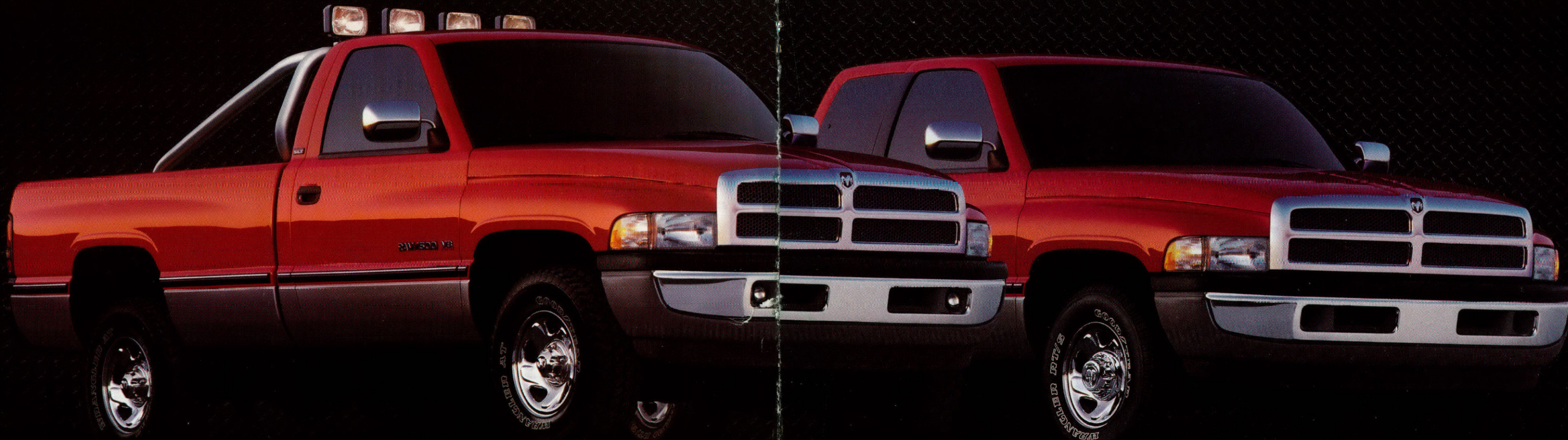


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# TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

DECEMBER 1995





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# AT ISSUE

I was introduced to the golden-cheeked warbler in the canyon at Honey Creek State Natural Area more than 10 years ago. In those days, this crystal-clear tributary of the Guadalupe River, along with 2,000 acres of its critical watershed, was managed by the Texas Nature Conservancy. The warbler, an endangered species few people had heard of at that time, builds its nest from the stringy bark of mature cedar (Ashe juniper) trees interspersed among the majestic cypresses trees.

In the ensuing years, protection of endangered species such as the golden-cheeked warbler has become intensely debated, not only in Texas but throughout the United States. Largely on the premise that rare species are indicators of ecosystem health—the proverbial canaries in the coal mine—we have expended an enormous amount of energy and capital in a controversial mission to save them. That premise is increasingly challenged and has threatened support for the entire conservation movement.

Fortunately, in the heat of the controversy over the past decade, Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists have quietly and effectively made major contributions to the conservation of nongame and endangered species in Texas. Using financing from the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund, Texas's first nongame wildlife management areas have been permanently protected at a Hill Country bat cave, in critical woodlots along the coast and in valuable habitat for neotropical birds in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The fund has helped establishment of the nature tourism industry in Texas that is bringing increasing revenue to our state through enjoyment of wildlife, and it has been used to acquire matching dollars for the Texas Private Lands initiative that has helped landowners save thousands of acres of habitat on their property.

And so, through the decade, our strategy has remained true to the days of Honey Creek. We must avoid spending all our resources on veterinarians to save the "canaries," and instead put our emphasis on the coal mine itself—the ecosystem.

So consider a 10th anniversary gift from the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund collection for a friend or loved one this holiday season.

The best wishes of this joyous time to you and yours from all of us at Texas Parks and Wildlife.

— ANDREW SANSOM, Executive Director

## IN JANUARY ...



© WYMAN MEINZER

- A photo essay showing how some of Texas's foremost outdoor photographers use fog's muted lighting to create memorable photographs.
- Bald eagles and where to see them this winter.
- Hueco Tanks State Park, one of the nation's top winter rock climbing sites.
- A visit to Engeling Wildlife Management Area.
- Masked ducks at Brazos Bend State Park.

DECEMBER 1995, Vol. 53, No. 12

## TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

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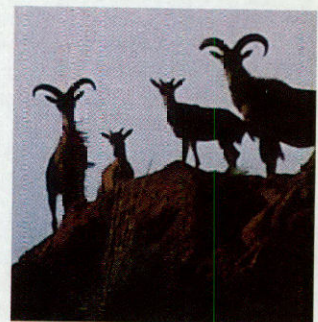
- 10** **GATEWAY TO THE GUADALUPE** Long popular with canoeists, the upper Guadalupe River is one of the state's most scenic waterways. Guadalupe River State Park provides access to the river for canoeists, swimmers and anglers, as well as a picturesque setting for hiking, picnicking and family activities. *by G. Elaine Acker*
- 24** **THE RACE IS THE THING** Fox hunting was ingrained in the lives of many rural East Texans, and their foxhounds were part of their families. *by Thad Sitton*
- 28** **TEXAS LOST** Texans have a special sense of place that stems from the diversity of lands and waters within our boundaries. *Texas Lost*, a new book written by Andrew Sansom and photographed by Wyman Meinzer, takes a look at the state's infinite natural wonders and the threats they face.
- 34** **RECLAIMING ROMA'S GLORY** Originally settled in the 1750s, the town of Roma contains an extraordinary concentration and variety of historic structures that reflect the cultural mixture that is the heritage of the Texas-Mexico border. Today several of Roma's architectural jewels are undergoing a facelift, thanks to a partnership of several public and private agencies. *by Jerry M. Sullivan*
- 44** **THE NONGAME DECADE** This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund, established to support management and research programs for the benefit of Texas's myriad nongame wildlife species. Sets of nongame stamps and posters featuring all the stamps are available in honor of the anniversary. *by Mary-Love Bigony*
- 50** **CARP OF THE DESERT** Aoudad sheep from North Africa were released in Palo Duro Canyon in the 1950s in the hopes they would be marketable game animals. But like German carp before them, these imports displace native animals and cause other problems. *by Russell Graves*



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## DEPARTMENTS

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## COVERS

**Front** Dawn breaks over the Canadian River and the remains of an unidentified outpost near the Texas-New Mexico border in Oldham County. Read about Wyman Meinzer's travels across the state to photograph historic sites for a new book, *Texas Lost*, on page 33. Photo © Wyman Meinzer. Canon F1 camera, Canon 20-35mm zoom lens, 1/125 second at f5.6, Fuji Velvia 50 film.

**Inside back** Ornate molded brick on the front of the Guerra Store is an example of craftsmanship by German-born Heinrich Portscheller, who designed and built more than a dozen buildings in Roma in the 1880s and 1890s. See story on page 34. Photo © Robert W. Parvin. Contax 167 camera, Zeiss 65mm lens, 1/125 second at f8, Fuji Velvia 50 film.

**Back** An aoudad sheep hunter uses a snowdrift for a stand in North Texas. See story on page 50. Photo © Wyman Meinzer. Canon F1 camera, Canon 500mm lens, 1/250 second at f4.5, Fuji Velvia 50 film.



## Beach Restoration

In keeping with your tradition of interesting stories was the piece, "To Build a Beach" (October). Permit me to clarify one issue. The article states that the Galveston project was the first beach restoration project attempted in Texas.

The Galveston District, Corps of Engineers, has been involved in beach restoration for some years with remarkable success, including the Corpus Christi North Beach, where a 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-mile beach had all but disappeared, leaving the waves lapping at hotels.

The beach was restored by the Corps in cooperation with the City of Corpus Christi with berm widths of 100 feet to 300 feet and an elevation of three feet. This was done in 1978 at a cost of \$4.4 million, of which half was provided by the federal government and half by the city. The beach remains popular today, with 700,000 or more visitors annually.

In other areas along the Texas coast the Corps has actively pursued "beneficial uses of dredged material" projects, where dredged material is used for beach restoration. Results can be seen at Surfside beach, Port Mansfield jetties, the mouth of the Colorado River and Port O'Connor.

Ken Bonham  
Corps of Engineers  
Galveston

## Caddo Birds

Talk about astonishing coincidences: the day I returned to work after a trip to Texas and my first visit to Caddo Lake, I saw a copy of the July 1993 issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* atop a stack of aging magazines in the Fairfield, California courthouse. This issue had a great deal of informative stuff about the lake's unique character, wildlife, etc.

My trip to Caddo Lake was principally to bird the lake and its environs. I continually was amazed

at the whole scene down there; it's extraordinary. I also was impressed by the quality of the birding. I especially was amazed at the apparent failure and/or reluctance of the locals to recognize that they're sitting on a birding gold mine. Adequately publicized and developed, there's an ecologically, environmentally and financially profitable opportunity to put Caddo Lake on the national map.

I, being an auslander, have no idea whether they're interested in bringing outsiders to the lake, but it seems to me that if they are, the most appreciative and least environmentally threatening group they could hope to attract would be the ever-growing community of American (and for that matter international) birders.

Herb McGrew  
Imola, California

## One-armed Ranger

We enjoyed the fine article by E. P. Haddon in the August issue, "Trek of the Tenderfoot."

Mr. Haddon wrote that Arch Miller was "the state's only one-armed Texas Ranger." Apparently Mr. Haddon was not aware of Ranger Captain Bryan Marsh who served in the 1880s.

In the Battle of New Hope Church in 1864, Bryan Marsh, then a colonel in the Confederate Army, was severely wounded, one hand badly mangled and the other amputated at the shoulder. After the war Marsh served as sheriff of Smith County for several years. In 1880 he was appointed to the Texas Ranger force by Governor Oran M. Roberts. In December 1880, Captain Marsh was placed in command of Company B, Frontier Battalion, replacing Captain Ira Long, who had resigned.

Captain Marsh is listed in the Ranger Hall of Fame in Waco. Due to his physical condition he was unable to use a gun, and his accomplishments were the results of courage and leadership.

Loy J. Gilbert  
Tyler

## Strange Dove

We have a small ranch in Medina County. Last spring we noticed the call of a dove different from that

of the mourning dove, white-winged dove, Inca or ground dove. We finally spotted the bird making this call, and have identified it as a ringed turtle-dove.

According to a book by the Audubon Society, this is a Southern Asian species and was a cage bird in Europe and the Orient. Its range is said to be Los Angeles, California, escaped from captivity. It is also said to be established in southern Florida.

We wondered if you had heard of other sightings, whether the bird has spread this far or if it might just be another local escapee.

E.A. "Tony" Leinweber  
San Antonio

■ Biologist Noreen Damude responds: "You may indeed have spotted a ringed turtle-dove. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish this species from a close relative, also a nonnative, the Eurasian collared-dove. Both have been observed in Texas. Both are popular cage birds throughout the world and both have been known to escape or be released.

"The Eurasian collared-dove is a Middle Eastern bird that has undergone a rapid range expansion over the last 50 years into Europe and parts of North America. Populations have been increasing geometrically where the bird has become established. By contrast, the ringed turtle-dove is an entirely domestic bird. This tame and pretty bird has lost its ability to disperse and flourish in the wild and has no natural reproducing populations anywhere. A few feral populations of escapees can establish themselves near the site of their escape or release and can persist in neighborhoods where they are bountifully fed.

"My guess is that your bird is more likely a Eurasian collared-dove, but a closer look needs to be taken. Complicating the issue is the fact that these two species interbreed, creating hybrids. The Eurasian collared-dove appears to be genetically swamping the ringed turtle-dove."

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

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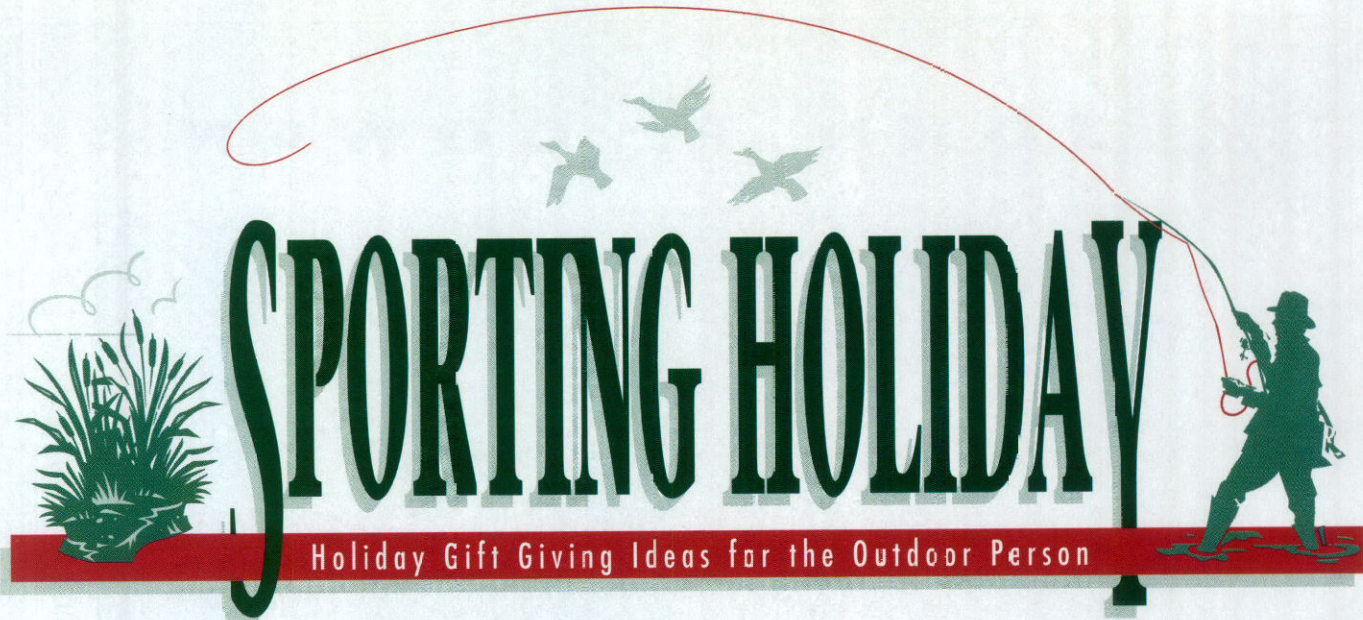
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# SPORTING HOLIDAY

Holiday Gift Giving Ideas for the Outdoor Person

**I**n many languages and cultures, the holidays celebrate family traditions. Platters of chocolate crinkle cookies, pitchers of egg nog and steaming plates of the season's best flavors adorn the dinner table, and everyone sneaks a peek at name tags, gently shaking the colorful boxes that hold carefully chosen gifts.

It's the commercial side of the holidays—the crowds, the traffic and the tug at the wallet—that can dampen holiday spirits, but a simple walk in the woods and a thoughtful look at gift ideas for those in love with Texas's outdoors can quickly brighten the holiday mood.

Despite a hectic schedule of deadlines, some of Texas's favorite outdoor writers spend most of the holiday season outdoors. "Newspapers are like convenience stores," said Shannon Tompkins of the *Houston Chronicle*. "They're open 365 days a year." Tompkins and fellow writers Ray Sasser (*Dallas Morning News*), Buddy Gough (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*), and Mike

Leggett (*Austin American Statesman*) all are hunters who refer to their respective parts of the state as "God's Country."

"I really love to duck hunt in the marshes along the coast," said Tompkins. "Just being outdoors at this time of year is an almost religious experience." Ray Sasser spends time roaming the deep canyons and rugged hills of Shackelford County. "I'm thankful for all the wild country that's still out there," he said. "The Indians and settlers hunted here to satisfy a physical hunger. We're hunting to satisfy a psychological hunger, and to remain in touch with those things wild and wonderful."

The hunters often bring wild game to the holiday table. "There are two things high on my list," said Buddy Gough. "One is a venison backstrap cut like a filet mignon and wrapped with bacon and grilled. It doesn't get any better than that unless it's a feral shoat, a young feral pig that weighs in the range of 30 to 60 pounds. Whenever I serve one at Christmas there's nothing left

but a little skin and bone." Gough also puts a hunter's twist on an old South Texas tradition—tamales. "My wife and I take venison to a custom tamale maker and have venison tamales made to share with our friends. They're special because you can't get them anywhere. Some people bake cookies—some would rather have venison tamales. The holidays and wild game go hand in hand, but if we don't have wild game, I'll take a regular turkey and cook it on the grill. We outdoor folks aren't happy unless we're cooking over a fire."

Sasser suggests other menu items: duck gumbo, fried quail or pheasant. Mike Leggett remembers squirrel hunting in East Texas as a child, and dishes of squirrel and dumplings. "It's incredible how good it is, and it's pretty simple, as long as you know how to make the dumplings," he said. "I like to cook them at my house, but I still have to call my mother every time I make dumplings."

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Leggett fondly remembers Christmases spent while growing up in Carthage, and special holiday gifts. “My mother and father once gave me a pair of hunting pants—the old-style canvas pants with the lining outside,” said Leggett. “You can walk through thorns in those without getting stuck and bleeding to death. I only wore them one time before leaving for college. The next fall, I came home for the opening of deer season and wanted to wear my new pants. I asked my mother where they were, and got a funny look. I searched the house, then asked again. This time, she and my dad started giggling. I looked in the closet and they were rolled up like a towel. When I unrolled

them, they might have reached my knees. They had shrunk in the wash. The waist fit, but the legs shrank. My dad and I tugged on those to try to get them below my knees, and I wore them anyway.”

Clothing (appropriately sized!) is an ever-popular gift item. “I think people who are seriously into hunting and fishing are the easiest people in the world to buy for,” said Sasser. “I know, because I’m one of them! I put together a list of gift ideas each year for the newspaper. Some are silly, some are serious, and some are seriously expensive. But one of the things that keep cropping up are the tools such as the Leatherman or the Gerber tools. They’re like a Swiss Army

knife with pliers, screwdrivers, can openers. I never realized how useful they are until I had one. They cost from \$39 to \$59, so they’re in a really nice price range. Another thing on my list of gift ideas is a mini flashlight. One of the reasons they’re on the list is I keep losing them, but they’re handy for going to a deer blind before daylight. And they’re only \$12 to \$14.”

Leggett suggests buying a person items that they already own. “By that I mean that if they have a certain brand fishing rod, you can’t go wrong buying them another rod of the same brand. If they have a certain camouflage pattern, you can buy them something in that same pattern. You can never have enough





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The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department also offers gift giving opportunities, making items available for sale through state parks and through the department's gift catalog, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Collection. Contact the state park nearest you for information on available gift items, or call 1-800-786-8644 for a catalog. The fall Texas Parks and Wildlife Collection catalog offers a wide selection of distinctive items in a variety of price ranges. Included in the catalog are clothing, leather goods, foods, pottery, books, jewelry, toys, weekend getaways and unique

gift ideas, such as a stone jackrabbit and fossilized limestone bookends. Many of the products are made in Texas and represent the state's rich cultural heritage and natural bounty. Purchases from the catalog benefit the conservation of wildlife, natural lands and historic places in Texas.

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Happy holidays to our outdoor family, from the staff of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine!



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**G**ateway  
to the Guadalupe

**The controversial opening  
of Guadalupe River State Park  
in 1983 assured canoeists  
and other recreationists they  
would have access to one of  
Texas's most scenic stretches  
of river.**

**By G. Elaine Acker**



© GRADY ALLEN

**Guadalupe River State Park is on a 20-mile stretch of water that receives some of the heaviest use by recreationists in the entire state.**

Paddle a canoe down the Guadalupe River, and you will feel a swirl of emotion flowing along in the moving currents. The upper Guadalupe River, with its trademark towering cypress trees and tangled masses of roots, limestone bluffs and diverse wildlife inspires joy, conflict and sometimes sadness, but the romance of the river pulls visitors back to her banks time and time again.

The North Fork of the 250-mile-long Guadalupe River begins 12 miles west of Hunt, within the boundaries of the Kerr Wildlife Management Area. It

merges with the South Fork 12½ miles downstream of the spring, one mile east of Hunt, forming Texas's most heavily utilized recreational river. Landowners guard her jealously, canoeists rejoice in her beauty and families turn to the Guadalupe to feel a connection with nature their grandparents knew.

Guadalupe River State Park, located in the middle of a 20-mile stretch of river popular with canoeists, provides access to the river's scenic beauty and recreational opportunities. But had events unfolded differently, there might

never have been a Guadalupe River State Park. Yesterday's political follies often make today's best campfire lore, and Guadalupe River State Park's shaky beginnings are a classic testament to human nature.

Park Superintendent Duncan Muckelroy is an avid canoeist who, while working for the Texas Historical Commission in the 1970s, was asked to guide a group from the 1975 legislative delegation on a canoe trip along the upper Guadalupe River. "The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department had expressed an interest in acquiring 600 acres of land and opening a park on the upper Guadalupe," said Muckelroy. "But many local landowners opposed the park because of the conflicts between canoeists and landowners along the river." Muckelroy's group put in at the Edge Falls Road crossing above the area that now is parkland, and enjoyed a nine-mile canoe trip that included a picnic on a cypress-shaded gravel bar.

"We had about 22 canoes," said Muckelroy. "We took out at the Spring Branch crossing farther downstream, and carpooled back to our vehicles at Edge Falls Road." Some of the cars parked at the Edge Falls crossing sported the red legislative license plates. Others, however, did not. "When we got back to Edge Falls Road, all of the cars without red state plates had been impounded by the Kimball County Sheriff's office," he said. "It was another instance where a local property owner was unhappy with people using the river for recreational purposes. He had called the sheriff's office and had the vehicles towed."

Legislative tempers flared, and after a series of angry phone calls to high-ranking officials, the matter was resolved

and the group moved to reclaim their cars. "One of our more powerful constituents went over to the deputy sheriff, leaned down, and said, 'You can tell your people they just got themselves a state park. And it's going to be for the canoeists!'" In that session, the legislature directed the state to acquire parkland in that area, guaranteeing recreational access to the upper Guadalupe River.

While canoeists have become an accepted part of life on the river, there still are conflicts between landowners and canoeists or tubers as a result of trespassing. According to state law, the river and the riverbed are state property, available to the citizens of Texas, but the banks are private land. Recreational users must respect private property.

Canoeing, swimming and hiking all are popular activities at the park, which opened to the public in June 1983, but anglers especially enjoy fishing here for Guadalupe bass, Texas's state fish. The Guadalupe bass lives only in Central Texas, including the Guadalupe River and Honey Creek. The small yet feisty fish is a species of black bass with distinctive black, diamond-shaped patterns along its sides, and rows of spots that form stripes on its belly.

In an effort to keep the river's habitats healthy, Park Ranger Deirdre Hisler coordinates the annual Upper Guadalupe River Cleanup, which started five years ago. Participants pick up litter and debris from those who dumped trash in or near the river and, to a lesser degree, from recreational users.

During the 1995 cleanup, volunteers collected tons of debris, including cans, clothing, washing machines, water heaters and more than 300 tires. "Some



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**A couple of the animals common to Guadalupe River Park and Honey Creek—a roadrunner and jackrabbit. Both parks are popular for wildlife observation, especially birding.**



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**Whitetails are abundant in the park, and visitors are urged to be cautious around mature bucks, especially during the fall rut.**



© GRADY ALLEN

**Perhaps this father and son have sighted a Guadalupe bass, a feisty member of the bass family, the Texas State Fish.**



© GRADY ALLEN

**There's more to Guadalupe River Park than the river. The park's roads and trails are popular with bikers and hikers.**

landowners have dumps next to the river," said Hisler. "During floods, the trash, abandoned appliances and worn tires all are swept downriver. Tires commonly have been used for erosion control, but those are quickly washed away." Scuba diving clubs have helped during the cleanup to remove heavier items from the water and the Boy Scouts sort the trash collected, providing a link between the volunteers and the recycling companies.

The enthusiasm of those involved with the cleanup and the community support is just one aspect of the family atmosphere at Guadalupe River State Park. "Each park has its own character," said Muckelroy. "And here, we've always been able to maintain a family-oriented environment. We don't have to make a great effort with our law enforcement patrols because our visitors usually are familiar with the park rules, and inappropriate behavior is quickly brought to our attention. That makes our job much easier."

While they save time in law enforcement, the park staff is now spending every spare minute developing marketing ideas that will enable the park to pay its own way. In 1993, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department accepted the challenge to become financially self-sufficient by the year 2000. As a result the parks (and this magazine) have begun to operate more like private businesses than governmental entities. The Entrepreneurial Budgeting System, or EBS, now allows revenue-producing divisions within the agency to actively promote themselves and use proven marketing strategies to achieve that goal. Guadalupe River State Park's success shows that this system can work. In the first two years of the program, they have

established a successful park store, and have formed a new nonprofit group, "Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc."

The store, named Swallow Bluffs after the old-timers' name for the day-use area, is housed in a small building adjacent to the park amphitheater. "Last winter, our volunteers cleaned out and repaired the building," said Joan Nitschke, park ranger. "We opened the second weekend of March 1995. We've tried to appeal to the basic interests with camping supplies, but we also have nice T-shirts and souvenir items. We've focused on natural things. We sell homemade jellies, and we stock science kits for children."

Volunteers are vital to the park's future. The park advertises nationally for four park host positions, and has formed the "Friends" group to generate local support. "Our Friends provided

many of the interpretive programs last year, and offered the first annual science camp for local schoolchildren," Nitschke said. "The camp evolved from school tours, and was offered for 500 fifth and sixth graders. It was an opportunity for hands-on learning. They handled reptiles and amphibians, and conducted water quality tests on the river."

The Friends group also has received a grant to restore the Rust House Visitor Center. The Rust House is situated at the trail head for Honey Creek State Natural Area tours (see accompanying article) and is used as an activity area for Earth Day events and jelly-making seminars conducted by naturalist Penny Solis, who leads many of the Honey Creek tours.

"Our Friends group is dedicated to the support of the park," said Nitschke. "And that support can be by raising funds,

by offering educational programs or by offering to volunteer for special projects. Our focus this year is the Rust House Resource and Visitor Center, which will be used as a meeting place and an interpretive center for visitors on the walking tour of Honey Creek." The group's long-range goals are to develop a regional resource center that will provide materials on the area's natural, cultural and historical resources, and share the joy of the Guadalupe River.

★

*ELAINE ACKER is a freelance writer living in Austin.*

**Canoeists and landowners have worked together to make family outings on the Guadalupe River an enjoyable experience for all.**

©GRADY ALLEN





© ROBERT W. PARVIN

**The only public access to Honey Creek State Natural Area is by guided tours each Saturday morning.**

## **H**oney Creek State Natural Area

Adjacent to the Guadalupe River State Park is the 2,300-acre Honey Creek State Natural Area. Originally acquired and protected by the Texas Nature Conservancy in 1980, the land was conveyed to the state for preservation as a State Natural Area in March 1985. According to the Nature Conservancy, Honey Creek State Natural Area's real importance lies in its potential as a "living reconstruction of a now-vanished Central Texas ecosystem: the live oak grassland." Park Ranger Joan Nitschke also noted that the area has provided valuable opportunities for interpretation and research.

The only public access to this ecologically sensitive area is through guided tours offered each Saturday morning. One- or two-mile hikes along designated

trails offer a leisurely look at Honey Creek and the surrounding terrain, and guides share their knowledge of the natural history, geology and flora and fauna encountered along the trail.

Visitors who hike from the trailhead at the Rust House Visitor Center toward the creek pass through distinctive biological habitats. The first is the classic Hill Country oak/juniper savannah where rugged limestone rocks pave the ground beneath twisting live oaks and stands of cedar. Below the Savannah is a gently sloping limestone canyon, home to nesting golden-cheeked warblers. The canyon is lined with a wide variety of trees such as cedar elms, Spanish oaks, pecans, walnuts and Mexican buckeyes.

"When you walk into the riparian ecosystem along the creek, it's like walking into a magical forest," said Nitschke. "Even local residents who visit can't believe what they see. The frostweed blooms in September, and then breaks open in the first freeze, forming

tiny ice sculptures." Farther down the trail, she pointed to a towering gum bumelia tree (the tree that provided Texas's first chewing gum), and noted the circular patterns in the bark, which was riddled with borings of sapsuckers. "Birders love it here. The San Antonio Audubon Society conducts bird surveys each week and is in the process of developing our new bird list."

Along the creek, thick mustang grape vines and Spanish moss drape the towering cypress trees that soak their roots in the blue-green waters. Texas palmetto, columbine and maidenhair fern grow along the rocky banks, and spatter dock floats on the surface, hiding a variety of turtles, frogs and Guadalupe bass.

Geologists appreciate the tour for the three strata of Lower Cretaceous rock exposed on the Honey Creek property. The Cow Creek Formation once was a shoal or beach deposit, and contains abundant marine fossils. The Hensel Formation is a river deposit composed of fine-grain sandstone and clays, and the most common surface layer is the limestone of the Glen Rose Formation. Geologists are especially fascinated with the extrusions of basalt. About 20 million years after the Glen Rose limestone was formed, molten rock surged upward through each of the formations, and oozed through fractures in the limestone strata. It cooled and hardened, creating outcroppings of black basalt rock, and attracting the interest of both professional researchers and amateur geology buffs.

Honey Creek State Natural Area has hosted Phase II sessions conducted by the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program. The program, sponsored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife



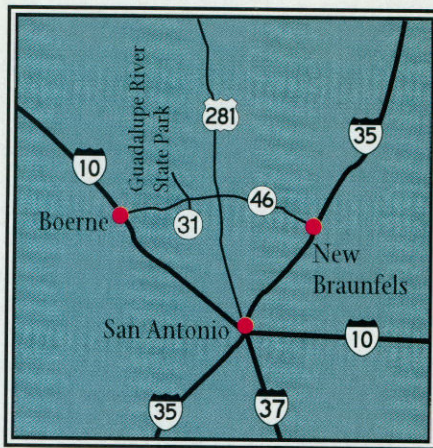
Department, began in 1993 with the goal of giving women a unique opportunity to experience outdoor activities and practice new skills. Each workshop offers introductions to a variety of activities including canoeing, rifle and handgun basics and camping. One of the most popular topics has been backpacking, and last February a group of women who had participated in previous basic backpacking sessions registered for Phase II—a rare opportunity to backpack across the Honey Creek State Natural area.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department employee Vernell Schievelbein participated in the backpacking weekend and enjoyed the wintertime peacefulness of the park. “The first evening, we hiked into the area, crossing the creek on a log, and set up camp above Honey Creek. The second night, we camped in a canyon near where the water made a turn around a bend. We always wanted to set up camp where we could hear the sound of the water trickling by. Honey Creek is such a pristine environment that we felt privileged and much closer to nature.”

## **G**uadalupe River State Park

Guadalupe River State Park is 30 miles north of San Antonio. Travel 13 miles east of Boerne on State Highway 46, or eight miles west of the U.S. Highway 281 intersection with State Highway 46. Turn north on Park Road 31, and continue three miles to the park entrance.

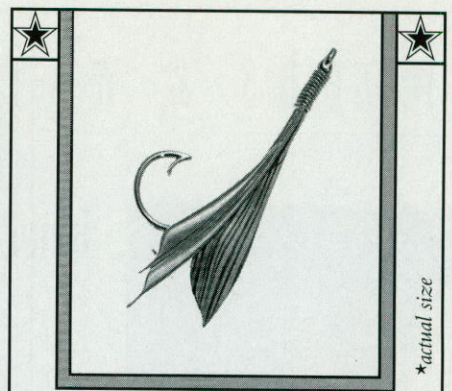
Currently, daily entrance fees are \$6



per vehicle. However, beginning in spring 1996, all parks will convert to a per-person fee structure. Park officials are pleased with the opportunity to introduce the new pricing system to the park's patrons. “We have not confirmed our prices,” said Duncan Muckelroy, park superintendent, “but we probably will recommend charges of \$3 for ages 13 and older. On weekdays, we have quite a few people visiting by themselves and we hope that this will be more equitable.”

Visitors enjoy the park's wide range of activities including picnic areas, three miles of hiking trails, river swimming, fishing, canoeing and wildlife observation. Facilities include a day-use area with 50 picnic tables, grills and drinking water. The three camping areas offer 48 electrical campsites with water; 37 non-electrical campsites with water; and 20 non-electrical, walk-in tent campsites with water.

For park information only, write 3350 Park Road 31, Spring Branch, Texas 78070, or phone 210-438-2656. Or call the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department headquarters in Austin at 800-792-1112. For reservations, call 512-389-8900.



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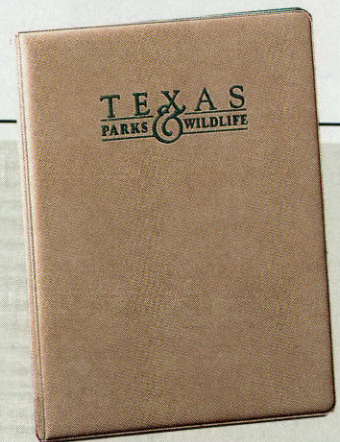
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## Binoculars

*A good set of binoculars can increase your chances of hunting success, even if you're not out in the wide open spaces.*

**B**ill Sheka Jr., serious deer hunter, credits expensive binoculars of the finest quality for his ability to bag a buck of a lifetime. Hunting brush country known to produce trophy white-tails, the Corpus Christi sportsman caught a glimpse of a buck showing only its neck and antlers at a distance of more than 300 yards. The hunter's large and high-power binoculars of European manufacture confirmed the animal as an exceptional specimen of its species.

Sheka went belly down on the ground. The ingenious hunter then placed his high-tech optics upright in the dirt and used them as a bipod to steady his rifle barrel, thereby deriving more benefit from his binoculars than many hunters get from theirs.

According to typical use, hunters' binoculars rattle around on a dashboard or hang from a nail in a tower blind until a four-footed animal of an antlered nature suddenly appears in the distance. The binoculars then are snatched up quickly and brought into hurried focus on the animal, usually just as its rump disappears from view.

The exercise represents the most basic use of long-range optics. It's called object identification, which essentially means confirming what the hunter

already has glimpsed with the naked eye.

This use shouldn't be minimized. It is helpful for distinguishing a bush from a deer at long range, but it can do more as well.

At a time when deer management programs are becoming the norm and hunters are becoming increasingly trophy-conscious, object identification can answer several important questions:

Is that fine looking buck a mature animal or a young one to be spared for another season?

Is that young antlerless deer a candidate for the table or is it a "nubbin" buck carrying the genes of greatness?

Are the antlers on that buck worthy of the Big Game Awards Program or just also-rans in the trophy-hunting derby?

Often, there are thousands of dollars and a ton of pride riding on the answers to those questions. Thus, object identification through the magnifying lens of binoculars can help hunters avoid mistakes in the field.

However, there is another and higher use of binoculars in whitetail range. It's object discovery, which is to discover what the hunter has not seen or is incapable of seeing with the naked eye.

This use of binoculars enhances the enjoyment of hunting, helps the hunter see more deer and increases the hunter's chances of memorable success.

If practiced long and often, optical object discovery can become what is known as the art of glassing. It is a characteristic of big game hunting in the sprawling Trans-Pecos region of West Texas, but it's an unsung art in the Brush Country, Hill Country and Pineywoods where sight planes are much more limited.

However, the visual limitations imposed by thick cover in

the eastern half of the state are precisely what make glassing a valuable practice.

Glassing essentially involves a visual dissection of the hunting area near and far, with equal emphasis on both distances. It further involves minute scrutiny of the terrain bush by bush, tree by tree and rock by rock.

In a Brush Country situation, for example, a hunter employing the techniques of glassing would use binoculars first to scrutinize the most visible line of brush. Next, the hunter would refocus the optics to peer 50 yards back into the brush, and gradually extend the range to the limits of visibility.

During the dissection of the hunting area, the hunter would be alert for parts of a deer, such as a white neck patch, a foreleg, an antler. The hunter also would be attuned to any suspected deer movement—a swish of a tail or the wag of an ear.

It's an exercise that can't be easily accomplished by holding binoculars offhand in the front seat of a pickup with a running engine, sending vibrations through the cab. The skillful glasser is a still hunter and a comfortable hunter with arms and elbows supported to hold binoculars to the eye for the extended periods of time.

The conduct of glassing may call to mind the image of a hunter positioned in a tower blind, but object discovery is also a good technique for bowhunters and horn rattlers whose sole object is to get close to deer.

This fact was brought out during a horn-rattling experiment conducted during the 1994-95 hunting season on a Brush Country ranch enclosed with high fence. The experiment involved a hunter rattling horns on the ground with an observer positioned nearby in an elevated tripod stand. Repeated horn-rattling exercises on the ranch

indicated a wide disparity between the number of bucks seen by the hunter on the ground and the observer in the tripod. The horn rattler saw only about 30 percent of the bucks seen by the elevated observer.

How many more bucks would the horn rattler have seen if binoculars had been used to scrutinize the surrounding brush in depth?

The closest many hunters come to the art of glassing is using their binoculars at dawn and dusk. The typical Texas deer hunter is middle-aged, and his or her eyesight isn't quite what it used to be, especially in low light conditions. So binoculars, with their light-gathering capacity, become necessary aids for detecting ghostly deer in the critical minutes before sunrise and after sunset.

However, there are many lighting conditions where extensive use of binoculars can be invaluable. A deer can be just as hard to discern in the low-light conditions of overcast, fog, mist and rain as in the twilight times of morning and evening. But contrasty days of bright sun and dark shadows also can present visual difficulties.

A cedar break may appear as dark as a tomb to a hunter looking from the sunlight toward the shadowy depths of juniper.

In the Brush Country, any hunter who has spent a sunny day hunting over a flat of prickly pear cactus can appreciate the hologram effect of shifting sun and shadow.

Binoculars can clarify these shadowy situations.

The practical benefits of glassing brings to mind a San Antonio sportsman, Earl Woodell, who hunted deer with bow and rifle on a 3,000-acre pasture of a large Hill Country ranch near Burnet.

The pasture offered a few wily bucks of mature age and impressive antlers and many oth-



BILL REAVES

*Binoculars come in various sizes, shapes and prices, but how you use them during your hunt may be just as important as how much money you spend. Regular prism binoculars and roof-prism binoculars, pictured here, both can help hunters see more deer. But roof-prism binoculars, in the center of the photo at left and in use in the photo at far left, are slimmer and more compact than regular prism binoculars, making them easier to carry.*

*Binoculars provided courtesy of Leupold and Wind River.*

ers with so-so horns. Yet, season after season, Woodell succeeded in taking one of the better bucks in the pasture while his hunting buddies settled for lesser animals. On one occasion, after claiming a high-tined 10-point-er with a 20-inch spread, Woodell revealed his technique: "I like to stalk hunt on foot in fairly thick cover, and my pattern of movement is about 10 percent stalking and 90 percent sitting. I might move only 200 yards in three or four hours. And I spend a lot of my time using binoculars. Most of the time, I'm not looking far, either. Maybe only 40 to 50 yards.

"In the daytime, I use the binoculars to see back into the brush and through the brush and trees, looking into the shadows, trying to spot deer. In the evening, I use my binoculars to extend my hunting time. On overcast days or in deep draws, twilight comes early, long before the end of shooting time. But with the glasses, I can keep hunting.

"When it's too dark to see 100 yards through the binoculars, I look 50 yards.

When I can't see 50 yards, I look 30 yards."

That's glassing.

BY BUDDY GOUGH

## Red Drum State Record Falls Twice

*After more than a decade of "catch and release only" for the larger red drum, biologists could have readily predicted a run at the state record.*

For almost 15 years it was impossible for a Texas angler to set a new state record for red drum (redfish) because of maximum length limits.

Now the rules have changed and the anglers have cashed in.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission, responding to improved redfish populations during the past several years, authorized establishment of a red drum trophy tag, allowing a license holder to retain one record over the maximum length limit of 28 inches. Return of the com-

pleted tag to the department resulted in issuance of a second tag for the year.

After the tag system went into effect on September 1, 1994, it took Darren Guernsey of Port Arthur only until the 21st of that month to set a new state record, a 53-pounder. Then, on September 3, 1995, Gordon Creel of Hardin pulled a 54-pounder from McFaddin Beach near Sabine Pass for the newest record.

After more than a decade of "catch and release only" for the larger red drum, biologists could have readily predicted a run at the state record. "I think we will continue to see new records being established and it's because of the conservation efforts of anglers that we now have this booming fishery," said Paul Hammerschmidt, program coordinator for the department's Coastal Fisheries Division.

The trophy tags are included on the annual fishing license. Anglers who turned 65 years of age on or after September 1, 1995, can obtain a trophy redfish tag by purchasing a \$6 Special Resident Fishing License and a saltwater stamp. Those 65 or older prior to September 1 may purchase the \$6 license in order to obtain the redfish tag.

## Dallas Nature Center

*Undiscovered by most Dallasites, this 630-acre facility offers a glimpse of what the region looked like before Dallas was settled.*

*Trails at the Dallas Nature Center wind through thick woods.*



© MICHAEL JAMES

Situated high on the White Rock Escarpment east of Joe Pool Lake in the southwest corner of Dallas County, the Dallas Nature Center is a 630-acre microcosm of native vegetation and wildlife that once populated much of north-central Texas. Although it is known to groups such as schools and nature organizations, the DNC often is overlooked by the general public.

The Claton Wyman family raised cattle and horses on the property from 1963 to 1973, calling it the Green Hills Ranch. In 1973 the Wymans sold the ranch to a development company. Soon the new owners realized it wasn't satisfactory for home sites, but had potential as a conservation area. They began promoting legislation to protect it from commercialization. The City of Dallas and Dallas County cooperatively purchased the property, and today the nonprofit Greenhills Foundation manages the property as the Dallas Nature Center.

Upon reaching the nature center's front gate, you'll leave the city behind and follow a winding road through native trees. Park in the clearing ahead, then sit for a minute. It will be hard to realize that suburbia is nearby. Follow a short path from the parking area to the Visitor Center/Gift Shop in the former ranch home. You'll find a guide leaflet containing a map and details about nature trails and center activities in a box posted by the path. No fee is charged to visit, but since the DNC is nonprofit they ask for a donation of \$3 per car to enter and 25 cents for the leaflet. Interesting items for sale

in the gift shop help support the center's activities. Interpretative displays are being constructed.

Fortunate visitors might chance to meet Dr. Geoffrey Stanford, the DNC's retired founding director, who lives on the grounds. He can tell you more about the plants and animals than you'll ever absorb in one meeting.

Offering a diverse geology, the DNC includes many soils and a terrain that are explained by the bulletin board at the Visitor Center. Consult the trail guide to choose those best suited to your hiking style. The selection varies from easy strolls of 1/4 mile to 3 1/2 miles of strenuous hiking down and up the escarpment. A new trail map produced with Global Positioning System and computer aided drafting will be available soon. It is an accurate satellite mapping system that makes hiking more enjoyable because of greater detail.

Most of the trails wind through thick woods of oak, elm, juniper and mesquite. Because the land was cleared for grazing during ranch days, much of the woods are reforestation; however, a few trails still have the early stands of large hackberry, post oak, prickly ash, black locust trees and an ancient cedar brake. In spring and summer, favorite Texas wildflowers, including bluebonnets and Indian paintbrushes, appear. You won't have to visit Hawaii to find orchids: several beautiful native varieties grow here. But please, don't disturb anything. Leave the center as you find it, to propagate for the enjoyment of all visitors

Those who want to see wildlife need to be more patient. There is a mix of animals common to North Texas including coyotes, foxes, bobcats and beavers. All are elusive, but you might see them near dusk or dawn. Bird-watchers may see black-capped vireos, an endangered songbird

that nests in the area and is being studied by the center.

Snakes are another matter. Most hikers don't search for them; however, all four poisonous snakes common to Texas are found on the property. They are the rattlesnake, copperhead, cottonmouth moccasin and coral snake. But don't let snakes keep you from enjoying the trails. For those who want to learn more about snakes, Daryl Sprout, the center's herpetologist volunteer, offers educational programs to groups and even brings live specimens to show.

The center's mission is four-fold. First is conservation and preservation of this ecologically rich area of Dallas County. Through careful management, native plants and animals live within a protected natural habitat ensuring their survival, while plants lost from overgrazing are reestablished. The DNC propagates native trees and plants and holds a fundraising plant sale each spring, encouraging citizens to use the native varieties for landscaping.

Education, especially for children, is the center's second mission. They accomplish this through programs, seminars and natural-setting experiences. It is unusual to visit the center without seeing a group of children eagerly exploring nature's wonders, especially in spring.

Third, recreation is the DNC's most obvious goal. Hiking and related activities are ideal for group and family outings. Nothing is more pleasant than resting by a gurgling creek before climbing back up a steep escarpment trail.

Finally, research is the Dallas Nature Center's continuing mission. The staff works diligently to return the area to its early condition by the study and restoration of native plants and trees. Their hope is that future generations will walk this land and



© MICHAEL JAMES

A representative from Last Chance Forever participated in the Dallas Nature Center's first annual Falcon Fest. The center plans to make the Falcon Fest an annual event.

say, "This is the way it was, long before Dallas was settled."

To reach the Dallas Nature Center, take the Mountain Creek Parkway exit off I-20 in south Dallas County and go south 2.7 miles to the entrance gate on your right. Trails are open daylight to sunset every day. Visitor

Center hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.

For more information about the DNC, write to 7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas, Texas 75249 or telephone 214-296-1955.

BY JEAN GALLIEN

## Expo '95 Attendance Sets Another Record

Almost 37,000 visitors of all ages gathered on the grounds of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Headquarters in Austin September 29–October 1 to celebrate the role of hunters, anglers and outdoor users in conservation.

Attractions at the fourth annual Expo ranged from fishing, shooting and rock climbing to

raptor demonstrations and other seminars and exhibits.

"I thought it would be hard to improve on last year's Expo, but I was amazed," said Andrew Sansom, TPWD executive director. "Sure, we were able to reach almost 37,000 people with our messages about conservation and outdoor recreation. But people also had a lot of fun out there. We created a weekend of family entertainment, and hopefully got some folks hooked on the outdoors in the process."

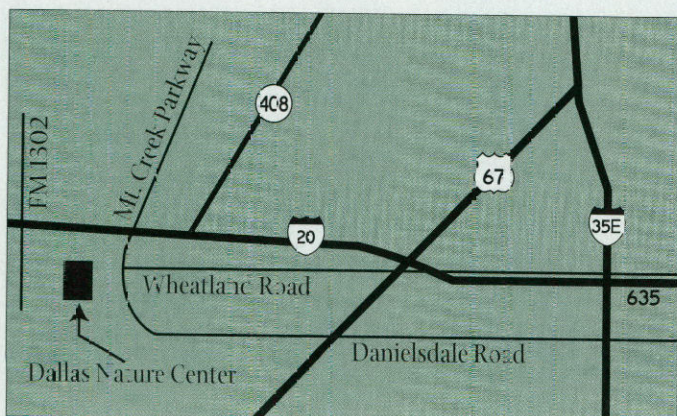
## Enchanted Rock Gets Entry Limits

Officials at the popular Enchanted Rock State Park north of Fredericksburg have taken steps to protect the park's environment by limiting numbers of visitors during peak times.

More than 350,000 persons entered the park during the past year, which exceeds the number for which the park was designed, according to superintendent Harold Lemons.

According to the new policy, once the park reaches capacity during peak periods such as weekends, holidays and spring break, it will close temporarily and reopen at 5 p.m. Park hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Persons with camping reservations for one of the 106 tent camping sites will be allowed to enter.

For more information, write the park at Rt. 4, Box 170, Fredericksburg, Texas 78624 or call 915-247-3903. For campsite reservations call 512-389-8900. The park is located in Gillespie and Llano counties on FM 965 north of Fredericksburg.



## Nature's Architects

*Biochemists marvel at the strength of compounds and structures created by some of nature's smallest creatures. Their handiwork even has spawned a new field of science called biomimetics or biological mimicking.*

Imagine having the power to spin protein molecules into silk threads stronger than Kevlar, the main component of bullet-proof vests. If you're a spider, it's something you do while waiting for dinner to drop in. What about secreting a suit of armor from sea water? If you're an abalone mollusk, you can crystallize calcium carbonate (chalk) into a shell with twice the strength of today's most advanced ceramics.

Consider also: rats with teeth so tough they can gnaw through aluminum cans; lizards and geckos able to regenerate missing tails; coconut and walnut shells that defy cracking; and bivalve mussels that attach themselves to rocks with a glue so strong it can

withstand hurricane-force wind and waves.

Attempts to understand how life forms use simple chemical building blocks to create materials superior to our most sophisticated synthetic composites and to accomplish biological processes that boggle the minds of our best biochemists have led to the development of a new science called biomimetics or biological mimicking. It has brought together researchers from fields as diverse as molecular biology, materials science, engineering, architecture, biochemistry, physics and mathematics, all sharing a common fascination with the precision, complexity and beauty of biological sys-



© GRADY ALLEN

tems. They hope to use nature's ingenious artwork as models for materials design and manufacturing of the future.

Yet even before this science acquired its tongue-twister name, engineers had been working in the field, copying nature's designs (perhaps coincidentally) as they tried to create more durable materials or better structural designs. Corrugated metal and cardboard, for example, mimic the ribbed shell pattern of the giant Atlantic cockle, a design that provides a much stronger supporting structure than the same surface area of materials molded as a flat surface. Stairs patterned after the spiral shape of shells such as the lightning whelk (the Texas state shell) allow architects to utilize a great deal of vertical space within a small area.

And if scientists continue to follow in nature's footsteps, they actually may accomplish much more than just creating new substances with superior properties. It's quite possible they also will develop ways to manufacture them that will not contaminate the environment. For example, Christopher Viney, a materials scientist at the University of Washington, hopes that his studies of spider silk will lead to better processing methods for Kevlar. This synthetic, insoluble, non-biodegradable fiber is manufactured in vats of boiling sulfuric acid under great pressure. The process is messy, dangerous and expensive. Spider silk, by contrast, is spun from organic, recyclable materials at earth-friendly temperatures and pressures, with water as a solvent.

More "sci-fi" is the dream of making superior synthetic materials that can carry out multiple functions. Stephen Gunderseon, a scientist at the University of Dayton Research Institute, envisions aviation parts such as heli-

copter blades and airplane wings patterned after the exoskeleton of the bess beetle, an insect commonly found in East Texas. These synthetics would be sturdy, wear-resistant and lightweight, yet could also sense damage and repair themselves in flight. What about medicines able to circulate, yet remain dormant within the body until exposed to cancer-causing pathogens? Suppose mechanical hearts could be fueled and controlled by the same food nutrients, hormones and nerve pathways that power other body organs? What about floating houses and furniture made of soft gels and fibers genetically engineered to be flexible? If patterned after the black willow—a tree common to East Texas—they could collapse without serious structural damage during tornadoes or hurricanes, then pull themselves upright after the storm passes!

Naturally, biomimetic scientists warn that such advanced materials and designs are years, perhaps even decades, in the making. First, they must unravel nature's biophysical mechanisms, and it won't be easy. In fact, no human laboratory can yet mimic nature's precise composite microarchitectural control. For example, multifunctional substances like wood, muscle tissue and bone are made from a handful of simple chemicals such as water, minerals, proteins and sugars. Each step of the design and construction process is carefully controlled by the nucleus of the living cell—from the assembly of atoms into molecules, to intermediate structures such as tissues, fibers or crystalline lattices to the final architectural masterpiece: a living organism. In contrast, human manufacturing methods usually work in the opposite direction, assembling large numbers of high-tech, complex compounds and putting them together in

comparatively simple ways.

More than any other scientific instrument, it is the electron microscope that has opened our eyes to the awesome intricacy of organic structures and processes. The abalone, for example, has long been known to make its own shell from calcium carbonate (chalk). But electron microscopy reveals that this ubiquitous material is secreted from the animal's fleshy mantle in tiny, ultra-thin sheets or platelets sandwiched between layers of protein matrix only 10 billionths of a meter thick. This highly organized "brick and mortar" design not only gives the shell a greater strength than today's most advanced ceramics, but also a much better resistance to cracking. Under intense temperatures and pressures, the abalone shell "bricks" seem able to slide over and under each other and deform or bend instead of splitting apart.

If scientists at the University of Washington, led by Mehmet Sarikaya, can mimic this design (which enhances the strength of chalk by a factor of 20), the durability of synthetic ceramics might be improved by at least a factor of five. Already, a new composite made of boron carbide and aluminum patterned in the "brick and mortar" fashion has shown early promise as a superior tank armor.

Biomimetics has also given birth to a synthetic elastin, modeled after a flexible protein found in skin and other body tissues. Developed by biophysicist Dan Urry at the University of Alabama, this material has been shown (in tests on laboratory rats) to help prevent the formation of adhesions, abnormal fibrous tissues that connect internal organs and tissues after surgery. With slight changes, this "psuedo-elastin" also may be useful as a temporary framework for the repair of damaged tissue.

Will biomimetic materials developed from living models one day move technology beyond the petroleum-based fibers and plastics that now permeate our culture? At this point, we can only speculate about the possibilities. In the meantime, we find ourselves returning to the oceans, the forests and the deserts for a closer look at animals so often disdained as the "creepy crawlies" of the natural world, hoping to find new solutions for our worrisome environmental, medical and industrial problems. Nature can only smile at the irony.

BY JANET R. EDWARDS

## TPWD Offers Special Wildlife Credit Card

Lovers of the great outdoors can feel a little better about charging their next meal, motel room or merchandise now that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is offering a VISA card.

A percentage of each purchase made with the TPWD charge card will go to help fund TPWD projects. In addition, the agency will receive \$2.50 for every approved application.

Customers may choose from one of three photographic images that pay tribute to hunting, fishing and the beauty of state parks. There is no annual fee and a fixed rate of 13.9 percent is offered through August 31, 1998, at which time a variable rate will apply.

The TPWD VISA card is being advertised in the agency's gift catalog, *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine and other outlets throughout the state. To receive an application, write Security State Bank, P.O. Box 521, Abilene, Texas 79605-9876 or call 915-673-8374.

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# The Race Is The Thing



Hard-running Walker hounds are engrained in the backwoods lore of East Texas: so beloved were these fox-trailing dogs that a prize hound's death was occasion for mourning and memorials.



by THAD SITTON

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Photo courtesy of Hinkle Shillings

Hinkle Shillings posed in 1955 with two of his champion Walker hounds, Bone Hill Granvil, left, and Judy, right.

In the old days, Texas hound-dog men pursued their quarry with something approaching religious zeal, and dog and hunter operated almost as a single unit. As J.R. Cockrell of Polk County once told me, "Something happens to a man inside when he hears his dog bark."

At times a fox hunter's attachment to an outstanding hound became as strong as his bond to human members of his family. An early resident of Cherokee County named Martin Palmer once summoned a Nacogdoches clergyman 50 miles to preach a eulogy at the funeral of his favorite hunting dog. Assuming the occasion was a death in Palmer's human family, the preacher made the trip, and when he got there he found Palmer and all his neighbors gathered around the deceased. Assessing the mood of the crowd, the clergyman did his duty.

The historian who reported this occasion in *Farm and Ranch* magazine in 1900 assumed Martin Palmer staged this affair as a joke, but he probably was wrong. Links between hunter and hound can be far stronger than most people understand. In 1941, Hinkle Shillings' champion foxhound Dawson Stride ran himself to death in a fox hunt. As Shillings told: "Dawson Stride overdid himself and died in a race; it'd be a good way for a person to die." Shillings was not a wealthy man, but fox hunters who knew him and Dawson Stride contributed money for a large pink granite monument for his hound, and the marker became the nucleus for the National Hall of Fame Cemetery of Foxhounds in Shelby County. There, under granite and marble monuments, are gathered several score hunting hounds from across the United States.

Their number includes Choctaw ("Tough hound, he always gave it all he had"), Climber H ("A running hound with a running heart"), and Dawson Stride himself ("He will be remembered and appreciated as long as the chase exists").

Hinkle Shillings' experiences with dogs were typical of many rural Southerners. His father kept stock dogs, and as he grew up he began using them for hunting—first for 'possums, then 'coons. Then, on a fateful day in 1916: "I heard my first fox race, rode right through the streets of Center a-horseback and hounds from people that I knew and neighbors. I didn't have a hound at that time. The streets of Center was dusty roads going out to Crockett, that's six miles out from Center. Got out there and trailed all night but never did jump. Some of 'em, just 'fore day, they give it



up, spread their saddle blankets down, took a nap, but I never did take no nap. Then we run back through Center the next morning, up in the morning, with the hounds a-follering us. From then on, I lost my taste for 'coon hunting."

**H**aving followed the fox hounds one night in 1916, Shillings then followed them all the rest of his life. He won his first foxhound, Christmas Dawson, as a "premium puppy" for selling subscriptions to *Hunter's Horn* magazine. He later shipped her to Birmingham, Alabama, to be bred to a noted stud dog named Hub Stride. Then, Hinkle hit the jackpot: the first dog born in her first litter was Dawson Stride, by general consensus one of the greatest Walker hounds ever to bay a fox. At that point Shillings began a 60-year career of fox hunting, dog breeding, field trial competition and farming on the side. As he said, "I had a good hound business, I shipped everywhere the foxes run." He kept, on the average, 10 or 12 "brood gyms" and about 18 hounds in all. As Dawson Stride's reputation grew, strangers arrived two or three times a week to meet Shillings and to go hunting with him and Dawson Stride. Even at the end of a long day's work on his farm, Shillings never declined a hunt and, as he said, "I never did refuse to take Dawson Stride." Later, people from 14 states would contribute money for the Dawson Stride memorial.

Twice a week for several decades, Shillings took part in an informal hill-top fox hunt characteristic of hundreds of others across the Texas countryside. Late on Tuesday and Friday afternoons, hunters from the Good Hope, Sardis and Antioch communities walked or rode over with their hounds to a place known as Bone Hill. Then the hunt began: like all the fox hunters before them, they built a fire, loosed or "cast" their hounds and listened for the first dog to bay.

Only grey foxes lived in the woods around Bone Hill, and the hunters (and doubtless their dogs as well) knew many of them individually. They knew a given fox's territory, the tactics it probably

would use to try to "throw" the dogs, and approximately how long it would run before it treed. Fox hunters liked and protected their foxes, often putting out meat scraps along the roads or planting crops that foxes liked. They also discouraged fox trappers and imported foxes from outside for local release. This approval was conditional, however, since hunters distinguished between "good foxes" and "bad foxes." A good grey fox gave dogs and hunters a satisfying two-to three-hour "fox race" before the hounds; a bad fox went up a tree in a half hour. Dogs normally were called off when the fox treed or after a certain amount of time had passed, leaving the fox unharmed. However, after a bad fox had shortened the race by premature treeing several times in a row, hunters might lose patience, go to the treed fox, and "jump it out" for the dogs to catch.

After a while, as the Bone Hill fox men stood around their fire listening, somewhere out in the dark woods a hound "made a pick-up"—it "struck" a hot trail and "opened," began to "give tongue." Its owner knew instantly that the hound was his, and rejoiced. The other hounds "honored" this dog, rushed to him and began to "pack up." Soon, the fox "jumped" and the full clamor of hound voices began to drift up from the bottoms. Each hound had its own characteristic bark or bay, its own "mouth," which was well-known to its owner and often to other men as well. Some hounds had "chop mouths," others "squalling mouths," and still others "squealing mouths." For an hour, or two, or three, hunters stood and listened as the "grey ghost" ducked and twisted through woods, thickets and creek bottoms. If the hunt went on long enough, a few hounds got tired and fell behind, "potlickered," then "howled out" and slunk back to the camp. Usually no one said anything, but the hounds' owners shared their shame. Eventually, the fox ran up a "stooping tree," the hounds bayed "treed" and the hunters raised their horns to "blow them off." Nothing remained but to ride home, feed the dogs, eat breakfast and go to work. Fox hunters

often could be distinguished from the general rural population by the dark circles beneath their eyes.

A grey fox normally circled "from one bad thicket and briar patch to another" within a couple of miles of where it was jumped, so a fox race involving a grey usually never went out of hearing. Not so a chase of the imported European red fox, the "red ranger." A red fox might run for miles and take the hounds out of the hunters' hearing for hours at a

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Photo courtesy of Hinkle Shillings

An ad in *Hunter's Horn* magazine advertised the services of Dawson Stride's sire.

time. Weighing from eight to 22 pounds, the red fox's body was built for both speed and endurance: it easily could run in front of an onrushing pack of baying foxhounds all night and put on sudden bursts of speed up to 45 miles per hour. A red fox presented an extreme challenge to any hound, some of which died of exhaustion trying to keep up with it. Foxhound man Aubrey Cole observed, "Hounds ain't really supposed to catch

up with a red fox," and Hinkle Shillings added, "You can tell more what you're feeding a-running a red fox than any other game."

During the 1840s and 1850s, red foxes spread into Kentucky, and area fox hunters soon found that their older breeds of hounds—redbones, blueticks and black-and-tans—could not catch them. Determined to breed a dog that could stay with the red ranger, John W. Walker and Wash Maupin imported large English foxhounds and crossed them with local dogs to produce a slimmed-down American foxhound, which was called the Walker hound. The Walker was fast and enduring, with a "cold nose," able to smell out a cold trail, but its most characteristic trait was its determination. As Hinkle Shillings said, the men who created the Walker "didn't tolerate a quittin' hound." When a man launched a Walker on the trail of a fox or deer, it might run all day and run all night and it might never come back. Walkers got lost with some regularity and—like Dawson Stride—sometimes ran themselves to death on the trail.

After the Civil War, members of the Walker family moved to Texas and, in a double stroke of hound-man one-upmanship, they introduced not only the red fox that local "potlickers" could not catch, but the dog that could catch them. For many Texas dog men, their redbones, blueticks and the like immediately were demoted to "coon hounds."

There were other gospels in the fox-dog religion. Some hunters favored the Trigg hound, the Hudspeth, the July, the Goodman or the Birdsong—all swift, enduring American foxhounds—but most Texas hunters were Walker-dog men. They valued the Walker's determination above all things, and they were ready to pay the price of time spent waiting for it to come back. As Aubrey Cole summed up the Walker's character: "Endurance, don't quit, don't give up, hustle hard when they made a little lose to regain the trail and continue on and not fumble the ball. Just get up on his tail, get up there and get him! And

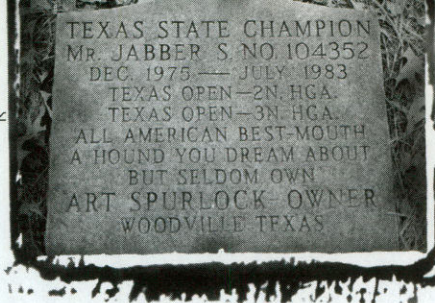


Photo courtesy of James H. Conrad

Monument of Texas state champion fox hound, Mr. Jabber.

my daddy said that he could stay as long as a hound can run; he was pretty much in favor of 'Let's wait for the dog.' I've watched the sun go down a-many a night waiting for hounds and hearing my daddy blow his blowing horn."

If the foxhound's virtues were a cold nose, speed, endurance, a good mouth, "fox sense" and determination, its potential sins were "babbling," "potlickering," "trashing" and "cunning-running." At the periodic field trial competitions, hounds were graded down or eliminated for these things, and since the failures of the dog reflected directly on its owner, some erring hounds were swiftly eliminated in a more ultimate sense. Field execution was something of a tradition among zealous fox men. A babbling foxhound barked when there was nothing to bark at, a trashing dog went off after deer, a potlickering hound simply quit and gave up. Cunning-running was a characteristic Walker-dog sin, a fault of over-competence; the cunning-running (or "skirting") hound anticipated the direction of the fox and cut across to take an unfair lead on other dogs. None of these sins were tolerated, or at least not for very long, and most hound men believed they had an obligation to purge evil from the holy bloodlines.

Field trials took place over three days. Hounds (with big numbers painted on their sides) were released before dawn each day, and by daylight judges were stationed across the countryside to observe the passing of the pack. They "scratched" dogs for serious misbehaviors, awarded demerits for minor ones and gave positive points for doing good work. At the end of the three days the scores were totaled and the winners announced. Field trials were (and are)

major affairs. On October 28–31, 1940, for example, the annual hunt of the Texas Fox and Wolf Hunters Association took place near Jasper. Three hundred prize hounds competed (including Dawson Stride), and well over 3,000 spectators attended.

Field trials offered formal competitions among men working through their dogs, but the common hilltop fox hunt also was such a competition. Significantly, hunters always spoke of it as a fox "race." Aubrey Cole eloquently explained this aspect of the inner game of fox hunting. "The thing is to be able to run that man's dog out, make him quit. Your dog stayed 'til the race was over, but they made that other one 'potlicker,' they called it. When that dog came out, he showed his stripe whenever you made him quit. That was the real big thing in fox hunting, is my dog to outdo your dog. We referred to it as, 'My dog is a-turning that brush loose so fast in your dog's face that he just can't stay there.' Usually, when a dog quit, when he'd potlickered, he'd hush. You wouldn't hear him any more. And in a minute you'd hear him go to howling. You'd say, Uh oh! Old so-and-so has potlickered. They've set the hair on him. He's come out."

Of Hinkle Shillings' thousands of fox hunts, his most memorable was a one-on-one competition between his dogs and those of a rich Lufkin fox-hound man named Carl Dupree one night in 1936. Dupree invited Hinkle to bring his dogs down to southern Angelina County to help him hunt a long-running fox. Dupree had run this fox many times and assured Hinkle that it not only would go all night but the next morning would "run off and leave the hounds." Then Dupree began praising his "bragging dogs," Cochran Chief and Calamity Jane, as hounds that had never been out-run except by this super fox—this way of setting up the competition with Hinkle's Dawson Stride and Dawson's sister, Pearl S. Of course Hinkle politely let it be known that he thought his dogs were the best.

The race for the super-fox started at dusk in the open "longstraw" pine forests near Weaver's Bend and went on throughout a long autumn night. By three o'clock in the morning, all of Dupree's dogs had quit except his champion bitch, Calamity Jane, but Hinkle told, "Them hounds of ours, I'll say, was just getting ripe, they was a-running that red fox." In the first light of dawn, the men cut the race off at a farmstead on a country road and waited for fox and hounds. Soon, they saw them approaching through the open longleaf woods to the north: "And we seen that red fox break cover and start down that hill. And the hounds was part-time looking at him. And it was just our hounds a-running, Jane had done quit." Desperate, the super-fox ran between the farm's garden and yard fence and into a field of corn with Dawson Stride and Pearl S on his tail, "and they caught the fox just 'fore he went into the woods."

Dupree proved a good loser, since he had the fox mounted and kept it displayed in his Lufkin Chevrolet dealership for the rest of his life. As Hinkle told, "The fox hunter hunts for the pleasure of hunting, they don't hunt for the kill," but this epic race had been an endurance contest to the bitter end. Dawson Stride died of exhaustion in a similar race five years later.

Although fox hunters normally called off the race short of the end, the deepest aspect of fox hunting's inner game was an ancient identification

of men with hounds as they pressed to the fight. Some fox hunters had to get closer to their hounds than a distant hilltop. As Walter Cole told: "I've hunted fox a many a night long by myself, nobody in the woods but me. Just turn my dogs out and ride my horse all night long running a fox. I could ride as fast as a pack—could ride right in the middle of 'em. They would stretch that fox on the ground." During deer drives, some "drivers" also ran with the dogs, sometimes on foot. "Buck" Vaughn's descendants still tell how he used to cross the line of deer "standers" running with the hounds.

More often than not, however, the hunter failed to reach the end of the hunt because of brush or thickets or cross-cutting creeks. Under these circumstances, his link to the chase came through his hounds' voices. Fox-hound man Aubrey Cole of Jasper County explained: "When a pack of dogs has run a fox about two hours, and they get him down to about 10 acres of ground, and he's a-doing everything he can to shed 'em—he's just ducking here and ducking there and ducking here and ducking there—old fox hunters call it, 'he's a-dragging his tail,' he's putting off lots of scent. And a hound, they don't have to hunt him, they just go with that scent. They boil him down to where they've got up in 75 yards of him, and they can look at him every once in a while, it's just 'Yap! Yap! Yap! Who can and who can't! Who can and who can't!' That last 15 minutes of that fox race, if

you've got it in your system, you can't forget that, you can't quit it."

Cole, like Hinkle Shillings, used an antique "blowing horn" to call hounds and to communicate with other hunters during hunts. In 1995, Shillings still had his grandfather's hunting horn, engraved with a date of 1857 by the horn's South Carolina maker and with the likeness of Dawson Stride, dated 1941, the year of Dawson's death. It is a small blowing horn, with a peculiarly clear, piercing, tenor sound. Hinkle stood on a stump with this horn to win the horn-blowing contest at the Texas state foxhound meet every year from 1934 to 1956, retiring only after he lost his teeth. From time to time, people still borrow the horn to sound the traditional "three long blows" at the funerals of fox hunters. Shillings noted, "It'll sure be blowed at mine after I pass on." In the old horn language, three long blows means, "come to me." ★

*Historian and writer THAD SITTON lives in Austin. His history of the Neches Valley, Backwoodsmen: Stockmen and Hunters Along a Big Thicket River Valley was published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1995.*

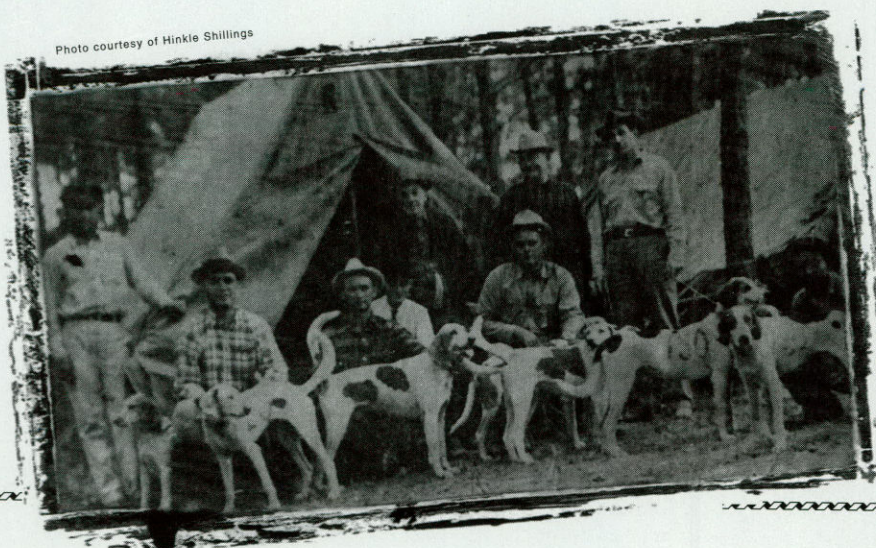


Photo courtesy of Hinkle Shillings

**Hunters and hounds at Texas State Fox and Wolf Hunters' Association yearly hunt, 1941. Hinkle Shillings is kneeling second from left with Dawson Stride.**

*Texas Lost*

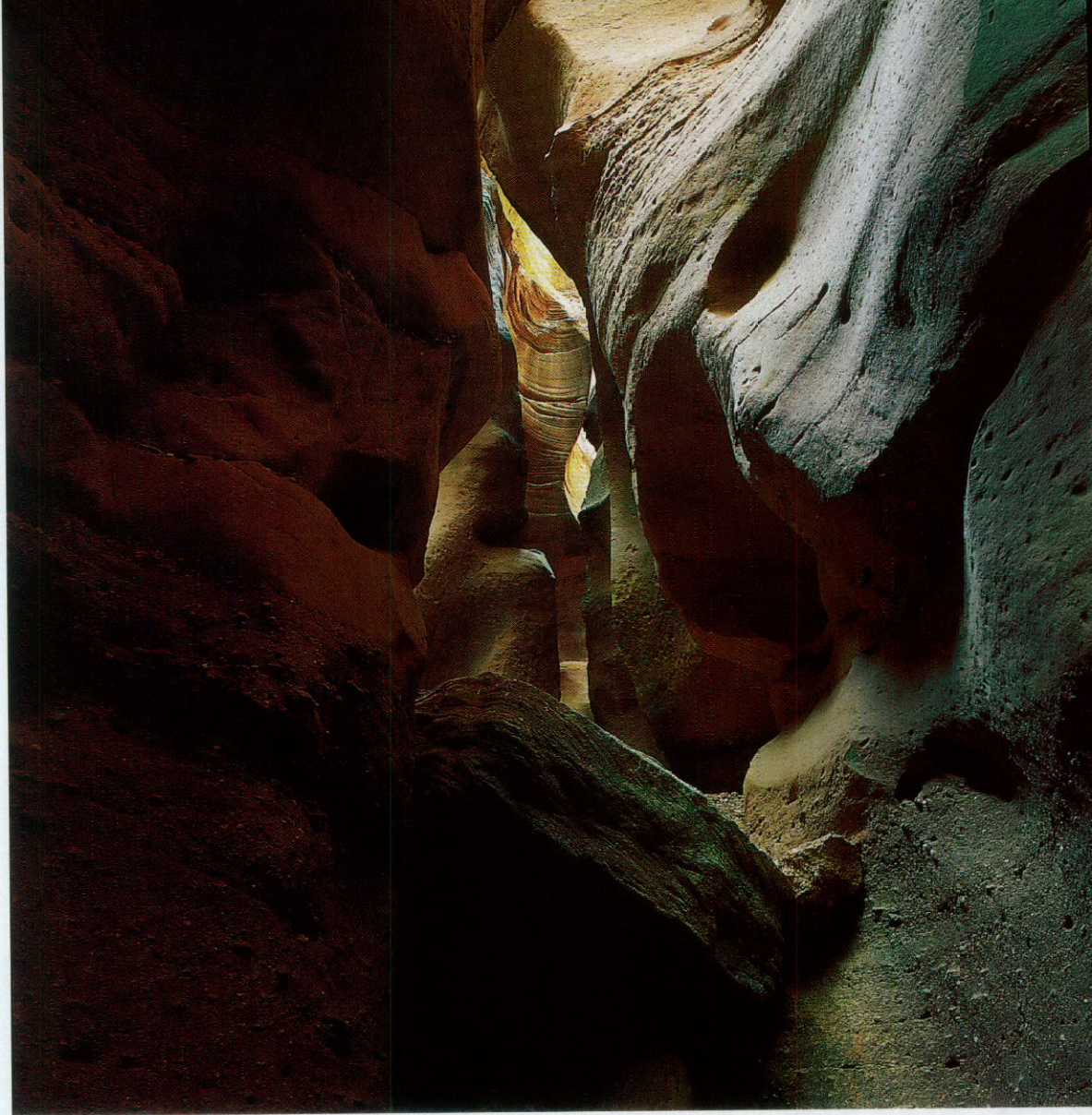




“ ONE ASPECT OF

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UNSURPASSED ON ANY  
OTHER TERRAIN OR BY ANY  
OTHER PEOPLE ON EARTH:  
OUR SENSE OF PLACE.” SO  
BEGINS *TEXAS LOST*, A NEW  
BOOK IN WHICH ANDREW  
SANSOM’S WORDS AND  
WYMAN MEINZER’S PHOTOS  
TAKE THE READER ON A  
TOUR OF TEXAS’S MOST  
BEAUTIFUL AND  
SIGNIFICANT REGIONS, FROM  
MADRID FALLS IN BIG BEND  
RANCH STATE NATURAL  
AREA (LEFT) TO THE  
FORESTS OF EAST TEXAS.

**LOS LINGOS NARROWS,  
RIGHT, IS IN THE  
ROLLING PLAINS, THE  
LAST GREAT  
STRONGHOLD OF THE  
INDIAN AND THE  
BUFFALO**



**THE OPEN  
COUNTRY OF THE  
ROLLING PLAINS  
IS BASICALLY  
FORMED OF  
MATERIAL THAT  
WASHED DOWN  
FROM THE ROCKY  
MOUNTAINS  
DURING THE  
TERTIARY PERIOD  
AND IS ALSO  
CALLED SIMPLY  
THE SOUTH  
PLAINS.**

Texas is in real ways becoming smaller, and extraordinary places that were once accessible and common now reveal themselves as but remnants of a Texas that is passing," writes Sansom.

In *Texas Lost*, the author and photographer show us 17 unique places. Drawing on his own experiences and those of people both historical and modern, Sansom examines the land's connection with the people of Texas. Beginning in the Columbia Bottomlands, where Anglo settlement of the state began, the text and photos move west, across the Blackland Prairies; over the Trinity, Brazos and Colorado rivers; into the Hill Country; through the Panhandle, Rolling and High Plains; and finally to the mountains and canyons of far West Texas.

"And so," writes Sansom, "as we make our way into the next century and millennium, the fate of the wonderful places through which we have defined ourselves and established our unique individuality as Texans is in our hands." He concludes by reminding us that "...the primary beneficiaries of our work are not born yet, and we

should be willing to make sacrifices on their behalf. That is the greatest privilege we have, and therein lies the opportunity to extend our abiding love of Texas beyond our own lifetimes and into the future."

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HAVE SHAPED AND  
ENHANCED THE LIVES OF  
TEXANS SINCE STEPHEN  
F. AUSTIN'S TIME.

HISTORICALLY THE TEXAS  
BLACKLAND PRAIRIE TOOK IN  
ALL OR PART OF 37 TEXAS  
COUNTIES--AN AREA TWICE THE  
SIZE OF MARYLAND.





# Texas Lost

A noted wildlife photographer gets a crash course in Texas topography while photographing scenes for a new book.

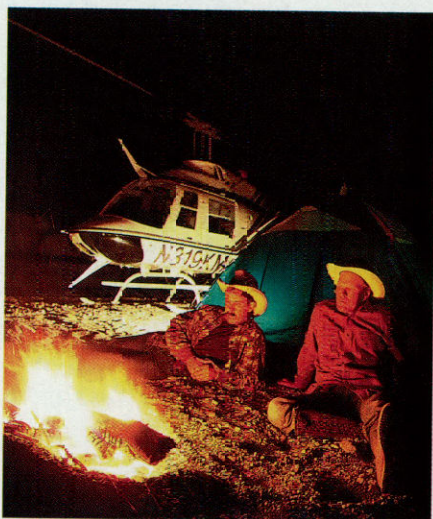
by WYMAN MEINZER

"I wonder if the wind ever blows in this part of the state," I thought, as we trudged through the ancient oaks and vines near the Brazos River in Southeast Texas. The whine of mosquitoes combined with my sweat-drenched clothing made me long for the cooler winds of the plains. Even with the sun only a few minutes over the eastern horizon, the humidity and heat had turned the damp forest into a natural sauna. But the thought of what lay ahead, a historic treasure hidden from view for well over a century, urged me on.

Soon the sun sliced through the green canopy and illuminated a structure foreign to this treescape. My guides motioned that we had arrived and we quickly fanned out to inspect the sleeping monument. I dropped my backpack and quickly extracted my cameras and lenses. For the next hour I photographed a Civil War-era sugar mill. Still largely intact, the structure has been protected from the vagaries of coastal weather and prying eyes by the trees that fed its furnaces over a century ago.

I have been captivated by the historical and natural treasures of Texas for more than 30 years. As a child in the rolling plains of north Texas, my roving on foot and horseback took me to the rivers and sites where ancient people lived. I still visit and photograph these historic sites whenever I can.

However, I have noticed that many of our state's treasures have been lost or despoiled. So when the opportunity came to work with Andy Sansom on the book *Texas Lost: Vanishing Heritage*, I saw an opportunity for an author and photographer to showcase some of the state's remaining historic areas.



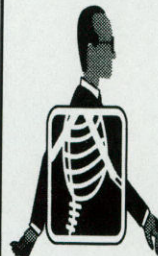
PHOTOGRAPHER WYMAN MEINZER (LEFT) AND PILOT KNUTE M. JOLHUS RELAX AFTER A DAY OF SHOOTING IN THE BIG BEND AREA.

Obtaining photographs for the book required extensive trips across Texas, utilizing aircraft, canoes, four-wheel drive trucks and plenty of boot leather. I flew over Old West historical areas of the western Panhandle along the Canadian River and the Rio Grande in Big Bend; viewed rare remnants of the native prairie ecosystem in Northeast Texas; trekked across beaches of wildlife-rich South Padre Island and the Laguna Madre; and paddled the cypress-lined waters of Caddo Lake and the Trinity River at Wallisville Reservoir.

More than 200 rolls of film, 12,000 ground and air miles and two months after it began, the photographic coverage of *Texas Lost* was completed. From changing lenses in a doorless helicopter in the turbulent skies over the Sierra Diablo Mountains to shooting the book's cover photo from 1,000 feet over Santa Elena Canyon after a break in an evening storm, I realized that the opportunity to photograph this book was a special gift. I wish every Texan could see our state as I have seen it and hope the readers will experience, through Andy Sansom's words and my photographs, an appreciation for what remains of our vanishing heritage. ★



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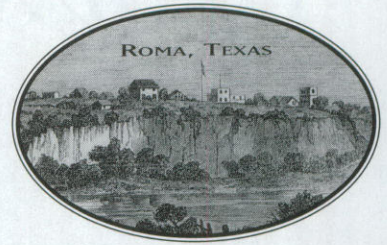
Outside the U.S., you may encounter machines that emit higher than usual dosages, and some countries require that everything be X-rayed, but it never hurts to politely request hand inspection.

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# R E C L A I M I N G



Once a bustling steamboat port, tiny Roma now is little more than a ghost town on the banks of the Rio Grande. A multi-agency task force has begun preserving historic sites and institutions to restore and interpret the city's 18th century ambiance.

## ROMA'S GLORY

BY JERRY M. SULLIVAN

The Eternal City on the Tiber it is not, but Roma on the Rio Grande, like its namesake, possesses a bountiful heritage of architecture and commerce—even experiencing a spiritual renaissance, albeit in the mid-19th century. From the richly detailed brick parapets and wrought-iron grillwork gracing many buildings to the preserved bell tower of the old Our Lady of Refuge Church, Roma captivates all who wander its dusty streets.

The little border town, located in Starr County about 10 miles south of the Falcon Reservoir dam, currently is in the midst of a major facelift of several of its historic buildings. In partnership with The Conservation Fund, the Meadows Foundation, the City of Roma and the Texas Historical Commission, among others, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is overseeing the restoration of several architectural jew-

els within the Roma National Historic Landmark District, a designation conferred by the United States Department of Interior in November 1993.

What makes Roma such a special place? Simply stated, the concentration and variety of historic structures is an extraordinary reflection of the cultural mixture that is the heritage of the borderlands.

The layout of the older section of Roma follows the Hispanic tradition of a plaza, surrounded by continuous structures with the church as a focal point. In general, the buildings are fronted by stone or brick *banquetas* (sidewalks) and form walled compounds with large courtyards in the Hispanic/Moorish tradition. In their variety, the structures offer a mixture of architectural styles. One-room sandstone or caliche block dwellings recall building traditions familiar to the original

Spanish settlers. Two-story sandstone homes and businesses of molded brick exhibit the sophistication of design and construction techniques brought to the area during the late 19th century.

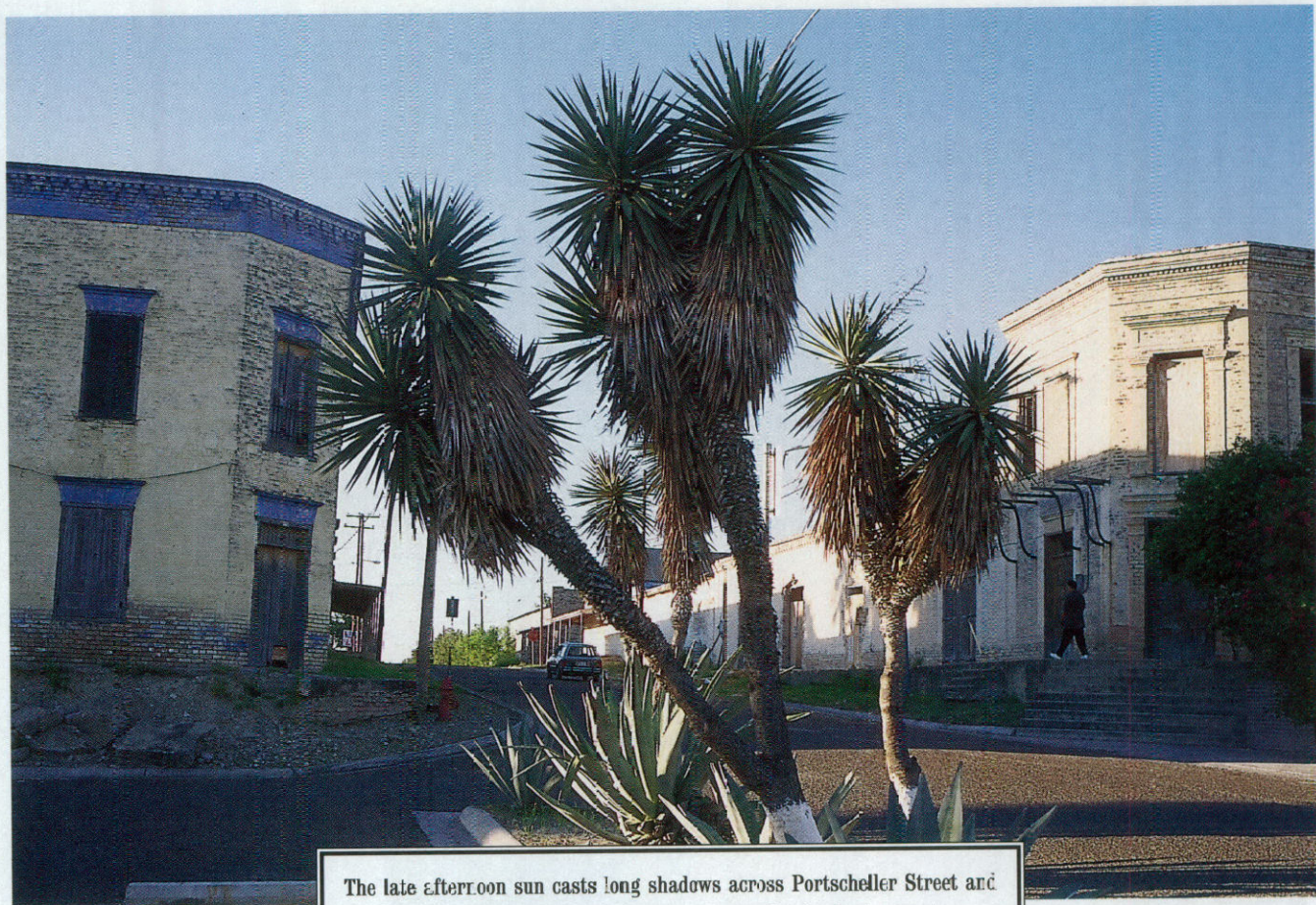
Roma is an ideal location for the study of regional construction technologies dating from the mid-19th century. Common to all buildings are massive masonry walls of brick and/or stone, with brick/tile roofs supported by large timber framing exposed to the interior. Yet the structures themselves range from simple stone construction with few openings and an absence of detail, to finely wrought brick buildings characterized by lively detailing at the doors, windows and cornices, continuous balconies overlooking the plaza, and cool, inviting interiors of painted plaster, all evidence of northern Mexico influences.

Roma's Hispanic heritage reaches



A TPWD restoration craftsman is framed by a doorway in the Manuel Guerra Store, above. Opposite, the earliest image of Roma, published in 1857.

© ROBERT W. PARVIN



The late afternoon sun casts long shadows across Portscheller Street and Roma Plaza. Roma captivates all who wander its dusty streets.

© ROBERT W. PARVIN

back to the mid-18th century, when the Spanish crown granted José de Escandón permission to colonize the lower Rio Grande region. The new colony, called Nuevo Santander, extended from the Sierra Madre Oriental east to the Gulf of Mexico and from the rainforests of Tamaulipas northward beyond the Rio Grande to the Nueces River.

Escandón departed from the missionary/military colonization system used in New Mexico and elsewhere, choosing instead an economics-driven strategy of building towns along the Rio Grande and issuing land grants nearby to farmers and ranchers willing to settle in the raw wilderness. By 1752, Escandón had ordered the establishment of Camargo, Reynosa, Revilla and Mier on the south bank of the river, followed by Laredo on the north bank, in 1755. The community of Roma traces its origins to the development of ranches on the pasture lands under Mier's jurisdiction.

Although settlement on Mier's lands

began around 1750, the community was not formally laid out until 1767, with an official survey of the plaza and town lots. At the same time, the royal surveyors divided Mier's pasture lands on both sides of the Rio Grande into *porciones*, or tracts, for allocation to farmers and ranchers. Several of the *porciones* north of the river were assigned to the Saenz and Salinas families, who established ranches on the property. The earliest ranching enterprise, Rancho de los Saenz, proved to be short-lived, while the second, Rancho de Buena Vista, survived into the 19th century, becoming Roma. The heritage of Rancho de los Saenz survives in a little community on the southeastern edge of Roma called Los Saenz.

By 1840, the rural settlement that had grown up around Rancho de Buena Vista evolved into a village called Garcias, and sometime in the mid- to late 1840s, its name was changed to Roma. The origin of the "Roma" name is uncertain, but it probably derived from Rancho

San Pedro de Roma, an early ranching enterprise across the river.

The war between the United States and Mexico, which erupted downriver near present Brownsville in 1846, brought about increased economic activity in the region. Steamboats supplying General Zachary Taylor's army began plying the Rio Grande, giving the river towns and adjacent areas greater access to trade goods. By the end of the war in 1848, a lucrative international trade had emerged along the new boundary between the two nations. Shallow shoals just above Roma made steamboat traffic upriver to Laredo impractical. Consequently, Roma became the head of navigation on the Rio Grande. Mercantile establishments flourished as the little community bustled with commerce. Goods from the eastern U.S. and Europe passed across its docks bound for Laredo and the Mexican interior. The direct trade contacts with foreign ports gave Roma and other border towns an unusual level of



Carlos Rugerio, project cultural advisor from Mexico, displays bricks made by "Enrique" Portscheller in the 1880s.

© ROBERT W. PARVIN

sophistication, drawing worldwide attention to the Rio Grande borderlands.

The group attracted to the region recognized the burgeoning remote population as fertile ground for the seeds of spiritual growth. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a French-Catholic religious order, arrived on the Rio Grande in the early 1850s. After visiting several towns, the Oblate Fathers chose Roma, with its central location among the river settlements, as the site for their first church. The edifice, Our Lady of Refuge, was designed by Fr. Pierre Keralum, a French architect-turned-priest, and built under his supervision between 1854 and 1858. Fr. Keralum designed or influenced the design of several other churches in the area, including Immaculate Conception Church in Brownsville and St. Augustine Church in Laredo. Today the bell tower of the original Our Lady of Refuge Church remains as a reminder of Fr. Keralum's inspired work.

Throughout the remainder of the 19th century, Roma prospered. Even after

the railroad reached Laredo in 1831, Roma continued to be an important regional business and trade center. The developing town offered many opportunities for professional artisans and craftsmen, especially a competent architect/builder. In 1883, German-born Heinrich Portscheller arrived in Roma from Mier, established a brickyard and began designing and building residential and commercial structures. Steeped in the architectural traditions of northern Mexico, "Enrique" Portscheller quickly emerged as one of the foremost builders in the borderlands. Known for his intricate molded brick detailing and the use of wrought-iron grillwork, Portscheller left his indelible stamp on Roma in the form of more than a dozen buildings. He left Roma in 1894, and spent the remainder of his life in Laredo. Other examples of his work may be seen in Rio Grande City, Laredo, Mier and Monterrey.

The Roma economy continued to flourish well into the 20th century. Only

when the railroad from Brownsville was extended to nearby Rio Grande City in 1924, spelling doom for any remaining river traffic, did the old border town begin a slow economic decline. The railroad company refused to extend the line the additional 16 miles to Roma. In 1928, a new suspension bridge connecting Roma and San Pedro (modern Miguel Aleman), one of five built along the river between Laredo and Brownsville, helped sustain the local economy for another few decades. Businesses gradually began to abandon the plaza, however, after U.S. Highway 83 bypassed the old waterfront area.

A brief surge of excitement filled the Roma plaza in the mid-1950s, when it became the setting for the film, "Viva Zapata!" Long-time residents still recall Marlon Brando fondly and his portrayal of the legendary hero of the Mexican Revolution, Emiliano Zapata.

By the 1970s, only the skeletons of a glorious past lined the once-bustling avenues of commerce. Even a major



© ROBERT W. PARVIN

TPWD archeologist José Zapata excavates beneath a brick floor in the Guerra Store, part of the Roma National Historic Landmark District.



© ROBERT W. PARVIN

Evidence of the restoration of the Antonic Saenz House is visible in the lower portion of this aerial photo of the Roma Plaza. The Manuel Guerra Store is left center.

# ROMA RISING



Historic Roma will be featured on the Texas Parks & Wildlife television series this month.

For the past five years, producer Curtis Craven has worked on several documentaries on and around the Texas/Mexico border. Recently, he made several trips to Roma to videotape the ongoing restoration taking place.

“One obstacle the restoration team has encountered is finding building materials that conform to historical specifications,” said Craven. On one trip, Craven accompanied project archeologist José Zapata and site foreman Pablo Rivera on a trip to Cedral, Mexico, some 500 miles south of Roma. Cedral is the site of a quarry that the restoration team hopes will supply the large caliche blocks known as *sillar* needed for the project. Years of neglect have allowed many of the *sillar* walls in Roma to corrode and crumble into useless piles of rubble.

“Arriving at the quarry we were greeted by Sr. Felix Oliva, the lone worker amidst a dusty sea of block,” said Craven. Now 58 years old, Oliva has been chipping caliche out of the ground for 45 years, continuing a trade he learned from his father.

“As we videotaped Oliva, we witnessed a process that has not changed since the time many of the buildings in Roma were constructed originally,” said Craven. “Once restored, the buildings of Roma will provide us with a vital and tangible link to a part of our Texas heritage that once was very close to extinction. Once again, Roma is on the rise.”

Craven’s documentary about Roma will be broadcast the week of December 10. See the Texas Parks & Wildlife television schedule on page 43 or call your local PBS affiliate.

landscape renovation for the 1975 Bicentennial failed to revive commercial interest in the old plaza.

Then, in 1990, along came the Los Caminos del Rio Heritage Corridor Project. The project is an international effort of national, state and local government agencies and private enterprise on both sides of the Rio Grande, from the two Laredos to the Gulf of Mexico, to promote economic development through preservation of important historic sites and institutions. Roma, positioned at the center of the Heritage Corridor, was identified immediately as a major link in the project’s goals. The designation as a National Historic Landmark aided Roma in becoming among the first sites in the Heritage Corridor to receive major restoration funding.

The Roma Restoration Project currently includes nine structures in the nine-square-block National Historic Landmark District. Extensive research, including archeology, is guiding the project in the careful stabilization of crumbling walls and the meticulous renovation of Portscheller’s buildings to their former glory.

So, if you happen to be traveling toward the Valley along U.S. 83 south



Historic Roma is about halfway between Laredo and Brownsville on U.S. Highway 83.

of Laredo this winter, stop and observe preservation in progress. New interpretive exhibits have been installed recently in the project headquarters on the plaza. Wander along the streets and to the bluff overlooking the river. Let your imagination take you back to a time when steamboats plied the Rio Grande, bound for Roma. ★

*JERRY M. SULLIVAN is an interpretive planner for the Public Lands Division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.*

*Science and skill, Boyd Ammerman believes, always will triumph over ignorance and superstition. Except, maybe, when it comes to fishing.*

by EZRA WARD

It was 10 o'clock in the morning after the first overnight freeze of December, and the Blue Plate Cafe was filled with hunters and fishermen who either got lucky or quit early, plus the regulars who would've been there anyway. The cafe filled with the hum of conversation exchanged over steaming mugs of coffee.

One fellow remarked that he didn't feel a bit bad about leaving his dour fishing companions fighting over a tiny campfire for warmth. This prompted George Schrader to tell his story about Boyd Ammerman for the umpteenth time—first glancing around to make certain Boyd wasn't there.

Now, nobody could ever dislike Boyd, who runs the Texaco station in Three Corners; but when it comes to fishing, he can sure test your patience.

Without a doubt Boyd Ammerman catches more fish than any two other fishermen in town. He can stand in a crowd on the bank or in a boat and be the only one catching fish. When everybody's catching fish, he catches twice as many. And if you're fishing with him and you land a big one, he's going to pull in one bigger. You can bet on it.

Another thing he does constantly is to throw back fish that any other angler would be more than happy to keep. The reason is that Boyd, especially since his divorce from Kitty, spends nearly all of his leisure time fishing and always has more fish in his freezer than he possibly could eat.

While this may seem a gen-

erous habit—letting so many fish grow to a larger size for other anglers to catch—it can be disconcerting, if not downright irritating, to any fisherman unlucky enough to be near Boyd when he does it. Boyd, who would never intentionally hurt someone's feelings, has no idea his habit affects people this way; he regards it as his little joke and frequently winks when he does it.

All of this was related as background by George, the city policeman, who proceeded to describe a similarly cold morning when he was called below the dam to quell a near riot caused by Boyd's "little joke."

"There was a bunch of ol' boys there who had driven all the way in from Midland the day before to fish because they had heard the action could really be good when the dam is passing water through its generators in the winter," George recalled.

"It was cold as hell and those boys fished all night and into the next day. They had a little fire, but it didn't help much. It was so cold the eyelets on their rods froze up every few minutes so the line couldn't be pulled in.

"To make things worse, the fish weren't biting at all. Every once in awhile, one of 'em would catch a little white bass and they'd think things were going to pick up. But by 11 the next morning, they didn't have more than 10 or 12 little fish on the stringer. They were tired, frozen stiff and drinking whiskey. I tell you, they were in an ugly mood.

"Just then, ol' Boyd drives up and saunters over, chewing tobacco and friendly like he always is.

Well, Boyd found a spot on the bank right in the middle of those fellas and commenced to hauling in fish on just about every cast. I don't know if he lucked into a sweet spot, had the right technique or just exactly the kind of jig the whites wanted to hit that day. Whatever it was, he was the only one catching anything. You can imagine how those other ol' boys felt. But the real kicker was that Boyd was throwing the fish back. And they weren't little ones, either. One of those guys told me later he didn't see Boyd catch a white under a pound and most of 'em ran around two pounds. And this is what Boyd said every time he threw one back: 'I sure wish I could catch one big enough to keep.'

"This went on for over an hour," George continued, "and those fellas from Midland were getting so hot under the collar they forgot about being cold. One of 'em finally caught a white, another little one, but he was too embarrassed to put it on the stringer and let Boyd see the other little ones already on there. So he threw it back and one of his buddies cussed him and things got uglier still.

"Well, just about then Boyd hooked into a big hybrid and he whooped and hollered and played around with it for show for a long time before he brought it in. It went five pounds, easy, the other fishermen said later. Boyd just took it off the hook, winked and said 'I sure wish I could catch one big enough to keep.'

"This was the last straw for the Midland bunch. 'Don't tell me you're going to throw that

one back!' one of 'em hollered.

"But Boyd, without realizing the danger of his situation there, said real careless-like: 'Shoot, I never clean a hybrid under seven pounds.' And he pitched the big fish back into the water.

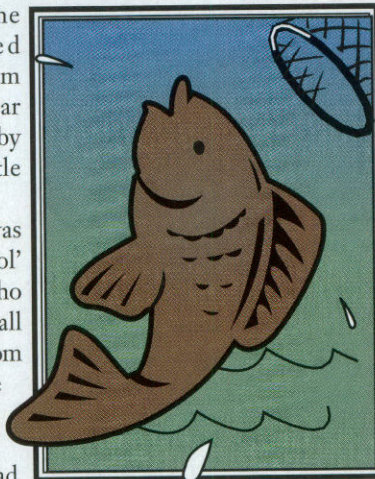
"Six fishermen threw down their gear and one man rushed for Boyd, who finally sensed he was in trouble. Fortunately for him, one of the workers at the dam was watching and called me and I got there pretty quick. When I drove up, they were holding Boyd in the air like a big stick of wood and running straight for the fire. I had to shoot two rounds in the air to get them to stop and put him down."

George laughed for a moment with his listeners, then added: "You know Boyd. To this day he thinks those boys were funnin' and didn't mean him any harm, so he wouldn't file charges. Since I didn't see them actually hurt him, there wasn't much I could do. But I'll tell you, if I hadn't driven up just then ol' Boyd would have been one cooked goose."

Charlie Thornton, seated across the lunch counter, said the experience hadn't changed Boyd a bit. "He did the same thing to me and Zeke Warner not a month ago at a crappie hole up on the lake," Charlie said. "We swore that never again would we fish within half a mile of Boyd, even though both of us like him."

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

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





# BIG GIFTS

for **SMALL CHANGE**  
for **ALL WHO LOVE**  
**TEXAS NATURALLY.**



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**W**hen you give friends and family a *Texas Parks & Wildlife* subscription, you're giving the most natural gift of all — Texas. Wide open, tall cotton, genuine, original Texas. And for only about a dollar a month!

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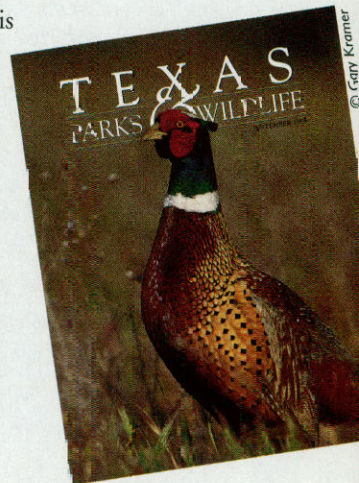
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Readers visit the Freshwater Fisheries Center at Athens



**IN A HURRY? CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-937-9393**

# OUTDOOR DATEBOOK

## DECEMBER

Dec.: Historical tour each Saturday, Stephen F. Austin State Park at San Felipe, 409-885-3613

Dec.: Lower Edwards Plateau ecosystem tour each Saturday, Honey Creek State Natural Area near Bulverde, 210-438-2656

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

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

Dec.: Boat tour each Saturday and Sunday, Martin Creek Lake State Park near Tatum, 903-836-4336

Dec. **1, 2**: "Twas a 19th century Christmas," Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park near Washington, 409-878-2214

Dec. **1**: Lower Laguna Madre Foundation's fourth annual Education Day for high school students, Harlingen Public Library, 210-944-2387.

Dec. **1, 8**: **\*** Intracoastal Waterway birding tour, Matagorda Island State Park & WMA, 512-983-2215

Dec. **2**-Feb. **11**: Zone B sandhill crane hunting season

Dec. **2**: Winter birding, Cooper Lake WMA near Sulphur Springs, 903-884-3833

Dec. **2**: A Christmas Celebration, Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historical Park at West Columbia, 409-345-4656

Dec. **2**: **\*** "An Afternoon at the Goose Roost," Lake Rita Blanca State Park at Dalhart, 806-655-3782.

Dec. **2**: **\*** Mountain bike nature tour, Elephant Mountain WMA near Alpine, 915-364-2228

Dec. **2**: Christmas peddlers' market, Fanthorp Inn State Historical Park at Anderson, 409-873-2633

Dec. **2, 9, 16, 30**: Bald eagle tour, Fairfield Lake State Park near Fairfield, 903-389-4514

Dec. **2, 16, 20, 30**: Birding, Choke Canyon State Park Calliham Unit near Three Rivers, 512-786-3868

Dec. **3**: "Tour de Somerville-An Off-road Adventure," Lake Somerville State Park Nail's Creek and Birch Creek Units, 409-542-0964

Dec. **9-24**: Pheasant hunting season in the Panhandle

Dec. **9**: **\*** Birding walk and hatchery tour with slide show, GCCA/CPL Marine Development Center at Corpus Christi, 512-939-7784

Dec. **9**: Christmas at the mansion, Fulton Mansion State Historical Park at Fulton, 512-729-0386

Dec. **9**: Christmas concert, Goliad State Historical Park at Goliad, 512-645-3405

Dec. **9**: "Breakfast With Santa," Meridian State Park at Meridian, 817-435-2536

Dec. **9**: Winter waterfowl boat tour, Fort Parker State Park near Mexia, 817-562-5751

Dec. **9**: Stagecoach rides, Fanthorp Inn State Historical Park at Anderson, 409-873-2633

Dec. **9**: Rock art tour, Hueco Tanks State Natural Area near El Paso, 915-857-1135

Dec. **9**: "Those Dusky Ducks," Cooper Lake WMA near Sulphur Springs, 903-884-3833

Dec. **9, 14, 16**: **\*** Primitive cavern tour, Kickapoo Cavern State Natural Area near Uvalde, 210-563-2342

Dec. **9-25**: "Forest of Lights," Meridian State Park at Meridian, 817-435-2536

Dec. **10**: Guided horseback tour, Hill Country State Natural Area near Bandera, reservations through Running R Ranch, 210-796-3984

Dec. **10**: **\*** Beachcombing and shelling tour, Matagorda Island State Park and WMA, 512-983-2215

Dec. **10-30**: "Home for Christmas," Eisenhower Birthplace State Historical Park in Denison, 903-465-8908

Dec. **15-24**: "Christmas Valley," Eisenhower State Park at Lake Texoma, 903-465-1956

Dec. **16**: "A Texas Norwegian Christmas," Meridian State Park, 817-435-2536

Dec. **16**: Kids' fishing day, Daingerfield State Park near Daingerfield, 903-645-2921

Dec. **16**: **\*** "An Afternoon at the Goose Roost," Playa Lakes WMA Taylor Lakes Unit, reservations required by calling 806-655-3782 or sending postcard to P.O. Box 659, Canyon, TX 79015 by noon Nov. 30.

Dec. **16**: Winter birding, Jasper State Fish Hatchery at Jasper, 409-384-9965 or 409-384-2221

Dec. **16**: "Christmas by the Campfire," Kerrville-Schreiner State Park at Kerrville, 210-257-5392

Dec. **16**: Migratory waterfowl viewing, White Oak Creek WMA near Mount Pleasant, 903-884-3833

Dec. **17**: Bird identification tour, Hueco Tanks State Natural area near El Paso, 915-857-1135

Dec. **22**: "Christmas in the Park," Stephen F. Austin State Historical Park at San Felipe, 409-885-3613

Dec. **26**-Jan. **7**: Winter mourning dove season in Central Zone

Dec. **26**-Jan. **9**: Winter mourning dove season in South Zone

Dec. **28-30**: **\*** Rock art seminar, Big Bend Ranch State Park, 915-229-3416

Dec. **30**: "Wildlife and You," Caddo Lake State Park & WMA, 903-884-3833

Dec. **30**: Pressa Canyon rock art tour, Seminole Canyon State Historical Park near Del Rio, 915-292-4464



© MASLOWSKI PHOTO

See bald eagles on tours at Fairfield Lake State Park scheduled for every Saturday in December except December 23.

## JANUARY

Jan.: Historical tour each Saturday, Stephen F. Austin State Historical Park at San Felipe, 409-885-3613

Jan.: Lower Edwards Plateau ecosystem tour each Saturday, Honey Creek State Natural Area near Bulverde, 210-438-2656

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

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

Jan.: Boat tour each Saturday and Sunday, Martin Creek Lake State Park near Tatum, 903-836-4336

Jan. **4, 6, 18, 20**: **\*** Primitive cavern tour, Kickapoo Cavern State Natural Area near Uvalde, 210-563-2342

Jan. **6**-Feb. **11**: Zone C sandhill crane hunting season

Jan. **6**: Winter waterfowl boat tour, Fort Parker State Park near Mexia, 817-562-5751

Jan. **6**: Duck Calling and Identification, Choke Canyon State Park near Three Rivers, Calliham Unit, 512-786-3868.

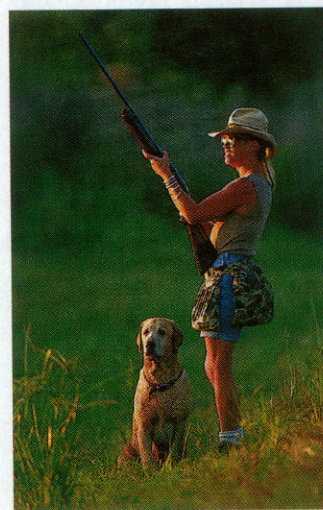
Jan. **6**: Predators, White Oak Creek WMA near Mt. Pleasant, 903-884-3833.



© WYMAN MEINZER

Zone B sandhill crane season opens December 2 and runs through February 11.

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



© DAVID SAMS

Winter mourning dove season in the South Zone opens December 26 and runs through January 9.

# TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

## TELEVISION SCHEDULE

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

*In stereo where available*

CITY/STATION	DAY	TIME
<b>Amarillo</b> KACV, Ch. 2	Sunday	4:00
<b>Austin</b> KLRU, Ch. 18	Monday Saturday	12:00 5:00
<b>College Station</b> KAMU, Ch. 15	Wednesday Tuesday	11:30 a.m. 7:30
<b>Corpus Christi</b> KEDT, Ch. 16	Thursday Friday	7:30 11:30
<b>Dallas/Ft. Worth</b> KERA, Ch. 13 <i>Also serving Abilene, Denton, Longview, Marshall, San Angelo, Texarkana, Tyler, Wichita Falls, Sherman</i>	Saturday	7:00
<b>El Paso</b> KCOS, Ch. 13	Sunday	6:00
<b>Harlingen</b> KMBH, Ch. 60 <i>Also serving McAllen, Mission</i>	Tuesday	8:00
<b>Houston</b> KUHT, Ch. 8 <i>Also serving Beaumont/Port Arthur, Galveston, Texas City, Victoria</i>	Monday	7:30
<b>Killeen</b> KNCT, Ch. 46 <i>Also serving Temple</i>	Sunday	4:00
<b>Lubbock</b> KTXT, Ch. 5	Saturday	7:00
<b>Odessa</b> KOCV, Ch. 36 <i>Also serving Midland</i>	Saturday	7:30
<b>San Antonio</b> KLRN, Ch. 9 <i>Also serving Laredo</i>	Thursday	12:00
<b>Waco</b> KCTF, Ch. 34	Saturday	3:00

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

### Look for these stories in the coming weeks

**NOVEMBER 26–DECEMBER 3:** Trapping and collaring mountain lions; Monahans Sandhills State Park; how Texas veterans celebrated the 50th anniversary of D-Day.

**DECEMBER 3–10:** A desert survival workshop; feral hogs; a visit to El Cielo, a nature preserve in the cloud forest of northern Mexico.

**DECEMBER 10–17:** Historic Roma on the Texas-Mexico border; dinosaurs; a trip beneath the Gulf of Mexico.

**DECEMBER 17–24:** Efforts to protect San Solomon Springs in the West Texas desert; a facelift for a World War II PT boat; how zoos meet the needs of endangered species

**DECEMBER 24–31:** Texas through the eyes of an early European explorer; tracking mountain lions in West Texas; what kids learn at a special summer camp.

Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27: Bald eagle tour, Fairfield Lake State Park near Fairfield, 903-389-4514

Jan. 7: General white-tailed deer hunting season closes in North Texas

Jan. 12, 13: Sam Bass treasure hunt and mystery game, Longhorn Cavern State Park near Burnet, 512-756-4680

Jan. 13: Kids' fishing tournament, Meridian State Park at Meridian, 817-435-2536

Jan. 13: Eagle workshop, Eisenhower State Park at Lake Texoma, 903-465-1956

Jan. 13: Migratory waterfowl viewing, White Oak Creek WMA near Mount Pleasant, 903-884-3833

Jan. 13: Stagecoach rides, Fanthorp Inn State Historical Park at Anderson, 409-873-2633

Jan. 13: Rock art tour, Hueco Tanks State Historical Park near El Paso, 915-857-1135

Jan. 13-14: "Grandma's Lost Art," Landmark Inn State Historical Park at Castroville, reservations, 210-931-2133, inn reservations, 512-389-8900

Jan. 13, 20, 27: Birding, Choke Canyon State Park Calliham Unit near Three Rivers, 512-786-3868

Jan. 14: General white-tailed deer hunting season closes in South Texas

Jan. 14: Guided horseback tour, Hill Country State Natural Area near Bandera, reservations through Running R Ranch, 210-796-3984

Jan. 19: ✨ Intracoastal Waterway birding tour, Matagorda Island State Park and WMA, 512-983-2215

Jan. 20-Feb. 4: Late South Texas antlerless-only white-tailed deer season

Jan. 20: Pressa Canyon rock art tour, Seminole Canyon State Historical Park near Del Rio, 915-292-4464

Jan. 20: Winter birding, Pat Mayse WMA near Paris, 903-884-3833

Jan. 20: Waterfowl identification and birding tour, Alcoa Lake near Rockdale, 409-279-2048

Jan. 21: Bird identification tour, Hueco Tanks State Historical Park near El Paso, 915-857-1135

Jan. 21: Duck season closes statewide

Jan. 22-Feb. 4: Special South Texas antlerless-only white-tailed deer season in 18 counties.

Jan. 26-28: ✨ "Hiking the Ranch," Big Bend Ranch State Park, 915-229-3416

Jan. 27: "Those Dusky Ducks," Cooper Lake WMA near Sulphur Springs, 903-884-3833

Jan. 27: ✨ Beachcombing and shelling tour, Matagorda Island State Park and WMA, 512-983-2215

Jan. 27: ✨ Geology tour of Elephant Mountain WMA near Alpine, 915-364-2228

Jan. 27-29: Women's fishing retreat, Meridian State Park at Meridian, 817-435-2536



© LANCE KRUEGER

General white-tailed deer season closes in South Texas on January 14.

# THE NONGAME DECADE

1985 - 1995



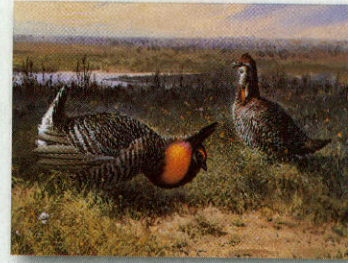
1995

*Thanks in part to the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund, Texas's nongame wildlife species received some tangible benefits during the past 10 years, ranging from bat caves to songbird roosts.*

by MARY-LOVE BIGONY



1985



1986

**F**rom monarch butterflies flitting through the October sky to mountain lions prowling the South Texas brush country, the category of wildlife known as “nongame” is diverse. This year Texas celebrates the 10th anniversary of a unique funding strategy that has benefited hundreds of wildlife species, including the aforementioned butterflies and lions.

Nongame wildlife—those species that are not hunted, fished or trapped—first received special consideration in Texas in 1973 when the legislature passed the Texas Nongame and Endangered Species Act and gave the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department responsibility for managing these species. The act provided funding from general revenue for management and research programs, but by the early 1980s it was apparent these funds were not sufficient.

In response to the need for additional revenue, the Texas Legislature in 1983 created the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. Legislation creating the fund stipulated that it would comprise private donations; income generated by lands purchased with the fund; investment interest; and income from the sale of art prints, decals and stamps.

The idea for a nongame stamp was inspired in part by the successful state and federal waterfowl stamps. While the waterfowl stamps are mandatory for waterfowl hunters, nonhunters also buy them as collectors' items and to contribute to habitat management and protection. The nongame stamp was seen as a way to allow Texans to make voluntary contributions to benefit conservation of nongame species.

In 1985, the department unveiled its first nongame stamp. This inaugural stamp featured art by Ken Carlson depicting two whooping cranes, birds that have become a symbol of endangered species in North America.

Subsequent stamps have featured other endangered and threatened animals—the Attwater's prairie chicken, white-tailed hawk, ocelot, bald eagle and reddish egret—as well as more common species such as the American kestrel, yellow-crowned night heron, Montezuma quail and great horned owl. The Special Fund benefits them all. This year's stamp features roadrunners by artist Charles Beckendorf. Commemorative items available in honor of the stamp's 10th anniversary include a poster depicting all the previous nongame stamps, as well as collectors' edition sets of all previous stamps.

Habitat protection is the cornerstone of any wildlife conservation effort, and in 1989 the Special Fund made its first habitat acquisition with purchase of the Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area on Galveston Bay. This 207-acre area on Smith Point, purchased with the help of Oryx Energy of Dallas, provides a stand of mature oak trees for songbirds completing their migration across the Gulf of Mexico. Each spring the management area is the site of a dramatic “fallout,” where hundreds of exhausted birds reach the end of their 500-mile journey and literally fall out of the sky, filling the trees.

This also is the site of one of the most spectacular hawk staging areas in the United States. Each fall the Abshier area is the site of the annual Smith Point Hawk Watch, during which volunteers monitor the fall raptor migration. Twenty species of hawks, falcons, accipiters, kites, vultures, eagles and caracaras have been recorded, and in fall 1994 the count was 61,022 individual raptors.

Other habitat acquisitions include Atkinson Island Wildlife Management Area in Galveston Bay, Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area in the Hill Country and the Kiskadee Wildlife Management Area in the Rio Grande Valley. Atkinson Island is near the heavily industrialized Houston Ship Channel. Like the Abshier area,



1987



1988

Atkinson Island hosts migrating songbirds, as well as providing a home for wading birds and shorebirds. Conoco, Inc. donated 151 acres of Atkinson Island to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the donation benefited the Special Fund by providing state funds to match federal moneys: for every \$1 donated to the Nongame Fund, a matching \$3 is available from the federal Pittman-Robertson Program.

Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area in Kendall County was part of the Fredericksburg and Northern Railway's line in the early 1900s. When trains stopped using the tunnel, bats moved in. Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area provides a safe roosting area for Mexican free-tailed bats, a species that is in decline over much of its range. Bats provide natural insect control, reducing the need for chemical insecticides.

**B**irds are some of the state's most visible nongame wildlife, and are natural beneficiaries of the Special Fund. And nowhere in the state are birds more abundant or more diverse than in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The Nongame Fund provided for acquisition of the Kiskadee Wildlife Management Area tract, named for a flycatcher native to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The Kiskadee tract is part of the Las Palomas Wildlife Management Area, which is made up of several units in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

In addition to habitat acquisition, the Special Fund has offered opportunities for education, habitat restoration and research projects. These activities provide scientific data for biologists, as well as a heightened awareness of nongame species among the general public. Recently the program has added outreach projects to get the public involved with wildlife right in their own backyard.

At a time when many people believe there is nothing they can do to make a difference in environmental concerns, the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund and nongame stamp offer a tangible means of contributing to the future of Texas and its wildlife. The 10th anniversary of the nongame stamp is an opportunity for Texans to renew their commitment to wildlife. ★

## POSTER & STAMP SETS

The following items are available to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Texas nongame stamp. All funds generated by the sale of these items will benefit Texas wildlife through the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund.

**10TH ANNIVERSARY POSTER** A 20- by 24-inch full-color commemorative poster featuring the artwork from the 1995 nongame stamp, a pair of greater roadrunners by Charles Beckendorf. All the previous nongame stamp/art prints, created by well-known wildlife artists, appear along the bottom of the poster. Posters include facts on each of the past years' featured species. *\$5 fund donation plus \$2 shipping and handling.*

**COLLECTOR'S STAMP SET AND CONSERVATION EDITION PRINT** Each set features a signed Conservation Edition print of the first nongame art print, whooping cranes by Ken Carlson. The set includes each of the 11 nongame stamps with matching serial numbers. The frame is a sandalwood finish trimmed in gold, and the hand-cut, acid-free mat is embossed with gold lettering. Overall size is 18½ by 22½ inches. *\$300 fund donation plus \$6 shipping and handling.*



1989



1990

**COMMEMORATIVE STAMP SET** This set of the 11 nongame stamps with matching serial numbers comes with a commemorative certificate and stamp mounts. *\$75 fund donation plus \$3 shipping and handling.*

To purchase items send check or money order made to the Special Fund to Nongame and Urban Program, TPWD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.

The 1995 nongame stamp is available for \$5. Call 1-800-792-1112 to find out where to purchase them. The 1995 limited edition art print and stamp is available at galleries across the state. Call Collectors Covey, 1-800-521-2403 for the location of a nearby gallery.

*These items are available through the Nongame and Urban Program. Clockwise from top left: Collector's stamp set and conservation edition print, \$300 plus \$6 shipping and handling; 10th anniversary poster, \$5 plus \$2 shipping and handling; canvas tote, \$8 plus \$1 shipping and handling; Mammals of Texas, \$17.95 plus \$2 shipping and handling; Hummingbird Wheel \$11.95 plus \$1 shipping and handling; commemorative stamp set, \$75 plus \$3 shipping and handling.*



BILL REAVES



1991



1992

## HOW THE NONGAME & ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND HELPS WILDLIFE

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has used the Special Fund for many activities including:

★ **RESEARCH PROJECTS** Dozens of research projects are now being conducted in the state. Current research includes mountain lion population and distribution in South Texas, monarch butterfly migration, habitat use by neotropical birds in the Rio Grande Valley, population and distribution of the threatened horned lizard in South Texas, population status of the endangered peregrine falcon in the Trans-Pecos and the effects of grazing on the protected habitat of the threatened gopher tortoise.

★ **HABITAT ACQUISITION** Several sites have been acquired using the fund and suitable sites are currently being reviewed for acquisition opportunities.

★ **HABITAT RESTORATION** The fund is working with the Texas Private Lands Initiative and the Texas Nature Conservancy to restore native brush in areas of the Lower Rio Grande Valley where habitat has been lost by clearing.

★ **TEXAS WILDSAPES** Information packets show homeowners how to provide food, water and cover for wildlife in their own yards using native plants, feeders and nest boxes. Texas Wildscapes participants receive a certificate and a sign for display. The program helps offset habitat loss.

★ **TEXAS PARTNERS IN FLIGHT** Partners in Flight works to protect habitat for migratory songbirds. Workshops focus on conservation strategies in Texas and neighboring states.

★ **TEXAS HUMMINGBIRD ROUNDUP** The Roundup is a five-year survey designed to collect information from Texans on their backyard hummingbird observations. The data collected will help document hummer distribution and range as well as help determine appropriate habitat.

★ **MANAGING FOR WILDLIFE DIVERSITY CONFERENCE** The Nongame Program sponsored the conference in May, bringing together outdoor enthusiasts, ranch managers and government scientists to discuss a growing awareness of wildlife diversity as a financial asset.

★ **NATURE TOURISM** The *Texas Nature Tourism Report*, produced by the Nongame and Urban Program, is being widely used across the state to build the nature tourism industry in Texas.

★ **EYE ON NATURE** This newsletter published by the Nongame and Urban Program contains news of nongame species in Texas and seeks to get Texans involved in conservation. The newsletter is published each spring and fall. To get on the mailing list call 1-800-792-1112.

★ **WILDSAPES DEMONSTRATIONS SITES** Sites are being developed in selected schools, public parks, and natural areas. Each site involves volunteers from the surrounding community and demonstrates the value of native plants.

★ **OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS** An outdoor classroom is an extension of the traditional classroom where all





1993



1994

subjects can be taught outdoors. Urban teams offer technical assistance in developing natural areas on school grounds, which function as outdoor classrooms.

★ **CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES** Wildscaping classes are being offered through selected colleges and school districts. Classes present information on wildscaping in general; how to provide the basics of food, water and shelter for wildlife; pond building; and how to create a wildscape in your own backyard.

★ **PUBLIC SPEAKING EVENTS** Whether the topic is wildscapes, outdoor classrooms, urban wildlife or conservation in general, the fund allows staff of the Urban Fish and Wildlife Program to speak on behalf of nongame species. They are available to speak to groups of 40 or more upon request. Although presentations are given at no cost to the audience, donations to the Special Fund are greatly appreciated.

## BECOME A WILD FRIEND

**H**elp Texas wildlife through the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. The Special Fund provides necessary resources to protect, restore, research and manage nongame and endangered species. Your support is vital to continued habitat enhancement, wildlife research and other nongame work. Join us in conserving the nongame and urban fish and wildlife of Texas.

All Wild Friends will receive the 10th Anniversary Nongame and Endangered Species Stamp Poster and *Eye on Nature*, the newsletter of the Nongame and Urban Program. Friends at the \$25 or higher level of membership will receive an additional special gift.

## WILD FRIENDS SIGN-UP

YES! I'd like to be a Wild Friend and help conserve nongame wildlife and habitat at the following level:

- \$10    \$25    \$50    \$100  
 Other

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

My employer will match this contribution. My company gift-matching form is enclosed.

Please make checks or money orders payable to the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund.

Contributions of \$50 or greater may be made by credit card.

- Master Card    Visa

CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRATION DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail completed form and contribution to:



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NONGAME AND URBAN PROGRAM  
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Your contribution to the Special Fund is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Contributors will receive a letter of acknowledgement and a contribution verification.

# CARP OF THE DESERT



Well-meaning folks brought aoudad sheep into Texas hoping they would be a marketable game animal. As German carp have done in local waters, aoudads wore out their welcome by competing with native species and being generally unmanageable.

by Russell Graves

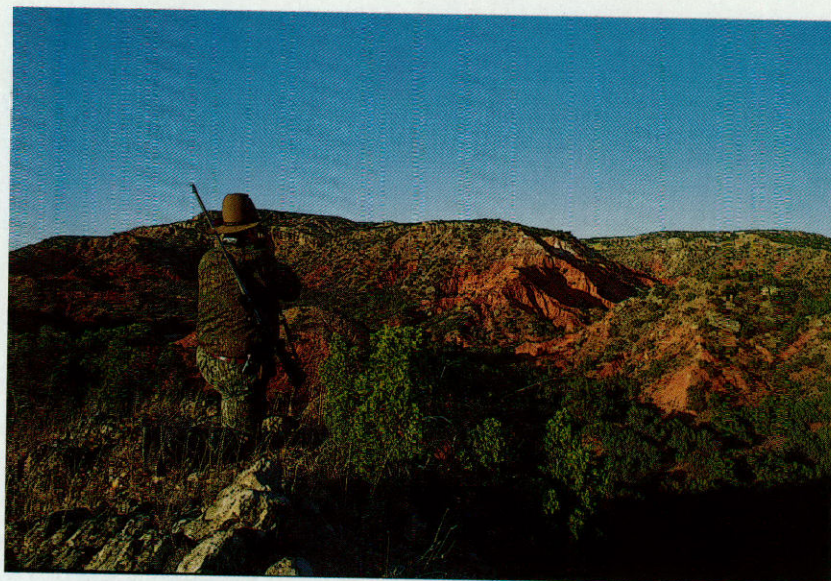
**T**he sun was barely peeking over the red badlands as I led a group of five hikers along the broken edges of the Caprock Escarpment. The smell of juniper filled the cool morning air as we explored the rugged canyons and arroyos of the Little Red River country.

The trail we were walking eventually took us to a narrow pass that cut between two canyon walls. I led the way through, and on the other side I was greeted by a band of strange animals I had never seen before. Startled, they jumped like a squadron of F-16s trying to outdistance an enemy.

I grasped my camera and telephoto lens firmly and began working my way around the face of the canyon wall hoping to meet them on the other side. But I was no match for the sure-footed creatures. I kept up my vigil for 15 minutes without any luck. The last time I saw them, they were standing broadside to me on top of a high ridge, silhouetted against the sky. Before they disappeared into the red sandstone, I managed to fire off three frames.

I had stumbled across a herd of the exotic animals of which thousands now call Texas home: the aoudad sheep. Aoudads or Barbary sheep inhabit some of the most rugged terrain in the state. Because of their cloven hooves and reddish-brown coloring, they can hide or outmaneuver almost any predator on rocky slopes or canyon draws.

The aoudad is an odd-looking animal. Both males and females have a fringe of hair that hangs from the throat down through the brisket to the forelegs. Although less pronounced in females, this hair is fair-



**Aoudads have done well in the Palo Duro/Caprock region of Texas, habitat similar to their home in the Atlas Mountains of North Africa. It takes a strong pair of legs, flat-shooting rifle and a good pair of binoculars to hunt aoudads successfully.**

ly thick on the males. Both sexes have horns that grow back from their head and curve downward in a semicircle. Males generally weigh from 200 to 250 pounds, while females average about 100 pounds lighter.

Like most people, my first encounter with the aoudad was purely accidental. But according to the latest counts, the aoudad is likely to be spotted more often as its range and numbers continue to expand. Currently there are approximately 15,000 aoudads in Texas, with the largest concentrations in the Palo Duro Canyon area of the Panhandle, the Trans-Pecos and Edwards Plateau.

Aoudads are native to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco along the northwestern tier of Africa. They originally were brought to the United States for zoos, but some were released on private ranches in California and New Mexico.

Until the 1950s, there were very few big game animals left in the Palo Duro Canyon. At the time, the num-

ber of native mule deer was barely sustainable and struggling, and white-tailed deer were almost nonexistent. So at the request of landowners, 44 aoudads were released in the winters of 1957 and 1958 in order to provide area ranchers an animal that hunters would pay to pursue. In the ensuing years the aoudad continued to expand its range and numbers as stockings increased in other areas of the state.

Because of the similarities in terrain and food supplies to their native land, the aoudad adapted well in West Texas. According to some, however, they may have adapted too well. Currently, there are mixed reviews about the aoudad's worth as a big game animal in Texas and concerns about their displacing native animals.

To some landowners, the aoudad represents an additional source of income. They are listed as exotic game species in much of the state and can be hunted year around without bag limits. They are game animals in the Panhandle counties of

Armstrong, Briscoe, Donley, Floyd, Hall, Motley, Randall and Swisher. The season is November 5 through January 15, and the bag limit is one aoudad. With packaged hunts going upwards from \$500, the rights to harvest just a few aoudads per year could net a landowner some extra cash.

For the hunter, the aoudad symbolizes an unusual type of quarry that they don't have to travel thousands of miles to hunt. With large, prominent horns and an extremely skittish nature, some hunters find them to be a challenging game to pursue. I've talked to a few hunters who tell me the hardest part of the hunt isn't approaching the animal, but retrieving it after it is down.

There is growing concern, however, that aoudads are wearing out their welcome in the places where they compete with other types of big game animals. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologist Dave Dvorak of Paducah, there is growing concern that aoudads are competing too effectively with mule deer for food. "Aoudads eat a lot of the same things that mule deer eat,

plus a lot of things that mule deer don't," said Dvorak, who was involved with the initial releases in the Panhandle. "If the food supply gets low, the mule deer may suffer while the aoudads can keep on going."

**D**vorak explained that mule deer feed by browsing. That means they primarily eat forbs and tender leaves of brush and trees. An aoudad, however, eats the same types of food but, unlike deer, they have the added advantage of being able to survive by also eating grasses. "Compared to some of our native big game species, aoudads are highly adaptable animals and very aggressive when it comes to expanding their range," he added.

Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist Mike Hobson of Alpine agrees. He said aoudads can be a benefit to both native animals and ranchers, provided they are managed in the right way. "If a landowner wants to introduce aoudads, or any exotic for that matter, one option is to erect a high fence and isolate them from the native species," said Hobson. "The Kerr Wildlife Management Area found many years ago that if natives and exotics are put in head-to-head competition for space, water and food, the exotics usually will prevail."

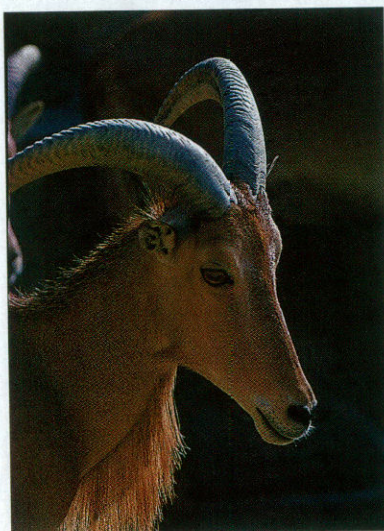
But perhaps the biggest opposition to aoudad range expansion comes from the Trans-Pecos region where biologists are attempting to reestablish the desert bighorn sheep to parts of its historical range. The consensus is that the two animals do not mix well in the wild. "There are some people who believe that when an aoudad and a desert bighorn

come into contact in the wild, there is a possibility for disease transmission from one to the other," noted Hobson. "When that occurs, the bighorn most likely is not going to be immune to some of the diseases that the aoudad may have and subsequently will die from that contact." Hobson said, however, that current restocking of the desert bighorn is taking place in those areas of West Texas where there are no aoudads. (See *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, October 1995.)

Also, the aoudad has become somewhat of a problem for urbanites around Franklin Mountains State Park in El Paso. According to Carolina Ramos, park superintendent, there have been reports of aoudads coming down from the mountains and into the populated areas. She speculates this is happening because of a lack of rainfall, causing food and water to be scarce in the mountains. She said that at this point the aoudads merely are a nuisance and haven't caused any property damage that she can confirm.

This, like many other such controversies, can't be put to rest with a few easy answers. Many Panhandle landowners do not view aoudads as detrimental to mule deer, especially since aoudads have declined since the 1970s. As long as there continues to be a demand for the aoudad as a huntable species, they will continue to be looked upon as a source of income. On the other hand, as long as aoudads are seen as a threat to desert bighorn sheep and mule deer, they won't be very welcome in some parts of our state. ★

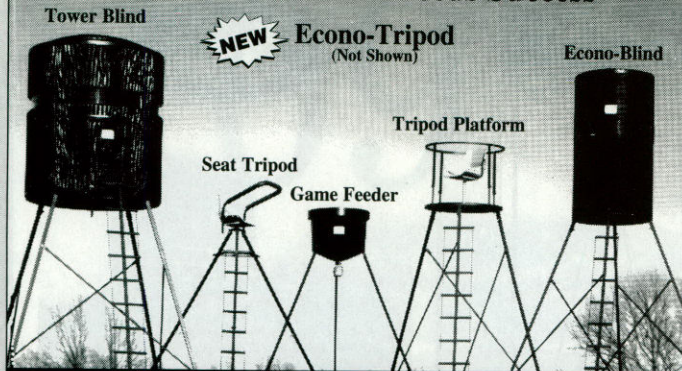
*RUSSELL GRAVES is an agricultural science instructor and FFA advisor at Childress High School in Childress.*



BILL REAVES

**Both sexes have a characteristic fringe of hair, although in females such as this one it is less pronounced.**

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## PARTING SHOT

### What's Shakin'?

A Labrador retriever named Bo gets shed of some excess pond water during a goose-hunting expedition near El Campo.



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