

MULE DEER / LEAD SHOT / PADDLING COLUMBUS / PLANT PIONEER

WWW.TPW MAGAZINE.COM / SEPTEMBER 2009

# TEXAS

PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR TEXAS

TXD P 400.6 P235 67:09



## 2009 HUNTING FORECAST

*Spotty rain means spotty conditions*

\$3.95

\$3.95US

09



KEEP TEXAS WILD

COOL SCHOOL Pg. 45





UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AMERICAN

LIMITED  
NUMBER OF  
DISCOUNTED PRE-SALE  
**\$10 TICKETS**  
AVAILABLE  
TODAY!



Fishing Exposition &  
Family Outdoor Adventures Area  
Nationally Televised Professional  
Bass Fishing World Championship

**Lake Conroe, Texas October 16-18, 2009**





MAY 28 2010

TEXAS STATE DOCUMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AM  
EDINBURG, TEXAS 78539



Join us and celebrate the efforts of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at the Toyota Texas Bass Classic. Enjoy professional bass fishing, our Fishing Exposition & Family Outdoor Adventures Area and country music concerts, all for \$10. Kids admitted free with ticketed adult, another great reason to get the family together.

Official Vehicle of the Toyota Texas Bass Classic & Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation



Performing Saturday  
**Pat Green**

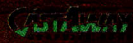
Zona Jones



Performing Sunday  
**Josh Turner**

Julianne Hough

**ToyotaTexasBassClassic.com 866-907-0143**





# Features

COVER STORY

# 23

## 2009 HUNTING FORECAST

*By John Jefferson*

Spotty rain means spotty conditions.

## 32 Mule Deer Mystique

*By Russell A. Graves*

New research hopes to provide better population estimates.

## 40 Load Without Lead

*By Steve Lightfoot*

Wildlife agencies worldwide await the results of extensive TPWD study on leadshot use for dove hunting.

## 45 Keep Texas Wild

*Cool School*

Dive into the wet world of fish!





# CONTENTS

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 9



Visit our online archive at <[www.tpwmagazine.com](http://www.tpwmagazine.com)>.  
For the latest information on Texas' parks and wildlife,  
visit the department's Web site: <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)>.

PHOTO © JOHN R. FORD



# Departments

## 6 At Issue

By Carter P. Smith

## 8 Mail Call

Our readers share their ideas.

## 10 LONESOME DOVE FEST

By Ralph Winingham

Annual event gives kids the chance to learn about the outdoors.

## 12 PARK PICK: HARVEST HAYRIDES

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

Enjoy amazing scenery and a taste of history at Big Spring.

## 14 FLORA FACT: SWEETGUM

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

They can reach towering heights and produce surprising fall color.

## 16 WILD THING: AMERICAN EEL

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

The strange life cycle of a (mostly) freshwater eel.

## 17 TEXAS READER: TAMING THE LAND

By E. Dan Klepper

The Lost Postcard Photographs of the Texas High Plains.

## 18 SKILL BUILDER: GET OUTSIDE AND BRING THE NEIGHBORS

By Bernadette Noll

Nurturing your own family nature club.

## 20 Three Days in the Field

By Rusty Middleton

Paddling Mayberry: Columbus offers a unique opportunity to paddle in circles.

## 50 Legend, Lore & Legacy

By Megan Wilde

Plant Pioneer: Mary Sophie Young's 1914 journal reveals a tough, witty botanist with a passion for West Texas.

## 56 Parting Shot

By Jesse Cancelmo

## Covers

FRONT: Hunting with a dog.  
Photo © Russell A. Graves

BACK: Wild turkey. Photo ©  
Derrick Hamrick/rolfnp.com

PREVIOUS SPREAD: Silhouette of  
a white-tailed buck. Photo ©  
John R. Ford

THIS PAGE: Tubing on the  
Colorado River near  
Columbus. Photo by Earl  
Nottingham/TPWD





# SUBSCRIBE TODAY

**YES!** Send me one full year of **Texas Parks & Wildlife** magazine for just **\$13.95**. I'll save 70% off the cover price.

Name

Address

City

State

ZIP

Phone #

Email Address

Simply drop this card in the mail – we'll bill you later, or call (800) 937-9393 to place an order.

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Hurry! Offer expires **November 30, 2009**

690509

# GIVE A GIFT

**YES!** Please send a **GIFT SUBSCRIPTION** of **Texas Parks & Wildlife** magazine to the person listed below (12 issues for just **\$13.95**).

## SEND GIFT TO:

## YOUR NAME:

Name

Name

Address

Address

City

State

ZIP

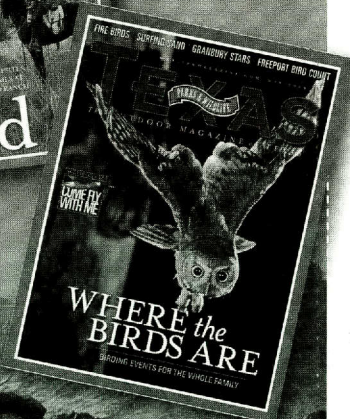
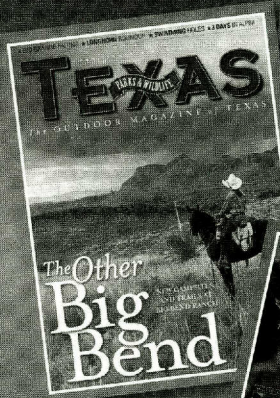
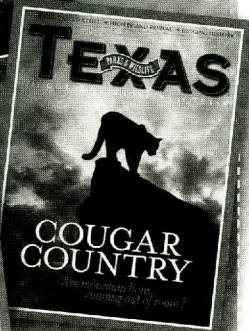
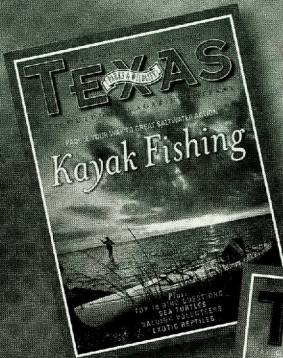
City

State

ZIP

Simply drop this card in the mail and we'll bill you later, or call **(800) 937-9393** to order today!

690509





Visit us at  
tpwmagazine.com



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 633 FLAGLER BEACH FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**TEXAS**  
PARKS & WILDLIFE

PO BOX 421105  
PALM COAST FL 32142-6458



Visit us at  
tpwmagazine.com



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 633 FLAGLER BEACH FL

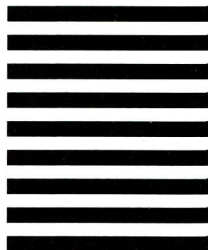
POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**TEXAS**  
PARKS & WILDLIFE

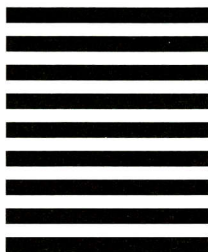
PO BOX 421105  
PALM COAST FL 32142-6458



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**SUBSCRIBE  
ONLINE**

AND RECEIVE A

**FREE  
GIFT**

WITH YOUR PAID ORDER

[tpwmagazine.com](http://tpwmagazine.com)

**TEXAS**  
PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

**For Customer Service  
Call (800) 937-9393**

M-F 7am - 9:30pm



# TEXAS

THE OUTDOOR MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 2009, VOL. 67, NO. 9

## GOVERNOR OF TEXAS

Rick Perry

## COMMISSION

Peter M. Holt, Chairman **San Antonio**  
T. Dan Friedkin, Vice Chairman **Houston**  
Antonio Falcon, M.D. **Rio Grande City** Margaret Martin **Boerne**  
Ralph H. Duggins **Fort Worth** S. Reed Morian **Houston**  
Mark E. Bivins **Amarillo** Karen J. Hixon **San Antonio**  
Dan Allen Hughes, Jr. **Beeville**  
Lee M. Bass, Chairman-Emeritus **Fort Worth**

**Executive Director** Carter P. Smith  
**Communications Director** Lydia Saldaña

## MAGAZINE STAFF:

**Randy Brudnicki** Publisher  
**Louie Bond** Managing Editor  
**Andres Carrasco** Art Director  
**Brandon Jakobeit** Assistant Art Director  
**Earl Nottingham** Chief Photographer  
**Mike Kelley** Circulation & Marketing  
**Ana Kirk** Business Manager  
**Cameron Dodd, Katie McGranahan** Editorial Interns

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Larry Bozka, Henry Chappell, Melissa Gaskill, Russell A. Graves, Larry D. Hodge  
Wendee Holtcamp, E. Dan Klepper, Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

## CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Grady Allen, Chase A. Fountain, Russell A. Graves, Wyman Meinzer

## EDITORIAL OFFICES:

4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744  
Phone: (512) 389-TPWD Fax: (512) 389-8397  
E-mail: magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us

## ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES:

STONEWALLACE COMMUNICATIONS, INC.  
c/o TP&W magazine  
4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744  
Fax: (512) 389-8397  
Jim Stone, Advertising Director (512) 799-1045 or (512) 389-8707  
E-mail: jim.stone@tpwd.state.tx.us

## SUBSCRIPTIONS:

(800) 937-9393

Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine (ISSN 0040-4586) is published monthly by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744. The inclusion of advertising is considered a service to subscribers and is not an endorsement of products nor concurrence with advertising claims. Copyright © 2009 by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. No part of the contents of this magazine may be reproduced by any means without the permission of Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine. The magazine is not responsible for the return of unsolicited materials provided for editorial consideration.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE: \$19.95/year; foreign subscription rate: \$27.95/year. POSTMASTER: If undeliverable, please send notices by form 3579 to Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine, P. O. Box 421103, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1103. Periodicals Postage Paid at Austin, Texas with additional mailing offices.

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



## SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES ONLY, PLEASE.

PHONE: (800) 937-9393

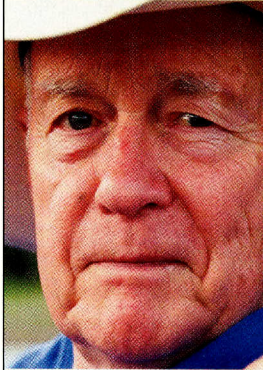
7 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

IRMA Member International  
Regional Magazine Association



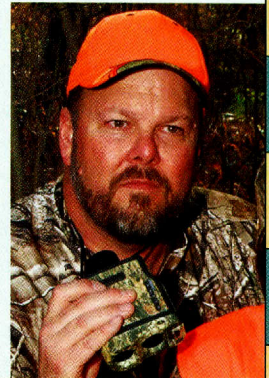
# In the Field

**JOHN JEFFERSON** has lived in or hunted, fished and camped in every region of Texas. He served as hunting and fishing regulations coordinator for TPWD, as well as director of information and education, before embarking on a freelance writing and photography career that's still progressing. The friendships and the respect he has for



TPWD biologists helped him gather hunting forecast information from across the state. John has written *Hunters Guide to Texas*, is co-author of *Texas Wildlife*, and has contributed to most regional hunting and fishing magazines, including the first hunting article to appear in *Texas Monthly*. He currently edits the TPWD *Outdoor Annual* and is past president of Texas Outdoor Writers' Association.

**STEVE LIGHTFOOT** has been writing about and photographing the outdoors for three decades, and his award-winning work has appeared in numerous publications. Steve has been a disciple of the outdoors since he was old enough to follow his dad and grandpa into the East Texas woods and is passing that heritage to his eight children, five of whom are adopted. He is a recipient of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association's highest honor, the L.A. Wilke Lifetime Achievement Award. At TPWD, Steve has followed wildlife research efforts during the last 16 years and communicated the findings. He's become adept at transforming "bio-babble" into words normal people can understand.



**MEGAN WILDE** counts burros, botanizing and the Big Bend among life's finest offerings, so she was thrilled to write this month's article about botanist Mary Sophie Young's burro expedition across far West Texas. Megan first learned about Young during a training program for the



Texas Master Naturalists. She has often thought of Young while hiking around the Davis Mountains and Big Bend, where she lives in Alpine with a burro, a horse, four cats and her artist husband. "If I'm ever on a hike that turns into a debacle and feel the urge to complain," Megan says, "I try to imagine Mary in a long skirt and high-laced boots trudging up the same slope nearly a hundred years ago."



# AT ISSUE

FROM THE PEN OF CARTER P. SMITH

**Theon. Walburg. Schwertner. Jarrell. Corn Hill. Bartlett.** I suspect these communities aren't on everyone's list of places to see and visit, but they most certainly were on mine as a kid growing up in central Texas. Our family owned a little blackland farm in that part of then-rural Williamson County. We shared the countryside with a large lot of hard-working, mostly Czech farmers who tilled the blackland soil to produce grain sorghum, cotton and corn. On the side, they all raised a few cows for beef and milk.

Come September, the population grew quite a bit, at least in the late afternoons and weekends. The sight of men in overalls was augmented substantially by men in a little different outerwear — camouflage. Dove season had finally come around again, and those crop fields, pastures, treelines, sunflower and ragweed patches, and occasional creek bottoms offered some pretty fair wing shooting if you caught the birds just right.

I should know. I spent every moment of discretionary time I had patterning the feeding, watering and roosting flights, and ultimately traipsing all over that farm trying to position myself just right when the birds came by. I'd start early and come home late. If the birds were going to sunflowers in the upper field, I was there or soon headed there. If they were coming to water, I was at the stock tank. If they were flying down the creek, I would crouch under a favorite mesquite tree to await them.

In my sweet mother's eyes, I probably should have worried more than about sunscreen, snakes, ticks, drinking enough water, remembering not to inadvertently spray the farmhouse roof with pellets and getting my homework done. But I didn't. Getting a limit of doves was important for bragging rights back at school, but grew less and less as I got older. Ultimately, it was more about an excuse to get outside, to unwind, to spend time with close friends and to explore and enjoy a piece of Texas I dearly loved.

I smile just thinking about it.

September marks a rite of re-entry for many of us who enjoy time afield. Dove and teal season are open. In October, the bows come out, and in November, so do the rifles. In fact, throw in quail, ducks, geese and turkeys, and there is quarry to pursue all the way through May. If you are interested in hunting feral hogs and exotic animals, you can do it year-round.

Our state has around a million hunting enthusiasts. Come September, 300,000 or so of them will start to enjoy what is unquestionably one of Texas' great pastimes — dove season. If you are one of them, I ask you to do four simple things: Be safe, respect the property on which you hunt, honor our game laws and take someone with you, particularly a child, who otherwise wouldn't get to go. They will be forever grateful, and so will you.

Thanks to all of you for caring about Texas' wild places and wild things. They need you more than ever.



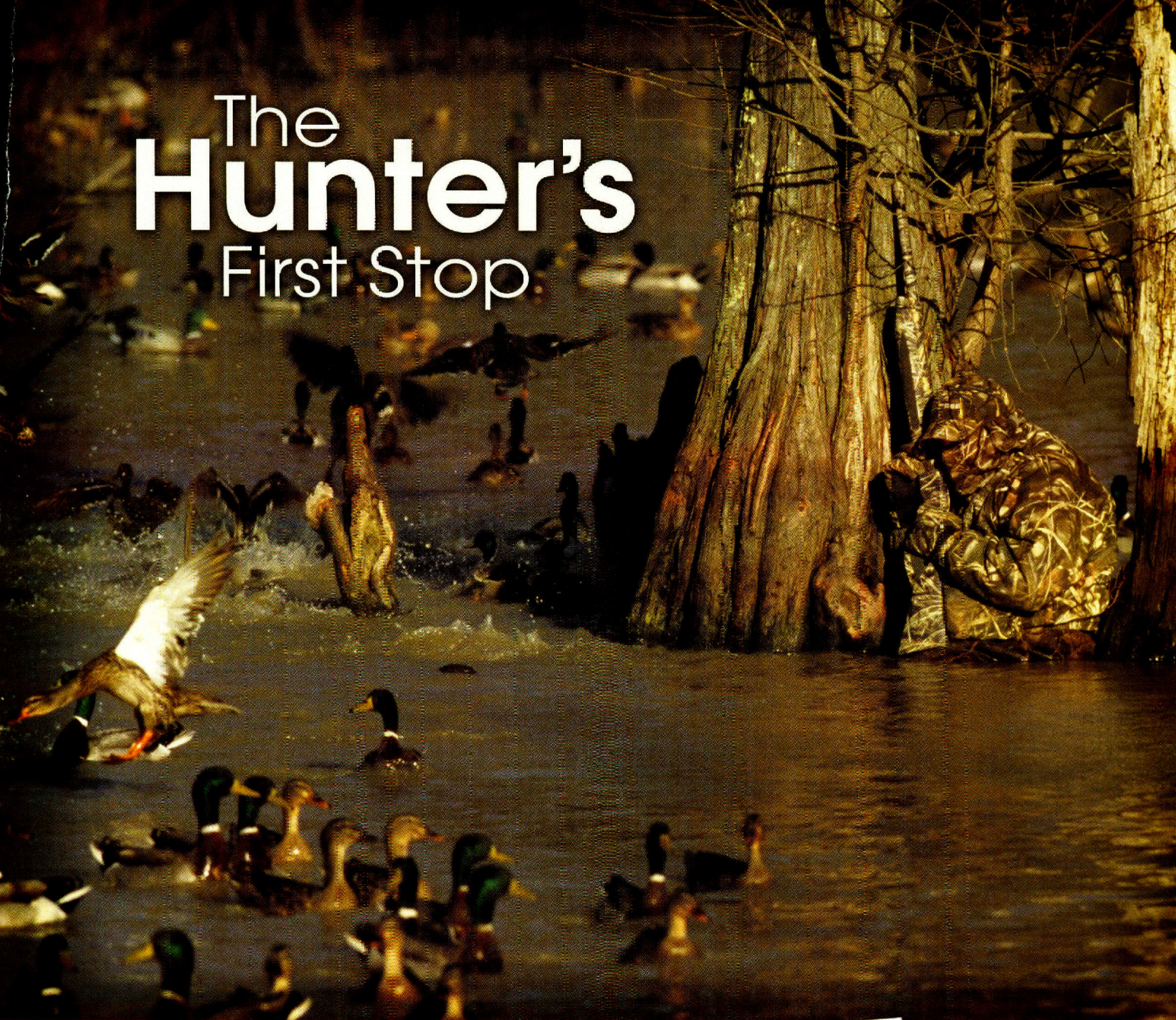
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Texas Parks and Wildlife Department mission statement:*

To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.



# The Hunter's First Stop



RIGHT STUFF. LOW PRICE. **EVERYDAY!**

 **Academy**<sup>®</sup>  
SPORTS+OUTDOORS

academy.com



Visit [academy.com](http://academy.com) or call Customer Service at 1-888-922-2336 to find a store near you.

**REALTREE**<sup>®</sup>

**Nikon.**

**PRIMOS**  
HUNTING CALLS

**FEDERAL**  
AMMUNITION

**Remington.**



# MAIL CALL

PICKS, PANS AND PROBES FROM OUR READERS

## FOREWORD

**Who are we?** Occasionally I receive comments and questions about *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine's editorial content — most are quite congratulatory, but some — well, not so much so. All are appreciated, however.

So who are we? Why so much variety in the articles? We write about wide-ranging outdoor topics for a couple of reasons. Texas is a very diverse state, so there is much to include, such as hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting and the science behind the management decisions. But also we represent the diversity of the agency.

The magazine's vision is to support the mission of TPWD, which is: To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Just like the outdoorsmen who use TPWD's services, the magazine has readers who only hunt, or only fish, or only partake in non-consumptive pursuits; we have many readers who enjoy all of the above. I'm one of them. Well, I don't hunt much anymore, but I do everything else. Once in a while I get the hankering to go hunting again, so I buy a SuperCombo license every year, but mostly, I use the fishing license portion.

I used to hunt — a lot. I was a hunting guide for deer, elk, geese and ducks when I lived in the Intermountain West. I started hunting in August for the deer archery season and stayed at it through the end of the waterfowl season in late winter. When I wasn't guiding, I hunted on my own or built blinds or goose pits for my clients; I would do this nearly every day for six months.

There was only one problem with this (actually two, if you ask my wife). On those unusually warm fall days, when the game wasn't cooperative, I would wish I was fishing. So after few years of earning a living in hunting-related ventures, I went cold turkey and took up fishing again — big time. I became hooked on tournament bass fishing, which I still love to this day.

I would hope my interests mirror many of our readers. We're passionate about one aspect of the outdoors and we enjoy the diversity of all wildlife. We're tolerant of all outdoor activities because we know we're in this together — no one group can foot the bill for all needed conservation efforts. By subscribing to *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine, you are getting the benefit of knowledge and entertainment, but you're also supporting TPWD's conservation efforts. Thank you.

*Randy Brudnicki*

RANDY BRUDNICKI  
PUBLISHER

## LETTERS

### TOUGH CLIMB AT THE TOP

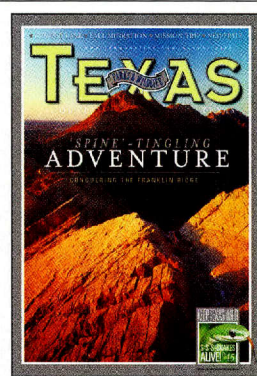
**K**udos to Joe Nick Patoski and Laurence Parent for the outstanding article on the Franklin Mountains in the August 2009 issue ("No Hike for Old Men"). What they really conveyed is how much more difficult it is to hike in these mountains than it would seem to be.

About 15 years ago, a good friend and I walked out of his home at 7 a.m. near the corner of Mesa Hills and Stanton. Our destination was to go directly east to the ridge of the Franklins. We were both experienced backpackers and climbers, so we thought the Franklins wouldn't be much of a challenge.

Wrong! Between the loose scree and the omnipresent cacti, and having to pick up his dog for the hand-over-hand parts, we were already beat by the time we finally got to the top. We were treated with the great views of the east side. When we returned to his house, it was almost pitch dark, and we just showered and collapsed in bed.

Thanks for highlighting these great mountains.

STAN PEYTON  
Austin



**We were both experienced backpackers and climbers, so we thought the Franklins wouldn't be much of a challenge. Wrong! Between the loose scree and the omnipresent cacti, and having to pick up his dog for the hand-over-hand parts, we were already beat by the time we finally got to the top.**

Stan Peyton  
Austin

### BLUE-GREEN ALGAE TOXIC TO DOGS

**T**he Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has been very helpful to me through the years with a pond that I manage. When my 90-pound black lab ate some algae at the pond, he became violently sick. The vet said that it may be



# MAIL CALL

blue-green algae, which is very toxic and attacks the liver.

I called Rafe Brook at TPWD, and he put me in touch with Joan Glass, Fish Kills, Waco. Joan put me in touch with Chetta Owens with Texas Corps of Engineers. They sent someone to the pond the very next day to test the algae. It was identified as blue-green algae.

This is a happy version of "I'm from the government and I'm here to help you!" After five blood transfusions and a week of intensive care hospitalization for my dog, he is now doing fine.

A lot of professionals know that blue-green algae is life threatening. Yours is a fine article ("Blue-Green Mystery, July 2009), but ingestion of this algae can be fatal, which goes far beyond just health impacts. I think that the public should know this.

MARTIN LYFORD  
*Dallas*

## NEED MORE PUBLIC LAND HUNTING

I have grandsons who are interested in deer hunting, and I have provided them with some hunting opportunities. In the future I do not see how me or their parents can continue to pay the tremendous prices that the new generation of landowners demand. We consider ourselves middle-income families, but in the very near future, only the very richest will be able to afford Texas deer leases.

I would like to see more public land hunting made available to average middle-class families. The hunting licenses are already expensive, but I for one would be willing to pay even more if more hunting opportunities could be created for average families.

WAYNE E. NORTH  
*La Grange*

## IN DEFENSE OF HEATED BLINDS

This letter is a response to "A Far Cry From Years Ago" in your January 2009 issue. I write in defense of the hunters who sit in heated blinds in hopes of seeing any kind of wildlife.

I am a South Texas woman hunter and love every minute of it. I have spent

hour upon hour in my heated blind (which I hardly ever turn on) hoping to see any kind of wildlife. I hunted fiercely this year, and have for many years, and never shot a deer.

It is wonderful to watch the wildlife (deer, coyotes, hogs, turkeys, bobcats, skunks, squirrels, birds, gophers, javelina, raccoons and badgers), only to end the day by watching the most beautiful sunset anyone has ever seen from a South Texas deer blind. I love watching how the deer interact with each other when wild hogs chase them off, and how 12 keen-eyed tom turkeys appear looking for corn under the feeder.

With the drought this year, wildlife has been moving at different times of the day and night looking for food and water. I think it is a good thing for hunters to sit in heated deer blinds and feed the wildlife — otherwise they would have had a tragic winter and spring.

A lot of people can't afford an expensive hunting lease, and the small tracts people hunt on are becoming scarce as subdivisions are moving in. You can't

walk and stalk — you have to sit and wait.

Face it, nothing is the same as it was years ago, but thank God for the small-time hunters — we can still enjoy our heated blinds and wildlife.

A SOUTH TEXAS WOMAN HUNTER  
*San Antonio*

## Sound off for "Mail Call!"

### Let us hear from you!

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

### Write to us at

*Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine,  
3000 South I-35, Suite 120,  
Austin, TX 78704.

Or, fax us at 512-707-1913.

### E-mail us at

<magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us>

**Subscribe** at <tpwmagazine.com>

We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity.

IN THE HEART OF TEXAS BETWEEN SAN ANTONIO AND AUSTIN

## RELAXING DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO SLOW DOWN.

Relaxation. Some find it through serenity, others actively pursue it. Our sun-soaked, spring fed rivers let you define the experience that is right for you.



Play. San Marcos, Texas. Come see our many charms.

**SAN MARCOS**  
A TEXAS NATURAL

888-200-5620 • [www.toursanmarcos.com](http://www.toursanmarcos.com)



# SCOUT

NEWS AND VIEWS IN THE TEXAS OUTDOORS

## LONESOME DOVE FEST

*Annual event gives kids the chance to learn about the outdoors.*

**Karnes County's Lonesome Dove Fest**, set for Sept. 18-19, was an idea hatched as a hay patch gathering of hunting buddies, fathers, sons and even a few sharp-shooting women.

Contrary to its name, the darting aerial acrobats known as the grey ghosts of fall were far from "lonesome" doves, but, at times, filled the sky in numbers that caused even veteran shooters to

experience opening day jitters.

That has been the pattern of the annual festival, which will celebrate its 18th year on the opening weekend of the South Zone mourning and white-winged dove season. The festivities are headquartered at the Karnes County Show Barn just off U.S. 181, about 60 miles south of San Antonio.

About 500 hunters attended that first gathering in 1992. At the 2008

celebration, nearly 8,000 hunters and their families came to watch celebrity and team sporting clay competitions, to see numerous exhibits and displays, including the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Wall of Shame, and to sample fine fare prepared during a cook-off competition that also featured wild game dishes.

"We started with no exhibits, no auction and no electricity except for a generator out in the middle of 110 acres," said Larry Hedtke, one of the festival's founders.

"This event has continued to grow and we are getting more and more support from sponsors and the community," he said.

"When we started, one of our goals was to put hunters together with landowners that wanted to lease their property," Hedtke added.

The liaison effort between hunters looking for land to lease and landowners looking for hunters has blossomed into a pipeline funneling hundreds of sportsmen into the area every year.

In addition, the clay target events at the festival have been designed to tune up the shooting skills of the visiting and local hunters — attracting as many as 300 participants.

However, the main focus of the activity is the education of youngsters about the outdoors. The first day of the festival is devoted to area high school students. More than 300 youngsters visited the event in 2008 on officially sanctioned school field trips.

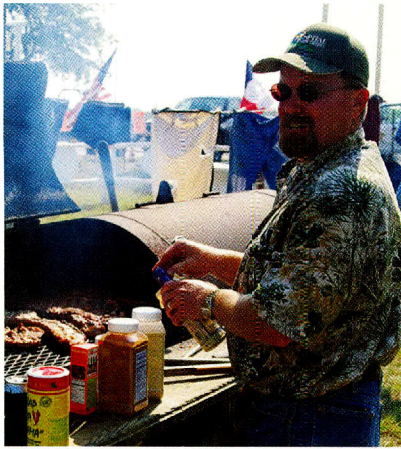
Outdoor skills, historical re-enactors at



Bring the family to celebrate the start of dove season at the Lonesome Dove Fest.

PHOTO BY CHASE A. FOUNTAIN/TPWD





A variety of activities await thousands of visitors to this year's Lonesome Dove Fest. Proceeds provide scholarships and benefit many other programs.



campsites, game law presentations by department game wardens, wildlife activities, shooting and boating simulators, bass casting and shooting safety instruction are just a few of the learning opportunities that have been presented to the students.

Area youngsters also are the main beneficiaries of the festival. In the past, the Karnes City Rotary Club has used proceeds to award college scholarships to graduating seniors from all four Karnes County high schools, purchased Jaws of Life equipment for emergency medical service crews, constructed little league fields, promoted shooting sports for area youngsters, contributed to volunteer education programs, and even provided Christmas gifts to needy area children.

To this end, the Karnes City Rotary Club has adopted the following mission statement for the event:

"Lonesome Dove Fest is a celebration of traditions and outdoor lifestyle of South Texas for local residents, visiting hunters and especially kids to enjoy."

Information on the various events at the festival is available at (830) 780-2670 or (830) 780-3314, or on the Web at [www.lonesomedovefest.com](http://www.lonesomedovefest.com). ☆

— Ralph Wingham

## INDUSTRY STANDARD FOR PRECISION PERFORMANCE

# DEFENDER CLS™



NEW 19

330+ FPS

6 POINT SERIES

MOSSY OAK Treestand

COMPACT LIMB SYSTEM

**A functional blend of great balance, precision engineering, and high-end performance at an affordable price.**

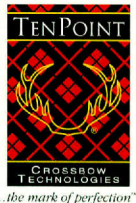
SCI FIRST FOR HUNTERS™

With every Defender CLS purchased, a portion of the proceeds goes to supporting Safari Club International Hunter's Defense Fund.

MADE IN THE USA 100% SUFFIELD OHIO

NEW 19

GT MAG™



1325 Waterloo Road, Suffield, OH 44260-9608  
330.628.9245 | [www.tenpointcrossbows.com](http://www.tenpointcrossbows.com)





# Harvest Hayrides

*Enjoy amazing scenery and a taste of history at Big Spring.*

## Pioneers who settled across Texas

typically carried a repair kit in their mule-drawn wagons that included a hammer and chisel. Using the tools in 1896, Thekla Scholz, a young German girl, carved her name into a limestone bluff that's now part of Big Spring State Park.

"She had eight siblings, and her family had a homestead and cotton farm at Marienfeld, which is now Stanton," says Ron Alton, park manager. "We have other carvings along the bluff, too, and some are fairly ornate."

Little else is known about Thekla, but you can hear other history stories and learn about the park's biology aboard a modern wagon (actually a flatbed trailer pulled by a pickup). As in years past, park staff will once again host Harvest Saturday, a fall event filled with evening hayrides around Scenic Mountain.



## SHOOTING WEST TEXAS

### A PHOTOGRAPHIC SYMPOSIUM

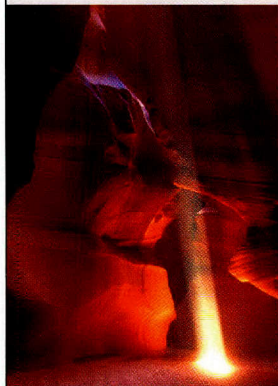
**September 25 - 26, 2009**

**Alpine, Texas**

on the campus of

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY**

*A Member of the Texas State University System*



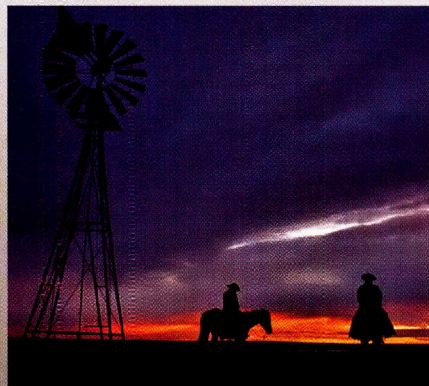
Terry Nathan



Jay Dusard



Kathy Adams Clark



David Stoecklein... & more!

speakers • workshops • photo contest • field trips • portfolio reviews

#### SPONSORS

**True Value.**  
START RIGHT. START HERE.  
Morrison True Value

TEXAS BOOK COMPANY  
Based by Our Relationships.

**Canon**



Sul Ross State  
University  
Continuing  
Education

**TEXAS**  
THE OUTDOOR MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

[www.shootingwesttexas.com](http://www.shootingwesttexas.com)

PHOTO BY TPWD





Gray foxes and opossums are among the wildlife that can be found at the park. The Big Spring Pavilion offers a place for large groups to picnic.

"We tour visitors along Scenic Drive, a three-mile road that loops around the mountain and follows the ledge of our 200-foot limestone bluff," Alton explains. "On clear days, you can see 28 miles to Stanton, and sunsets are pretty amazing."

Bring snacks or a picnic so you can come early and explore the 352-acre park, open for day-use only (no camping facilities). Both the park and city of Big Spring were named after a natural spring that stopped flowing after the turn of the century, but once drew early explorers, Indians, settlers and cattle drovers.

Check out the park's cool limestone architecture, built in the 1930s by young men employed with the Civilian Conservation Corps. From limestone quarried on site, they constructed an open-air pavilion, headquarters, a residence, pumphouse and restroom, not to mention the amazing three-

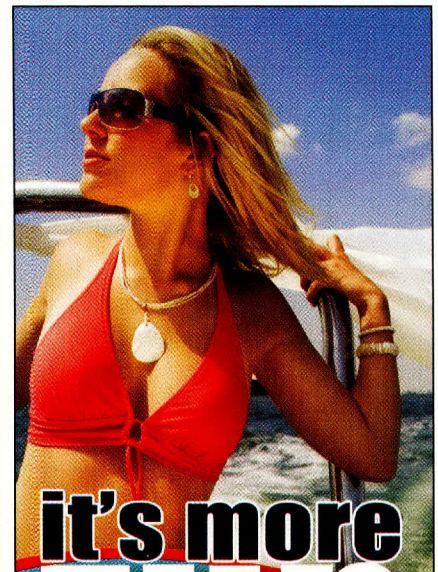
mile loop and its retaining wall.

If you're lucky, you may spot a horned lizard, a threatened species whose numbers have declined sharply in the past 30 years. "We still have plenty of harvester ants, their only food source," Alton says. "Fire ants aren't a problem here yet. We also have lots of other wildlife, such as raccoons, ringtails, opossums and gray foxes."

Steep grades make the scenic road a favorite with walkers, runners and cyclists. The park also has a 2/3-mile nature trail and an interpretive center with Indian artifacts and fossils.

Harvest Saturday, set for Sept. 26, runs 3 to 6 p.m. Hayrides depart at 3 and 4:30 p.m. No fee, but donations accepted. Big Spring State Park is located halfway between Abilene and Odessa off Interstate 20. For information, call 432-263-4931 or visit <[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/bigspring](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/bigspring)>.★

— Sheri Smith-Rodgers



# it's more FUN In-Water

A Florida Style Boat Show  
Arrives In Houston!



South Shore Harbour Marina,  
Bay Area Houston,  
September 24th - 27th, 2009

The South Shore Harbour Marina plays host to the largest in-water boat show ever to come to Houston, a big bustling "Florida Style" Boat Show in the Bay Area, with over 400 boats in the water and onshore, many ready to demo.

Luxury autos, trucks and custom motorcycles, swimwear fashion shows, fishing and boating gear, live music from The Bahamas and plenty of fun for the family, all geared to four fabulous days of fun in the sun.

So don't miss out on the biggest and most exciting boat show ever to arrive in Houston's Bay Area, the South West International Boat Show!

For exhibit and visitor details please contact:  
561.842.8808  
E-mail [info@southwestintlboatshow.com](mailto:info@southwestintlboatshow.com)  
or visit us on line at:  
[www.SouthWestInternationalBoatShow.com](http://www.SouthWestInternationalBoatShow.com)



## SIGHTS & SOUNDS

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE TV AND RADIO



### TELEVISION

LOOK FOR THESE STORIES IN THE COMING WEEKS:

**Aug. 30 – Sept. 6:** leading the way in conservation; new life in nature; understanding the science of deer.  
Saving endangered ocelots; hummingbird photographers; economics of deer; Meridian State Park; Neches River bottomlands.

**Sept. 6 – 13:** Pecos River rock art; 'natural' communication skills; Village Creek State Park; Stumberg Ranch; Port Aransas sunset.

**Sept. 13 – 20:** Hurricane Ike impacts TPWD employees; Sebastopol House;  
**Sept. 20 – 27:** Texas Clipper; reef fish; get SCUBA certified; dive the state's newest artificial reef.  
**Sept. 27 – Oct. 4:** Summer traditions at Garner State Park; learning from frontier history; Monahans Sandhills State Park; environmentally innovative golf course; Texas shorebirds.



Hurricane Ike affected TPWD sites and personnel. See how people and parks are recovering. Watch the week of September 13–20.

### TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

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

[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/tv](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/tv)



### RADIO

YOUR RADIO GUIDE TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS

September brings cool temperatures and even cooler programming on Passport to Texas. Learn about an in-depth documentary on Palo Duro Canyon airing this month, hear an 11-year-old's adventure with a giant turtle, and a lot more.

Log onto [www.passporttotexas.org](http://www.passporttotexas.org) to find a station near you that airs the series.

### PASSPORT TO TEXAS

Join host Cecilia Nasti weekdays for a 90-second excursion into the Texas Outdoors. Find a station near you, or listen on the Web at

[www.passporttotexas.org](http://www.passporttotexas.org)



# Sweetgum

*They can reach towering heights and produce surprising fall color.*

**Step barefooted on a spiked seed ball** dropped from an American sweetgum, and you're sure to yelp. For that reason, some people despise the tree. Not Randy Scott, a retired project manager who advocates planting more of the species around his neighborhood in The Woodlands.

"Sweetgums are hidden jewels," he enthuses. "Nobody really notices, but they have absolutely beautiful little green blooms in the spring. I also like how the green color of their star-shaped leaves contrasts against the darker green of our pines."

Best of all, in the autumn sweetgums blaze into brilliant hues of burgundy, orange and gold.

*Liquidambar styraciflua* — the only member of the sweetgum family that's native to North America — inhabits moist bottomlands of East Texas and is favored as an ornamental. Conical in form, sweetgums can reach towering heights of 100 feet or more. Although fast growing, the species doesn't produce seeds until 20 years of age or older.

When wounded, the sweetgum's furrowed bark

bleeds an amber resin, a sticky substance once chewed as gum by Native Americans and pioneers. Commercially, sweetgum hardwood is crafted into furniture, flooring, veneers and cabinetry. As for the seed balls, squirrels and chipmunks as well as more than 20 species of birds — including turkeys, doves, cardinals and yellow-bellied sapsuckers — eat their fruit.

Scott finds the barbed husks useful, too. "I work them into my sandy clay soil for aeration," he says. "And when I do, I always wear shoes." ★

— Sheryl Smith-Rodgers



↑ The star-shaped leaves of the sweetgum blaze with color in fall. The fruit turns to a spiky seed ball coveted by squirrels and birds.

TOP LEFT © SUSAN M. GLASCOCK; TOP RIGHT © BILL BEATY; OTHERS © LANCE YARNELL



call us toll free:  
866.522.8793



**Hoffpauir**  
POLARIS



**POLARIS**

2114 Highway 84 • Goldthwaite, Texas 76844 325.648.3341 FAX: 325.648.2653

**NO REPAIR/SERVICE DELAYS!** No Appointment Necessary — Walk-ins Welcome  
On All Repair and Maintenance Work

**2009 POLARIS  
RANGER 2x4**

MSRP \$7,999  
H DISC 1,000

**\$6,999** + TTL

**15 IN STOCK!**



**2009 POLARIS  
RANGER 6x6**

MSRP \$11,499  
H DISC 1,500

**\$9,999** + TTL

**4 IN STOCK!**



**2008 POLARIS  
500 EFI  
4x4**

MSRP \$7,399  
REBATE 700  
H DISC 700

**\$5,999** + TTL

**7 IN STOCK!**



**2009 POLARIS  
RANGER  
RZR 170  
YOUTH MODEL**

MSRP

**\$3,695** + TTL

**6 IN STOCK!**



**2009 POLARIS  
RANGER  
CREW 4x4**

MSRP \$11,499  
REBATE 800  
H DISC 700

**\$ 9,999**  
+ TTL



**2009 POLARIS  
RANGER  
500 4x4**

MSRP \$9,699  
REBATE 400  
H DISC 300

**\$8,999** + TTL



**2009 POLARIS  
RANGER XP**

MSRP \$10,799  
REBATE 800  
H DISC 300

**\$9,699**

+ TTL



**2009 POLARIS  
RZR**

MSRP \$10,799  
REBATE 500  
H DISC 1,300

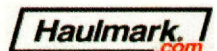
**\$8,999**

**15 IN STOCK!**



**GREAT SELECTION OF CREW CABS RANGERS**

**WE ARE ALSO YOUR DEALER FOR THE FOLLOWING PRODUCTS:**



**Huge Selection Of Pre-Owned ATV's And Rangers See Them At: [www.hautogroup.com](http://www.hautogroup.com)**

\* Plus Applicable Fees  
\* Photos For Illustration  
Purposes Only





# American Eel

The strange life cycle of a (mostly) freshwater eel.

**Three years ago**, Jennifer Bixby fought hard to reel in her fishing line at a Port Lavaca pier. "I was ready to cut it," she recalls. Then, unexpectedly, she landed her catch — a slimy, serpentine American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*).

"I'd never caught one before nor seen one either, but I knew what it was from my college classes," Bixby says of the fish species. Nowadays, she's got another eel in her life. This one lurks in a saltwater exhibit at Sea Center Texas, where she works as a hatchery biologist.

Pulled from Galveston Bay's brackish waters, the male eel someday would have migrated back to the faraway Sargasso Sea northeast of Bermuda. Why? Amazingly, all American eels end their complex, often lengthy life cycle where they began.

No one's ever documented their breeding behaviors, but biologists believe that American (and European) eels die soon after spawning in the Sargasso Sea. The transparent larvae (called leptocephali) drift with ocean currents and morph into "glass" eels. For a year or so, the transparent juveniles float until they reach coastal waters, which can be anywhere from Greenland to Brazil (including the Gulf Coast).

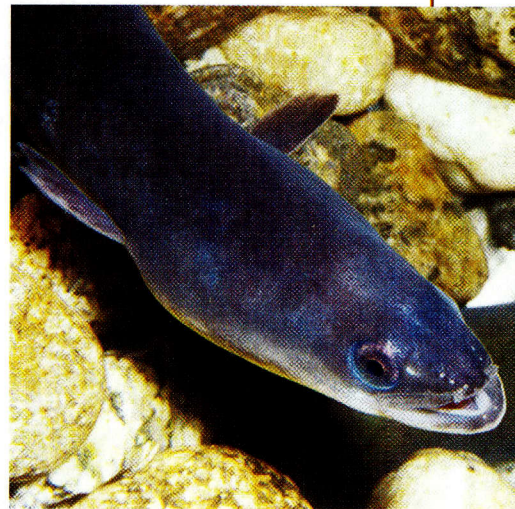
Moving into estuaries and rivers, the grayish or greenish "elvers" turn into sexually immature "yellow" adults. (Before modern dams, American eels once ranged upstream as far as

New Mexico and the Red River.) Hiding under rocks by day, eels feed at night on fish, fish eggs, worms, clams and frogs. At maturity, females can measure 3 to 4 feet long and weigh 4 to 5 pounds whereas males generally reach 1.5 feet long and 3 pounds.

American eels are North America's only catadromous species, meaning they live in freshwater but spawn in the ocean. (The life cycle of anadromous fish, like salmon, goes the other way.) After three or as many as 30 years, the eels turn "silver." This final stage readies them for ocean travel with enlarged eyes, ample reserves of fat and a thicker, darker skin.

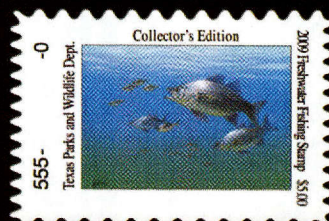
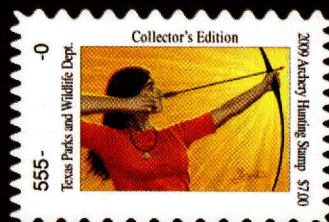
Finally, off they go, headed back to the Sargasso Sea to complete their life cycle — unless they happen onto someone's fishing line. ★

—Sheryl Smith-Rodgers



American eels absorb oxygen through their skin as well as their gills.

## Collect the Artwork of Conservation



Each year Texas Parks and Wildlife publishes a set of collector stamps featuring artwork from some of the finest wildlife and sporting artists.

These special edition stamps are available for purchase as a set of six stamps, a print, or a set of both stamp and print. They make a great gift or personal collectible for any outdoor enthusiast!

Stamp sets cost just \$21.65, and unframed print and stamp sets start at \$150.

When you purchase one of the stamps or prints, a share of the proceeds goes to support conservation efforts in Texas.



Visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/shopcovey](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/shopcovey) to collect the artwork for conservation.



# Taming the Land

*The Lost Postcard Photographs of the Texas High Plains.*

It didn't take long after the first photographic postcards appeared in America before Texans were enthusiastically mailing them off to friends and family. The postcards were often personal, featuring pictures of relatives, special events and the family homestead.

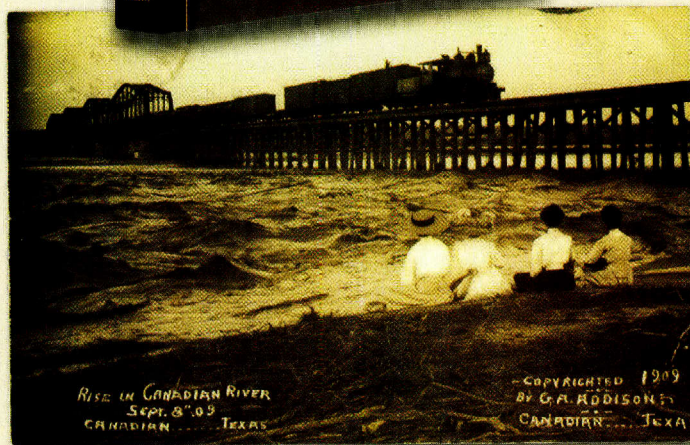
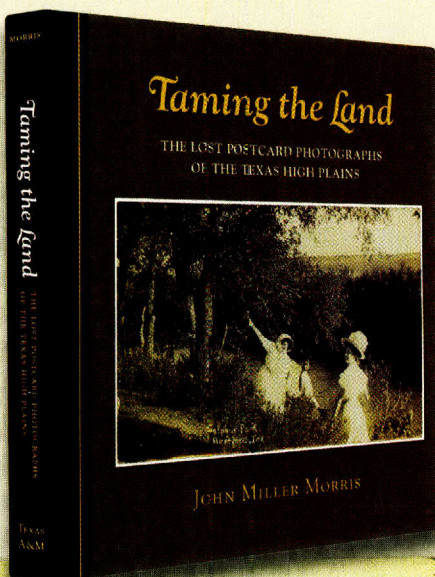
In fact, the proliferation of the picture postcard and the history of photography in Texas go hand-in-hand, a phenomenon explored with zeal by author John Miller Morris. *Taming the Land: The Lost Postcard Photographs of the Texas High Plains* (Texas A&M University Press, 2009) is the first volume in Morris' series called "Plains of Light," a visual record of West Texas life captured by postcard photographers of the early 1900s.

"Between 1900 and 1910 photography diffused across the entire Panhandle," Morris writes. "Farmers and ranchers had closed the frontier, while railroads had introduced industrialized culture to almost every corner. If not the best of times economically — there was a drought here and there — it was certainly not the worst. American culture in general

was in a mood of permanent celebration. A national spirit flourished, one that nurtured commemorative photography from national expositions to local main streets."

These commemorative photographs were called "real photo postcards" because the negatives were used to print directly on photographic postcard paper. Many of the surviving images, along with Morris' well-researched text, serve as documentation of the Texas West during its initial and most prolific growth. The postcard images included in *Taming the Land* are annotated with geographic and historical information, and the author has also provided the postcards' handwritten messages.

"The messages that people wrote on the



postcards are an appealing aspect of the medium," Morris explains. "While some messages refer to the photo scene on the opposite side, other semiotics are often at work. Many young men and women documented their youth, friendships, and romances with real photos."

An example is the message from "Monroe" in Canadian, Texas, to Miss Dell Courtney in Clovis, New Mexico: "Well here I am and not a word from you. What is wrong. Now you can see what is on the face of this card. Well this is what will happen if I don't get a letter from you tomorrow. By By — Monroe."

The message is humorously paired with the postcard depiction of a dramatic train wreck on the AT&SF Railroad near Canadian.

Of equal interest are Morris' brief biographies of the postcard photographers' lives. "Oddly enough," Morris reports, "most of the photographers presented herein rarely ventured from their chosen region, as if they were bound to the land by affections and sentiments too great to ignore."

One such photographer, Maidens Stennett Lusby, captured some of the finest early images of Palo Duro Canyon. His beautifully composed photographs inspired a movement to preserve the Palo Duro landscape. But as Lusby aged, his eyesight — the photographer's foremost tool — began to fail. Morris' talent as revelator shines here as he follows the photographer's life story, just as he has done in each biography, to its final chapter.

"In November 1947 at the age of eighty," Morris writes, "he traveled to Corpus Christi, registered in a hotel under an assumed name, and bought a new sports coat. On the twenty-fifth he rowed out into the bay at 3:00 p.m. carrying a suitcase. Near dusk he pulled a heavy chain from the suitcase and tied it around his waist. He secured it with a new padlock also from the suitcase and jumped overboard."

Unfortunately identities and images of many other Panhandle postcard photographers have been lost to time. Yet Morris has done a fine job of gathering and analyzing the remains, then constructing portraits of the men and women who were, perhaps unwittingly, responsible for capturing much of our Texas past. *Taming the Land* represents the first volume in an ambitious collection of early 19th-century photography. For Texans specifically, it archives a vital era in the evolution of the Lone Star State. ★



# Get Outside and Bring the Neighbors

*Nurturing your own family nature club.*

## One of our favorite family outings

is to head out in search of new places to hike. My husband and I are not exactly hard-core outdoor types, but we have enough of a foundation in nature to provide us with a basic understanding and a love of outdoors to give us the impetus to get outside and explore. Because of this foundation, even if we're uncertain about a particular destination, we know enough seriously hard-core nature explorers that are more than willing to either guide us themselves or just point the way.

For many parents, particularly ones who didn't grow up with any hiking experience, the idea of heading outdoors may be enticing but doesn't always feel doable for a variety of reasons. There may be lack of knowledge about where to go or how to go about getting there. There may be a fear of snakes or poison ivy or some other potential hazard. There might also be a fear that they don't have the right gear or information.

And sometimes, too, even if there are no hidden fears of dangers lurking, there just might be a hesitation to venture out on their own where they haven't ventured before.

In the past few years, in many cities, towns and neighborhoods, many families have been forming family nature clubs to explore the outdoors together. These informal clubs were the brainchild of a family inspired by the book *The Last Child in the Woods* by author Richard Louv. The Children and Nature Network, founded by Louv and others to encourage nature play for children, hopes others follow the family nature club lead.

"What if more and more parents, grandparents and kids around the country band together to create outdoor adventure clubs, family nature networks, family outdoor clubs or green gyms?" Louv says. "What if this approach becomes the norm in every community?"

In the past couple of months we have become part of a neighborhood-based family nature club, which sets destinations monthly in and around Austin. One



dad set up a blog and invited others via the blog and the school newsletter. Forming your own club is easy and a good way to build community. There is no need to form committees or get funding or wait for a reason. Rather, the only reason necessary is that you want to get outside and you want to encourage other families to do the same.

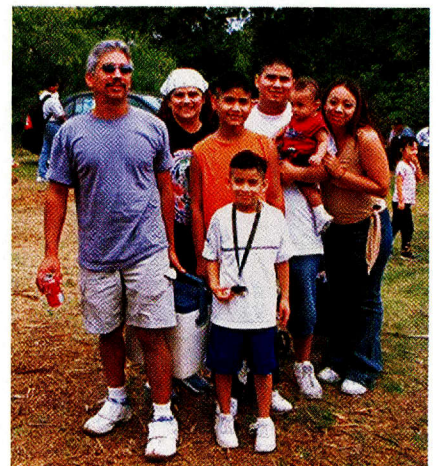
By joining forces and forging a simple path to the outdoors, many families have discovered that getting out on a trail or park or other natural setting is the best way to connect — not only with nature but with friends and family as well!

And here are five simple steps from the Children and Nature Network for forming your own family nature club:

**1. Create a plan of when, where and how long.** Keeping it simple and close to home will encourage even the most nature-intimidated. Schedule for a variety of activities. (See "50 Ways to Hook Kids on the Outdoors," March 2008.)

**2. Check out your location ahead of time.** You don't need to know the trail like the back of your hand, but having some expectations of what you will encounter is a good idea.

**3. Send out your invitations.** You can do this by word of mouth, Internet newsletters, school information folders or



Family nature clubs provide an easy way to explore the outdoors with kids and neighbors.

neighborhood bulletin boards.

**4. Provide a checklist of what to wear and bring.** Leave nothing up to chance so as to encourage the hesitant. Think sunscreen, hat, water, good shoes, snacks, hand wipes, etc. Include any special equipment they might need (binoculars, fishing gear).

**5. Gather, hike and record.** Gather at the spot and get hiking. On your hike record what you see, water levels, number of participants, etc. Having a record of what was happening when you started is a great idea.

You can download a free Family Nature Club Tool Kit at [www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org) ★



A look every sportsman will love...

# The Northwoods Legends Leather Jacket

Full-color imagery from wildlife artist Greg Alexander presented on a classic leather jacket

Rugged mid-weight leather jacket in sizes M to XXL

Waist-length with two zippered pockets



*Surround yourself with the majesty of nature*

When you enter the world of the whitetail deer, you are immediately enveloped in the serenity of their hidden realm. Now you can feel as if you're surrounded by nature every time you slip into the *Northwoods Legends Leather Jacket*, a work of wearable art that demonstrates your love of the outdoors—every time you step outdoors! Slip into the warmth and style of this rugged leather jacket decorated with striking artwork by famed wildlife artist Greg Alexander recreated on the back shoulder panel. The handsome brown leather jacket is styled in a waist-length full cut, with knit cuffs and waistband.

**Exceptional value; satisfaction guaranteed**

Available in four sizes, the *Northwoods Legends Leather Jacket* is offered by The Bradford Exchange at the affordable price of \$199\*, payable in four convenient installments of \$49.75 each, and backed by our 30-day money-back guarantee. To acquire yours, send no money now; just return the Reservation Application today.

Each *Northwoods Legends* jacket is crafted of genuine leather, with the exception of the back shoulder panel, a man-made leather that allows for a higher quality and more durable reproduction of Greg Alexander's artwork.



Greg Alexander's portrait of a ten-point buck is featured on the back of this richly-styled jacket

## RESERVATION APPLICATION

### THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE

9345 Milwaukee Avenue · Niles, IL 60714-1393

THE *Heart* OF COLLECTING®

**YES.** Please reserve the *Northwoods Legends Leather Jacket* for me as described in this announcement. I've circled my size preference below.  
**Limit: one per order. Please Respond Promptly**

M(38-40) L(42-44) XL(46-48) XXL(50-52)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Mr. Ms. \_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**01-06840-001-E31701**

\*Plus \$14.99 shipping and service. Please allow 4 to 8 weeks after the first payment for shipment. All sales are subject to product availability and order acceptance.



# 3 Days in the Field / By Rusty Middleton

DESTINATION: COLUMBUS

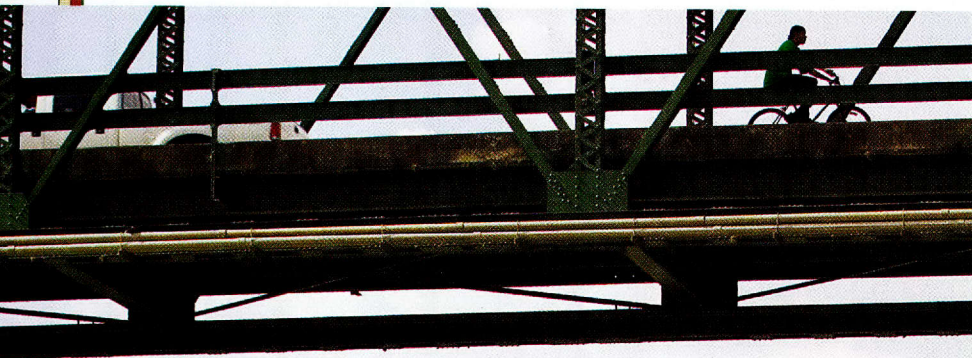
TRAVEL TIME FROM:

AUSTIN – 2 hours / BROWNSVILLE – 5.5 hours / DALLAS – 4 hours

HOUSTON – 1.25 hours / SAN ANTONIO – 2 hours / LUBBOCK – 8.5 hours / EL PASO – 11.25 hours

## Paddling Mayberry

*Columbus offers a unique opportunity to paddle in circles.*



### We tend to think of rural communities

like Columbus as molasses-slow, quiet, Mayberry kinds of places, where an uptick in sorghum futures is what passes for excitement. But somehow Columbus never quite got that message. Perhaps nowhere else can you find such a bewildering yet charming combination of cultural and outdoor pursuits.

If you timed it just right, it would be possible in and around Columbus to attend a dinner theater in an 1886 opera house, canoe, hunt geese, go antiquing, tour one of the most historic towns in Texas, watch endangered prairie chickens engage in bizarre reproductive acts and visit the only Santa Claus museum in Texas, all in the same frenzied weekend.

I was certainly curious about any town with a Santa Claus museum and lust-crazed chickens, but my main focus was to hit the river. I wanted to canoe the Columbus Paddling Trail on the Colorado River, opened by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau in May 2007.

What I got, besides a sunburn, was a great river experience plus new and unexpected perspectives on Texas history, Texas outdoors and the distractions of romance.

But that's getting a little ahead of myself. Did I mention the sunburn?

The Colorado River near Columbus gets a little loopy — literally. It is supposed to be headed southeast and downhill toward a union with the Gulf of Mexico. But at Columbus, for reasons best known to hydrogeologists, or perhaps some other "ologist," the river has decid-

Life takes on a slower pace when you take the family (and the dogs) out for a leisurely paddle on the Colorado.



ed to flow due north for a while. Gravity finally wins out over this futile contrariness, and the river flows south again, taking a 6 1/2-mile detour to return to a point less than a mile downstream.

This meander turns out to be very convenient for paddlers. In Columbus you can take a 6 1/2-mile canoe trip and wind up almost where you started. That means a lot less fussiness about shuttling vehicles and people. If you bring your own boat, you can launch at the paddling trail's put-in site just under the Highway 71 (Business) bridge in Columbus.

If you want to rent a boat, you can cross the bridge and go just downstream to Howell's Canoe Livery. Frank Howell and his wife, Evelyn, are the only game in town when it comes to canoe/kayak/tube rental, but they definitely don't act like it. Both are very helpful and friendly. Frank Howell downloaded the application from the TPWD Web site, filled it out and, with the help of TPWD staff, started the

process of creating a paddling trail. (For more information about Texas Paddling Trails, go to [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/boat/paddlingtrails](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/boat/paddlingtrails).)

Frank shoved us off from his dock.

"Keep a lookout for bald eagles," he yelled. "They fly up and down the river."

We let the current catch the boat and begin to take us downstream. Suddenly our main goal in life was not, as we originally thought, to retire comfortably. Instead, it was now to make it down the river and have a good time doing it.

Howell's dock slowly disappeared from view, and the serenity of the river enveloped us. In the quiet, our voices suddenly seemed way too loud. A river mindset settled in. Whatever I was thinking while standing on the bank a little while ago seemed irrelevant now.

While you are on it, you belong to the river, so you have to adjust your thinking down to the basics. You are now in a place where reflexes count a good deal

more than intellect, where judgment is about little more than timing your paddle strokes to avoid a tree limb. Your main job in life is to keep the boat upright, and in this section of the Colorado, that is not too demanding a task.

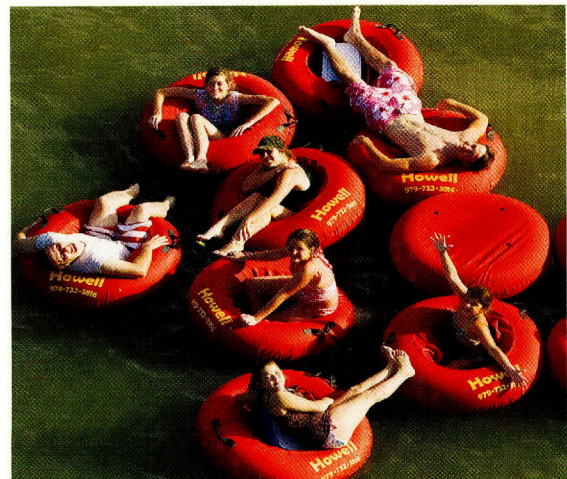
For most of the trail, the river is slow and broad, making paddling almost, but not quite, optional. You still have to steer around curves and the odd tree branch, but you can also spend a lot of time just floating along, deep in river-think, contemplating your place in a world where humans are mostly just visitors.

The residents here are fish, turtles and birds, especially birds. Yellow-crowned night-herons, egrets, flocks of teal and uncounted swallows, among many others, fill the air and riverbanks. Huge alligator gar roll on the surface in the deeper sections. Many paddlers come here just to see them. Alligators have been spotted a few miles downstream.

After a few hours of this dreamy float-



In Columbus you can take a 6 1/2-mile canoe trip and wind up almost where you started. Young floaters tie their tubes together.







Clockwise from top: Confederate Memorial Museum and Stafford Opera House, both on the town square; Magnolia Oaks Bed & Breakfast; Ilse-Rau House (private home).

ing and idle paddling, it is time to reluctantly look for the take-out point.

“Just after the two big bridges, look for Beason’s Park on the left,” Frank had instructed. The two bridges are large, by far the most imposing structures to be seen on the paddling trail. We got out at Beason’s Park, yet such is the lure of the water, and reportedly each other, that a couple in a canoe recently missed these two massive structures entirely, plus the I-10 bridge further down, and managed to float another 10 miles downriver.

They were getting seriously nervous by the time they were found around dark by TPWD game wardens.

Beason’s Park, within the Columbus city limits, was formerly known as Beason’s Crossing. It was at this and a couple of other nearby crossings on the Colorado that the Texan and Mexican armies engaged in a stare-down for several days after the Battle of the Alamo.

(continued on page 55)

# Get Your Paddle Wet!

Texas Paddling Trails are a series of inland and coastal water trails with clearly marked put-ins and take-outs and helpful information kiosks that make it easier than ever to spend time on the water, paddling and relaxing with your family or friends.

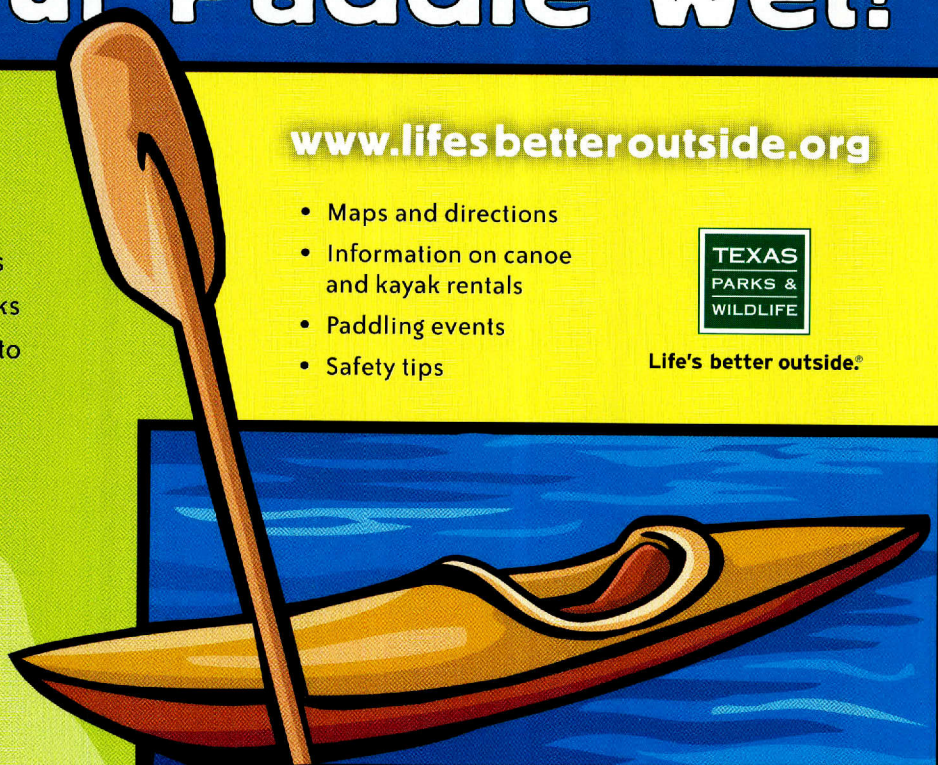


[www.lifesbetteroutside.org](http://www.lifesbetteroutside.org)

- Maps and directions
- Information on canoe and kayak rentals
- Paddling events
- Safety tips



Life's better outside.®

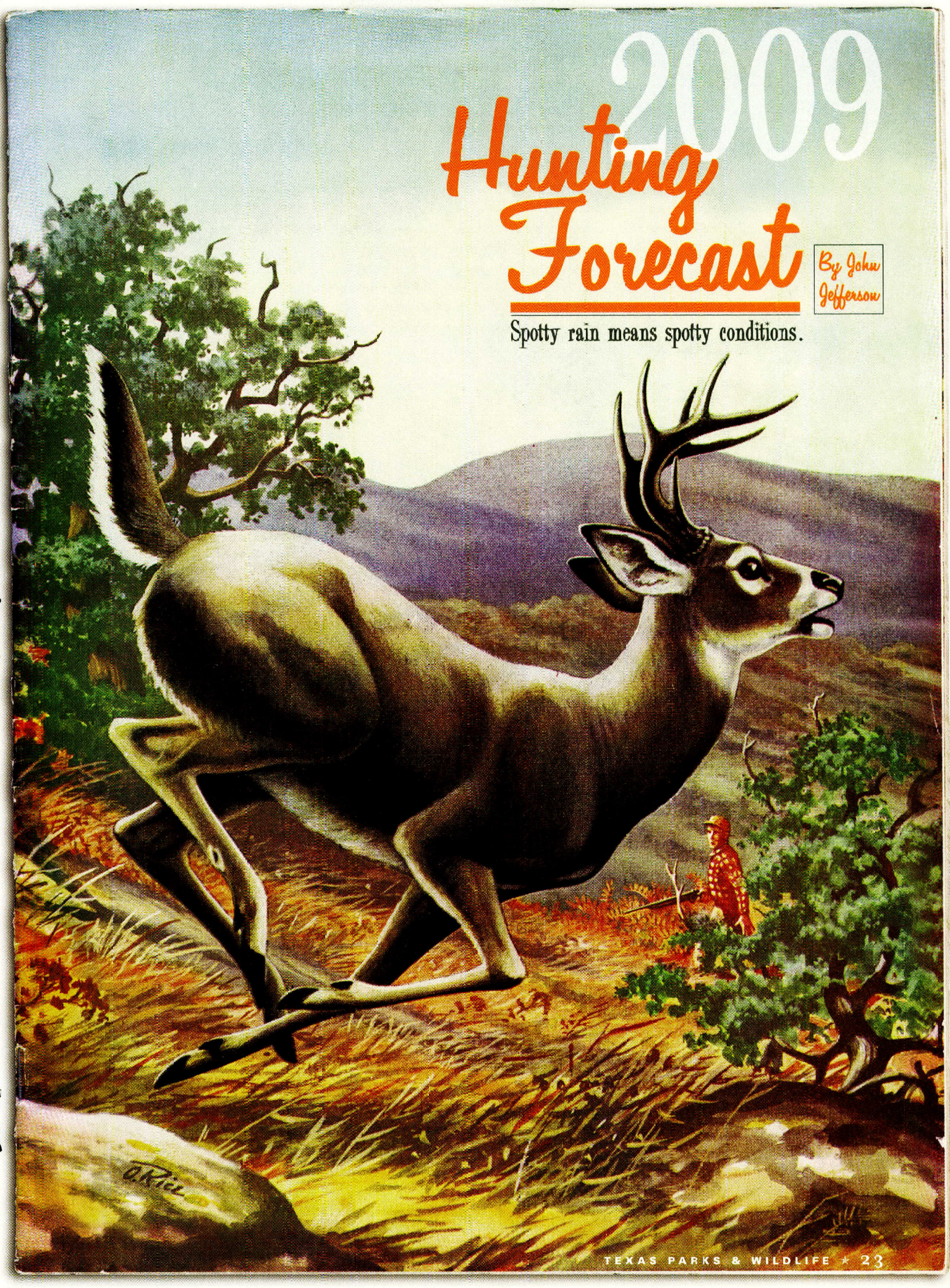




# 2009 Hunting Forecast

By John  
Jefferson

Spotty rain means spotty conditions.



OKRIL





**I**T'S WORSE THAN BEING a weatherman. Predicting hunting conditions for the fall before we know how severe the summer drought will be is more art than science.

A lot of factors are involved, including reproduction and survival from the preceding five seasons. But at least the

following is predicated upon what the scientists in the wildlife division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department have observed.

Beware that ideal conditions for wildlife may well be the very influences that make hunting harder. Critters having plenty to eat is a good thing. But it also may mean that they don't move around to be seen by hunters. But then when it quits raining for any extended period, the opposite is true, and hunter success improves con-

siderably. You take the good with the bad, and just be thankful you can be out in the hills or brush doing what we call hunting. It's our heritage, and one of the factors that keeps us sane in a stressful world.

So, with that covering my, uh, credibility, here's a compilation of what the TPWD game biologists around the state have to say about hunting prospects.



### DOVE SEASONS:

(Please report leg bands to  
1-800-327-BAND)

**North Zone** Sept. 1–Oct. 25, Dec.  
26–Jan. 9

**Central Zone** Sept. 1–Oct. 25,  
Dec. 26–Jan. 9

**South Zone** Sept. 18–Nov. 3, Dec.  
26–Jan. 17

**Special White-Winged Dove**

**Area** Sept. 5, 6, 12 and 13  
Sept. 18–Nov. 3, Dec. 26–Jan. 13



# Doves

**A**CCORDING TO VERNON BEVILL, TPWD's small game program director, the statewide dove breeding population is around 20–25 million, and chances are good that the population will at least double during the breeding season.

In West Texas, district biologist Billy Tarrant, in Alpine, reports that both mourning dove and whitewing populations are in good shape. He expects cultivated areas will offer the best hunting.

Duane Lucia, in Lubbock, says that Panhandle numbers are also good, and that mourning doves started nesting in March. Whitewings are also increasing there. Chip Ruthven supervises the Panhandle wildlife management areas and says 2008 was a great year for dove hunters. He expects another fine season this year.

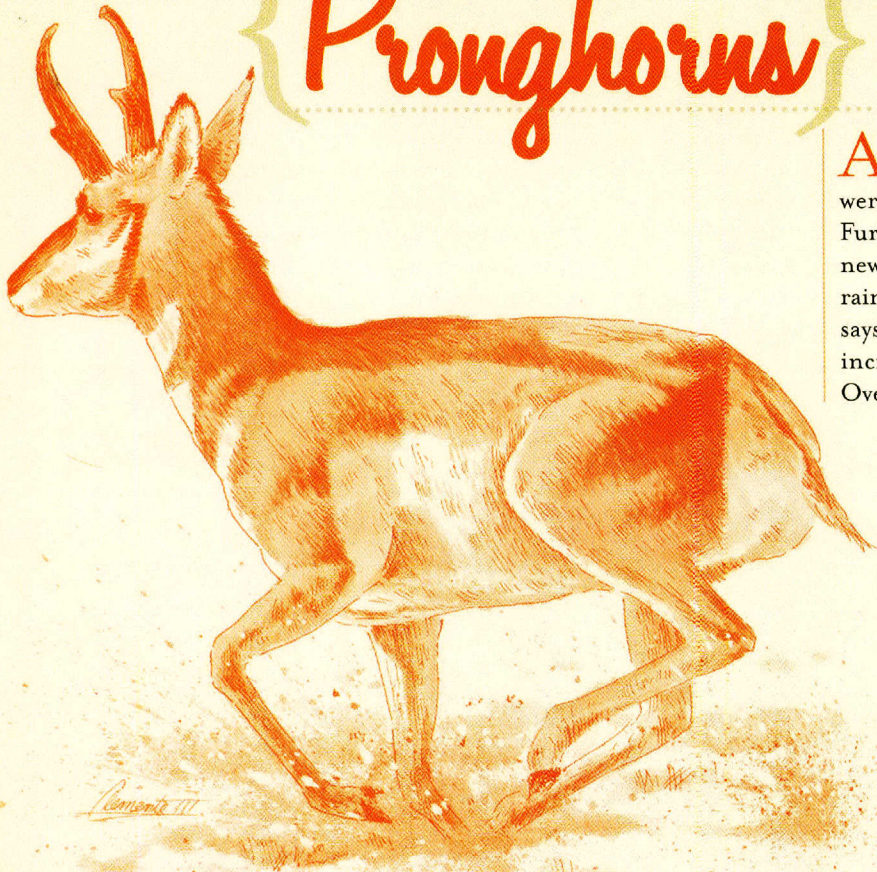
Charlie Newberry, in Henrietta, suggests that hunting over native sunflowers and croton should be productive. James Edwards, in De Leon, noted that wheat and oat production there seem to hold birds in the area. Gilbert Guzman reports that spring rains should bring up croton in the Menard–Mason area.

Most of the Hill Country had nice spring rains. In East Texas, David Sierra recommends the northern counties, but says Navarro County was excellent last year.

South Texas has been the mecca for dove hunters, and this year should be no exception. The areas just south of San Antonio and around Uvalde are loaded. Ashton Hutchins recommends the Frio–Zavala county area, and points to the four public hunting areas there. I'm ready!



# Pronghorn



**A** DROUGHT-INDUCED DIE-OFF struck the Trans-Pecos pronghorns. Range conditions were poor but improving, according to Tarrant. Further north, John McEachern has similar bad news about the Permian Basin herd. Little or no rain retarded horn growth. In the Panhandle, Lucia says the pronghorns in northern Panhandle are increasing and the western population is stable. Overall, it's not a year to write home about.

## PRONGHORN SEASON:

35 counties Oct. 3-11  
(by permit only)

# Bighorn



**A** RECORD NUMBER OF SHEEP were observed by helicopter last year, and a record number of permits were issued — 15. Mike Pittman, manager of the Trans-Pecos WMAs, expects a comparable number of permits this season.

## BIGHORN SEASON:

(by permit only)



# Feral Hogs

CHIP RUTHVEN WRITES, "Short of a nuclear winter, feral hogs should continue to increase throughout the (Panhandle) region." Many ranchers would like a winter that would nuke the hogs! They're everywhere, and multiplying. In the Hill Country, Guzman says they're all along the Llano and San Saba river corridors. Danny

Davis, a biologist in Ranger, reports they are flourishing in improved habitat and food plots. Sierra, in East Texas, says they provide excellent hunting opportunities, especially in bottomland hardwoods. South Texas district biologist, Alan Cain, agrees, saying the drought has relegated them to creek and river drainages.

## FERAL HOG SEASON\*

No closed season; landowner permission and hunting license required.



# Javelina

TARRANT SAYS the javelinas appear to be on the rise, especially in the central mountains of the Trans-Pecos. They seem to him to be expanding their range to the north and west. Pittman says there are plenty of them on the WMAs. In South Texas, Cain reports an abundance of them.

## JAVELINA SEASON\*

(43 counties)

Oct. 1–Feb. 28

(50 counties)

Sept. 1–Aug. 31





# Quail

LAST SEASON IN WEST TEXAS was dreadful. According to Tarrant, this one may not be much better. The best hunting will be on properties that have implemented good habitat management practices for quail. Some Gambel's quail can be found along the Rio Grande and associated drainages in the western portion of the region. Lucia, in Lubbock, expects a good hatch if the region gets some rain, since there was a good carryover of broodstock. Ruthven says the same for the WMAs: a mild winter and good carryover. Rains have picked up well; if this holds, prospects will range from "average" to "pretty good," depending on where you are hunting across this broad area. The Mator and Gene Howe WMAs definitely look better with recent rains.

Biologists in the Hill Country don't talk much about quail because habitat and drought limit their existence. Guzman, in Menard County, says bobwhites do a little better there, since the habitat is more compatible with quail.



Soil and vegetation generate more groceries to the west and north, and Ralph Suarez, in Ballinger, writes that quail there are "holding their own" due to habitat management practices that allowed nesting cover to remain.

Raymond Sims, in Graham, also spoke to management practices and acknowledged that large ranches in his area "still make up some of the best bobwhite quail habitat remaining in Texas."

Moving east, it gets worse. Kyle Melton, in Hewitt, says quail numbers there have been declining for 20 years. Jennifer Barrow, north of Dallas/Fort Worth, reports a downward trend and unfavorable nesting conditions.

In East Texas, only one biologist, Ron Mize, even mentioned quail, and that was to add, "where the few are found."

It's better to the south. David Forrester, in La Grange, the district biologist for the upper coastal plains, expects "average to above-average" hunting. Alan Cain, district biologist for the Brush Country, says they need rain for a good hatch. Eric Garza, in Hebbbronville, expects low numbers there, too, without rain.

Although conditions aren't ideal, David Synatzske, on the Chaparral WMA, reminds us that South Texas wildlife species are survivors and respond quickly. Brad Porter says the Three Rivers area had a good carryover of birds, and could recover with rain. Hutchins expects good hunting in Frio, Zavala and Dimmit counties.

So it's not all bad, and could get better. Just add water!

## QUAIL SEASON\*

Statewide (all counties)  
Oct. 31-Feb. 28



# Small Game

**W**ITH LESS RAIN, there is certainly less salad for the rabbits. Consequently, Rufus Stephens predicts fewer rabbits in Comal and Kendall counties this year. But, being bunnies, they'll rebound quickly with any rain.

The place to take kids for good squirrel hunting will be East Texas. Sierra says the Post Oak Region, extending from Oklahoma between Sherman and Paris to south of Bryan, should be excellent. Gary Calkins, to the east in the Pineywoods, says the only limiting factor was that the hurricane knocked a lot of acorns off the trees last year.

Jeff Gunnels, on the Engeling WMA, says last season was one of the best ever, and this one will be good, too. All the WMAs tell the same story. With a \$48 annual public hunting permit, a lot of hunting is available.

## SQUIRREL SEASON:

### \*\*Special Youth Season

Sept. 26-27

### East Texas (51 counties)

Oct. 1-Feb. 7, May. 1-31

### Other open counties (See

county listings in TPWD Outdoor Annual) Sept. 1-Aug. 31



# White-Tailed Deer

## WHITETAIL SEASON:

### (GENERAL SEASON)

#### Special Youth Season

Oct. 31-Nov. 1, Jan. 4-17

#### North Texas (206 counties)

Nov. 7-Jan. 3

#### South Texas (30 counties)

Nov. 7-Jan. 17

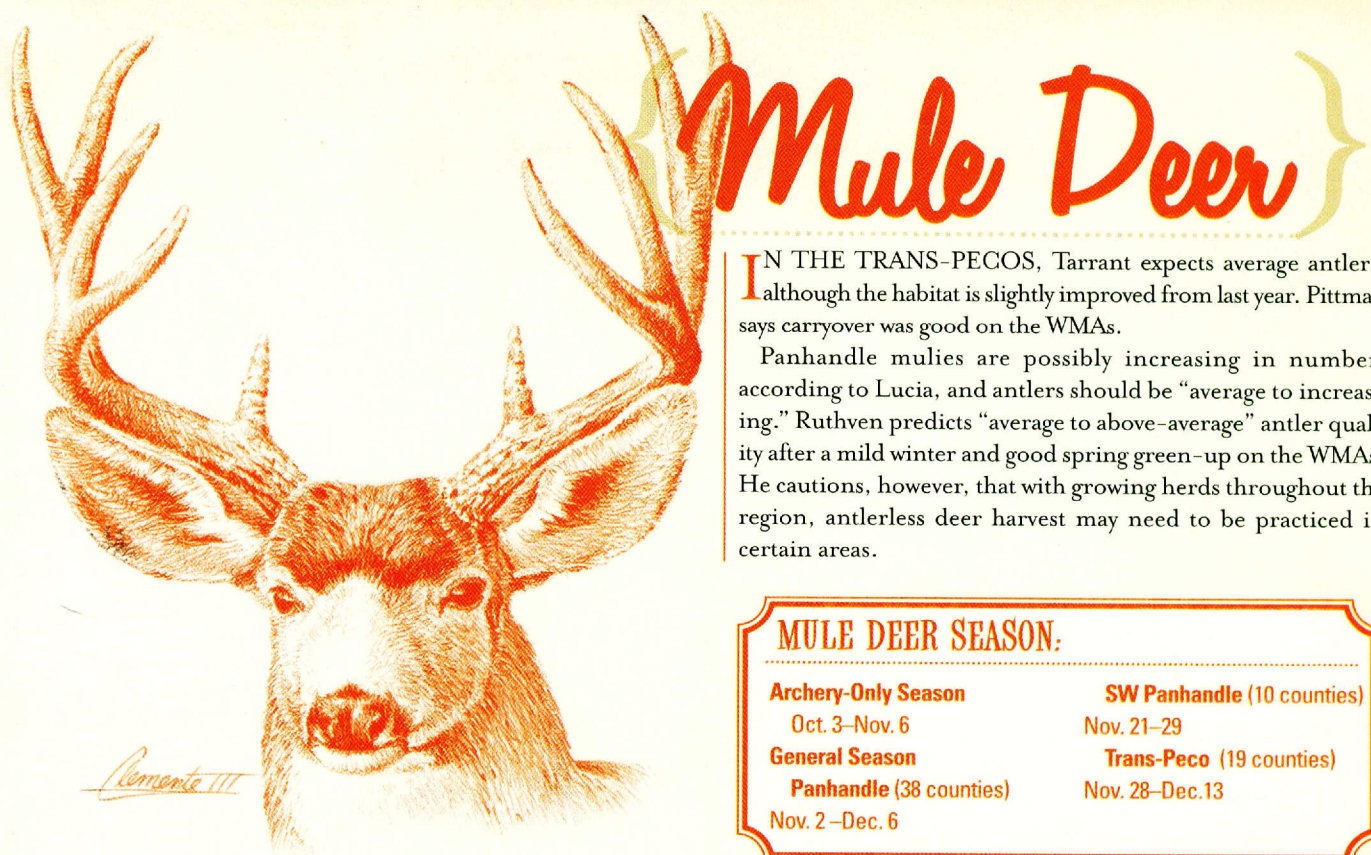
### LATE ANTERLESS & SPIKE:

#### Edwards Plateau (39 counties)

Nov. 7-Jan. 17







# Mule Deer

**I**N THE TRANS-PECOS, Tarrant expects average antlers, although the habitat is slightly improved from last year. Pittman says carryover was good on the WMAs.

Panhandle mulies are possibly increasing in number, according to Lucia, and antlers should be "average to increasing." Ruthven predicts "average to above-average" antler quality after a mild winter and good spring green-up on the WMAs. He cautions, however, that with growing herds throughout the region, antlerless deer harvest may need to be practiced in certain areas.

## MULE DEER SEASON:

### Archery-Only Season

Oct. 3–Nov. 6

### General Season

Panhandle (38 counties)

Nov. 2–Dec. 6

### SW Panhandle (10 counties)

Nov. 21–29

### Trans-Peco (19 counties)

Nov. 28–Dec. 13

**T**EXAS' 4 MILLION DEER suffered during the drought, but they are survivors. Here's how it looks.

Tarrant expects West Texas whitetails to have improved antlers. The population is above the long-term average. Lucia says Panhandle antler development also got a boost from spring rains, but some areas are still overpopulated. On WMAs, Ruthven says more antlerless deer need to be removed, but he expects bucks to have above-average antlers.

Kory Perlichek prepared the report for the Edwards Plateau, and said the 18-month drought was the worst on record. Ninety percent of the state was classified "abnormally dry." That took its toll. Dale Schmidt, in Llano, said last season produced very few trophy bucks. Then, just as it started greening up from spring rains, Blake Hendon, in Austin, noted that a late frost set back mesquites, Spanish oaks and post oaks.

Mary Humphrey, working the western counties of the Plateau, says that probably nixed a mesquite bean crop this year, and that's what pulled the deer through last year. It also nipped

a number of forbs. But nature has a way of compensating.

With less to eat across the plateau, Mike Reagan, in Wimberley, observed that the fawn crop was the lowest in 30 years. Spring rains brightened the picture. Ray Aguirre, in Kerrville, says that Bandera, Kerr and Real counties are going to be better than last year. "They've already received more rain than the last two years, combined," he says. Trey Carpenter, in Burnet, expects antler quality to be "average at best," however.

Up through the Rolling Plains, there's a little more optimism. Sims, in Graham, sends word that a good carryover of bucks resulting from a light harvest on well-managed ranches could make hunters happy this year. To the east, Dean Marquardt, in Granbury, forecasts an increase in antler development and age structure, primarily due to the antler restrictions that are having good effects. James Edwards, in De Leon, agrees with that.

Further east, Sierra says the Post Oak Savannah deer should have better-than-average weights and antlers, especially in the 13 antler-restriction counties. Calkins, in the Pineywoods, also lauds

the restrictions and points to a large carryover of bucks, due to decreased hunting after Hurricane Ike.

The WMAs in East Texas expect good seasons, and Gunnels, on the Engeling WMA, speaks about seeing "really big, older age" deer there.

Forrester, working the coastal prairies where antler restriction started, anticipates average antlers as conditions improve. In the Brush Country, Daniel Kunz expects the poor body condition of most bucks will take time to recover, thus affecting antler development. Conditions were so bad that Dustin Windsor, in Cotulla, says that more than 60 percent of the ranchers there noted 8–14 less Boone & Crockett inches of antler.

Matt Reidy says antler restrictions for Wilson and Karnes counties, coupled with a conservative harvest last season, should put plenty of good bucks in the crosshairs this year. Heather Halbritter, biologist for Atascosa, Bexar and Medina counties, also says quality bucks walked last season, making some leases more attractive this season. David Rios, in Uvalde, says that the resilient South Texas brush species only need a little rain to bounce back.



# Pheasants



LUCIA TELLS US that pheasant numbers look to be average. Hunter success will probably depend upon when and how much rain falls, and what the farmers plant. And because of overlapping seasons, you could hunt four species of birds on one hunt: pheasants, ducks, geese and sandhill cranes!

## PHEASANT SEASON:

**Chambers, Jefferson  
& Liberty counties**

Oct. 31–Feb. 28

**Panhandle (37 counties)**

Dec. 5–Jan. 3

# Rio Grande Turkeys

FEW PEOPLE HUNT strictly for turkeys in the fall, and most are taken incidentally by deer hunters. Turkeys are underutilized in West Texas, according to Tarrant, and have found near permanent water sources. Ruthven says the Panhandle hunters will see a number of two-year-old gobblers. In the Hill Country, Joyce Moore expects there will be a number of middle-aged and mature birds this fall. In North Texas, reports indicate fair hunting, in spite of wildfires that destroyed nesting cover. In South Texas, populations have declined in recent years, but Hutchins says turkeys are abundant along the Frio, Leona and Nueces river basins.

## RIO GRANDE TURKEY SEASON:

### Archery - Only Season

Oct. 3–Nov. 6

### FALL SEASON

#### Special Youth Season

Oct. 31–Nov. 1, Jan. 16–17

**North Texas (122 counties)**

Nov. 7–Jan. 3

**South Texas (26 counties)**

Nov. 7–Jan. 17

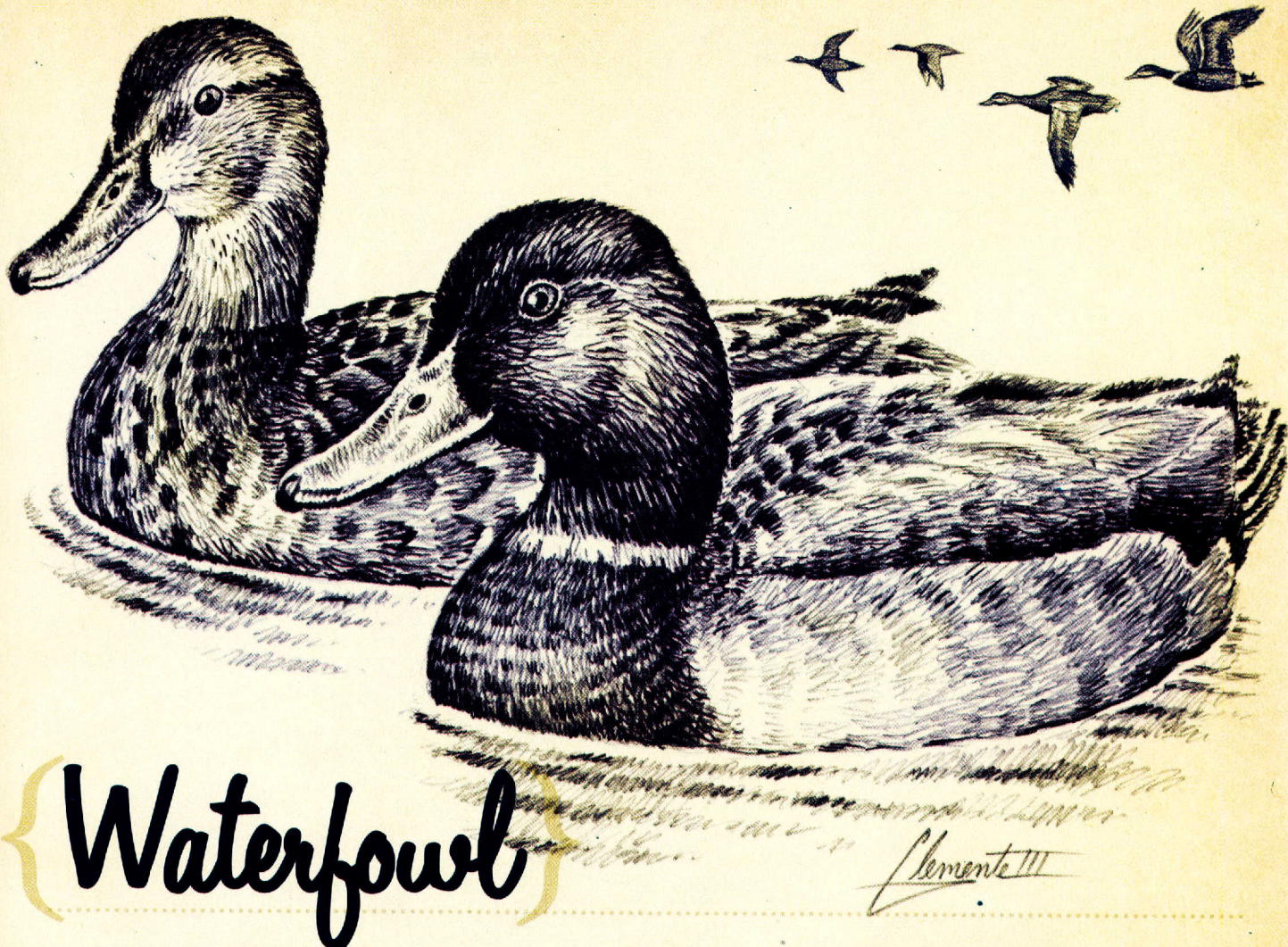
**Brooks, Kenedy, Kleberg & Willacy counties**

Nov. 7–Feb. 28

Fall season is closed for Eastern turkeys.







# Waterfowl

**D**UCKS AND GEESE are migratory. They breed and nest in the north during spring and summer and come to Texas and other southern states for fall and winter. So, hunting prospects depend on balancing conditions in two very different parts of North America.

Most followers of the ups and downs of the waterfowl world look to the north to start the discussion. It stands to reason: If breeding and nesting break down in Canada, Minnesota, parts of Wyoming and Montana and the Dakotas, the population goes down, and the number of birds flying south for the winter is diminished. If conditions are ideal and the numbers are up, a bumper crop comes south. Then hunting depends on what has happened to the Texas habitat.

This year's story is a tale of two very different cities, so to speak. The north was wet. Ponds were plentiful and brimming. Ducks had water. Grass was abundant for nesting and cover. Even the red fox population was

down, so predation was reduced. It looks really good.

The Dakotas had pond estimates 108 percent above last year and 87 percent above the long-term average (LTA). All ducks important to Texas improved from last year, except wigeons. Mallards were up 10 percent. Redheads declined by a percent, but were still above the LTA. Scaup, which had declined, showed a 12 percent increase. Pintails were up 23 percent. Green-winged teal rose 16 percent and blue-wings increased 11 percent. Gadwalls, northern shovelers and canvasbacks also showed gains. Overall, the duck population is estimated to be 13 percent higher than last year, and 25 percent above the LTA.

But what will happen when they migrate to the lower realms? Will there be enough food and water to hold them, or will many move on to greener pastures in Mexico?

That's the question. Texas is dry—very dry—and may get drier before fall. El Niño is

expected to bring some relief, but will it come soon enough?

Dave Morrison, TPWD's waterfowl program leader, says, "(Ducks) moving to Mexico is certainly an option, but I suspect that most can find some place in Texas to spend the winter." If the drought continues, ducks could be concentrated on areas with managed water, he added.

As the Central Texas lakes shrink, there is at least a small amount of solace in knowing that some of the water being taken from the reservoirs to irrigate fields along the coast will also help hold waterfowl this winter.

With geese, reports from the north are another story. A late spring and high water retarded nesting. Most females simply did not nest. Nest failure was as high as 100 percent around Hudson Bay. Other areas also suffered. If you missed shots at a goose or two last year, be glad it's coming back to give you another try; you may not see many young geese this season. ★



---

M·U·L·E·D·E·E·R

*NEW RESEARCH HOPES TO PROVIDE BETTER POPULATION ESTIMATES*

M·Y·S·T·I·Q·U·E

*TEXT AND PHOTOS BY RUSSELL A. GRAVES*

---









“It

won't take long to get on one and get him caught,” predicts pilot Dusty Whitaker while his two-seater helicopter refuels behind us on the makeshift red-dirt tarmac. Just a short distance from the Caprock

Escarpment and west of Matador, our impromptu command post includes the helicopter, a couple of ATVs and a cadre of pickups. Stretched out across the ground, bright orange catch-nets strike a peculiar contrast against the frost-killed grass, as a couple of Dusty's helpers pack the nets into the rocket guns.

“Once I get in the air, y'all need to have your crew ready to move in and get the deer and I'll take off and catch another.”

Dusty makes the process sound simple, but having seen him do the catch-on-the-fly routine once before, I know the aerial acrobatics involved in this research project are far from simple.

While he speaks, a collection of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists, college students (both graduate and undergraduate) from West Texas A&M University and Texas A&M University-Kingsville wildlife management programs and their respective college professors gather around in a huddle to listen for the day's agenda. In short order, various members of the group pore over maps of the ranch, delegate responsibilities for each crew member, and engage in jovial banter while Whitaker finishes his preflight routine.

The plan today is to catch 36 mule deer by day's end and catalog things like their sex, age and rump fat thickness to gauge their overall health. In addition, before their release, the crew will adorn each deer with ear tags to aid in identification and a GPS collar that logs their latitude and longitude over two-and-a-half months before they automatically fall off the deer and are retrieved by researchers using radio telemetry technology.

It's mid-December and the morning is overcast and predictably chilly by Texas Rolling Plains standards, but after hearing of the bevy of physical activity that's to come, there is no doubt that covered up in the heavy coats and gloves, we've all overdressed.

## RESEARCH IN MOTION

After pulling up to an old barn that flanks a green wheat field on the ranch's western edge, mule deer quickly shoot from the cow lot and across the wheat field. At first I am fixated on the deer hopping toward a newly erected wind farm in the distance. Instantly, though, the recognizable *chop-chop-chop* sound of the helicopter blades erupts from the brush and the black chopper rushes past, only feet from the ground. Over the wheat field, I see an orange net open swiftly from beneath the aircraft's blades, and a puff of dust confirms that the first deer is caught.

In a smooth and choreographed fashion, the ground crew moves into action and sidles alongside the netted deer, loads her onto an ATV, and brings her back to the barn, where graduate research assistant Cody Zabransky helps coordinate the ground work under the guidance of his major professor, Dave Hewitt. Cody is here working with Texas A&M University-Kingsville under the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Insti-



THE HELICOPTER CREW (top left) lays out the catch nets before packing them in the net guns. A desert mule deer buck (top center). Dana Wright and Mike Janis review a topographic map (top right). The catch helicopter takes off on the first flight (right).

tute and is instrumental in the mule deer research project.

On the ground, the deer get worked over in a humane fashion. Their eyes are covered to calm them, and their feet bound to keep them from hurting themselves or the researchers. While does can injure with their flailing feet, the bucks are handled especially gingerly to avoid any damage to their antlers and keep their antlers from impaling a researcher.

While one researcher ear-tags the deer, another shaves a patch of hair from its rump so an accurate ultrasound can be administered and yet another records all the pertinent data marked by the various data collectors. In the end, whoever has the small digital camera at the time photographs the animal before it's released.





## MULE DEER OCCUPY THE DRIER OPEN COUNTRY AND RANGE OVER AS MUCH AS 10 TIMES MORE AREA THAN WHITETAILED.

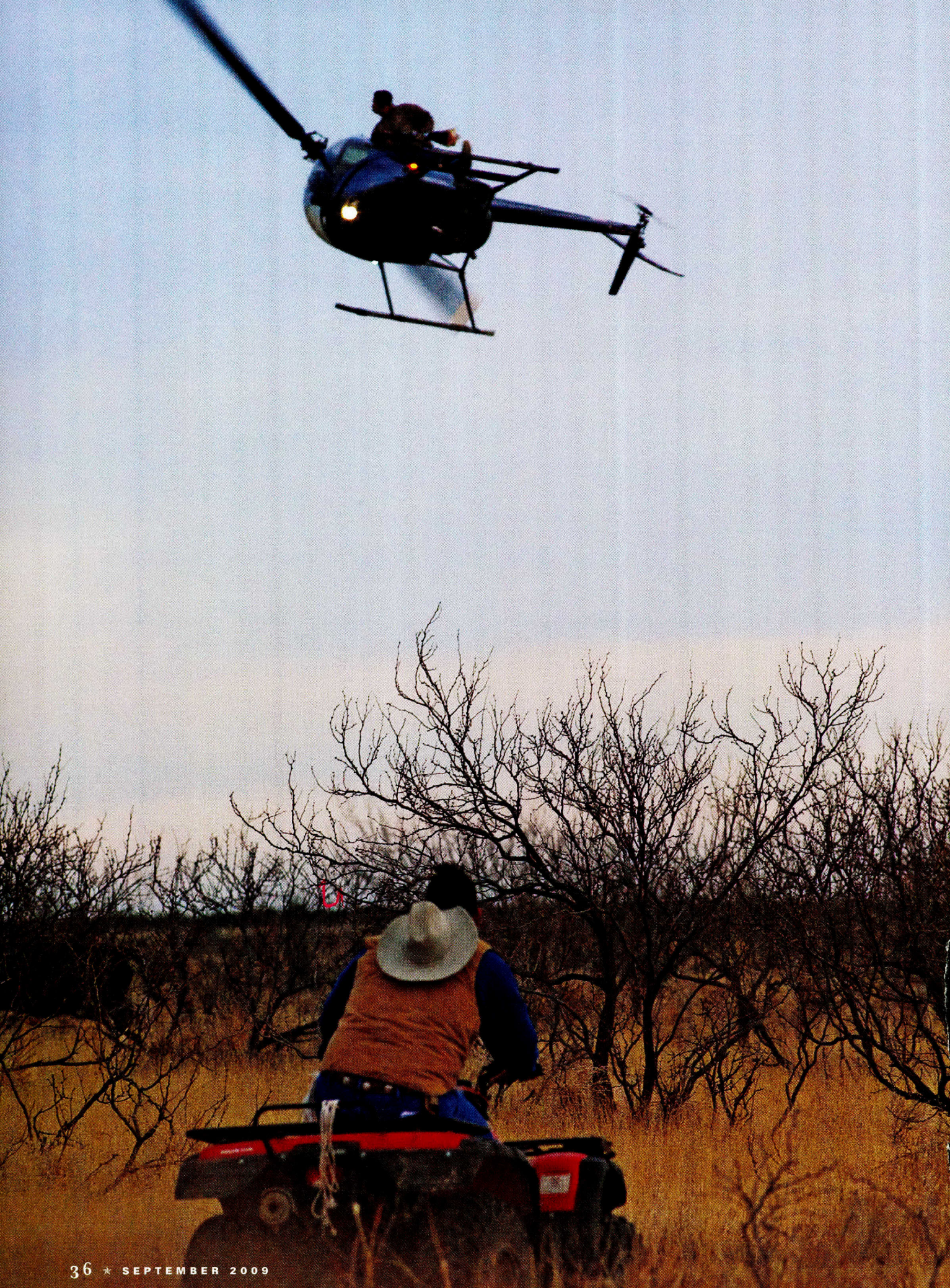
Back on their feet, most deer react the same way to the global positioning system collar and the ear tags, curiously shaking their heads while trotting off. Soon though, they become accustomed to their regalia and carry on as mule deer do. While it seems like a lot of work just to figure out more about mule deer, when it comes to this project, there's much more to it than simply what I've witnessed.

"The purpose of the research is to develop a sightability model for aerial surveys of mule deer in western Texas," explains Zabransky. "The Texas Parks and Wildlife Depart-

ment currently uses data counts that do not estimate population levels, but instead provide population trend data."

According to Zabransky, when subjected to scientific scrutiny, the current method of counting mule deer employed by TPWD is highly variable and not as accurate as needed for critical population and habitat management decisions. Overall, the research assesses how the effects of terrain, vegetation type, woody cover, weather, deer activity, group size and observer experience influence sightability of mule deer during helicopter surveys. Researchers admit that the percentage of deer









**AN ATV RACES IN** to retrieve a captured deer (opposite). (Clockwise from top left) Plastic ear tags for identification. A helicopter brings in a freshly netted doe. The deer are blindfolded to keep them calm. Researchers quickly remove a catch net from a deer.

observed during helicopter surveys is not known, and the percentages often vary due to a number of variables like brush cover or weather at the time of the survey.

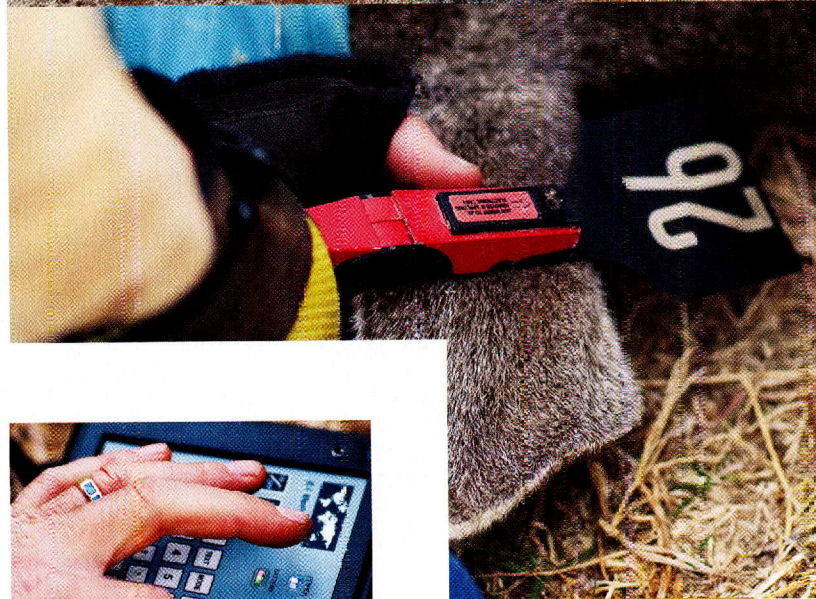
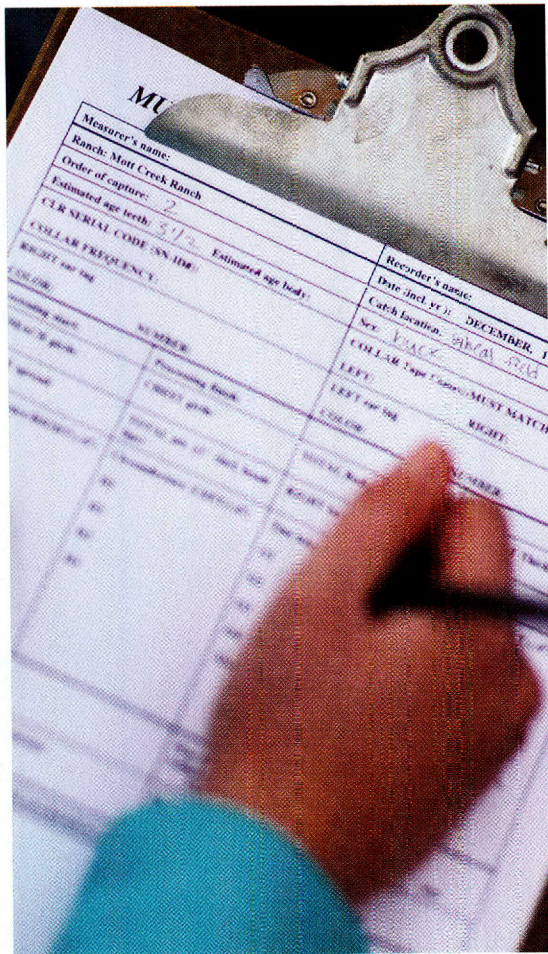
Determining the actual number of deer on a range is a challenge using current techniques, and according to Calvin Richardson, desert big game leader with TPWD, spotlight survey results are often inconsistent due to the limited road systems on some West Texas ranches. Moreover, current aerial survey techniques typically underestimate deer numbers.

"The ultimate goal is to possess the ability to 'correct' our estimates following a helicopter survey under a specific set of conditions," says Richardson from his base in Midland. "More accurate population estimates at the state and ecoregion levels improve our ability to manage the mule deer population. Accurate data improves our decision-making ability regarding seasons and bag limits, as well as for any other proposals that may arise in the future, such as managed land deer permits or antler restrictions."

In this particular research study, trapping takes place on six different ranches in the Texas mule deer range. Two of the ranches are in the Panhandle, while the balance are in the Trans-Pecos. Each ranch is big enough to ensure that the census methods developed from this project are applicable over the entire mule deer range.

"Mule deer are the focus of the study because they require a model of their own, as a model developed for white-tailed deer would not apply to mule deer because of different habitat types and behaviors of the two species," Zabransky notes.





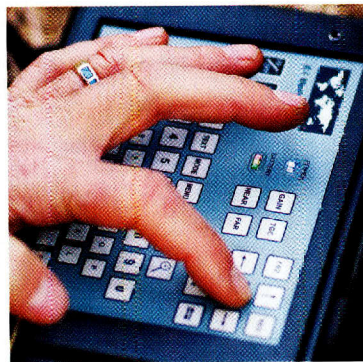
## DRY COUNTRY DRIFTERS

As far as Texas deer, the desert mule is the less-common cousin of Texas' most prominent deer—the whitetail. Because its range is found in the least populated regions of Texas, many people aren't as familiar with the deer that roams chiefly in the Texas Panhandle and the mountains and basins of the Trans-Pecos.

Historically, mule deer resided in nearly every Texas county west of the 100th meridian. By the middle part of the 20th century, over-hunting and habitat changes reduced their range substantially and pushed them into the desert mountains of western Texas and tiny pockets in the Panhandle.

Currently, because of a trap-and-translocate program that ended in 1988 and stricter adherence to sound habitat and population management philosophies, their numbers and range have expanded. The Trans-Pecos holds about 85 percent of the statewide mule deer population.

In body size, mule deer are slightly larger than whitetails. The first thing you'll probably notice is its large namesake ears that resemble those of a mule. Typically, as mule deer bucks grow larger, their antlers branch dichotomously fork, as opposed to a white-tailed deer, whose tines grow typically from a single main beam. While whitetails generally are found in the wetter and densely vegetative habitats in the eastern two-thirds of Texas, mule deer occupy the drier open country and range over as



much as 10 times more area than whitetails.

Because of the inherent differences in white-tailed and mule deer, management strategies vary between the two species. Therefore, from a wildlife management point of view, several concerns arise with the management of Texas mules.

"Intensive supplemental feeding is becoming a management concern from the perspective of most deer biologists," advises Richardson. "With good intentions, many managers provide year-round high-protein feed to prevent drought-induced fluctuations in deer numbers, and some provide feed to increase antler growth in bucks."

Richardson says that supplemental feeding typically benefits

**RESEARCHERS RECORD DATA** (top left) from each captured deer. (Clockwise from top) Dr. David Hewitt uses an ultrasound probe to measure the rump-fat thickness of a doe. A male deer buck is released. A collared and ear-tagged buck heads back into the brush. A researcher programs a GPS collar.





## WITH MORE ACCURATE POPULATION DATA, THIS RESEARCH GOES FAR IN HELPING PRIVATE LAND MANAGERS MAKE SOUND MANAGEMENT DECISIONS.

mule deer herds the first few years by inducing greater body weights and slightly larger antlers, but invariably, fawn production and survival increases to as much as 80 to 90 percent, and many fed deer herds triple or quadruple in numbers within the first 10 years.

“Since most managers are reluctant to harvest mule deer does, long-term overpopulation is inevitable. What most managers don’t realize is that the feed composes only a small portion of the overall diet, and the majority of a deer’s diet consists of native vegetation,” Richardson advises. As overpopulation occurs, the highly preferred native plants are affected first by the browsing pressure, and the habitat experiences long-term decline, which ultimately reduces the carrying capacity of the land for deer and other wildlife, he says.

“Overall, the mule deer herd in Texas is in great shape due to the management efforts of private landowners in West Texas. Compared to other southwestern states, desert mule deer harvested in Texas tend to be more mature than in other states that have more public land, and sex ratios in Texas are

tighter than in other states due to the conservative harvest of bucks in West Texas.”

While Texas mule deer are doing well, that doesn’t mean a hands-off management approach should be the rule. Instead, the catch-and-collar research is not only used to establish more scientifically sound census methods, but researchers are learning more about the western Texas deer and their habitat utilization. Additionally, because of the more accurate population data to come, this research goes far in helping private land managers make sound management decisions on a local scale.

“Biologists have long recognized that a certain proportion of deer are missed during aerial surveys. A few deer are usually missed because mule deer are good at blending into their environment when they don’t move — especially on overcast days,” Richardson confides. “It’s likely that the majority of deer that are missed are not even visible to the observers — like when they are standing or bedded in woody cover or rugged terrain. This research will ultimately help us to account for those deer that we’ve been missing.”★





PHOTO © RUSSELL A. GRAVES



# LOAD WITHOUT LEAD

*Wildlife agencies worldwide await the results of an extensive TPWD study on lead shot use for dove hunting.*

BY STEVE LIGHTFOOT



## **SEVENTEEN SETS OF TRAINED EYES**

tracked the squadron of mourning doves riding a stiff breeze down the edge of the sunflower field in search of a prime feeding spot. As the birds crossed left-to-right 15 yards out, two shotgun reports in rapid succession sparked evasive maneuvers as birds dipped, darted and kicked in gray-feathered afterburners.

"Do you think you hit that bird?" queried the owner of one of the sets of eyes. Many of the other sets were still glued to rangefinders, mentally marking a spot in the weeds where a bird may have fallen or re-tracing the doves' flight paths.

"Which one?" retorted Tom Roster as he gently set down the 12-gauge over/under shotgun, recovered two spent plastic shotshell hulls, and then proceeded to retrieve three dead birds.



Of the 16 who observed the shooting, only a couple were in position to see the third bird fall and many never saw the second dove, spurring a barrage of questions for Roster on how to record a complex series of events that lasted mere seconds.

About the only things missing were a grassy knoll and grainy black-and-white video.

For four long, grueling days in the heat, the group of observers — trained wildlife biologists and seasoned dove hunters — practiced the science of observation, data collection and reporting.

“You cannot report what you did not see!” reiterated Roster, a leading authority on shotgun ammunition efficiency and wounding loss in game bird hunting. He has been researching shotshell efficiency since the early ‘70s, when lead pellets for hunting waterfowl first came under scrutiny. Now, Roster is working with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department on a study investigating the comparable effectiveness of lead and non-lead shot for doves.

Roster knows from experience that the science will be challenged, either by peers or in court, so the study protocols must be ironclad and the procedures consistent and accurate.

Passing Roster’s training means you are proficient at following multiple targets no bigger than your hand flying erratically at speeds up to 40 mph. You can calculate within a matter of feet the distance from a shooter to these targets, determine based on the bird’s reaction to the shot whether or not it had been struck, and then track its flight path to conclude with certainty if it was wounded and flew off or died.

The data collection and reporting components would frustrate a court stenographer: recording the shooter’s recollection of the event, tagging and storing each recovered bird for necropsy, and entering all these pieces of information on a form before the shooter can take aim again.

Before the study is finished, these processes will have been repeated thousands of times; all over something the size of a pin head, and so common that its use has been ongoing for thousands of years.

The use of lead and its impacts on the environment have



**With more than a quarter of a million dove hunters taking to the field each fall, the results of the TPWD study on whether to discontinue use of lead shot will have a huge impact. The effects may reach beyond doves to upland game birds.**

been a fulcrum for debate since dangerous emissions from lead smelting by Romans were documented in 300 BC. Lead’s impact on human health is undeniable, and its use is banned for hunting waterfowl to protect ducks that mistake spent lead shot pellets deposited in marshland as food. Concern over the use of lead shot for upland game bird hunting is growing, and it is conceivable that non-lead shot requirements could be placed on dove hunters in the future.

This would have a huge impact on Texas, which owns the nation’s largest mourning dove population (at an estimated 20 million birds) as well as a rich hunting tradition that sees about 300,000 hunters take to the field each fall. Texas hunters harvest about 6.4 million doves annually, roughly 30 percent of all doves taken nationally. With such an enormous stake in doves, it makes sense that Texas would take the lead in dove conservation.

“We already know lead is an environmental contaminant and has been shown to cause poisoning in more than 50 bird species other than waterfowl, including dove, but we do not know the extent of its impact,” said Vernon Beville, TPWD small game and habitat assessment program director.

To address this concern, TPWD is conducting a study to determine the killing ability and wounding rates of lead ver-



sus non-lead shot on dove under real Texas hunting conditions. The research is the first of its kind ever for doves, and the results are anticipated for use in decision-making on an international level. The study has support from many organizations, including the Central Flyway Council, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Wildlife Management Institute.

“Wildlife agencies worldwide are awaiting the results of the Texas dove lethality study,” Roster said. “[Other] states, which permit dove hunting, are direct stakeholders in the results. Other nations that hunt small birds, such as the United Kingdom, cannot afford to nor would they ever be permitted because of anti-hunter resistance, related politics and relatively small hunter numbers to conduct such extensive research on their own. Thus, the results found in the Texas dove lethality study will help those agencies and those organizations worldwide wishing to perpetuate certain forms

of bird hunting to continue to run and defend legal hunts for such bird species.”

Since non-lead shot has proven effective for killing ducks and geese, common sense says it should be just as good or better on a much smaller quarry. According to Roster, in the case of shotgun loads, one size does not fit all.

“One thing I have clearly learned in my shotshell efficiency research is that performance parameters learned for one body size do not necessarily apply to other body sizes,” he explained. “Worldwide there are no available data or information on shotshell efficiency performance for taking doves. The world has nothing other than theories, opinions and unsubstantiated assumptions about what shotshell loads would be most efficient. By conducting this research, Texas will be the world leader in answers to shotshell efficiency and lethality questions concerning doves.

“Neither I nor Texas Parks and Wildlife, I presume, have any

**It is conceivable that non-lead shot requirements could be placed on dove hunters in the future.**







**It's all about the science for TPWD. Lead shot is already banned for use in waterfowl hunting to protect ducks from mistaking shot pellets deposited in marshland as food.**

## **It makes sense that Texas would take the lead in dove conservation.**

vested interest in whether hunters use lead or nontoxic shot-shell loads for hunting doves,” said Roster. “If, however, the forces that he wish to prevent the hunting of doves in Texas in the future if lead shot loads continue to be allowed, the results of the Texas dove lethality study will allow Texas to know — scientifically and with a high degree of statistical confidence — whether there is any other affordable nontoxic shot type for which there is any proven lethality for taking doves.”

Steve Williams, president of the Wildlife Management Institute, believes this study is imperative. “My contention is there are groups pushing the lead issue with very little science to rely upon, and not just with doves, but also raptors and in fishing tackle. The study Texas is putting together is the most comprehensive effort to date and will provide science that decision makers can use to determine the impact lead has on dove populations.”

Understanding the human dimension in the equation is significant as the debate over lead usage for hunting plays out. That is why the department is assessing hunter attitudes and knowledge about lead poisoning and non-lead shot. TPWD contract-

ed with D.J. Case and Associates to survey randomly selected dove hunters. The findings of the survey will help the department identify issues and address concerns among the dove hunting community and the general public in the debate over lead.

Some of the initial findings from the survey aren't surprising, but do indicate a need for education and communication with this important constituency during any decision-making process regarding use of lead and non-lead shot for doves.

Dove hunters surveyed expressed initial opposition to any change away from lead shot, but by the same percentages indicated a lack of knowledge about health concerns about lead shot and doves.

Historically, hunters have championed wildlife conservation even if it meant greater restriction on their ability to hunt. According to survey findings, by nearly a four-to-one ratio, hunters believe that if a scientific argument can be made identifying wildlife health risks from lead on doves, then TPWD has a responsibility to take action to conserve the resource. Furthermore, nearly three-fourths of the hunters surveyed said that they would learn how to better shoot non-lead if that argument was made.

If debates over restrictions on lead for dove hunting are on the horizon, Texas will have the ammunition it needs. ★



# Keep Texas Wild



## COOL SCHOOL

Dive into the wet world of fish!



### » SUPER SWIMMERS

EVER WISHED YOU WERE A FISH? Well, you'd look silly with fins, scales and gills, right? But those three main body parts enable fish to swim and survive under water. Fish are also cold blooded, which means their body temperature changes with the surrounding water. Freshwater fish live in rivers, creeks and lakes. Saltwater fish live only in the ocean. Fish can be as small as tiny minnows in a stream or gigantic, like blue marlins in the gulf. What kind of fish would you like to be?

Sailfish

WWW.TPWPMAGAZINE.COM



## » SURVIVAL TACTICS

Shape and color matter if you're a fish. They both help a fish swim faster or hide better.

### Color:

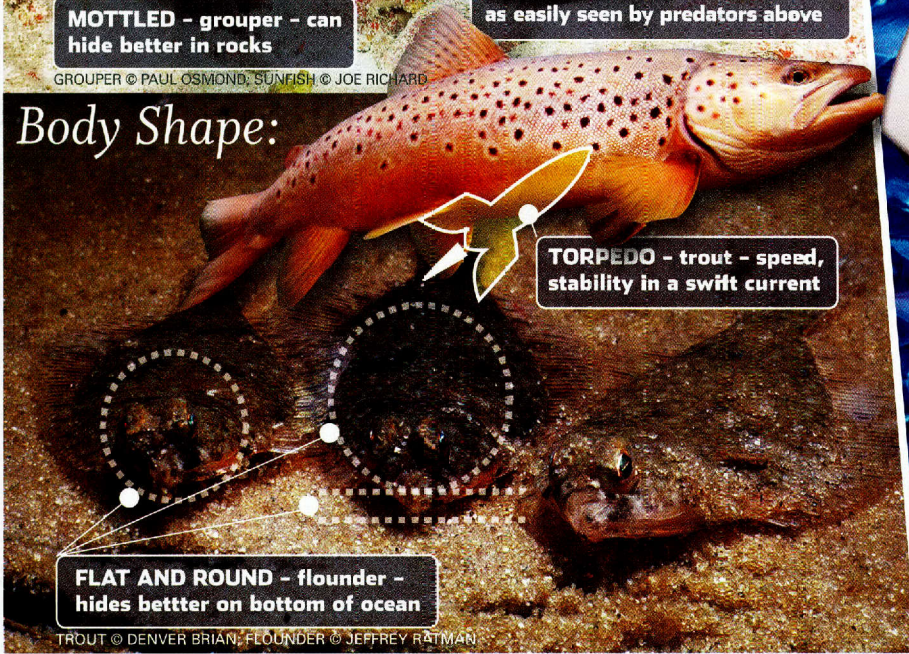


**MOTTLED** - grouper - can hide better in rocks

**DARK UPPER SIDE** - sunfish - not as easily seen by predators above

GROUPEL © PAUL OSMOND, SUNFISH © JOE RICHARD

### Body Shape:



**TORPEDO** - trout - speed, stability in a swift current

**FLAT AND ROUND** - flounder - hides better on bottom of ocean

TROUT © DENVER BRIAN, FLOUNDER © JEFFREY RATMAN

## » FISH SCHOOL

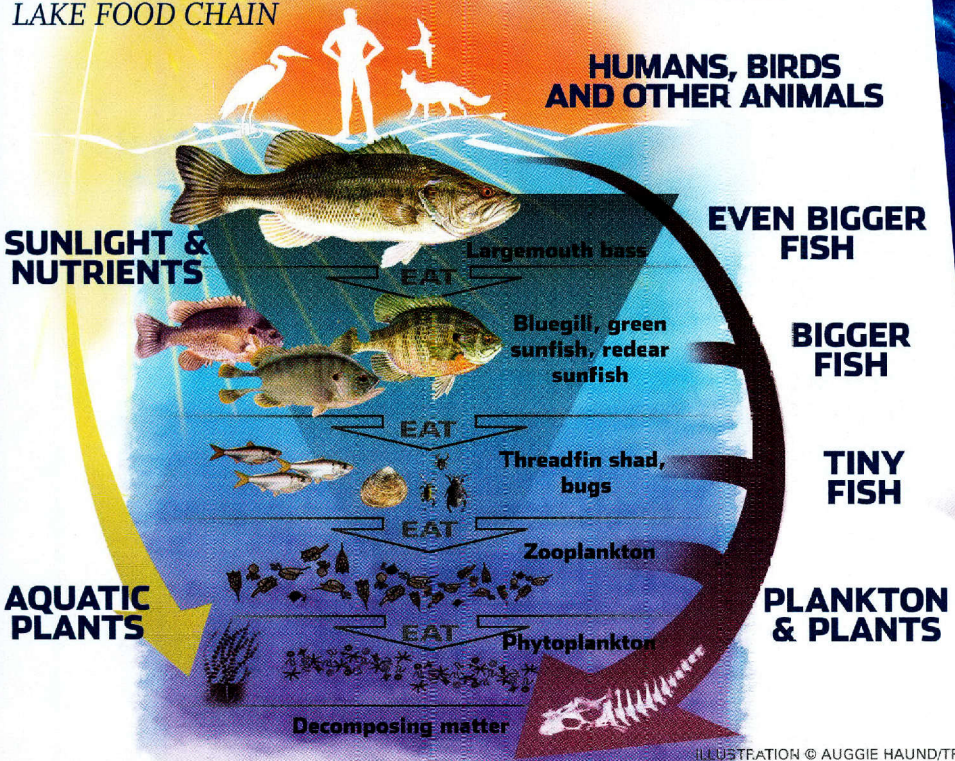


Did you know?

Scientists who study fish are called ichthyologists.

## » PASS THE PLANKTON, PLEASE!

### LAKE FOOD CHAIN

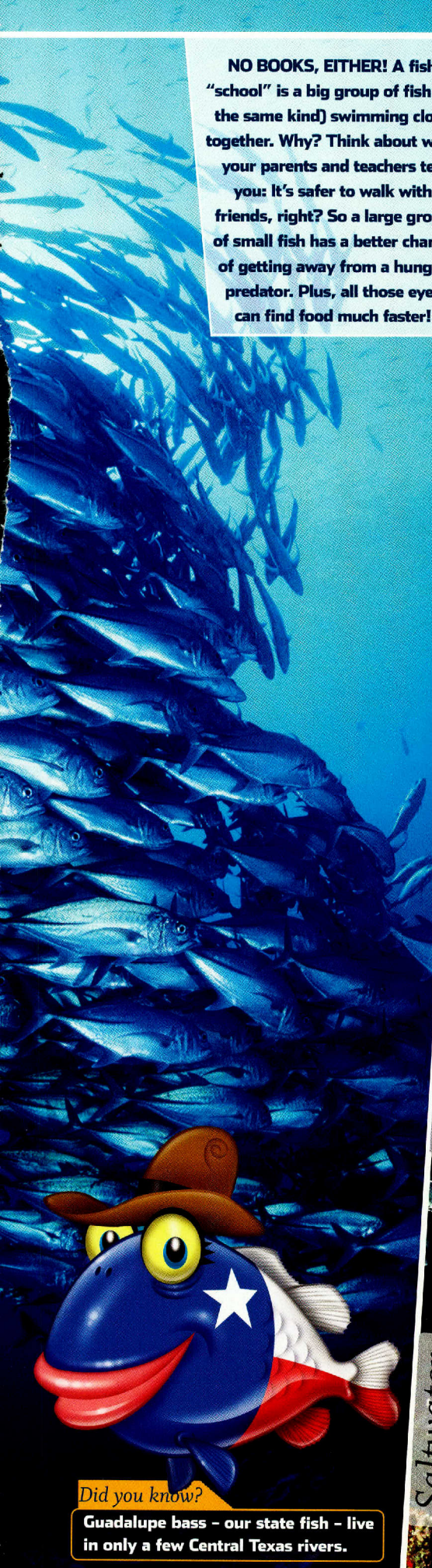


Did you know?

Do fish drink water? Not like we do. Freshwater fish absorb water through their skin, while saltwater species get the water they need through their gills.

ILLUSTRATION © AUGGIE HAUND/TPWD





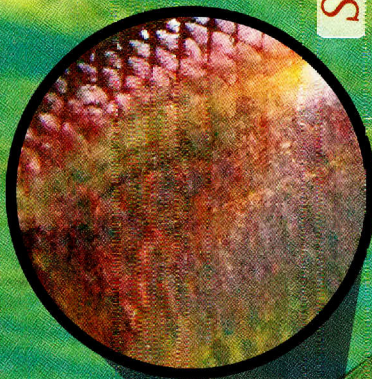
**NO BOOKS, EITHER!** A fish "school" is a big group of fish (all the same kind) swimming close together. Why? Think about what your parents and teachers tell you: It's safer to walk with friends, right? So a large group of small fish has a better chance of getting away from a hungry predator. Plus, all those eyes can find food much faster!

ILLUSTRATIONS © FIAN APROYO; PHOTO © DOUG FERRINE/SEAPICS.COM

## »» LIVING UNDERWATER

**Scales**

**HARD, THIN PLATES** that overlap and protect a fish's skin. They're covered with mucous (a slimy substance), which helps the fish move faster through the water.



**FIVE DIFFERENT** types of fins allow a fish to move forward, backward or stay in the same position.

**5 Fins**



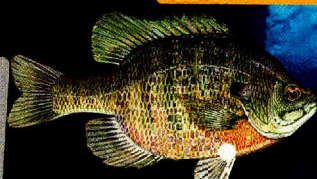
**Gills**

**FISH "BREATHE"** by taking water into their mouths and through their gills. After taking air from the water, the gill coverings open and let the water back out.

PHOTOS © RUSSELL A. GRAVES

## »» SPOTLIGHT ON TEXAS FISH

**Freshwater**



**Bluegill**



**Largemouth bass**

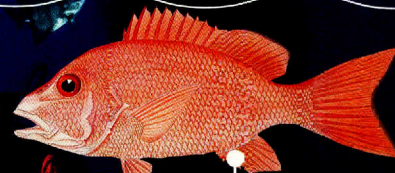


**Channel catfish**

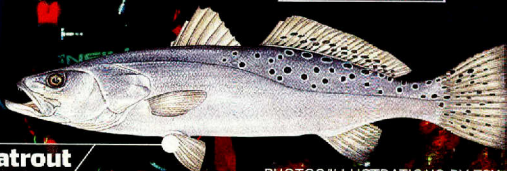
**Saltwater**



**Southern flounder**



**Red snapper**



**Spotted seatrout**

PHOTOS/ILLUSTRATIONS BY TPWD

**Did you know?**

**Guadalupe bass** - our state fish - live in only a few Central Texas rivers.





# Spike's Activity Page



## >> WILD ART

YOU'LL NEED SOME CRAFT FOAM or stiff cardboard. Draw a simple fish outline on the foam. Decorate or color your fish. Cut it out, then attach a paper clip near its mouth. Find a magnet and tie a long string around it. Attach the string to a pole or a ruler. Now go fishing! Make lots of fish in different sizes and colors. Find a book on fish and draw outlines that look like a channel catfish, longnose gar or some other Texas fish.

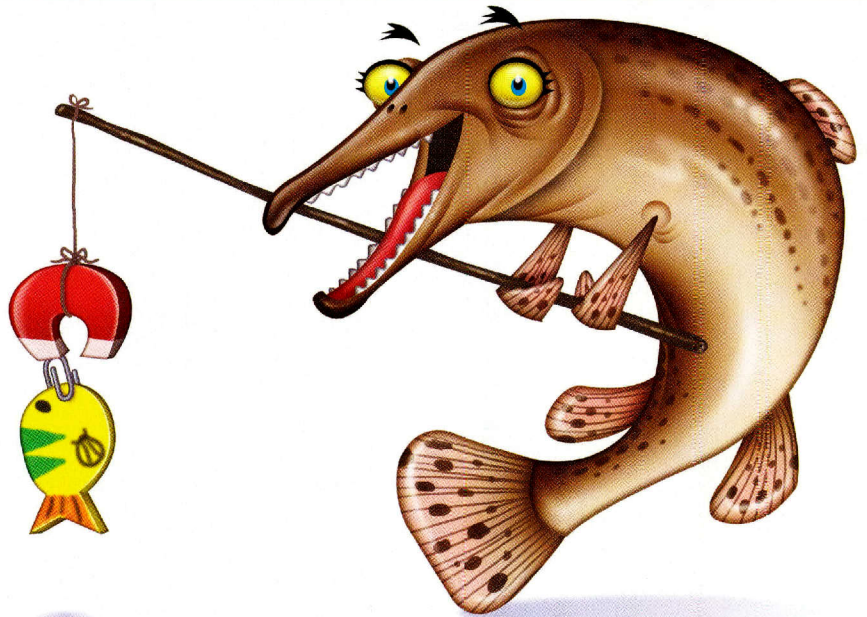


ILLUSTRATION © FIAN ARROYO

## >> KEEPING IT WILD

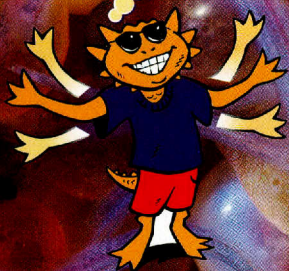
WHAT DO YOU DO when you see trash on the ground? If you don't pick it up, that soda can or candy wrapper could eventually get washed into a river or onto a beach. Trash dirties the water, which can hurt fish and other aquatic animals. Do you live near water? Why not invite some friends to help you clean up a riverbank or part of a beach? (Be sure to ask an adult to come along as well.) If you live in a city, pick up trash in your neighborhood. Explain to your friends why fish need clean places to live, too.



PHOTO BY TPWD

## >> WILD MATH

$$\begin{matrix} +1 \times 35 \\ 2 \div 4 \end{matrix}$$



**MOST FISH REPRODUCE BY "SPAWNING."** A female lays hundreds or thousands of eggs, then a male comes by and fertilizes them. A female Guadalupe bass deposits 9,000 eggs. After chasing her off, the male guards the nest. That sounds like a lot of eggs, right? But some minnows sneak up and eat 3,679 eggs. Then two catfish come along and snatch 2,534 more. The "fry" (baby fish) hatch, but bigger fish swallow up 2,707 during the first week. How many survived? Why do you think fish lay so many eggs?

PHOTO © ROLF NUSSBAUMER

**NEXT MONTH:**  
Mysteries of the monarch

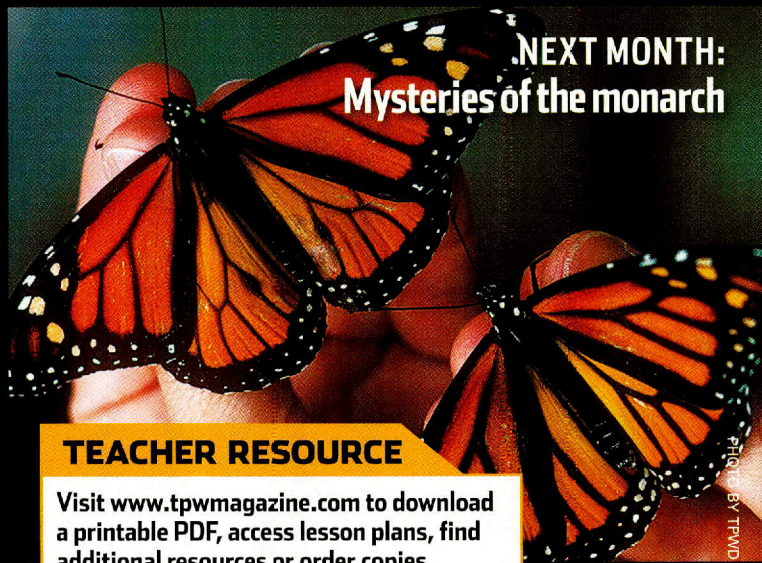


PHOTO BY TPWD

### TEACHER RESOURCE

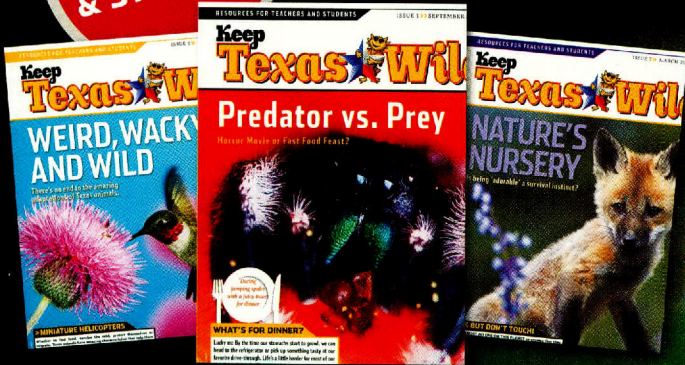
Visit [www.tpwmagazine.com](http://www.tpwmagazine.com) to download a printable PDF, access lesson plans, find additional resources or order copies.



# Discover the Benefits of Outdoor Education



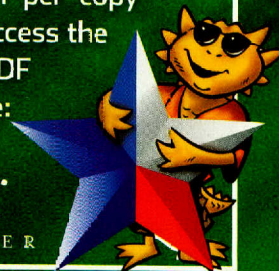
SPECIALLY FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS



We hope you have enjoyed our new educational feature “Keep Texas Wild” and found it to be useful in your classroom or home. Unfortunately, our grant from ExxonMobil expired with the August issue, so we won’t be able to send free issues to fourth-grade classrooms and other learning centers throughout Texas until another sponsorship is obtained. **Keep Texas Wild** — with its engaging photography and illustrations, fun-filled nature lessons and cross-curriculum activities is now a permanent feature of **Texas Parks & Wildlife** magazine.

If you would like to receive a magazine subscription for educational use, we offer a deeply discounted educators’ price of **\$9.95 for 12 issues**. That’s 75% off the cover price. Or buy additional copies of any issue for the classroom for only \$1 per copy (plus shipping). Of course, you can access the **Keep Texas Wild** downloadable PDF free each month through our Web site: [www.tpwmagazine.com](http://www.tpwmagazine.com).

*Randy Breuhicke*  
PUBLISHER

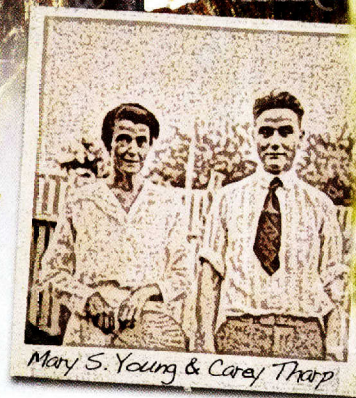






BY MEGAN  
WILDE

# P. Plant Pioneer



Mary S. Young & Carey Trap

*Mary Sophie Young's 1914 journal reveals a tough, witty botanist with a passion for West Texas.*

**In August and September of 1914** — before Texan women could vote and highways tamed statewide travel — Mary Sophie Young wore out her shoes exploring the rugged Trans-Pecos. Accompanied by a college student and a pair of ornery pack burros, this plucky botanist trekked about 100 miles across the Marfa grasslands, through the Davis Mountains, around the Sierra Vieja, along the Rio Grande and into the Chinati Mountains.

She learned about much more than the region's vegetation: "the characteristics of burros, how to treat wounds when they have worms in them, that hogs always have liver worms how to cook frijoles, what jack rabbit tastes like," she wrote in her field journal, which was published in 1962 in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* and is archived at the University of Texas at Austin.

Born in September 1872 in Ohio, Young came to Austin in 1910 as a UT botany instructor. She later took charge of and greatly expanded the university's nascent plant collection. She was the sort of gentle, generous professor who took needy students and stray animals into her home.

Though described by others as shy and frail-looking, she was a robust outdoorswoman, a trait she attributed to keeping up with several older brothers on childhood tramps. Being an unmarried woman with limited means never deterred her from far-flung fieldwork. With a .25-caliber Colt tucked in her long skirt's pocket, she traipsed around the state, gathering thousands of plant specimens and completing two pioneering studies of Austin-area flora. But the vegetation of far West Texas, then a



botanical frontier, particularly fascinated Young. Her journal from the 1914 trip — her first major expedition there — paints an amusing and endearing portrait of a turn-of-the-century woman naturalist afield.

Between botanical notes, she chronicled nights spent among flowering willows by a stream and on the starlit open range, where passing cattle served as a morning alarm. Other nights she and her 17-year-old assistant, Carey Tharp, shared a hay barn with cows, a rock pile with an inquisitive skunk and an abandoned ranch house with raucous rats.

“Carey shot holes in the roof after we went to bed trying to scare away a rat,” she wrote, “but there are no signs that there are any holes in the rat.”

She described daytime encounters with wilder critters, such as a squeaking coterie of prairie dogs outside Valentine and a nightmarish plague of caterpillars near Candelaria. A black bear and a rattlesnake startled her on Mount Livermore — the Davis Mountain’s highest peak. She pegged the snake with rocks and severed its tail as a trophy, which, she noted, “when cut off entirely, asserted its independence by waving the rattles defiantly in the air.”

The animals that figured most prominently in her journal, though, were her pack burros, Nebuchadnezzar and Balaam. When they weren’t running away, the donkeys were perpetually prone to stopping, eating, laying down and sleeping.

“If our Lord rode as lazy a beast as this one, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem must have taken a long, long time,” she wrote. After her attempt to ride Nebuchadnezzar deteriorated into a wrestling match, she declared: “Burros are a sore temptation to wrath.”

As frustrating as the beasts could be, she kept her sense of humor about them. “Burros are interesting personalities,” she observed after trying to put a pack on Balaam, whose shoulder was scratched. “They are like the fascinatingly mysterious heroines in the story books. When our two darlings were nearly ready, Balaam suddenly, but with deliberate intent, fell over on her side. We thought she had a giddy spell caused by her wound — (though she did not look faint) but when Nebuchadnezzar, seeing her, deliberately followed her example, we decided differently.”

Food troubles were her greatest source of vexation. Packrats raided their hardtack, and a herd of rascally horses ravaged their butter supply in the night. She ate weevil-flavored beans, cooked with worm-ridden corn meal and brewed coffee with cattle-tank water. After a few weeks in the field, she pined for a grocery store.

“This sounds like the diary of someone on an arctic expedition. The interesting item each day is how much food there is left,” she wrote. “I was hard up the first part of the summer, but did not expect to live on famine rations in August. We suggest boiled boots, rats and other famine delicacies. It is a shame we can’t go down in the canyon and eat grass like the burros. If the real old Nebuchadnezzar did it, why cannot we?”

With ever-dwindling supplies, she and Tharp supplemented their diet with cottontails, one “tough old grandmother” of a squirrel and even a jackrabbit. “It is good exercise to eat jack rabbit — gives

you an appetite. Jack rabbit should always be served with tooth-picks. Jack rabbit is economical, one piece two inches in diameter and half an inch thick will last an average man all day if he chews constantly and his jaws stand the strain. Jack rabbit meat would make good sole leather.”

Throughout her notes on food frustrations and animal antics, the landscape looms large. Her prose depicts rolling grasslands soaked green by summer thunderstorms and dotted with friendly mules and slick, fat cows. The Davis Mountains evoked her most vivid descriptions. “There was space: wide, brown, hazy, spotted with the shadows of the clouds,” she wrote of the view from Livermore. “The plain lay before us, stretching out miles and miles to the mountains, which like gray clouds skirted the horizon.”

Back at camp one evening, she described the “lonely time” in a dusk-embossed mountain canyon. “The air is very transparent and very still and everything glistens. There is something of that uncanny feeling of the consciousness of inanimate things.”

Such mountain vistas stirred deep sentiment in Young: “Now and then there is an outcrop of white rock which looks at a distance like a group of white houses. All the time you know they are not houses. Through the gleaming, clear air, they give the impression of a mirage and the feeling they give one is an uncanny one of intense loneliness. The yuccas have the same effect in a rather less degree. They stand up stiff and straight like men, on the hills against the sky. The sight of cattle affects me sometimes the same way. It is the suggestion of human life with the conviction of its absence.”

Young returned to the mountains of West Texas a few more times before her life was cut short. In February 1919, an operation revealed she had an advanced, untreatable cancer. She died in March, at age 46, in Austin.

It was B.C. Tharp, Carey’s older brother and Young’s successor at the UT herbarium, who later published her journal. In his introduction Tharp recalled that Young, leading up to her death, never complained about pain or the severity of her illness. Among the friends she left behind was a rescued mutt, named Santa Claus for his unruly love of stockings. After Young’s death, Santa Claus made daily expeditions from her home to her laboratory, whining as he searched for his bold, beloved companion. ★

**“IT IS GOOD EXERCISE TO EAT JACK RABBIT — GIVES YOU AN APPETITE. JACK RABBIT MEAT WOULD MAKE GOOD SOLE LEATHER.”**





GOODS AND SERVICES FOR THE OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST

# OUTDOOR

M A R K E T P L A C E

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION & MECHANICAL SPECIFICATIONS: (512) 389-8707

## HUNTING

### The latest *poop* on Spin-Cast Wildlife Feeders of Texas - Now "RUGGEDIZED" more than ever...

#### Wildlife Feeders and Accessories

MK-1/MK-2 Control Unit has 6 feeding times available. The rate of feed is fully adjustable for each feeding. (available in 6 or 12 volts)

MK-6 and MK-6Solar Control Unit will feed up to 4 times a day for 3, 6 or 9 seconds. (6V only)

6V/12V LCD Digital Timer has the same features as the MK-1 and MK-2 Control Units



All Control Units are shipped ready to use with fresh batteries, small cone and mounting hardware. Solar panel with stainless steel conecable is included with Control Units that have rechargeable batteries. Plastic is made of **Virgin Polycarbonate with UV inhibitors added** (same tough, flexible material that is used in safety glass).

CHECK WEB-SITE FOR LIMITED TIME OFFERS

#### Spin-Cast Wildlife Feeders of Texas

2946 NE Loop 410  
San Antonio TX 78218

Phone: 210-653-7514 {Info}  
210-653-3641 {Fax}  
1-800-950-7087 or 8087  
{Toll free for orders}

spincast@spincastfeeders.com  
Free Catalog Available

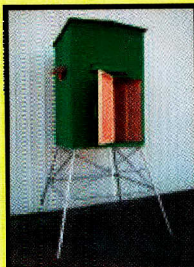
Scratch & Sniff

Shop online at [spincastfeeders.com](http://spincastfeeders.com)

© 2008, Spin-Cast Inc

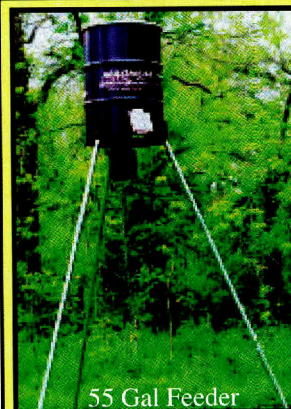
## GAME FEEDERS

- FEEDERS - 5 gal to 55 gal, tripod crank up, hitch, tailgate, hanging
- TIMERS/CONTROLLERS - digital, solar clock, photocell
- BATTERIES - 6 volt or 12 volt
- CHARGERS - solar or 115 volt
- ACCESSORIES - funnels, varmint guards, night hog lights, leg kits, lids, windproof slingers, mounting kits, etc.
- BLINDS/STANDS - 4X4, 4X6, 4X8
- REPAIRS



**MAGNUM** HUNTING PRODUCTS  
MORE FOR YOUR BUCK  
[www.magnumhunting.com](http://www.magnumhunting.com)

FREE CATALOG  
(281)-261-0803



55 Gal Feeder

## FISHING & BOATING



The New Go-Anywhere Marsh/Duck Boat

[WWW.MARSHRIDER.COM](http://WWW.MARSHRIDER.COM) OR (903) 898-2462

#### BOAT INSPECTIONS / APPRAISALS

by accredited and certified marine surveyor/inspector and appraiser  
Donald Patterson.

Corpus Christi

(361) 884-1033

## ARCHEOLOGY

### TEXAS

#### ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

FREE PUBLIC FORUM AND ART FACT ID.  
TALKS ON ROCK ART BY JEAN CLOTES AND CAROLYN BEYD  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 7:00 P.M. - RAMADA INN IN DEL RIO



# Visit

[WWW.TPWMAGAZINE.COM](http://WWW.TPWMAGAZINE.COM)  
FOR LINKS TO OUR ADVERTISERS' WEBSITES



# TEXAS

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

**SUBSCRIBE TODAY**

**GIVE A GIFT**

**YES!** Please start my subscription to *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine today. One year (12 issues) for just \$13.95. That's 70% off the newsstand price.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

E-MAIL

*Simply drop this card in the mail – we'll bill you later.  
Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.  
Savings are off cover price of \$3.95 per issue.*

**YES!** Please send a GIFT SUBSCRIPTION of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine to the person listed below (12 issues for just \$13.95).

**SEND GIFT TO:**

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

**YOUR NAME:**

NAME

ADDRESS

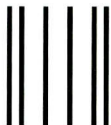
CITY

STATE

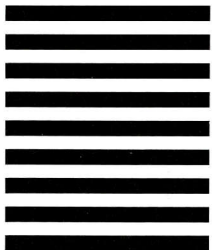
ZIP

690109





NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 633 FLAGLER BEACH FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**TEXAS**  
PARKS & RECREATION

PO BOX 421105

PALM COAST FL 32142-6458

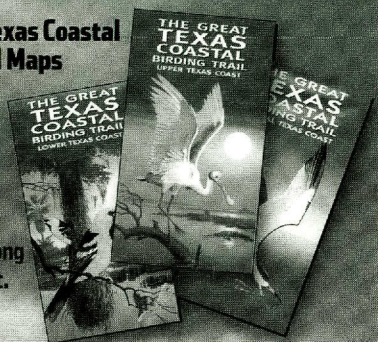




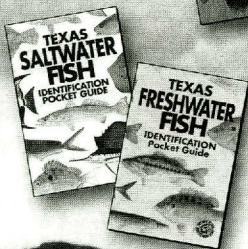
# SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AND CHOOSE YOUR FREE GIFT

## The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail Maps

Beautifully  
illustrated  
maps of  
designated  
birding and  
nature sites along  
the Texas Coast.

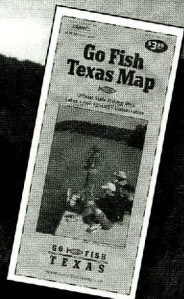


## The Texas Saltwater and Freshwater Fish Pocket I.D. Guides



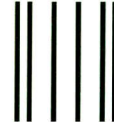
## The Go Fish Texas Map

The Go Fish Texas Map is the  
first official freshwater map  
designed specifically to help  
Texas fishing enthusiasts find  
their next catch!



[tpwmagazine.com](http://tpwmagazine.com)

**TEXAS**  
PARKS & RECREATION  
The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS



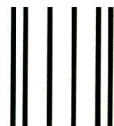
NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

## BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 17897 HOUSTON TX

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

THE LIGHTHOUSE OF HOUSTON  
PO BOX 130435  
HOUSTON, TX 77219-9955



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

## BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 17897 HOUSTON TX

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

THE LIGHTHOUSE OF HOUSTON  
PO BOX 130435  
HOUSTON, TX 77219-9955





# FREE INFORMATION

To receive free information about advertisers, just circle the numbers below that correspond to advertisers listed to the right. Fill in your name and address, then simply drop the card in the mail.

**We pay the postage!**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State ZIP

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54

*Offer expires November 30, 2009*

**TEXAS**  
PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

# FREE INFORMATION

To receive free information about advertisers, just circle the numbers below that correspond to advertisers listed to the right. Fill in your name and address, then simply drop the card in the mail.

**We pay the postage!**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State ZIP

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54

*Offer expires November 30, 2009*

**TEXAS**  
PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

# GET FREE INFORMATION FROM ADVERTISERS

Listed to the right  
are advertisers in this issue.  
Just circle the corresponding  
numbers on the card to the left  
and drop it in the mail —

Or you can call us  
toll free at

**877-526-7924**

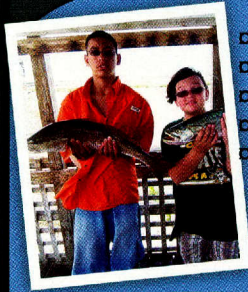
Our email address is:  
[atorres@houstonlighthouse.org](mailto:atorres@houstonlighthouse.org)



FISHING & BOATING

**Rockport RedRunner**  
**Captain Chad Verburgt**

*Specializing  
 in shallow water  
 flats fishing for reelfish,  
 trout & flounder.*



- ▣ Full Day / Half Day
- ▣ Baffin trips
- ▣ Cedar Bayou Trips
- ▣ Kayaks Shuttle Drop off / pick up
- ▣ Kayak Rentals

Call (361) 463-6545

rockportredrunner@yahoo.com  
 www.rockportredrunner.com

ACCOMMODATIONS

**Save Money on Gas!**

Vacation in an Undiscovered Paradise Closer to Home...



Retreat to the Hills  
 for a Week  
 or Weekend of  
 Relaxation & Adventure



"Your Hill Country Home Away from Home"

**Rio Frio Lodging**

830-966-2320 • www.riolodging.com

Also offering  
 Nature, Birding & Sunset Bat Flight Tours  
 www.hillcountryadventures.com

**Lake Whitney-Rocky Creek Lodge.** Clean cabins,  
 24-hr. fishing, largest covered fishing & boat docks.  
 www.rockycreeklodge.com (254) 622-3383

**BIG BEND - MEXICO GETAWAY**



**The Gage Hotel**  
 Marathon, Texas  
 (800) 884-GAGE  
 www.gagehotel.com



**Villa Del Rio**  
 Del Rio, Texas  
 (800) 995-1887  
 www.villadelrio.com

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

**THE HUNTERS CHOICE**  
 For Do-It-Yourself Steel Buildings



SET YOUR SIGHTS  
 ON A REAL STEEL DEAL.  
 For Your FREE Brochure Call  
**1-800-668-5111 ext 83**  
 www.FutureSteel-Deal.com

**FUTURE STEEL BUILDINGS**

Fredericksburg Enterprises  
 www.fredericksburgenterprises.com

**Fredericksburg**



800-426-7866

Sunday  
 House  
 Inn

800-274-3762

**Kerrville**



800-404-4125



800-677-9477

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

**CRAWFORD & COMPANY**



*Hand Crafted, Personalized Boot  
 Jacks and Coaster Sets.*

P.O. Box 126, Uvalde, TX 78802  
 Visa/Mastercard, Call to order a Free Brochure  
 Toll Free (888) 301-1967  
 www.crawjacks.com

Our wildlife exhibits  
 open daily.



trailswestgatecompany.com  
 979.277.9926

**TEXAS**  
PARKS & WILDLIFE

**FREE**  
 Information!

Circle the numbers on the card  
 that correspond to advertisers  
 that interest you. Then mail  
 the postage-paid card.

1. **Lee Hoffpauer, pg. 15**  
 866-522-8793  
 www.hautogroup.com
2. **San Marcos Texas, pg. 9**  
 888-200-5620  
 www.toursanmarcos.com
3. **Spincast Wildlife Feeders, pg. 52**  
 800-950-7087  
 www.spincastfeeders.com
4. **Ten Point Crossbows, pg. 11**  
 www.tenpointcrossbows.com
5. **Texas Forest Service, inside  
 back cover**  
 www.texasforestservice.tamu.edu
6. **The Bradford Exchange, pg. 19**  
 1-877-268-6638  
 bradfordexchange.collectiblesto  
 day.com





★ **The Great Stays of Texas (HAT)** includes the state's finest bed & breakfast inns, country inns, guesthouses and distinctive hotels. The HAT seal of approval means that the property is not only beautiful but unique, sparkling clean and also is full of Texas charm. For a full listing of HAT accommodations, visit us at [www.hat.org](http://www.hat.org) or call (800) HAT-0368.

## THE GREAT STAYS OF TEXAS (HAT)

### BELLVILLE

★ **Texas Ranch Life.** Restored historic Texas homes on 1,400-acre ranch between Bellville & Chappell Hill. Weekend rental includes bass fishing, trail and chuckwagon rides, cutting, bird/coyote/raccoon hunting and cow works available.  
[www.texasranchlife.com](http://www.texasranchlife.com) (866) TEXASRL

### BRENHAM

★ **Mariposa Ranch.** Cabins, fireplaces, Jacuzzis for two, romantic dinners, "Enchanted Evening" packages, swimming pool. — *Southern Living*  
[www.mariposaranch.com](http://www.mariposaranch.com) (877) 647-4774

### COMFORT

★ **Meyer B&B.** On Cypress Creek, Hill Country, mid-1800s stage stop, Texas landmark. Pool, hot tub, fireplaces, golf.  
[www.meyerbedandbreakfast.com](http://www.meyerbedandbreakfast.com) (888) 995-6100

★ **Cabin on Verde Creek & Old School House B&B.** Cabin retreat on beautiful Verde Creek or the historic Old School House B&B on the Guadalupe Valley Wine Trail. Hill country comfort at its best.  
[www.hillcountrycomfort.com](http://www.hillcountrycomfort.com) (830) 995-2511

### HUNTSVILLE

★ **The Whistler B&B.** 1859 Victorian home, lovingly restored. Original antiques. Peaceful atmosphere on 3 wooded acres. Gourmet breakfast.  
[www.thewhistlerbnb.com](http://www.thewhistlerbnb.com) (800) 404-2834

### FREDERICKSBURG

★ **Palo Alto Creek Farm.** Landmark historic German-Texas farmstead on the creek. Ancient oaks, abundant wildlife, Hill Country tranquility. Beautifully renovated log cabin, barn, farmhouse, all with private spa therapy rooms.  
[www.paloaltocreekfarm.com](http://www.paloaltocreekfarm.com) (800) 997-0089

★ **Settler's Crossing Bed and Breakfast.** Private historic log cabins and cottages spread over 35 park-like acres, just minutes from town.  
[www.settlerscrossing.com](http://www.settlerscrossing.com) (800) 874-1020

### NEW BRAUNFELS

★ **Historic Kuebler-Waldrip Haus & Danville Schoolhouse.** 43-acre deer haven near Gruene, rivers. Getaways, reunions, weddings, corporate retreats. 10 luxurious rooms, Jacuzzis. Delicious breakfasts.  
[www.kueblerwaldrip.com](http://www.kueblerwaldrip.com) (800) 299-8372

### GRUENE

★ **Gruene Mansion Inn.** Premier romantic B&B, next door to Gruene Hall and overlooking the Guadalupe River... a little Texas Magic.  
[www.GrueneMansionInn.com](http://www.GrueneMansionInn.com) (830) 629-2641

### ROCKPORT

**HOOPES' HOUSE**  
ROCKPORT, TEXAS  
(800) 924-1008  
[www.hoopeshouse.com](http://www.hoopeshouse.com)



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

## THIS MONTH'S INNSIDER CHOICE is The Gruene Mansion Inn of the Guadalupe River

The Gruene Mansion Inn is next door to Gruene Hall, the oldest dance hall in Texas. Shop, dine, float, dance & relax while staying at one of the premier B&B's in Texas.

THE GRUENE MANSION INN  
1275 Gruene Rd.  
New Braunfels, TX 78130  
(830) 629-2641  
[www.gruenemansioninn.com](http://www.gruenemansioninn.com)



THE GRUENE MANSION INN  
NEW BRAUNFELS, TX

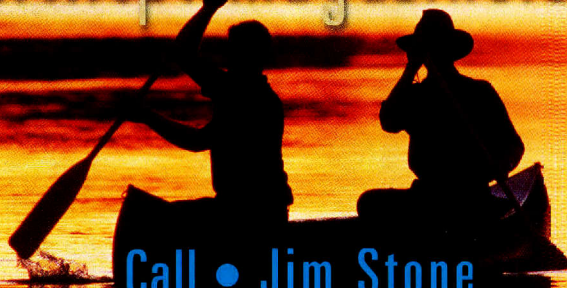
THE INNSIDER

## EVENTS

DON'T MISS THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO REACH MORE

TEXAS OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS IN THE MOST COST  
EFFECTIVE WAY, EVER! FOR DETAILS.....

[www.tpwmagazine.com](http://www.tpwmagazine.com)



Call • Jim Stone

512-799-1045 • 512-389-8707

[jim.stone@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:jim.stone@tpwd.state.tx.us)

## Wimberley Market Days

The Hill Country's Oldest &  
Largest Outdoor Market  
470+ Booths of everything  
you just can't live without  
**1st SATURDAY**  
**March - December**

Open 7am - 4pm  
Lions Field • FM2325 • Wimberley  
512-847-2201

[www.shopmarketdays.com](http://www.shopmarketdays.com)

Don't miss the

opportunity to reach more  
Texas outdoor enthusiasts  
in the most cost-effective  
way, ever!

For details.....

Call Jim Stone at

512-799-1045 or 512-389-8707



(continued from page 22)

Many of the men in the Texas army were from Columbus and may have even watched as the town was put to the torch when Houston and his men withdrew to the east. The town was quickly rebuilt afterwards, and today it can claim to be the oldest Anglo-American settlement in Texas.

History abounds here. Columbus and the surrounding area is where Stephen F. Austin brought his original 300 settlers. The town is dotted with historical markers and sites that spell out much of the story of Texas, from its earliest days right into the present era.

A talking house tour (you can park near the house and tune to a designated radio frequency) takes you from the most primitive of log cabins to grand mansions, and many fascinating homes between those extremes. The charming Magnolia Oaks Bed and Breakfast provides an opportunity to actually spend the night in a well-restored, 19th-century Victorian home.

While Columbus has exceptional depth and variety for a community of its size, it has also managed to hang onto that Mayberry quality. It is friendly even by Texas standards. The best possible way to see it is also the simplest — on foot. The streets are quiet and uncrowded, the atmosphere peaceful to the point of being spiritual. Opie might be just around the corner, headed for the river.

Columbus is fun and interesting, but don't ignore the surrounding area. A few miles to the southeast of Columbus, at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, you can watch prairie chickens put on a courting display worthy of

the male lead in high Italian opera. During mating season, the colorful male prairie chicken puffs up, struts and "booms" for hours to get the ladies into the right mood. Unfortunately, because of habitat loss and predators, the numbers of these once abundant birds are now down to about 100 in the wild. If you want to see them perform their courtship displays, you have to go in the spring on a guided tour.

For sheer number of birds, a grander spectacle is the arrival of hundreds of thousands of geese and ducks in the fall around Eagle Lake (a self-described "goose hunting capital") just south of Columbus. The geese come to fatten up on the leftovers of the rice harvest after their long flight from Canada. The fields for miles around Eagle Lake can be filled with foraging geese and ducks during the winter. And following the birds come the bird hunters, also in large numbers.

"The bird hunting around here is usually fantastic during the winter. Although it varies from year to year, we've always got good opportunities," said Tim Kelly, owner of Eagle Lake Lodge. "We lease thousands of acres of rice fields around the area for hunting."

Rice is a water-hungry crop and could not be grown in such huge quantity without adequate water from the Colorado River. And without the rice, there would be far fewer geese to hunt around Eagle Lake in winter. Thus the river links almost every aspect of life around Columbus, from its history to its economy, to its charming ambiance and, of course, its great paddling trips. ☆

## Texas landowners are our best hope.

The Lone Star Land Steward Awards recognize private landowners for outstanding habitat management and wildlife conservation. In Texas, more than 95 percent of land is privately owned or managed, making the work of landowners important to all of us. We salute all 11 of the Lone Star Land Steward Award winners.

**J. David Bamberger of Selah-Bamberger Ranch Preserve in Blanco County, recipient of this year's top recognition, the Leopold Conservation Award**



To become a sponsor or nominate a landowner, call (512) 389-4395 or visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landsteward](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landsteward)



### Gold Sponsors

**H. Yturria Land & Cattle Company**



### Silver Sponsors



**Llano Springs Ranch**

### Bronze Sponsors

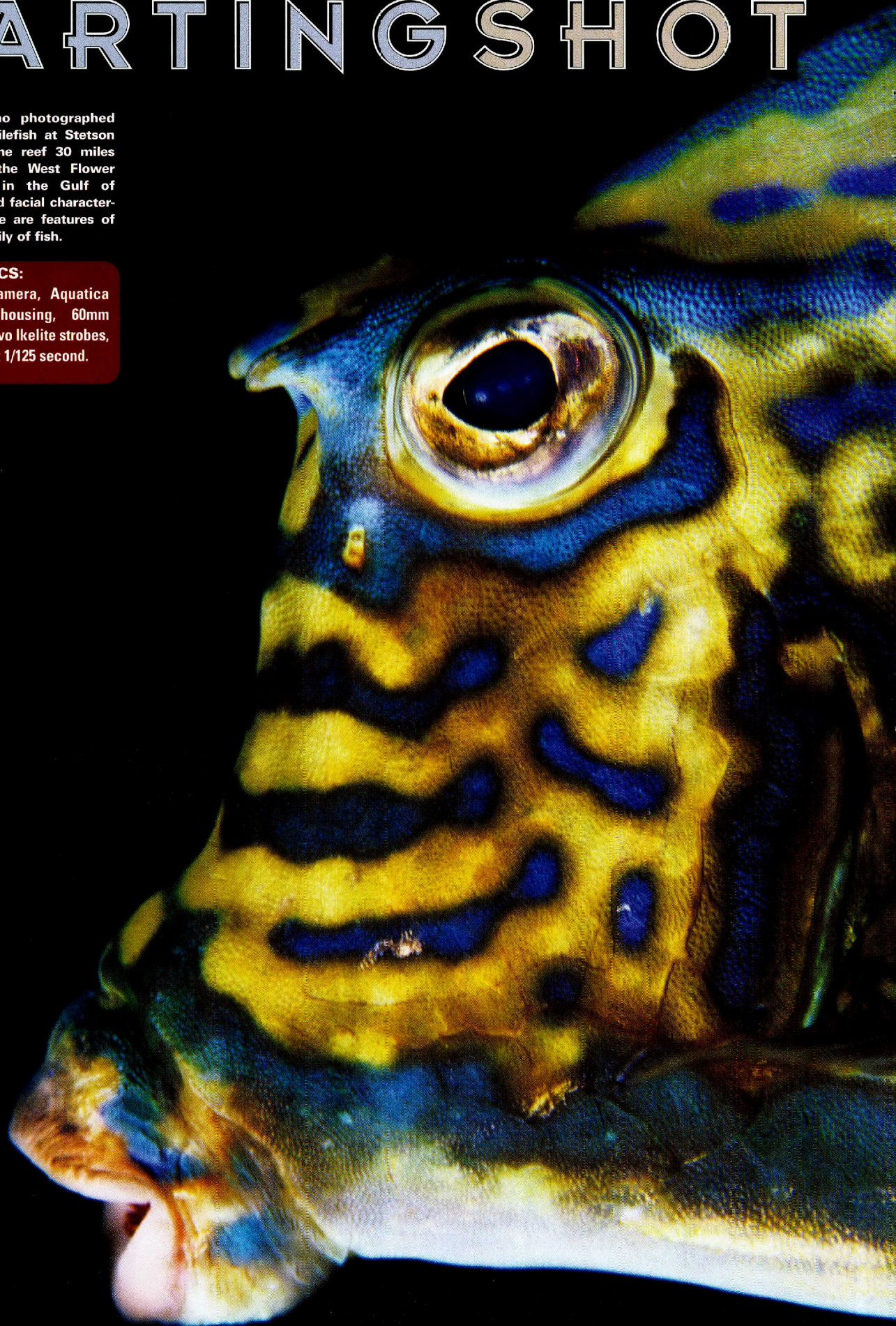


# PARTINGSHOT

Jesse Cancelmo photographed this scrawled filefish at Stetson Bank, a siltstone reef 30 miles northwest of the West Flower Garden Bank in the Gulf of Mexico. The odd facial characteristics and shape are features of the boxfish family of fish.

#### IMAGE SPECS:

Nikon 200 camera, Aquatica underwater housing, 60mm Nikkor lens, two Ikelite strobes, ISO 100, f/16 at 1/125 second.





# BARK FALLING FROM YOUR SOAPBERRY TREES?

**Soapberry Borer may be the cause!**

*Magnified up to 3x actual size*



**Do you think your soapberry tree might be infested? Texas Forest Service wants to know.**

**TexasInvasives.org**

**Report this invasive species.  
It's killing TREES!**

**T E X A S**  
**FOREST SERVICE**  
The Texas A&M University System



[Blank white rectangular area]

