

# TEXAS

PARKS & WILDLIFE



October 1988



# TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

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Leroy Williamson ..... Chief Photographer  
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## Covers

**Front:** As the sun begins to set after a day of quail hunting in South Texas, the subtle beauty of the Brush Country becomes apparent. Quail hunting here is good, and to many, it's one of the state's best kept secrets. (See story on page 24.) Photo by Steve Bentsen. **Inside Front:** As a Halloween treat to our readers, we went ghost hunting in the state parks. This phantom soldier at Fort Lancaster State Historic Site is just one of many friendly spirits we discovered on our journey. (See story on page 2.) Photo by Leroy Williamson.

# In the Spirit

## State park ghosts wish you Happy Halloween

Article by Mary-Love Bigony ♦ Photos by Leroy Williamson

**T**he small group visiting the chapel at Presidio La Bahia watched with curiosity and concern as a woman dressed in black made her way to the altar. Weeping, she knelt to pray. As the minutes passed, she seemed to become increasingly distressed and overcome with grief. The woman in black aroused compassion among the observers, and as she rose, a woman from the group approached her to offer comfort and assistance. But as she reached out to her, the woman in black disappeared.

Now, we all know there's no such thing as ghosts, right? Everything has a rational, if not readily apparent, explanation. But the past is always present at historic old buildings and forts, and reports of mysterious footsteps, shadows and an occasional apparition bring to mind Hamlet's admonition: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Historic sites under the stewardship of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department have been meticulously pre-

served or restored to present an accurate and authentic picture of the state's past. So authentic are these places, it's easy to see why history can come alive in an almost literal sense for some people. But reports of figures such as the woman in black at the reconstructed Presidio La Bahia near Goliad State Park should in no way draw attention away from the sites' historic and educational value. Similar stories have been reported from many of the parks, tales that often reflect the attitudes and cultures of past generations.





*Grieving women often are the central characters in ghost stories. At Presidio La Bahia near Goliad State Park, the woman in black stirs compassion among the observers, then disappears. A mysterious white-clad figure has been seen floating around Fantborp Inn and the nearby family cemetery.*

Just who is the grieving woman in black who appears at Presidio La Bahia every few years? No one knows. She's one of a cast of spirits occasionally seen in and around Goliad State Historical Park. The original Presidio La Bahia was moved to the area in 1749 and provided protection for Espiritu Santo and Mission Rosario, both of which now are part of the state park. Spanish soldiers manned the presidio during this period, and modern-day visitors have seen the pale forms of two men dressed in Spanish uniforms fighting with swords near La Bahia. Is the woman in black mourning for a victim of this clash, or perhaps for the headless horseman of La Bahia, a figure wearing early Texas clothing that has been seen riding around the compound on nights when the fog rolls in.

The centerpiece of Goliad State Historical Park is the reconstructed Mission Espiritu Santo, founded in 1722 and moved to its present site 27 years later. There are believed to be more than 20 people buried around the stone church in the mission compound, which dates from 1777. Perhaps it is the spirit of one of these people who attracts the woman in a white shroud seen floating across the grounds on chilly, misty nights.

More recent history was the 1836 execution of Colonel James Fannin and his troops on orders of General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, an event known as the Goliad massacre. The executions took place a short distance outside Presidio La Bahia, and a camper in the park recently told superintendent James Hudnall that he was awak-

ened by men's voices and moans coming from the area of the massacre. People have also told Hudnall about an unsettling experience they have had as they walked across a bridge in front of the park. They report hearing someone walking behind them, right in step. When they turn to investigate, no one is there and the footsteps stop. When they start walking again, the footsteps resume.

La Llorona, the weeping woman, has been seen on rivers throughout the state, including the portion of the San Antonio River in Goliad State Park. The stories about La Llorona vary, but she always is seen as a young woman with long hair and a cape, holding a blanket-wrapped baby. According to one of the most widespread stories, La Llorona is the ghost of a peasant girl who fell in love with a wealthy aristocrat. His family forbade him to marry her, but he saw her secretly for several years and she bore him three children. One night he failed to appear. When he did not return for several weeks, La Llorona inquired after him. To her horror, she learned that he had married. In anger and shame, she threw her children into the river. She died soon after her crime; some say she died by her own hand, some say she went to prison and grieved herself to death. Whatever her fate, she continues to walk the banks of the San Antonio and other rivers, weeping for her crime and searching for her children.

A different group of spirits roams the remote Fort Leaton State Historic Site in Presidio. Ben Leaton had been a scalp hunter for the Mexican government before coming to this spot on the Rio Grande in 1848 and building a massive fortress. These adobe walls have seen bloodshed and violence, the perfect scenario for ghost stories.

Ben Leaton died in 1851. His widow married Edward Hall, a local customs agent, and the Halls made their home in the adobe fort. Some time after marrying Leaton's widow, Hall borrowed a large sum of money from Leaton's old partner, John Burgess, us-

ing the fort as collateral. Hall failed to repay the loan and Burgess foreclosed, but Hall refused to leave. Frontier justice being what it was, Burgess allegedly had Hall murdered in one of the rooms of the fort. The Burgess family assumed ownership of the fort.

Soon after moving in, Burgess did an odd thing: he converted the room in which Hall had been murdered into a chapel, complete with an altar. Did John Burgess—a man with no qualms about taking whatever action he deemed appropriate—suffer a guilty conscience? Or did Edward Hall's ghost return and demand retribution?

John Burgess supposedly died at the hands of Bill Leaton—Ben Leaton's son and Edward Hall's stepson—in 1875. The Burgess family abandoned the fort in 1926, but the huge adobe structure's presence continued to be felt in this small community. Workers in the area often reported seeing an old woman in a rocking chair in the kitchen. Mrs. Hall or Mrs. Burgess, perhaps, watching over her home? The vague figure of a man matching Edward Hall's description also has been seen in the room in which he was murdered. Even today, staff and visitors occasionally hear chains rattling in the granary, as though some long-ago horsemen were removing the harnesses from their horses.

According to one legend, a horseman was caught in a sudden thunderstorm near Fort Leaton around the turn of the century. As he tried to pull his cape around his shoulders, a clap of thunder startled the horse. The horse bolted, but instead of being thrown clear, the rider's foot was caught in the stirrup and he was dragged along behind the horse. The rider's body slammed into a sharp boulder and he was beheaded. If you believe that ghosts linger in the places in which they died suddenly, watch carefully if you find yourself near Fort Leaton during a sudden thunderstorm: reports persist of a headless horseman in a black cape that can be seen riding a white horse around the compound.

During the period Fort Leaton was abandoned, its rooms served as temporary shelter for homeless families in the area. An elderly couple visited the historic site recently, and told superintendent Luis Armendariz they had set up housekeeping in two of the fort's rooms when they were newly married

in the late 1920s. Among their meager furnishings were some wooden crates they used as shelves for their dishes. The couple said that after they retired for the night, they would hear dishes crashing to the floor and breaking, as if the crates had been pushed over. When they went to check, everything was fine. This occurred night after night, and became so unnerving that the couple soon sought other quarters.

Rumors circulated for decades that Ben Leaton had buried gold under the floor of one of the rooms. Throughout the years that the structure stood abandoned, treasure hunters dug for the nonexistent gold. The result was a deep pit that eventually filled with garbage. When the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department acquired Fort Leaton in 1968, one of the first jobs was to clean out the pit. The local workers who were hired for the job were about halfway into the pit when they became terror stricken. Both claimed to feel something pulling them into the hole. They abandoned the work and the fort and never returned, not even for their paychecks.

If Fort Leaton's turbulent history accounts for its cast of spirits, perhaps George and Harriet Fulton's happy life explains the dearth of ghosts at Fulton Mansion State Historic Structure. According to curator Paula Ussery, "The house has only one ghost, which fortunately is very inactive." Ussery said the ghost, a young woman, has appeared only once, during World War II. She materialized near the window in the fourth-floor growlery, or tower, and pointed toward Aransas Bay to warn the citizens of Rockport and Ful-

*The adobe walls of Fort Leaton have seen bloodshed and violence, so it is no surprise that ghost stories are abundant there. People have heard chains rattling in the granary, perhaps an echo from a long-ago horseman. At Fulton Mansion, a woman is said to have appeared at the window to warn of impending danger.*





by Leroy Williamson

## Ghostly Images

There's an old saying that "the camera never lies." But is that true? Ordinary cameras convert our three-dimensional world into photographs without depth. Still, they accurately reproduce what they see and people assume that if it's in the picture, that's the way it was.

What happens if the subject to be photographed either doesn't exist, or the possibility of photographing a subject could take years of waiting? That's when the photographer has to resort to tricks—or special effects might be a nicer way to say it.

Now, I'm not saying it's impossible to photograph a ghost. I have never photographed a real ghost, and with magazine deadlines being what they are, there just wasn't time to wait for a real ghost to show up.

**How These Pictures Were Made**  
The technique is simple. Most of

these photos are double exposures. Take one picture with your model placed and posed. After the first exposure, have your model move from the scene and make a second exposure on the same frame. The result will be a see-through ghost image. Some exposure compensation is necessary.

If you want your ghost in a photo with a real person, the real person must remain in the same position for both exposures.

Another way to photograph a ghost image is to use a long exposure—from one to five seconds—and have your model move a few feet to create a blur.

There are many special effects that photographers can use to create images which depart from reality. If you like taking pictures, use your imagination to create your own special images. \* \*

ton of impending doom. Former superintendent June Secrist has heard additional stories about the woman at the window—that she appeared there to warn of a submarine coming through the channel, and whenever there was some sort of danger in the bay, such as a hurricane.

Even though the woman at the window is the Fulton Mansion's only ghost, many people ask if the house is haunted. It is architecturally similar to the house in Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho," and George Fulton died on Halloween night, 1893; but so far, that combination of coincidences has failed to produce any ghost tales.

Ussery said she has heard stories from local people about the small room on the third floor of the house. The room has no windows, and the ceiling is so low you have to crawl on hands and knees. One widely told tale is that Harriet went mad and George locked her up in the room. Other people think the family used the room to hide from pirates and Indians. Doubtful, since the last Indians left the area in the 1850s and pirates hadn't been there since the 1830s. Still others ask if this was a treasure room where George kept his money. Fulton might have kept money there, says Ussery, but it was not built for that purpose. Actually, the room is a trunk storage area that was common in houses such as this one.

Pirates and Indians come up again in discussions about the Fulton Mansion's basement, an unusual feature in a house this near the water. Legend has it that the basement led to a tunnel through which the family fled from pirates and Indians. Once again, no pirates and Indians and furthermore, says Ussery, a tunnel in such a location would flood and cave in. Secrist added that the stories about a tunnel probably originated with people who recall the house having a wine cellar beneath the basement. This second cellar was probably what people believed to be a tunnel, but Secrist points out that the house itself is only seven feet above sea level, with the basement three to four feet lower. So a tunnel would be below sea level.

**F**ort McKavett was established on the San Saba River in 1852, one of six forts that provided military protection for the frontier. It was abandoned

for the last time in 1883, but a few civilian residents remained until the early 1970s.

Between 1900 and 1910, a family traveling west stopped for the night at Fort McKavett's old barracks. The family had a sick child, who grew increasingly ill during the night. She died before morning, and the grief-stricken family resumed their journey without their daughter.

Several years after the incident, a family living at the fort heard a knock on their door late at night. The caller was a young girl dressed in turn-of-the-century clothing. "Follow me!" she cried, and ran toward the barracks. The family ran after her; it was far too late for a child to be out by herself. But when the girl reached the barracks, she disappeared into the wall and no evidence of the child could be found inside the building. Several people who lived at the fort prior to the 1970s reported similar experiences.

David Bischofhausen, superintendent at Fort McKavett State Historic Site, has never seen the girl in turn-of-the-century clothing, but he has a healthy respect for the past he lives with every day. One winter morning several years ago, Bischofhausen was in his office at the fort's old hospital when he heard someone wearing heavy boots walking back and forth along the porch. Knowing no one was in the park at the time, he went out to check but found nothing. When he returned to his office, the heavy footsteps resumed.

Another time, the superintendent was working at his home near the park when he heard "a voice like a first sergeant talking to his troops." The far-off voice was in the vicinity of the park, and Bischofhausen went to investigate. The voice got louder as he got closer to the parade ground. "He was really on a tirade," said Bischofhausen. But as the superintendent approached the parade ground the voice faded. It started again when he retreated.

Mysterious footsteps are almost commonplace at Monahans Sandhills State Park. Legend has it that the visitor center was built on the site of a 19th-century Comanche burial ground. In 1967, two boys who were digging near the building unearthed a skeleton, giving credence to the story of the burial ground.

Staff members at Monahans report hearing doors slamming—doors that were already closed. Mysterious shadows come and go, as do sounds of a heavy object falling. A new employee, having been told of these phenomena, thought her coworkers were pulling her leg until the day she was alone in the office and heard a woman screaming just outside the building. She ran out to help, but found no one; she searched the perimeter of the building until the screams subsided, but never found the frightened woman.

**P**eople approaching Davis Mountains State Park from the south after nightfall have told of seeing a phenomenon known locally as the Marfa Lights. First sighted in the 1880s, the lights may appear as one sphere that divides into several balls of many colors; sometimes they become elongated, then snap back to their original shape. The mysterious lights have been seen flitting about the mountains east of Marfa, or cruising the flats below. Some people say that if you flash your headlights at them, they come closer.

Explanations such as gasses, natural phosphorescence or static electricity have never been proven. The lights aren't reflections from headlights, either—there weren't many highways or automobiles when the lights first were reported in the 1880s. Are the lights phantom campfires from long ago, or perhaps the spirits of miners trapped in a cave-in?

People undoubtedly will continue to search for an explanation of the Marfa Lights, but the results might not be any more satisfactory than those of one experiment conducted several years ago. Sacks of flour were dropped at night from a low-flying airplane to mark the



spots where the lights were seen. The next morning, the searchers found not only no evidence of the lights, but no trace of the flour either.

**T**here are people who say all battleships are haunted. That's an unnerving thought for Bennie Green, an employee at the Battleship *Texas*, although she has heard stories from other employees that have made her stop and think.

One former employee of the battleship told Green she often saw a young man dressed in a white sailor's suit standing by a ladder on the second deck. He had red hair and blue eyes, and although he never spoke to the woman, he was always smiling. She didn't see the sailor every time she passed by the spot, but she always knew when she was about to see him, because she would get cold just before the ladder came into sight.

A room on the second deck of the *Texas* at one time contained a display of guns and other military equipment. The guns had been removed but the empty display cases remained on the day when a former member of the ship's cleaning crew entered that room. The other members of the cleaning

*Forts are good ghost-hunting spots. Footsteps, voices and apparitions have been reported from Fort McKavett, including the ghost of a child looking for her family. Although no specific ghost stories have come from Fort Lancaster (opposite), a visitor recently told the park ranger she felt a presence walking along beside her as she toured the ruins.*



crew were heading in the opposite direction when they heard terrified screams coming from the room with the display cases. They ran toward the screams and met their frightened co-worker fleeing the room. She told them that when she stepped over the threshold, the floor became a grassy cemetery studded with white crosses. The scene she described was the image of the cemetery at Normandy.

**F**anthorp Inn in Anderson hosted luminaries such as Sam Houston, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee during its heyday in the 1850s. It has been restored in recent years, and today is one of the newest state historic sites.

Superintendent Jo Frances Greenlaw finds it intriguing that the house, which stood empty at the end of the road for many years, still has almost all of its original window panes. How did it escape the vandalism that plagues most empty houses? A history of Fanthorp Inn written by the late Maude McAlpine Siddall might provide a clue. Greenlaw acquired the story from Mrs. Siddall's granddaughter, Sarah Van Pelt of Anderson, who in 1964 assisted her grandmother in writing down the history of Fanthorp Inn.

During the period that the house stood empty, hunters often roamed the nearby bottomlands with their dogs. One party of hunters told the following story during the 1930s:

As the men and dogs approached the open spaces of the house's lawn, the baying of the dogs ceased abruptly and they returned, whimpering, to their masters. The hunters continued through the underbrush until they saw the open space. They stopped too, and peering through the fog that enveloped the hillside, they could see a slowly moving white-clad figure. The mourning woman moved toward the house, passing through and over the undergrowth. The hunting party ended abruptly.

A similar apparition was seen during the same period, moving across the home's sloping lawn on moonlit nights. Crying softly, the white-clad woman crossed the roadway and entered the family cemetery. She moved among the gravestones and finally sank to the ground sobbing beside one of the graves.

Is it stories such as these, told and retold throughout the years, that has kept Fanthorp Inn safe from vandals? Or does the woman in white continue to appear periodically?

Maude McAlpine Siddall's history of Fanthorp Inn ends in the 1950s, when the home once again was occupied by a family. "Those who live in the home . . . tell with tender amusement of hearing, in the midnight hours, the sound of boisterous noises," she wrote. "Investigation reveals the rooms undisturbed and in perfect order. They end the story saying, 'It's just our ancestral ghosts come to see us. They

were nice people and won't harm us.'"

These are the tales we've uncovered in our search for ghost stories in and around the state parks. But who knows what other spirits are lurking out there? Recently, a woman visiting Fort Lancaster State Historic Site asked the park ranger, "Do you ever see anything out here?"

"Yes," he replied, "we see a lot of birds, rabbits, things like that."

"No," said the woman. "I mean do you ever *see* anything or *feel* anything? While I was walking around the grounds, I felt some sort of presence walking along beside me." \*\*



# Holidays Got You Covered Up?

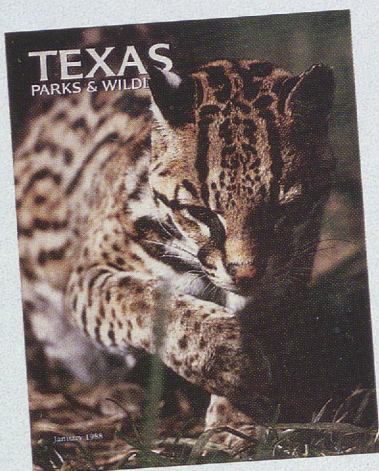
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If the gift envelope at right is missing, just fill out your holiday list with names and addresses and send it to *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.

There—it's done, now you can relax and finish reading *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, you old wise owl you.



Burrowing owl by Wyman P. Meinzer

# Outdoor Roundup

by Jim Cox

COMPILED BY THE PARKS AND WILDLIFE  
DEPARTMENT'S NEWS SERVICE

## Sportsmen Face Several Regulation Changes

Hunters and fishermen have several important regulation changes to consider, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Hunting and fishing licenses and regulations guides for 1988-89 are now available at department offices and retail hunting and fishing license outlets across the state.

All 1988-89 licenses and stamps are the same price as their 1987-88 counterparts. Resident fishing licenses are \$8, resident hunting is \$10 and the combination hunting/fishing license costs \$15.

Hunters should be aware of several changes for the fall hunting seasons. Deer hunters will be affected by an earlier season opening date for whitetails (November 5) and a closing date of January 1. In South Texas, the season opens one week later, November 12, but extends a week later, to January 8. This change was adopted by the Parks and Wildlife Commission to give hunters more opportunity to hunt during the whitetail rutting period.

Hunters also should be aware that the either-sex system of whitetail bag limits has been expanded to include 138 counties in 1988. Hunters in those counties are not required to obtain an antlerless deer permit from landowners to take antlerless deer. Only the appropriate tag from the hunting license and the landowner's permission are required to take antlerless whitetails.

Two special antlerless-only seasons were expanded to include more counties. These are an early (October 22-November 4) season in six East Texas counties and a late (January 14-29, 1989) antlerless-only season in 17 South Texas counties.

The mule deer season in the Panhandle and Trans-Pecos regions of the state was extended from nine to 16 days. The season dates are November 19-December 4 in the Panhandle and November 26-December 11 in the Trans-Pecos.

Deer hunters may be pleased to learn that they no longer are required to retain the head of any deer taken until reaching the final destination. For the 1988-89 season, a statement from the landowner or his agent, or a receipt from a taxidermist stating the sex of the deer will suffice.

Quail hunters can plan for a daily bag limit of 15 birds and a possession limit of 45 statewide. Pheasant hunters in the Panhandle may take two cocks per day, with four in possession. In coastal areas, however, the bag limit is three cocks per day, six in possession.

A number of important regulation changes affects both freshwater and saltwater anglers. For both there is a new method for measuring length. The new method requires that the tail be squeezed together or rotated to produce the maximum overall length. New regulations governing saltwater fish include a daily limit of three red drum (redfish), possession limit of six, with a minimum length limit of 20 inches and maximum length of 28 inches.

Other new saltwater limits include black drum, five per day, 10 in possession, minimum length 14 inches, maximum length 30 inches; sheepshead, five per day, 10 in possession, minimum length 12 inches; flounder, 20 per day, 40 in possession, minimum length 12 inches. Daily bag and possession limits on these three species do not apply to licensed commercial finfish fishermen.

Freshwater fishermen are alerted that all black bass species, including smallmouth, spotted and Guadalupe bass, have been included in the statewide 14-inch minimum length limit already in effect for largemouth bass. There are certain exceptions to the statewide limits, including some lakes with slot limits. All slot limits have been changed to one slot of 14-21 inches. Under this limit, anglers may retain three largemouth bass per day of any length shorter than 14 inches or longer than 21 inches. Several lakes also have an 18-inch minimum length limit on largemouths.

Other new fishing regulations include a statewide 18-inch minimum length limit on striped bass and striped/white bass hybrids, and a 10-inch minimum length and 25-per-day bag limit on white bass.

## Mad Island Purchased With Waterfowl Stamp Funds

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department recently completed acquisition of the 5,700-acre Mad Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Matagorda County.

The department paid the Texas Nature Conservancy for the remaining 50 percent undivided interest in the tract, at a price of \$325 per acre.

Funds for the purchase were derived from sales of Texas Waterfowl Stamps.

The department has entered into a 50-50 cost-sharing agreement with the Ducks Unlimited (DU) organization under the DU MARSH program, to develop waterfowl habitat on the area.

Dr. Dan Moulton, program leader for waterfowl habitat acquisition and development, said the area will be open to the public for waterfowl hunting this fall. Waterfowl hunts will be held on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and daily hunting permits (\$5) will be issued at the WMA check station beginning two hours before sunrise until 30 minutes before legal shooting time.

Rails and gallinules may be

*The Parks and Wildlife Commission has adopted a statewide quail hunting season and bag limit for 1988-89. Season dates are October 29-February 26. The bag limit is 15 quail per day, 45 in possession, in all Texas counties.*



Wyman P. Meinzer

# Outdoor Roundup *Continued*

taken in season during concurrent hunts for waterfowl. A special permit is required to hunt alligators on the WMA. More information, including a map, on this Type I WMA is contained in the department's Hunting Opportunities bulletin that can be obtained at TPWD regional and district law enforcement offices or by calling toll-free 1-800-792-1112.

Moulton reminds hunters and conservationists they can support TPWD's wetland preservation and development program by purchasing Texas Waterfowl Stamps. Also, print reproductions of the stamp art are available from art dealers or Collectors Covey, P.O. Box 57306, Dallas, Texas 75207, 214-630-4981.

Tax-deductible donations to the fund also may be sent to Waterfowl Habitat Fund, TPWD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.

## CCC Reunion Set For Cleburne State Park

Cleburne State Park will be the site of the Texas reunion of Civilian Conservation Corps alumni, to be held October 29-30.

Organization officials said participants planning to camp in the park during the reunion should call or write Cleburne State Recreation Area, Rt. 2, Box 90, Cle-

burne, Texas 76031, 817-645-4215. For further information, write NACCA Chapter 123, 5808 Trigg, Fort Worth, Texas 76114.

The CCC, a depression-era government program set up under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, was active in construction of facilities in many Texas state parks. Most of these facilities are still in use today.

## Thunderstorms Often Pose Boating Hazards

Boaters caught in unexpected autumn thunderstorms sometimes make a tragic error by trying to outrun the storm back to the boat ramp.

"If you're caught in a storm you should head for the nearest sheltered shoreline," said Capt. Larry Williford, water safety director for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Law Enforcement Division. "Many lives have been lost when boat operators for some reason felt they had to get back to where they put their boat in."

Thunderstorms that form quickly in Texas can be turbulent and dangerous, but they generally subside within a half-hour or so, Williford noted. "Most landowners will be understanding about boaters' taking temporary shelter at their boat docks or shorelines when the weather gets rough," he said.

Fishermen and other boat operators should make a check of weather forecasts a standard procedure before launching, and then keep a sharp eye for threatening clouds. Areas with dead standing timber in the water also should be avoided when high winds threaten.

All safety equipment, including U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices for all passengers, should be on board. To learn more about required equipment and boat operating procedures, obtain a free Texas Water Safety Act leaflet by writing the TPWD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744, or call toll-free 1-800-792-1112.

## Spotted Bass 'Discovered' At Cypress Springs

Recent gill net surveys by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department fishery crews turned up evidence of a strong population of spotted bass at Lake Cypress Springs in Franklin County.

Biologist Mark Webb of Marshall said net surveys ordinarily yield more catfish than bass, but the nets collected 40 spotted bass averaging one pound in weight and more than 12 inches in length. The largest was an 18-incher that weighed over three pounds.

Webb said the relatively clear

water and rocky shorelines at Cypress Springs apparently provide good habitat for the fish, which are not as well-known to most anglers as largemouth bass. "Spotted bass should provide plenty of light tackle excitement," said Webb, adding that they can be caught on small jigs, crankbaits, spinners and live crawfish.

Lake Cypress Springs is located near Mount Pleasant, and is adjacent to Lakes Monticello and Bob Sandlin.

Officials remind anglers that as of September 1, spotted and smallmouth bass are subject to the statewide 14-inch minimum length limit already in effect for largemouth bass. For details on all freshwater fishing regulations, obtain the department's 1988-89 Fishing Regulations Guide, now available from department offices and fishing license outlets across the state.

## Catfish In Good Supply At White Rock Lake

White Rock Lake is a true urban reservoir located in East Dallas just south of Northwest Highway. While not known as a fishing hot-spot, the 1,100 acre lake apparently is producing an excellent crop of channel catfish, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Biologist Bobby Farquhar said a recent gill net survey showed the lake has good populations of catfish. "A stocking of 2,000 catchable-sized channel catfish in 1986 may be contributing significantly to the fishery, since numerous four-year-old fish were collected in the survey," Farquhar said. "These fish ranged from 16 to 22 inches in length, and were the most numerous year-class."

Farquhar said catfish stocked in 1986 at 10 to 12 inches would now be four years old and in the size class now being found at White Rock.

*When threatening clouds approach, many boaters feel the urge to return to the boat ramp or dock where they put in. Water safety officials say it's safer, however, to seek the nearest sheltered shoreline.*



Glen Mills

## Department Wins ACI Awards During July

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department photographers Leroy Williamson and Glen Mills won first place in the color photography category of the 1987 Association of Conservation Information (ACI) Awards, which were announced at Steamboat Springs, Colorado during July.

First-place honors also went to the "Made In Texas" television series. The winning program was "Texas Reflections," a visual celebration of the beauty of Texas produced by Luis Peon-Cassanova.

## Caddo Lake Feeling Effects Of Florida Bass

Add the name of Caddo Lake to the list of Texas reservoirs where Florida-strain largemouth bass have had a positive impact.

Biologist Tim Schlagenhaft of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department said Caddo, Texas' largest natural lake, has been popular with bass fishermen for decades. "While anglers have always caught good numbers of bass, they often complained about the absence of larger fish," Schlagenhaft said. "Now, however, anglers and concessionaires report an increase in the number of big bass being caught."

While five-pound bass were considered a rarity before, the lake now is producing many in this size class, including two during 1988 that weighed more than nine pounds.

"Surveys indicate that the introduction of Florida bass into Caddo probably is responsible for the increase in trophy-sized bass," Schlagenhaft said. Floridas stocked in 1981 and 1982 have had a strong genetic impact on the population, the biologist said. "An electrophoretic survey in November 1987 showed that 33 percent of the largemouths sampled contained the Florida gene," he said.

The impact of Florida bass on trophy bass production is well documented, Schlagenhaft said. A total of 49 of the 50 biggest bass taken in Texas were caught since Florida bass were first stocked in



Leroy Williamson

*Caddo Lake always looked like trophy bass water. Biologists now say its looks are not deceiving.*

1972. Of those top 50, 10 have been analyzed using electrophoresis, and all contained the Florida gene.

Caddo Lake is located in Marion and Harrison Counties and straddles the Texas-Louisiana border in Northeast Texas. Caddo Lake anglers should be aware that largemouth bass limits there differ from limits in other parts of Texas, and new limits went into effect September 1. The bass bag limit in all Caddo Lake waters is 10 per day, with a 12-inch minimum length limit.

For recreational fishing and camping facilities at Caddo Lake State Park write to: Caddo Lake State Park, Route 2, Box 15, Karnack, Texas 75661. Or call 214-679-3351.

## Black Drum Record May Last A Long Time

A Bay City man's recent catch of an 81-pound black drum broke a state record that had stood for a quarter-century. Wally L. Escobar

Jr. caught the big drum near the mouth of the Colorado River on June 19. It was 51.1 inches long. The former state record black drum was a 78-pounder caught near Sabine Pass in 1964.

The state fish records committee of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department also certified state records for a 5.76-pound smooth puffer caught by Tim Miller of Brazoria off Freeport during May, and a 14-pound, nine-ounce almaco jack caught by Steven W. Puckitt of Pearland off Galveston, also during May.

## Poacher Kills Wild Turkey In Restoration Area

Poachers recently shot an eastern wild turkey gobbler from a vehicle on a Trinity County park road, then left it to spoil.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials said the 20-pound eastern turkey was one of a flock of eastern-strain turkeys trapped from a restoration area and stocked near

Trinity in late 1986 and early 1987.

Biologist Joe Campo asked Trinity County and East Texas citizens to help in preventing this kind of needless waste of a valuable resource. "Any known or suspected illegal turkey hunting should be reported," Campo said, adding that callers to the state's toll-free Operation Game Thief number, 1-800-792-GAME, may be eligible for cash rewards if their information leads to arrest and conviction of game law violators.

Campo said the released flock, consisting of eight gobblers and 13 hens, had good reproductive success during summer 1987 and their numbers appear to be increasing.

The eastern-strain turkey, once abundant throughout East Texas, was largely wiped out by over-hunting shortly after the turn of the century. The department's stocking programs have restored eastern turkey populations to huntable levels in several East Texas counties, but thousands of acres of habitat remain to be stocked, Campo said.

# A \$35 HUNTING LEASE

A goal of providing additional public hunting opportunities in Texas where 96 percent of the land is privately owned has been a major challenge for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. But great strides were made in 1987 in meeting this Texas-sized challenge, with the creation of the Type II Wildlife Management Area public hunting program.

In September 1987, the Type II program began with the idea of offering low-priced outdoor recreation for sportsmen while providing economic incentives to participating landowners. Most of the lands or units designated as Type II areas are leased by the department from the General Land Office of Texas, the U.S. Forest Service, timber companies and other cooperating private landowners.

The primary difference between Type I WMAs and Type II areas is that Type I WMAs generally have wildlife resources or facilities that require more intensive management and protection than Type II lands. Public hunts on Type I areas tend to be more closely supervised since they are often conducted in concert with ongoing wildlife management or research projects.

The structure of the Type II program

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by A. Gayland Moore

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is relatively simple. To participate, sportsmen and outdoor enthusiasts must purchase a \$35 Type II permit, which allows them to hunt, fish and enjoy the Texas outdoors on 82 Type II units totaling approximately 670,000 acres. For those who do not hunt or fish, a new \$10 annual permit for non-consumptive users is offered this year. The Type II season is from September 1 to August 31 of the following year.

Although the program was designed to promote low cost, family-oriented, public hunting opportunities, other outdoor activities such as fishing, camping, hiking, photography and nature observation are encouraged. Type II permit holders may take their children hunting or camping on the Type II areas, with hopes of making them aware of the need for proper management of wildlife resources along with introducing children to the sport hunting ethic. Children under the age of 13 are not required to have a Type II permit, but must be accompanied by

adults for proper supervision and safety.

Other advantages for Type II participants are many: They may enter and hunt on any Type II area in the state and make as many visits to their favorite areas as they wish. Permit holders also are eligible to enter drawings which select a limited number of hunters to participate in hunts for pronghorn antelope, mule deer or desert bighorn sheep. In essence, permit holders have carte blanche to enter and hunt on any of the designated Type II areas in Texas.

New areas added to the list of available Type II units this season include acreage from the forest products industry and 17,000 acres in the Panhandle for pheasant hunting. The North Toledo Bend, Caddo, Moore Plantation, Bannister and Alabama Creek Wildlife Management Areas also were added. Gun deer hunts on these five areas, however, will have a later opening date (December 1) than the

*The construction of hunting blinds, stands or towers (right) is allowed, provided that the builder disassembles the structure within 72 hours.*

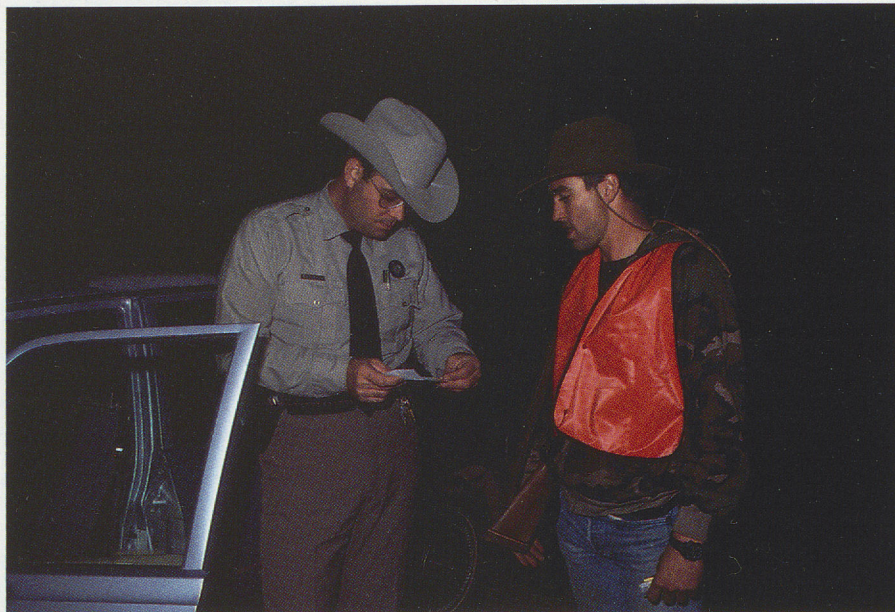


Glen Willis

statewide season.

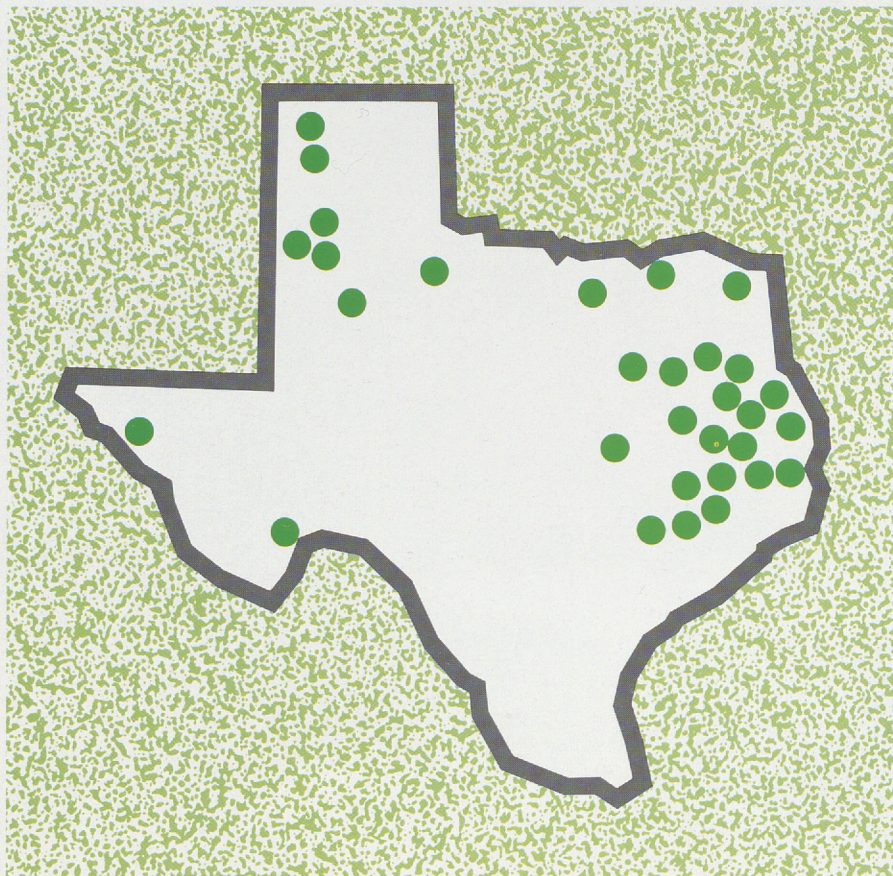
Once you have purchased a \$35 Type II hunting/fishing permit or a \$10 Type II nonconsumptive annual permit, and a hunter-orange vest, along with learning the Type II regulations and restrictions, you are ready to find a Type II area and begin your outing. Each permit holder receives a "Type II Wildlife Management Areas Map Booklet," a valuable possession because this booklet provides maps and detailed information on all 82 units throughout the state.

To locate a specific Type II area, you can refer to the Locator Map (an outline by counties of the State of Texas) inside the Map Booklet and select a geographic region (East, West or Panhandle). County maps, which appear in alphabetical order by region in the



Glenn Mills

*Of the 82 Type II units in Texas, 65 are located in 23 East Texas counties. The remaining 17 units are found in the northeast, Trans-Pecos and Panhandle regions of the state (below).*



map booklet, help Type II permit holders select a particular unit that they may wish to visit. Public roads, access routes and boundaries of each unit also are shown in the Type II Map Booklet.

Type II hunters and visitors should study the county maps closely to avoid trespassing on private property or private roads when entering, using or departing Type II areas. The Type II permit does not authorize you to be on adjacent private property. A compass can help provide orientation within the unit in relation to geographic features such as roads, drainages or hills depicted on the map. Through frequent reference to the map and by maintaining a sharp eye for boundary markers, Type II participants should have little difficulty in staying within areas where they are authorized to hunt.

Boundaries of Type II areas are marked at intervals of one-fourth mile with yellow, diamond-shaped, 10-inch by 10-inch signs facing outward and displaying the following information: Posted; No Trespassing; Hunting By Permit Only; Type II Wildlife Management Area; Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Participants need to pay close attention to boundary signs because many of the boundaries of Type II property are unfenced.

As Texas hunters and campers prepare for the 1988-89 Type II season, a critique of the Type II program's inaugural year seems to be in order. To help the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department determine the program's success the first year, hunter-attitude and hunter-harvest surveys were con-





*Game wardens are among the first to inform wandering Type II hunters and campers of overlooked boundary markers (above), especially at night (top left). Children under the age of 13 (right) must be accompanied by an adult permit holder.*

ducted by the Wildlife Division. Although some questions remain, the results of both surveys were favorable.

The hunter-harvest survey of one-half of the permit holders indicated that an estimated 14,584 hunters spent 115,588 hunter-days on Type II areas. Some 11,109 of the hunters hunted deer, taking a total of 1,896 animals. Deer hunter success was approximately 14 percent. The generally high populations of quail across the state were reflected in the estimated harvest of 25,055 quail by 2,122 hunters. Other species harvested on Type II areas during the 1987-88 season included 9,085 doves, 10,356 rabbits, 44,802 squirrels, 118 feral hogs and javelinas and 5,526 waterfowl.

Wildlife Division Director Charles Allen said he was pleased with the sur-



vey results. "We didn't expect a high deer harvest the initial year because deer populations were low on several of the Type II units," said Allen. "However, with stocking programs, habitat enhancement and continued excellent law enforcement, hunting success will improve in the next couple of years.

"One of the most exciting aspects of the program last year was seeing supervised youths hunting a total of 11,105 days. The Type II program was de-

signed to provide low cost hunter opportunity and allow youths under an adult's supervision to hunt free, and this was accomplished," said Allen.

A hunter-attitude survey indicated that the Type II program was well received by the Texas hunters during its first year. Survey forms were sent to 5,000 of the 24,875 persons who purchased Type II permits, with slightly more than half responding to the survey. The hunter-attitude survey was de-

signed to assess overall hunter opinion of the Type II program, satisfaction levels of the hunting experience, problems encountered and the extent of non-hunting outdoor activities in the areas.

Eighty-six percent of the survey respondents thought the program was either a "great" or "good" idea. Only three percent thought it was a bad or very bad idea. Another 11 percent had mixed feelings about the program.

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## Type II WMA Rules & Regulations

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In addition to any other statute or regulation, a person commits an offense if that person:

- does not possess a Type II Hunting Permit (when required), hunting license, or any other permit or stamp required;
- (ALL PERSONS) fails to visibly wear at least 400 square inches of hunter orange material with at least 144 square inches appearing on both chest and back except when deer hunting is permitted. Exempt from these requirements are: persons within vehicles or designated campsites and authorized department and landowner employees; persons hunting sandhill cranes and waterfowl or fur-bearing animals, bobcats and coyotes at night.
- possesses buckshot on a Type II Area;
- leaves the area and trespasses or shoots wildlife on privately-owned property adjacent to a Type II Area;
- possesses a loaded firearm within or on a motor vehicle; (A loaded firearm is defined as a firearm containing a live round of ammunition within the chamber and/or magazine, or if muzzleloading, one which has a cap on the nipple or a priming charge in the pan).
- hunts from a designated road or any county or state road or highway in a Type II Area;
- uses a motor vehicle, including all-terrain vehicles, three-wheelers, four-wheelers, or dirt bikes, except on designated roads. Paraplegics or double or single amputees are exempt from this regulation to the extent that they may drive directly to the hunting area;
- hunts from a motor vehicle, except paraplegic and single or double amputees of the legs may hunt from a stationary vehicle provided the hunting is not conducted on a designated road or any other public road;
- uses a dog or dogs to hunt any animal or bird, except:
  - on National Grassland and General Land Office land bobcats, coyotes, fur-bearing animals, rabbits, hares, squirrels, and game birds may be hunted with dogs;
  - on all areas rabbits, hares, squirrels, and game birds may be hunted with dogs;
  - on all areas, except on Units #501, #601, #602, #608, #609, #610, #611, #612, #613, #614, and #701, bobcats, coyotes, and fur-bearing animals may be hunted with dogs only *at night*.
- constructs or emplaces a hunting blind, stand, tower, or platform within 50 yards of any road, marked boundary, or campsite;
- leaves a permanent hunting blind, stand, tower, or platform for more than 72 hours;
- fails or refuses to obey posted regulations;
- fails to comply with instructions on special permits and self-registration permits;
- fails or refuses to follow directions given by department personnel in the discharge of official duties;
- leaves or strews refuse, litter, trash, or garbage;
- fails to keep all dogs in designated campsites confined or leashed;
- causes, creates, or contributes to excessive or disturbing sounds beyond the person's immediate campsite between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.;
- discharges a firearm, muzzleloading weapon, or bow and arrows in designated campsites;
- uses any weapon other than a shotgun to take turkey during spring gobbler season;
- hunts, shoots at, or kills an antlerless white-tailed deer on any Type II Area;
- takes any species of wildlife resource other than those species designated as **LEGAL GAME** as shown on the **LEGAL GAME LEGEND** of the unit maps and is authorized to be taken on a specific Type II Wildlife Management Area contained in this publication;
- uses shot other than non-toxic (steel) shot in areas designated as a Non-toxic Shot Zone as shown on the **LEGAL GAME LEGEND** on the unit maps in this publication;
- camps or builds a fire anywhere other than in a designated campsite.



Leroy Williamson

The Type II Map Booklet (above) provides maps and detailed information on all 82 Type II units. All hunting structures (right) must be built more than 50 yards from any road, marked boundary or campsite.

## LEGAL GAME AVAILABLE

- Antelope — Special Permit
- Desert Bighorn Sheep—Special Permit
- Mule Deer — Special Permit
- White-tailed Buck Deer
- Javelina — Black Gap WMA Only
- Jan. 14 - Feb. 26
- Turkey — Spring season only
- Rabbits & Hares
- Other Migratory Game Birds
 

Quail	Predators
Dove	Furbearers
Pheasant	Feral Hogs
Waterfowl	Fish
Squirrel	

Regulations concerning seasons, bag limits and means and methods of hunting will conform with those established by Commission adopted regulations in effect for the county or counties where individual units are located, unless otherwise noted on the Legal Game Legends of individual unit maps.

The satisfaction level of hunting experiences was equally positive because 38 percent of the respondents said they were "satisfied," with 13 percent saying they were "highly satisfied," for an overall satisfaction rate of 51 percent. Thirty percent had mixed feelings while on the negative side, 13 percent were "dissatisfied," with an additional six percent claiming to have been "highly dissatisfied."

Other significant percentages from the attitude survey included 49 percent saying that "not enough game" was a problem. The next most common problem listed was "too many hunters" at 35 percent. Glenn Boydston, coordinator of technical programs for the Wildlife Division, said the high response for the "lack of game" problem was expected because most of the Type II areas historically had been subjected to unregulated hunting pressure in addition to having low deer populations. Boydston, however, said that "game populations should increase in the near future, thus increasing hunting success." More than 1,000 white-tailed deer, primarily does, were trapped from South Texas ranches and

released on Type II units in East Texas during January and February 1988.

Safeguards against the possibility of overcrowding on Type II areas has been a concern of both permit holders and department officials since the program's inception. Theoretically, all Type II permit holders could appear at the same place on the same day, which led the department to implement several management actions to guard against overcrowding.

For starters, the issuance of Type II permits is limited to a number not to exceed one permit per 15 acres of land included within the Type II program. The approximately 670,000 acres will serve to disperse public users and the 82 units located throughout the state will help to disperse Type II users. Also, the number of participants at any one place and time will be affected by the varied interests and work schedules of permit holders. Department officials anticipate public use to be spread out over a long period of time due to hunting seasons which are scheduled to occur at various times of the year.

Perhaps the best way to avoid occasional overcrowding is by timing



Leroy Williamson

your use later in the season, hunting on weekdays rather than weekends, and by scouting several units to provide yourself another option if your first choice is overcrowded. Holders of Type II permits should remember that the Type II permit is an annual permit, allowing for a variety of public use opportunities throughout the year.

Boydston said that non-hunting use of the Type II areas is difficult to gauge, but more than 50 percent of the survey

respondents said they participated in activities such as hiking, camping and nature observation. One major change in the Type II program this year is that camping will be confined to designated camping areas. Only primitive campsites (no shelters, toilets, drinking water, etc.) are available.

Properly contained campfires are permitted only in designated camping areas, but cutting of standing timber or removal of firewood from the Type II

unit is prohibited. Trash receptacles are not provided, so campers must take all trash with them upon departure from a Type II area.

If the Type II program is to continue to succeed in Texas, its permit holders must cooperate, whether they be hunters, campers, hikers, nature observers or any combination of these. Remembering to respect the rights and property of the landowners and other permit holders will increase future



availability of lands to the public—a necessity for the program.

“Now that we have had a successful first year of Type II hunting and outdoor recreation in Texas, we will be able to convince landowners that it’s a practical and financially rewarding way of leasing land to the public,” said Charles Allen. “Enjoy your outings, be safe and thanks for helping the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department plan for the future.” \* \*

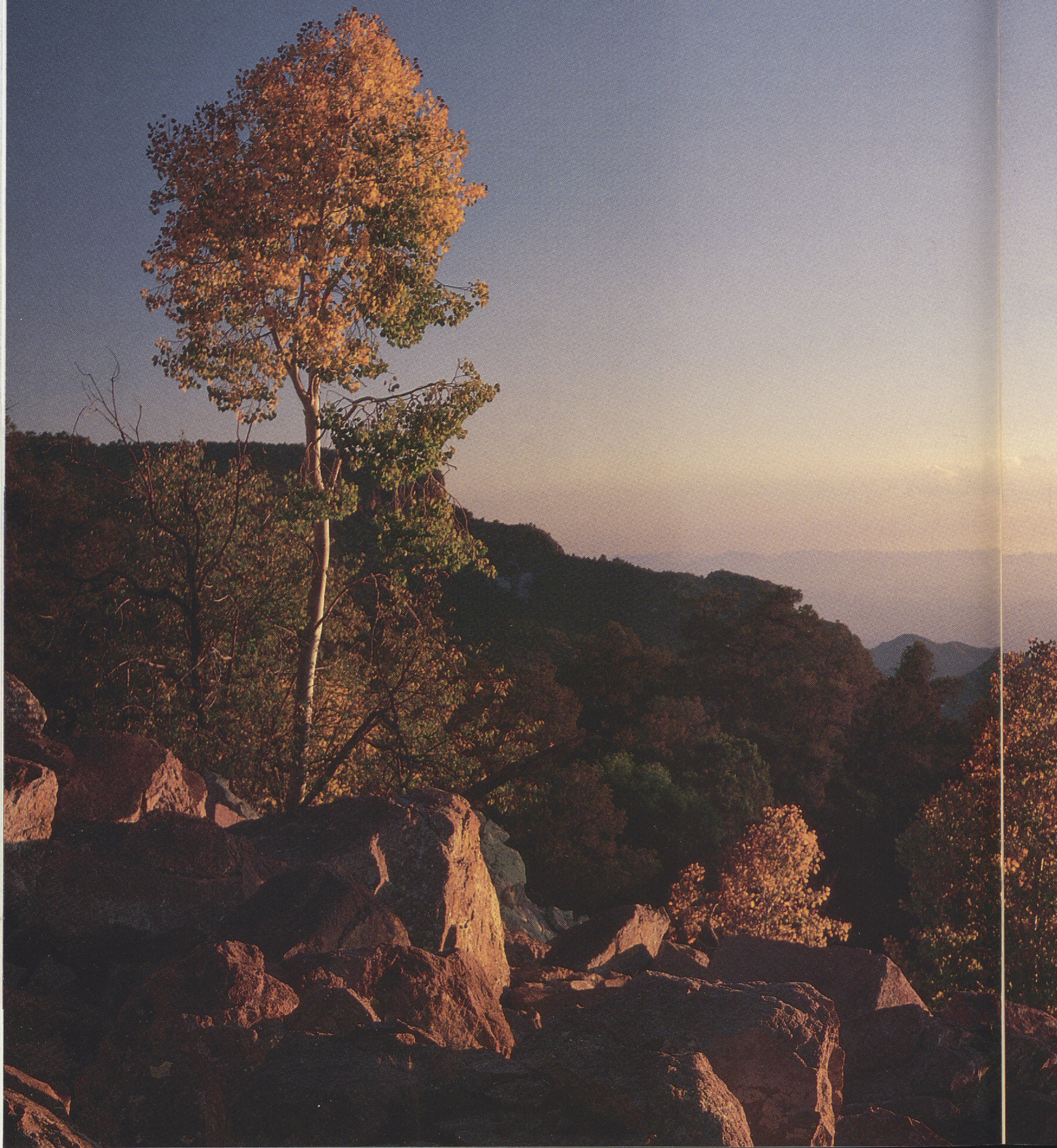



*Most of the lands or units designated as Type II areas are leased by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department from the General Land Office of Texas, the U.S. Forest Service, timber companies and other landowners. At left, a clear-cut timber area in East Texas. Above, Unit #113 in Rusk County.*

Glen Mills

Glen Mills







# The Aspens of West Texas

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Article and Photos by Laurence Parent

The crisp morning air nipped at my ears with a hint of the coming winter. As the sun peeked over the horizon, I strapped on my backpack and started up the Tejas Trail at Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Here and there, the steep ravines tumbling down the walls of Pine Canyon were spotted with brilliant scarlet and gold leaves of the bigtooth maples. My trail was empty, but nearby McKittrick Canyon teemed with hikers enjoying the first colors of fall. I was not in search of maples, however; I was hunting the aspens of Texas.

After climbing about 2,000 feet, I reached Pine Canyon's north rim and paused for breath. In sharp contrast to the desert I had left below, pines and Douglas firs dotted the ridges and canyons to the north. My directions instructed me to continue over the canyon rim on the Tejas Trail and down into the tangle of South McKittrick Canyon's upper reaches. After a mile or so, I left the trail as instructed and ventured upstream into a deep dry drainage. The canyon was choked with ponderosa and southwestern white pines, Douglas firs, and bigtooth maples.

After a half mile of rocky bushwhack-

ing and doubts about my directions, I suddenly stopped. Beneath my feet was a carpet of rounded yellow leaves. As I peered upwards at a pair of 30-foot aspens reaching skyward from the floor of the dark narrow ravine, a light breeze rustled the golden fall leaves, giving credence to the popular name of quaking or trembling aspen.

The aspens are scattered in small groves for a half mile up the remote sheltered canyon. In their fierce competition for sunlight with the pines and firs, the aspens grow as tall as 50 feet, with a small narrow crown of foliage at the top. The trees concentrate in the bottom of the canyon, making the most of the meager moisture available in the Guadalupe Mountains; few young trees are present.

Biologists Loren Potter and James Robinson examined the aspens as part of their study of the relict forest of the Guadalupe Mountains. They found that most of the aspens occur within 10 vertical feet of the canyon bottom, taking advantage of the more favorable moisture created by the steep walls. Many of the individuals are connected by roots, making them clones. Aspens generally reproduce vigorously by root suckers. In the Guadalupes, however, the area's rockiness hinders spreading of the shallow roots. Potter and Robinson feel that the increasing dominance of pine and fir in the canyon may lead to eventual extinction of the grove.

*The aspens in Big Bend National Park (left) are reached by climbing the Laguna Meadows Trail, which leads up from the Chisos Mountains Basin past Emory Peak to the South Rim.*

Without fire or clearing to allow sunlight to reach the aspens, the mature trees will eventually die and no young will be able to replace them.

The aspens' white-barked trunks, mixed in with the evergreens, look out of place in Texas. Most people associate aspens with the cooler, wetter and higher mountains of New Mexico and Colorado. But the aspens persevere in their remaining Texas strongholds as representatives of one of the most widespread North American trees.

"Not many people know of the aspens or ask about them," says Phil Koepp, now chief ranger at Big Bend National Park. "Even fewer are energetic enough to hike up to them. Most people choose the easier hike up McKittrick Canyon to see fall color, but some extra effort would reward the hiker not only with the aspens, but with the many maples growing in the high country.

The aspens generally lose their leaves a little before the maples," Koepp warns, "so trips need to be timed carefully to see the fall color on both trees."

The quaking aspen, *Populus tremuloides*, ranges from the tundra of Newfoundland and Labrador, west to Alaska and south to the Great Lakes states, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The tree grows as far south as Kentucky in the Appalachian Mountains and from the Rocky Mountains west to the Pacific Coast and south to the mountains of northern Mexico.

The aspen is normally a small to medium-sized tree growing to 40 or 50 feet tall with a trunk diameter of eight to 20 inches. Less favorable habitat in the Guadalupe Mountains limits the Texas aspens to about 30 feet in height and a trunk thickness of 10 inches. The bark is smooth, ranging in color from greenish-white to cream-colored to white, becoming dark and furrowed near the base of mature trees. The glossy green leaves are almost round with a pointed apex and finely toothed edges. A long flattened stem connects the leaves to the limbs, allowing them to flutter or tremble in the slightest

breeze. In fall, the leaves turn a bright yellow and an occasional pink or red.

Aspens quickly pioneer burned or cleared areas and provide necessary shade for young conifers to reestablish themselves. Eventually the aspens are crowded out by the taller evergreens in the competition for sunlight. Aspens spread through seeds and root suckers. After flowering in early summer, the seed pods burst open in midsummer, releasing tiny cottony seeds. The large range of this tree is probably due in part to the ease with which the tiny fluffy seeds become windborne. Aspens readily sprout from roots, resulting in few solitary aspens. Entire groves of aspens often will change colors at

the same time, indicating common root stock.

Due to the aspens' small numbers and inaccessibility, the tree is not logged in Texas. In other states where aspens are prolific, the soft, lightweight wood is sought after for plywood core stock, paper pulp, matches and food boxes. The aspen often is most appreciated for its lavish displays of fall color in the evergreen western mountains of the United States.

Several weeks after my Guadalupe Mountains hike, I struggled up to visit the aspens at Big Bend. The Laguna Meadows Trail leads up from the Chisos Mountains Basin past the flanks of Emory Peak to the South Rim. The



*Aspens and maples grow together in the high country of the Guadalupe Mountains (right). The aspens usually lose their leaves before the maples.*





aspens there survive largely in two small groves on the steep talus slopes below the summit of Emory Peak. A little above Laguna Meadows, I left the trail and picked my way up through the rocks to the largest grove.

Unlike the Guadalupe Mountains' aspens, the trees at Big Bend grow high on an exposed southwest-facing slope. Even with the greater exposure to sun and wind, water filtering down through the talus slope provides enough extra moisture for the aspens to live and even thrive. The Chisos aspens also benefit from a lack of competition on the talus slopes.

Park Ranger Eric Burr counted 222 living aspens in the largest grove in 1965. An examination by Karen Nilges in 1985 indicated a small but significant increase in number, especially among the smaller, younger trees. A smaller stand of aspens on a north-facing talus slope of Mount Emory had 18 live trees in 1985, an increase from the 1965 count. A healthy number of seedlings and small saplings also were found.

Recently, Betty and Tom Alex of the National Park Service confirmed the existence of a stand of four stunted aspens on a north-facing talus slope in the Chisos Basin itself.

"The Basin aspens grow at an exceptionally low elevation of about 5,000 feet. This far south, aspens rarely grow below 7,000 to 8,000 feet in the western U.S. or Mexico," says Betty Alex. "We saw no young trees, so it may be difficult for that small a grove to survive in such an unfavorable location."



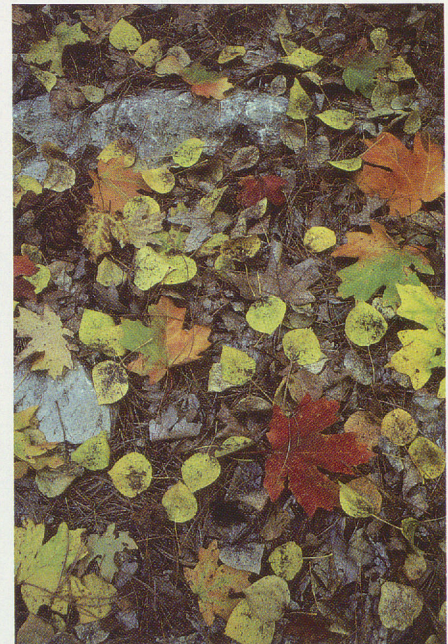
The aspens in the Guadalupe, Davis, and Chisos Mountains are thought to be relicts of wetter, cooler Pleistocene times. The aspens, along with the pines, firs and other members of the forest community, retreated to the highest, coolest and wettest parts of the West Texas mountains as the climate became hotter and drier. If disease or increased climatic dryness does not occur, most of the Chisos aspens should persevere in their small stable populations, making the most of available moisture. According to Phil Koepp of Big Bend National Park, the Guadalupe Mountains' aspens may have a harder time surviving.

"No large fires have occurred in the Guadalupe for 70 to 80 years, which has allowed the pines and firs to choke out the aspens," Koepp says. "Grazing and browsing limited the available fuel before the Park Service acquired the land. Since then, even though fuel has built up, conditions have not been right for a major fire. Carefully prescribed burns are being considered by the Park Service to help prevent a massive uncontrolled fire and to allow plants such as the aspen to recover."

A gust of wind blew a few bright yellow leaves down on me as I rested under several of the hardy Big Bend aspens. Far below, the shadows lengthened over miles of rugged mountains and desert as the autumn sun settled toward the horizon. The last rays of light turned the leaves a rich golden color. In a few days, the last leaves would fall and the slender white trunks would stand dormant and quiet until spring.

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*Red and gold maple leaves fall to the ground with yellow, rounded aspen leaves in the Guadalupe Mountains (below). The aspens grow among the southwestern desert pines and Douglas firs in parts of the Guadalupe (above). In Big Bend National Park (above left), aspens grow in two small groves on the steep talus slopes below the summit of Emory Peak.*



# Brush Coun



# Country Quail

## *Hunting bobs and blues in South Texas*



Steve Bentsen

**T**he initial attraction of South Texas is the hunting; the love of the brush comes later. Hunters come to sample what is undeniably the best quail and deer hunting in the state, if not the world. Most of them never realize that they are in danger of becoming hooked.

The attraction of South Texas is not obvious to the newcomer, for the beauty of this country is subtle. It takes a little time to become apparent, but it grows on you and eventually you find yourself giving a patronizing smile to those who question the beauty of the Brush Country. Like a magnet, it pulls at you and sooner or later you will return.

South Texas is best known for its deer hunting, and that's just fine with Texas quail hunters who believe quail hunting there is one of the state's best kept secrets. The quail hunts and yields of the deep South only make Texas quail hunters grin and hope South Texas hunting never gets that popular.

Quail hunting is serious business in the Brush Country and is treated as such. Lease prices rival those of deer leases and are frequently exclusive, since the last thing a bird hunter wants is a bunch of deer hunters running around. As landowners and hunters have become more aware of the value of quail hunting, they have turned to biologists for advice on increasing production. Substantial strides have been made in range management for quail production in recent years.

Quail prefer a diversity of tall and short grasses, with some brush or similar cover for nesting and loafing cover. They eat a mixture of vegetable matter, plant seeds and insects and benefit from a habitat that provides this in abundance. Consistent water is needed for the best nesting success. Between what nature has already provided and the efforts of managers, South Texas has all of this in abundance.

*The beauty of the South Texas Brush Country is subtle, but this thorny terrain is the scene of some of the best quail hunting in Texas.*

by Steve Bentsen



Steve Bertensen

Many techniques are used to enhance the food, cover and shelter available for both bobwhites and blue quail. These may include discing, burning, planting, special grazing methods, half-cutting existing trees and shrubs, shelter construction and various methods of providing water. Harvests are monitored and studied to determine weight, age ratios, sex ratios and diet. The results help biologists determine the status of the population.

The methods that work in one area may not be the best in another place. Some techniques may be counterproductive at certain times or in the wrong area. It is important to consult a wildlife professional before embarking on any improvement program. The Parks and Wildlife Department offers technical assistance by biologists familiar with each area of the state. Private biologists also can assist landowners and lease holders.

Quail populations are volatile and can change dramatically from year to year, and even within the same year. As conditions change, even properly managed habitat will be affected, but it will suffer less and recover more quickly.

In typical Texas fashion, South Texas quail hunting is

*Bobwhites (left) share their South Texas habitat with scaled quail. Many hunters have custom-equipped vehicles designed to carry their dogs in style.*



Steve Bertensen

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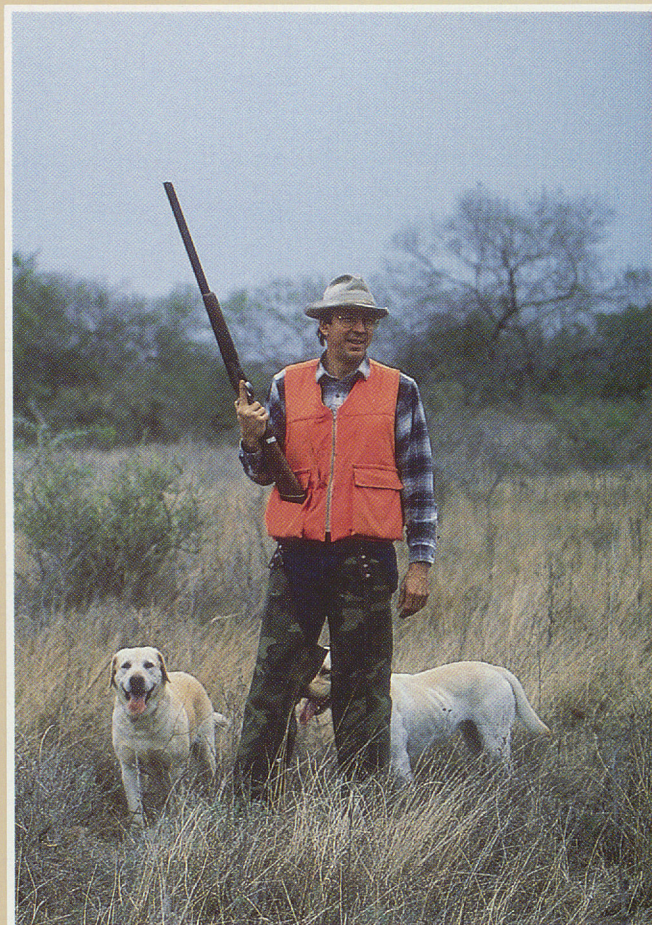


*Good hunting dogs such as pointers (above and left) and Labrador retrievers (below) are some of the most important investments a quail hunter makes. Protect your dogs from snakebite in the Brush Country, and give them plenty of water when temperatures are high.*

done with flair. The frills and trappings are unique. There are special guns, game bags, clothes, boots, snake leggings, hats and glasses. There are several variations of custom-made vehicles designed to carry dogs and hunters in style. Most of these include custom cages for the dogs which frequently include running water. There is, of course, special gear for the dogs, including training collars and leather boots. There are even a few hunters who use specialized dogs for the separate functions, one dog to point and another to retrieve.

Quail hunting success is seldom measured by the number of birds killed. The more serious the quail hunter, the fewer birds he or she is likely to shoot. Experienced quail hunters often prefer to watch the dogs work and their companions shoot. They will shoot only enough birds to help train the dogs. Far more important in measuring hunting success are factors such as how the dogs worked, how many coveys were found, the lively banter among hunters and who missed an easy shot on a big covey rise.

Etiquette is always important; never take a questionable shot or ground shoot a bird. Sportsmen always shoot birds on the rise. Blue quail are the exception: more often than not, they are shot on the ground from the hip at a dead run while hurdling cactus. That's an exaggeration and certainly not safe hunting practices, but you get the idea. One can



Steve Bentzen



Steve Bentsen

only hunt in a civilized fashion when hunting civilized birds.

There are some less important facts: when amortized against expenses, quail cost considerably more than Maine lobster. Also, quail hunters often spend more time hunting their dogs than hunting quail. Quail hunting is a South Texas favorite because it combines most of the things that sportsmen enjoy in hunting, while avoiding the pressures and tensions that accompany other forms of hunting. However, there are no trophy quail, only trophy experiences and trophy eating.

Quail hunting can be pursued as simply as you please or taken to the limit with all the frills. Either way, quail hunting is fun, and South Texas quail hunting is the best. \* \*



Bill Draker

*Blue quail (above) don't flush as easily as bobwhites. Seasoned quail hunters enjoy watching the dogs and the other hunters as much as they enjoy shooting.*



Steve Bentsen

# A good quail gun is a joy forever



The old jeep spewed a faint dust trail as we traveled the dirt road, which intersected the meandering game paths leading from the brush down to the laguna.

The late afternoon sun, bathed in a distant haze, sent light in deep carmine shafts that dissipated into obscure places overhead. The stagnant heat of midday had begun to yield to the cooler breaths rolling in from the coast. And the animals, reclusive by day, now could be seen venturing from their hidden places in the deeper woods.

The quiet was penetrating. Ironically, the inner tranquility I felt was shadowed by remorse for having missed so many days like this in my life.

Glancing down, I chanced to admire an old companion that has accompanied me on many solitary treks to other quiet woods and meadows. Bored cylinder and skeet, my side-by-side double Bernardelli 28-gauge shows the marks of the field—a small scratch here, and a little blueing gone there. Yet despite its time worn exterior, it is the only shotgun I have ever really cared for.

As always, the Berni had performed flawlessly. A bag full of scaled quail lay behind the seat as proof. But it was then that I realized its performance lay not merely in its ability to swing like a feather, or point instinctively, but in its capacity to add the final touch of perfection to a day in the woods.

*An over-and-under is the gun of choice for most quail hunters, usually a 20-gauge because it is lighter. Receivers, stocks and quality of wood (seldom mesquite) vary greatly.*

fection to a day in the woods.

Like other fine shotguns, the Berni appears to have been extruded from some gunmaker's press. The wood-to-metal fit defies insult, as do the gracefully sweeping lines from toe to muzzle. The European walnut stock is a combination of sworls, fiddleback, streaks and colors that range from

*These handsome side-by-side shotguns were manufactured in Liege, Belgium by Francotte Arms. Guns such as these usually are placed in collections, but many are used in the field.*



# ONE SPECIAL GUN

It is hard to explain man's fascination with guns. You can see it in kids with their toy guns and you can see it in adults with their real guns. There is something about guns that attracts man.

Throughout history, people have developed special relationships with their firearms. They have relied on them for food, protection and sport. They have collected them, traded them, engraved and carved them into works of art and even named them.

While a man may possess many guns in his lifetime and appreciate each and every one of them, a few of them become special. This may be because of how they look, how they feel, how they

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by Steve Bentsen

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shoot or some special sentimental history. But for whatever reason, this firearm becomes personal and is treated accordingly. With such a gun, a man can build a lasting relationship that spans years and ultimately generations.

Domestic and foreign production shotguns come in various actions—pumps, automatics, single shots and doubles, both side-by-sides and over-and-unders. They can be purchased with any number of options of chokes,

wood, stock styles, engravings and barrels. These production guns range from affordable to outrageously priced. Most shooters and collectors can find exactly what they are looking for among the ranks of present and past production shotguns.

There is another group of shotgun aficionados, however. These men have usually had, or still have, numerous production shotguns, but now they want something more. Whether for actual use, as part of a collection, for appreciation of fine craftsmanship, or simply as an investment, they want a one-of-a-kind shotgun and have the resources to commission such a creation.

There are numerous custom gunmakers around the world that cater to these desires. These craftsmen receive customers at their offices and also send representatives around the world to call on potential customers. The purchaser is measured so that the gun will fit in every aspect. He selects action, wood, stock and grip styles, checkering patterns, finish, engraving, inlaying, bar-



*The maker of this custom side-by-side measured the purchaser so that the gun will fit him in every respect.*



blond to reddish brown. The wrap-around, multi-point checkering pattern of 26 lines per inch not only serves the utilitarian assignment of facilitating the grip, but also acts as an artistic overlay.

Finally, the mating of barrels (to shoot and pattern obediently) and the case-hardened side plates (restrained, never gaudy) add the final touch to a gun that satisfies the eye, as much as it does the feel.

On slow, cautious walks through wooded chop-downs, or across weedy fields, I have often stopped just to admire my Bernardelli. Other quail hunters will understand, for they are a breed apart. They are as much enam-

ored with the tools of the trade as with their quest. But the gun is the link. Fancy wheeled rigs, meticulously trained dogs, and even tweedy knickers or fedora tops become superfluous if the gun isn't right. For in the end, only the gun can transpose the hunter's skill into success.

The modern quail gun has evolved from the slow and cumbersome scattergun of decades past. Balanced, sleek, quick to shoulder and fast to point, today's quail guns are a far cry from the long-tom shotguns that echoed across the back forty in years past. Modern quail guns have shorter barrels; chokes are, for the most part, nonexistent. The

20-gauge has become the standard, although an occasional 28- or 12-gauge can be found in the hands of a quail hunter.

Essentially, the 20-gauge's diminished recoil and smaller dimensions enable artisans to fashion shotguns that meet the quail hunter's needs. Extending it into works of art is often nothing more than maximizing the hunter's requirements. Top grade, double-barreled shotguns by Holland and Holland, Purdy, Winchester, Piotti, Perugini-Visini, Lebeau-Courally and others are usually stocked individually in order to complement the hunter's physique and particular shooting style.



rels and chokes. Most of these guns require at least a year to create and are individual works of art. The price varies with the materials and options selected.

The pictures here illustrate one such shotgun. It was created for a Rio Grande Valley businessman by Francotte Arms of Liege, Belgium. It is a side-by-side double 20 gauge with a straight English stock in French walnut, wrap around checkering and interchangeable chokes. The metal parts are engraved with Rio Grande Valley scenes from photos and drawings provided by the purchaser. The metal

*South Texas scenes grace the metal parts of this gun created by Francotte Arms of Belgium. Photos such as this bobwhite were supplied to the engraver for his translation onto the gun.*

work is signed by the engraver.

The gun took a year to create and is used in the field by the owner, who is an avid quail hunter. He cites investment purposes as his secondary objective. The real motivation was the pleasure of owning and using such a wonderful piece of craftsmanship.

Ornate embellishments such as fancy checkering patterns, and especially engraving, can be produced to match the customer's wishes, as well as his pocketbook.

Texans can get downright religious when it comes to quail guns. A few well-heeled entrepreneurs have been known to spend \$100,000 to fulfill their idea on what a quail gun ought to be. What drives the cost up? Patches of French walnut may gobble up \$1,000 and precision workmanship may demand several thousand more, but the real culprit is engraving, especially when it is complemented with gold inlays. The more conservative quail gunners find extensive engraving and opulent inlays gauche. Yet, most agree that within reason, metal sketching adds appeal to any firearm. A big price tag and two barrels, however, do not necessarily make a quail gun.

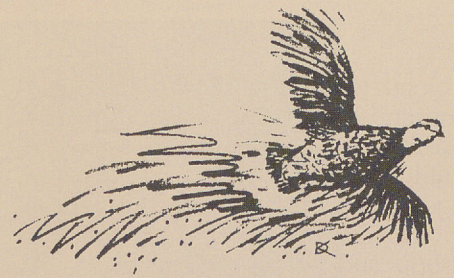
Once, while accompanied by three other hunters on a late fall hunt in East Texas, I discovered just how varied a quail gun can be. My companions were using high-class Browning over-and-unders, with extra fancy walnut stocks, and scroll engravings on satin gray receivers. I had borrowed a nice little Winchester model 23 side-by-side, and like my friends' shotguns, it was a 20-gauge.

The East Texas landowner announced that a friend of his would be joining us for the hunt. When the man

arrived, he was carrying a peculiar looking shotgun—an Ithaca model 37, 20-gauge. What made it unique was that the barrel had been sliced off at 22 inches, and a variable choke had been installed. The metal had been parkerized by a company in Natalia, Texas. Our hunting guide had then touched it up a bit with his own rendition of tiger-striped camouflage, using some mud brown, matte-finish epoxy paint. It was a ghastly sight. The gun looked like it hadn't been cleaned since the Civil War. To make things worse, the gun had a slip-on recoil pad because the man had cut the stock, only to discover that he'd gone too far. The length of pull was about 12 inches.

We were awe struck by this crude attempt at quail gunnery. Only problem was that the man outshot everyone. It couldn't possibly be because he was just better; it had to be because he was better armed. One of my compadres decided to put it to the test, so he set his expensive Browning aside, and asked if he could take a swig of the Ithaca. And you guessed it, he did great too.

Within a month, my buddy had put a twin outfit together, sans the tiger-striped epoxy touch. His Browning now sits behind the glass to impress friends at cocktail parties. But it's the Ithaca that he pulls out of the closet when it comes time for some serious quail shooting.



The quail gun can be many things to many people. It must be fast, quick to point and maneuverable. Choice of shotgun varies with tastes. Some prefer semi-automatics, others the pump action. Many more probably select the over-and-under. And then there are the traditionalists who become emotionally myopic with anything other than a side-by-side.

Currently, some of the finest shotguns are being assembled in the United States. No longer is Europe the epicenter of fine shotgun production. American custom stockmakers are unequaled. The newly reestablished Parker, as well as the neat little 20-gauge produced by the Hatfield's of Tennessee, proves that Americans still can produce an excellent shotgun. And when pressed for the truth, what chronic quail hunter wouldn't admit to being passionate for an elegant double over-and-under, or side-by-side.

I'll take a side-lock 20-gauge with 26-inch barrels, stocked in French walnut, restrained scroll engraving, straight grip stock, skeletonized butt-plate and multi-point wrap-around checkering. Just put it under the tree for Christmas. \* \*



*Engraving usually enhances the receivers of fine shotguns. The receivers of the two Holland and Hollands on the left are engraved with scrollwork. Receivers of the Francotte (third from left) and Winchester 21 (right) boast detailed engravings of game birds.*



Side-by-side shotguns (left) illustrate the variety of engraving techniques that can be found on the receivers of collector-quality shotguns. From left to right: two Holland and Hollands, a Francotte, a Purdy and two Winchester 21s. Top quality, lightweight pump shotguns are available for quail hunters or gun collectors. Above are a Winchester model 42-.410 (left) and an Ithaca model 37 20-gauge.



At right is a Winchester model 21 with a plain receiver to compare against two that have been custom engraved. Custom nameplates (above) add to the stock. The silver one is a coat of arms of an Indian Maharajah, circa 1900.



## MARTIN CREEK LAKE

# *Park in the land of the*

Few regions of the state rival Northeast Texas for a variety of fall colors, and Texas' newest state park is a prime example. Stately loblolly and shortleaf pines share their domain with post oak, red oak, blackjack oak and yaupon throughout the 240-acre Martin Creek Lake State Recreation Area in Rusk County.

Visitation has been brisk at the park since its opening in April. Although the generating plant on the shore of the 5,000-acre lake may not fit the typical scene most people expect to find at a state park, industry and nature amicably share the environment at Martin Creek. The power plant sits outside the park boundaries, about a half-mile

across the lake. Photographers might object to the plant looming in the background, but fishing enthusiasts don't mind at all. Thanks to the plant and warm water it generates, anglers can enjoy excellent fishing year around.

Mark Pyle of Houston, who fishes on Martin Creek Lake whenever vacation time allows, says he goes for black

Jim Cammack



# of the Cherokee

by Sheryl Smith-Rogers

bass, which average three- to four-pounds. Sporting anglers also can hook largemouth bass, crappie, white bass, sunfish and catfish.

On a pretty weekend, boats of all kinds dot the lake. A few people ski and sail, but most of the people the reservoir attracts are avid fishermen, who keep the park's two paved boat ramps busy. At its deepest point, the lake is only 40 feet, and boaters are warned to watch for tree stumps beneath the water's surface.

The lake was impounded in the early 1970s to provide cooling water for the lignite-fired, electric power generating plant owned by Texas Utilities Generating Co. The company later donated 240 acres to the state, and the park first opened in 1976 with minimum facilities. Several years later, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission approved funds to fully upgrade the area to state park standards. The park was closed for construction for a year before reopening in April 1988.

History permeates the rich, red soil of Martin Creek Lake State Recreation Area. Long before settlers reached the area in the early 1800s, Caddo Indians lived in the area. When trading with other tribes, they used a footpath that ran north-south and crossed the Sabine River. In 1813, the U.S. government hired frontiersman Nicholas Trammel to survey and mark the trail so settlers could use it to move into the area. Trammel traded in stolen horses and used the trail to move his merchandise in and out of the state. The horse traffic widened the trail into a wagon path

*Surrounded by pines and post oaks, Martin Creek Lake's swimming beach is popular with all park visitors, especially on weekends.*

and became a major route between Arkansas and Texas. Trammel's Trace, as it became known, passed through the park, and the old roadbed can still be seen near the park's fishing pier. In fact, the entrance road into the park follows Trammel's Trace.

Martin Creek, the lake's watershed, was named for Daniel Martin of Tennessee, who arrived in the area with his family in 1833. He and friend John Irons built a small fort and survived by hunting wild game and trading with the Indians. Irons, a bachelor who preferred his solitude, moved farther into the forest and built a cabin. He lived there until a band of Cherokee Indians attacked the cabin and killed him. Martin later found Irons' body and buried it on the cabin site. Martin returned home and added further defenses to his fortress. Cherokees often visited the Martin settlement but did not demonstrate any aggression until the Army of the Republic of Texas was ordered to expel them from the country in 1839.

Anglo settlers moving westward displaced Cherokees and several other eastern Indian tribes into Texas. Portions of what is now Rusk County were part of a promised land grant from Mexico to the Cherokee Nation. Later, in February 1836, fearing the Cherokee would align themselves with Mexican forces, Sam Houston, on behalf of the Republic of Texas granted the "right of domicile and tillage" to the Cherokee for lands between the Angelina and Sabine Rivers and northwest of the Old San Antonio Road. However, the Texas Senate failed to ratify Houston's treaty.

In 1838, after being elected president of the Republic, Mirabeau Lamar initiated a military campaign to expel Indians from East Texas. After several attacks on Indian villages, the Cherokee raided settlements and home-



Jim Cammack

*Warm water generated by the power plant (below) is responsible for good fishing year around. Bass are said to average three to four pounds. The park's lighted fishing pier makes the lake accessible to all anglers.*

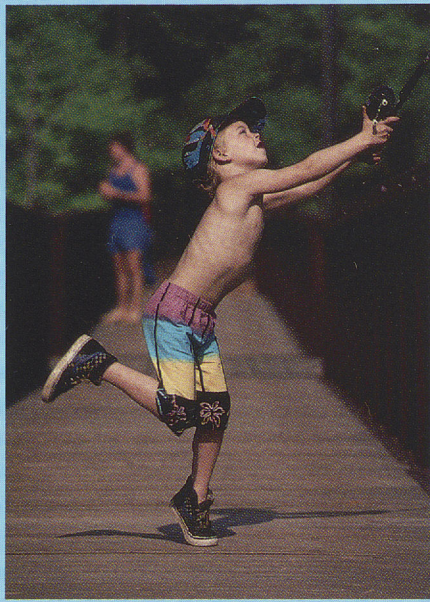


Jim Cammack

steads throughout East Texas, causing considerable destruction.

Martin later sold the western portion of his land to John Kuykendall, who then laid out the township of Harmony Hill, and began selling lots in 1855. According to the *Archaeological and Historical Investigation at Martin Creek* by the Texas Archaeological Survey at the University of Texas, Martin sold the land to Leonard Tomlinson in 1849. Kuykendall was designated as title holder by Tomlinson's estate in 1853. The land was finally deeded to Kuykendall in 1854.

By 1860, the town boasted eight to 10 stores, a small furniture factory, a blacksmith shop, two churches, a Masonic Hall and school and several



Jim Cammack



Laurenne Parent

houses. After the Civil War, Harmony Hill included a population of 100, three churches, four steam cotton gins and three gristmills. The town's demise followed the construction of a railroad from Longview to Carthage, through Tatum in 1882. As Tatum began to prosper, Harmony Hill quickly died, and by 1900 the town was deserted. In 1906, a tornado destroyed most of the buildings. The town's namesake, Harmony Hill Cemetery, is located on the east side of the park entrance road and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, the park retains much of the natural history that attracted those first settlers to the area. In April, patches of vibrant crimson clover decorate the roadsides. A few weeks later, vines of fragrant honeysuckle saturate the air with their intoxicating scent. As the honeysuckle withers, fruits of the wild plum trees and dewberry bushes begin to ripen. Fall is most colorful from late October through the first two weeks of November with beautiful foliage displays from the many hardwood varieties. Snow has been known to fall during the winter months.

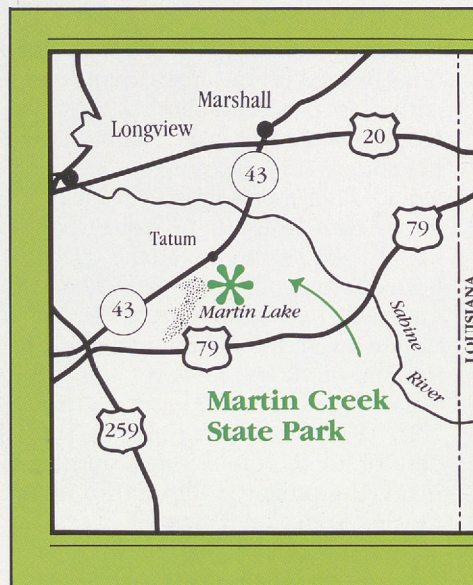
Wildlife within the park largely keeps to itself in the dense forests. However, an observant visitor may catch glimpses of white-tailed deer, swamp rabbits, gophers, squirrels or a

nutria taking a leisurely swim in the lake. Birds most commonly seen include the great blue heron, green-backed heron, great egret, cardinal, blue jay, red-headed woodpecker, bobwhite and mockingbird.

While fishing may be the park's most popular attraction, camping can't be far behind. Nestled among the stately pines and post oaks, many of the 60 multiuse campsites offer a glimpse of the lake. Each includes a picnic table, grill, tent pad, water and electricity and a lantern hook. All 21 screened shel-

ters, with partial wooden slats for privacy, include a movable picnic table inside. For large gatherings, an open group shelter with a giant barbecue grill has seating room for 75 people.

Martin Creek visitors may be drawn to the park's wooded island, accessible only by footbridge or boat. Trails lead visitors across and around the island where they may enjoy primitive camping and picnicking. Though not yet completed, a hiking trail soon will wind through a northern portion of the park, and for a time follow the historic

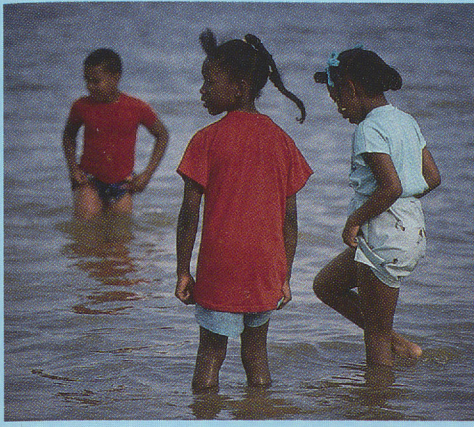


## Martin Creek Lake State Recreation Area

**Location:** Rusk County, 20 miles southeast of Longview and three miles southwest of Tatum on Highway 43.

**Fees:** \$2 entrance fee (annual entrance permit available); \$9 for campsite with water/electricity; \$12 for screened shelter and group pavilion for 1-25 people, \$12; \$24 for 26-75.

**For information and reservations:** Call 214-836-4336 or write Martin Creek Lake State Recreation Area, Route 2, Box 20, Tatum, Texas 75691.



Jim Cammack

*The lake provides fun for everyone: boaters, windsurfers, anglers and swimmers. Moms and dads can get serious about bass fishing, and kids can experience the thrill of catching their first fish.*



Jim Cammack



Jim Cammack



Jim Cammack

Old Henderson/Board Ferry Road.

The park's swimming beach is a bee hive of activity during weekends. No lifeguard is provided. There's also a children's playground. And fishermen who prefer to keep their feet on dry land will head straight for the lighted fishing pier.

A multitude of nearby attractions make Martin Creek Lake State Recreation Area and East Texas a great vaca-

tion package. The park is about 15 to 20 miles away from Longview, Marshall, Carthage and Henderson. Longview offers the Longview Museum and Art Center, Caddo Indian Museum and the Gregg County Historical Museum. In Marshall, there's the Starr Family State Historic Site (a furnished Victorian house), the Old Courthouse Museum, Michelson-Reves Museum of Art, Gi-nocchio National Register Historic Dis-

trict, Scottsdale Cemetery and Marshall Pottery. Only three miles away is the small community of Tatum with its own depot museum. The old Tatum plantation home still stands near the First Baptist Church.

Other points of interest within an hour's drive include: Tyler and Tyler State Park, Kilgore and the East Texas Oil Museum, Rusk/Palestine and the Texas State Railroad, Caddo Lake State Park, the quaint city of Jefferson, Dain-gerfield State Park and Lake Bob Sand-lin State Recreation Area. \* \*

*Observant visitors might see a red-eared turtle sunning itself on a log near the water or a red-winged blackbird perched among the grasses and cattails.*



Jim Cammack



Jim Cammack

# On Golden W

The colorful display of goldenrods along Eastern Texas roadsides in autumn provides a pleasant surprise for newcomers to the Lone Star State. With lemon-yellow blossoms at the tips of majestic wands, goldenrods add their glory to the cooler fall months.

Goldenrods have narrow leaves that

spiral up two- to six-foot stems. Dense clusters of minuscule flowers decorate the ends of slender stems. Nearly two dozen species of goldenrod grow in Texas, some abundant and others quite rare. Goldenrod blossoms provide a source of nectar for migrating butterflies, such as the monarch, and pollen

for bees.

Despite the beauty of these flowers, many people take a dim view of the golden blossoms. If you suffer from hay fever, you probably have found yourself cursing the goldenrod. The blame is misplaced, however. If you take a closer look at the greenery





# nWand

around the goldenrod patch, you often will find a stand of ragweed nearby. The wind-borne pollen of ragweed, not goldenrod, is the main cause of runny noses and itchy eyes at this time of year, together with many full-blooming grasses.

Early Americans had practical uses



Stephan Myers

for the goldenrod. The American colonists may have celebrated the tax rebellion at Boston Harbor in 1773 with a drink of Liberty Tea, a concoction of native herbs including sweet goldenrod, *Solidago odora*.

Today, you too can make a delightful drink from this East Texas native. Look for sweet goldenrod in sandy soil, but harvest only in areas where the plant grows in abundance. You can easily distinguish sweet goldenrod from other species by the odor and taste of the leaves and flowers. No other goldenrod has the strong aroma of licorice or anise.

If left intact, goldenrods produce new flowers year after year from a perennial root stock. Rather than collecting the entire plant, strip leaves and flowers from stems of several plants. Better yet, collect wild seeds and grow your own. Remember that native plants are protected on public property, so gather plants only on private property with permission of the owner.

Leaves and flowers can be used in the tea, but hay fever victims will want to omit the flowers. Fresh green leaves are preferable to dried ones. Pour boil-

*Goldenrod blossoms provide nectar for butterflies and pollen for bees. The leaves and flowers of this versatile plant can be used in tea, perfume and yellow dye, but don't blame the goldenrod for sneezing and itchy eyes during the allergy season.*

Stephan Myers

by Delena Tull

ing water over the clean leaves and flowers (one cup of plant parts to two cups of water). After steeping for 10 to 30 minutes, strain out the plants. Add sweetening and lemon to taste. Refrigerated, the juice yields a delightful licorice-flavored cold drink. You can even make jelly with the liquid.

In addition, the oil on the leaves of sweet goldenrod has been used in perfumes. Thomas Edison experimented with the sap of several other species and found that the latex had potential for rubber production.

The flowers of all species of goldenrod produce a lovely yellow dye for wool. Goldenrods also work well with solar dyeing. Fill a one-gallon glass jar with flowers, cover them with water, and seal the jar. After a few days in the sun, the water will turn yellow. Strain off the plant parts, and add your pre-mordanted wool to the jar of water. In a few more days, the wool will be dyed, just as thoroughly as if you had spent hours simmering the plants and wool over a hot stove.

Don't curse the goldenrod this fall. It doesn't deserve its reputation. Instead, admire the golden blossoms swaying in the breezes and perhaps experiment with some of their many uses. \*\*



George O. Miller

# John P. Cowan



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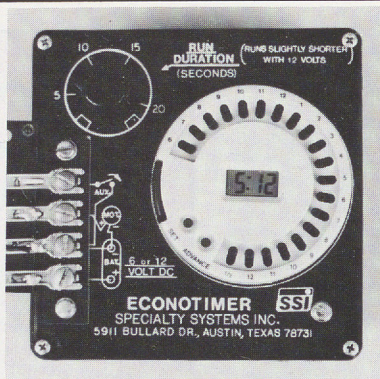
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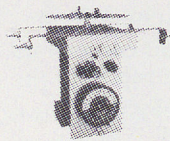
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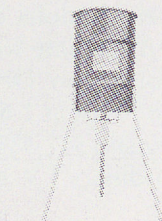
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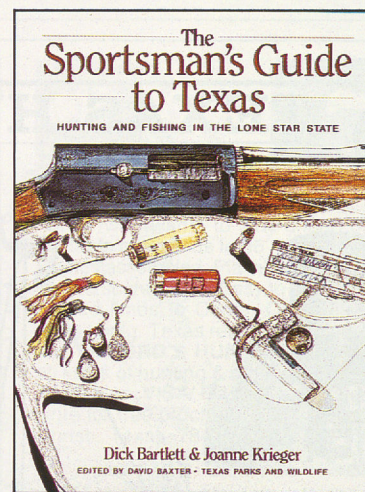
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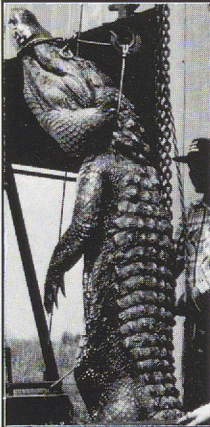
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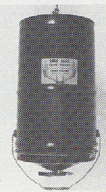
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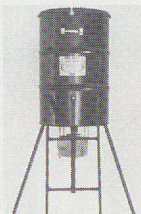
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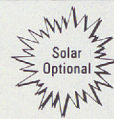
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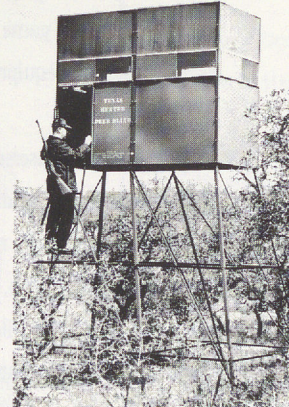


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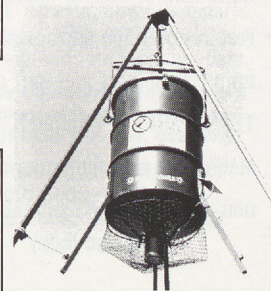
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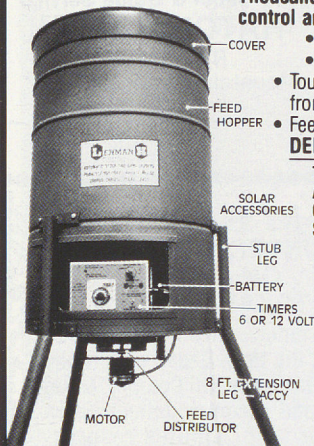


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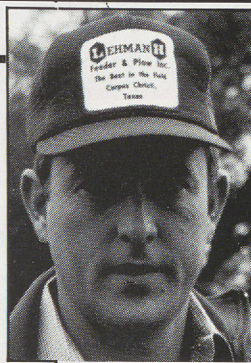
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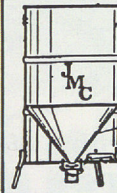
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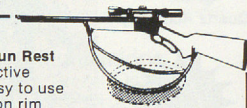


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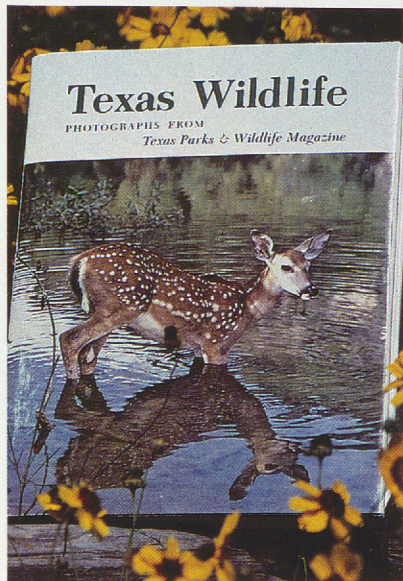
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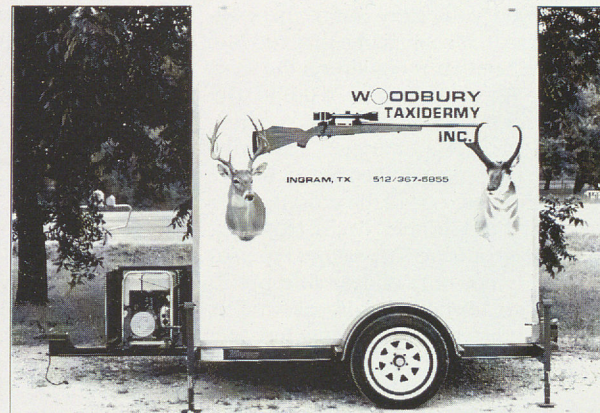
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# Letters

## Lizard Airlines

During a brief visit from our son and grandchildren, who live in Anchorage, Alaska, we caught one of the many lizards living in and around the plants by our home here in Houston.

To oblige a granddaughter's request to take a lizard back to Alaska as a pet, we decided to send one of our Houston reptiles north. The traveling lizard survived the trip in good shape, but it needed some Texas companions. So, during the next few months, three more lizards made the flight north.

Our grandchildren kept their lizard pets in a glass aquarium with a screened top. Fed a steady diet of spiders and crickets, all four were doing fine a year later when we paid them a visit in Alaska.

This past June, my son and his family returned to Houston for a visit on their way to a new duty station. And, of course, their lizards were traveling with them. The original lizard, (looking remarkably like your green anole on page 26 of the August 1988 issue), having survived two cross-country trips and two Alaska winters (indoors), was returned and released on the bush where it had been captured two years earlier.

Hardy creatures, aren't they?

Bruner S. Lee  
Houston

■ We enjoyed your story about the well-traveled lizards. It sounds like they did fine in captivity, but that is not always the case. While the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has no strong objection to keeping lizards as pets, biologists generally discourage keeping wildlife species in captivity. In years past, one of the most popular lizard pets was the horned lizard. However, since its designation as a threatened species in 1977, it is not only undesirable but illegal to keep horned lizards—as well as any other threatened or endangered species—as pets.

## August Issue Clarifications

The article on Texas lizards in the August issue contained some errors in identification. In the photo on page 28, the smaller lizard is the Texas banded gecko and the larger is the Big Bend gecko. However, the accepted English name for this species is the reticulated gecko. And while the information about eyelids and toepads is correct for geckos in general, half the geckos found in Texas have eyelids and three out of four have no toe pads.

Also, the bottom right photo on page 29 is a tree lizard and the bottom photo on page 24 is a Texas spiny lizard.

I am a great admirer of your magazine, and the photos you publish are among the best to be found in natural history magazines. I am looking forward to more of your attractive and informative articles on Texas wildlife.

C.J. McCoy

The Carnegie Museum of Natural History  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

■ Thanks for straightening out the lizard mix-up. We have a couple of additional corrections to the August issue. The hummingbird on page 39 is a black-chinned hummingbird, not a ruby-throated. And Parks Division officials have asked us to point out that, despite the photo on page 37, pets are not allowed in state park swimming areas; they must be kept on a leash of six feet or less, or confined.

## Poison Sumac

I am writing you in hopes of gaining more information about poison sumac. After coming in contact with it here near my home in the Amelia area on two different occasions, I had to take cortisone shots and apply antibiotic cream in order to get relief from irritated skin.

In addition to causing painful hives, I have learned that the plant's poison can get into your bloodstream and lasts about a month in your body.

Where does this plant come from, and where else does it grow in the United States? Also, what are some ways to kill it?

Pat Capps  
Beaumont

■ Poison sumac grows from seeds produced by other poison sumac plants. Songbirds relish the white berries of poison sumac and poison ivy, and have spread both plants across the Eastern United States.

We do not have any suggestions for killing it. Your best defense is to learn to recognize it and avoid contact. If you have it growing on your own property, you might consult your local agricultural extension agent at the county courthouse or look in your local phone directory under county government.

Please do not try burning poison ivy to get rid of it. Fire does not destroy the poison, it only makes it float through the air. Any human or animal that breathes the smoke can get hives inside their lungs. It can be a serious and life-threatening situation.

## Cover Kids

The "Big Sister" photo on your inside front cover of the July 1988 issue is priceless.

Our congratulations to photographer Stephan Myers.

Don and Betty Logan  
Belton

Your July 1988 issue's inside front cover of the kids on the beach was just precious!

That photo was the perfect touch to a perfect magazine.

Louise Morris  
Houston

In my opinion, the photograph of the nude child on the inside front cover of the July 1988 issue was in very poor taste.

I trust your quality publication will find no need of such inclusions in future issues.

Betty L. Erwin  
Mesquite

## BACK COVERS

**Inside:** These three bobwhite quail hens were found wandering around together in the South Texas brush away from the rest of the covey. The thorny terrain of the South Texas Brush Country offers some of the best quail hunting in Texas. The statewide quail season is October 29, 1988 through February 26, 1989. Bag limits for all Texas counties are 15 per day, with 45 in possession. (See story on South Texas quail hunting, page 24; a story on quail guns begins on page 29.) Photo by Steve Bentsen. **Outside:** Although the generating plant on the shore of this 5,000-acre lake may not fit the typical scene most people expect to find at a state park, industry and nature amicably share the environment at Texas' newest state park—Martin Creek Lake State Recreation Area in Rusk County. In late October, the 240-acre park will be colorful, as the green leaves of the loblolly and shortleaf pines mix with the reds and golds of the post oak, red oak and yaupon. Cooler temperatures of fall and winter also reduce the number of canoes, sailboats and waterskiers, but thanks to the plant and the warm water it generates, anglers can enjoy excellent fishing at Martin Creek year around. (See story on page 34.) Photo by Jim Cammack.

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