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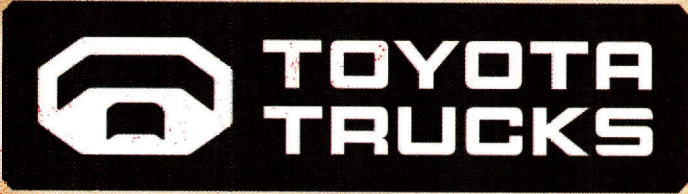


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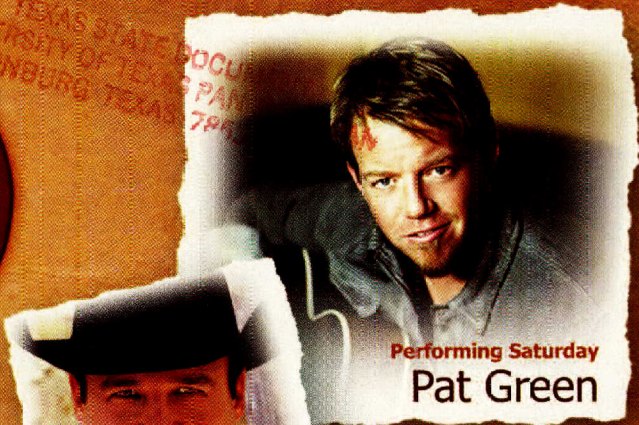
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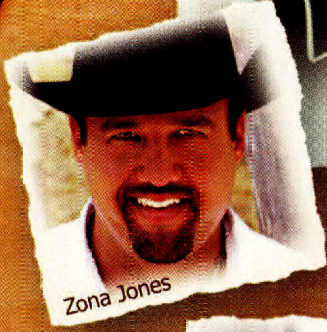


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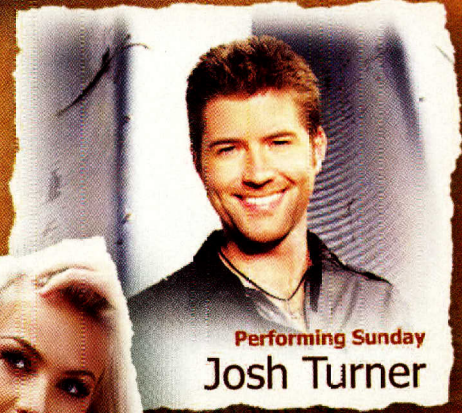
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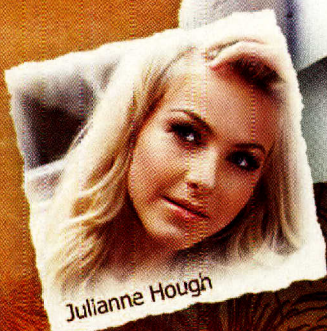
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Features

32 Monarch Mania

By Elaine Robbins

Each October Texans witness an amazing natural phenomenon — in their own backyards.

40 Kayak Convert

By Scott Sommerlatte

It only took one hunting trip to prove the allure of duck hunting from a kayak.

45 Keep Texas Wild

Mysterious Monarchs

Beautiful butterflies puzzle scientists around the world.

CONTENTS

OCTOBER 2009

COVER STORY

24 Gone With the Wind?

By Stayton Bonner

Lesser prairie-chickens are imperiled
in the quest for renewable energy.

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Departments

6 At Issue

By Carter P. Smith

8 Mail Call

Our readers share their ideas.

10 INTO THE WILD

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

Educators seek to nurture a love for nature among college students.

12 BRINGING KIDS OUTDOORS

By Kathryn McGranahan

Workshop helps educators and students reconnect with nature.

13 TEXAS READER: BLUSHING BEHEMOTH

By E. Dan Klepper

Enchanted Rock: A Natural and Human History.

14 PARK PICK: PARKER PADDLE

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

New trail opens at Fort Parker State Park.

15 WILD THING: ROLY-POLY PILLBUGS

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

Neither pill nor bug, these cuties are actually crustaceans.

16 FLORA FACT: HERE COMES THE SUN

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

Superhardy Maximilian sunflowers keep their faces turned toward the sun.

17 SKILL BUILDER: READY, SET, HOOK

By Will Leschper

If you can't master the hook-set, you can't catch fish.

20 Three Days in the Field

By Barbara Rodriguez

Peaceful Panhandle Perspective: Quiet Canadian's fall foliage display lets you leave the bustling world behind.

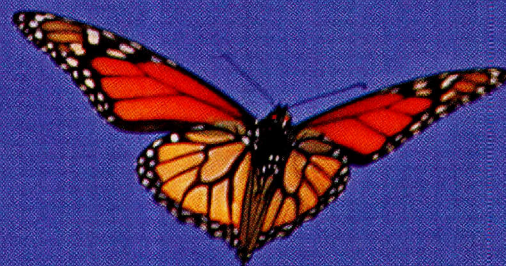
50 Legend, Lore & Legacy

By Russell A. Graves

Teddy Roosevelt's Texas: The great outdoorsman hunted javelinas and recruited Rough Riders here.

56 Parting Shot

By Wyman Meinzer



Covers

FRONT: Lesser prairie-chicken. Photo © Gary Kramer.net

BACK: Monarchs. Photo © Lynne Bandy

PREVIOUS SPREAD: An old windmill stands against a blazing sky. Photo © Wyman Meinzer

THIS PAGE: Monarchs at their wintering site. Photo © Kathy & Gordon Illig

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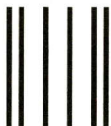
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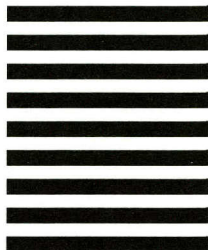
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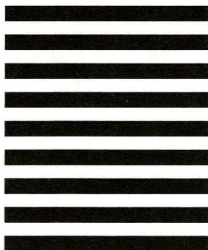
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OCTOBER 2009, VOL. 67, NO. 10

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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.



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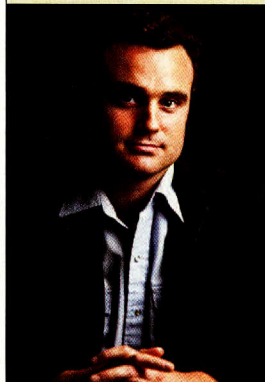
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In the Field

STAYTON BONNER

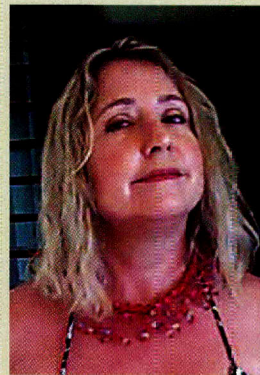
is currently writing on wind energy development in conjunction with Texas Tech University. "Wind energy ties into the Panhandle's history of resource exploration," Bonner says. While working in Lubbock, Bonner has become friends with photographers Wyman Meinzer and Jerod Foster. "Jerod's shots for this



story are fantastic," he says. "We sat in freezing blinds before sunrise to observe the prairie-chickens. Some of the cameras were bigger than the birds." Stayton's articles have appeared in *Outside*, *Texas Monthly* and the *Texas Observer*. In 2006, Three Dog Books released *The Bookman*, his biography of author Larry McMurtry's book-selling career. Stayton Bonner and his wife live in Austin.

BARBARA RODRIGUEZ

says that the Texas Big Sky country, both in the Panhandle and Big Bend, has always appealed to her for the way all that breathing room allows city cares to fall away. When she traveled to Canadian for this month's Three Days in the Field, she had a lot of anxiety about her husband taking a contract job in Asia, while she and pre-teen son Elliott were to stay behind. As always, coondogging the backroads allowed for lots of meaningful family interaction that often gets lost in the rattle and hum of home routines. "My husband and I have always loved roadtrips for the way they open up opportunities for conversations and ideas we haven't yet explored."



WILL LESCHPER

is an award-winning writer and photographer whose passion for the outdoors can be traced to the first wiggling piggy perch he pulled from Aransas Bay when he was 2. Will grew up hunting and fishing Texas. His outdoor pursuits now include fly fishing in Colorado, New Mexico and Hawaii. The 2005 graduate of West Texas A&M University began writing



for Texas newspapers when he was 14. He now writes about the outdoors for newspapers, magazines and websites. Will's Aggie parents, who now live in Alaska, introduced him to fishing and hunting in the Last Frontier. "Catching a 10-pound salmon that you can't slow down on an 8-weight fly rod is tough to beat. Unless, of course, you do it on every cast." His favorite place remains any place outdoors - in Texas.

AT ISSUE

FROM THE PEN OF CARTER P. SMITH

Of all the possible names that could have been conjured up for one of the signature bird species of the southern Great Plains, “lesser prairie-chicken” has to be one of the more unfortunate. Clearly, it is not the bird’s fault that it has been labeled with a name that neither inspires nor elicits much sympathetic concern. That is too bad. In the coming years, the lesser prairie-chicken is going to need every bit of help it can get to persist in the wilds of the Texas Panhandle.

The lesser prairie-chicken, or in conservation parlance, the “LPC,” is a denizen of the expansive grasslands still found throughout the Texas Panhandle, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Kansas and Colorado. The colorful and highly ritualized mating dances of male LPCs performed on their spring breeding grounds, or “leks,” are the stuff of legend. The bird’s elaborate booming and strutting are said to have inspired certain dances performed by Native American tribes. Believe me, the dances are magical, visceral and worth observing, if you ever get the chance.

Regrettably, LPCs appear to be going the way of their coastal cousins, the endangered Attwater’s prairie-chickens, which have dwindled to such low numbers that they are holding on only by virtue of an aggressive captive breeding-and-release program. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists and other scientists, Texas’ LPC populations have dropped over 90 percent from their historic highs. The culprits for the LPC’s decline are familiar ones — conversion of grasslands to croplands, habitat fragmentation, urbanization and incompatible oil and gas development.

Today, the birds may only be found in a dozen or so Panhandle counties, largely around the community of Canadian, as well as southwest of Lubbock near the New Mexico line. Thanks to efforts from private landowners, as well as biologists from TPWD, the Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy and others, there is still potential for enhancing the bird’s habitat, and hence conservation, of this imperiled species.

This part of the state, however, also harbors great potential for something else, a feature already well-known to citizens of the Texas Panhandle — wind. The readily available supply and predictability of Panhandle wind resources, substantial local, state and national tax incentives and aggressive renewable energy portfolio goals have spawned a literal wind rush in areas occupied by the remaining LPCs. With it are coming miles and miles of new 345 kV transmission lines in order to move wind-generated energy to more populous parts of the state.

Suffice it to say, wind energy development is a welcome economic development for some Panhandle landowners and communities. For Texas LPC populations, it is probably not. These grassland birds evolved in open, prairie landscapes, places bereft of trees. Anything tall in the grasslands usually means habitat for predators like hawks and owls. As researchers in Kansas and Oklahoma have shown, LPCs deliberately avoid using available habitat close to transmission lines and wind turbines, likely because of this association with roosts for predators.

As you will read in the accompanying article by Stayton Bonner, there is a storm brewing in the Panhandle over wind and prairie-chickens. Having gone through a few endangered species conflicts in my career, I’d rather not see LPCs become the golden-cheeked warblers of the High Plains. Avoiding such a scenario is possible, but it will require a newfound level of cooperation between wind developers, state and federal agencies, environmental groups and, of course, our Panhandle landowners. At Texas Parks and Wildlife, we stand ready to do our part.

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



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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.


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PICKS, PANS AND PROBES FROM OUR READERS

FOREWORD

My childhood home's backyard was my blessed wilderness, even though it was no more than a properly manicured suburban plot. Reading in a fort built from old bedspreads and clothespins in the limbs of our best climbing tree or lying on my belly in the sweet St. Augustine, poking around for interesting insects, I was totally immersed in my element. Trapped in a desk at school, I couldn't help but spend many hours dreaming about the crisp breeze I could see stirring the branches, the smell of freshly-mown grass or the stickiness of the horse apples that grew just outside the window.

One late summer afternoon when my age was still in the single digits, I was idly pulling blooms from the abundant honeysuckle bushes, pinching off the ends to pull out the "fairy wand" and trying to catch the single drop of sweet nectar on my tongue. A small, rather plain, brown butterfly had the same thought on his mind, and he landed, much to my amazement, on the back of my hand as it rested in the soft foliage and fragrant blooms.

Afraid to dislodge the fragile creature, I froze. He paced back and forth a bit, unsure about his choice of landing site, while I marveled at the delicate touch of his tiny legs, gentler than anything a human could attempt.

As time passed, it became apparent that the butterfly was quite content on my hand, climbing up my arm to explore my shoulder and not startling as I walked ever so carefully across the yard. I hoped that someone would pass by soon to observe my prowess in taming this wild creature.

"I have the amazing powers of Dr. Dolittle!" I thought to myself. "Of all the people in the universe, only I can communicate with butterflies! They are drawn to me as their human leader!"

To my wonder, that butterfly, or perhaps there were several, came back to visit many times that summer. I could put my finger next to those impossibly spindly legs, and he would climb on with seemingly no trepidation. I was the butterfly whisperer.

This month, we reveal the mysterious migration of the monarch butterflies, who fly thousands of miles each year to gather in places they've never seen. How do they know when to go, where to go, how to go? With a brain the size of a pinhead, these fantastical creatures can traverse continents, while I have trouble following a simple map. Dr. Doolittle, indeed.

We also take a look at the precarious fate of the lesser prairie-chicken, who is wary to nest near the windmills of the Plains. Does clean energy come with a high price tag for our wildlife?



LOUIE BOND
MANAGING EDITOR

LETTERS

FERAL HOG HUNT REQUIRES LICENSE?

On page 26 ("Hunting Forecast 2009") of the September 2009 issue, you note "Feral Hog Season: No closed season; landowner permission and hunting license required."

When did a hunting license become a

requirement in Texas for hunting and killing feral hogs? I was not aware of a change requiring a hunting license. This is strange as I recently attended a seminar put on by the Texas AgriLife Extension Agency (Houston County) specifically on feral hog problems and remedies ("Feral Hog Management").

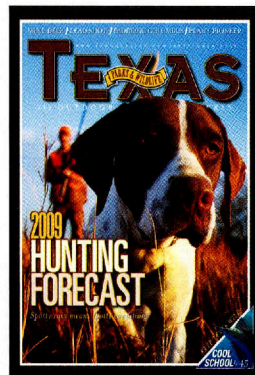
Feral hogs are tearing up our farm and ranch land and are moving into town/city areas, as well. Billy Higginbottom of Texas A&M University and Game Warden Zeke Bengé were the guest speakers. Neither gentleman mentioned a new state regulation that would require a hunting license to hunt and kill feral hogs. As a matter of

fact, they reminded the audience that a hunting license was not required.

Also, I just looked at the 2009 regulations and game animal listings on the TPWD website (www.tpwd.state.tx.us) and did not find any new regulation requiring a hunting license for hunting and killing feral hogs. Feral hogs are still not listed as a game animal on the TPWD website (as of about 5 minutes ago).

GEORGE EDDINGTON
Huntsville

TPWD RESPONDS: TPWD Assistant Chief of Wildlife Enforcement Scott Vaca says: "There is no new license requirement for hunting feral hogs. A valid hunting



When did a hunting license become a requirement in Texas for hunting and killing feral hogs? I was not aware of a change requiring a hunting license.

George Eddington
Huntsville

MAIL CALL

license is required to hunt ANY animal, bird, frog or turtle in Texas. This includes feral hogs. However, a landowner, landowner's agent or lessee may trap or kill feral hogs causing depredation on the landowner's land without a hunting license. This exception to the license requirement is often misunderstood. If you are paying a landowner to hunt or trap hogs, you need a hunting license. Hunter education requirements still apply."

LECHUGUILLA PROVIDES SUSTENANCE FOR WILDLIFE

I read with interest the brief article ("Shin Dagger") on agave lechugilla in the August TP&W magazine. However, there was one very important use of this plant that was completely overlooked. We have property in Brewster and Terrill counties that is covered with the demon plant, but the deer and javelina treat it like we humans do artichokes. They will pull off the hard inedible leaf to get to the base and nip off the tender, moisture-bearing bite that is there. In areas where there is little water other than the infrequent rains, this plant provides moisture and sustenance for the wildlife.

JOYCE D. SCHAEFER
Port Lavaca

NABBED BY GRAMMAR POLICE

In the August issue, "No Hike for Old Men," the second sentence contains a grammatical error. The sentence, in part, should read: "presented Lawrence and ME with copies of a topo map."

No one can present "I" with a map.

JOHN LIMB
Houston

TPWD RESPONDS: Managing Editor Louie Bond replies: "You are correct, Mr. Limb. It is not a proud day for my English grammar teachers. Thanks for keeping us on our toes."

POINSETTIAS NOT POISONOUS?

On a recent visit to my doctor, I picked up your August issue and was pleasantly surprised by the picture of the mission at Goliad. The picture of the agave in the corner of the mission looked like the one I took when we vis-

ited last year. That was cool.

Reading through the magazine, I got to the (Keep Texas Wild, "S-s-s-Snakes Alive!") venomous section and it reminded me of my trip to Tyler State Park and the snake-feeding seminar there, which was also featured in your magazine (what a coincidence), but I noticed a discrepancy in your article. In the section "Venomous vs. Poisonous," you asked if poinsettias were venomous or poisonous. Your answer was poisonous, and that is incorrect. As a Texas Master Certified Nurseryman, I know that poinsettias are in fact not poisonous. A child would have to eat his weight in leaves and then would only end up with a stomachache. To further educate the public, I wish you would check your research.

TERRY LEAR
Austin

TPWD RESPONDS: Jackie Poole, TPWD wildlife biologist, says: "According to the poison control centers around the country, poinsettias are not poisonous. At least they won't kill you. However, eating a few leaves or stems may cause stomach distress,

vomiting, etc. Also, the sap may cause a rash in some people. I don't know what the "official" poison control center definition of poisonous is, but as someone who is allergic to poison ivy, I know it doesn't kill you, but really bad cases make you wish you were dead. In general, I stay away from plants in the spurge family. There are some really nasty species in Africa that can spurt poisonous sap (blind or kill you) for yards. So poinsettias won't kill you, but they aren't entirely harmless, either."

Sound off for "Mail Call!"

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SCOUT

NEWS AND VIEWS IN THE TEXAS OUTDOORS

INTO THE WILD

Educators seek to nurture a love for nature among college students.



Nearly anyone who visits the Texas Nature Project near Mason gets introduced to a special live oak that's heavily branched and thick with age.

"We call this the climbing tree," says Dr. Sierra Theisen, hiking a jean-clad leg on a low-slung branch. "So many students who come here — and their parents, too — have never climbed a tree. So we make sure they do."

The simple experience — once an integral part of childhood — can be life-changing.

"A person who climbs a tree for the first time may discover not only a sense of empowerment, but that the tree has true beauty and worth," Theisen explains. "That's a lesson not easily taught in a classroom."

These days, it's rarely taught at home, either. Even worse, Theisen and her colleague, Jan Schultz, worry that young, mostly urban Texans, who've grown up indoors with computers and other electronic gadgets, will be ill-prepared to inherit a natural world they've had little to do with.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SIERRA THEISEN

"I've had bright college students tell me that they didn't know trees were alive," Thiesen laments. "If they don't know about the outdoors, how can they care for it?"

With the goal of turning that around, she and Schultz — who've each worked in academics 20-plus years — have put together the Texas Nature Project, an outdoor learning center (where they also live) spread across a 100-acre former cattle ranch. Now managed as a wildlife habitat, Northpoint Ranch encompasses year-round springs, seasonal creeks, pink granite outcroppings and a rich diversity of native flora and fauna.

For one full semester, Texas university students — housed in modest steel-framed dorms — live on the ranch and spend most of their time outside, studying under Thiesen, Schultz and other instructors. Curriculums — customized to dovetail with a student's degree plan — encourage participants to ponder how their personal and professional choices affect the environment.

"We immerse students in hands-on experiences, like how to build in sustainable ways, grow vegetables in a garden and use alternate forms of energy," Schultz explains. "We live with the students. For



↑ Texas college students live close to nature for a semester while participating in the Texas Nature Project, learning how their choices affect the environment.

educators to have a real impact on lives, it requires more than a few hours a day.

"Most people think that going abroad for a semester is important," she adds. "Why not a semester in nature? That's even more important!"

As a summer intern this year, Murray Myers — a graduate of the University of St. Thomas in Houston — helped build the ranch's green dorms.

"My time with Sherra and Jan better prepared me for graduate school," says Myers, who plans to specialize in sustainable development. "I also learned a lot about Texas ecology."

Like his two mentors in Mason, Myers

sees a distinct disconnect with nature, especially among his peers.

"It's a big problem in Houston, where I live," he muses. "People have no respect for their neighborhood, which leads to apathy, and even littering. A program like the Texas Nature Project can make a difference, even if it's just changing one student at a time."

The Texas Nature Project also offers learning programs, photography classes, hiking and bird watching. For more information or to request a student application, call (832) 878-4141 or visit www.texasnatureproject.org. ☆

— Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

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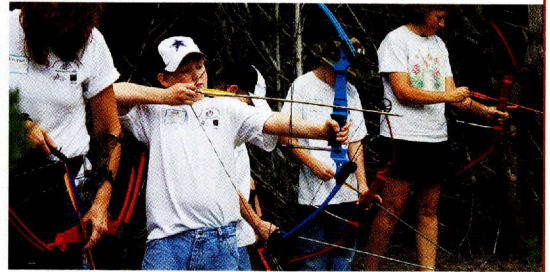
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Bringing Kids Outdoors

Workshop helps educators and students reconnect with nature.



▲ A variety of outdoor skills will be taught at this year's TOEA workshop.

program included trail riding, Indian storytelling, hot air ballooning and photography. Attendees also enjoy chances for free prizes between sessions.

TPWD education staff partnered with Fortner and the association in the early 1980s, teaching such topics as riflery, archery, Project WILD and fly fishing. Staff continued to be involved until Texas Wildlife Expo came along in 1992 — the same weekend as the annual workshop.

The Annual Fall Workshop is more than a chance to get outside. Workshops count as professional development for educators, fill physical education requirements and fit with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Some activity sessions even count as Texas Environmental Education Advisory Committee credits.

To date, TOEA workshops have reached more than 7,600 educators and 1.8 million students—many of whom attended public schools that couldn't provide such easy access to nature.

TOEA president Don Carter is always amazed at the effect the workshops and their natural surroundings have on students. "Even the ones who give you problems behave better," he says. "They listen to what everyone is saying. I wouldn't trade any of them."

The Annual Fall Workshop will be held October 2–4 in Echo Valley at H. E. Butt Foundation Free Camps, located on Highway 83, 12 miles north of Leakey, with a fee of \$125. Food, drinks and lodging are provided. For more information, visit toea.org or call H.E. Butt Foundation at (830) 896-2505. ★

—Kathryn McGranahan

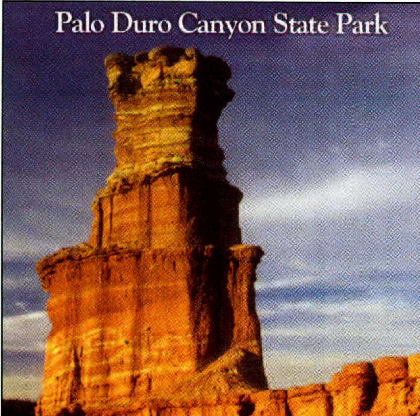
Interested in educating youth about the outdoors? Join the Texas Outdoor Education Association for its 30th Annual Fall Workshop.

This workshop, also known as the Annual State Teacher Workshop, began as Ewell Sessom's pet project, Outdoor Adventure Workshops. As director of health, physical education and recreation at the Texas Education Agency, Sessom's passion for outdoor education enticed 40 participants to spend a fun and educational experience in Camp Baylor. TEA held six workshops from 1974 to 1978, until Sessom's other TEA duties pulled for his attention. He entrusted his workshops to a civic-minded teacher named John Fortner.

Funding from the Dallas Safari Club enabled Sessom and Fortner to organize the first Texas Outdoor Education Association workshop in 1979, attended by nearly 100 participants.

With additional funding from environmental and conservation groups, the workshops have been able to continue at as low a cost as possible. Each workshop brings a wide and engaging variety of activities for children and adults. Last year's

Palo Duro Canyon State Park



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Blushing Behemoth

Enchanted Rock: A Natural and Human History.

Writer and photographer Lance Allred has succeeded in producing both a guidebook and important reference with his new *Enchanted Rock: A Natural and Human History*. With more than 300 pages and including 1,000 photographs, Allred has provided enlightenment and thorough documentation where there were once but a few pamphlets and dissertations on one of Texas' unique wonders.

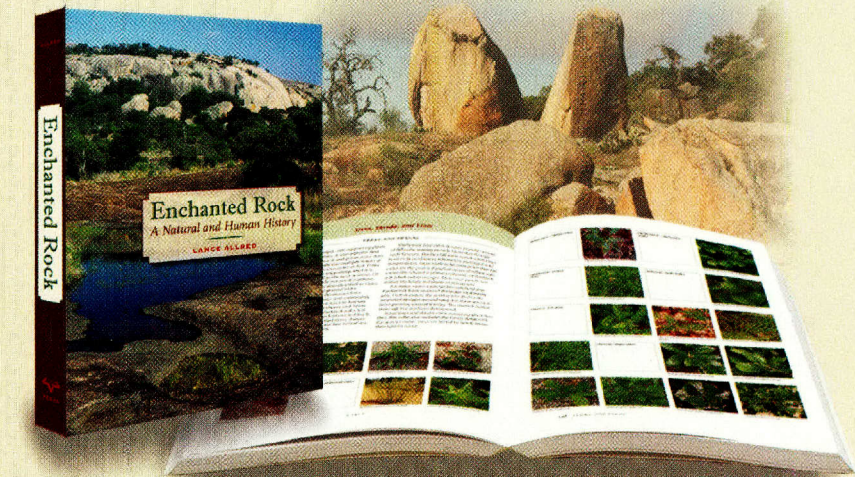
Enchanted Rock is among the most sizable exposed rock formations in the country. Called a batholith (Greek for "deep rock"), Enchanted Rock is the result of the accumulation and slow cooling of underground magma that has since been exposed. Potassium feldspar gives the rock its pinkish hue. Allred covers the rock's geology in-depth, along with its history, weather, flora and fauna (including an entire section on insects), as well as the surrounding Llano region.

Why do a giant rock, roughly the height of a 40-story building and covering one square mile, and the area around it, deserve so much attention?

"The Llano region supplies critical clues in the story not only of the geological history of Texas but also for the development of the earth as a whole," explains Allred in his book. "Some rock exposures in the Llano Region are considered 'classic,' attracting study and interpretation by geologists from around the world."

Allred describes the region's plants and animals as "an interesting juxtaposition of desert, subtropical, plains and eastern forest species, including many plants that have been separated from their ranges through long-term climatic change."

Loaded with full-color charts and graphs to help readers digest the details, *Enchanted Rock* covers pretty much everything you might ever want to know about Texas' blushing behemoths.



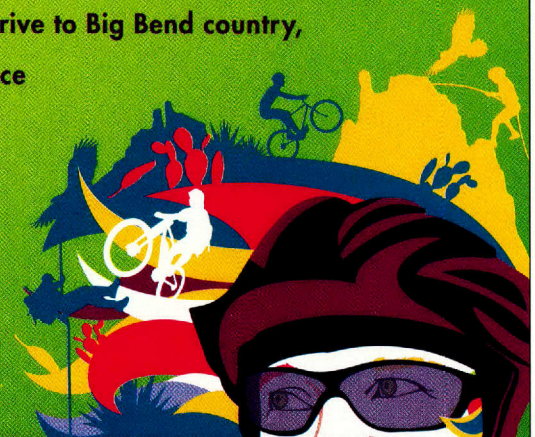
moth. Often accompanied by his delightfully named family — wife Windflower Waters and daughters Willow and Sierra — Allred spent several years visiting the rock and taking its picture before putting all the pieces together.

"It is more than a field guide," Allred writes. "Maybe it could be called a destination guide. It touches on all the elements that make Enchanted Rock such an intriguing and endlessly interesting place to visit." ☆

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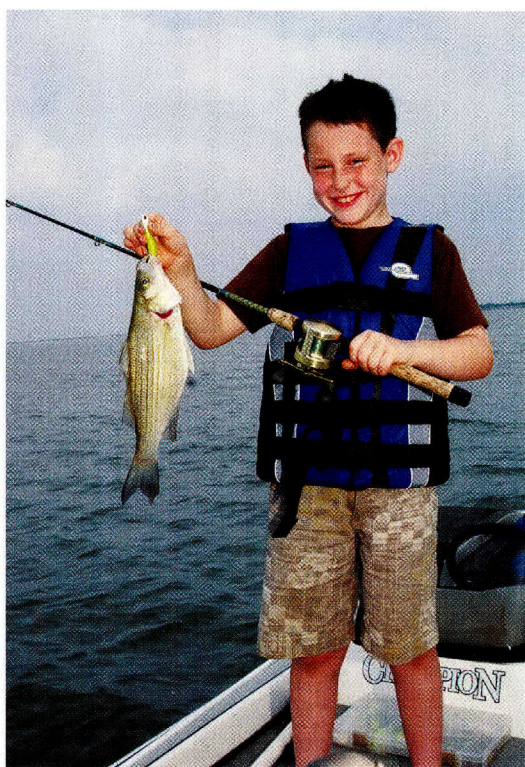
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EL PASO



Parker Paddle

New trail opens at Fort Parker State Park.



The fishing's great at Fort Parker State Park. For non-anglers, there are plenty of other ways to enjoy the water and wildlife there.

High limestone ridges and thick hardwood forests shade a still stretch of the Navasota River, just before it empties into the lake at Fort Parker State Park. Last May, the 5.3-mile corridor opened to the public as one of 18 designated state paddling trails.

"The water's fairly deep, and the scenery's beautiful," says park manager Tom Fisher, who sometimes floats the Limestone Bluffs Paddling Trail with his family. "Birdwatching's great, too. You can often see belted kingfishers, great blue herons, wood ducks and egrets."

Paddlers who make a morning voyage will have plenty of time to explore the 758-acre park, named for the nearby stockade fort where Comanches abducted Cynthia Ann Parker in 1836. More history lies within the park, where the town of Springfield — Limestone County's first county seat — once stood.

Trips start at the nearby Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historic Site (operated by the Texas Historical Commission) and end at the state park. "It usually takes us less than two hours to paddle the trail," Fisher says. "Average float times run three to four hours."

But it's the fun of meeting friends and family in the outdoors that seems to draw most visitors to Fort Parker State Park, a convenient place to meet coming from Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and Austin.

"Because the park's small and quiet, families love to come here," Fisher says. "Our facilities and the dam across the river were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the late 1930s, which adds to the park's charm. The recreation hall, which seats up to 50, is rented most weekends because we have so many reunions. Our group barracks, which

accommodate 96 people, host descendants of the Parker family every July."

The lake's also great for canoeing, swimming and fishing. "Anglers catch white bass, largemouth bass and crappie," Fisher says.

Hiking and mountain biking are popular on the park's two trails, a 1.5-mile loop and a 2.5-mile one-way trek.

Sharp eyes may spot some of the park's native wildlife, such as beaver, white-tailed deer and raccoons. Near the campgrounds, a pair of bald eagles tends a nest high in some towering oak trees.

The park offers canoe rentals for \$25 per day, and a shuttle service from park to reunion grounds (canoes only) is \$5 per canoe. Fort Parker State Park is located 7 miles south of Mexia on Texas 14. Call (254) 562-5751 or visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fortparker. ★

— Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

FISH: © GRADY ALLEN; OTHERS: © ANDY SHARP; OPPOSITE: © CLIVE YARLACK



Roly-Poly Pillbugs

Neither pill nor bug, these cuties are actually crustaceans.

As a kid, you probably kept a cute little roly-poly (pillbug) as a pet. Now that you're grown, the last thing you want to see is one tooling across your kitchen floor. Not cute. So out the door it goes! After all, bugs belong outside, right?

Sure. But before you administer the boot, consider this: Pillbugs are neither bugs nor insects. They're terrestrial crustaceans known as isopods. Like shrimp and lobsters, pillbugs breathe through gills, only not underwater. However, since gills require water to function, pillbugs prefer damp habitats, such as under rocks, potted plants or leaf litter.

Armadillidium vulgare — as its genus name suggests — resembles a tiny gray armadillo. Seven segmented plates form a pillbug's hard exoskeleton and allow maximum flexibility. Thus, it can easily roll into a "pill" to escape predators. Sowbugs, another isopod, resemble pillbugs but are flatter, with two short posterior "tails." Since they are unable to roll up like pillbugs, sowbugs run fast, instead.

Annoying but harmless, pillbugs

can devour tender vegetation in the landscape and garden. These scavengers particularly relish decaying matter, including wood, mulch and lawn clippings. In the spring after mating, a female — who may reproduce two or three times a year — incubates up to 200 eggs in a brood pouch located

underneath her body. After hatching, the tiny pillbugs stay in the pouch several more weeks, then venture out on their own. In a year, they're adults.

Got a pet pillbug in the house? Then you'll be happy to know that your cute little isopod can live as long as three years! ★

— Sheryl Smith-Rodgers



↑ The pillbug's genus name acknowledges its resemblance to an armadillo.

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Oct. 11 – 18:

Cleaning up Lavaca Bay; CCC history at Lake Brownwood SP; calling all campers; Hueco Tanks; forest fungi.

Oct. 18 – 25:

Neighborhood fishing; Eisenhower SP; mesquite; volunteers at Pedernales SP; Lake Ray Roberts sunset.

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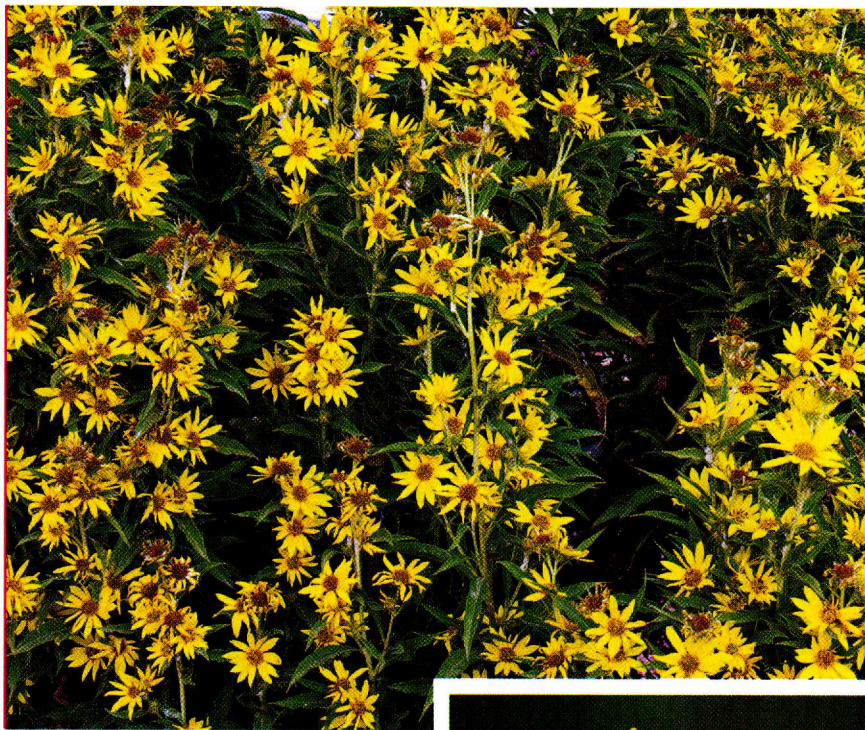
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Here Comes the Sun

Superhardy Maximilian sunflowers keep their faces turned toward the sun.

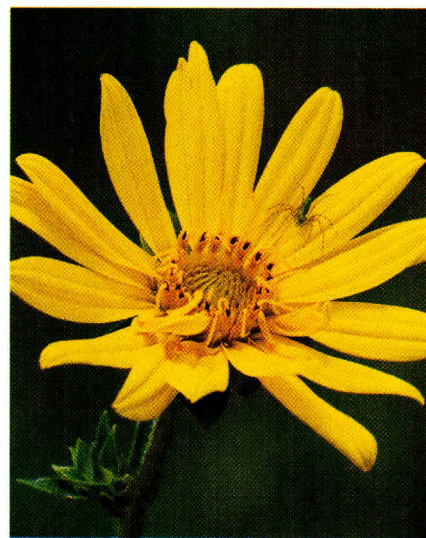


In a community garden at a San Antonio library, Joan Miller grows one of her favorite Texas natives for bright fall color—Maximilian sunflowers.

"I dug up about eight plants from our property in Banderita County and transplanted them here," says Miller, who volunteers at the garden, supported by the Landa Gardens Conservancy. "I love them because they bloom late summer into fall and do well no matter what."

Even complete neglect doesn't offend *Helianthus maximiliani*, cousin to the common sunflower. With little more than full sun and occasional showers, this long-stemmed, unbranched perennial thrives along highways and across fields, standing anywhere from three to 10 feet high. Large colonies can form from a single plant.

Up to 3 inches wide, the yellow-petaled faces of Maximilian sunflowers track the sun throughout the day. Livestock graze the species, and birds love the seeds. So did Native Americans, who once cultivated sunflowers for food, dye and fibers. The plant's rootlets, which look like mini potatoes, taste similar to a Jerusalem artichoke,



Even in drought-plagued regions, the hardy sunflower still blooms this year.

according to *Edible and Useful Plants of Texas and the Southwest*.

As its common and botanical names imply, Maximilian sunflowers have regal connections. The species was christened after Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied, a German naturalist who explored the American West in the 1830s. ★

—Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

TOP © GREG LASLEY/KAC PRODUCTIONS; BOTTOM © KATHY ADAMS CLARK © KAC PRODUCTIONS

Ready, Set, Hook

If you can't master the hook-set, you can't catch fish.

You can't actually die from missing a hook-set, but anglers know the acute pain of a lunker snapping up a bait only to become the proverbial "one that got away," leaving a slack line and a broken heart in its wake.

Anglers today have the best tools at their disposal, but all that technology won't do any good unless it's applied correctly. There remain tried-and-true concepts about hook-sets that are easy and practical to utilize.

Here's a rundown of reasons why an angler might come up short in an attempt to hook a fish, as well as a few ways to overcome obstacles.

DON'T SLACK OFF. One good reason to keep the line tight is the ability to feel live bait worked into a frenzy. Another benefit is the ability to see if a fish has taken an offering when you don't yet feel its weight. Slack becomes more of an issue when an angler is working a bait using rod movement (popping, chugging or dancing a topwater), but the easiest remedy is quick turns of the reel. After all, that's what it's there for.

BAD FORM MEANS GOODBYE. Keeping a stable stance is vital in almost any type of sporting situation, and fishing is no different. By keeping your knees slightly bent and having a solid base, you won't lose balance and you'll be able to put more force on tackle. Losing your balance even slightly and overcompensating could give fish the amount of slack they need to escape.

STRONG-ARM ACTION. Some anglers use a wide sweeping motion with their arms or push their elbows out when a fish hits, but the key to a solid hook-set is keeping your elbows close to your body. Get the line as tight as possible as quickly as possible. When you keep your elbows near your torso, you'll cut down on motion while increasing leverage.

BARBED TENDENCIES. Circle hooks work better to keep from hooking a fish deep and don't require a big hook-set. As a fish

takes the bait, the hook should find purchase in the side of its mouth as the line tightens. For other hooks, a set of some kind often is needed. Think about the mouth type of the fish you're targeting. If a fish with a tougher mouth (like a largemouth) has struck, a strong set will work. If you're after fish with softer mouths, such as crappie, a big jerk could tear the hook out.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING. The tendency is to give the rod a jerk whenever you feel a fish, but sometimes you've got to wait. Anglers who fish topwater plugs know fish will often blow up on a bait without getting a mouthful. In this instance, it's important to wait

until you feel the weight of the fish.

IT'S A STRETCH. At greater depths, almost all lines have a stretch factor. If you're fishing deeper, such as in the gulf, this can be a hurdle. Generally, you must apply more force to get a solid set in deep water, overcoming stretch in the line with power.

Missing a fish that blows up on a well-placed lure is inevitable for any angler, regardless of his prowess. The most important skill is to not get discouraged. Setting the hook is a crash course in physics; your local honey hole is the best classroom for this.

When in doubt, set the hook! ★





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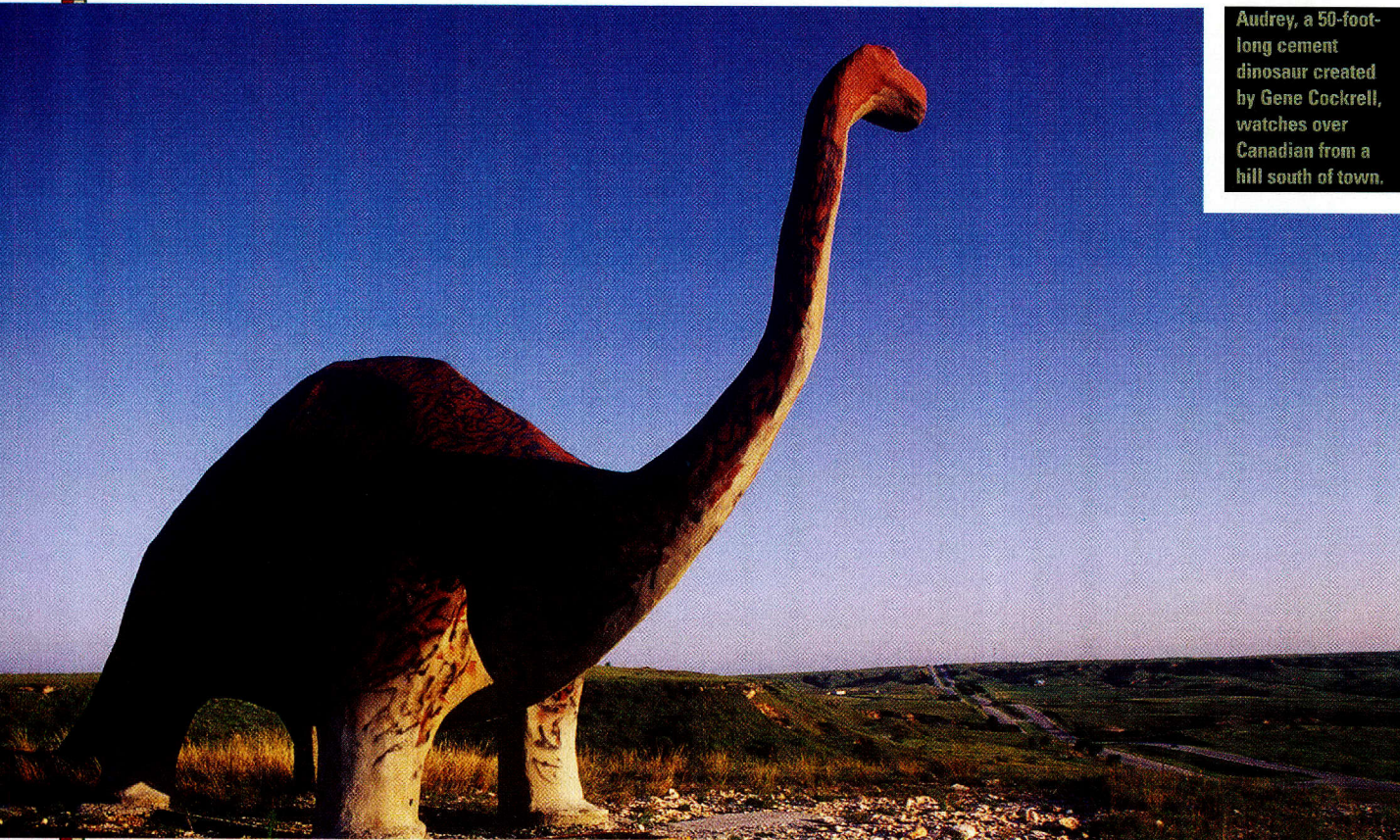
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Panhandle Perspective

Canadian's fall foliage display lets you leave the bustling world behind.

Audrey, a 50-foot-long cement dinosaur created by Gene Cockrell, watches over Canadian from a hill south of town.



There is something about the drive up into the rarified air of the Texas Panhandle that invites conversation, even — miracle of miracles — from a preteen. We've left Fort Worth for an autumnal uplift to relieve familial stress, manifested on my son Elliott's part by an uncharacteristic silence. I'm hopeful a road trip to Canadian's Fall Foliage Festival will offer mobile therapy.

Day One

Near Amarillo, puzzle-piece clouds dissolve into the billowy blue tent of Texas Big Sky country. Cotton fields roll flat to the horizon, then undulate into prairie. The

landscape ripples with gilded grasses, sometimes embroidered in sorghum red, until the wind-sloshed swells buck up into flat-topped mesas. Turf rips open up like a broken zipper to expose a spill of canyon. Chattering about what we might find in Canadian, Elliott and my husband Jurgen's voices are balm to me. For an entire weekend, we are bound together in a shared love of discovery.

Panhandle roads are often ribbon straight, but we try to reroute ourselves to avoid the region's most reliable speed bump: mile-long trains. At last we give in and let the rattle and hum of passing trains

help us to slow down. We count the cars, breathing deeply. I sow fun facts about the 16 million acres of mixed grass prairie that sprout conversation about wind farms and crosswinds. Iconic isolated farmhouses inspire talk of lonely transplanted brides. We revel in roadside signs we've never seen before. Jurgen's favorite is a pictograph illustrating the danger of bottoming out a trailer; I quite like the warning of low visibility due to blowing dust.

Pampa heralds the legions of Spanish dagger that Elliott used to call upside-down palm trees. At Miami we reminisce about a recent earthquake. As we pass into

Hemphill County the road-kill count inspires Elliott to raise a truly existential question: If all the turkey vultures were killed, what would eat their carcasses?

Seven miles outside Canadian a dinosaur stands sentinel on a high bluff. It is Audrey, the yellow-spotted, 50-foot, one-ton steel mesh and concrete brontosaurus-of-sorts built by rancher Gene Cockrell in honor of his wife, Audrey. It is a love token second only to the Taj Mahal.

Beyond Canadian's highway storefronts is a serenity that's more hometown than tourist destination. We'd expected the Fall Foliage Festival to mean traffic jams and crowded restaurants, but the event is more like a big family reunion. There's a huge arts and crafts show, barbecue and home tours. But the main draw is the foliage, best enjoyed in a leisurely drive along the 12 miles of farm road to Lake Marvin.

We head to the edge of town and walk the bridge. The Canadian River Wagon Bridge was constructed in 1916 to a length of 2,635 feet. When the river changed course in 1924, the bridge was lengthened to its current 3,255 feet. Considered the longest metal truss span in the state (a technology replaced by riveted connections), it is truly a bridge to nowhere, a favored spot for strolling with babies and binoculars. Alone

there, as we were, it's a long wood-planked stretch of splendid isolation.

As we walk, the drone of wasps and cicadas grows hypnotic. Elliott, happier than I've seen him in days, reemerges from the distance, breathless, to announce a giant spider web. "It feels like it never ends," he pants, as we retrace his steps to the glinting treasure.

The once mighty Canadian River appears near the far end of the bridge, a muddy S-turn moving swiftly only in a narrow channel, while lazier waters ripple across sandbars. Beneath the bridge, swallow nests like adobe cliff dwellings remind me that humans carved out shelter along the bluffs of the river in the early 12th century.

Elliott stops to eye a stink bug that puts the length of the bridge in a new perspective: "Think what that walk would be like to him," he says.

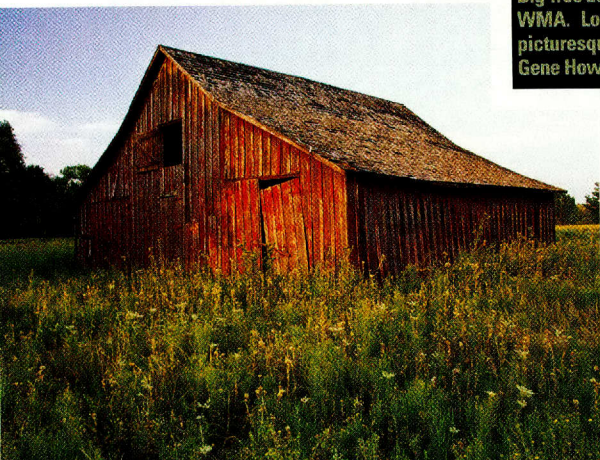
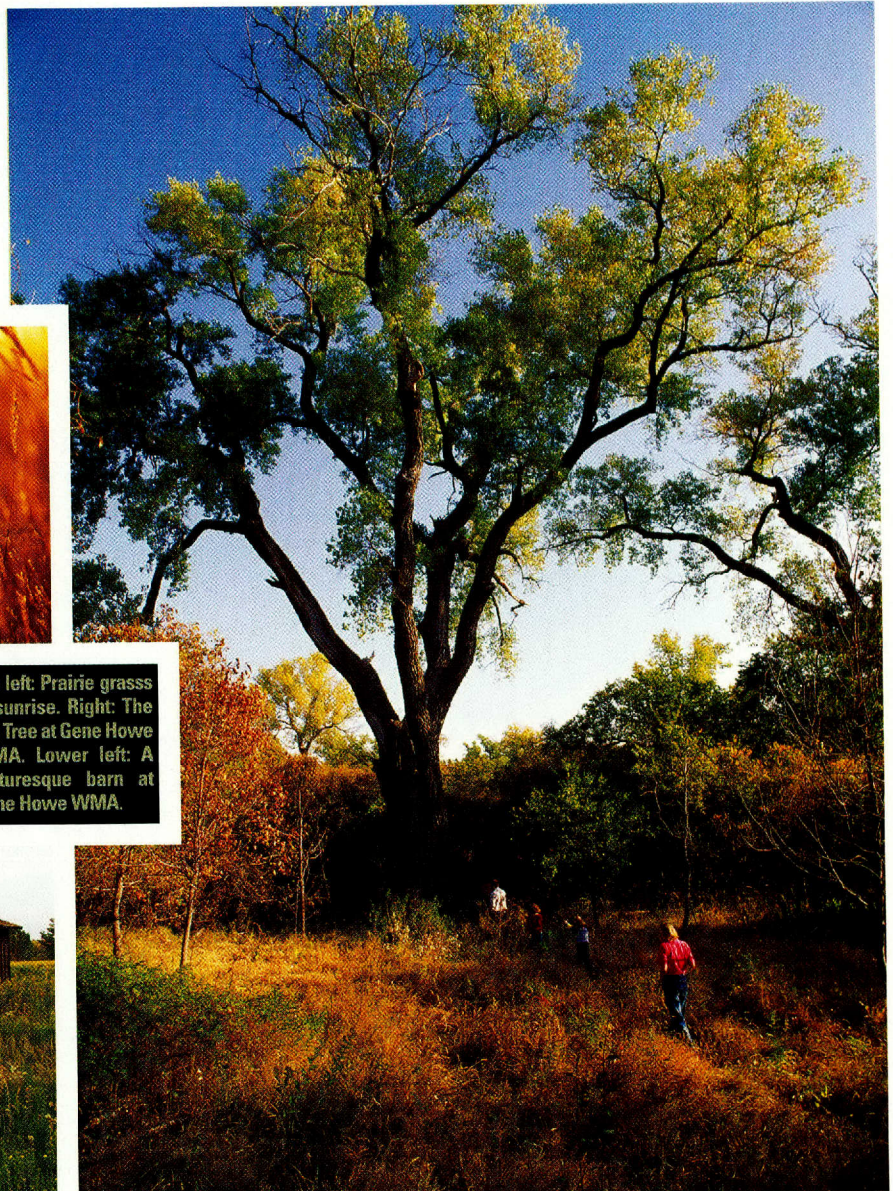
Day Two

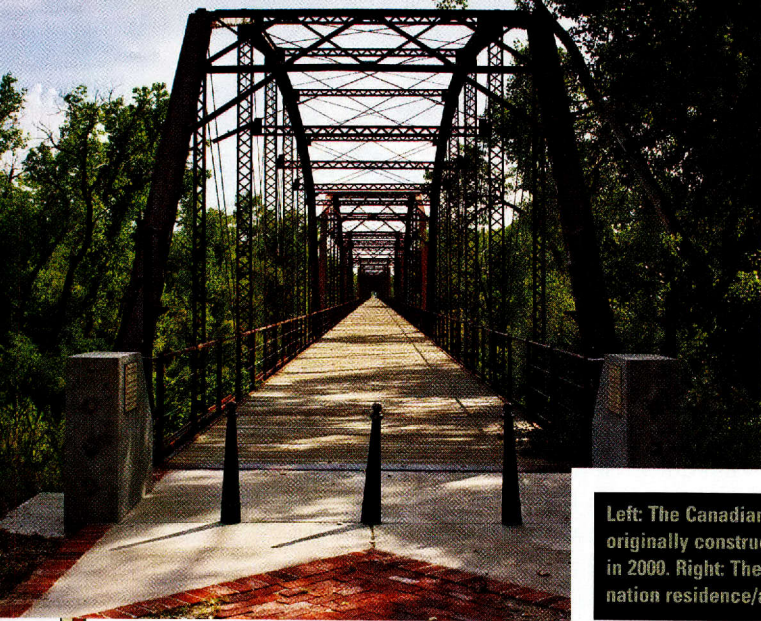
Rising early, I recognize a sweet, earthy feedlot smell that I associate with Stock Show week in Fort Worth. In Canadian, it is a scent as central to the town's well-being as the smells of natural gas throughout the county. Thanks to the Anadarko Basin, Canadian enjoys the prosperity of the largest natural-gas well in the world.

But the town's robustness also reflects its spirited frontier heritage. The red-bricked Main Street is witnessing a \$1.3 million renovation; silk-stocking historic houses boast museum quality art (specifically the famed Citadelle, a former Baptist church that is now home to the Malouf Abraham family, longtime town patrons); the fully restored Palace Theatre has a state-of-the-art sound system. The town that in the 1880s had 13 saloons and no churches now has 11 churches and no saloons.

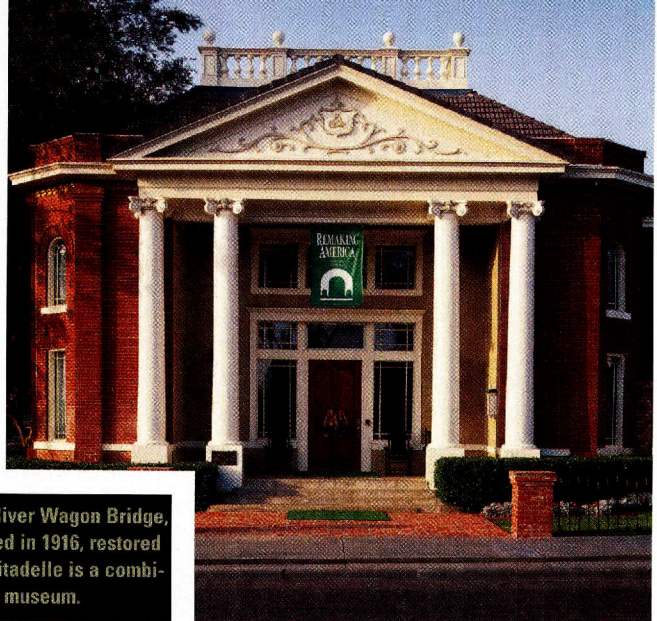


Top left: Prairie grasses at sunrise. Right: The Big Tree at Gene Howe WMA. Lower left: A picturesque barn at Gene Howe WMA.





Left: The Canadian River Wagon Bridge, originally constructed in 1916, restored in 2000. Right: The Citadelle is a combination residence/art museum.



As we head out, we notice that there's been a scenic adjustment. Overnight, as if arranged by festival organizers, the landscape has been brushed with the glorious colors of autumn. Burnished coppers, glinting golds and blushing reds that weren't obvious yesterday are in full display. The evening's chill has brought on a flash of foliage that is guest-worthy.

Six miles from town we bisect the Gene Howe Wildlife Management Area, 5,394 acres of grasslands and cottonwood rangeland, bordered on the south by the Canadian River. Lesser prairie-chickens occasionally can be found there, but today the sandhill uplands are still. We stop at headquarters (registration allows you access to side roads) and wend in and out to see many a Rio Grande turkey in full strut, a few prairie dogs, but nary a chicken,

scaled quail or antelope. At a historic marker, we read about the discovery of pierced mastodon bones that evidenced prehistoric man's trails here. Then it's on to Lake Marvin in the Black Kettle National Grasslands, where we find a crowd of families making pine cone bird feeders, custom-mixing birdseed and lining up to look at the sun through a telescope. The sheer audacity of the last activity has Elliott bolting into line. The filtered show of a fiery red disk is impressive indeed.

Circling the 63-acre lake (conveniently outfitted with fishing piers) we find the Old Cottonwood Trail, heralding the landmark known as the Big Tree by Native Americans and cavalry traveling the stage road from 1870-90. The boys surge forward while I stop to admire stands of persimmons, equally loved by

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hogs (for forage) and early pioneers (for wine). Not quite so easy to discern, simply because of their numbers, are tracks of everything from deer to raccoon to wild turkey. Flecks of sumac berries brighten the underbrush.

Day Three

Elliott and Jurgen have sided against me in a bid to spend time at the Canadian Skate Park, a block from our cottage. Watching father and son head out, I know the weekend has been a success.

In the afternoon, no bones broken, and spirits high we head out for Lipscomb, discovering along the way the landscape that captivated Georgia O'Keeffe in the early 1900s. The broad views of draws, bluffs, canyons and mesas she painted are animated by the rolling sea of prairie grasses. Silhouetted on the horizon is a caravan of wild turkeys, 15 hens, necks extended, tail feathers down, lurching along like miniature dinosaurs.

Lipscomb, population 44, is a blip of a prairie railroad town with a surprisingly large and sturdy county courthouse in the center. The settlement once known as a cattleman's paradise now cultivates artist studios. The mostly grass town square is home to three frontier storefronts with a winningly eccentric inventory of art, books, saddles and big personalities. Monthly art shows feature at Naturally Yours, a gallery maybe best known for the Dance Platform out back. Continuing a tradition established in July 1885, Debby Opdyke and Jan Luna opened their platform in 1996 for family dancing and Prairie Kitchen dinners every third Saturday, June through September.

We've come in search of posole, chile and cornbread and the Annual Lipscomb Studio Tour, held each October. At Natural-

ly Yours we find Gerald L. Holmes, illustrator of John Erikson's Hank the Cowdog series, sketching in the front room and folks lining up for chow in the back. We settle in to chat and chew, totally entranced by the locals and their knowledge of area history (settlers here were Germans and Russians lured by offers of free passage and abundant land).

Before leaving town we stop to visit with J.W. Beeson, saddle-maker and cowboy poet, as fine a teller of tales as he is a leather artisan. Finally, we hit the lonesome road to Higgins and the Prairie View Furniture studio of Doug Ricketts, a one-of-a-kind woodworker and artisan, who redefines the expression "creative reuse." He recycles hardware and machine bits, iron key plates, stove legs and found objects into museum-worthy tables, cabinets and furnishings. In one remarkable white oak cabinet, a John Deere Crust Buster's tine functions as a door pull, a section of the diesel tank a door panel.

Then, too early, it's time to head back south and settle into our next adventure. I ask Elliott what wisdom he has gleaned from the journey. He closes his eyes and thinks. Then, with a smile he says, "Opportunities lead to opportunities," he says. Indeed. ☆

DETAILS

- **Canadian Visitors' Center/Chamber of Commerce:** (806) 323-6234, www.canadiantx.com
- **Gene Howe Wildlife Management Area:** (806) 323-8642, www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wma/wmarea/genehowe.htm
- **Palace Theatre:** (806) 323-5133, www.palacetheatre.com
- **Naturally Yours Gallery & Dance Platform:** (806) 862-2900
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G O N E W I T H

Story by Stayton Bonner ~ Photography by Jerod Foster



ON FEBRUARY 8, 1868, CHARLES GOODNIGHT PACKED OLIVER LOVING'S CORPSE WITH POWDERED CHARCOAL IN A SEALED TIN CASKET AND CARTED HIS DEAD PARTNER 600 miles from Fort Sumner to Weatherford. The two men had fought exhaustion, Reconstruction-era rustlers and Comanche to blaze a cattle trail that created an empire and worldwide mythology. Before Loving died, he told



T H E W I N D ?

Lesser prairie-chickens are imperiled in the quest for renewable energy.

his young partner he wished to be buried back home.

For these hard-driving businessmen, Texas was more than a land of economic opportunities. Realizing the bison's inherent worth as a part of the Great Plains, the land from which he'd made his fortune, Goodnight preserved a herd of his own. The bison's descendants still roam the prairie at Caprock Canyons State Park.

FROM TEXAS TO CANADA, THE MIDWEST WIND CORRIDOR IS HOME TO SOME OF THE WORLD'S STRONGEST AND MOST CONSISTENT AIR CURRENTS.



OPPOSITE: ESOPHAGEAL AIRSACK FULL, THE LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN IS CERTAINLY A UNIQUE-LOOKING BIRD, NOT ACTUALLY A CHICKEN, BUT A TYPE OF GROUSE.

BELOW: FORMER TEXAS CONGRESSMAN PAUL SADLER IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WIND COALITION, AN ADVOCACY TRADE GROUP SUPPORTING CONTINUED GROWTH OF WIND ENERGY TECHNOLOGY IN TEXAS.



THEIR TALES MAY NEVER have survived had it not been for biographer J. Evetts Haley's 1936 book *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman*. The cattle drive stories that Haley recorded from Goodnight ended with the barbed-wire fencing of the West. But the writer's grandson, Jeff Haley, a fifth-generation cattleman east of Pampa, now sees a new economic endeavor approaching from just over the southern horizon. As cattle drives and their ensuing ranches closed the bison's range, wind energy may doom another Great Plains species — the lesser prairie-chicken.

In May 2008, the U.S. Department of Energy issued a report outlining how wind farms could produce 20 percent of the country's electricity by 2030. As domestic wind energy currently produces just over 1 percent of total U.S. power grid capacity, the projected goal would fuel massive industry growth, producing an estimated 180,000 new jobs. The United States is looking to the Great Plains for its wind market future. From Texas to Canada, the Midwest wind corridor is home to some of the world's strongest and most consistent air currents.

Realizing wind energy's economic potential, Texas has been aggressive in its development. With more than 8,000 installed megawatts of wind energy, the Lone Star State has established itself as the wind corridor's foundation. International energy companies like Shell and BP are attracted by the state's generous tax incentives, few siting restrictions and lack of environmental regulations on development.

The state government enacted legislation to create "Competitive Renewable Energy Zones," or CREZs, to fast-track wind energy development and the construction of transmission lines necessary to move large amounts of wind energy. Lines will run from the five CREZs, located in windy West Texas and the Panhandle, to urban centers located within the Electricity Reliability Council of Texas. As the nation's only energy grid completely contained within state borders, ERCOT enjoys substantial autonomy from federal oversight. The Texas Public Utility Commission plans for transmission line construction to begin in 2011.

"Being the new kid on the block and displacing other energy sources, wind is sometimes criticized," says Paul Sadler, a Democrat who served in the Texas House from 1991 to 2003. He now heads the Wind Coalition, a nonprofit association designed to promote wind energy development in eight states, including Texas. Sadler's office overlooks an Austin skyline jagged with construction towers.

"If you're of the opinion that burning fossil fuels and relying on foreign oil are creating

problems for us, then you have to develop renewables," he says. "To do that, you have to get it to the market. [CREZ] was very forward-thinking and progressive."

The rapid growth of renewable energy production in Texas is a direct result of Senate Bill 7, passed by the Texas legislature in 1999 and signed by then-Governor George W. Bush. The bill established the state's first renewable energy portfolio standard. Traditional energy generators entered into contracts with wind farm developers, kick-starting the industry and establishing a new state commodity for fiscal growth. Development has far exceeded the bill's projected levels and is more aggressive than the federal Obama-Biden Energy Plan.

Like oil and gas families with generations of wealth based on fossil fuels, property owners with good wind potential may receive royalties from energy sold. But unlike oil, a finite resource, wind can be utilized from generation to generation into perpetuity. For a dry land farmer scraping by from year to year, an extra \$70,000 to \$100,000 from wind energy income may mean the difference between selling and keeping the land.

Even with frequently granted tax abatements, wind farms generate millions in tax revenue, benefit local school districts and create new jobs. Wind is an energy source that creates no emissions and requires virtually no water after its access roads have been built (a key issue considering the Panhandle's depleting Ogallala Aquifer).

The Texas State Data Center projects that the state's current population will more than double by 2035. Residents will need all the energy possible. The only way to curtail energy resource development is for state residents to lessen their usage habits.

While renewables receive federal production tax credits, almost all forms of energy receive federal tax incentives. A state's diverse renewable energy portfolio holds down prices on other sources.

Despite wind energy's positive traits, the state's lack of regulations is having unknown repercussions on its wildlife. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) manages the state's fish and wildlife resources but has no formal regulatory authority over development projects. As a result, the agency must encourage wind developers to embrace voluntary siting guidelines in order to attenuate possible impacts to wildlife. In some cases, the agency has received high levels of cooperation and in others it has not.

Kathy Boydston, TPWD's program leader for the Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program, says that, at best, 40 percent of wind energy develop-





ers choose to work with her agency.

"It's probably less than that," she says. "A lot of people don't come to us because they're not required to do so by any federal or state regulation."

Animals that have adjusted to man's 20th-century presence suddenly have a new entity with which to deal. Aside from the turbines and their attendant roads, the Texas Public Utility Commission's plan to build transmission lines from the CREZs to ERCOT would displace an estimated 56,000 acres and further fragment undeveloped land.

"Wind development is the last one to the dance," says Heather Whitlaw, TPWD's non-game specialist for the Panhandle. "We already have production agriculture, oil and gas development and urbanization on the landscape. Now we have wind development coming in."

Development planning may be crucial for ensuring that wildlife isn't squeezed from remaining parcels of habitat. A reclusive and relatively unknown animal has been designated as the sole representative of all Panhandle species: the lesser prairie-chicken. With endangered status under consideration by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the secretive bird's fate may have larger repercussions than most Texans realize.

The Panhandle CREZs directly line up with the lesser prairie-chicken's habitat. If the species becomes listed as threatened or endangered, changes to habitat would fall under federal jurisdiction. Wind development companies would be fined and required to purchase offset habitat for their projects. Any type of program related to a federal incentive would be affected by the lesser prairie-chicken's listing.

"We understand that wind development has many positive benefits, but at the same time we have to do it in a way that doesn't have an unintended consequence of impacting all these other landowners, producers and everybody who's already working on the land," Whitlaw says. "Dealing with an endangered species would be a challenge, to say the least. But if that time comes, we will be ready."



THE LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN gets no respect. Even its title is a misnomer. The "chicken" is actually a grouse, named by the Panhandle's early settlers for its passing resemblance to a species they already recognized. The grassland nesting bird is found in small regions of Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. Like New Zealand's kiwi and Mauritius' extinct dodo, the lesser prairie-chicken is

a geographically isolated, ground-dwelling bird. Other than the Great Plains' short-grass prairie, the species is found nowhere else in the world.

Though diminutive in size, the lesser prairie-chicken has certain traits in common with the wolves and bison that once roamed the plains. The species needs wide-open rangeland. The embattled grouse's aversion to vertical structures like wind turbines and transmission lines could prove its death knell.

A Kansas State University 2002 study found that female lesser prairie-chickens will avoid transmission lines by an average distance of 472 feet. The higher the structure, the more the grouse will avoid it. Scientists theorize that the species avoids tall structures like turbines because they equate them with trees or other places where birds of prey may perch. The CREZs call for 2,529 miles of 345 kv transmission lines to be built. The lines average in height from 115 to 150 feet. A typical wind turbine will range from 300 to 500 feet tall.

Scientists hypothesize that the Panhandle lesser prairie-chicken may be affected the same as its Kansas brethren. If this is proven true, aside from the direct habitat loss from CREZ transmission line construction, an indirect loss of habitat due to avoidance will greatly decrease the grouse's range.

As the female won't raise her clutch of six to 10 eggs near a tall vertical structure, her habitat is fragmented. Unable to find cover, the chicks are susceptible to predation. The species' habitat becomes more confined and its genetic diversity is diminished.

"The Kansas studies found that they avoid structures there," states Blake Grisham, who tracks lesser prairie-chickens for Texas Tech University. "Our hypothesis is that they'll avoid them here as well."

Along with fellow graduate students Nick Pirius and Adam Behney, Grisham tracks lesser prairie-chickens for TPWD and the U.S. Geological Survey Texas Cooperative Research Unit at Texas Tech University. Their 2-million-acre study site encompasses Hockley, Terry, Cochran and Yoakum counties. A vast sand dune system extends from New Mexico and runs southeast across the counties. Pump jacks toil amid the dunes' bluestem grass, flowering yucca, shinery oak and mesquite. Although the dunes don't fall under the current CREZ plans, a similar study is being conducted in the Panhandle, where development would occur.

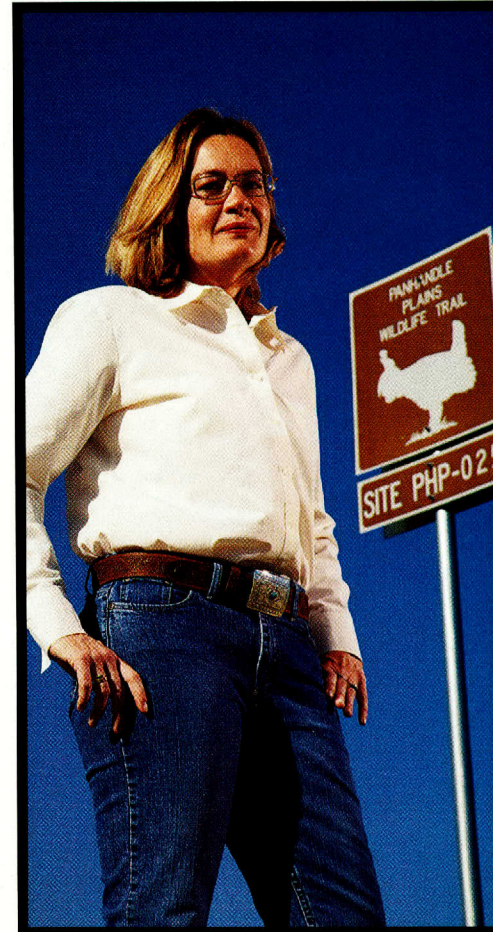


IN THE PREDAWN darkness, researchers hear the grouse before seeing them. The birds'

WITH ENDANGERED STATUS UNDER CONSIDERATION, THE SECRETIVE BIRD'S FATE MAY HAVE LARGER REPERCUSSIONS THAN MOST TEXANS REALIZE.

OPPOSITE: BLAKE GRISHAM, A PH.D. STUDENT IN TEXAS TECH'S NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT, MEASURES THE LENGTH OF A CAPTURED PRAIRIE-CHICKEN'S LEG, WHILE NICK PIRIUS, A MASTER'S STUDENT, SECURELY HOLDS THE BIRD BEFORE RELEASE.

BELOW: HEATHER WHITLAW, A RESEARCHER WORKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH TPWD AND TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY, HELPS DIRECT MUCH OF THE LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN RESEARCH.



DESPITE WIND ENERGY'S POSITIVE TRAITS, THE STATE'S LACK OF REGULATIONS IS HAVING UNKNOWN REPERCUSSIONS ON ITS WILDLIFE.

otherworldly staccato calls build. These “booms” are punctuated by their pounding feet. The researchers hear and feel these reverberations beneath their boots. The acrid smell of oil production permeates the winter air.

As dawn breaks, they see the male lesser prairie-chickens performing their courtship ritual. Bent at a 90-degree angle, the male defends his territory. He displays power to try to woo a female into copulation. Yellow eye-combs give him the appearance of a furtive brow. He bleats out a call, the red esophageal air sack inflating like a balloon at the base of his neck. Red pinnae feathers rise in a distinctive V behind his head. Resembling a Native American headdress, the pinnae are often broken and worn from battles. If an adversary continues to approach, the male will attack in the hopes of driving him away.

TPWD researchers have faced difficulty in calculating the grouse's population because they're difficult to track. Lack of knowledge about their habits, alongside wind energy's fast development, accounts for the species' sudden endangered listing peril. The game bird was still on the state's hunting list until last March. Despite the species' availability, only a few grouse were harvested in 2007 and no permits were issued in 2008.

As with Goodnight's bison, the lesser prairie-chicken is symbolic of the Great Plains. Yet the grouse remains hidden amid the plains' shinnery oak and sand sagebrush. It is hard to feel a species' loss when you never even knew it existed. Which begs the question: Aside from the federal impositions associated with the Endangered Species Act, why should we care about the bird at all?

“Honestly, we use the prairie-chicken as what we call an ‘umbrella species,’” says Jay Pruett, conservation director of the Nature Conservancy's Oklahoma branch. “They have varying habitat requirements and there are varying species that fit into each one of those habitats. We feel that if the prairie habitat is being taken care of for the prairie-chicken, it is also being taken care of for all these other groups of species that live there.”

Ideally, wind turbines would be placed on land that is already fragmented by commercial agriculture and oil and gas production. But developers understandably build where they find the best wind and transmission potential. Iberdrola Renewables, the world's largest wind energy provider, is taking an industry-leading step in monitoring ecological impact. Their “Avian and Bat Protection Plan” is a corporate commitment to conducting pre-construction and post-construction studies. The company reports its findings to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If a problem arises, they work with the federal agency

to fix it. In Texas, which has no mandates requiring post-construction studies, Iberdrola will monitor their sites anyway.

The company recently partnered with TPWD and Texas Tech University to research potential development impact on lesser prairie-chickens in Gray and Donley counties. Although no birds were found, the study will help TPWD refine their development guidelines.

“We have not yet confronted any very difficult situations where we would have to remove or redesign a project in a major way,” says Andy Linehan, Iberdrola's director of wind energy permitting. “But I think others will face that because there are certainly a lot of proposed projects throughout the Panhandle, including areas with known lesser prairie-chicken presence.”



“I DON'T REALLY WANT TO LOOK at turbines on my ranch,” Jeff Haley says. His grandfather's books line the walls alongside selections like Plato's *Republic*, Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink* and Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*. “But if my neighbors put them up, I wouldn't raise Cain because I'm adamantly opposed to any person, agency or entity dictating what can or cannot be done on the land.”

Haley's Gray County ranch falls under one of the proposed CREZs. The state would have the right of eminent domain to build transmission lines over his property.

More than 90 percent of land in Texas is privately owned. The fate of state species is held in the hands of landowners like Haley — men and women who balance their families' economic needs with overseeing their property's ecology. That balance can be as complicated as human nature. Goodnight cultivated a bison herd while simultaneously displacing the species to make room for his own cattle.

In a rapidly changing society, perhaps a landowner's best asset is knowledge. TPWD offers free land management consultation services. Wind developers like Iberdrola will inspect property and give their analysis. Independent land management agents are available to give a third opinion. For the landowner wanting to learn more about his or her property, the options are there.

“Goodnight conserved the buffalo at expense and work for himself,” Haley says. “When you're out there every day, an attachment grows. When your sweat hits the dirt, when you see the sunsets, the sunrises, the morning sun hitting the new snow, you can't help but have an attachment for it.” ★

OPPOSITE: THE SANDHILLS SOUTHWEST OF LEVELLAND, WHERE ONE POPULATION OF PRAIRIE-CHICKENS STILL RESIDES.

BELOW: JEFF HALEY STANDS ON A LEK ON HIS RANCH. HALEY CAME TO THIS LEK YEARS AGO TO WATCH THE PRAIRIE-CHICKENS BOOM, BUT HAS SEEN VERY FEW IN THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.





M O N A R C H

~ BY ELAINE ROBBINS ~

M A N I A

Each October Texans witness an amazing natural phenomenon — in their own backyards.





PHOTO © PATRICIO ROBLES GILMINDEN PICTURES

Sure, Mike Bessire raises cows on his ranch near Abilene, but it's really butterflies, not Brangus cattle, that get him excited. Each year a growing crowd of friends and family gathers for the show.

"They are here!" he wrote last fall in a posting to Journey North, a monarch migration website. "For the seventh year in a row we have monarchs in mass numbers roosting in the tall willow trees. The preliminary count is as low as 12,500 and as high as 25,000!"

Up to 300 million monarchs migrate annually through Texas. They fly in from Maine to Minnesota, from across the eastern United States and southern Canada, they funnel down to a 300 mile-wide central flyway through Texas centered on Wichita Falls [through Abilene, San Angelo and on to Del Rio] (A smaller migration route follows the gulf coast.)

Where are all those monarchs heading? To their wintering roosts in the oyamel forest of Michoacán, in central Mexico.

Last fall, a week after the monarchs left Bessire's ranch, they flitted through Helen Cordes' backyard in Georgetown, where she was having lunch with her daughter Zoe.

"We watched for at least 15 to 30 minutes when a dozen at a time flew by," she says. "They seemed to be flying a route that went right down our street. It was one of the most amazing things I've ever seen in my life."

A few days later, they were gliding high on a thermal over Sabinal Canyon, where Mitch Heindel watched them through binoculars near his home in Utopia.

"I saw one, then an hour later 10, then 100," he recalls. "I'm standing at one edge of this river of monarchs. The river could be miles wide and who knows how many miles long. Like the wildebeest or whale migration, it's hard not to be overwhelmed by the energy of life you're getting to witness."

A week later Carol Cullar saw them crossing into Mexico while she was taking a Sunday-school class on a canoe trip down the Rio Grande. "There was a continuous stream of monarchs flowing across the river into Mexico," she posted on the website Monarch Watch. "We probably saw between 500 and 700 an hour. Our canoes and the monarchs were fighting a stiff southeast wind gusting up to 35

Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed. They ingest and store the plant's toxins, which makes predators who eat them sick and less likely to eat other monarchs.





miles per hour.”

Entomologist Mike Quinn, who leads Texas Monarch Watch (www.texasento.net/dplex.htm), is amazed by the monarch mania that descends on Texas each fall. Like most insect scientists, he has come to accept the fact that some of his research doesn't generate much excitement among the general public. But each October when the monarchs arrive, his phone starts ringing off the hook. Reporters call from across the state, clamoring for quotes. His e-mail inbox fills up with reported sightings.

The mania reached its height the year that the migration went straight through the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. “I had people calling from the 20th floor of high-rise apartment buildings to say that the monarchs had just flown past their windows. Downtown office workers called and said, ‘Come get your monarchs. They're distracting me from my work.’”

Quinn believes that it is not just their trademark beauty but also the unfathomable challenge of their journey that inspires such rapture.

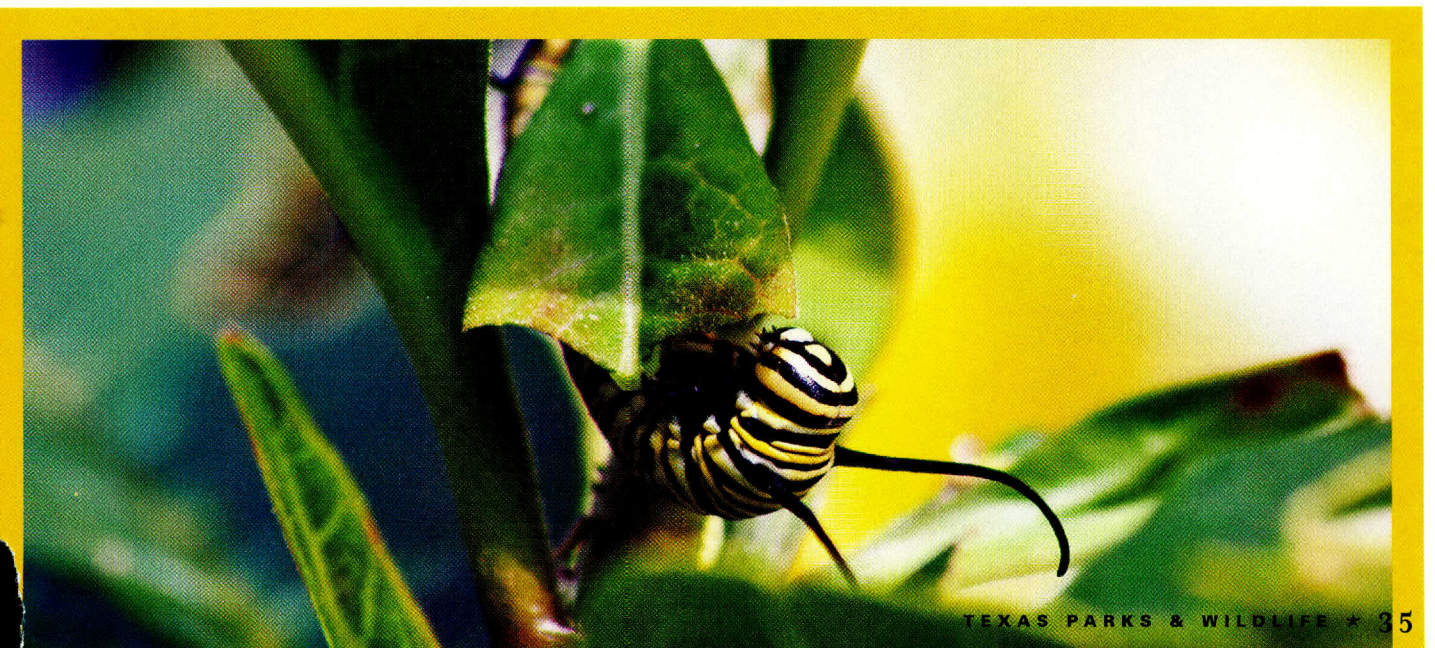
“They weigh half a gram and can fly as far as 3,000 miles,” says Quinn. “This is something no technology can match — our brains can't even understand it. It's something that will forever be of fascination.”

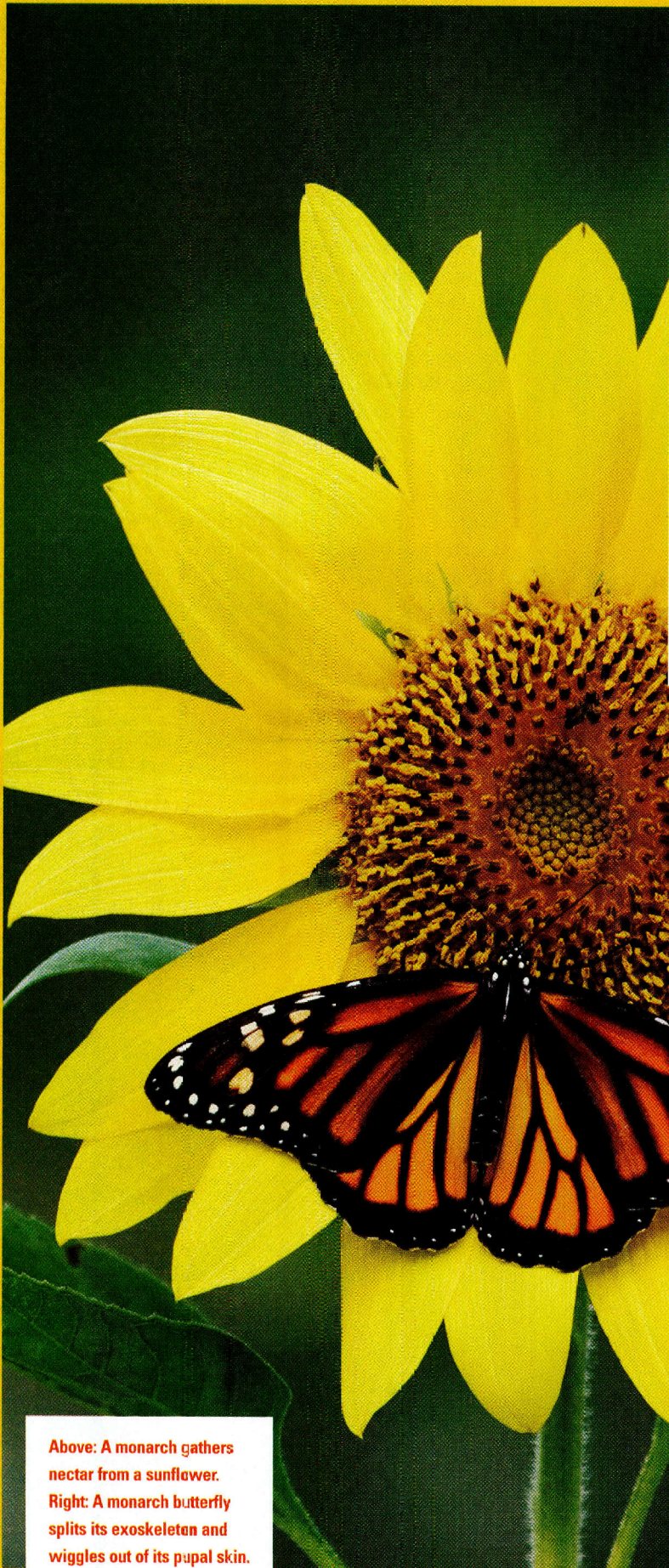
To save energy, monarchs ride on tailwinds and glide on their

The monarch may be fragile, but it is also incredibly resilient. It can alter the timing and route of its migration.

monarchs for long stretches of their journey. So effective is this approach that monarchs, scientists were surprised to find, weigh more at the end of their journey than at the start.

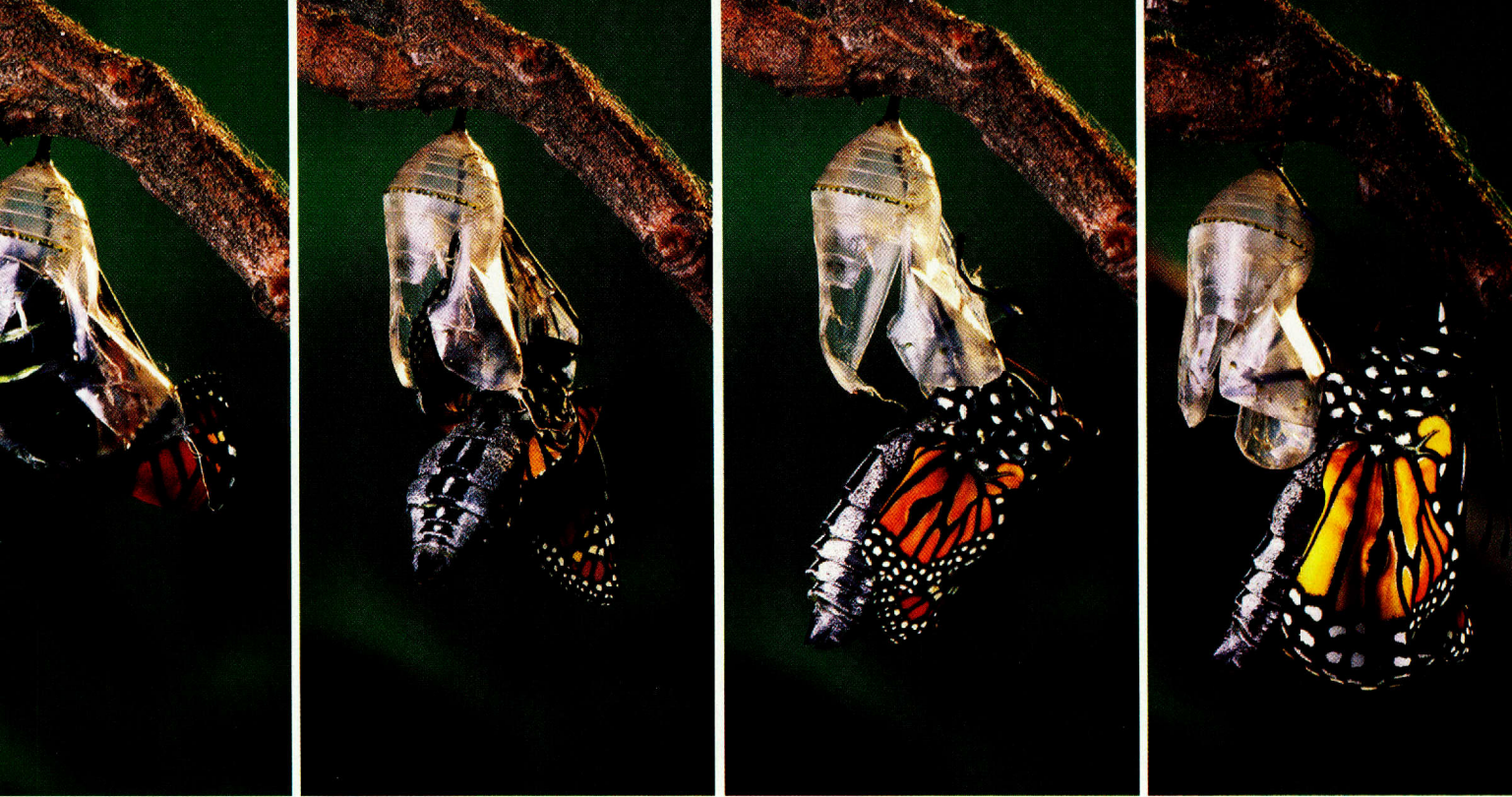
“The other mind-boggling aspect is that it takes three to five generations to make the yearly round trip,” says Quinn. “No





Above: A monarch gathers nectar from a sunflower.
Right: A monarch butterfly splits its exoskeleton and wiggles out of its pupal skin.





one butterfly goes all the way around. They're gathering in Mexico by the hundreds of millions, and not a single one of them has been there before."

In the world's longest relay race, the southward-bound generation flies all the way to Mexico, where it overwinters in a torpid state and then starts the journey north in the spring. That overwintering generation lives up to eight months — a very long time for an adult insect. Heading back north in the spring, they lay eggs and die, and the next generation picks up the baton.

It takes two more generations to complete the northward journey, each living just four to six weeks. The fourth generation, cued by the angle of the sun that cold weather is coming, makes the long journey to the Mexican wintering grounds, continuing the ancient cycle.

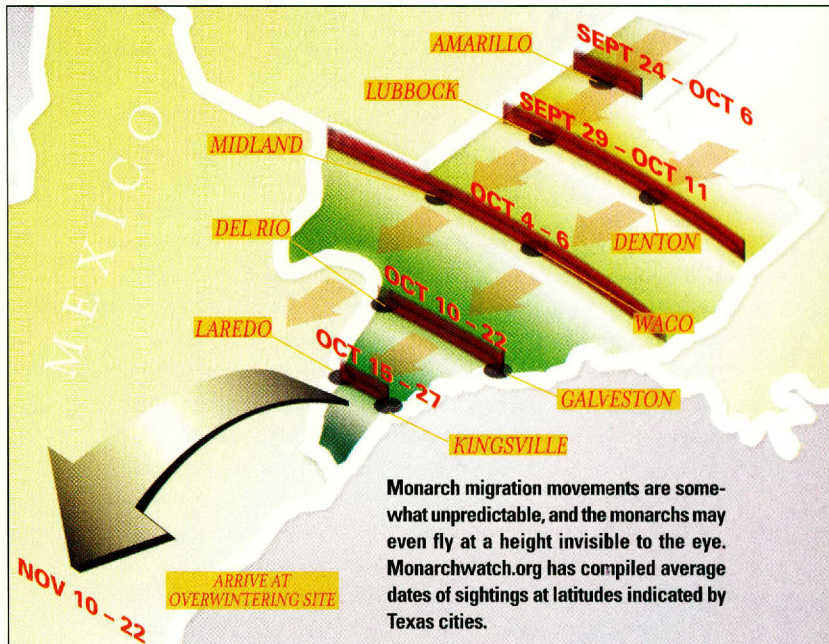
How butterflies from across the country find their way to a 70-square-mile forest in Mexico is still a subject of debate. Like birds, monarchs are thought to navigate using the angle of the sun, the earth's magnetic field and landmarks. When they hit the Sierra Madre Orientals in Mexico, for example, they follow the mountains 900 miles south to their winter roost.

But the clever monarch has another trick up its sleeve: It is one of the few insects that can navigate lon-

gitude as well as latitude. Latitude is a fairly simple proposition, involving gauging one's position based on the location of the sun or stars. But longitude is a more vexing problem, one that challenged humans for centuries. Explorers constantly missed their marks until the invention of the marine chronometer, which could simultaneously track their current time against Greenwich Mean Time. Steven M. Reppert, chair of neurobiology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, recently discovered that the monarch, with a brain smaller than a pinhead, indeed has a circadian clock that communicates with an internal time-compensated sun compass to aid navigation.

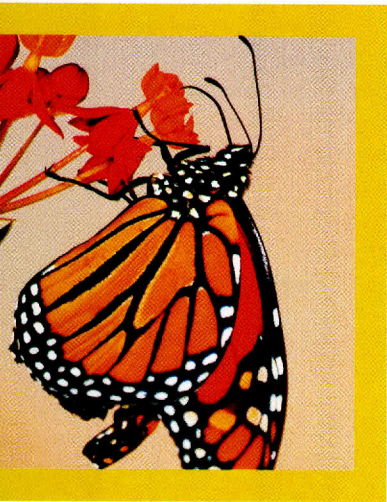
They're gathering in Mexico by the hundreds of millions, and not a single one of them has been there before."

WHEN TO SEE THEM





Left to right: A ventral view of an adult monarch. Thousands of monarchs present a lovely spectacle during migration. When they reach Mexico, monarch clusters hang like draperies from the trees. A monarch gathers nectar from garden phlox.



LEFT © CLIVE VARLACK; TOP © RUSTY BAY



For 100 years another mystery puzzled scientists: Where did the monarchs go when they disappeared in the fall? In the 1870s naturalists first theorized that monarchs might migrate like birds. Their theories were mostly spec-

ulative until 1938, when Fred Urquhart, a zoology professor at the University of Toronto, started tagging monarchs to track their movements. Eventually he and his wife developed a network of 3,000 volunteers throughout North America to tag the butterflies and report the locations of found individuals. By 1972 a pattern started to emerge as the first tagged monarchs from the eastern United States and Canada turned up in central Mexico.

The final breakthrough occurred in 1975, when Ken Brugger, an American research associate of Urquhart's who was working in Mexico City, discovered their roosting place. Working on tips from local loggers and from his Mexican wife, Catalina, who recalled seeing the monarchs as a child when she brought lunch up the mountains to her grandfather, he climbed to the oyamel

fir forest at 10,000 feet in Michoacán.

What he saw there would amaze the thousands of monarch pilgrims who would follow in his footsteps. Millions of butterflies covered the trunks of tall trees and hung in clusters on branches like fall leaves.

Urquhart announced the discovery in an article in the August 1976 issue of *National Geographic*. It was "among the greatest biological finds of the century," writes Eric Grace in *The World of the Monarch Butterfly*, "a zoological equivalent of the tomb of Tutankhamun, a treasure trove of history and beauty combined."

The excitement of the discovery was followed several years later by alarm when monarch biologists reported that logging was taking a toll on the butterflies' oyamel forest. In response to an

Millions of butterflies covered the trunks of tall trees and hung in clusters on branches like fall leaves.





LEFT © KATHY & ORDON ILLG; RIGHT © BILL BEATTY/AKMI IMAGES

MONARCH FACTS

- Most of North America's monarchs migrate through Texas. The exceptions are monarchs from west of the Rockies, which winter along the California coast, and a few eastern monarchs that travel through Florida toward Cuba.
- The monarch is the state insect of Texas.
- The North American Free Trade Agreement adopted the monarch, a true North American ambassador, as its symbol.
- The monarch is the only butterfly that completes a full, albeit sequential, south-north migration, although other species, such as the painted lady and red admiral, buy a one-way ticket north in the spring.
- Monarchs from Canada need to fly at least 50 miles a day to make it to their Mexican roosts before winter.

international public outcry, in 1986 the Mexican government declared the monarchs' winter roost an official sanctuary. Today visitors from all over the world climb the mountains to listen to the sound of millions of flapping wings in the sanctuary. But illegal logging continues to be a threat because it cuts holes in the "thermal blanket" of the forest canopy, making the butterflies vulnerable to cold and rain. That threat led the World Conservation Union to declare the monarch migration the first "threatened biological phenomenon."

While the migration does face real threats — both in Mexico, where grinding poverty provides a powerful incentive for logging, and in the United States, where agricultural herbicide use and suburban sprawl threaten the monarch caterpillar's sole food plant, milkweed — reports of its death are greatly exaggerated, as Mark Twain once said. The monarch may be fragile, but it is also incredibly resilient. As it breeds across a wide swath of North America, it can take advantage of favorable conditions where they might occur. Most important, it has an impressive reproductive capacity, with each female laying about 300 to 400 eggs.

"The endangered whooping cranes still haven't fully recovered after 60 years," Quinn says, "but the monarchs can recover from a winter population drop in a year if conditions in the spring and summer are particularly favorable."

In springtime, as the monarchs fly back through Texas, torn and tattered at the end of their life, mating is their sole imperative. The female finds a patch of milkweed to lay her eggs, which are pearly, textured jewels of pastel yellow.

In a few days, the caterpillar emerges. As the caterpillar chomps down milkweed and grows, it breaks out of its skin five times, eventually sporting stylish rings of black, white and bright yellow. Then it spins a pupa of shimmery spring green dotted with spots of metallic gold. One to two weeks later, the butterfly emerges, its trademark orange-and-black wings fringed with white-dotted borders.

The butterfly will spend its life in movement, claiming no territory of its own but making the whole continent its home. Its brief and beautiful life will be over in the flap of a wing. But if all goes well, the migration cycle will continue, inspiring all who see it with its sheer force of life. ★



<IT ONLY TOOK ONE HUNTING TRIP TO

>> BY SCOTT SOMMERLATTE



CONVERT

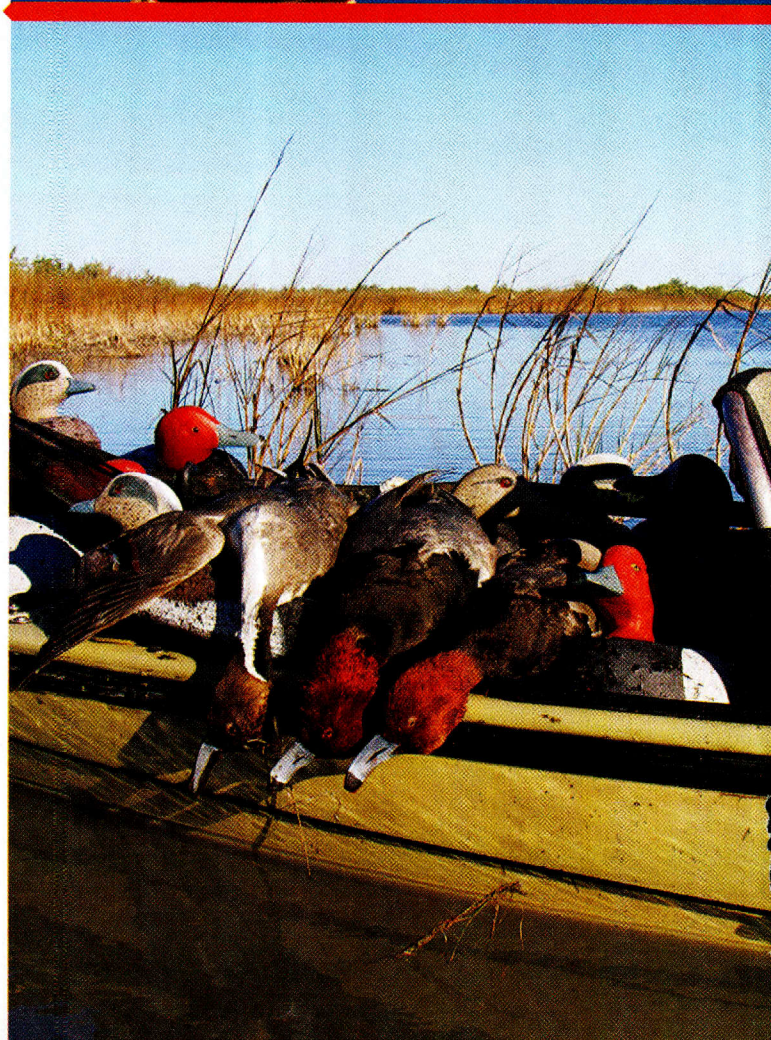
KAYAK

PROVE THE ALLURE OF DUCK HUNTING FROM A KAYAK. >

OVER THE YEARS I HAVE taken to the water to chase fowl in more ways than a person could possibly imagine.

When I was younger I would walk miles through the marsh with decoys on my back, or travel hours in a rough-riding johnboat or, sometimes, do both in a day in pursuit of a limit of ducks. Later in life, I resorted to elaborate contraptions such as marsh buggies and airboats. Now I prefer to revert back to a simpler time in life and can sometimes be found making my way to a favorite duck-hole paddling a kayak.

PHOTO © SCOTT SOMMERLATTE



LAST SEASON, A BUDDY WHO DOES MOST OF HIS outdoor recreation from a kayak told me of a fantastic day of kayak duck hunting. It wasn't so unusual, but I had never heard of it.

I thought to myself, "A kayak might just make a choice addition to my arsenal of waterfowl hunting tools." So a-shopping I went.

I was completely overwhelmed by the number of choices available to the consumer when it comes to kayaks. There are several different styles and as many or more different brands. It took me all of one shopping trip to realize that I just did not have a clue.

I had only kayaked a few times with buddies who had a spare and invited me along on a day of fishing. Honestly, I did not even remotely enjoy fishing from a kayak and swore I would never own one. I was completely satisfied with poling around in a skiff, and always wondered what all the hoopla was surrounding this whole "kayak" thing. On top of that, I could not wrap my brain around the concept of it becoming the fastest-growing segment of the outdoor industry.

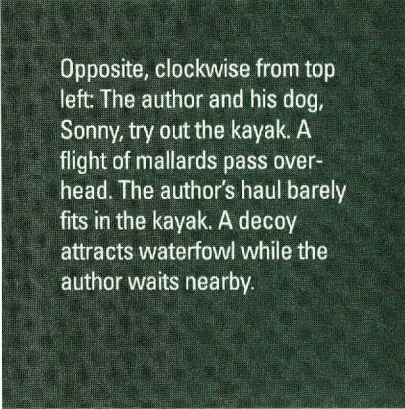
In spite of all this, now I wanted one, so it was time to do some research to find exactly what I needed in a "yak" for the pursuit of ducks.

At home, I went straight to the garage and started perusing the shelves full of waterfowl hunting gear that I have collected over the last few decades. A kayak is not all that big, I thought, and, unless I want to go straight down to Davy Jones' locker, the first thing I ought to do is figure out exactly what I need to take down a duck or two.

I narrowed down the equipment list to a few essentials, and then started thinking about the different types of craft and how the limited space might be utilized. After hours of research on the Internet and multiple trips in and out of the garage, I made a decision. I needed the widest model of a sit-on-top-type kayak that I could find. The width would give me stability and the hollow inside of the sit-on-top would give me some dry storage.

At the store, I quickly located a couple of models and then started looking at all the colors. There was no way I would be able to hide a yellow or orange kayak in the marsh, so I narrowed it down to olive drab or tan. While scoping out the boat I decided would go home with me, I realized that there was no place to put any decoys or to carry the dog, should I feel it necessary. Both would easily slide off the top, or at least make the kayak very top-heavy.

I was growing a little frustrated, so I decided to call on my friend, kayak guide Reuben Garza. Garza suggested



Opposite, clockwise from top left: The author and his dog, Sonny, try out the kayak. A flight of mallards pass overhead. The author's haul barely fits in the kayak. A decoy attracts waterfowl while the author waits nearby.

that I take a look at the Native Watercraft Ultimate. "They are wide and have a completely open cockpit that will hold all of your

gear," he told me. "Since your gear is all in the bottom of the boat, you will have a lower center of gravity, which will help with stability."

I was back on track. A mutual friend and legendary outdoorsman from Alabama, Jimbo Meador, who designed the Native Watercraft, was quick to inform me that he designed the kayak to be the ultimate tool for the total outdoorsman. "It doesn't matter whether it's fly-fishing, hunting, frog gigging — you name it, we've done it," he proclaimed proudly.

I ordered one right then and there. A couple of weeks later I was the proud owner of my first kayak, but I had not even considered all the things that I still needed to even be able to go hunting. Another trip to the store was required for the paddle and life-jacket, all in a camo pattern, of course. And, since duck hunting is often done in inclement and harsh conditions, I decided to pick up a few additional items such as a first-aid kit, a survival kit and a couple of camo dry bags for any gear that I felt would have to stay dry. I was now ready.

Since kayaking was relatively new to me, I decided to make my first trip an easy one, so I took the boat down to my hunting lease and launched in a small wooded lake that often proved difficult to hunt because of the water depth. With decoys and other essentials loaded, I set off for the middle, where there was a good natural blind among some downed trees. Once there, I set my decoy spread from the boat and then paddled up to the spot where I intended to wait for the arrival of any flights.

Situated in the cover, I used some camouflaged burlap sacks to cover the kayak and took a seat on a tree limb. In this situation, the kayak did not look much different than any other tree trunk that had fallen over in the pond and proved to be an excellent floating "shelf" for my gear.

Moments later a flight of teal arrived and was feet down in the decoys before I knew it. The flight immediately

vaulted to the air as I stood and leveled the little 20-gauge over-and-under. I missed my first shot as the birds rose and blended into the tree line behind them. I then waited for them to clear the background clutter and become silhouetted against the clear winter sky before pulling the trigger again. The second shot was clean and a green wing drake fell back into the decoys. I then noticed that a pair of birds had broken from the flock and were returning to the spread. I quickly reloaded just in time to make a snap-shot on another drake as the two teal buzzed the decoys. The hunt was a success.

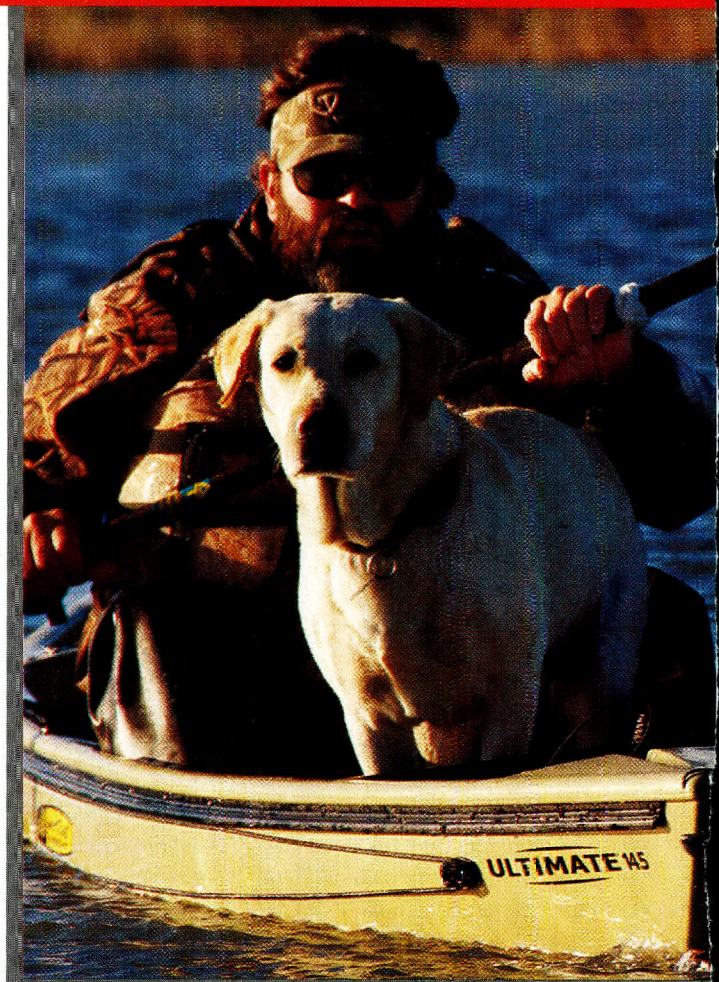
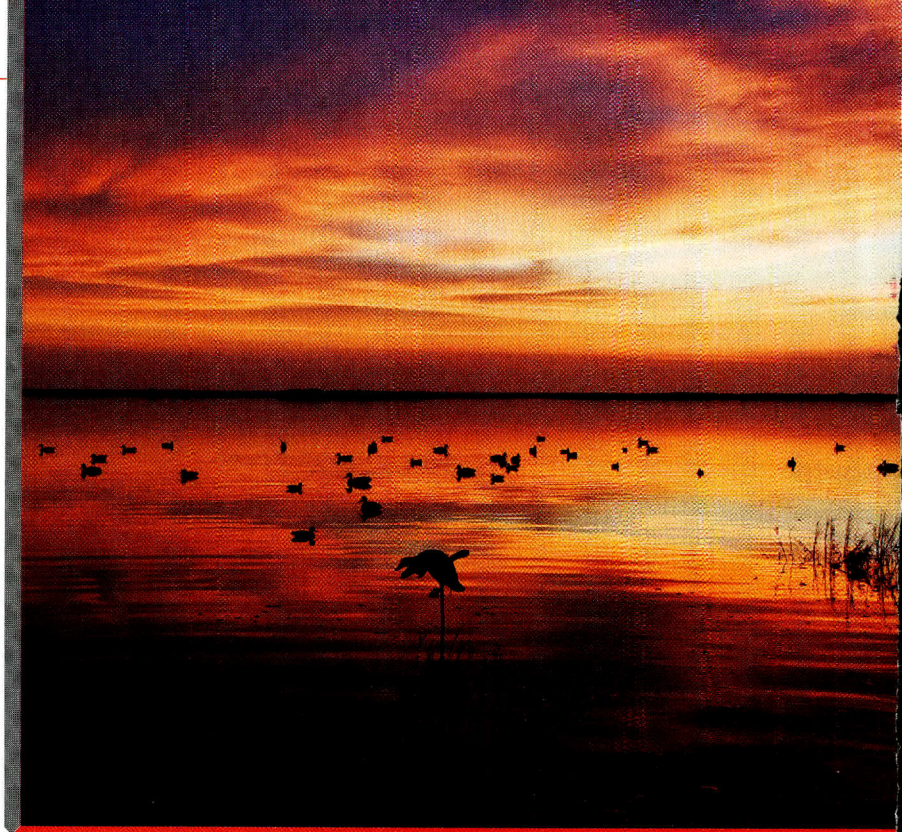
For the rest of the season, I utilized the kayak in various ways. Several times I used it to paddle to and from blinds that were not too far away from my camp. Other times I used it from a larger craft as a tender.

Using a larger outboard boat across the bay when it was rough then loading gear into the kayak and paddling into the shallow marsh to hunt pintails and redheads proved very successful on more than one occasion. The beauty of the kayak in this situation was that, unlike an airboat or bay boat, it is very small and compact, so it was very easy to hide in the spartina grass and mangroves near the blind, which eliminated the long walks through the bog of the marsh to get to and from the boat.

The kayak was also a valuable tool when I was hunting a small pond out in the middle of the saltgrass prairie. Every morning, a flight of 30 or so teal would buzz this pond and we would pass-shoot a bird or two while goose hunting. All our decoys were very tight to the shoreline because the middle was way too boggy to set out and retrieve a decoy spread, so the birds would rarely work the pond. After witnessing this event a couple of times, I realized that I had to get a spread out into the middle of the pond, where the decoys would be visible to the passing flights.

On the next trip, I loaded the kayak into the back of the truck and took it down to the pond. Using it to set the spread worked out perfectly, and it sure paid off. Every flight of ducks that flew within a couple of hundred yards of the pond made a beeline for the blocks, feet down. Even the wily mottled ducks that made the occasional pass on the pond could not resist the large spread sitting out in the middle.

All and all, I would have to say my first season as a kayak hunter was a success. I realize that I have not even begun to scratch the surface of all the possible uses of a duck "yak," but I hope I have another 20 or 30 years left in me to find out. ★



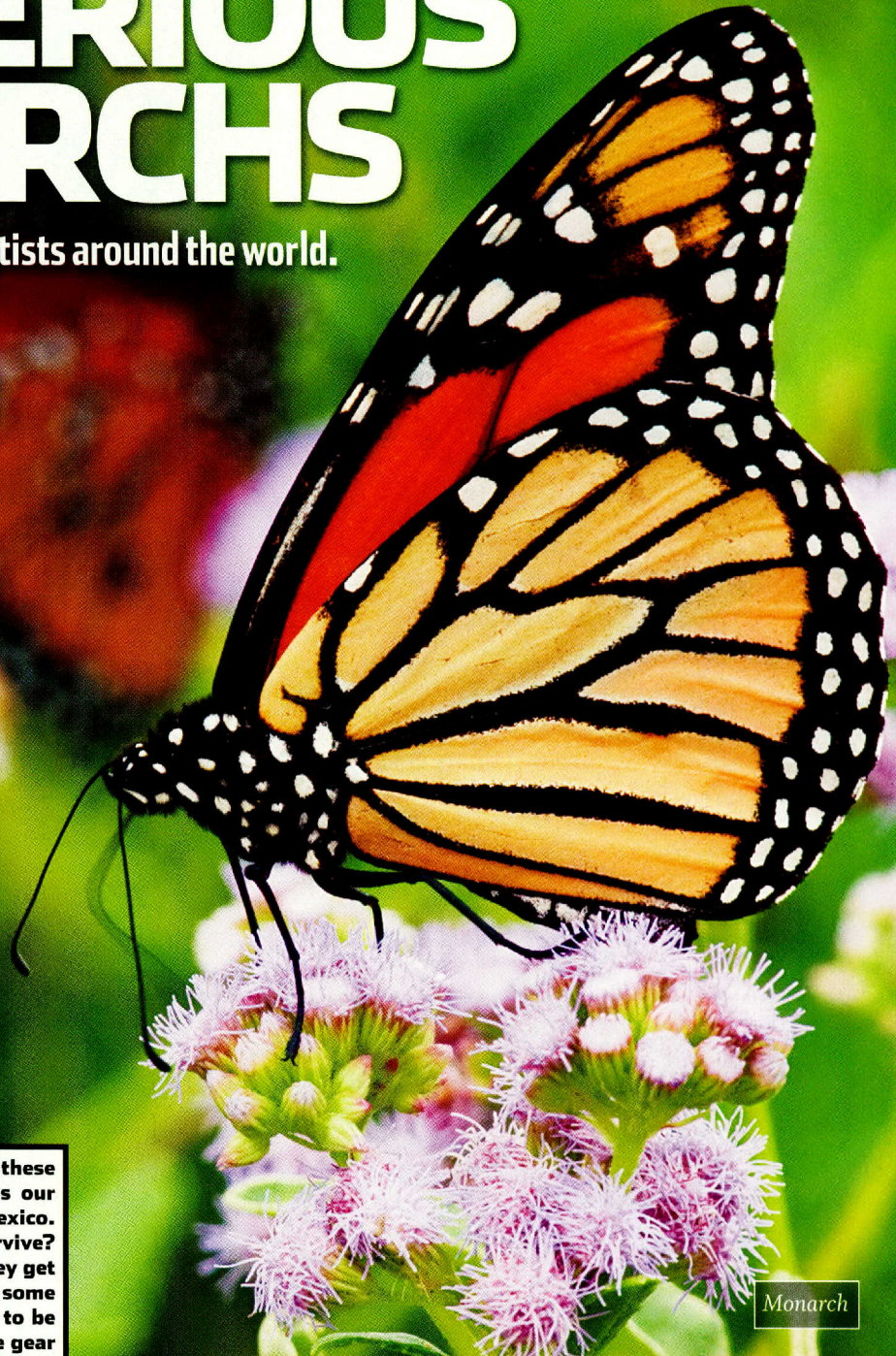
Top: Sunset alters the view, making us wonder what is real and what is decoy. Above: The author and his faithful companion, Sony, find the quiet and stealth of a kayak to be useful in their quest for ducks.

Keep Texas Wild



MYSTERIOUS MONARCHS

Beautiful butterflies puzzle scientists around the world.



» WINGED WONDERS

WELCOME TO TEXAS, MONARCHS! Every fall, these delicate but tough little insects migrate across our state on their way from Canada to Central Mexico. Some fly as far as 3,000 miles! How do they survive? How do they know where to go? And how do they get back to Canada? Scientists have figured out some answers, but there are still monarch mysteries to be solved. In the meantime, pull out your detective gear and let's go investigate these winged wonders!

PHOTO © LARRY D'ITTO

Monarch

WWW.TPWMAGAZINE.COM

The Mystery of Migration

MONARCHS – LIKE SOME BIRDS and mammals – travel south in the fall to reach warmer climates with abundant food. Most come from Canada and the northern U.S. Somehow, they find their way to fir forests that grow high in the mountains of Central Mexico. Over winter, they roost together in large numbers among the tree branches. In the spring, they return to Texas and the southern U.S., lay eggs on milkweeds and die. The young hatch and mature into adult butterflies, which continue northward. By September and October, great-grandchildren (and sometimes great-great-grandchildren) of the monarchs that migrated the previous fall arrive back in Canada and the northern U.S. Then the cycle begins again!

Monarch or not?

Difference between a monarch and a viceroy. Queen, too.



MONARCH

Round dots on the rear wings mean it's a male.



VICEROY

Thin line across rear wings is a distinguishing mark.



QUEEN

More brownish in color, open wings have no thick black lines.

Did you know?

The monarch is Texas' state insect!

Did you know?

Adult monarchs that hatch in the fall can live up to eight months. Adults that hatch in the spring and summer live only four to six weeks.

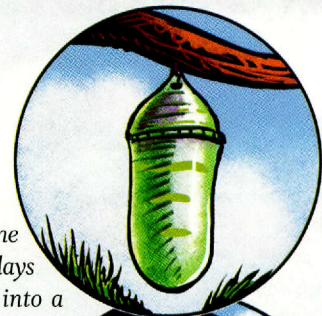
Did you know?

A butterfly drinks through its straw-like mouth (proboscis) but tastes with its feet!



The Mystery of Metamorphosis

IN THE SPRING AND FALL, monarchs deposit tiny eggs – one at a time – on the underside of a milkweed leaf. Three to six days later, the egg hatches into a larva. The larva eats milkweed leaves. Then, two to three weeks later, the caterpillar forms a green chrysalis. An adult monarch emerges seven to 10 days later.



The Mystery of Milkweed

BUTTERFLIES REQUIRE two kinds of plants: nectar (food for adult butterflies) and larval (food for caterpillars). Monarch caterpillars eat ONLY milkweed plants. So females must deposit their eggs on milkweed leaves or larvae will starve.



BROADLEAF MILKWEED
(*Asclepias latifolia*)
Common to West Texas in fall



GREEN MILKWEED
(*Asclepias viridis*)
Most monarchs feed on this species.
Found in East Central and South Texas



ANTELOPE HORN MILKWEED
(*Asclepias asperula*) – Most common in West-Central Texas



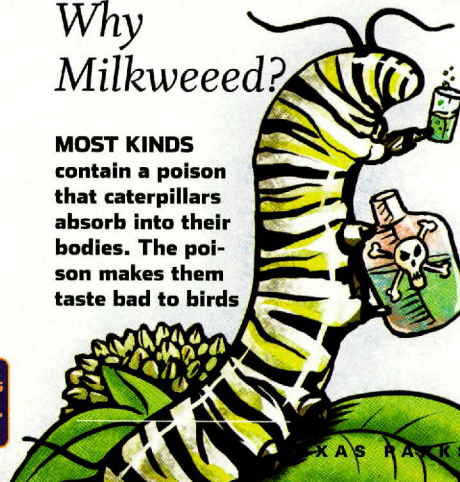
BUTTERFLY WEED
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Most common in the eastern half of Texas in the spring



Did you know?
Scientists who study butterflies and moths are called lepidopterists.

Why Milkweed?

MOST KINDS contain a poison that caterpillars absorb into their bodies. The poison makes them taste bad to birds



and other predators, which can also get sick. Like caterpillars, adult monarchs taste bad, too. Their bright orange color warns predators: Don't eat me or you'll get sick!



>> WILD ART

COLOR A BLACK-AND-WHITE version of the monarch. Can you tell if it's a male or female?

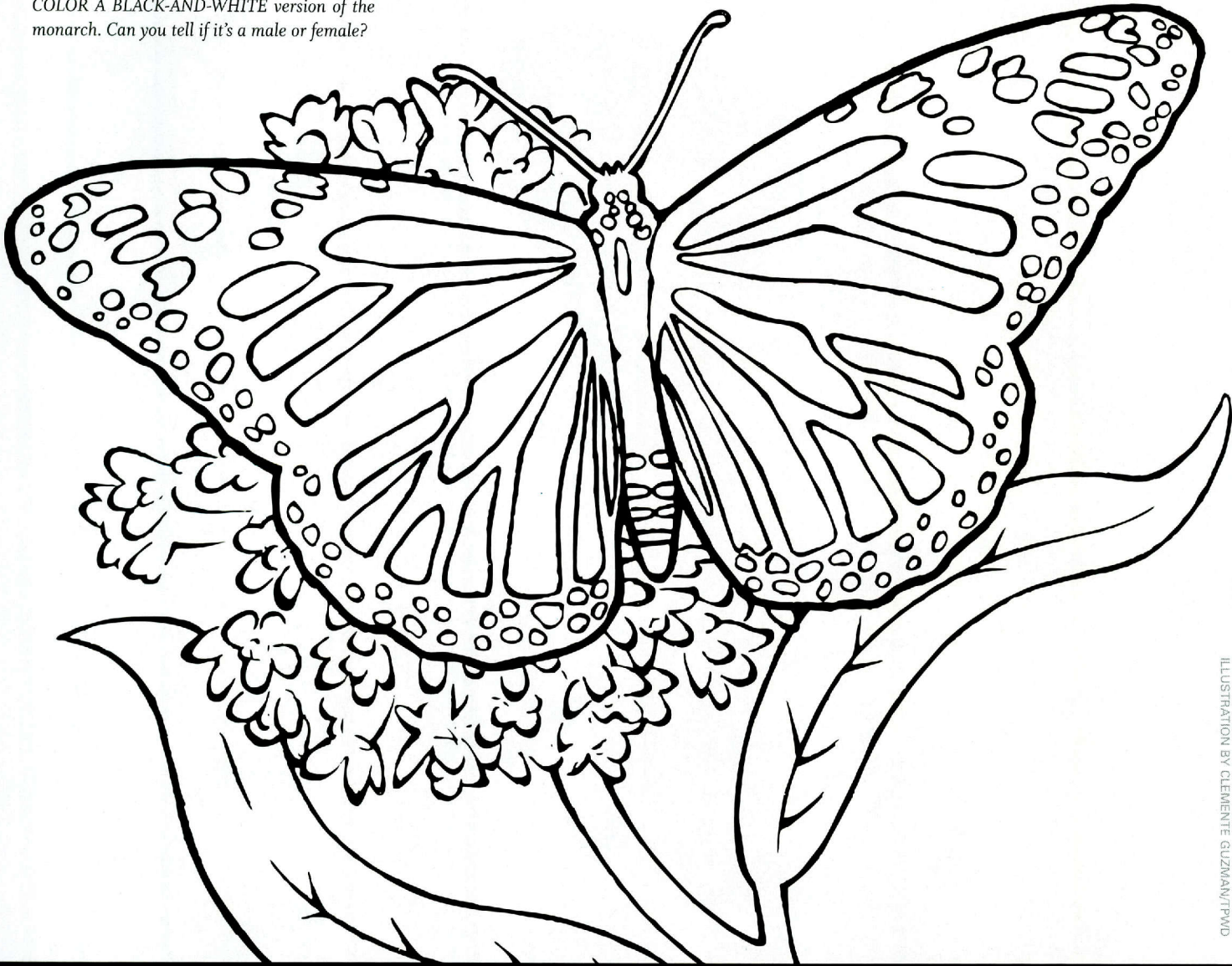


ILLUSTRATION BY CLEMENTE GUZMAN/TPWD

>> KEEPING IT WILD

MONARCHS NEED A LOT OF ENERGY (food) to migrate. You can help them stay strong by planting nectar sources in your yard. Monarchs especially love white mistflower, blue mistflower, fall asters, purple coneflowers, and zinnias. Plant some milkweeds, too — such as butterfly weed — so females can deposit eggs. It's fun to look for tiny caterpillars and watch them grow chubby and big. Challenge: ask friends to help you plant a butterfly garden at a local hospital, library or nursing home.

Fall aster

White mistflower



Yellow zinnia

Blue mistflower

COURTESY LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER GARDEN

NEXT MONTH: How To Eat With a Beak



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PHOTO BY TPWD

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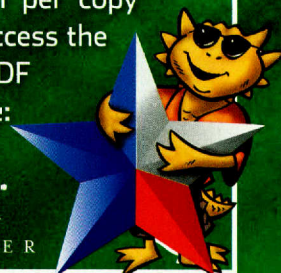
SPECIALLY FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS



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.

Randy Brudnicki
PUBLISHER





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Teddy Roosevelt's Texas

The great outdoorsman hunted javelinas and recruited Rough Riders here.

BY RUSSELL A. GRAVES

From the side road, you may never know the history inside the nondescript door mere feet from the Alamo's south wall. A sign hangs overhead announcing a doorway to history that every Texan should visit — Menger Bar.

Walking inside, the bar — which is still in operation and greets visitors daily as a part of the palatial Menger Hotel — is predictably dark despite it being early afternoon. No exterior windows and a dark, rich cherrywood interior accounts for the dimness while turn-of-the-century-looking incandescent bulbs provide enough fill light to bring out the detail in the finely carved wood.

"Hello," I say to the bartender, who is dressed in appropriately professional togs with a hint of old-school flair.

Opposite: TR in Rough Rider uniform. Lower left: Roosevelt and his Rough Riders, winners of the Battle of San Juan. Lower right: TR gives a farewell address from the back of a train in Fort Worth.



He wipes the bar with a white rag and looks up to return my salutation. He offers me a drink but I decline — opting instead to talk about the history of the bar and to shoot a few images.

It takes no time exploring the lower level of the bar, as it isn't all that big. I scamper up the stairs to the top level and look over the rail at the black-and-white-clad barkeep sorting bottles and carrying about his business before his mid-week crowd filters through the doors. I catch a subtle waft of cigar smoke and see a man walk through the door from the hotel. Turns out, he's a filmmaker scouting locations for an upcoming feature and figured that Texas is the place where he'd find what he was looking for.

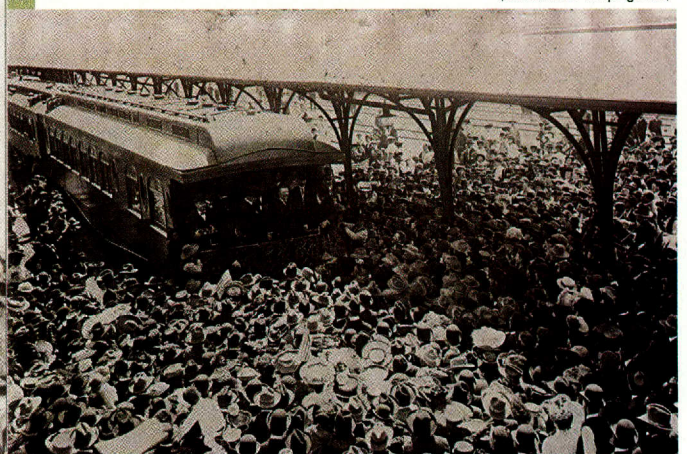
It seems that this bar is a good place to find what adventurers seek. In 1898 Colonel Theodore Roosevelt sat in this very bar looking for a piece of a puzzle that, he surmised, he

"OF COURSE THESE RANGERS NEEDED NO TEACHING. THEY WERE TRAINED TO OBEY AND TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY. THEY WERE SPLENDID SHOTS, HORSEMEN, AND TRAILERS."

— President Theodore Roosevelt

would have no trouble finding in Texas. I'm on TR's trail and aim to visit some of the same sites he visited in Texas and, in the process, learn how the 26th president influenced our state.

(continued on page 55)



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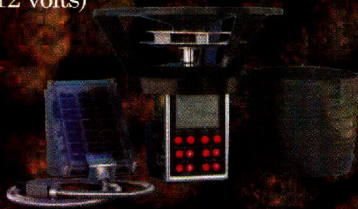
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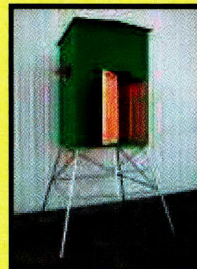
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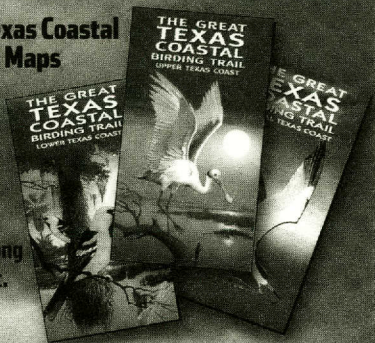
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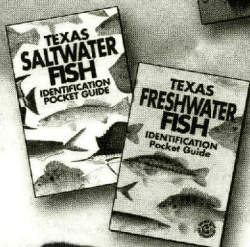
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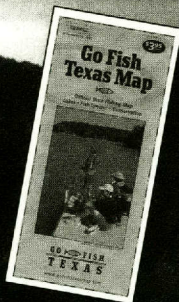


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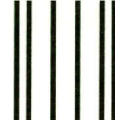
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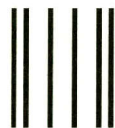
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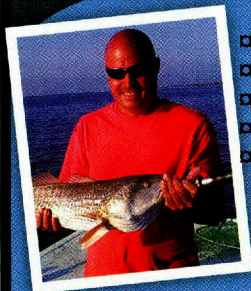
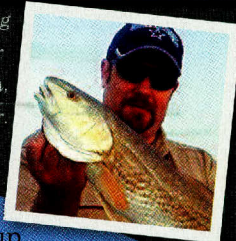
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The First United States Volunteer Cavalry

The 1898 trip to the Menger Bar was Roosevelt's second trip to the San Antonio area. Six years earlier he was in Texas for recreation when he hunted javelinas near the Nueces River.

The 1898 trip was all business, though. Less than a month after President William McKinley signed the April 1898 law that formed volunteer military regiments in the western United States and territories, Roosevelt traveled to the Menger Bar to recruit volunteers for the cavalry that he was appointed to command — the Rough Riders.

The Rough Riders were mustered because the regular army was deemed too small to undertake a foreign military engagement. In Texas, Roosevelt knew that he'd be able to find hard-fighting men who matched what he needed for his outfit. Turns out, he was right.

"We drew a great many recruits from Texas," wrote Roosevelt on his visit to San Antonio in his book *The Rough Riders*, "and from nowhere did we get a higher average, for many of them had served in that famous body of frontier fighters, the Texas Rangers. Of course these rangers needed no teaching. They were trained to obey and to take responsibility. They were splendid shots, horsemen, and trailers. They were accustomed to living in the open, to enduring great fatigue and hardship, and to encountering all kinds of danger."

On May 15, Roosevelt joined his men just south of downtown San Antonio on land (now named Roosevelt Park) next to the San Antonio River, where some 1,200 men drilled and trained on horses bought in Texas. Less than two weeks later, the men left for Florida, and a couple of weeks after that, the Rough Riders were the first United States troops to land in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. They cemented their place in history with their charge of San Juan Hill — a move that seized Spanish fortifications and caused the enemy's retreat.

The Wolf Hunt

Teddy Roosevelt's fame as a commander in the Spanish-American War, of course, catapulted his political popularity, and he was soon elected governor of New York, then tapped as vice president, and upon the assassination of William McKinley, became president of the United States.

While still president, Roosevelt traveled back to Texas for a Rough Riders reunion in San Antonio in 1905. After the reunion, he made his way back up through northwest Texas to hunt coyotes in the Comanche Territory in present-day southwest Oklahoma.

After train stops and speeches in small towns like Quanah, Texas, the presidential procession arrived in Frederick, Oklahoma, where, on April 18, he joined notable Texas cattlemen like Burk Burnett of the Four Sixes Ranch, Comanche Indian Chief Quanah Parker and Texas Ranger Bill McDonald for a few days of "wolf coursing."

While most of the hunt took place just across the Red River in Oklahoma, toward the hunt's end, the party relo-

cated to a ranch south of Quanah near the present-day Lake Pauline. Just south of town, a county road (Wolf Hunt Road) pays homage to the event.

In his memoir *Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter*, Roosevelt describes a lively hunt: "We entered the town after dark, some twenty of us on horseback. ... We broke into a lope a mile outside the limits, and by the time we struck the main street, the horses were on a run and we tore down like a whirlwind until we reached the train. Thus ended as pleasant a hunting trip as anyone could imagine."

In all, the group took 17 coyotes on the hunt. Roosevelt was fascinated by one of the hunters, Jack Abernathy, and was impressed by his ability to catch and tie up live coyotes by hand. Roosevelt, in complimentary fashion, was reported to have quipped to Abernathy, "I want you to be my guest in Washington, and every time you see a senator grab him and tie up his jaws the way you do those wolves."

Lasting Texas Legacies

While parks and streets in San Antonio bear Roosevelt's name, only one Texas community was named to honor him. Established in 1898 out on the hardscrabble edge of the western Texas Hill Country in Kimble County, Roosevelt was named for the future president after it was reported he visited the area with the Rough Riders before heading to the Spanish-American War.

Perhaps the most long-lasting influence that Teddy Roosevelt had on Texas was his strong conservation ethic. His leadership brought conservationist principles to the forefront after the excesses of market hunting decimated wildlife populations in the 19th century.

Founded in 1887 by Roosevelt and a handful of other like-minded individuals, the Boone & Crockett Club was formed to promote fair chase in hunting, and lobby for conservation-minded hunting regulations. Additionally, the Boone & Crockett Club established the standards by which big game animals are judged. The Boone & Crockett scoring system is the most widely used system for objectively establishing a measurable score for antlered and horned mammals.

Interest in big deer has shaped the way most Texas hunters think, and a huge deer hunting culture has emerged. Today, Texas is recognized internationally as being one of the top states for harvesting free-range white-tailed deer with the potential of making the Boone & Crockett Club record books.

In 1903, President Roosevelt set aside lands for the protection of wildlife when he authorized the creation of the first National Bird Preserve on Pelican Island, Florida. The move eventually paved the way for the national wildlife refuge system, and today, Texas is home to 17 national wildlife refuges encompassing more than 400,000 acres.

While Roosevelt was a New Yorker by birth, his impact on Texas culture and folklore is undeniable. As a soldier, conservationist, hunter and president, he held Texas and Texans in high esteem, and his impact on our state lasted well beyond his passing. ★

PARTINGSHOT

IMAGE SPECS:

Canon EOS 1N camera, 24mm
Canon tilt shift lens, Velvia film,
ISO 50, f/16 at 1/15 second.

Sometimes it seems that when photographer Wyman Meinzer takes his camera out on the West Texas plains, Mother Nature obliges by putting on a spectacular show. After 50 years of hard work, this tired windmill has seen better days, but it provides stark contrast to the stunning symphony of color in the background.





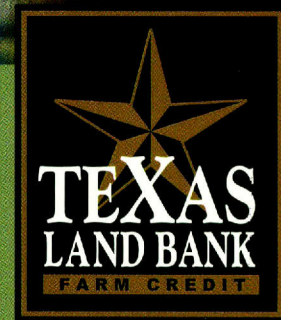
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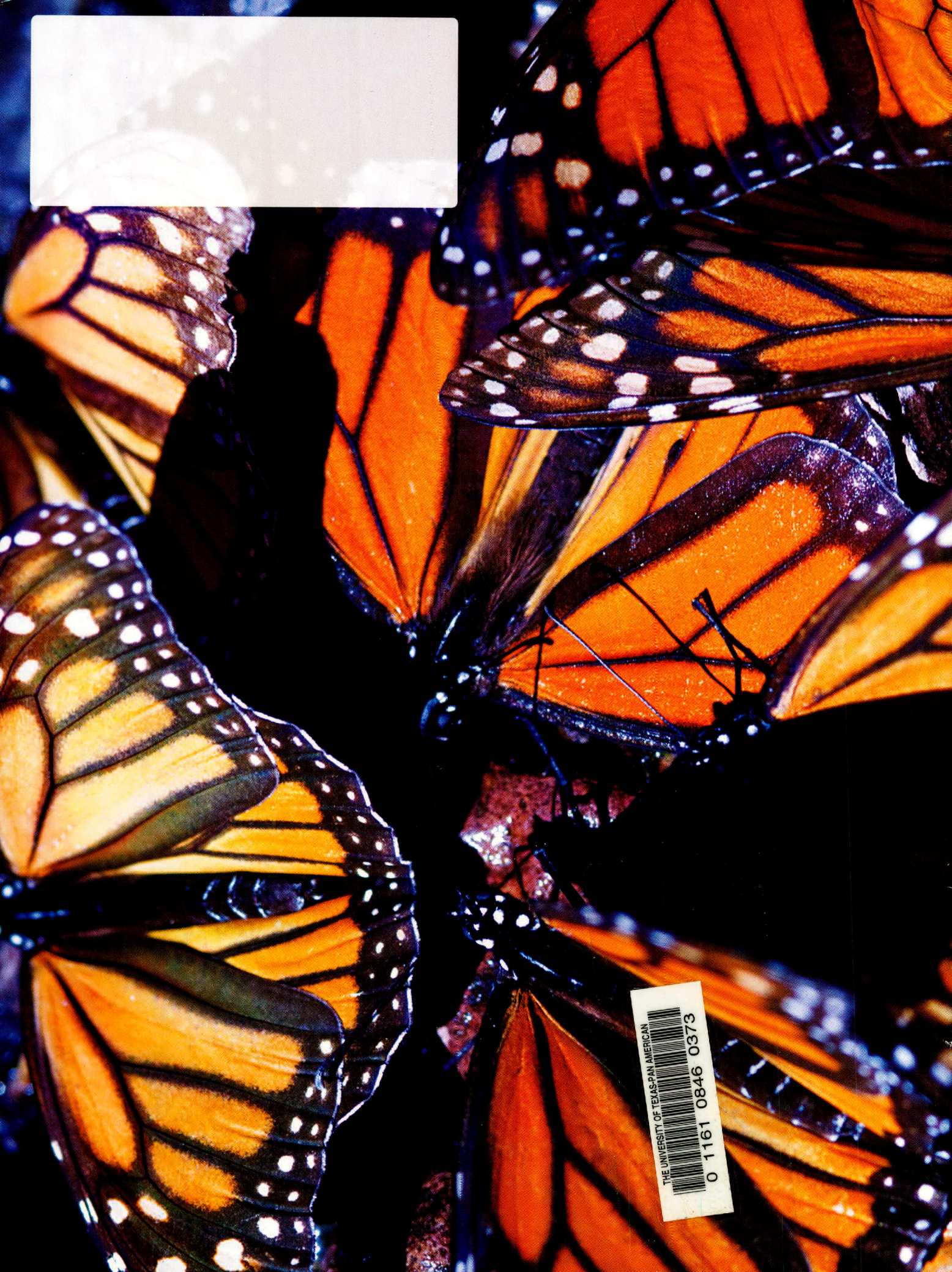
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