (915) 426-3640, <www.as.utexas.edu>.

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**44 WATCH BATS AT OLD TUNNEL WMA**

A tornado of bats flies out of the abandoned railroad tunnel and funnels up in two dense counterclockwise circles. They swoop so close to the group huddled near the tunnel entrance that the breathless visitors can feel the wind in their hair. There's a nightly viewing from above the tunnel, but this bat's-eye-view tour is unforgettable. It's available only to Texas Conservation Passport holders.

**How to Get There:** From Fredericksburg, take US 290 two miles east to Grapetown Road. Go south for 11 miles through Grapetown to the WMA. **Best Time to Go:** Thursday and Saturday nights June through October. The emergence is best in late summer and fall. **Contact:** Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wma/wmarea/tunnel.htm>. For information, contact LBJ State Historical Park, (830) 644-2478. To purchase a Texas Conservation Passport, call (800) 895-4248 or buy one at any state park.

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**45 TOUCH NATURE AT BRAZOS BEND**

Brazos Bend State Park's wheelchair-accessible, half-mile paved trail through a wetlands area provides tactile and auditory interpretive exhibits for the visually and hearing-impaired. All visitors appreciate the boardwalk and observation deck — alligators are

one of the park's main attractions. Deer, butterflies and a variety of birds delight a variety of senses as well.

**How to Get There:** From Richmond, go 20 miles south on FM 762. **Best Time to Go:** Spring and fall. Alligators are most active during the summer, but so are the mosquitoes. **Contact:** Brazos Bend State Park, (979) 553-5101; <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/brazos/brazos.htm>.

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**46 HUNT GEESE ON THE TEXAS COAST**

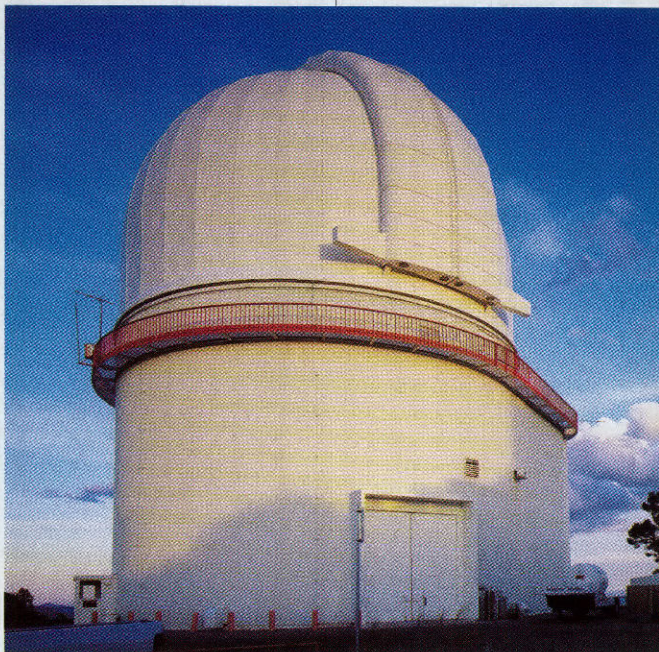
Ducks zing by as the sky grays, then geese by the thousands roll from roost ponds and crisscross the sky. Your heart pounds as geese commit to the decoys, then, "Take 'em," the guide commands. Limits apply only to birds, not fun.

**How to Get There:** The prime coastal goose-hunting areas are about 60 miles west of Houston via I-10, US Alt. 90, or US 59. **Best Time to Go:** Mid-November to mid-December. **Contact:** Most goose hunters hire outfitters who furnish decoys, dogs and places to hunt. Local chambers of commerce maintain lists: El Campo, (979) 543-2713, <www.elcampochamber.com>; Eagle Lake, (979) 234-2780, <www.elc.net/chamber/apage4.htm>. Another good source is <www.outdoorguides.com>.

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**47 TOUR KING RANCH ▶**

Covering 825,000 acres in the South Texas brush country, the legendary King Ranch is Texas hyperbole at its best. Now the ranch that has embraced ranching, oil and agri-

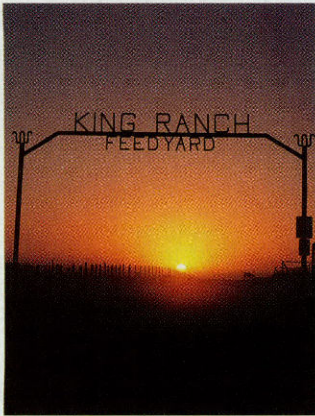




culture on a grand scale is cashing in on the newest boom: nature tourism.

Visitors on half- and full-day van nature tours may get within spitting distance of deer, bobcats, javelinas and coyotes. Birding tours take you close to such rare species as white-tailed hawks and ferruginous pygmy-owls.

**How to Get There:** The King Ranch Visitor Center is in Kingsville. From Corpus Christi, take US 77 south 30 miles to TX 141. **Best Time to Go:** Year-round. **Contact:** King Ranch, (361) 595-1344, <www.king-ranch.com>.



## \*\*\*\*\* 48 HUNT SCALED QUAIL IN THE BIG BEND

We've never worked harder for fewer birds than while hunting scaled quail on Black Gap and Elephant Mountain Wildlife Management Areas — or had more fun doing it. You'll revel in blue skies, clean air and desert vistas even as your heart and lungs threaten to burst from chasing quail up the sides of mountains. Populations boom and bust with desert rains, so call before going.

**How to Get There:** Take US 385 south from Marathon for 40 miles. Take FM 2627 south another 18 miles to the entrance of Black Gap. Elephant Mountain is 26 miles south of Alpine on TX 118. **Best Time to Go:** Check the Public Hunting Lands Map Booklet, available with purchase of an Annual Public Hunting Permit, for open dates. Early January and February are delightful times to be in the Big Bend. **Contact:** Black Gap WMA, (915) 837-3251; <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wma/wmarea/black\_gap.htm#text>. Elephant Mountain WMA, (915) 364-2228; <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wma/wmarea/elephant.htm#text>.

## \*\*\*\*\* 49 WATCH BUTTERFLIES IN THE VALLEY

Soldiers, emperors and skippers will assemble in Mission this month. No, it's not a major naval maneuver — it's the annual Texas Butterfly Festival, scheduled for October 18–21 this year. Blessed with an unbeatable diversity of birds, the Lower Rio Grande Valley, it turns out, also has the greatest butterfly diversity in the United States.

Guided field trips take festival participants to butterfly hot spots. Local gardens will be open for tours, and canoe and pontoon excursions will explore the Rio Grande.

**How to Get There:** Take US 281/H 37 south out of San Antonio. Continue on US 281 for about 230 miles to US 83. Go west on US 83 for 10 miles. **Best Time to Go:** The Texas Butterfly Festival is held each October. **Contact:** (800) 580-2700, <www.texasbutterfly.com>.



## \*\*\*\*\* 50 HEAR A SPRING FROG CHORUS

For a symphony unrivaled in any concert hall, visit a Texas pine forest on a spring evening. Tree frogs, cricket frogs, bullfrogs and others lend their voices to a melodious and hypnotic chorus.

Start out at dusk along one of the boardwalk trails of the Big Thicket or in the pine forest in Bastrop State Park. Be sure to take a flashlight to help you get back to your campsite or car — or you might literally get lost in the music.

**How to Get There:** Bastrop State Park is 30 miles east of Austin on SH 71. The Big Thicket National Preserve consists of nine units in Southeast Texas. To reach the visitor center, take US 96 out of Beaumont, then take US 69/287 for 13 miles. **Best Time to Go:** Late February through April. **Contact:** Big Thicket National Preserve, (409) 246-2337, <www.nps.gov/bith>; Bastrop State Park, (512) 321-2101, <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/bastrop/bastrop.htm>. ★

# MORE OUTDOOR FUN FROM TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

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**A** LONG WITH THE GREAT OUTDOOR ADVENTURES is a host of programs and recreational opportunities provided by Texas Parks and Wildlife. Call (800) 792-1112 or visit <www.tpwd.state.tx.us> for your free booklet on TPW programs and recreational opportunities.

**Becoming An Outdoors-Woman** This program is designed for women who want to learn the basics of archery, birdwatching, boating, camping, canoeing, fishing, hunting, mountain biking, hiking and much more. Workshops are offered year-round at various camp locations throughout the state. Contact (800) 792-1112, ext. 64, or (512) 389-8198 for more information.

**Discovery Passport** This is your road map for exploring Texas Parks and Wildlife's state parks, Sea Center Texas and Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center. Collect 11 souvenir patches and earn camping discounts by getting your passport stamped when you visit state parks and visitor centers. Call (512) 389-4310.

**Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail and Birding Classic** Treat yourself to the birding trip of a lifetime! Three trail maps (Upper, Middle and Lower Texas Coast) guide you through 308 designated birding sites organized by color-coded loops. Colorful, illustrated maps include directions to sites, best times to visit, birds to see and more! The Birding Classic, an annual competitive birding tournament that raises funds for habitat conservation projects, is the spring highlight of the trail. Order your maps by e-mail at <birdingtrails@tpwd.state.tx.us> or by calling (888) TXBIRDS (892-4737). Contact (512) 389-4396 for further information.

**Texas Wildlife Expo** This annual program at Texas Parks and Wildlife headquarters in Austin offers two days of free fun for the whole family! Held on the first weekend in October, Expo is the largest hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation show of its kind in the nation. More than 200 exhibitors and 150 hands-on outdoor activities and demonstrations are available for all ages. Call (512) 389-4472 for information about this year's show — the 10th Anniversary of Texas Wildlife Expo!

**Angler, Boater and Hunter Education** Angler education is designed for youngsters just learning how to catch fish. Boater and hunter education are required of certain age groups. Go online at <www.tpwd.state.tx.us> or call (800) 792-1112, ext. 62, to find a course near you.

**Public Hunting** Texas Parks and Wildlife offers a variety of public hunting opportunities through two public hunting systems.

- The \$40 annual Public Hunting Permit provides nearly year-round hunting on more than 1.4 million acres of land. Dove hunting areas are offered through this system.

- The Public Hunt Drawing System provides opportunities to apply for a wide variety of supervised, drawn hunts, including special drawings for both adults and youth hunters.

In addition, TPW offers special hunting and fishing packages by drawings for quality native animals, fish and even exotics on TPW-managed lands and public waters, as well as specially leased private properties.

**Texas Master Naturalists** Gain knowledge about sustainable use, conservation and maintenance of natural resources through adult instruction and volunteer opportunities. Participants volunteer at least 40 hours annually for their community after becoming certified. Call (979) 458-2034 for more information.

**Nature Trackers and Nature Studies** Track the migration of monarch butterflies or help locate populations of the Texas horned lizard. Statewide networks of citizen scientists of all ages monitor amphibians, hummingbirds, eagles, prairie birds and freshwater mussels. Call (512) 912-7040 for dates and locations of monitoring workshops.

**Project WILD** Learn to teach wildlife and environmental education in a fun, hands-on way through more than 120 activities that can be integrated into any curricula or outdoor-based sessions. Go online for more information or call (800) 792-1112, ext. 65, or (512) 389-4369.

**Community Outreach Programs and Urban Fish and Wildlife** Learn to blaze new trails or learn all about the Texas Buffalo Soldiers, vaqueros, Native Americans and frontier women — (512) 912-7113. Explore Texas Roots — (830) 278-2001. Learn about new recreational opportunities in the outdoors from your home in Houston, Dallas or San Antonio — (512) 389-8183. Study and learn about wildlife ecology, nature and conservation from urban biologists in the major urban regions of Texas, including the Valley and El Paso. Call (512) 912-7020.



# Song of the C







# Sabinal

DESPITE THE DENTS AND SCARS OF HISTORY, THE SABINAL CANYON — FED BY THE CLEAREST RIVER IN THE STATE — REMAINS BLESSEDLY, TRANQUILLY AND BEAUTIFULLY ITSELF.

BY JOHN GRAVES  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WYMAN MEINZER

WHEN WHITE SETTLEMENT of the Hill Country began, that region may have held other rivers as pretty as the little Sabinal in its upper reaches, but in our own time I have seen none to compare with it. It is one of the waterways that originate in springs of the rugged southern fringe of the limestone hills, west of San Antonio. A few miles downstream from sources in Real and Bandera counties, its two forks join to traverse a valley walled and dotted with low mountains, before the river finally and definitely leaves the hills behind, passing through a narrow groove in the Balcones Escarpment onto brushy plains, where porous soils absorb much of its flow and make it intermittent in many parts.



IT IS ALSO ONE OF THE PUREST OF OUR TEXAS RIVERS, POSSIBLY THE PUREST OF ALL, TO JUDGE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY ANALYSES OF OUR STREAMS. AND, ALTHOUGH THE EARLIEST WHITE SETTLERS ARRIVED HERE A CENTURY AND A HALF AGO AND STARTED USING THE LAND HARD, MODERN MANKIND SEEMS TO HAVE EXERTED MINIMAL PRESSURE ON THE SCHEME OF THINGS. THE UPPER RIVER'S DRAINAGE

basin holds a rather sparse number of permanent residents, many of whom live in one quite small town, Utopia. It nurtures no pollutive industries, still depends heavily on ranching and on hunting leases, and has few of the kind of riverside vacation or retirement developments, fishing camps and trailer parks so noticeable on other Hill Country streams. Even more impressively, the magnificent, tall, centuries-old bald cypresses that line the banks of the Sabinal and some of its tributaries were spared from the 19th century's wholesale commercial exploitation of such trees for boards and shingles, which stripped so many of them from riversides elsewhere. What lumbering was done here was minor in scope, and its products were put to local use. The Spanish word for these relatives of the redwood is *sabinos*, and *sabinal* means a grove of them. The name still fits.

Natives of this upper part of the river refer to its basin, including the miles-wide valley, as the Canyon. The narrower slots that creeks have carved in the mountains on either side of both the main Sabinal and its West Prong are generally called hollows, rendered as "hollers" by local tongues. They form a network of fissures, steepest and most pronounced in the upper reaches of the West Prong in Real County, and in the Lost Maples area near the main river's sources.

There is more of the river, of course — the often-intermittent stretch from the groove in the Escarpment to where the stream joins the Frio in southeastern Uvalde County.

Along this flatter stretch there is one substantial town, called Sabinal, and in places where groundwater irrigation has been developed the land is sometimes lush these days. Most of it, though, is covered with a blanket of mesquite and thorny scrub that has been there just about forever — though I believe there is some scholarly disagreement over whether, long ago, it used to be a grassy savanna. This is the South Texas Brush Country, where a special kind of ranching and cowboying was evolved by Spaniards and Mexicans centuries ago and was passed along to Anglo interlopers. It is monotonous in appearance but has been much loved by its

people, among them J. Frank Dobie, who was born and shaped in the same brush a few counties southeast of the Sabinal. In fact, Dobie used to come to this area often, to visit some kinfolks-by-marriage who ranched just north of the town of Sabinal, and to hunt deer and collect some of the folklore and treasure-hunting



tales he wrote down in his books.

But let's get back to the Canyon.



Even among historians, a certain amount of confusion seems to exist about the Indians who once frequented the Sabinal region. The tribes that were here originally — leaving out Paleo-Indians and Archaics, of whom there are many traces — probably consisted of two or three wandering Coahuiltecan bands and some Tonkawas in the hills.

*The ruling philosophy was perhaps best expressed by one old-timer: "To settle this part of Texas, all you had to do was fight the Comanches, the bears, and the wolves, survive the floods and outlast the droughts, and the land was yours."*

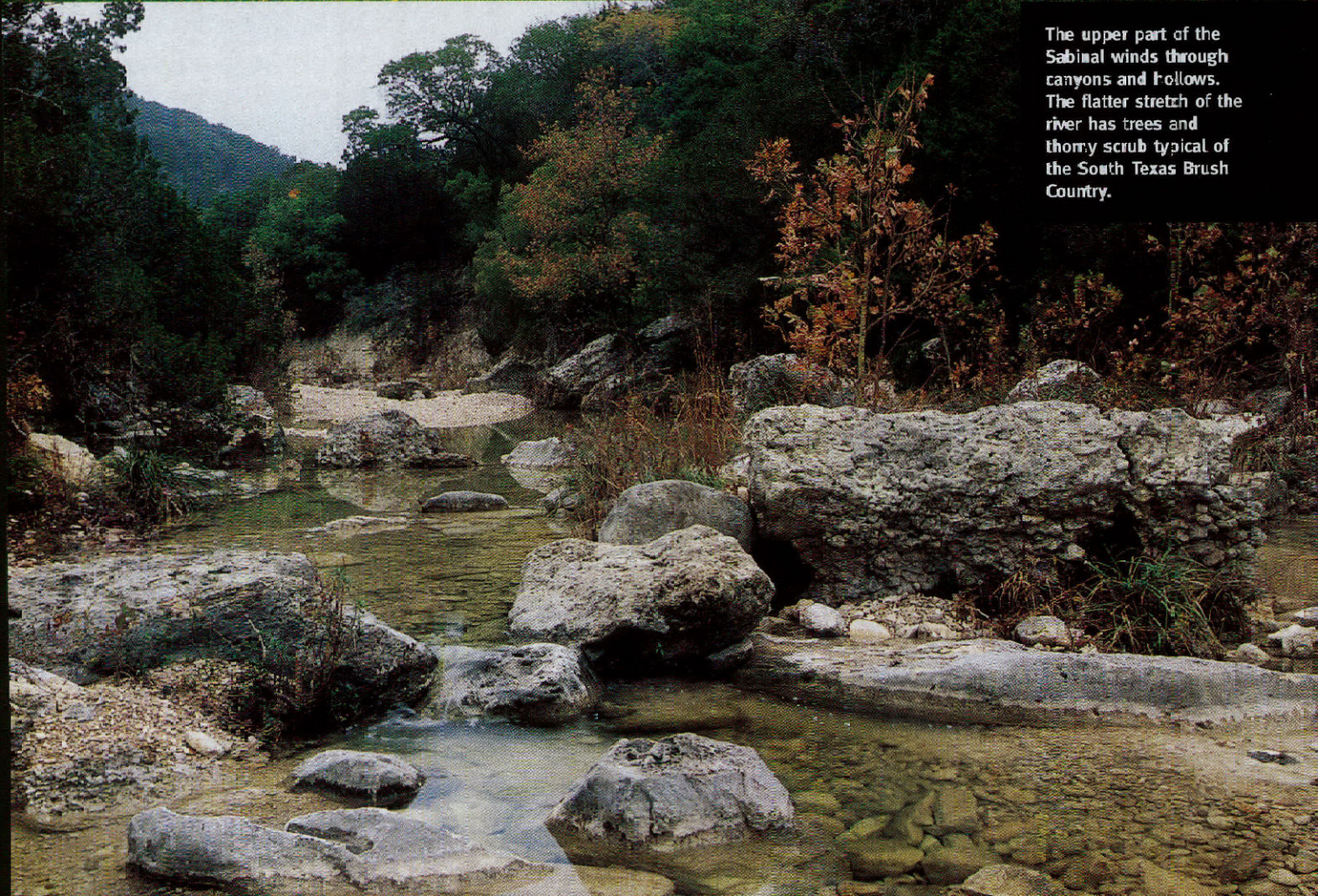




Traces of early settlers remain. One of the first, Captain William Ware, lies buried in the cemetery in Waresville, as the area he settled in 1852 came to be known. Wagons hauling wool and mohair left a permanent scar in the bed of a tributary of the Sabinal. Elsewhere, ruins of a homesite and a rusted tractor recall the resilient people who made this isolated region their home.







The upper part of the Sabinal winds through canyons and hollows. The flatter stretch of the river has trees and thorny scrub typical of the South Texas Brush Country.



But by the time San Antonio was established in 1718, or not long thereafter, Lipan Apaches had begun to predominate, shoved south and east out of their old Great Plains haunts by the advance of newly equestrian and very warlike Comanches. As time went on and Comanche depredations worsened, the Spanish tried to make the Apaches their allies by setting up presidios and missions for them, but this didn't work. Most of the time the Apaches stayed at odds with both Comanches and Spaniards, and in 1790 Juan de Ugalde's troops won a battle with them in the Sabinal Canyon — which for a time was therefore called the Cañon de Ugalde. (The town and county of Uvalde were also named for this *caballero*, though the spelling got a bit corrupted along the way.)

Meanwhile, the Comanches kept on coming, and coming. One of their main war and raiding trails passed from the Edwards Plateau down the Sabinal to the plains below and the Rio Grande, and they harried everybody they found along their route. This included the Anglo settlers who started arriving here in the early 1850s and were targets of hostility from both Comanches and Apaches, hostility which they returned full-strength. In the atmosphere of those times it is understandable that they didn't always know or care which tribe they were fighting at a given time and place, and old accounts often disagree about this. Things were further confused by the presence south of the Rio Grande of groups of displaced and disgruntled Indians, primarily Kickapoos but with some Apache cohorts, who in the resentful aftermath of the Mexican War were encouraged by Mexican authorities to raid up through South Texas, and did so with enthusiasm for many years.

It was a violent era with violent people on all sides, and old local tales deriving from it abound. Mrs. Kincheloe stuck full of arrows and lance wounds, but surviving. The exploits of Bigfoot Wallace, who ranched not far away and took part in many of the local pursuits of Indians. Frank

Buckelew captured by Apaches as a kid and kept for several years, after which he remained quite Indianized, like old Hermann Lehmann up in Mason County. The chase after eleven probably Comanche horse thieves that ended at a swimming hole on the Frio, the next river to the west, where the raiders, while happily splashing water, were all shot happily by their white pursuers, except for one who, happily or not, slipped away... And so on.



The Canyon's pioneers appear to have been an exceptionally sturdy and self-reliant lot. They needed to be. They were frontiersmen, but within the mountain-isolated environs they had chosen for their own, they were to some extent their own frontier, rather than part of a larger one as were settlers in regions with wider horizons. Supplies from outside were harder to come by, and so was help in coping with Indians — though for a time there was a Texas Ranger post at what is now the tiny hamlet of Vanderpool. So the settlers had to do their own coping for the most part.

The first of them was Captain William Ware, a veteran of San Jacinto who with a son, a few other followers, and some livestock came here in 1852, building his home on the river at a place below present Utopia that came to be known as Waresville. That same year saw the arrival of Gideon Thompson and his family, and others kept showing up in the years before the Civil War and afterward, acquiring land in patches large or small, building their dwellings with stone or cedar logs, and setting about making a living from their holdings.

Among these early settlers subsistence was the rule, raising things for home use — vegetables, corn and feed crops, and livestock both edible and usable for work — for there were no markets accessible from their isolated valley. Some, though, were more enterprising, like Gid Thompson, who was building a ranch operation in the upper Canyon. He saw the market potential in the swarms of Spanish longhorn



*This is the South Texas Brush Country, where a special kind of ranching and cowboying was evolved by Spaniards and Mexicans centuries ago and was passed along to Anglo interlopers.*



cattle running wild in the valley and the Brush Country. They were free for the taking if you could handle them after you took them, and Thompson could. Even before the Civil War he assembled a herd and with his son Hiram and some cowboys drove them across the deserts to California, realizing a good profit from their sale. After the war he kept on doing this, and others began driving to California too, or to the railroad towns of Kansas when those trails opened up.

The war itself was a rough time around here, as it was everywhere else on the edge of Texas settlement. Federal garrisons withdrew from frontier posts, and though the only such post in this region, Fort Inge on the Leona near present Uvalde, was restaffed with state troops and Rangers, it was fifty miles or so from most settlers on the upper Sabinal and afforded scant protection from Comanches freed by the war for a widespread and bloody rampage. In addition, a number of local men had enlisted, though most joined state "home guard" units that operated in the region — which was not a hotbed of Rebel sentiment, Uvalde County having voted heavily against secession in the 1860 referendum.

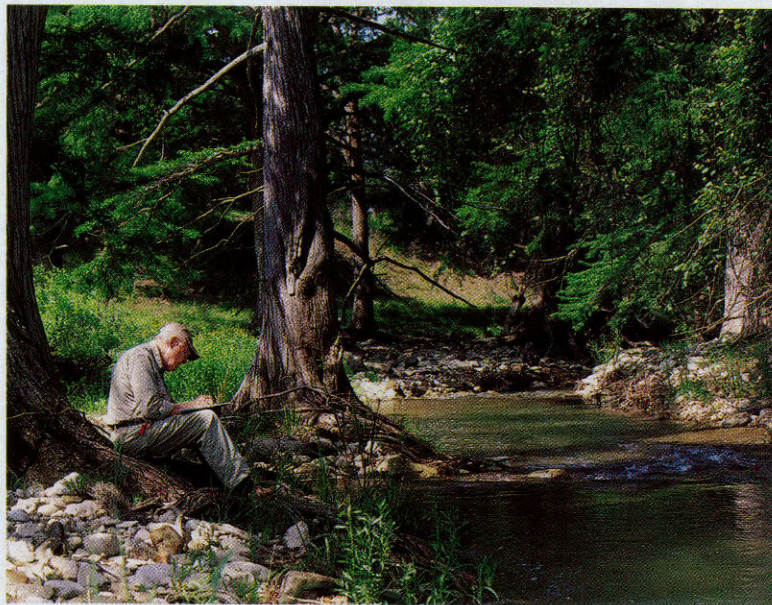
At any rate, they coped, as they had coped before, "forting up" and fighting back, even though at times women and children had to be moved over to Fort Inge for protection. The ruling philosophy was perhaps best expressed by one old-timer: "To settle this part of Texas, all you had to do was fight the Comanches, the bears and the wolves, survive the floods and outlast the drouths, and the land was yours." And after the war that attitude continued to prevail because it had to, though Indians stopped being a menace in the mid-1870s and the bears and wolves and panthers became mostly memories. By then the area's population was taking on an admixture of hardy German-speaking Alsatians moving west out of the Castro colonies in Medina County, who shaped up their own farms and ranches and often intermar-

ried with the Anglo families.

The Canyon was never a prosperous place, and self-sufficiency remained the norm even after some sources of cash were developed besides trail-driven longhorns. Cotton became a crop on the good soils of the valley floor, and was produced in quantity until a massive invasion of boll weevils in the Nineties wiped out that activity. Sheep and especially Angora goats thrived on the brushy slopes of the mountains, yielding wool and mohair salable for cash when hauled in wagons up onto the Divide above Lost Maples, then down the Guadalupe to Kerrville. The advent of barbed wire stimulated the breeding of meatier cattle with British blood, and after the railroad reached Sabinal in 1881, trail drives became quite short.

But no irrelevant booms like those created by oil and other mineral discoveries ever visited the Sabinal, nor did its climate change.

Too much rain and too little have been the lasting threats. I have read that the precipitous country along the Balcones Fault is more subject to flash flooding than anywhere else in this nation, and floods have struck here a number of times, destroying homesteads and fences and fields and drowning livestock and people. Less quickly devastating,



drouths crept in unannounced and created a deadly stasis in which nothing grew and even the river might stop running, except underground. People tried to keep coping, and often did, by preserving food in good years against the possibility of bad ones, but sometimes that wasn't enough, as during the drouths of the late Teens and the Thirties, when some natives took up moonshining or other fringe activities to survive, while many others left to seek jobs elsewhere, the canneries and fruit orchards of California being favored destinations. Another large exodus took place during the horrendous dry years of the Fifties, at the end of which the town of Utopia is reported to have held only sixty persons.

*continued on page 67*

*Why are the cypresses still here? How did the Sabinal manage to escape the effects of our forebears' addiction to their lumber ("the wood eternal," it was called), which demolished so many of those superb trees throughout the region?*





Author John Graves sits beneath a towering cypress. Many of the Sabinal's cypresses have been spared from heavy lumbering.



# ANTHROPO KNOWLEDGE



PHOTO © DENVERBRYAN.COM



# LEOGE

BY  
RUSSELL  
A. GRAVES

WANT TO START DEER HUNTING BUT WONDER WHERE TO BEGIN? HERE'S A PRIMER FROM GEAR FOR DEER TO STEP-BY-STEP TECHNIQUES, LOCATIONS AND LINGO.

**T**HE PALE LEMON SUN RISES above the horizon, dappling the oak motte with light. Birds begin to stir in the treetops while an armadillo, gorged after a night of for-

aging on subterranean insects, lumbers toward its lair. Turkey hens cluck and purr as they stir amid the twisted understorey of bumelia and greenbrier.

Without notice, a white-tailed doe materializes from the brush. Sleek and fat from a fall of eating acorns and browse, she steps cautiously into the clearing and tests the air for a hint of intruders. She draws a breath slowly but exhales in an explosion from flared nostrils.

The cool morning air tries to hold the warm, rising breath close to the earth, and it is slow to dissipate. But like the doe, the breath simply disappears into the air as you watch from your nearby blind, rifle in hand.

Next a buck sidles into the clearing, looking both ways as if he were a pedestrian at a busy intersection. His slender neck and lean build tell you he's young. His cavorting about as the turkeys stroll past confirms your suspicions. You wait for a more mature buck to step into view. You watch the breeze make the live oaks sway and are reminded that you are just a piece of a greater puzzle.

This scene has played out for years in deer blinds scattered across a Texas landscape constantly being shaped and changed by humans and the elemental

forces of wind, water and time. Some of the changes, unfortunately, have been negative. However, negativity doesn't apply in the case of white-tailed deer. This animal, arguably more than any other, is the success story of the modern wildlife management movement.

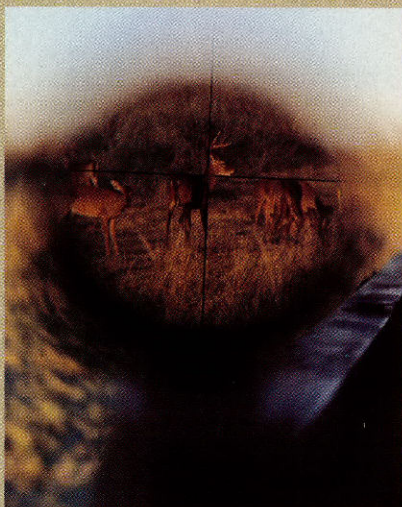
Consider the numbers: In the early 1900s, the total white-tailed deer population in the United States was estimated at half a million. Over the next 100 years, persistent restocking and management efforts paid for by hunters were carried out, and by the start of the new millennium, white-tailed deer could be found in every continental state as well as Mexico and Canada. Year after year in Texas, the number of white-tailed deer hovers around 4 million, and the annual harvest nearly surpasses the nationwide deer population barely a century ago.

With the explosion in white-tailed deer numbers, a once-minuscule segment of the Texas economy mushroomed into a \$1 billion-a-year industry. The influx of money helps fund state wildlife management programs via the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. Passed in the 1930s, this law levies a tax on the purchase of certain hunting-related equipment and dedicates the money to state wildlife agencies.

A 1996 report of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the

National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation, showed that deer hunting in Texas is extremely popular. More than three-quarters of a million Texans hunted deer in 1996 — a whopping 83 percent of the total hunters in the state.

The reasons for deer hunting's popularity are simple. It is a challenging activity that almost anyone can take part in. Sex or physical ability play no part in how successful one can be at deer hunting. And a beginner can get started in deer hunting with just a bit of preparation and a relatively small amount of money.



HERE'S HOW. -->

PHOTO © DAVID J. SAMS





DEER HUNTING REQUIRES surprisingly little equipment. Danny Neskorik, an outfitter who hunts the Rolling Plains near Cee Vee, Texas, puts just four essential items on the list in addition to a rifle and scope. "I tell folks that the first thing they need is comfortable boots. Since deer hunting requires some walking to and from hunting locations, comfort should be one of your main concerns." In addition, Neskorik advises that a sharp knife, clothing matched to the type of weather conditions you will be hunting, and binoculars round out the must-have gear list for deer hunters of all skill levels.

Your firearm will be your biggest investment. It requires you to do your homework well before you walk into a store. Because there are so many models and calibers of rifles available, the task of picking the right one can seem daunting. The question of what is the "best" deer rifle is much debated, but a good rule of thumb is to buy only enough rifle for what you intend to hunt. When it comes to firearms for deer, bigger isn't always better.

"A lot of people think you need a large magnum rifle for hunting deer," says Neskorik. "I want a rifle that will work efficiently in the field but will not be uncomfortable to shoot." The recoil (or "kick") of some large-caliber rifles, such as a 7 mm magnum, may intimidate beginners.

"I shoot a .270 caliber because it has plenty of power for Texas big game and has a flat trajectory," Neskorik says. "For

the beginning hunter, I think a .243 would be a good choice. It has a modest recoil and is effective for hunting deer."

Garry Mills of Dodd City, who has taken many mature deer in his 20 years in the Texas deer woods, agrees. "Many people have the notion that you need a huge caliber to harvest white-tailed deer. I think that a big caliber cannot make up for a firm understanding of a firearm and, ultimately, careful and accurate shot placement."

Mills suggests that beginning deer hunters purchase their firearms well in advance of opening day and practice often at a shooting range, making sure the gun is properly sighted and functioning. Even more important is that the owner have a good understanding of the gun's safe operation and handling.

Beginning hunters must decide whether or not to outfit their firearm with a telescopic sight, or scope. Rifles with open iron sights are just as accurate as scoped rifles in the

## THE TALE OF THE TAPE

**B**elieve it or not, white-tailed deer are one of the least expensive species to pursue. For about the cost of a weekend vacation for four at an amusement park, you can be outfitted to hunt deer in style for years to come. Here's the scoop.

.243 BOLT-ACTION RIFLE:	\$375
3X-9X SCOPE:	\$60
BOX OF SHELLS:	\$12
SET OF CAMO CLOTHES:	\$50
INSULATED HUNTING BOOTS:	\$150
BINOCULARS:	\$120
HUNTING KNIFE:	\$50
TEXAS RESIDENT HUNTING LICENSE:	\$19

**TOTAL: \$836**



hands of an able shooter, but a scope can give a beginner an added level of confidence. Scopes also make it easier to place the shot exactly where you want it, especially in low light. Respect for the animal demands that shots be lethal as quickly as possible.

When shopping for scopes, remember that 1x, or one power, is absolutely no magnification — it's just like our eyes see. Beyond that, scope power is just a matter of multiplication. Twice magnified from normal vision is 2x, four times

**WHEN IT COMES TO FIREARMS FOR DEER, BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER.**



magnification is 4x, and so on. A word of caution, though: the higher the magnification, the more difficult it is to hold the crosshairs steady on the target, since every little movement by the shooter is magnified through the lens of a scope. Your best bet? Mills says that a variable three- to nine-power scope works best for him, and he dials it to four-power most of the time.

"I believe that good camouflage and a good masking scent

can make a big difference in the overall success of a hunt," Mills says. "I like to be camouflaged from head to toe and wear a cover scent, such as fox urine, to mask my odor." Mills says he prefers to wear camouflage that closely matches the terrain he hunts in at the particular time of year he'll be there. For example, early season hunts in North Texas require some green in the pattern, while December Panhandle hunts call for gray in the pattern.

## TECHNIQUES //

"I THINK THE TIME YOU PUT IN before deer hunting season begins will mirror your success once the fall rolls around," says Mills, who has hunted whitetails in almost every geographic region of Texas. "No matter where you hunt, you should always go out and study the area before you ever take a rifle with you."

Mills says that when scouting during the pre-season, he looks for places that deer have been as well as spots where he suspects deer want to be. For example, he advises concentrating on looking for buck rubs so that you'll have an idea where bucks hung out the season before. He also tries to identify travel corridors by looking for areas laden with fresh tracks or well-used trails.

"I look for travel corridors where I think deer will be moving once the season starts. If there is an area with a lot of acorn production or a food plot nearby, I look for cover like brushy draws where deer are likely to try to remain undetected as they travel from their bedding to their feeding areas," he says.

He points out that deer are reluctant to move over the tops of open hills where they can be spotted easily. Instead, they prefer to move stealthily through cover along depressions

such as creek bottoms and draws. A topographic map of your hunting area can help you identify these locations, which you can then scout on foot. (Watch for an article about finding big bucks in the November issue.)

Other signs to look for when scouting are scrapes, pawed-out areas where bucks mark their territory by urinating. Scrapes work somewhat like calling cards for does in the area. As the rut nears, bucks visit the spot again and again, looking for does that may be hanging around. Whitetail bucks tend to make several scrapes in an area. Find one that's fresh, and chances are you'll see some action.

Although an area may look promising to you, if there aren't tracks or other deer signs present, don't be afraid to adjust your location. Since deer are highly adaptable creatures, they often alter their routines in response to hunting pressure or breeding periods. Be where the deer want to be.







## METHODS // //

BEGINNING HUNTERS probably will see more deer from a stationary position such as a stand or blind. "Hunting from a stand or blind is probably the best choice if you have a feeder or active trail nearby," claims Neskorik. He often uses feeders to bring deer into a central point for his hunters and takes advantage of agricultural fields in the area to try to predict deer movement. Neskorik says that feeding corn on a regular schedule or hunting near cultivated crops is a great way to see deer and aids greatly in predicting their movement from bedding areas to feeding areas. (If you feed deer corn, buy only grain that has a tag certifying that the level of aflatoxin is safe for livestock, and store it in a cool, dry place. Never leave corn in a feeder from one hunting season to the next.)

More seasoned hunters may prefer to use the spot-and-stalk method of hunting. This involves using binoculars to spot deer from a distance, then using natural cover to approach within shooting range. Spot-and-stalk hunting should be used only if no other hunters are in the area. Wearing safety orange is a good idea, no matter where or how you hunt. Deer see safety orange as a brownish hue, so it will not spook them.

As the rut nears, bucks begin to respond to rattling antlers. In skilled hands, a pair of antlers can be a "come-here" call to bucks looking for does and itching for a fight. Grinding the antlers together mimics two bucks in a fight. If the dominant buck in the area is within earshot, he'll think that a couple of other bucks are moving in on his territory, and he may charge in to show them who is boss.

Perhaps the best technique for taking a deer is to be

where the deer are. Most successful hunters will tell you that time spent studying signs, reading all they can about deer biology and behavior and spending time afield in a stand or blind is their key to success. Even if the deer aren't moving, there will still be all kinds of wildlife to see that will enrich the time you spend waiting.

## DEER DICTIONARY: Words every deer hunter should know

**L**IKE EVERY OUTDOOR ACTIVITY, deer hunting has its own unique vernacular. To be a deer hunter worth your salt, get a handle on these words.

**4x:** A number to represent the power of a scope. 4x represents four times magnification from normal vision.

**Aflatoxin:** a biological toxin created by a fungus that grows on corn and other grains. Levels above 100 parts per billion can cause liver damage to deer and other species of wildlife.

**Antlers:** Let's be clear. Deer have antlers, not horns. Antlers are bony appendages that are shed and grow again each year. Horns are made of keratin (the same substance found in fingernails) and are permanent. Cattle have horns—deer don't.

**Blind:** A place to hide while hunting. Designs can vary from a pile of limbs to an enclosed box complete with a floor, roof and windows. Blinds are often called shooting houses outside of Texas.



# PLACES // // // //

IN TEXAS, ABOUT 97 PERCENT of the land is under private ownership. Many landowners lease the right to hunt their property on a day-to-day or seasonal basis. Prices and amenities can sway the price from a couple of hundred dollars to several thousand, depending on the package. As a rule, doe hunting is much less expensive than buck hunting, and harvesting does is an important way of keeping deer numbers within the carrying capacity of the habitat.

Private hunting opportunities can be discovered by checking with local chambers of commerce and county agricultural extension agents as well as advertisements in magazines, newspapers and Internet sites. Texas Parks and Wildlife offers free software to help you decide where to hunt at <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hunt/choice/tpwd\\_hch.htm#view](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hunt/choice/tpwd_hch.htm#view)>. The software has recently been updated to include 1999-2000 hunting season data.

Don't fret if you don't have the cash to secure a private lease. Texas is a big state, with more than 2 million acres available for public hunting.

Wildlife management areas owned or managed by Texas Parks and Wildlife offer perhaps the best value. For \$40 per year, every Texas hunter can gain access to some 1.2 million acres statewide. The Annual Public Hunting Permit allows access to land in every region of Texas. (Adult permit holders may take their children under age 17 along free.)

While most public deer hunting on state wildlife management areas requires winning a spot in a drawing, nearly 300,000 acres in national forests in Texas are open to anyone who purchases the Annual Public Hunting Permit.

**Caliber:** The diameter of a bullet expressed in millimeters (as in 6.5 mm) or decimal fractions of an inch. A .243 bullet is just shy of being a quarter of an inch across.

**Rattling:** A technique used for luring deer in which two antlers are banged together to mimic deer fighting.

**Rut:** The time of year, usually running from mid-November to mid-December in Texas, when deer mate.

**Rub:** Antler marks made on a tree when a buck deposits scents from glands on its head. A rub is characterized by shredded bark hanging from a tree a couple of feet from the ground or the absence of bark on the rubbed area. The rule of thumb is that the bigger the tree rubbed, the bigger the buck.

**Scrape:** A pawed-out area of the ground, usually about three feet across, where a buck marks its territory by urinating in the dirt. Look for broken twigs above the scrape and paw marks in the dirt for a positive ID.

**Spot-and-stalk hunting:** A method of hunting involving spotting deer with binoculars and stalking close enough to them to get a clean shot.

**Stand:** A permanent or portable platform placed in a tree as a means of getting above deer and avoiding detection.

Hunting is free on many tracts of land managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These areas surround lakes across the state and have their own permitting requirements. Check with the Corps of Engineers office managing each area. A list of the areas and contact information for each can be found on the Internet at <[www.recreation.gov/advindex.cfmz](http://www.recreation.gov/advindex.cfmz)>.

Don't be discouraged about hunting on public land. Only 15 percent of deer hunters in Texas utilize public lands, and the chance of everyone hunting on the same day is next to nil. Go on a weekday or after opening weekend, and you will probably have the woods mostly to yourself.

# SAFETY // // // //

AS IN ALL TYPES OF HUNTING, safety should be the first priority. Compared to other recreational activities, hunting is among the safest. Studies show that fewer people are injured hunting than playing popular sports such as basketball. Don't be fooled by the numbers, though — any hunting accident has the potential to be dangerous.

The most effective tool for ensuring you hunt safely is your brain. If you aren't sure about a shot, don't take it. Think rationally and deliberately — that's the key to safety. Treat every firearm as if it were loaded, and always make sure the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction.

Specific safety measures that apply to deer hunting are:

- Never climb a tree or stand with a firearm in hand. Instead, carry some rope to tether the firearm and pull it up to you — unloaded, of course. Lower the unloaded gun the same way.
- If hunting in a tree stand, always use a safety harness to secure yourself to the tree.
- Make sure the game is in open view before you shoot. And be sure your target is game, not another person.
- Use binoculars — not your scope — to look for game. Where the scope is pointed, the muzzle is, too. Never point a gun at anything you do not intend to shoot.
- Keep knives closed or sheathed until you are ready to use them. Never cut toward yourself.
- When hunting on public land, be aware that unseen hunters may be all around you. Make sure that your shooting lanes are clear, both to the target and beyond.
- When hunting on private land with more than one person present, wear safety orange to and from your stand so you can be seen. Hunters on public land are generally required to wear orange when outside the camping area.

Think before you act. If you do, you'll be able to chase the world's most popular big game animal for many seasons to come. ★

RUSSELL GRAVES first hunted deer back in the early '80s on the Caddo National Grasslands in Fannin County.





THE STORY OF TEXAS  
TEXAS STATE HISTORY

IMAX  
THEATRE  
AMAZON  
CAVE  
APRIL 21 - SEPTEMBER 10  
EXTREME

THEATRE





# MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR

STORY BY MARY-LOVE BIGONY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EARL NOTTINGHAM

**DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HISTORY? FOR A BRUSH-UP COURSE IN TEXAS HISTORY 101, MAKE YOUR FIRST STOP THE NEW BOB BULLOCK TEXAS STATE HISTORY MUSEUM.**

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY when the story of Texas began. It wasn't in 1823, when Stephen F. Austin started bringing Anglo colonists into the Brazos River Valley. European explorers had arrived almost 300 years before that. And it wasn't in 1528, when shipwrecked Spaniards, Cabeza de Vaca among them, came ashore near present-day Galveston, believing they had discovered a New World. The native people these European explorers encountered were descendants of people who had been here for thousands of years.

State historical sites across Texas have been bringing parts of this story to life for many years. Now a new museum

in Austin offers visitors an overview of Texas history, putting each site in context and providing a foundation for visits to the individual sites. "The Story of Texas - The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum," which opened in April, offers an exciting multimedia and interactive journey through the state's remarkable past.

Three floors of exhibits and artifacts tell the story, but not in the linear way many people expect. The first floor, "Encounters on the Land," tells the story of human interactions with the land that came to be called Texas. It begins by showing how Native Americans lived before explorers reached the shores of the New



World, and ends with the mapping of the last piece of Texas land in 1900. The second floor, "Building the Lone Star Identity," starts in 1821, when the Mexican government agreed to allow settlers from the United States into Texas. It ends in 1936, with the Texas Centennial. "Creating Opportunity" is the theme for the third floor. Exhibits cover industries that have flourished in Texas: ranching, oil, cotton, transportation, medicine and space.

## HIGH-TECH HISTORY LESSONS

Throughout the museum, the stories are told through structures, computerized graphics, movies, recordings, hands-on displays and artifacts, which will rotate every six months to a year. "It was important to us that original objects be on exhibit," says museum director Lynn Denton. "We worked with individuals and institutions across the state to find objects that help tell each story. When those objects go back to the institution we borrowed them from, we can borrow other objects that relate and tell a different aspect of the story. Each story is so layered and complex that we can vary it within the framework and still have it stay fresh and informative."

As visually commanding as the museum is, some visitors may fail to notice how the ground changes as they move through exhibits. A Karankawa family pulls a canoe over a sandy beach. Footprints gouge the dirt-like surface near the mission. Throughout the museum are authentic reproductions of Texas land.

Murals of the forest, plains, coast and canyons — areas where native people lived in the centuries before European exploration — set the scene on the first floor. "We felt it was important in 'Encounters on the Land' for the sense of landscape and space in Texas to be represented," says Denton. "We didn't want paintings, but we also didn't want to use photographs that might seem hard and cold. So we took photographs from some of Texas' best photographers and put them through a digital process that made them more painterly. It softened the edges."

Structures on the first floor include representations of a thatched Caddo house, a Comanche teepee, a dogtrot cabin and Fort Griffin with a buffalo soldier standing nearby. Inside the Caddo house, visitors hear the Caddos' reaction to Spanish and French explorers; Comanche elders, including Quanah Parker's grandson, tell their stories in a program inside the teepee.

## EXPLORERS AND SETTLERS

French exploration of Texas is represented by artifacts recovered from *La Belle*, wrecked in Matagorda Bay in 1686 and excavated in 1996. The 300-year-old artifacts, on loan from the Texas Historical Commission, include a cast-iron cannon from Fort Saint Louis and brass cooking pots and ladle found in *La Belle's* hold. Dramatic lighting makes the items look almost as if they are underwater. In the back-

## Where History Happened

**A**FTER EXPERIENCING AN OVERVIEW of Texas history at the new Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, visit Texas Parks and Wildlife's state historical sites and parks to learn more and to see the places where history actually happened.

### Native Americans

**Caddoan Mounds:** Exhibits and interpretive trails take visitors through reconstructed sites of Caddo dwellings and ceremonial areas at this East Texas site.

**Seminole Canyon:** Located near the Pecos River, this site offers tours to spectacular rock art sites.

**Lubbock Lake Landmark:** Now part of Texas Tech University, this site on the Southern Plains is one of the few places in North America that has been continuously occupied for more than 11,000 years. TPW artist Mike Obrien, who created bas-relief sculptures for the new museum, produced lifesize mother and baby Columbia mammoths, on display at the site.

**Hueco Tanks:** Guided pictograph tours lead visitors to areas showcasing examples of paintings representing many Native American cultures. Paleoindians first visited the site more than 10,000 years ago, and it later served as an oasis for the Archaic, Jornada Mogollon and historic groups. Hueco Tanks also was a stop on the Butterfield Stage Route.

### Missions

**Mission Tejas:** A commemorative representation of Mission San Francisco de los Tejas, established in 1690, is the highlight of this East Texas park.

**Goliad:** More often associated with a cold-blooded execution during the Texas Revolution, this park houses a replica of Mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga, established in 1722, and the ruins of Mission Nuestra Señora del Rosario, established in 1754.

### Frontier Forts

**Fort Griffin:** The fort was established on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River in 1867. Cavalry patrols from Fort Griffin regularly scouted the countryside. Partially restored ruins remain.

**Fort Lancaster:** Located near Sheffield on the Pecos River, Fort Lancaster was established in 1855 to guard the San Antonio-El Paso Road. Partially restored ruins remain here also.

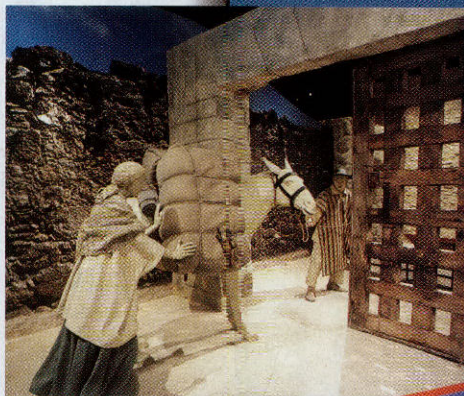
**Fort McKavett:** General William T. Sherman called Fort McKavett "the prettiest post in Texas," due to its location on the headwaters of the San Saba River. Established in 1852, the fort had 40 buildings at its peak in the 1870s. Sixteen of them have been restored.

**Fort Richardson:** Established in 1867, this is the northernmost of the military outposts in the state park system. Restored buildings include the post hospital, commissary and bakery.

### Settlers

**Stephen F. Austin:** This park includes a portion of the site of San Felipe, the seat of government for Anglo colonists in Texas. In 1824, Stephen F. Austin brought 297 families to colonize Texas under a contract with the Mexican government.

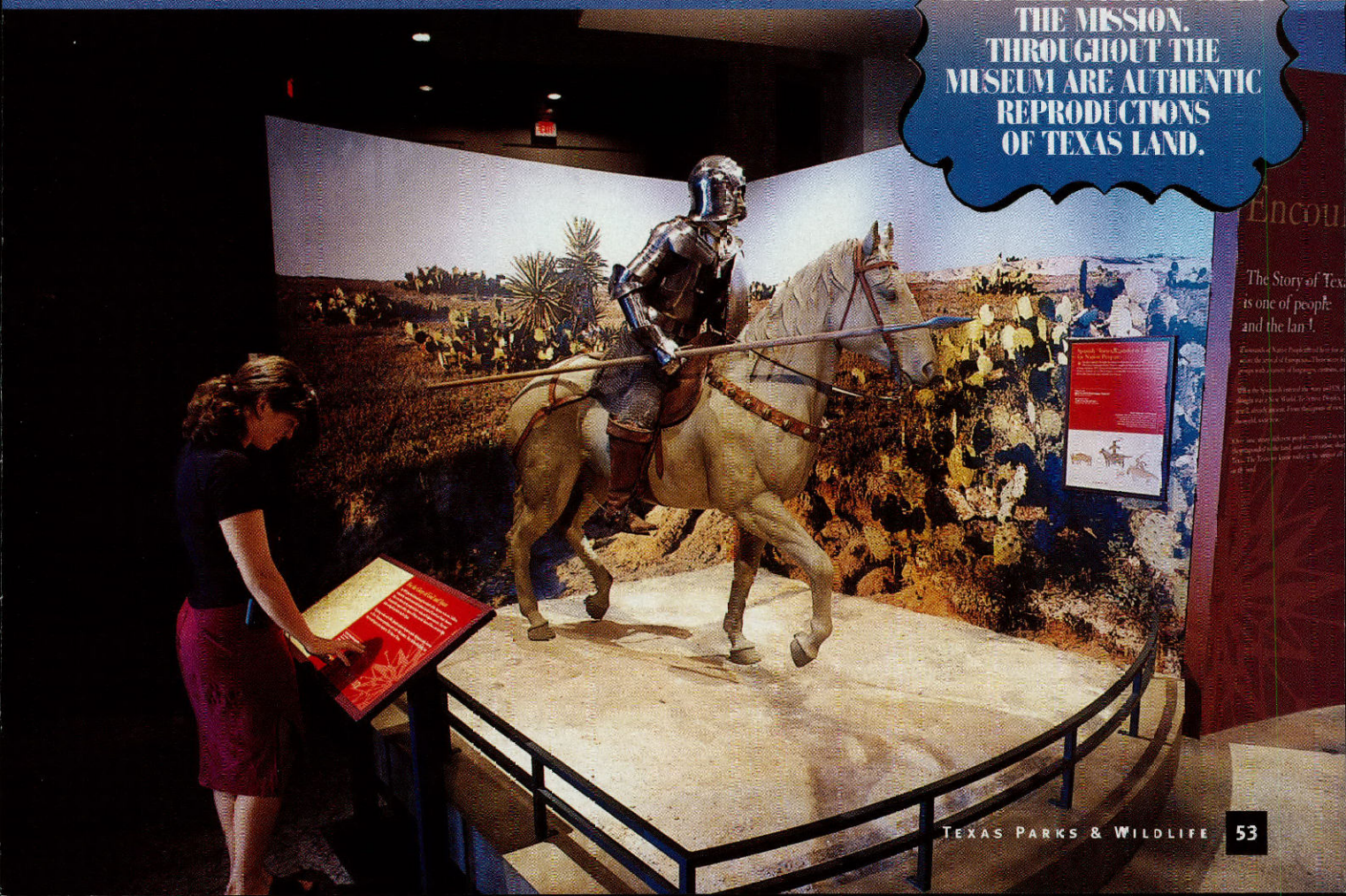
**Varner-Hogg Plantation:** Martin Varner, one of Stephen F. Austin's "Old 300," settled this property in 1824. In 1834, he sold



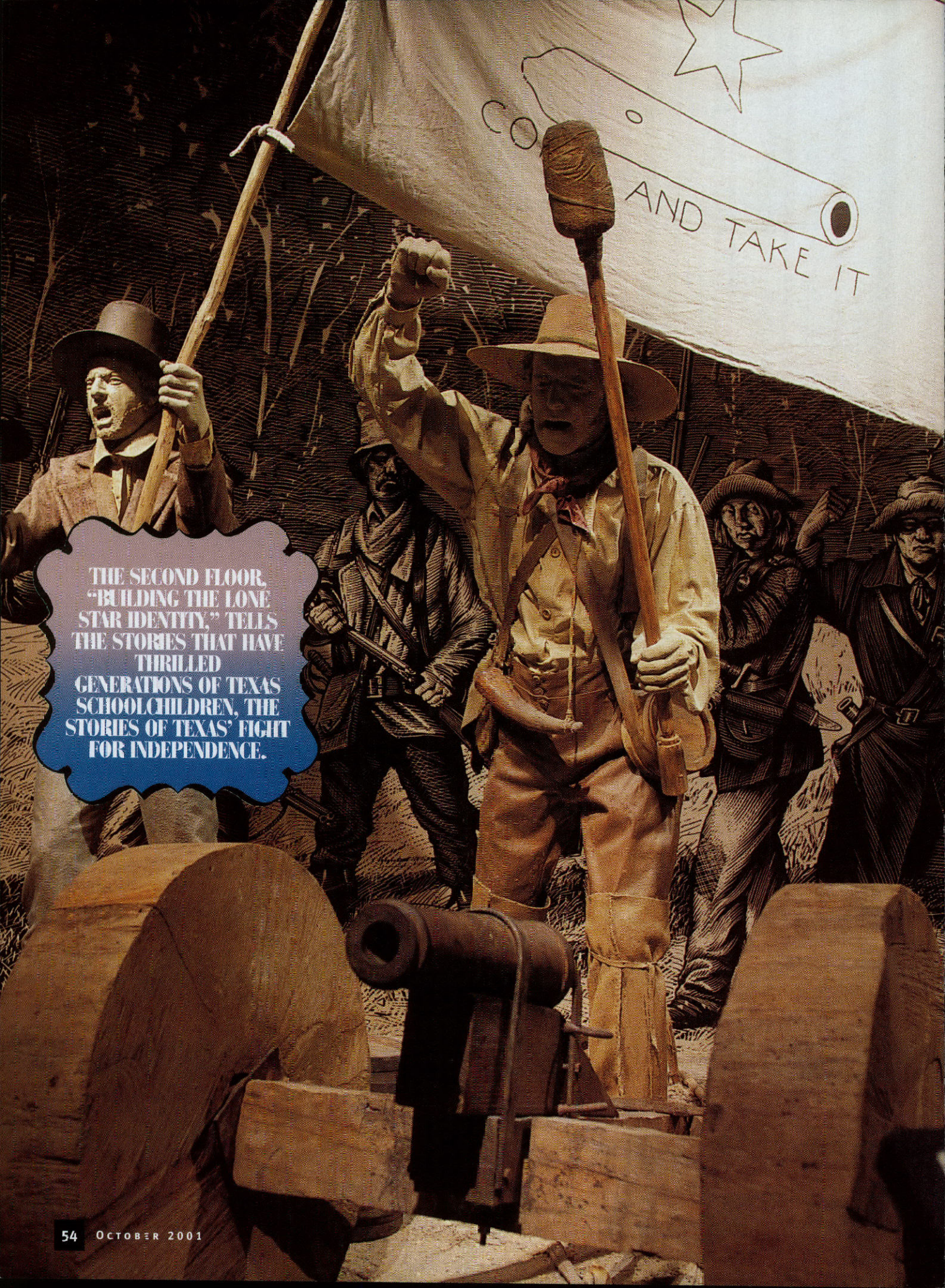




A KARANKAWA FAMILY PULLS A CANOE OVER A SANDY BEACH. FOOTPRINTS GOUGE THE DIRT-LIKE SURFACE NEAR THE MISSION. THROUGHOUT THE MUSEUM ARE AUTHENTIC REPRODUCTIONS OF TEXAS LAND.







THE SECOND FLOOR, "BUILDING THE LONE STAR IDENTITY," TELLS THE STORIES THAT HAVE THRILLED GENERATIONS OF TEXAS SCHOOLCHILDREN, THE STORIES OF TEXAS' FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE.



it to Columbus Patton, who developed a sugar plantation. Park visitors can tour the plantation house and hear the stories of enslaved people who made the plantation prosperous.

**Old Fort Parker:** Daniel Parker was among a group who emigrated to Texas from Illinois in 1833 in ox-drawn wagons. He established a fort for his family's protection, but in 1836 his daughter, Cynthia Ann, was kidnapped by Comanches. She became the mother of Comanche chief Quanah Parker.

**Landmark Inn:** Still welcoming overnight guests, Landmark Inn has its roots in the days of the Republic of Texas. French entrepreneur Henri Castro established the settlement of Castroville in 1842. A stone building constructed on the Medina River seven years later became known as the Vance Hotel, offering lodging to travelers on the San Antonio–El Paso Road.

**Monument Hill/Kreische Brewery:** Immigrant Heinrich Kreische established one of Texas' first commercial breweries here in the 1860s. At Monument Hill is the tomb of Texans killed in conflicts with Mexico in the 1840s.

**Sam Bell Maxey House:** Maxey, a Confederate general, settled in the East Texas town of Paris in 1857. The fashionable, high Victorian Italianate-style home continued to be occupied by Maxey descendants until 1966.

**Fulton Mansion:** Built from 1874 to 1877, Fulton Mansion is a commanding, three-story structure on Aransas Bay. Unusual architecture and systems characterize the mansion.

**Magoffin Home:** Joseph Magoffin built this grand adobe home at the edge of El Paso in 1875. Magoffin played a significant role in the growth and development of Texas' westernmost city. Visitors may tour the 20-room home filled with original family furnishings.

**Lyndon B. Johnson:** This historical park honors a native Texan who served as president of the United States from 1963 to 1969.

Visitors enjoy a variety of recreational facilities and day-use picnic areas. A living history farmstead home of 19th century German settlers portrays a Hill Country farm in 1918.

### The Revolution

**Casa Navarro:** This was the home of José Antonio Navarro, born in San Antonio in 1795. Navarro was a Tejano — a Texas of Mexican descent — who supported the Texas Revolution. He aligned himself with the Anglo-American settlers to accomplish this feat, then spent the next three decades defending the rights of Tejanos against exploitation by the Anglos.

**Washington-on-the-Brazos:** Delegates from each municipality in Texas gathered here on March 2, 1836, to declare Texas' independence from Mexico and write the constitution that established the Republic of Texas. A new visitor services complex at the park tells the story through interactive exhibits. New features include Barrington Living History Farm, built around the restored home of Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic.

**Fannin Battleground:** On March 27, 1836, Colonel James Fannin and his men were executed near Goliad on orders of Santa Anna. A stone obelisk marks the site where they surrendered.

**San Jacinto Battleground:** This is the site of the final battle of the revolution, the 18-minute battle in which Sam Houston's army

ground, the ghost of a ship disappears, then reappears, on a Gulf Coast scene.

French explorations nudged the Spanish into action, prompting them to begin sending missionaries, soldiers and settlers from Mexico to the frontier. Exhibits show how Spanish missionaries coped with this wild land, and one caption still rings true in the 21st century: "Survival depended on access to water." Explaining that fresh water was crucial in choosing each mission and presidio site, the exhibit explains that missionaries used irrigation techniques based on Spanish and Arab engineering as well as Native American technology. A model based on Mission Espiritu Santo at Goliad State Historical Park shows the layout of a mission complex.

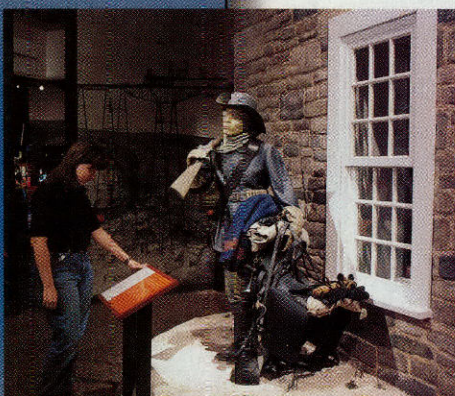
The early 19th century saw an influx of Anglo settlers into the Pineywoods. Set against a mural of East Texas, this section is entitled "Gone to Texas." Displays include Stephen F. Austin's pistol and his calling card. Settlers built dogtrot cabins — two rooms separated by an open passageway. In the museum's dogtrot cabin, visitors hear recordings made from settlers' diaries. Mary Maverick tells about how fever, smallpox and cholera took their toll. As she speaks, a chair from the mid-1800s is highlighted, along with a mortar and pestle from the early 1800s. Mary Rabb, one of Austin's colonists, speaks of loneliness on the frontier: "I could hear the Indians walking around the house... I kept my spinning wheel whistling all day and a good part of the night. While the wheel was roaring, it would keep me from hearing the Indians." As she speaks, an 1810 spinning wheel comes into view.

### THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS

The second floor, "Building the Lone Star Identity," tells stories that have thrilled generations of Texas schoolchildren, the stories of Texas' fight for independence. Two compelling exhibits are on this floor: replicas of Stephen F. Austin's cell in Mexico and the Alamo as it would have looked the day after the battle.

As visitors sit in the jail cell, they hear excerpts from the diary Austin kept while he was imprisoned. Austin traveled to Mexico City in 1834 to petition for reforms in Tejas. As he was on his way back home, he was arrested, taken back to Mexico City and jailed on charges of treason. Listen as Austin recalls his own transformation from a loyal citizen of Mexico to an advocate for Texas independence. Nearby, a group of ragtag, defiant Texans defend the "come and take it" cannon at Gonzales. Directly across from the Texans is a tidy red-and-navy uniform coat worn by a colonel in Santa Anna's army. With the Battle of Gonzales on October 2, 1835, Texans started down the road to revolution.

At the Alamo façade, the mood is somber. The building is battered from the conflict. Cannonballs and axes litter the ground, which is smeared with blood. Rosaries that fell from the hands of dying soldiers lie almost buried by footprints and hoofprints that crisscross each other time and time again. "It's hard to tell the story of the revolution in a way that





# The Republic of Texas 1836-1845

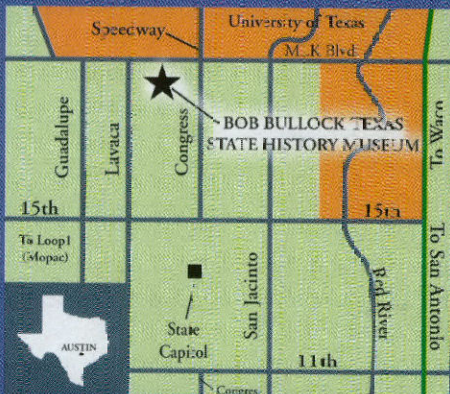


**"EVERYBODY KNOWS THE STORY OF THE ALAMO — OR WE THINK WE DO," SAYS EYNN DENTON, MUSEUM DIRECTOR. "WE WANTED TO CREATE A PLACE WHERE YOU FELT THE SENSE OF HUMAN LOSS ON BOTH SIDES."**

## Getting There

**T**HE BOB BULLOCK TEXAS STATE HISTORY MUSEUM is two blocks north of the state capitol building, at Congress Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. From I-35, take exit 235A and go west on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. to Congress. Underground parking is available.

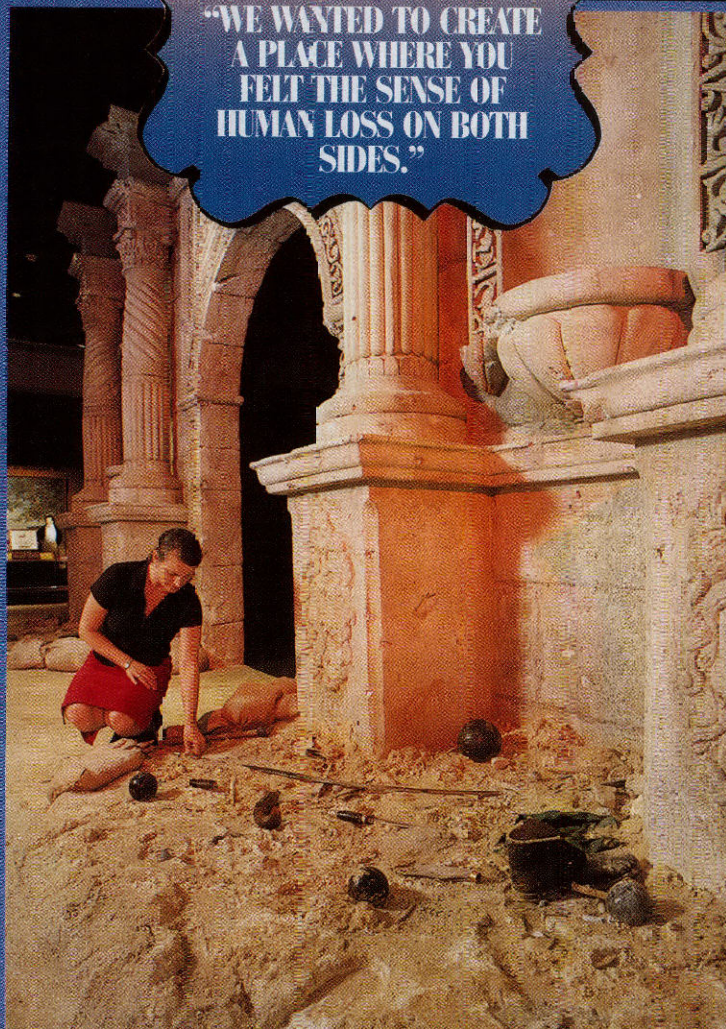
Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4.25 for seniors 65 and over and free for youth 18 and under. Combination tickets are available for the exhibits and one or both theaters. For more information, call (512) 936-8746 or go to [www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com).



Beginning this month, audio tours will be available in English and Spanish, along with a descriptive tour for visitors with vision impairments.

On October 14 the museum will offer Ask the TExperts, a free object identification service, from 2 p.m. to

5 p.m. Experts will be available to identify objects relating to Texas history. Objects will not be appraised for a monetary value, and the museum asks that people not bring large items, such as furniture. For more information call (512) 936-2309.





prevailed over Santa Anna and his soldiers. Work is underway to restore the marshes where the battle took place.

For information about these and other state historical sites, call (800) 792-1112 or go to [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/).

—M.L.B.

## Texas Parks and Wildlife Talent on Display at Museum

**T**EXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE STAFF played a prominent role in creating Texas' first state history museum, from the enormous bas-relief panels adorning the exterior to exhibits tracing the state's history.

One of the first things visitors see as they approach the huge granite structure is a series of massive concrete panels designed and sculpted by TPW exhibit specialist Mike Obrien. Measuring 11 feet by 16 feet and weighing about 500 apiece, the panels evoke chapters of the state's history.

"My job was to tell the story of Texas in six spaces," Obrien says. He began by showing a Native American leading a conquistador through Palo Duro Canyon. Subsequent panels depict the aftermath of the Alamo; cowboys, cattle and trains; immigrants and cotton; the oil boom; and space exploration.

"Mike was a hero," says Dave Denney, the museum's director of public programming. "He really put his blood and soul into this job."

TPW photographer Earl Nottingham's images appear in several large photomurals, and the terrazzo design in the rotunda floor is patterned after his composite photos of a campfire scene. Illustrations by artists Nola Davis and Doug Hill can be seen in the 60-foot Texas timeline visible from the second floor, and Davis' Caddoan Indians paintings are featured in a video shown inside the Caddo house replica. Ken Pollard, who oversees TPW's community services and outreach programs, helped develop the buffalo soldiers exhibit and provided the voice for the display. TPW staff provided expertise for several other exhibits as well: Lester Galbreath on longhorn cattle and western clothing, Lupita Barrera on Spanish missions, and Dennis Cordes on frontier forts and cabins. Joanne Avant, chief curator of TPW's historical collections, and her staff helped secure and loan TPW artifacts to the museum, and Anne Helbing of the executive office helped with fundraising.

"This has been challenging," says Obrien, "but it's an incredible honor to be a part of something this huge and enduring."

—Mark Southern

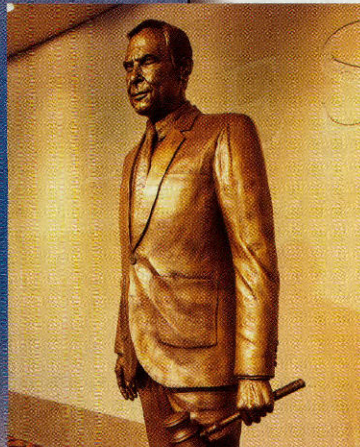
## High-Tech Visit

**S**CHOOLCHILDREN CAN INTERACT with museum staff and others during a live Web cast Friday, November 2, 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Students will learn more about the Story of Texas, meet characters from the past, and even take a quiz like those on popular game shows. In addition to live video, there will be a Web site, a moderated chatroom and interactive quizzes. Schools can preregister for this free event and receive an educational packet at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/expltx/ef/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/expltx/ef/).

people don't anticipate," says Denton. "Everybody knows the story of the Alamo — or we think we do. We wanted to create the scene of the Alamo, not as we know it, as a shrine, but as a place where you felt the human loss on both sides."

Many Tejanos — Texans of Mexican descent — shared colonists' dissatisfaction with the leadership in Mexico City. "Nothing could be expected from Santa Anna but the death of our liberties. It is better to let Texas be reduced to ashes than to live in slavery under a despotic government," reads a quote from Tejano leader José Antonio Navarro, born in San Antonio in 1795. His home is now a state historical site in downtown San Antonio. Inside the Alamo, visitors see a presentation told from the viewpoint of Captain Juan Seguín of the Texas Army. The Tejano patriot narrates the increasing tension as events lead up to the Battle of San Jacinto. "My blood is Mexican," he declares, "but my heart is in Tejas."

From independence to statehood, secession, reconstruction and back to statehood, the story advances to 1936 — the centennial of the revolution. Celebrations took place statewide, with Dallas hosting the central exposition. Civic leaders took the opportunity to promote Texas to the world, and exhibits capture the excitement.



The late Bob Bullock, lieutenant governor from 1991 to 1999, was instrumental in creating the museum.

## MODERN TIMES

On the third floor, visitors learn about industries that have made Texas great. Texan Walter Cronkite tells about oil exploration. At a computer touch screen, see performances from decades of Texas sports and music.

Also on the third floor is a section called "Destination Texas History." Visitors can use computers to search and print out lists of Texas Parks and Wildlife's state historical sites as well as other historical parks and museums across the state — places where they can continue their study of Texas history. "We're just a showcase," says Heather Brand, head of public relations for the museum. "We hope to inspire people to go out to these places and learn more."

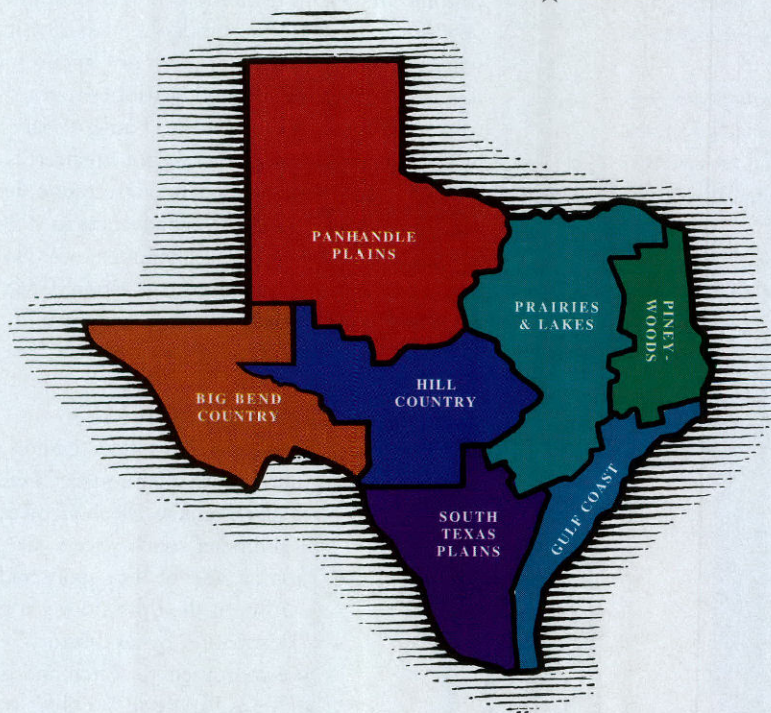
The museum has two theaters: Austin's first IMAX and the Texas Spirit Theater, which uses special effects that involve the audience to show how the spirit of Texas is in its people. "The presentation tells stories of courage and perseverance that are based on solid historical scholarship, and uses special effects to make the story memorable," says Denton.

"Texas is the finest portion of the globe that has ever blessed my vision." This quote from Sam Houston welcomes visitors to the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum. After seeing and hearing the stories the exhibits tell, visitors will understand what Houston found so grand. Whether you're a Texas history buff or someone who hasn't even thought about Texas history since you left the seventh grade, you'll have a lump in your throat and a smile on your face as you experience the people and events that tell the story of Texas. ☆



# GETAWAYS

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



## BIG BEND COUNTRY

**Oct:** White Shaman Tour, every Saturday, subject to cancellation, Seminole Canyon SHS, Comstock, (888) 525-9907.

**Oct:** Fate Bell Cave-Dwelling Tour, every Wednesday through Sunday, subject to cancellation, Seminole Canyon SHS, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

**Oct:** Bouldering Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, also available Wednesday through Friday by advance request, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

**Oct:** Bird-Banding, call for dates, Davis Mountains SP, Fort Davis, (915) 426-3337.

**Oct:** Fishing on the Rio Grande, call for dates during business hours, Black Gap WMA, Alpine,

(915) 376-2216.

**Oct:** Pictograph Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, also available Wednesday through Friday by advance request, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

**Oct:** Phantom Cave Springs and San Solcomon Cienega Hike, every Saturday, Balmorhea SP, Toyahvale, (915) 375-2370.

**Oct. 1-6:** Wilderness EMT Transition Course, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Terlingua, (915) 424-3327.

**Oct. 5-7:** Longhorn Cattle Drive, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, (915) 229-3416.

**Oct. 6, 7, 20, 21:** Guided Tours, Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, (915) 566-6441.

**Oct. 13:** Stories of Spirits, Magoffin Home SHS, El Paso, (915) 533-5147.

**Oct. 19:** Star Party, Fort Lancaster SHS, Sheffield, (915) 836-4391.

**Oct. 19:** Ghostly Candlelight Tours, Magoffin Home SHS, El Paso, (915) 533-5147.

**Oct. 19, 20:** Stargazing Party, Seminole Canyon SHS, Com-

stock, (915) 292-4464.

**Oct. 19, 20:** Slide Show, Seminole Canyon SHS, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

**Oct. 20:** Panther Cave Boat Tour, Seminole Canyon SHS, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

**Oct. 20:** Tours, Fort Leaton SHS, Presidio, (915) 229-3613.

**Oct. 20:** Outdoor Adventures for Kids, Davis Mountains SP, Fort Davis, (915) 426-3337.

**Oct. 20:** White Shaman Tour, Seminole Canyon SHS, Comstock, (888) 525-9907.

**Oct. 20:** 3rd Annual Arts and Crafts Show, Indian Lodge, Fort Davis, (915) 426-3254.

**Oct. 20:** Dia del Rio, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Terlingua, (915) 424-3327.

**Oct. 20:** Annual Living History Day, Fort Lancaster SHS, Sheffield, (915) 836-4391.

**Oct. 20:** Barbecue Dinner, Monahans Sandhills SP, Monahans, (915) 943-2092.

**Oct. 20:** Trail Dedication, Monahans Sandhills SP, Monahans,

(915) 943-2092.

**Oct. 20:** Camping 101, Davis Mountains SP, Fort Davis, (915) 426-3337.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Quail Hunt, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Walking Tour, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Fate Bell Cave-Dwelling Tour, Seminole Canyon SHS, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Driving Tour, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Slide Presentations, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Tours, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Tramway Tours, Wyler Aerial Tramway Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, (915) 562-9899.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Tours, Devils River SNA, Del Rio, (830) 395-2133.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Campfire Program, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Entertainment and Music Program, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Native Plant Seminar, Balmorhea SP, Toyahvale, (915) 375-2370.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Interpretive Programs, Balmorhea SP, Toyahvale, (915) 375-2370.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Dune Buggy Tours, Monahans Sandhills SP, Monahans, (915) 943-2092.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Around the Campfire, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

**Oct. 21:** Bird Identification Tours, Hueco Tanks SHS, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

**Oct. 21:** Upper Canyon Tour, Seminole Canyon SHS, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

**Oct. 21:** Triathlon, Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, (915) 566-6441.

**Oct. 26:** Haunted Ghost Town, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio,

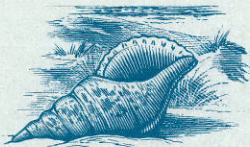


(915) 424-3327.

**Oct. 27:** Presa Canyon Tour, Seminole Canyon SHS, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

**Oct. 27-31:** Scaled Quail Hunt, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

**Oct. 29-31:** Fall Trail Ride, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, (915) 229-3416.



## GULF COAST

**Oct:** Nature Programs, every Saturday and Sunday, Brazos Bend SP, Needville, (979) 553-5101.

**Oct. 3-31:** Showing of the Quilts 2001, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHS, West Columbia, (979) 345-4656.

**Oct. 6:** USS Texas Crew Reunion, Battleship Texas SHS, La Porte, (281) 479-2431.

**Oct. 12, 28:** Beachcombing Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

**Oct. 13:** Night-time Wildlife Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

**Oct. 13, 14:** Migratory Bird Tours, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

**Oct. 13:** Texas Gulf Coast Roundup, Texas City, (800) 792-1112 (Press 4)

**Oct. 20:** Wildlife Management, Lake Texana SP, Edna, (361) 782-5718.

**Oct. 20:** Surfing Contest, Mustang Island SP, Port Aransas, (361) 749-5246.

**Oct. 20:** Tours, Rockport Marine Lab, Rockport, (361) 729-2328.

**Oct. 20:** Marketplace, Lake Texana SP, Edna, (361) 782-5718.

**Oct. 20:** Walkathon, Lake Texana SP, Edna, (361) 782-5718.

**Oct. 20:** Rock Climbing, Lake Texana SP, Edna, (361) 782-5718.

**Oct. 20:** All About Fish, Lake Texana SP, Edna, (361) 782-5718.

**Oct. 20:** Fun and Games, Lake Texana SP, Edna, (361) 782-5718.

**Oct. 20:** Surf Fishing Tournament, Sea Rim SP, Sabine Pass, (409) 971-2559.

**Oct. 20:** Open House, Sea Center Texas, Lake Jackson, (979) 292-0100.

**Oct. 20:** Hard Hat Tours, Battleship Texas SHS, LaPorte,

(281) 479-2431.

**Oct. 20:** Lone Star Legacy Music Celebration, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHS, West Columbia, (979) 345-4656.

**Oct. 20:** Walking Tour, San Jacinto Battleground SHS, La Porte, (281) 479-2431.

**Oct. 20:** Concert in the Park, Lake Texana SP, Edna, (361) 782-5718.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Open House, Peach Point WMA, Bay City, (409) 244-7697.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Fun at the Beach, Mustang Island SP, Port Aransas, (361) 749-5246.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Guided Tours, Sabine Pass Battleground SHS, Sabine Pass, (409) 971-2559.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Surf Fishing Tournament, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Redfish Bay Event, Lighthouse Lakes Trails, Aransas Pass, (512) 389-4642.

**Oct. 21:** 2nd Annual Lone Star Legacy Fun Run, Lake Corpus Christi SP, Mathis, (361) 547-2635.

**Oct. 21:** Lone Star Sunday, Fulton Mansion, Fulton, (361) 729-0386.

**Oct. 21:** Native Plant Seminar, Goose Island SP, Rockport, (361) 729-2858.

**Oct. 27:** Halloween Extravaganza, Lake Texana SP, Edna, (361) 782-5718.



## HILL COUNTRY

**Oct:** Flying with the Freetails, every Thursday and Saturday, Old Tunnel WMA, Comfort, (830) 644-2478.

**Oct:** Gorman Falls Tour, every Saturday and Sunday, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

**Oct:** Birdwatching, daily except when closed for hunting, Peder-nales Falls SP, Johnson City, (830) 868-7304.

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

**Oct. 5:** Range and Wildlife, Kerr WMA, Hunt, (830) 238-4483.

**Oct. 6:** Crawling Wild Cave Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

**Oct. 13:** Texas Hill Country River Region Classic, Garner State Park, (800) 210-0380

**Oct. 20:** Granite Gripper Climbing Competition, Enchanted Rock SNA, Fredericksburg, (210) 682-4480.

**Oct. 20:** Tree Walk, Blanco SP, Blanco, (830) 833-4333.

**Oct. 20:** Honey Creek Hike, Honey Creek SNA, Spring Branch, (830) 438-2656.

**Oct. 20:** Why Horseshoes are Lucky, Hill Country SNA, Bandera, (830) 796-4413.

**Oct. 20:** Cowboy Poetry, Hill Country SNA, Bandera, (830) 796-4413.

**Oct. 20:** Storytelling, Guadalupe River SP, Spring Branch, (830) 438-2656.

**Oct. 20:** Native American Dances, Guadalupe River SP, Spring Branch, (830) 438-2656.

**Oct. 20:** Star Party, Fort McKavett SHS, (915) 396-2358.

**Oct. 20:** Cave Tours, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

**Oct. 20:** Cowboy Concert, Longhorn Cavern SP, Burnet, (877) 441-2283 or (512) 756-4680.

**Oct. 20:** Wildlife Demonstrations, Longhorn Cavern, Burnet, (877) 441-2283 or (512) 756-4680.

**Oct. 20:** Gorman Springs Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

**Oct. 20:** Native American Crafts, Longhorn Cavern SP, Burnet, (877) 441-2283.

**Oct. 20:** Walkfest, Lost Maples SNA, Vanderpool, (830) 966-3413.

**Oct. 20:** Gorman Falls Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

**Oct. 20:** Devil's Waterhole Canoe Tour, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

**Oct. 20:** Catfishing, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

**Oct. 20:** Water Watch, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

**Oct. 20:** Living History Demonstrations, Inks Lake SP, Burnet, (512) 793-2223.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Plant Trees, Blanco SP, Blanco, (830) 833-4333.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Nature Walks, Garner SP, Concan, (830) 232-6132.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Interpretive Hikes, Garner SP, Concan, (830) 232-6132.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Open House, South Llano River SP, Junction, (915) 446-3994.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Birdwatching, Peder-nales Falls SP, Johnson City,

(830) 868-7304.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Interpretive Programs, Lyndon B. Johnson SHS, Stonewall, (830) 644-2252.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Open House, Kerr WMA, Hunt, (830) 238-4483.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Tours, Longhorn Cavern SP, Burnet, (877) 441-2283 or (512) 756-4680.

**Oct. 21:** Birds of Prey Program, Guadalupe River SP, Spring Branch, (830) 438-2656.

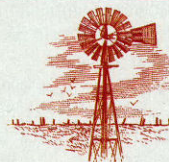
**Oct. 21:** A Day on the Frontier, Landmark Inn SHS, Castroville, (830) 931-2133.

**Oct. 21:** Guided Tours, Fort McKavett SHS, Fort McKavett, (915) 396-2358.

**Oct. 21:** Sinkhole Viewing, Devil's Sinkhole SNA, Brackettville, (830) 563-2342.

**Oct. 21:** Tours and More, Bright Leaf SNA, Austin, (512) 243-1643.

**Oct. 27:** Volunteer Trail-building Days, Enchanted Rock SNA, Fredericksburg, (915) 247-3903.



## PANHANDLE PLAINS

**Oct:** Llama Treks, by reservation only, Jordan Llamas, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, (915) 651-7346.

**Oct. 5:** John Muir: Legacy of a Conservationist, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.

**Oct. 6:** Wyman Meinzer Photography Workshop, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, (940) 552-6291.

**Oct. 6:** Dinosaur Walk, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, (915) 949-4757.

**Oct. 6:** Bike Trail Days, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 355-7224.

**Oct. 6:** "Indian Summer," Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.

**Oct. 6:** Archeology Fair, Fort Concho, San Angelo, (915) 949-4757.

**Oct. 13:** Stargazing, Fort Griffin SHS, Albany, (915) 762-3592.

**Oct. 13:** Nature Challenge, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.

**Oct. 13:** Volunteer Day, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.

**Oct. 13:** Owl Calling, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, (940) 839-4331.





**Oct. 13-14:** Panhandle Trail Riders Benefit Ride, Caprock Canyons Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.

**Oct. 19, 20:** Dinner With the Commanding Officer, Fort Richardson SHS, Jacksboro, (940) 567-3506.

**Oct. 20:** 16th Annual Palo Duro Trail 50, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 353-3847.

**Oct. 20:** Haunted Canyon, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.

**Oct. 20:** Pictorial Tour, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.

**Oct. 20:** Trailway Tour, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.

**Oct. 20:** Doubleheader - Bats and Starwalk, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, (940) 839-4331.

**Oct. 20:** Interpretive Program, Lake Colorado City SP, Colorado City, (915) 728-3931.

**Oct. 20:** Annual Pioneer Day, Abilene SP, Tuscola, (915) 572-3204.

**Oct. 20:** Cowboy Symposium and Celebration, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, (915) 949-4757.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Tours, Fort Richardson SHS and Lost Creek Reservoir State Trailway, Jacksboro, (940) 567-3506.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Open House, Lake Arrowhead SP, Wichita Falls, (940) 528-2211.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Park Showcase, Lake Brownwood SP, Brownwood, (915) 784-5223.

**Oct. 21:** Quitaque Quest Bike Race, Caprock Canyons Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.

**Oct. 21:** Youth Fishing Tournament, Lake Colorado City SP, Colorado City, (915) 728-3931.

**Oct. 26-28:** Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, Texas 4-H Center, Brownwood, (512) 389-8198.

**Oct. 27:** Kid Fish, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 455-1492.



## PINEYWOODS

**Oct. 5, 19:** Slide Presentation, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.

**Oct. 7, 14, 21:** Walk on the Wild Side, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, (409) 384-5231.

**Oct. 13, 27:** Guided Nature Trail Hike, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.

**Oct. 20:** Walk for the Park, Atlanta SP, Atlanta, (903) 796-6476.

**Oct. 20:** Tours, Caddo Lake SP & WMA, Karnack, (903) 679-3351.

**Oct. 20:** Nature Tours, Daingerfield SP, Daingerfield, (903) 645-2921.

**Oct. 20:** Interpretive Activities, Mission Tejas SHS, Grapeland, (936) 687-2394.

**Oct. 20:** Street Dance, Martin Creek Lake SP, Tatum, (903) 836-4336.

**Oct. 20:** Chili Cook-off, Martin Creek Lake SP, Tatum, (903) 836-4336.

**Oct. 20:** Annual Halloween Haunted Hike, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, (409) 384-5231.

**Oct. 20:** Music and More, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, (409) 384-5231.

**Oct. 20:** Dance Reunion, Tyler SP, Tyler, (903) 597-5338.

**Oct. 20:** Interpretive Trail Walk, Lake Livingston SP, Livingston, (936) 365-2201.

**Oct. 20:** Archery Demonstration, Lake Livingston SP, Livingston, (936) 365-2201.

**Oct. 20:** Hunter Education, Lake Livingston SP, Livingston, (936) 365-2201.

**Oct. 20:** Wildscapes, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.

**Oct. 20:** 2nd Annual Lone Star Legacy Benefit Dinner, Old Sabine Bottom WMA, Tyler, (903) 566-1626.

**Oct. 20:** Interpretive Programs, Huntsville SP, Huntsville, (936) 295-5644.

**Oct. 20:** Saw Mill Demonstration, Lake Livingston SP, Livingston, (936) 365-2201.

**Oct. 20:** March for the Parks Walkathon, Lake Bob Sandlin SP, Pittsburg, (903) 572-5531.

**Oct. 20:** Lone Star Legacy Hike, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Vintage Clothing Display, Starr Family SHS, Marshall, (903) 935-3044.

**Oct. 21:** 8th Annual Murder on the DisOriented Express, Texas State Railroad SHS, Rusk, (800) 659-3484.

**Oct. 27:** Floating the Forks, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper, (409) 384-5231.



## PRAIRIES AND LAKES

**Oct:** Birding and Nature Hike, call for dates, Buescher SP, Smithville, (512) 237-2241.

**Oct:** Guided Nature Hikes, call for dates, Buescher SP, Smithville, (512) 237-2241.

**Oct:** Birding Hike, call for dates, Bastrop SP, Bastrop, (512) 321-2101.

**Oct:** Guided Nature Hikes, call for dates, Bastrop SP, Bastrop, (512) 321-2101.

**Oct:** Ranger Talk and Lost Pines Slide Show, call for dates, Bastrop SP, Bastrop, (512) 321-2101.

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

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

**Oct:** Kreische Brewery Tours, every Saturday and Sunday. Also available other days by advance reservation, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.

**Oct. 6:** Sunset Nature Hike, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, (903) 395-3100.

**Oct. 6:** Outdoor Photography, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-6505.

**Oct. 7, 14:** Kreische House Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.

**Oct. 13:** Stagecoach Days, Fanthorp Inn SHS, Anderson, (936) 873-2633.

**Oct. 13:** Creatures of the Night, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, (903) 945-5256.

**Oct. 13:** Lost Wonders of East Texas, Purts Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.

**Oct. 14:** Eisenhower Birthday Celebration, Eisenhower Birthplace SHS, Denison, (903) 465-8908.

**Oct. 20:** Park Tours, Rusk/Palentine SP, Rusk, (903) 683-5126.

**Oct. 20:** Fall Festival, Stephen F. Austin SHS, San Felipe, (979) 885-3613.

**Oct. 20:** Concert in the Park,

Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.

**Oct. 20:** Nature Hikes, Ray Roberts Lake SP/Isle du Bois Unit, Pilot Point, (940) 686-2148.

**Oct. 20:** Wild Game Dinner, Purts Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.

**Oct. 20:** Ottine Swamp Fest, Palmetto SP, Gonzales, (830) 672-3266.

**Oct. 20:** Outdoor Fun, Buescher SP, Smithville, (512) 237-2241.

**Oct. 20:** Discovery Day, Mother Neff SP, Moody, (254) 853-2389.

**Oct. 20:** Outdoor Fun, Bastrop SP, Bastrop, (512) 321-2101.

**Oct. 20:** Texas Naturalists Past and Present, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHS, Washington, (936) 878-2214.

**Oct. 20:** Jack's Creek Bluegrass Jamboree, Confederate Reunion Grounds SHS, Mexia, (254) 562-5751.

**Oct. 20:** 1st Annual Lone Star Legacy Archery Shoot, Gus Engeling WMA, Tennessee Colony, (903) 928-2251.

**Oct. 20:** Charity Golf Tournament at Area Golf Course, Eisenhower SP, Denison, (903) 465-1956.

**Oct. 20:** Charity Golf Tournament at Area Golf Course, Eisenhower Birthplace SHS, Denison, (903) 465-8908.

**Oct. 20:** Cowboy Campfire, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 327-8950.

**Oct. 20:** Nature Program, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 327-8950.

**Oct. 20:** Interpretive Programs, Cooper Lake SP/Doctors Creek Unit, Cooper, (903) 395-3100.

**Oct. 20:** Wildlife Demonstration, Meridian SP, Meridian, (254) 435-2536.

**Oct. 20:** Bike Ride, Cleburne SP, Cleburne, (817) 645-4215.

**Oct. 20:** Garbage, Where Can It Go? Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-6505.

**Oct. 20:** Outdoor Heritage Extravaganza, Fort Parker SP, Mexia, (254) 562-5751.

**Oct. 20:** Fun Day, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, (903) 945-5256.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Kreische Brewery Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Outdoor Variety, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-6505.







**Oct. 20, 21:** Raffle, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, (903) 676-BASS.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Come to the Park, Fairfield Lake SP, Fairfield, (903) 389-4514.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Kreische House Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, La Grange, (979) 968-5658.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Open House, Meridian SP, Meridian, (254) 435-2536.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Waterfowl Observation, Bonham SP, Bonham, (903) 583-5022.

**Oct. 20, 27:** Haunted House, Puritis Creek SP, Eustace, (903) 425-2332.

**Oct. 21:** Single Track Mountain Bike Race, Ray Roberts Lake SP/Johnson Branch Unit, Valley View, (940)637-2294.

**Oct. 21:** Outdoor Sportsman's Rodeo, Lake Somerville SP & Trailway/Nails Creek Unit, Led-

better, (979) 289-2392.

**Oct. 21:** Campfire Programs, Lake Somerville SP & Trailway/Nails Creek Unit, Ledbetter, (979) 289-2392.

**Oct. 21:** Horse-Care Clinic, Lake Somerville SP & Trailway/Nails Creek Unit, Ledbetter, (979) 289-2392.

**Oct. 21:** Orienteering Meet, Bastrop SP, Bastrop, (512) 321-2101.

**Oct. 21:** Kids' Fishing Tournament, Lake Whitney SP, Whitney, (254) 694-3793.

**Oct. 25, 26, 27:** 3rd Annual Haunted Trail and Hayride, Stephen F. Austin SHS, San Felipe, (979) 885-3613.

**Oct. 27:** Critters of the Cooper Lake Area, Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit, Sulphur Springs, (903) 945-5256.

**Oct. 27:** Hike of the Day, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-6505.

**Oct. 27:** Falconfest, Fairfield Lake SP, Fairfield, (903) 389-4514.

**Oct. 27:** Storytelling Down in the Holler, Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway, Mineral Wells, (940) 327-8950.

**Oct. 29:** Horror at the Hatchery, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, (903) 676-BASS.



### SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

**Oct:** Kiskadee Bus Tour, Tuesday & Friday, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, (956) 585-1107.

**Oct. 19, 20:** Spanish Tracks and Trails, Goliad SHS, Goliad, (361) 645-1227.

**Oct. 19-21:** 8th Annual Legacy Bass Fishing Tournament, Falcon SP, Falcon Heights, (956) 8485327.

**Oct. 20:** Run, Walk, or Bicycle Across Dam, Choke Canyon SP/South Shore Unit, Three Rivers, (361) 786-3538.

**Oct. 20:** Children's Fishing Clinic, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, Calliham, (361) 786-3868.

**Oct. 20:** Walk or Run, Lake Casa Blanca International SP, Laredo, (956) 725-3826.

**Oct. 20:** Tree Planting, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, (956) 585-1107.

**Oct. 20, 21:** Feria Navarro, Casa

Navarro SHS, San Antonio, (210) 226-2801.

**Oct. 21:** Battle of the Bands, Choke Canyon SP/South Shore Unit, Three Rivers, (361) 786-3538.

### State Parks Offer Public Hunts

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

The following schedule lists the times and dates when public access is restricted. Call the park of your choice directly to make sure it will be open on the day you want to visit. Or call Texas Parks and Wildlife's information line, (800) 792-1112, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday Press 3 for park information or 2 for public hunt information.

**Oct. 14-19**  
Fort Boggy SP  
(903) 389-2514  
**Oct. 28-31**  
Hill Country SNA  
(830) 796-4413

SP	STATE PARK
SHS	STATE HISTORICAL SITE
SNA	STATE NATURAL AREA
WMA	WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

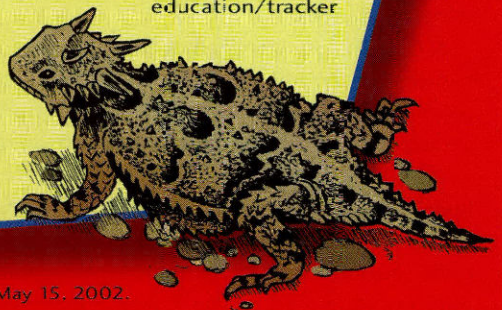
TEXAS  
PARKS &  
WILDLIFE

# Hometown Horned Toads Essay Contest

**WANTED:**  
your stories!

Texas Parks and Wildlife is sponsoring an essay contest open to students, grades 3-12, to document personal stories and do research about horned toads in their communities. Biologists hope student researchers and the memories they collect from community residents will provide clues as to why horned lizard populations have declined and how to help them make a comeback.

To receive an information packet that includes rules, suggestions for doing research and prizes, call the Wildlife Diversity Branch, 1-800-792-1112 ext. 7011, or check out our Web site: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/education/tracker](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/education/tracker)



Entry deadline is March 1, 2002. Winner announced by May 15, 2002.





# El Chupacabras!

The fable of the legendary goatsucker took Univision and Telemundo by storm.

BY MACARENA DEL ROCÍO HERNÁNDEZ  
ILLUSTRATION BY ARTMAN

THE NIGHT BEFORE I GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE, my mom lay in bed chasing after sleep. Her mind was racing. The next day she would watch me walk across the stage in a freshly ironed black gown and a smile wide enough to make my eyes disappear. At 22, I would be the first Hernández woman to leave La Joya, our one-stop-light town, with a college diploma under my arm that at the very least would get me a job in an air-conditioned building.

But it was fear, not anticipation, that stole her sleep.

That morning, my brother had found five sheep and 20 chickens dead at his Caldwell County ranch. Had it not been for the fang marks on their necks and the fact that the chickens were all lying flat on the ground, you would have thought that all the animals were sleeping in.

"It was ugly to see all your animals massacred all over the ground," lamented Olivia, my sister-in-law. "You have animals and you have expectations of chicken eggs, and chicks and all that. And there they were, all dead."

As soon as my mother saw the deep, punctured wounds in the shape of a colon mark on the animals' necks, she knew exactly who was the culprit. To her, it looked like the unmistakable work of — *El Chupacabras*.

She had seen the goatsucker — with its fiery red eyes, the powerful hind legs of a kangaroo, vampire-like fangs, long

And it didn't need to leave footprints to leave a mark.

After the *Chupacabras* was first sighted in Puerto Rico in 1995, it made a pit stop in Miami before making its rounds throughout the Americas. By the time it emigrated to the United States, what started off as a bulge-eyed animal with kangaroo legs had evolved into an even more hideous monster with membranous wings and claws ready to clasp anything.

In a matter of months, *El Chupacabras* became a national phenomenon, bigger than *La Macarena*. As with Elvis Presley, there were sightings everywhere. My mother and grandmother would sit in our living room flipping between Univision and Telemundo watching for *Chupacabras* updates.

"Ayyyy, eso es puras mentiras," I would say to them as I would pass them on my way to the kitchen, where food was no longer cooked. They were both too preoccupied making sure the *Chupacabras* wasn't headed to my grandfather's ranch in La Ceja, Nuevo León. With all the animals there, the *Chupacabras* would have had a big *pachanga*.

My disbelief was always met with the response in unison: "Shhhhh, muchacha."

There was no stopping it. The *Chupacabras* even found its way to Hollywood. The X-Files dedicated an episode to the infamous celebrity creature. (But I don't think they can take credit for adding another Latino actor to their shortlist. We really don't know where *El Chupacabras* is from.)

IN A MATTER OF MONTHS, *EL CHUPACABRAS* BECAME A NATIONAL PHENOMENON, BIGGER THAN *LA MACARENA*. AS WITH ELVIS PRESLEY, THERE WERE SIGHTINGS EVERYWHERE.

claws, lizard-like skin, disproportionately large wings and a weakness for blood — many times on the Spanish-language television stations.

*El Chupacabras* (literally translated means goatsucker) was named after the animal it first went after. But by the summer of 1996, it had become an equal-opportunity blood-sucker, going after almost any animal with an owner.

"They didn't even have their heads cut off. They just had holes on their necks," my mother said as she placed her right index and middle finger to her neck demonstrating the punctures. "But just like it happened at Pepe's, it was happening at other places, to other people. It doesn't leave tracks."

The summer of 1996 wasn't even over, and already corridos, rap and merengue songs were written about it. Had there been a goatsucking dance, Al Gore, wearing one of his Alpha-male suits, would have been dancing to it. The residents of Zapata held a festival in its honor. I don't think the honoree ever showed up. *Chupacabramania* inspired key chains and T-shirts, including one of the predator lusting over a voluptuous woman while saying, "*Chupacabras* cannot live on goats alone!"

"They even started making lollipops of the *Chupacabras*," recalled Olivia. "I remember eating one, and it was good. Get it, it was *chupa*, like 'suck,' because it was a lollipop."

continued on page 64





EL CORAZÓN



Love and Death

# EL CHULACABRAS



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El Cabrero

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continued from page 62

A Mexican woman in the state of Sinaloa disputed what looked like love bites as the work of *El Chupacabras*. Her accusations were met with disbelief. Most sane people knew the goat-sucker was not interested in human blood. In Mexico, stuffy intellectuals blamed the *Chupacabras* phenomenon on the government, a.k.a. the peso-suckers, as a ploy to keep *Mexicanos* from obsessing instead on their drained-out economy.

Still others argued that the *Chupacabras* was actually the abandoned pet of extraterrestrials who left in a rush. Puerto Rico residents, though, claimed the flying fiend had escaped the Arecibo Observatory, the world's largest radio-radar telescope, located in the northwestern part of the island.

My grandmother saw this demon-like creature as a blessing. "We are seeing so many things these days that we didn't see before because we are already living our last days (of the Bible)," *'uelita* Cecilia would say, lifting her right index finger into the air as she continued her thought. "I — maybe because I am old — have already told Jesus I am in his hands. Anytime he chooses, I am ready to go."

If the *Chupacabras* is a warning that the Second Coming is near and Latinos are the only ones who see it, maybe we *are* the chosen people. The man upstairs might very well want us to be the first in line. We might even score something better than Section 8 seats. This might be reparation for having to put up with non-Spanish speakers telling us where and when we could speak *español*. It could also be what we get for being forced to adopt the Taco Bell chihuahua as our mascot. But something tells me these puncture wounds go much deeper than that. After all, this might be payoff for having spent most of our lives picking somebody else's dinner vegetables.

"Before, you didn't see these things. Before, if these things happened, we never found out. How could we?" says *'uelita* Cecilia as she lowers her voice and lifts her finger to make her point. "But that was before we got electricity. After we got electricity, then we started watching television." ★

# TEXAS

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# SIGHTS AND SOUNDS



The Front Line of News and Views



## TELEVISION

### Look for These Stories in the Coming Weeks:

#### Sept. 30 – Oct. 7:

Exploring the underwater flower gardens of the Gulf of Mexico; desert springs in Big Bend; visit to a bird sanctuary.

#### Oct. 7 – 14:

The legendary Hallie Stillwell of the Big Bend, and the challenges that threaten the future of small ranchers trying to stay in business.

#### Oct. 14 – 21:

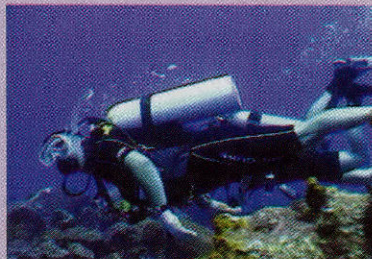
The kingfisher; the intricate web of Houston's waterways; rehabilitators helping green sea turtles; a biologist who helps manage Galveston Bay; watching birds at the garbage dump.

#### Oct. 21 – 28:

Brian Duplechain, a fishing guide at the "Bass Fishing Capital of the World"; the vanishing Houston toad; water conservation in the home; Clarence Porse, a volunteer at Sea Center in Lake Jackson; the Rio Grande turkey.

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**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. / Sat. 5 p.m.

**Corpus Christi:** KEDT, Ch. 16 / Sun. 11 a.m. / Thurs. 1 p.m.

**El Paso:** KCOS, Ch. 13 / Sat. 5:30 p.m.

**Dallas-Fort Worth:** KERA, Ch. 13 / Fri. 1:30 p.m. Also serving Abilene, Denton, Longview, Marshall, San Antonio, Texarkana, Tyler, Wichita Falls, Sherman

**Harlingen:** KMBH, Ch. 60 / Thurs. 8:30 p.m. / Sun. 12:30 p.m.

Also serving McAllen, Mission, Brownsville

**Houston:** KUHT, Ch. 8 / Sun. 5 p.m. / Fri. 1 p.m.

Also serving Beaumont/Port Arthur, Galveston, Texas City, Victoria

**Killeen:** KNCT, Ch. 46 / Sun. 5 p.m.

Also serving Temple

**Lubbock:** KTXN, Ch. 5 / Sat. 6:30 p.m.

**Odessa-Midland:** KOCV, Ch. 36 / Sat. 5 p.m.

**Portales, N.M.:** KENW, Ch. 3 / Sun. 2 p.m.

Also serving West Texas/Panhandle area

**San Antonio & Laredo:** KLRN, Ch. 9 / Thur. noon

**Waco:** KWBU, Ch. 34 / Sat. 3 p.m.

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

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**Alexandria, La.:** KLSA-FM 90.7 / 5:33 a.m.

**Alpine:** KSRC-FM 92.7 / Thurs. – Sat. 9 p.m.

**Amarillo:** KACV-FM 89.9 / 11:20 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 / 8:25 a.m., cable ch. 23 / 8:25 a.m., KBST-FM 95.7 / 8:25 a.m.

**Brady:** KNEL-AM 1490 / 7:20 a.m. / Sat. 7:50 a.m., KNEL-FM 95.3 / 7:20 a.m. / Sat. 7:50 a.m.

**Bridgeport:** KBOC-FM 98.3 / 1:15 p.m.

**Bryan:** KZNE-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

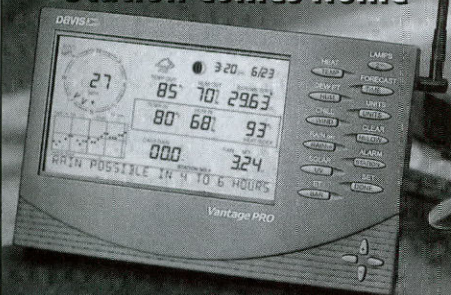
**Carthage:** KGAS-AM 1590 / 6:46 a.m., KGAS-FM 104.3 / 6:46 a.m.

**Center:** KDET-AM 930 / TBA

**Coleman:** KSTA-AM 1000 / 5:15 p.m.



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**Comanche:** KCOM-AM 1550 / 6:30 a.m.

**Commerce:** KETR-FM 88.9 / 10:15 a.m.

**Corpus Christi:** KEDT-FM 90.3 / 5:34 p.m.,  
KFTX-FM 97.5 / 5:35 a.m.

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

**Cuero:** KVCQ-FM 97.7 / 6:50 a.m.

**Del Rio:** KWMC-AM 1490 / 5:50 p.m.

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

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

**Dumas:** KDDD-FM 95.3 / 10:30 a.m.  
KDDD-AM 800 / 10:30 a.m.

**Eagle Pass:** KINL-FM 92.7 / 7:15 a.m.  
**Eastland:** KEAS-AM 1590 / 5:51 a.m. &  
5:51 p.m., KATX-FM 97.7 / 5:51 a.m. &  
5:51 p.m.

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

**El Dorado, Ark.:** KBSA-FM 90.9 / 5:33 a.m.

**El Paso:** KXCR-FM 89.5 / 12:20 p.m.

**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.,  
KFST-FM 94.3 / 12:50 p.m.

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

**Galveston:** KGBC-AM 1540 / 11:45 a.m.

**Greenville:** KGVL-AM 1400 / 8:15 a.m.

**Hallettsville:** KHLT-AM 1520 / 6:50 a.m.,  
KTXM-FM 99.9 / 6:50 a.m.

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

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

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

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

**Huntsville:** KSHU-FM 90.5 / 11:55 a.m.,  
5:55 p.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:** KLVT-AM 1230 / 12:05 p.m.

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

**Lufkin:** KLDN-FM 88.9 / 5:33 a.m.

**Marshall:** KCUL-AM 1410 / 6:39 a.m.,  
KCUL-FM 92.3 / 6:39 a.m.

**McAllen:** KHID-FM 88.1 / 4:58 p.m.

**Mesquite:** KEOM-FM 88.5 / 5:30 a.m. &  
2:30, 8:30 p.m. M-Th. (5:30 a.m. & 4:45 p.m. Fr.)

**Midland/Odessa:** KCRS-AM 550 / 6:15 a.m. &  
5:50 p.m.

**Mineola:** KMOO-FM 99.9 / 5:15 p.m.

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

**New Braunfels:** KGNB-AM 1420 / 6:52 a.m.

**Ozona:** KYXX-FM 94.3 / 6:22 p.m.

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

**Rockdale:** KRXT-FM 98.5 / 5:04 a.m. &  
6:35 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.

**San Augustine:** KCOT-FM 92.5 / TBA

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

**Shreveport:** KDAQ-FM 89.9 / 5:33 a.m.

**Sonora:** KHOS-FM 92.1 / 6:22 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 / 6:50 a.m.

**Waco:** KBCT-FM 94.5 / 6:05 a.m.

**Wichita Falls:** KWFS-AM 1290 / 6:15 a.m.

**Yoakum:** KYKM-FM 92.5 / 6:50 a.m.

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*continued from page 43*

Today the Canyon is of course much changed from its original state, if perhaps less than a lot of other Texas land. Brush Country vegetation has spread into places where once, as an oldster put it, "The grass was horse high and not a mesquite in sight." Cedars proliferating on overgrazed slopes suck away a fat share of the valley's water, shrinking the creeks and the river. And the range of wildlife species has been greatly impoverished. All of which ills, in one form or another, are common throughout our state and our country, the price we have paid for modern times.

There are still dozens of working ranches ranging in size from modest to eight or ten thousand acres. A few belong to absentee city owners, but surprisingly many are still in the hands of descendants of the old-timers, and nearly all are more carefully managed than they used to be, because of improved knowledge of how to handle land and livestock.

One small but very visible change dates back mainly, I believe, to the 1950s — the construction of concrete channel dams here and there on the river. These create pleasant, long blue pools that more or less duplicate the natural holes cherished by the old ones for swimming, fishing, revivals, and baptizings. But they can be hard on shoreline cypresses, especially, it seems, the larger ones, which often don't tolerate the change in water level, and die. "Cypresses," one local said to me with conviction, "don't much like change."



The Canyon possesses tourist attractions, chief among them its overall scenic beauty, epitomized in Lost Maples State Natural Area, which straddles the river's main fork high up in jagged, handsome country. There are some bed-and-breakfasts, a couple of them quite upscale, and one small motel. Utopia puts on an annual rodeo, with barbecues, that is much attended by outsiders. And plenty of lease-hunters show up in autumn to harvest the area's numerous if rather small deer, of which around 900 are processed each year at a Utopia facility. There is even to be a sesquicentennial celebration in 2002....

Yet none of this seems to have done much to diminish the place's essential peace and calm, which leads an observer to wonder why not. Why has its attractiveness not spawned the sort of frantic real-estate development and the construction of hotels, motels and gaudy fun centers that blight so much of the rest of our Hill Country nowadays? Why do the river's stately cypress corridors, where often the only sounds are the rippling of water and the songs of birds, lack windrows of empty beer cans and loud flotillas of inner-tubers?

Another, related question delves back much farther: why are the cypresses still here? How did the Sabinal manage to escape the effects of our forebears' addiction to their lumber ("the wood eternal," it was called), which demolished so many of those superb trees throughout the region?

What is it, in short, that makes this enclave so distinctively non 21st century?

I put these questions to a knowledgeable, educated younger local man, descended from one of the place's old

families and related to some of the other ones. He lives in a city now, but feels his home territory's pull, visits it often, and plans to bring his family there to live when he can do so.

He smiled and said the one about cypresses was the easiest to answer. Huge logs or even big loads of lumber couldn't be hauled out of the Canyon by oxen on the narrow, winding, rough, steep trails that used to be the only exits. "Mr. John Leakey lived here for a while in the 1850s, but then he moved over on the Frio where the town is named for him. He built his sawmill there, and you can still see some stumps."

As for the people's resistance to outside ways, he thought that might have derived from the same isolation, which was often hard on the early folk but also contributed to a sense of specialness and to the self-reliance we have noted, which got passed down. "Our people have been through too many hard times to be called self-satisfied," he said, "though there may be a touch of that."

This makes sense to an alien like myself. Nearly all of the true natives I have met on the Sabinal have been friendly and generous-spirited people, but there is a part of them that is hard for an outsider to reach. I think it has to do with their strong attachment to place, which used to be common among rural Americans but is less and less so now, and with an awareness that outsiders, however sympathetic, are still outsiders, even if a number of quiet retirees and others who fit in do find acceptance. The natives' traditions, family memories and ingrained awareness of their countryside's past constitute a mythology which, in W. B. Yeats' phrase, "marries them to rock and hill." They cherish their Canyon as an extension of themselves and their ancestors and, in the manner of the cypresses, they "don't much like change."

Or is that wishful thinking, and do plenty of natives actually yearn for wholesale, garish, and cash-generating change in their river and their surroundings? Looking at other valleys not far away, one has to consider that possibility.

The area's young people, raised with television and computers and much aware of a wider world, also pose a question. Will they be as protective of what is here as their elders have been, as aware of its mythology? The friend who answered my other questions says that after he graduated from Utopia High School, he couldn't wait to get away, and he adds that most local youths still feel that way, and leave. But in time, with the perspective that absence bestows, he began to see the valley's unique qualities and came to cherish his connection with it. And he believes that many others who leave gain similar insight and will want to return later on: "We leave as soon as we can, and then spend the rest of our lives trying to figure out how to get back."

At any rate, for now — despite the dents and scars of history, and whatever the reasons and prospects may be — the Sabinal Canyon is still blessedly, tranquilly and beautifully itself.

A lot of us, whether natives or strangers, devoutly hope it may remain so.

Will it? ☆





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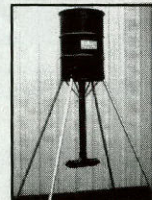
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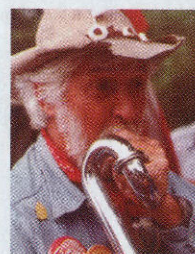
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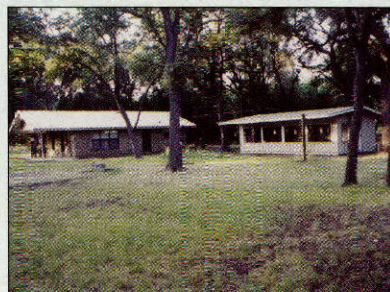
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Photographer Wyman Meinzer and author John Graves take a break on the Sabinat River. The product of their collaboration on this Hill Country waterway begins on page 36.



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