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TEXAS

PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS



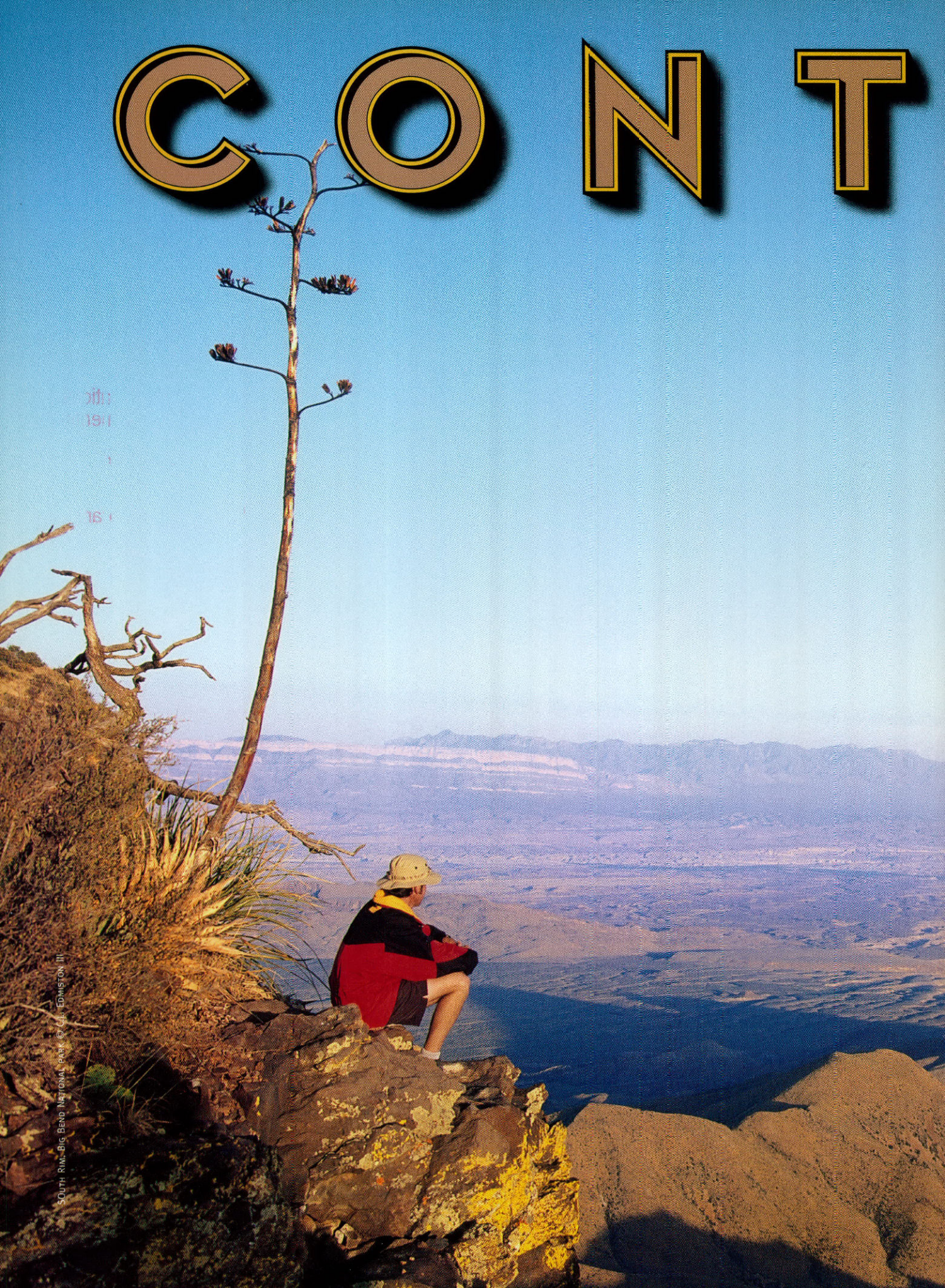
TAKE FLIGHT!

INTRODUCING "Three Days in the Field"

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JANUARY 2002

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Front: El Campo sits in the center of a three-county area that hosts one of the largest concentrations of waterfowl in the U.S. See "Three Days in the Field" on page 12. Photo © John R. Ford.

Back: Bass tournaments are big business in small-town Texas. Read about efforts to protect the bass population beginning on page 16. Photo © David J. Sams.

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AT ISSUE

From the Pen of Susan L. Ebert

As we look forward to the year ahead, our hearts are filled with hope and our heads are brimming with ideas for new features, departments and presentations. This venerable magazine is approaching the 60th anniversary of its genesis in December 1942, a tenure becoming increasingly rare in the magazine world. Although we strive to delight you as you turn these pages while relaxing in your favorite chair, we at *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine seek to be even more: To become your encouragement, your scout, to enjoying wild Texas.

In the past few months, not only has the economy plummeted but often, our spirits have as well. Although the burdens of humankind are ones we must shoulder with our fellow citizens, the restorative powers of the natural world are quietly waiting for us every hour of the day.



Nearby, hundreds of thousands of white shrimp dashed toward the sea, flickering like silvered popcorn across the surface as the seagulls circled overhead and the speckled trout feasted below.

The wild places are waiting for you! In the past month, I have seen clouds of redhead ducks — 10,000 or more at once — roll over the surface of St. Charles Bay like an airborne river. Nearby, hundreds of thousands of white shrimp dashed toward the sea, flickering like silvered popcorn across the surface as the seagulls circled overhead and the speckled trout feasted below. I've explored Big Bend Ranch State Park with my teenagers, where we quietly observed tarantulas, coachwhip snakes, roadrunners, jackrabbits and mule deer go about their daily quests for survival. Regenerated and refreshed, we returned to our daily obligations with a lilt in our hearts. Now, I challenge you to do the same!

To entice you to go wild in Texas, *Texas Parks & Wildlife* has partnered with 48 fishing guides, hunting guides and paddling outfitters to bring you an extraordinary opportunity: The 48 guides, featured on pages 50 and 51, have graciously agreed to offer a 20% discount on their services to any reader of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. *For the next six months!*



To take advantage of this offer, simply book a trip with one of our 48 partners between now and June 30, 2002. Clip the advertisement of the guide you will be hiring, and send the clipped ad along with your trip deposit. To be fair to the guides in their generosity, no facsimiles or photocopies of the ad will be accepted. This promotion will run not only in this issue, but in February and March as well.

This issue, as well, launches our brand-new department "Three Days in the Field." As Texans become increasingly time-impooverished, we hope to fill a need by giving you a "how-to" travel itinerary for an outdoors-oriented three-day weekend.

So no excuses now: Read this issue, then go wild in Texas!

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To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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Rick Bass is the author of 16 books of fiction and nonfiction, including most recently *Colter: The True Story of the Best Dog I Ever Had*. In July, Houghton Mifflin will publish a collection of fiction, *The Hermit's Story*. A native of Fort Worth, Bass lives in northwestern Montana with his wife and daughters, where he is a board member of the Montana Wilderness Association and the Yaak Valley Forest Council, which is



working to help protect the last roadless areas in the national forests. In this issue he writes about his young dog's hunting misadventure.

Slayton L. White is the editor of *Field & Stream* magazine. A lifelong outdoorsman, he has written the magazine's vehicles column for 14 years. He is a past president of the International Motor Press Association and author of *The Field & Stream Sporting Vehicles Handbook*, available from The Lyons Press. In this



issue's Skillbuilder, White offers tips for taking care of your truck in order to get the best service from it on hunting and fishing trips.

E. Dan Klepper is the author, under the pen name Edwin Daniels, of books on art, culture and natural history including *Ghostdancing — Sacred Medicine and the Art of JD Challenger* and the beautifully illustrated *Wolf Walking*. Klepper's fiction includes short stories that portray the natural world as an integral force in the lives of



his characters. He lives and works in the heart of his inspiration — the Big Bend country of West Texas. He writes about the Devils River wolf girl in this issue.

IN THE FIELD

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MAIL CALL

Picks, Pans and Probes from Previous Issues

Save Some Texas for Us All!

I have reread "Investing in the Future" several times, and I am really encouraged by the conservation mindset of private citizens and the state's recognition of land conservation easements.

As a Texas resident who has been away for 19 years on various U.S. Marine Corps assignments, I find myself eager to return to Texas at the conclusion of my military career. Each issue of your magazine keeps me in touch with the wonder, beauty and bounty of Texas. Currently living overseas on assignment, I am reminded of the great treasure we Americans enjoy in our vast and beautiful countryside!

*David Blasko
Okinawa, Japan*

Thanks for the wonderful article in the November 2001 issue, "Investing in the Future." This article on conservation easements is so important because it informs the public of their options in preserving their property from development and urban sprawl. Thanks to the 100 Texas landowners who have participated at this time.

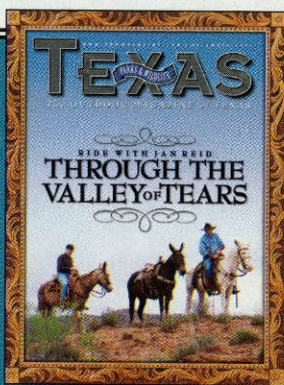
We who love the land in its natural state are few it seems, and many times feel like the brave souls who fought in the Alamo: so outnumbered, fighting a brave war alone, but knowing that there are more important issues than economic growth.

My forefathers made a three-month voyage on the ship *Neptune*

from Germany in 1848, arriving in Galveston, then moving on to Spring Branch. They suffered malaria, typhoid and other hardships. They persevered and moved on to Round Top, as they believed it to be healthier for their families. They made difficult

looking over a beautiful land that has not been covered with cement. There must be land for our grandchildren to enjoy, with wildlife in abundance, clean air and clean water.

*Wanda Moyle
Rosharon*



I am wickedly jealous of Jan Reid's experience in "Through the Valley of Tears" (December 2001)! My mule, Chess Pie, is terrified of turkeys but she eats up big country like a Sherman tank.

*Ann Alejandro
Uvalde*

choices, as did the 100 Texas landowners who invested in our future generations.

We know there are pros and cons of conservation easements, but when faced with taxation and urban sprawl, something has to be done. As Texans, we do not like restrictions; we like freedom of choice. But most of all we like

Thanks from Martin W. Dies

I want to express the appreciation of our family for Mary-Love Bigony's well-written article in the December 2001 issue. My father would have been very proud.

Today, the existence of Martin Dies, Jr. State Park is being threatened by outside sources. The Lower Neches River Authority in Beaumont has proposed raising the level of Steinhagen Reservoir by seven to 10 feet in order to increase the capacity of the lake, apparently so they can sell East Texas water to outside interests. It is ironic that no East Texas governments have indicated a need for additional water supply, and that there is enormous unused capacity at Toledo Bend Reservoir.

There is a Texas Parks and Wildlife study entitled "Potential Effects of Inundation to the Angelina-Neches/Dam B Wildlife Management Area" currently being put into final form by the TPW staff, which demonstrates that up to 9,600 acres of unique and irreplaceable hardwood bottomland habitat — including the park — would be inundated and totally destroyed were this proposal to be

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implemented. The area known as "The Forks of the River," one of the last primeval East Texas forests, also would be lost under the proposal.

My father strongly believed in Texas Parks and Wildlife, and he fought many legislative battles on its behalf. His loyalty never wavered in almost 40 years of public service. I know if he were here now he would express confidence in the TPW staff that they would stand tall in his (and the public's) hour of need to preserve Martin Dies, Jr. State Park by doing their usual good job of providing information to the public

When the public becomes fully aware of the facts, your lead to the article which states, "...an East Texas woodlands will be enjoyed forever as a state park" can be realized.

Martin W. Dies
Orange

New Coastal Effort

The Saltwater Conservation Association of Texas (SCA Texas), a new nonprofit, is raising funds to assist TPW in its effort to retire commercial shrimping licenses. Readers can find details at <www.scatexas.org>.

⚡ *Mark Schultz*

Sound off for "Mail Call!"

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SCOUT

NEWS AND VIEWS IN THE TEXAS OUTDOORS

WILD LIFE

The Birders Are Coming, The Birders Are Coming!

The Texas Coastal Birding Trail wins a British Airways tourism award.

ONE IF BY LAND, two if by sea, but how many if by air? That's the question that Texans are asking as they prepare for a second British invasion — of birders.

The invasion of British birders is expected on the heels of a prestigious win by the Texas Coastal Birding Trail as regional winner of British Airways' Tourism for Tomorrow Awards. The Texas Coastal Birding Trail project was chosen over 115 entries from 47 countries as the best sustainable tourism project in the Americas. It was praised as an innovative example of a public-private partnership, demonstrating the benefits that can be achieved when public agencies like Texas Parks and Wildlife, rural communities and landowners work together to promote nature tourism. "This excellent domestic project should now be seen as a role model for tourism in the Americas," says British Airways chairman Lord Marshall.

What should we expect from this strange new species? "The average British birder is mainly male, very aggressive and competitive," says Robin Doughty, a pro-

fessor of geography at the University of Texas at Austin who hosts groups of his British compatriots as they bird across Texas. "I've had eight telescopes lined up like rifles pointing out toward a sewage pond. He typically does Texas in 10 days, and he never sleeps except in the back of the car."

So obsessed is this breed of birder that he doesn't even notice that his 4 o'clock tea and scones has been replaced by tortilla chips and salsa. "Food is just something that happens in between times," says Mark Constantine, a British regular on the Coastal Birding Trail circuit. "That's the sad thing about us as a group. Texas has fabulous birds — so varied, intriguing, spectacular," says Constantine. "One would like to be more easygoing, but we're just more uptight and intense, aren't we?"

No comment. But when the new Heart of Texas and High Plains Wildlife Trails open in 2003, keep a sharp eye out for an invasion of intense, tea-drinking trail drivers.

— Elaine Robbins

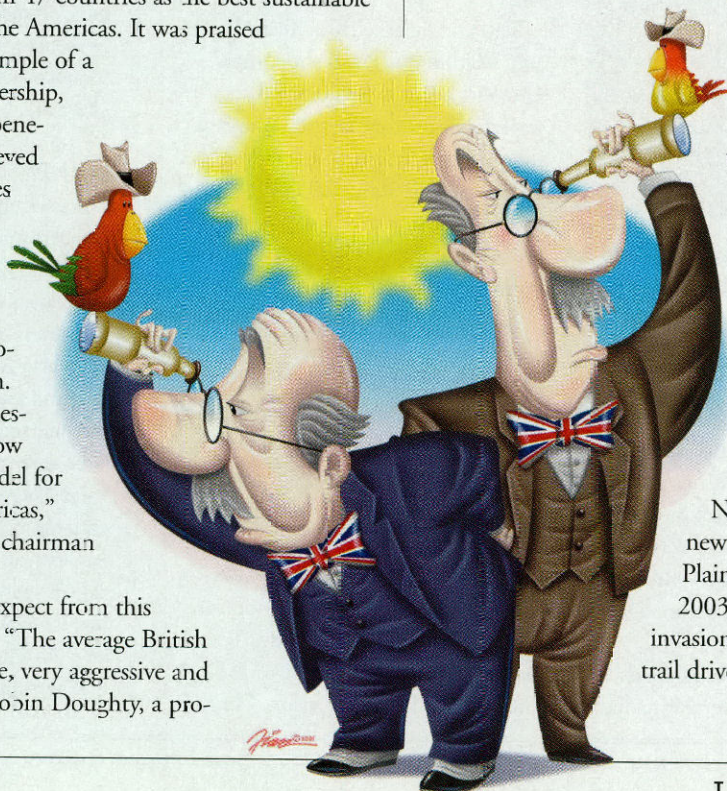


ILLUSTRATION BY FIAN ARROYO

CONSERVATION

BULLISH ON GEESE

To struggling small towns, the call of migrating waterfowl is the sound of money.

UNTIL YOU HAVE LAIN in a cold rice field to participate in a goose hunt firsthand, as hundreds, even thousands, of geese call at once, you may never know what a thrill it can be.

Goose hunting provides quite a thrill to the Texas economy as well: in a recent year, all waterfowl hunters

for clothing, wet weather gear, decoys, callers, shotguns, ammunition, ATVs and cameras, just to name a few items. Motels, restaurants, grocery and convenience stores benefit when goose hunters come to town. Post-hunt dollars go to laundries, car washes, taxidermists and meat processors. Many small towns and communities throughout Texas depend heavily on the influx of goose hunters each season to boost their economies and carry them through the rest of the year.

While geese fly all over the state, the most concentrated areas of hunting are in North Texas and counties along the coast. The coastal prairie counties of Colorado, Wharton, Matagorda, Brazoria, Jackson and Calhoun are joined by Lubbock County as the top goose harvesters in the state. The top three — Colorado, Wharton and Lubbock counties — accounted for 92,000 geese taken in 2000, almost half of the entire Texas take.

Figures available from Texas Parks and Wildlife for 2000 show that 136,414 hunters participated in waterfowl hunting in the Lone Star state. Harvested geese (excluding ducks) totaled about 205,000 birds. The entire Central Flyway, with Texas included, bagged 956,000 of the big migratory birds.

Each year grain fields from North Texas to the coastal waters of the Gulf of Mexico hold millions of Canada, Ross's, white-fronted and snow geese. The annual fall migration into the Lone Star state now provides some of the best goose hunting in the world. Hunting, particularly of snow geese, is one way to keep goose numbers in check. "Snow goose populations are at unprecedented levels," says Texas Parks and Wildlife waterfowl program leader Dave Morrison. "In their

Arctic breeding grounds, they're eating themselves out of house and home. Their fragile habitat is being destroyed and could be lost forever."

Along with Texans, goose hunters from across the nation and around the world flock to Texas — spending additional dollars on airfare and car rentals. And for small towns in need of an economic reprieve, the sight of goose hunters flocking to town is just as welcome as the whirling, tornado-funnel of approaching geese overhead.

— Judy Bishop Jurek



(which includes duck hunters) pumped \$96 million in waterfowl-related expenditures — including retail sales, earnings and sales tax — into the Texas economy.

Goose hunting helps many different businesses proliferate. The most obvious ones, of course, are goose guides and outfitters, rice farmers, landowners and others directly involved with actual goose hunting. More dollars are spent before and after hunting.

Before heading out to the fields, hunters and guides alike visit retailers

FIELD NOTES

Road Repairs

Due to road repairs at Palo Duro Canyon State Park, there will be no vehicle, horseback, bike or camping access to the canyon floor at the park through March 1, 2002. The rim of the canyon, including the visitor center, scenic overlook and three overnight cabins, will remain open. During repairs, park admission will be reduced from \$3 to \$1 per person. For more information call (806) 488-2227.

Duck Bands

Hunters, don't forget to report the numbers from the leg bands of the ducks and geese you took this season. Please call the Bird Banding Laboratory at (800) 327-2263, 24 hours a day, to report the numbers and species, along with the date and location where the banded birds were taken. This information helps biologists monitor migration patterns, survival rates and state harvests. You will receive a certificate of appreciation from the laboratory for each band returned, which lists the date and location where that particular bird was banded.

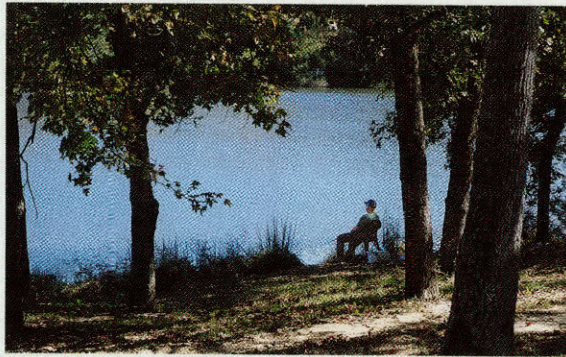
FORT BOGGY

East Texas woodlands and wetlands have been restored to their natural state at the newest state park.

A SMALL COMMUNITY of early East Texas pioneers once relied on the sturdy palisade fort known as Fort Boggy for protection from raiding Keechi and Kickapoo Indians. The log fort no longer stands amid the wooded marshland and verdant meadows of Leon County near Centerville, but visitors can see the site where it stood when they visit the 1,847-acre Fort Boggy State Park, which opened in October.

Plans for the park began in 1985, when longtime Leon County resident Eileen Crain Sullivan donated the land to Texas Parks and Wildlife. New park facilities were built in the handcrafted style of the 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps — among them a stone and timber pavilion that overlooks a lake and wetland area below.

“The boggy area is ideal as a wetland habitat,” says park manager Roy Gonzales. “We’re truly blessed at Fort Boggy with wilderness because the land sat idle for so long.” With teal, wood ducks and mallards in the ponds and feral hogs and white-tailed deer in the woodlands, “wildlife watchers and birders will have a ball here.” The area has approximately 700 plant species, including the endangered Centerville Brazos mint plant, which grows in alluvial sands.



Park attractions include a 15-acre lake where visitors can fish, swim and boat, as well as a 1.5-mile hiking trail that runs along the water's edge. Plans are underway for a biking trail in the near future. Currently, the park is open only for day-use, Friday through Sunday from 8 a.m. until sunset, although overnight camping will eventually be offered as well.

The original Fort Boggy enclosed two blockhouses and 11 dwellings, housing 75 settlers by the end of 1840. Under the leadership of Captain Thomas Greer, a military company authorized by Republic of Texas President Mirabeau B. Lamar was formed to guard the fort and protect the settlers.

A few years later, the fort was abandoned as Indian attacks decreased and settlers began spilling into other parts of the region, shifting the center of population toward nearby Leona.

The land within the park was farmed for nearly a century but was taken out of cultivation by the Sullivan family in the 1930s. Now, 60 years of regeneration have restored the natural landscape of wooded forests and fertile meadows.

For more information about Fort Boggy State Park, contact the park at (903) 536-1523 or visit <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/fortboggy>.

— Kim Tilley

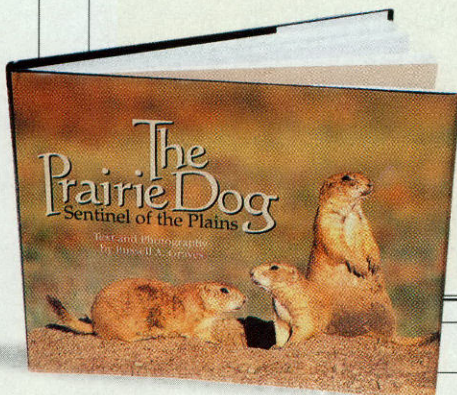
TEXAS READER

My Life as a Prairie Dog

IN 1902 FEDERAL BIOLOGISTS DISCOVERED a black-tailed prairie dog town — megalopolis, really — that stretched 250 miles north from San Angelo and was 100 miles wide. But today, the creature that was once prince of the prairie is a species at risk. Vilified by many ranchers, who believe its tunnels endanger livestock and horses, the prairie dog had its acreage reduced 99.9 percent in Texas between 1870 and 1998. Ecologists defend the prairie dog as a keystone species that supports a variety of wildlife, from horned lizards and burrowing owls to such predators as the coyote and ferruginous hawk.

In his new book *Prairie Dog: Sentinel of the Plains* (\$39.95, Texas Tech University Press), *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine contributor Russell Graves captures in text and photographs the behavior and history of this controversial creature. Graves' excellent photographs show prairie dogs on sentry duty at the entrance to their holes, and engaging in the friendly social interactions that make them so appealing to humans. (Graves explains that behavior that looks like kissing is actually how prairie dogs check scent to “tell kin from non-kin.” Remember that at your next family reunion.) *Prairie Dog* is not only a beautiful coffee table book; it will go a long way in increasing understanding of a species at risk.

— Elaine Robbins



FIELD TEST

Electronic Goose Calls

These cassette and CD players make a "come-on-down" call an irresistible proposition.

BY GIBBS MILLIKEN

IN THE LIGHTENING DAWN skies of winter, long skeins of "barking" geese may be heard for great distances as they fly toward daily feeding areas. Calling constantly when on the move, these birds are attracted to call imitations from hunters concealed in or near ground decoys. Next to a correctly set spread, nothing seems better to wild geese than the "come-on-down" calls of the real thing. Portable electronic systems do a

(Remember: Sark geese cannot be taken during this period.) Hunters are required to have a Texas hunting license as well as state and federal waterfowl stamps. There is no daily or season limit on light geese during this special season.

Battery-powered electronic calls are more expensive than hand calls, but they can be used year-round with different recordings to attract all kinds of wildlife. One good quality system cur-



Lohman CD Electronic Caller with speakers, wireless remote control and digital disk recording.

better job of sounding like a gathering of birds than a few isolated squawks from traditional hand-held calls.

Until recently, use of recorded goose calls was outlawed as a method of luring migratory birds. However, with the overpopulation of snow geese and the resulting impact on the Arctic tundra, managers have resorted to more aggressive measures to increase the harvest of light geese. Under the Light Goose Conservation Order, hunters can now use electronic calls to lure these big migratory birds into gun range in East Texas from January 21 to March 31 and in West Texas from February 11 to March 31, 2002.

rently in production is the **Lohman CD Electronic Caller, Model 2555** (\$249.99, Outdoor World, (800) 227-7776) with player, rechargeable battery, AC/DC chargers, two 15-watt loudspeakers, remote control and field bag. The advantage of the CD is that you can pause and start again without distracting tape hiss, chirps or other noises. This system, with two speakers on 30-foot wires, allows wider coverage of an area. According to professional guides, the disk player produces louder volume with better range than comparable cassette models. The matching recording **Lohman DS-7 CD, Snow Geese Flying and**

Feeding (\$19.99, Outdoor World) provides excellent voice variety. Included with the kit is a wireless remote control.

A second design is the **Lohman Wildlife Calling System/Cassette 2000** (\$169.99, Outdoor World) featuring a high-volume amplifier and a long-range speaker with 30 feet of wire. Also included are a 12-volt battery, wall charger, auto lighter charger, and camo carry bag. The suggested cassette for this system is **Snow Geese, CT-14** (\$9.99, Outland Sports, (800) 922-9034).

The **Johnny Stewart Deluxe Professional Series Game Caller, Model 612-LR** (\$169.99, Hunters Specialties, (800) 537-0652) is a traditional cassette player with a long-range weatherproof 15-watt speaker on a 30-foot cord, charger and battery. The unit has an auxiliary on/off jack that accepts the **Johnny Stewart RC-2 Remote Control** (\$149.99, Hunter's Specialties), allowing gradual volume output and mute functions with a range of 100 yards. Also from Johnny Stewart is the **Power Pro Convert-A-Caller, Model PPC-1** (\$129.99, Hunter's Specialties), which consists of an amplifier, weatherproof speaker, battery and audio patch cord in a camo carry bag. It is designed to allow any portable CD or MP-3 player to be converted into a game caller. This company also produces a full line of excellent-quality cassette recordings of wildlife-attracting sounds.

None of these kits is completely waterproof. The speakers are labeled "water-resistant," but you'll need to protect them from the elements for them to work reliably.

If you miss the idea of good, old-fashioned hand calls, don't worry. Waterfowl guide Steve Hendricks of Katy says it's best to add variety by using standard mouth or hand calls as well. "This is especially effective when the birds are very shy in the late season. That's when they need to be convinced that the repetitious sounds they are hearing are not too mechanical." ★

SKILLBUILDER

10 Tips for Trucks

How to get more out of an invaluable hunting and fishing "partner."

BY SLAYTON L. WHITE



GETTING TO YOUR FAVORITE hunting or fishing spot may be half the fun, but you don't want truck trouble to deny you the pleasure of getting home again. Knowing your vehicle and taking care of it can mean the difference between a trip whose memory you savor and one you can't wait to forget.

1. To take full advantage of a maximum-traction offroad tire, deliberately alternate right and left turns of the steering wheel. This will gently pinch the tire against the edges of deep ruts, allowing the shoulder lugs to claw at the sides of the ruts and pull the vehicle forward.

2. Periodically check the condition of the windshield wipers. Don't think this is important? Try driving five or six hours in bad weather with worn-out wipers. It's bad enough during the day. At night, when you're tired, forget it; you're an accident waiting to happen.

3. If you submerge the axle of your 4 x 4 at a boat ramp, creek cross-

ing, or mudhole, remove the differential cover plate as soon as possible and look at the fluid. If the fluid looks milky, it's been contaminated by water and must be changed as quickly as possible. Generally, running the truck 20 to 30 miles like this isn't so bad; but if you put on more than a couple of hundred miles, you'll damage the gears as well as the bearings.

4. Running the air conditioner full tilt while towing in hot weather or grinding up steep offroad trails can tax the cooling system to the max. Many boilovers are actually the result of hot transmission fluid overwhelming the vehicle's cooling system. The fix? Install an auxiliary transmission fluid cooler.

5. When securing the drawbar/ball-mount into the hitch receiver, slip the pin in from the driver's side of the receiver. Roads are crowded, which means the surface is slightly higher in the middle (this helps the road drain faster). Inserting the pin from the driver's side takes advantage

of this and will help keep the pin in place if the safety clip falls off.

6. Wheel spin on dirt trails or in mudholes (the result of a heavy foot on the throttle) usually means that you're not in control of the situation. Slow down. You want enough momentum to carry the vehicle through mud or sand but not so much that you can't completely control the vehicle. Try feathering the throttle instead.

7. To spot problems caused by worn-out suspension parts, have a buddy drive while you ride shotgun. (Suspensions degrade slowly over time, and regular drivers often don't notice the problems.) Run the vehicle at highway speeds and then slowly over a bumpy road. Be alert for shakes in the steering wheel. This could be due to an out-of-balance tire (not serious) or a slowly disintegrating ball joint (big trouble). In an empty parking lot, turn the vehicle in slow circles, with the wheel cranked hard right, then hard left. Look and listen for anything out of the ordinary.

8. The lowly dipstick remains a great diagnostic tool — if you know what it's telling you. After checking the oil level, look closely at the color. Though oil discolors over time, it should not look like tar. If it does, and especially if it smells "burned," change the oil immediately.

9. Before starting a vehicle recovery with an electric winch, lay a blanket or tarp over the wire rope about halfway between the winch and the anchor. This will help direct the rope to the ground should it break under the load.

10. Pickups and sport utilities that routinely negotiate wet terrain are prime candidates for corrosion damage. Clean off mud and other crud after every trip. You can also place an oscillating lawn sprinkler underneath the truck and drive back and forth over the sprinkler to wash away road film and salt. ★

EXCERPTED FROM MAY 2001 *Field & Stream*.

DESTINATION: EL CAMPO

TRAVEL TIME FROM:

AUSTIN—2.5 HOURS / DALLAS—5 HOURS / HOUSTON—1.5 HOURS / SAN ANTONIO—3 HOURS

Pearls on the Prairie



As I round the bend in the road bordering the rice field, I have to look twice to make sure I am not seeing things. Has it really snowed at the Texas coast in November?

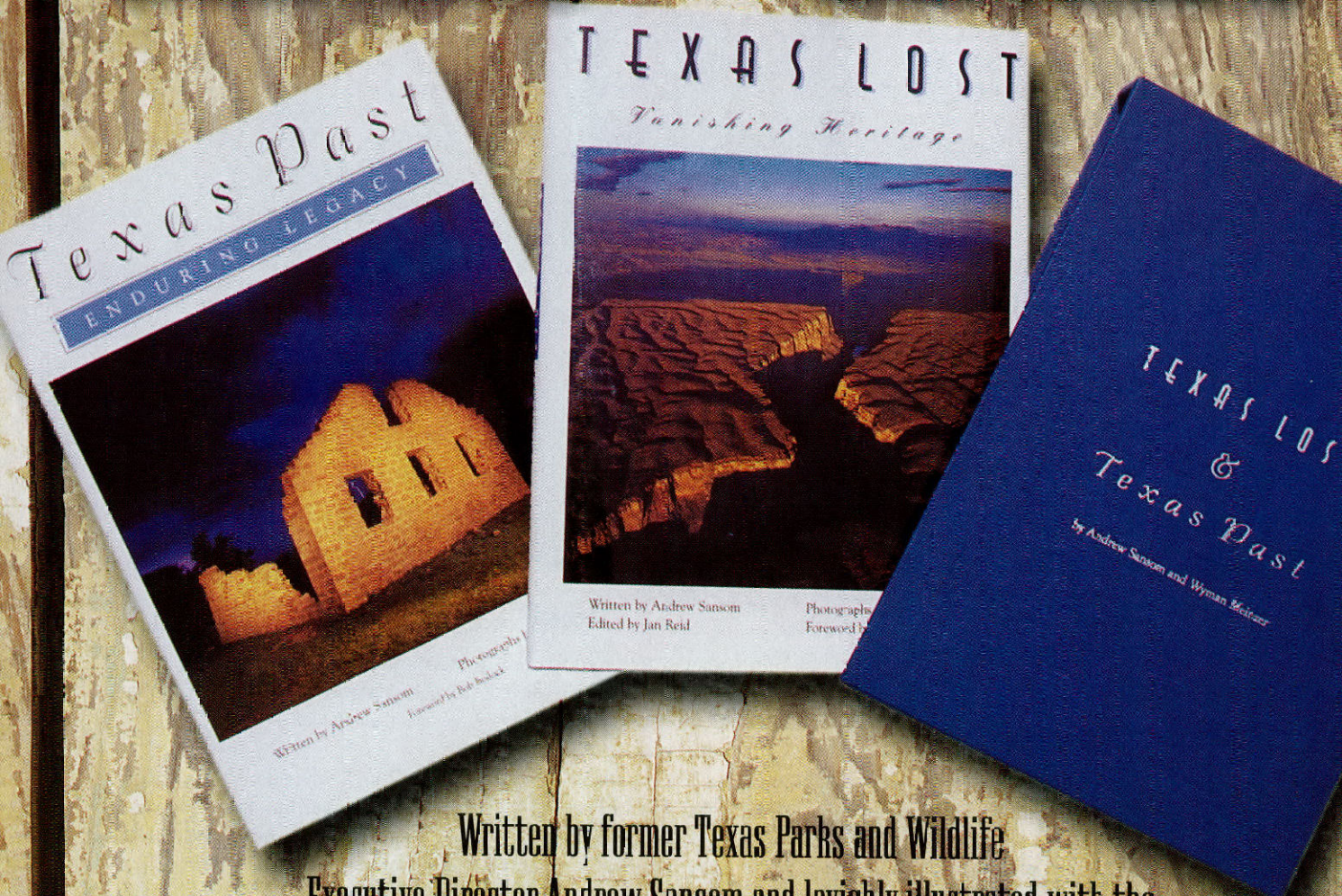
IN A WAY IT HAS, for white snows blanket the field — lesser snow geese, to be exact. Through binoculars I can see thousands of individual snow geese. Around the edges of the mass of feeding birds appear dark spots, clumps of white-fronted geese, also known as speckle-bills because of the broken bars that stripe their chests. A variety of ducks dot open areas of water.

Camera in hand, I step out and slam the car door, inadvertently sparking a spectacle as the nearest birds take wing and are followed by the remainder of the flock in a wave-like motion called a roll. As I click away, the geese circle the field and immediately begin landing again, eager to continue feeding. They have recently completed their annual migration from Canada to the Texas coast, and like most travelers at the end

of a long journey, food and rest are their top priorities.

El Campo sits in the center of a three-county area that hosts one of the largest concentrations of wintering waterfowl in the United States. I have come not only to see the geese and ducks but also to hunt them. My next stop is the comfortable lodge of the South Texas Hunting Company, a dozen miles or so from El Campo.

SHARE THE LEGACY

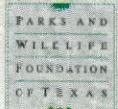


Written by former Texas Parks and Wildlife Executive Director Andrew Sansom and lavishly illustrated with the photographs of Texas State Photographer Wyman Meinzer, *Texas Lost: Vanishing Heritage* and *Texas Past: Enduring Legacy* capture the magnificence of Texas as never before.

This limited edition boxed set is the perfect gift for any conservation-minded Texan - but why not order two? It's a thoughtful addition to your own library as well! The handsomely bound and dust-jacketed books are encased in a cloth-bound, embossed collector's case. Each book is 9" x 12" and full color throughout.

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Hunting Camp

Randy Stacy, co-owner of the outfitting and guide service, greets me at the lodge. Through the afternoon other hunters trickle in and claim bunks in one of the lodge's four bedrooms before gathering in the common area to watch television, shoot pool, visit with old friends and make new ones. By 9 p.m., stuffed with Randy's lasagna, most of us are turning in, since the wake-up call at hunting camps comes at 4 a.m. As more than one sleepy-eyed hunter has observed, it doesn't take long to spend the night in El Campo.

The next morning, other occupants



of the bedroom where I sleep claim my snoring was so bad it drove them out. This is a vicious lie. Their failure to bring earplugs was the problem. But be aware that while some hunting camps offer private rooms, at most you will have to bunk with others. Prepare accordingly.

Well before dawn the next morning, my hunting group slogs through knee-deep water and mud as we help our guide set out duck decoys. Chest waders are

essential if you want to keep your feet and bottom dry; ducks and geese go where the water is, and hunters must follow.

One of the chief pleasures of waterfowl hunting is watching the rising sun wake up the world. Ducks begin to fly when it is still so dark that you never see them as they swoop overhead — only the swooshing of their wings making their presence known. When legal shooting time arrives, the guide begins

Murals around town and taxidermy exhibits at the El Campo Museum provide entertainment for visitors.

sending out a serenade of quacks and whistles, and soon our shotguns add a bass line. Widgeons, green-winged teal, gadwalls, lesser scaup and pintails fill out limits for all hunters by midmorning.

After lunch and a nap at the lodge, I head into El Campo to check out the El Campo Museum (at the El Campo Civic Center, <www.ohwy.com/tx/elcampo.htm>). The museum displays about 150 mounted animals from around the world in natural settings. Full-body mounts of an Alaskan brown bear, white rhinoceros and musk ox seem out of place here, but the waterfowl exhibit and the South Texas exhibit display species familiar to hunters. Several of the exhibits feature touch-screen computers that teach about the animals as well as let you hear the sounds they make.

A little pre-trip research on the Internet also steered me to another of El Campo's

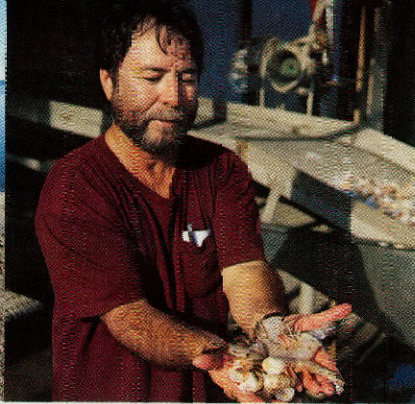
EL CAMPO — PEARL OF THE PRAIRIE

EL CAMPO BEGAN as a shipping point for cattle from area ranches. The New York, Texas and Mexican Railroad, financed by one of the owner's profits from the Comstock Silver Mine in Nevada, laid track from Richmond to Victoria in 1882. Built by Italian laborers who clung to their traditional diet of pasta, it was dubbed the "Macaroni Line."

A set of loading pens was built at the site where El Campo now stands, but the initial name was Prairie Switch. Local Anglo cowboys called it "Pearl of the Prairie" because the light from the railroad section house shone for miles over the flat coastal prairie. However, Mexican cowboys called it *el campo* (the camp), and the latter name was adopted when the town was laid out.

Wharton County is one of the top three rice-producing counties in the state, and waterfowl hunting is also an important industry. Grains of rice and the waterfowl that feed on them are now also considered to be "pearls of the prairie." A list of area hunting outfitters is on the Internet at <www.elcampochamber.com/hunting.htm>, or you can call (979) 543-2713 for information on all area attractions.

THIS PAGE AND LEFT PHOTO ON OPPOSITE PAGE © GRADY ALLEN; RIGHT PHOTO OPPOSITE BY LARRY D. HODGE



Palacios, less than an hour's drive from El Campo, offers pier fishing and fresh seafood.

attractions, a collection of murals on buildings around town. The murals depict the rice and cotton culture of the area as well as other aspects of local history. You can print out a map showing the locations of the murals and take a virtual tour at www.elcamnochamber.com/elmurals.htm. Most of the murals are in the downtown area and are best seen by walking.

Coastal Scenery

After the second morning's hunt, clear blue skies and a warm sun remind me that El Campo is less than an hour's drive from the coast. I head for Palacios, which calls itself the "Shrimp Capital of Texas" and is a stellar site on the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. Palacios has its own mural tour, which you can learn about at www.palacioschamber.com. But on this trip my objective was the bayfront, where a fishing pier juts 400 feet into South Bay, and fishers catch speckled trout, redfish and flounder. Nearby is the Texas Baptist Encampment, which also has a free fishing pier. The beach between the two is lined with shaded picnic tables with barbecue grills, and walkers and joggers enjoy the sidewalk atop the seawall.

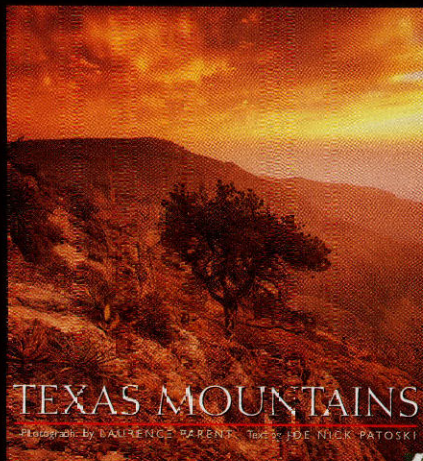
Had I not been booked for a second night at the South Texas Hunting Company lodge, I would opt to dine on fresh seafood at a local restaurant and spend the night at the Luther Hotel, a 1903 structure that is billed as "The Palace at Palacios." The Luther Hotel once boasted of having the longest front porch in Texas. Time, fire and hurricanes have taken their toll on the structure, but it still offers charming accommodations just across the street from the bay. Monarch butterflies feasting on the hotel's flower garden — still in full bloom in mid-November — catch my eye, and I take advantage of the photo opportunity.

As the sun nears the horizon, herald-

ing the time of day photographers refer to as "the golden hour," I head back toward El Campo, winding my way along farm-to-market roads and watch-

ing for wildlife along the way. I am not disappointed. Geese, ducks, and sandhill cranes dot the landscape, and I stop again and again to peer through binoculars and camera at these feathered winter Texans. By the time I arrive at the lodge, stars are popping out, a hearty meal of chicken breasts stuffed with wild rice is being served, and my soul is refreshed. ★

Books as beautiful as Texas

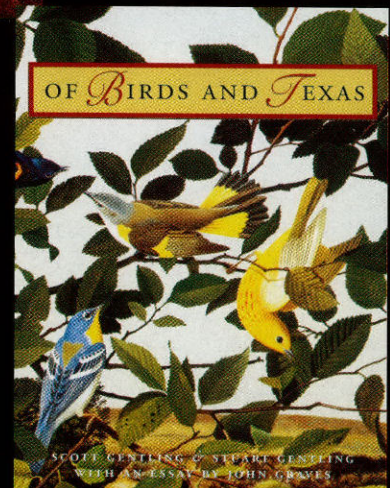


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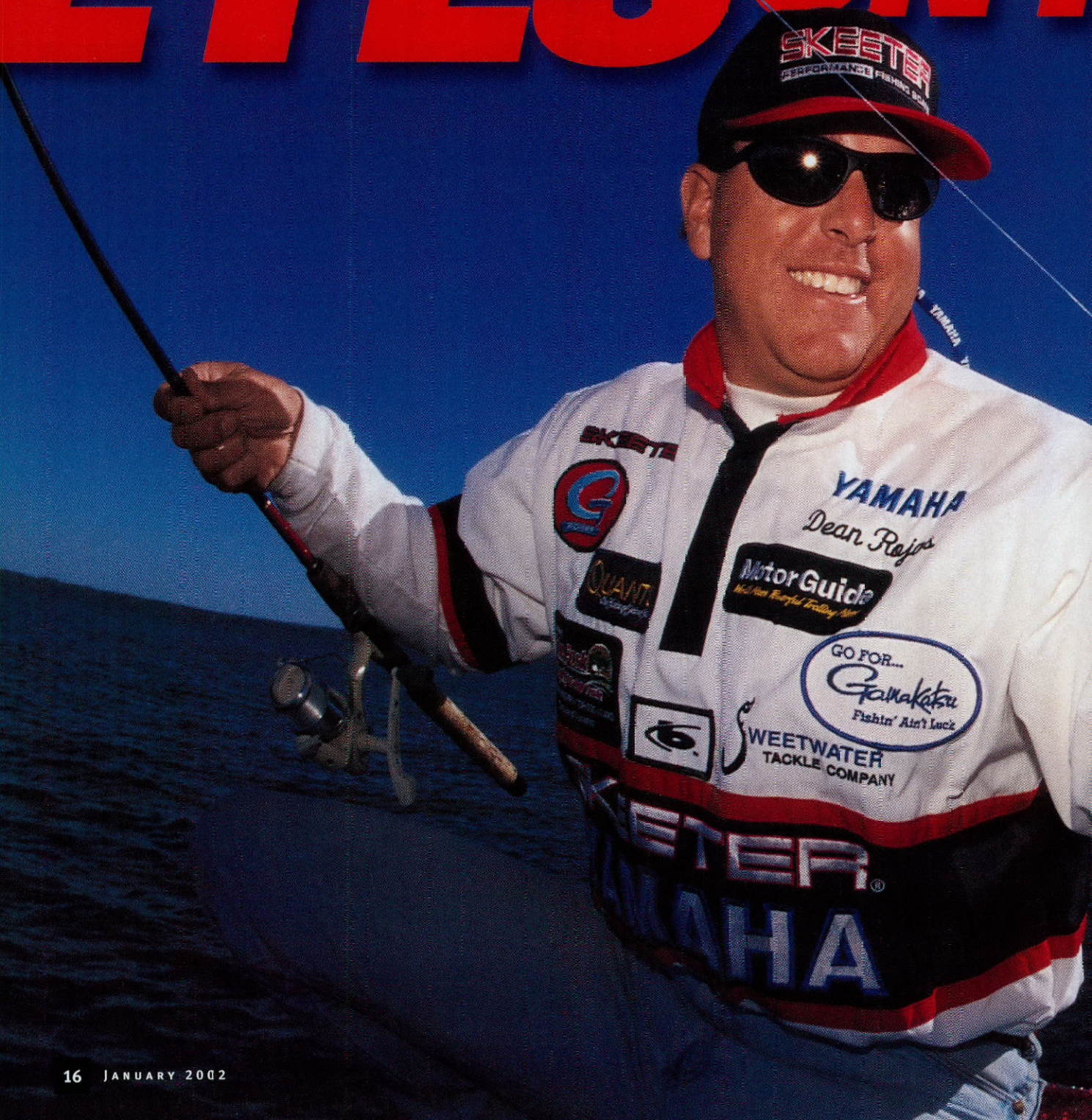
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WITH HUGE CASH WINNINGS AND ENTHUSIASTIC CROWDS, BASS TOURNAMENTS ARE BIG BUSINESS IN SMALL-TOWN TEXAS. NOW SPONSORS AND BIOLOGISTS ARE LOOKING AT HOW TO HELP THE FISH SURVIVE THE CONTEST.

ARTICLE BY PHIL H. SHOOK
PHOTOS BY DAVID J. SAMS



Bass fishing tournaments are to Texas what NASCAR is to North Carolina. Like race-car drivers, pro anglers, both men and women, wear uniforms peppered with logos and slogans of corporate sponsors. Tournament weigh-ins are the equivalent of the winner's circle, with the added drama of big bass being hoisted from livewells to the oohs and aahs of the crowd.

THE FINANCIAL STAKES are high for participants, sponsors and the communities that host the more than 5,000 bass tournaments held in the state annually. And there can be little doubt that the glamour associated with bass tournaments sparks interest in fishing among the general public, which results in enormous expenditures for fishing gear, boats and travel.

Tournament anglers and organizations like the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.) and the Texas B.A.S.S. Federation have played a major role in introducing conservation practices such as catch-and-release fishing. Biologists say there is no evidence that tournament angling hurts fish populations on any Texas lake, but recent studies show that mortality rates of fish released at tournaments are higher than many tournament organizers originally thought. Everyone involved in fishing — a \$2.9 billion industry in Texas — realizes there must be a balance between economic returns and the health of the fish-

ery. In light of this, tournament organizers have taken the lead in efforts to reduce mortality by working to refine and improve catch-and-release practices at tournaments.

Fishing for Dollars

More than a decade before Alabamian Ray Scott founded B.A.S.S., which organized American bass anglers and launched nationwide tournaments on a grand scale, 73 two-person teams of Texas anglers participated in the first organized bass tournament at Lake Whitney. Today Texans are well-represented among the more than 600,000 anglers who now participate in B.A.S.S. tournaments nationwide.

Like many boys and girls growing up in Texas, Wade Middleton used to sneak out to fish nearby lakes and farm ponds every chance he got. Today, the 35-year-old professional bass angler from San Antonio lives his boyhood dream, hosting his own fishing show and earning a decent living as a successful pro on the major bass tournament trail. And, thanks to the wide variety of quality lakes available for tournaments in Texas, Middleton seldom has to leave his

home state to compete.

"We are blessed in Texas," he says. "If you can fish on five or six of the biggest reservoirs all year long, you can make a living within the state as a tournament professional."

Besides the professionals, many other Texas anglers — men and women with day jobs — also take part in bass tournaments across the state. These include Bassmaster tournaments where top pros vie for six-figure cash prizes, as well as club tournaments, church tournaments, corporate tournaments and tournaments that pair up husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, parents and children; and youth tournaments where youngsters can earn scholarships (see sidebar).

There are two levels of tournament fishing under the Texas B.A.S.S. Federation program, the amateur side and the pro division, which includes the top 150 tournaments and the invitational tournaments — events that B.A.S.S. puts on for professionals.

"What the B.A.S.S. program does is let grassroots anglers compete on a local level and possibly advance all the way to the national level, conceivably ending up in the Bassmaster Classic competing with the top pros in the world," says Randy Kindler, a former president of the Texas B.A.S.S. Federation.

While studies show that only about 14 percent of recreational anglers participate in bass tournaments in Texas, there are some reservoirs where the percentage is much higher, says Todd Driscoll, TPW district biologist in Jasper, a region that includes Lakes Sam Rayburn and Toledo Bend, two of the most popular waterways for bass fishing in the state.

"Certainly it is much higher than 14 percent here," Driscoll says. "Around the first of February through the first of July, there are tournaments every weekend at these reservoirs, and sometimes 10 or more going on at one time."

In addition to their great size — Sam Rayburn offers anglers 114,500 acres of water while Toledo Bend has 185,000 acres — these reservoirs also have the launch

PHOTO FINISH

TO IMPROVE THE SURVIVAL of bass caught and released, some tournaments have turned to a "paper" format. Anglers simply record the length of fish they catch, and then immediately return them to the water. Anglers get credit for the number of "inches" caught, or the length can be used in a formula to estimate the fish's weight.

This fall, organizers of the Honey Hole Bass Clubs Affiliation tournament on Lake Fork tried an innovative wrinkle on the "paper" tournament format: Polaroid photos. Harvest regulations on this East Texas trophy lake prevent anglers from keeping bass in the 16-to-24-inch "slot" limit. Each two-person team was allowed to submit two photos on each day of the two-day event. Slot-sized bass were photographed on official measuring sheets (printed on a different background color each day) and then released. Length measurements were converted to weights using formulas developed from TPW fish population data. Anglers turned in 158 photos over the two days.

Whether this format will catch on is not yet clear, but both anglers and organizers were pleased with the outcome. Dave Terre, regional fisheries director for TPW, sees it as a win-win situation. "This innovative format will allow tournaments to be held on this and other Texas lakes with similar restrictive limits," he says. "The fish benefit by less exposure to handling, and the local economies benefit by hosting the tournaments."

In the future, don't be surprised if you hear anglers bragging about the Polaroid that got away.

— Ken Kurzawski



"WE ARE BLESSED IN TEXAS," SAYS MIDDLETON. "IF YOU CAN FISH ON FIVE OR SIX OF THE BIGGEST RESERVOIRS ALL YEAR LONG, YOU CAN MAKE A LIVING WITHIN THE STATE AS A TOURNAMENT PROFESSIONAL."





UNTIL RECENT RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE MORTALITY RATES OF FISH CAUGHT, HELD AND LATER RELEASED, IT WAS ASSUMED THAT ALL THE FISH LIVED, SAYS PHIL DUROCHER, DIRECTOR OF INLAND FISHERIES FOR TPW. "WE KNOW NOW THAT THAT IS NOT TRUE," HE SAYS.



ramp capacity, nearby lodging and services required for handling large tournaments. While anglers land the big bass, the local economy nets the big bucks. Fishing contributes an estimated \$30 million annually to communities surrounding Toledo Bend.

Smaller lakes such as Choke Canyon in South Texas boost local towns as well. "For a small town like ours, obviously these things have a major impact on business," says Murrell Foster, executive director of the Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce. A recent couples tournament attracted 400 anglers and generated an estimated \$115,000 for Three Rivers. "When anyone drops that kind of change in a small town like this, it can be felt," Foster says. "There is no other single three-day event that would generate that kind of impact."

The Lure of Tournaments

Citing the enormous annual expenditures that fishing brings to the state economy, researchers have launched a number of studies to determine the specific contributions of bass tournaments. The social interaction among participants, the general angling public, fishing guides and other stakeholders on Texas lakes is also being studied. These studies, undertaken by TPW and university researchers, have been conducted in response to questions about tournaments from anglers, tournament sponsors, rural community leaders and the members of the Texas Legislature.

"We know that bass tournaments are important to the state, and this research highlights that importance," says T.O. Smith, TPW research specialist. Having accurate economic numbers on tournaments is important, Smith says, because water use issues regularly come before the Legislature, and although bass tournaments and other recreational uses take a back seat to the agricultural and municipal uses of the water, it is important to show that angling and tournament activity have a significant impact, especially on rural areas. Smith says that once legislators who have these lakes in their districts understand how fishing bolsters the local economies, they might be more supportive of the lakes' use as sites for bass tournaments instead of "supporting a pipeline from the lake that goes across the state to another municipality."

Bob Ditton, a fisheries researcher at Texas A&M University, agrees that studies on the



SAVE THE FISH

RECENTLY THE BASS ANGLERS SPORTSMAN SOCIETY PRODUCED a handbook entitled *Keeping Tournament Bass Alive* that includes recommendations for handling bass, conducting tournaments and improving livewell operations. Gene Gilliland, senior fisheries biologist with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and a contributor to the handbook, says the overriding theme of the publication is "You can't take too good care of your fish."

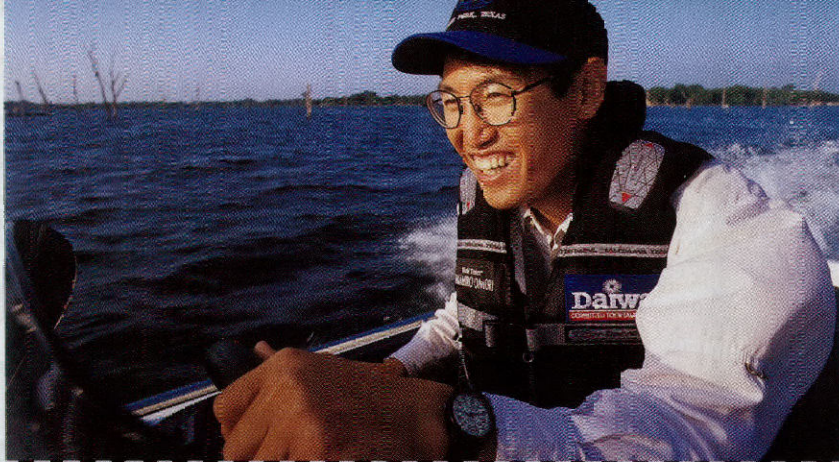
The problem with the mortality at bass tournaments is that most of it is unseen, Gilliland says. "Delayed mortality happens after everyone has gone home." If most anglers don't realize that there is a problem, they don't have any reason to do anything differently, he says. "If they bring fish to weigh that appear to be alive and healthy and those fish are released and swim away, they make the assumption that their fish are going to live." He says that may or may not be true depending on how they were cared for. "The stresses and breakdowns of the body functions due to the things that have gone on with that fish may not kill it for several days."

Gilliland says there are two big issues to address in keeping fish healthy. One is at the weigh-in, where the steps that the tournament directors take are the most visible. "If they have the right equipment and the right procedures and streamline their process to reduce handling and speed up the weigh-in as much as possible so the fish can be returned to the water quickly, that is a big part of the solution." Gilliland says most anglers focus on this procedure when they are concerned about the mortality of the fish. The problem, he says, is that all that first aid at the weigh-in doesn't help if the fish has been mistreated for eight hours in the livewell.

Therefore, a second vital issue must be addressed. Here the burden is more on the angler than on the tournament director. "What the fisher does in terms of keeping water quality in the livewell as good as possible is what really counts," Gilliland says. To accomplish this, Gilliland says researchers recommend that anglers use plenty of fresh water in livewells and run the aerator so oxygen is continually replenished. He says this is particularly important at tournaments held during summer months. Second, contrary to the practice in years past of recirculating the same water, livewells should be flushed and refilled with fresh water in the course of the day to eliminate buildups of waste products such as ammonia. Last, anglers should never allow the water temperature in the livewell to rise above the lake temperature. Adding ice to cool the water up to about 10 degrees Fahrenheit can be a positive factor in reducing mortality, Gilliland says.

B.A.S.S. plans to publish the recommendations in booklet form, but until then they will be available on its Web page at www.bassmaster.com.

Texas Parks and Wildlife officials say that while they play a key role in overseeing the health of freshwater fisheries, which may involve conducting economic impact and fish mortality studies, they do not have regulatory authority over bass tournaments. "From an agency standpoint, we promote angling," says Rick Ott, TPW district biologist in Tyler. "Not just one kind of angling over another but angling in general."



WE'D RATHER BE FISHING

BY TWITCHING A FLOATING WORM lure slowly over submerged bushes and willows at Sam Rayburn Reservoir last March, Takahiro Omori managed to earn almost \$1,000 for each of the 55 pounds of largemouth bass he weighed in over the three-day tournament.

Omori, a native of Japan, now travels the tournament bass circuit from his home base in East Texas near Lake Fork. He finished dead last in his first tournament at Sam Rayburn in 1992, but after spending time guiding and developing his fishing skills on Lake Fork, he has become one of the leading tournament anglers in the country.

While Omori is among the lucky few with the exceptional angling skills, determination and wherewithal to pay the entry fees and travel expenses and afford the vehicles, boats, trailers and specialized tackle required to make it on the major bass tournament trail, he is hardly alone among Texans enjoying competition bass fishing. Texans are well-represented among the more than 600,000 anglers who now participate in B.A.S.S. tournaments nationwide.

Randy Kindler, a former Texas B.A.S.S. Federation president who has been involved with tournaments in the state for almost 20 years, says he can remember when a big turnout at a Texas bass tournament was 10 or 15 boats. Today, he notes that an average tournament can host 75 to 80 boats, and large ones accommodate 250 boats. The Texas Oilman's Bass Invitational (T.O.B.I.), for example, has been known to attract more than 1,000 anglers for tournaments at Toledo Bend Reservoir, and the Sealy Big Bass event attracted 5,000 people for a three-day tournament.

Ed Provasek of Temple says he and his wife, Debra, got involved with Couples Association of Sport Tournaments (C.A.S.T.), the oldest and largest bass tournament trail for couples, because his wife likes to fish as much as he does, and this gives them an opportunity to do it together. Jim Files, an attorney who owns and operates JR's Guide Service in Blanco, has organized and run the South Texas region of C.A.S.T. for five years. He says C.A.S.T. is open to novice anglers as well as tournament professionals, but the emphasis is as much on socializing as on winning. Some of the contestants are married couples and others are just fishing partners.

On the highest level of tournament competition, anglers qualify for a limited number of spots and compete for top payoffs of \$100,000 or more.

Like many other Texas anglers, Kindler says he started out fishing on the club levels, honed his skills there and moved up the competitive ladder. The prizes at the regional and state tournament levels are based on the number of entries, with a portion of the entry fees going back to the winners.

With two boys who wanted to fish, Kindler also participated in youth tournament activities with them, including the Little Buddies Tournament Trail. "This enables kids in Texas to get scholarship money through fishing bass tournaments with their parents."

In addition to Sam Rayburn and Toledo Bend, the majority of the big-prize-money tournaments traditionally have been centered around Lake Livingston and Lake Texoma. But with the popularity of tournament bass fishing, new lakes are being opened to bigger tournaments. The Texas Tournament Trail Operation Bass Series, offering \$70,000 payoffs, recently has selected lakes such as Travis and O.H. Ivie that have never before seen tournaments. And next year the Texas Tournament Trail will start off at Lake Amistad. These are three lakes that have had good participation with local and regional tournaments but never on the professional level. "To me," Kindler says, "that shows the growth of tournament fishing."

economic impact of bass tournaments are important. "Tournaments have made the argument that they are a key part of economic development, that they attract clean industry by bringing in business and new dollars to the community," Ditton says. A study now underway by TPW biologists at Lake O.H. Ivie is seeking to determine the economic impact of bass tournaments held at the lake over a full year. Started in March 2001 and running through February 2002, the study is the first to track the economic impact of all tournaments at a single reservoir for an entire year. All professional and club tournaments held during the period will be examined, and more than 3,000 anglers will be surveyed.

Efforts to Reduce Catch-and-Release Mortality

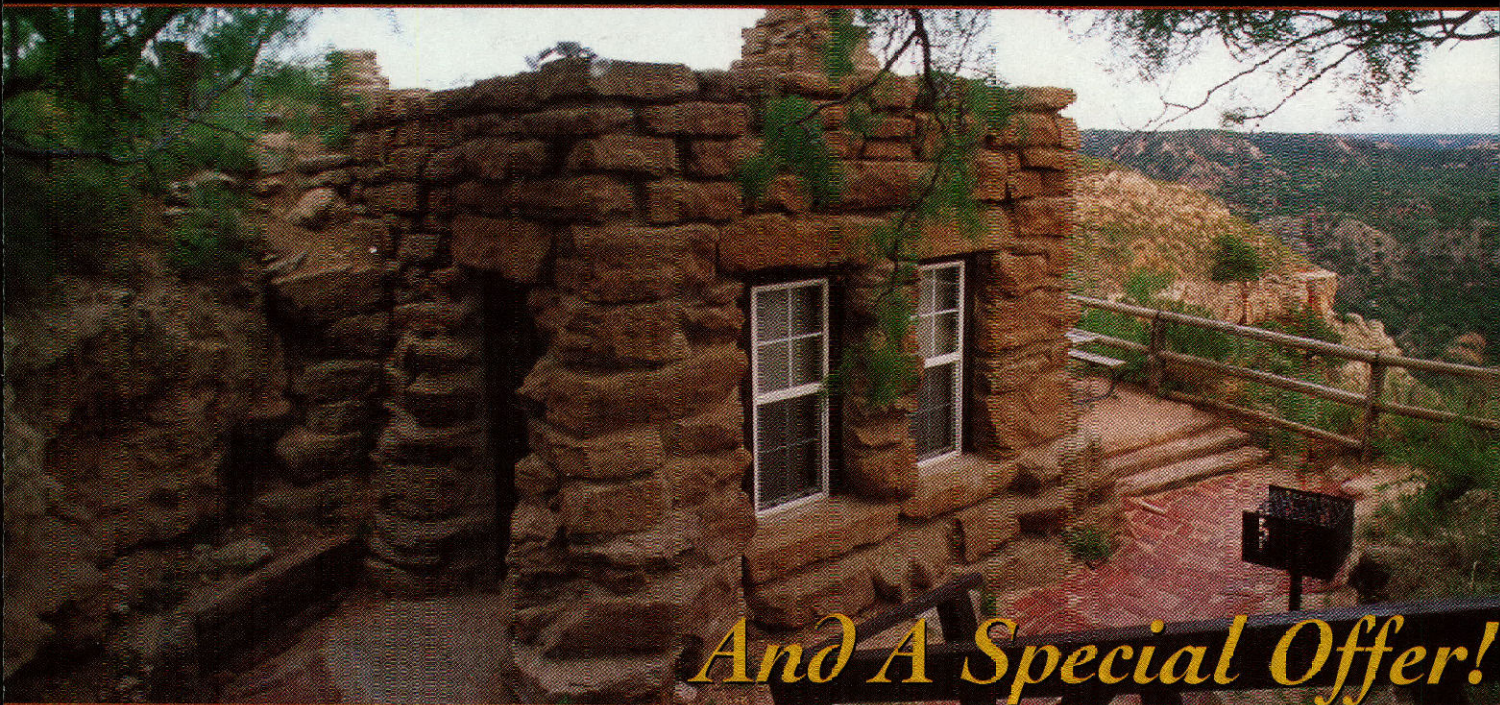
Twenty-five years ago, bass anglers and guides on public lakes routinely kept all legal-sized fish. In 1972, B.A.S.S. founder Ray Scott, inspired by trout anglers at a Federation of Fly Fishers event in Colorado, introduced the catch-and-release concept at bass tournaments. Recreational anglers regularly practice catch-and-release as well. Until recent research findings on the mortality rates of fish caught, held and later released, it was assumed that all the fish lived, says Phil Durocher, director of inland fisheries for TPW. "We know now that is not true," he says. Durocher points out that the mortality of bass that are caught and immediately released is very low, but in the case of tournaments where fish are caught, hauled around in livewells, and handled at a weigh-in, mortality rates are increased.

Durocher emphasizes that this should not be construed as a black mark against tournaments, since the fish these anglers are dealing with are all legally caught, keeper-sized fish. "They could kill them all if they wanted to," he notes. But instead of being satisfied with the status quo, Durocher says tournament organizers are working to find ways to reduce mortality rates of fish released after these events (see sidebar).

There is much evidence to suggest the popularity and economic contributions of Texas bass tournaments will continue to soar — especially if the star of the show is allowed to swim away after the curtain comes down. ★

PHIL H. SHOOK, who writes regularly for this magazine on angling and fisheries, is the author of *Flyfisher's Guide to Texas*.

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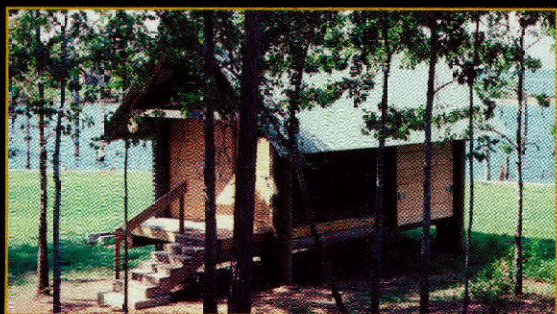
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Cloud cover clears to high sky.

When shallow cover is available, bass pull tight to cover; however, if cover is scarce, bass move to closest drop-off or depression.

When fishing isolated cover, switch to penetrating lure (jig or Texas-rigged worm). Make precise and quiet casts to cover.

Reading Na

TO BE A FIRST-RATE BASS FISHER, YOU NEED TO LEARN TO NOT



PHOTOS © DAVID J. SAMS

Sky becomes overcast.

Bass become active and move relatively shallow to feed.

Switch to lures that can be fished fast. Cover water quickly. Go to lures that are bright and large.

ature's Signs

DE SUBTLE CHANGES IN THE ENVIRONMENT. // BY PAUL A. CAÑADA



A. Bass concentrate along drop-offs during outgoing tide and face into current — intercepting baitfish leaving shallow flats.

B. During incoming tide, bass spread out over shallow flats, actively flushing prey.

A. During outgoing tide, move to drop-offs and parallel deeper edge with lure.
B. During incoming tide, quickly fan cast surface and subsurface lures over shallow flats.

Disappointment was evident on the anglers' faces and in the slump of their shoulders as they arrived at the boat ramp. "They were biting good in the morning, but they shut off as soon as the sky cleared," one explained.

It would be nice if bass were always aggressively feeding and their strike zones were relatively large. Unfortunately, this simply isn't the case. Fisheries biologists tell us that mature bass actively feed only 10 to 15 percent of the time. They are in a negative or neutral feeding mood most of the time. That explains why bass fishing can be so puzzling and why tough bite conditions are the norm rather than the exception. Because a bass' strike zone and activity level can change throughout the day, determining the best lure and presentation for the job at hand can be difficult. Many of the factors that influence a bass' strike zone are well-known — water temperature and clarity, angling pressure, prey availability, population dynamics and fish activity.

Nature provides anglers with important hints to these subtle changes occurring in the bass' environment. The hint might be as simple as a group of egrets working down a bank, the presence of bass fry in an area or the faint movement of a lily pad or tall reed. Other times, the tip-off might be the way a bass charges a lure or flees the shallows after an oversized bait carelessly slaps the surface.

One of Texas' most renowned bass anglers, Weatherford's Gary Klein, has spent decades honing his ability to read these subtle signs. Peers credit Klein's two-time win of bass fishing's

most coveted prize — the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society's Angler of the Year award — to his ability to detect slight yet significant changes and to make key adjustments in lure presentation.

Klein believes the inability of most anglers to detect subtle clues is linked chiefly to the urban (or suburban) environments in which we live. "Texans living in heavily populated areas and making long daily commutes experience a tremendous amount of environmental noise and stimuli," says Klein. "We're conditioned to shut out the excessive background noise and stimuli and to focus only on what we deem to be important information. That numbness we have toward our surroundings hurts us when we're outdoors."

As a result, novice anglers often focus strictly on the placement and accuracy of casts. Somewhat more experienced fishers are concerned with the lure as it moves through the water. Even fewer, more experienced, anglers are aware of the water immediately surrounding them. Only the truly rare angler can remain focused on both the lure and the water around it and at the same time be alert to changes in the surrounding landscape.

Ideally, bass anglers should be able to stay focused on the lure as it swims through the water column, notice egrets feeding farther down the shoreline — and be aware of a build-up



PHOTOS © GRADY ALLEN

IDEALLY, BASS ANGLERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO STAY FOCUSED ON THE LURE AS IT SWIMS THROUGH THE WATER COLUMN, NOTICE EGRETS FEEDING FARTHER DOWN THE SHORELINE — AND BE AWARE OF A BUILD-UP OF CLOUDS ON THE DISTANT HORIZON.

Post-front conditions --clearing skies, stable barometric pressure.

Bass move deep or close to cover. Strike zones shrink and bass activity slows.

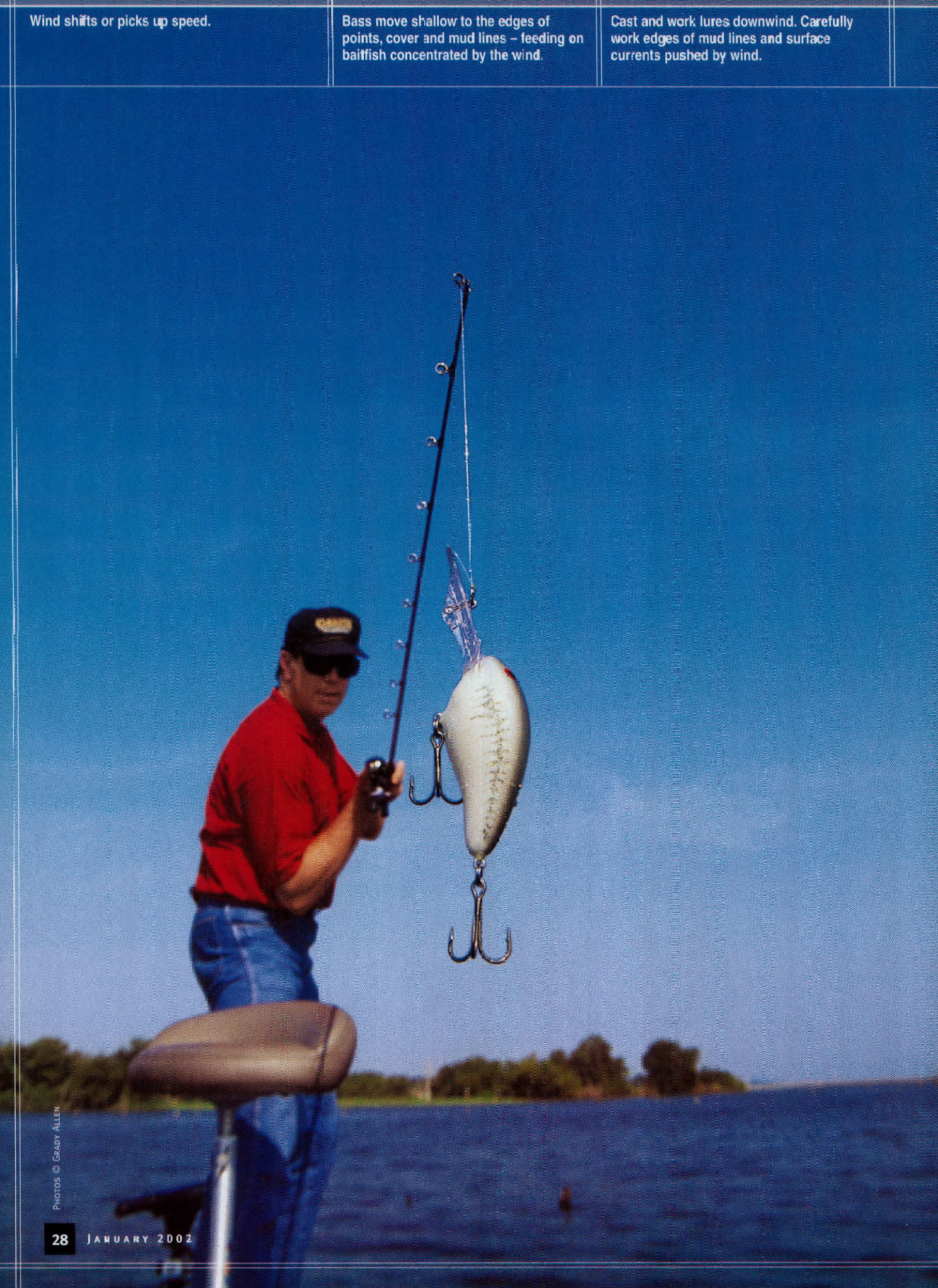
Anglers need to slow down and downsize, or try to entice the reactive strike. Try fishing riprap and boulder-strewn shoreline, because rock retains heat and the surrounding water should be warmer.



Wind shifts or picks up speed.

Bass move shallow to the edges of points, cover and mud lines – feeding on baitfish concentrated by the wind.

Cast and work lures downwind. Carefully work edges of mud lines and surface currents pushed by wind.



Water being pulled for power generation or flood abatement and so water level is dropping.

Bass move out of shallow cover to drop-offs, suspending along the edge and over deep water or in deep cover.

Try casting from shallow water out to deeper water. Lures that suspend or fall slowly are very effective.

of clouds on the distant horizon. But even the most practiced anglers, including three-time B.A.S.S. Masters Classic winner Rick Clunn, struggle to stay alert and aware of the environment. "Maintaining a heightened awareness of the natural surroundings doesn't suddenly happen when you launch the boat," says Clunn. "I discovered you have to practice this awareness every day. A lot of this has to do with where you live. Do you live — like a farmer or rancher — in a natural setting that has rhythms similar to those experienced on the water? Or do you live in a metropolitan area where the closest thing to natural rhythms is the potted plant sitting on the window sill?"

Even anglers who live in a city or suburb, though, don't need to feel hampered in their fishing success by their narrow focus. According to Klein and Clunn, observation skills can be learned. However, it requires a concerted effort and ample time on the water. "Admittedly," says Klein, "I don't possess the ability to instantly put myself into that mental state. I think it's because I am so socialized. That's why I spend so much time practicing on the water. It takes time to settle back into the bass' environment."

The Habits of Highly Successful Bass

The largemouth bass is an amazing predator. The freshwater fish can be found in Texas' many streams, rivers, tidal estuaries, marshes, ponds, soil conservation lakes and large reservoirs. The bodies of water that hold largemouth bass vary greatly in depth, type of bottom features, types and amount of natural cover, water conditions, forage base and fertility.

A key to the largemouth's broad distribution is its ability to adapt to a changing environment and fill a variety of ecological niches. As one might expect, largemouth bass thrive in East Texas' many cover-filled, lowland impoundments. However, the fish also survive in the clear, deep and relatively infertile reservoirs of West Texas. They are equally at home in many river and stream environs, including the brackish

marshes of large tidal estuaries.

Much of the largemouth's wide distribution is due to its ability to take a great variety of prey. Early on, largemouth fry feed on plankton and the larvae of insects and other fish. As juveniles and adults, their diet consists mainly of smaller game fish and baitfish. Additional food sources include crayfish, terrestrial and aquatic insects, amphibians, small birds, snakes — and almost anything else that has the misfortune of encountering the predatory fish.

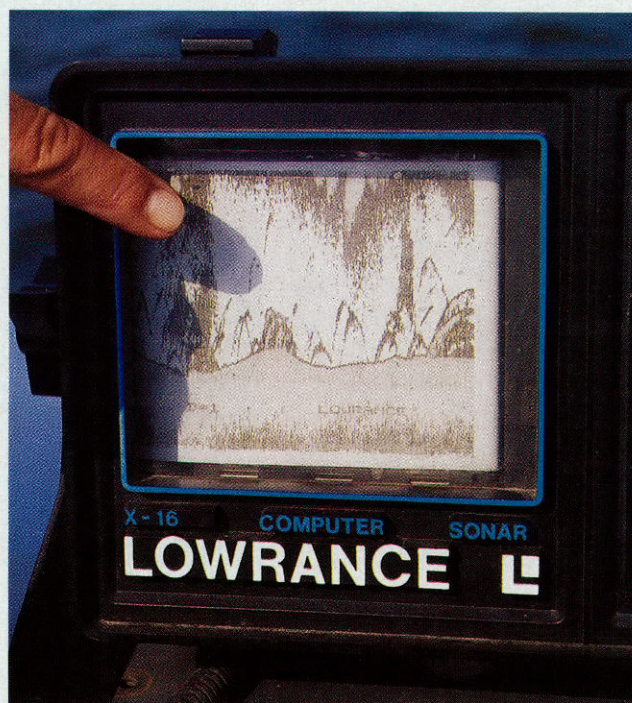
The stout fish is designed for short, powerful bursts of speed, not a drawn-out pursuit of prey. Because of this, the largemouth is most active when environmental conditions favor its strengths as a predator, therefore shifting the odds of success in its favor. The bass' feeding activity is probably

strongly influenced by the habits and abilities of key prey species. Fisheries biologists find that bass actually feed and function fairly well under bright lighting conditions; however, many baitfish have sharper bright-light vision, giving them an escape advantage under sunny conditions. Conversely, during low-light conditions — at night, dawn and dusk, or on overcast or windy days — the scale is tipped in the bass' favor.

Gary Garrett, Ph.D., a fisheries researcher at TPW's Heart of the Hills Research Center, explains the importance of conserving energy to these fish.

"Bass are instinctive creatures," he says, "and those individuals that don't have the right instincts and don't conserve energy, simply don't survive to reproduce. That's the process of natural selection. The bass that do instinctively conserve or maximize energy are the fish that are the most successful."

According to Garrett, predators cannot afford to expend more metabolic energy in the hunt, chase and kill than they get in return from the digested food item. Bass learn to target sick and injured prey items or healthy prey that cannot quickly avoid or outrun an attack. Large, mature bass feed when the odds are in their favor, and in doing so efficiently manage their energy reserves.



NORMALLY, BASS MOVE INTO SHALLOW COVER — BOAT DOCKS, AQUATIC VEGETATION, BRUSH AND TIMBER — AS THE AMOUNT OF LIGHT INTENSIFIES. IF SHALLOW COVER IS SPARSE, THE BASS TYPICALLY MOVE TO THE NEAREST PROMINENT BREAK INTO DEEPER WATER.

Not surprising, this predator is extremely sensitive to changes in its liquid environment. As soon as conditions change — giving the prey the advantage — the largemouth moves from an actively feeding mode to one of inactivity. The bass' strike zone — the distance it is willing to move to strike a lure — shrinks, and the fish seems to adopt a "sit and wait" approach, waiting for conditions to improve before expending more metabolic energy. Many of these environmental changes cause bass to relate to cover and structure differently and so require a specific change in the angler's presentation.

Follow the Light

With the exception of water temperature, it seems nothing affects a bass' feeding activity, strike zone or position in relation to cover and structure as much as light penetration. Many factors — water clarity, cloud cover, surface disturbance and the sun's position in the sky — determine the depth to which light penetrates. Clear water, a high sun, cloudless skies and a calm surface all contribute to greater light penetration. In a similar way, penetration is diminished in heavily stained or muddy water, when the water surface is agitated by the wind and under cloudy skies.

Most experienced anglers know that on overcast days and during dawn and dusk, bass tend to be relatively shallow, actively flushing and feeding on prey. This period is considered by many bass anglers to be the "prime time" of fishing. Conversely, the greater the light penetration, the deeper bass move or the more cover-oriented they become. Normally, bass move into shallow cover — boat docks, aquatic vegetation, brush and timber — as the light intensifies. If shallow cover is sparse, the bass typically move to the nearest prominent break into deeper water such as a ditch, wash, creek channel or significant ledge. While an angler might fail to draw surface strikes, the smart angler flipping a plastic worm or jig into cover will probably find the bite is still relatively good. Those bass fishers willing to adjust their presentation — switching from a topwater pattern to a deeper, penetrating presentation — can take full advantage of the changing conditions.



The Winds of Change

Probably the most overlooked — yet still significant — environmental change affecting a bass' activity is a change in wind speed or direction. Frequently, these changes are subtle and easily overlooked. This is unfortunate, because the best bite often occurs directly after a wind shift.

As mentioned earlier, wind agitating the water surface decreases light penetration and encourages fish to move shallow to feed. Additionally, wind blowing against a shoreline creates feeding opportunities. Largemouth bass cruise the edge of mud-lines forming along a windblown shoreline as they forage for baitfish and crawfish feeding under the cover of the waterborne sediment.

Similarly, wind blowing against a point moves water and creates surface current. Plankton blown against the point concentrates baitfish and in turn draws predators in. Bass will position along the structure so as to take advantage of the super-charged food chain. Anglers casting into the wind and working a lure past the bass — with their heads tucked into the wind-induced current — can score big numbers of fish.

The successful bass angler is an active observer, both observing and participating at the same time. It's equally important to notice the smallest detail and yet be aware of what's happening across the cove and on the horizon. In order to accomplish this, bass anglers must rely on many senses — sight, smell, touch and hearing. Often, an adjustment made after observing a slight change of conditions can lead to an immediate catch.

Many changes occurring in the bass' environment — as subtle as the angle of the sun or as obvious as the changing of a tide — cause the fish to relate to cover or structure differently. Anglers picking up on these changes are able to make the adjustments in their presentation necessary to stay in touch with the fish. Those that don't might as well be casting into a bathtub. ☆

PAUL A. CAÑADA writes regularly about saltwater and freshwater fishing for *Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine*.

PHOTO © DAVID J. SAMS

AS SOON AS CONDITIONS CHANGE, THE LARGEMOUTH MOVES FROM AN ACTIVELY FEEDING MODE TO ONE OF INACTIVITY. THE BASS' STRIKE ZONE — THE DISTANCE IT IS WILLING TO MOVE TO STRIKE A LURE — SHRINKS, AND THE FISH SEEMS TO ADOPT A "SIT AND WAIT" APPROACH.

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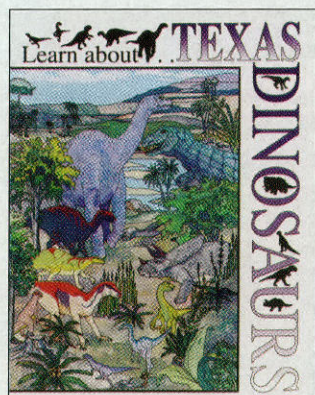
The "Learn About..." books from Texas Parks & Wildlife Press have something to offer children of various ages. For young children, the books have learning and coloring activities. For somewhat older children, there are word puzzles and basic information. Plus — the scientific information in the books about birds, insects, and freshwater fishes is detailed and comprehensive enough to satisfy budding naturalists!

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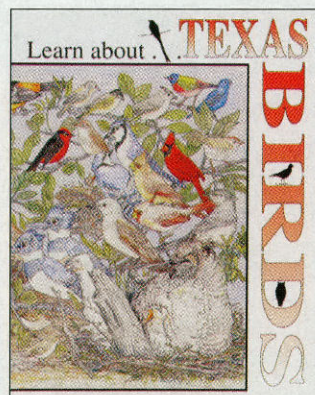
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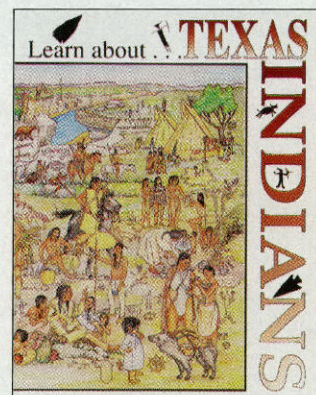
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Learn About... Texas Indians

By Georg Zappler
Illustrated by Elena T. Ivy
This fun-filled activity book has eye-catching line drawings that invite children to color a wide assortment of scenes from the diverse lives of Texas' Native Americans. Entertaining games and a 16" x 21" coloring poster add to youngsters' knowledge of Lone Star Indians. Suggested for children ages 8 to 10. 40 pages, soft cover, profusely illustrated with black-and-white line drawings, 8 1/2" x 11" Paperback, \$7.95 ISBN 1-885696-02-7

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TPW Press books are available for purchase from the University of Texas Press.

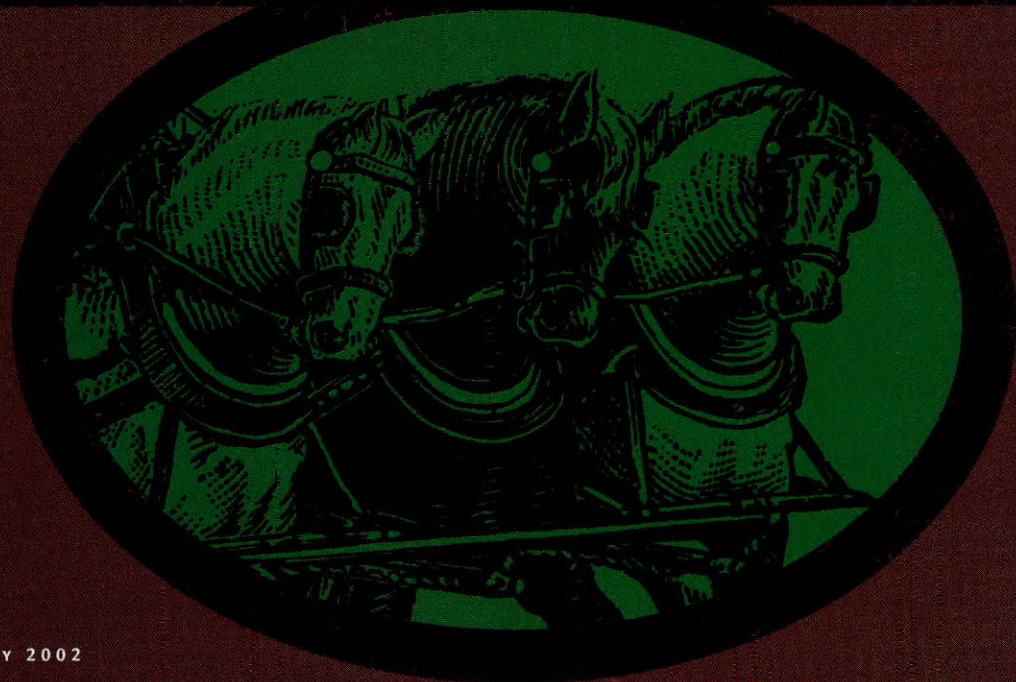
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PATH THROUGH THE PAST

HIKERS, BIKERS AND EQUESTRIANS

FOLLOW LAKE MINERAL WELLS TRAILWAY THROUGH A LANDSCAPE OF ROLLING COUNTRYSIDE AND SCENIC OVERLOOKS, WHERE RUSTIC-LOOKING WOODEN RAILROAD BRIDGES ARE A REMINDER OF THE AREA'S HARDWORKING INDUSTRIAL PAST.

B Y D O N P R I C E





FOLLOWING THE CIVIL WAR,

OLIVER LOVING AND CHARLES GOODNIGHT ROUNDED UP MAVERICK LONGHORNS IN THE RUGGED BRAZOS RIVER COUNTRY WEST OF FORT WORTH, LAUNCHING AN ADVENTURE THAT WOULD INSPIRE LARRY MCMURTRY'S 1985 PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING NOVEL, *LONESOME DOVE* ☉ AFTER LOVING DIED IN 1867 FROM INJURIES SUFFERED DURING A SKIRMISH WITH INDIANS IN THE NEW MEXICO TERRITORY, GOODNIGHT TEMPORARILY BURIED HIM AT FORT SUMNER AND FINISHED DRIVING THEIR CATTLE TO COLORADO ☉ UPON HIS RETURN, GOODNIGHT EXHUMED LOVING'S BODY, PACKED IT IN CHARCOAL, AND SENT IT TO WEATHERFORD IN A MULE-DRAWN WAGON — SOME 600 MILES DISTANT — TO HONOR LOVING'S REQUEST THAT HE BE LAID TO REST IN TEXAS SOIL. 🖱





IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE that the last few miles of Loving's final journey partially followed the route of the Lake Mineral Wells State Trailway, a 20-mile hike, bike and equestrian trail. The trail starts at Cartwright Park, northwest of Weatherford, and ends in downtown Mineral Wells, once a spa town famous for the healing powers of its mineral waters. The trail follows the path of the Weatherford, Mineral Wells & Northwestern Railroad (WMW & NW), built in 1889.

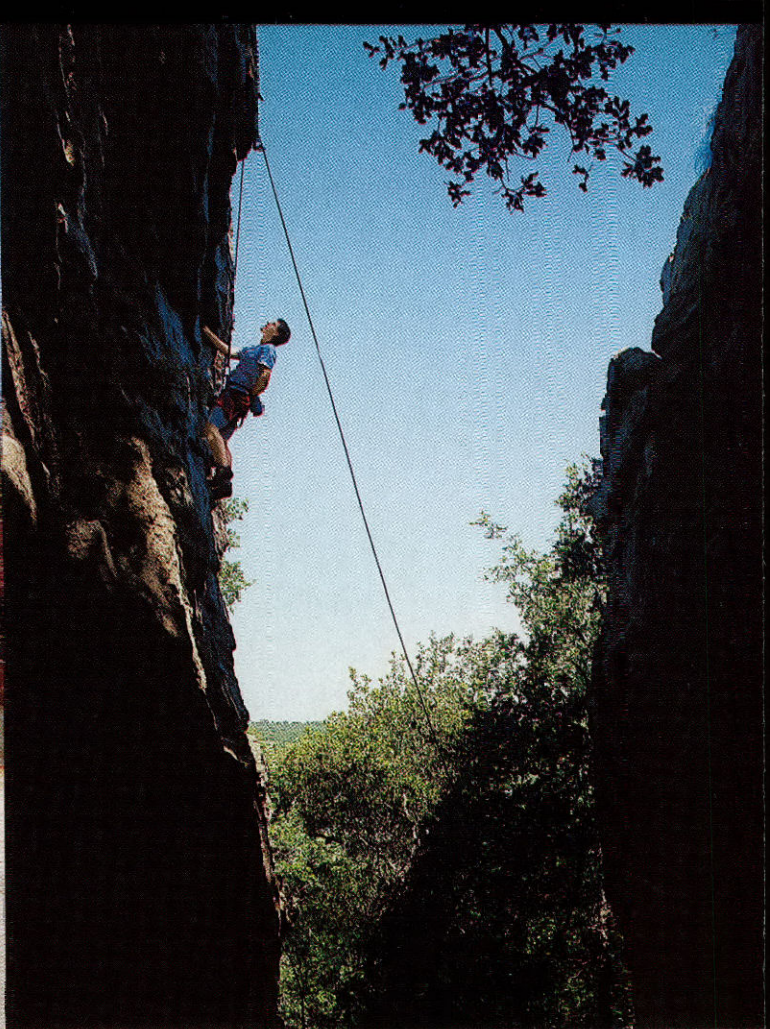
Had you been riding with Loving's remains through this western Cross Timbers country, the rough trail would have been the least of your worries. This was Comanche and Kiowa country, and in the years during and immediately succeeding the Civil War, Parker County's white settlers suffered from more Comanche raids than perhaps any other county in Texas. Frontier-era graves are scattered along both sides of the trailway, a mile or two in the distance. Some of the rough-hewn sandstone markers simply state: "Killed by Indians." The raids were so frequent and deadly that many ranchers moved their families into Weatherford, the county seat, until they abated in the early 1870s. Some of the descendants of

these hardy pioneers still live near the trailway.

The state trailway opened in 1998 along the converted rail line of the former WMW & NW railroad. The 25-mile line, which ran between Weatherford and Mineral Wells, was purchased in 1902 by the Texas and Pacific Railway Company, and later by Missouri Pacific. The line was abandoned in 1992 for lack of traffic. Soon after, the rails were ripped up, and the right of way was smoothed and resurfaced. Today the trailway provides a scenic route for a leisurely hike with the children or a longer bike ride or horse trek.

The trailway's eastern terminus is in Cartwright Park, just outside Weatherford. From there, it meanders through rolling countryside in a northwesterly direction, along the divide between the Brazos and Trinity river basins, before swinging due west to reach the second trailhead at the small community of Garner, some 11 miles distant. In 1889, as carpenters began building the first of 15 railroad bridges, they noticed right away that the water flowed toward the Trinity River Basin. A few bridges later, they noticed water flowing in the opposite direction into the Brazos River Basin. How many trailway users pause to notice the direction of flowing water under each bridge?

THE ROAD NEXT TO THE TRAILHEAD HEADS NORTH TO PENITENTIARY HOLLOW, A FAVORITE PLACE FOR ROCK CLIMBERS AND RAPPELLERS. SOME VISITORS, SEEING LAKE MINERAL WELLS FROM THIS HEIGHT FOR THE FIRST TIME, SAY THAT IT MAKES THEM THINK OF WALDEN POND.



TOP LEFT PHOTO: © LANCE VARNELL; TOP RIGHT PHOTO: © LAURENCE PARENT; BOTTOM PHOTO: © LANCE VARNELL

From the Garner trailhead, the railway strikes out in a southwesterly direction, crossing the Blue Hole Bridge on Dry Creek, one of several renovated railroad bridges on the trail. About three miles later, travelers see a sign directing them to the Lake Mineral Wells State Park trailhead. This 2/3-mile spur gets gradually steeper and soon turns into a series of switchbacks before topping out at trailhead number three, located in 3,282-acre Lake Mineral Wells State Park. This wooded tract of undulating countryside has several miles of winding trails for hikers, bikers and equestrians. This segment offers an overview of Lake Mineral Wells and its shoreline.

The road next to the trailhead parking lot heads north to Penitentiary Hollow, a favorite place for rock climbers and rappellers. This spot affords an excellent view of 646-acre Lake Mineral Wells. Some visitors, seeing the lake from this height for the first time, say that it makes them think of Walden Pond.

After a rest and water break at Lake Mineral Wells Trailhead, it's time to descend back to the railway. Careful, though. The descent can be deceptively fast because of a series of sharp switchbacks necessary to negotiate a steep,

100-foot elevation change. A prominent sign warns bikers: Control Speed, Switchbacks Ahead. Scofflaws will soon find the going tricky; it's best to take it easy and brake smartly down to the bottom of the hill. Back on the railway, the town of Mineral Wells is still six miles distant.



After a couple of curves in the railway, a long, white bridge spanning U.S. Highway 180 comes into view. The approaches to the 500-foot bridge are gradual ascents of asphalt-topped fill. A safety fence, painted green, runs along the entire length. Around a wide curve with a remarkable descent — it's hard to imagine how a train loaded with cargo could have managed it — trailgoers approach the Rock Creek Bridge with a full head of steam. From the bridge, it's a 40-foot drop to the creek's meandering channel, downstream of the park's Walden-like lake. To the right of the railway is a century-old, rustic-looking brick plant. A little west of this plant is another

wooden bridge, and water flows south under this span in wet weather. Some 400 yards west you'll reach yet another of the 15 wooden bridges, where the water below flows north. The abrupt change in flow direction is puzzling at first. (It's really the same wet-weather *(Continued on page 44)*)

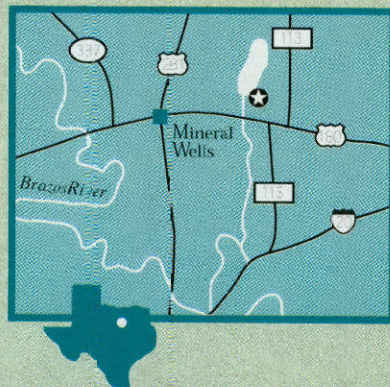
AROUND A WIDE CURVE WITH A REMARKABLE DESCENT — IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE HOW A TRAIN LOADED WITH CARGO COULD HAVE MANAGED IT — TRAILGOERS APPROACH THE ROCK CREEK BRIDGE WITH A FULL HEAD OF STEAM. FROM THE BRIDGE, IT'S A 40-FOOT DROP TO THE CREEK'S MEANDERING CHANNEL.

GETTING THERE

LAKE MINERAL WELLS State Park is about 30 miles west of Fort Worth. Head west on Interstate 20 to Exit 414/U.S. 180, and go west about five miles to Weatherford. The park is another 15 miles west of Weatherford on the right.

The wheelchair-accessible Lake Mineral Wells State Trailway is open daily from sunrise to sunset. To get to the Cartwright Park trailhead in Weatherford, one of four trailheads, take I-20 to Exit 408, and turn north in downtown Weatherford on FM 51 at the Parker County Courthouse. Then turn left on FM 920 to Cartwright Park Road. Day-use trailway fees are \$2 for adult hikers and cyclists and \$4 for equestrians. All trailheads have restrooms and drinking water.

Lake Mineral Wells State Park has a large campground with a primitive area for backpackers, 77 sites with water and electricity hookups, 31 sites with water only (20 are developed equestrian sites), and 15 screened shelters with picnic tables, electrical outlets



and interior and exterior lights. The campground has restroom facilities, four with hot and cold showers. Entrance fee to the park is \$3, and camping fees are \$6 – \$20 per day.

Recreational opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, boating, fishing, picnicking and swimming. Park facilities include multi-use trails, a boat ramp, fishing piers and picnic tables. Rock climbers must register at park headquarters and pay an additional \$2 climbing fee; there are restrictions on bolts, pitons and other damaging equipment.

Reservations are recommended. To reserve a campsite, call (512) 389-8900 or go to the TPW Web site: <www.tpwd.state.tx.us>. For more information, call 800-792-1112, or call the park at (940) 328-1171.





IT'S NOT ALL BLISS AND
WONDER, IN THE AUTUMN.

There are days when you'd have been better off staying at home: days when your legs feel heavy and your heart, for whatever reason, is elsewhere. And whether you're picking up on some sluggishness in the air, some heaviness hanging thick in the forest, or whether such heaviness resides solely within you, no

OnPoint

matter. For on those days, your dog picks up on it as well, even a fine dog like little Point. He doesn't find the birds, or he bumps them wild, or the birds simply aren't there, so that rather than a glorious hunt with the senses finely tuned, the afternoon instead ends up resembling a march, and a thrashing.

BY RICK BASS
ILLUSTRATION BY JIMMY LONGACRE

IT WAS RAINING HARD— a steamy, hissing, foggy rain. There's no law that says you have to hunt every available day possible.

You can't hunt yourself out of such a funk. The proper remedy is to go straight home and tend to whatever it is that's troubling you. Hunting should not be a mask one puts on to disappear from the rest of the world. It should be its own thing — the lure that calls you away from the rest of the world, but not a mask over that other world.

Still, because you realize that time's so short, and time afield so valuable, there's a tendency, on those occasional heart-heavy days, to try to push through the strange sadness, that ill-fitting sense of gracelessness. You try to hunt on, hunting under the worst of conditions, which is to say, hunting without joy — as if hoping that something wonderful and heart-stirring, something miraculous, will occur nonetheless.

I've yet to have it happen that way, but this was another of those foolish days where, somber for one reason or another, I kept going from covert to covert, hoping something would happen to bring me joy, and to bring my tired legs new life.

No dog — especially no young dog — wants to be in the company of such heaviness, and so Point was ranging far, and not hunting very sharp: just kind of galloping. Obviously he was thinking, If this party-pooper isn't going to hunt hard, why should I?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

We didn't even get a flush in any of the three coverts we tried, and I'd driven a pretty long way to get to them. After each fruitless run, I'd considered going home, but kept telling myself, foolishly, almost angrily — angry at my heaviness of heart, and angry, too, at the rainy woods — Don't be a quitter. One more run. As if believing that a successful point, and a good shot, a clean kill, could turn my mood around — even when the essence of the thing, the hunt itself, was not accomplishing this.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The rain was beating down even harder. There was just barely enough light left for one last run. I should have quit and gone home, but I kept hoping the woods would yield something that would bring me out of my strange, uneasy funk.

Point hit some scent and hurried forward, running too fast, snuffling ahead quickly out of range, his little stub-tail twitching wildly. Probably a running bird, I thought, and I hurried after him, pushing through the drenched vegetation and shouldering my way between limber young trees; but before I could reach him, I heard an excited yelping, and figured he had flushed a bird, or birds.

When I came around the corner, I was expecting to see birds all lined up on a limb, as if in a pear tree, looking down at my barking dog. I was not prepared to see what I saw instead: one thoroughly pissed-off skunk; nor was I prepared to see my foolish young dog charging in, snarling, getting blasted, reeling back, then charging in again, more furious than ever.

The skunk was so busy spraying him that it could barely keep up with Point's lunges. The skunk kept having to whirl to aim his back end at Point, letting him have it again and again. In this savage, snarling manner, dog and skunk were dancing across the mountain, retreating and advancing, with the skunk spinning all the while like the machine gunner in a tank's turret.

Point would not come to my call, and so I finally had to leap in between them (it was a small miracle that I did not get sprayed) and drag him away.

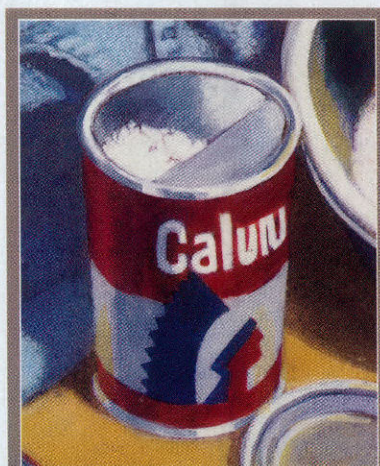
I'd never seen Point madder. He was growling and hissing and frothing at the mouth, and the air was thick with the acrid, gagging odor of skunk. The skunk hurried down into a burrow — evidently it had been running from

Point, and had almost made it to that burrow.

I scolded Point good — as if he needed any added negative reinforcement — and put his drenched, foul-smelling, shivering self in the back of the truck, and drove home wishing that I had not gone hunting that day.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I was up most of the night, trying various remedies — some gotten from books and magazine articles and phone calls to friends, others downloaded from the Internet. (I already knew from long-ago past experience with my old hound, Ann, that



IN THIS SAVAGE, SNARLING MANNER, DOG AND SKUNK WERE DANCING ACROSS THE MOUNTAIN, RETREATING AND ADVANCING, WITH THE SKUNK SPINNING ALL THE WHILE LIKE THE MACHINE GUNNER IN A TANK'S TURRET.

tomato juice did nothing but make an ugly, sodden mess, the residue of which could sour in the dog's coat at a later date, making one long for the odor of skunk.)

What finally worked, and worked amazingly well, was a mild mixture of hydrogen peroxide, warm water, dish soap and baking powder. It was the middle of the night before I applied that one, but I could tell immediately, miraculously, that the stuff was coming off.

It stung Point's eyes, and he howled and scabbled to get away as I wrestled with him, trying to sponge the mixture onto him and then spray it off with the hose. He's a little dog, but phenomenally strong, and sometimes he would drag me across the yard before I could pin him again and resume the application.

I should not have gone hunting that day. I should not have gotten greedy. I was due to go on another hunt in only a few days, but my gluttony had severely compromised that trip. Point's skunkiness went away soon enough, but what remained was a cloudiness in his eyes, a bluish opacity like cataracts, that left me frantic.

His spirits were good, but he had no sight except on the outermost perimeters of his vision. Troubled, I would test his eyesight by walking out onto the porch and calling his name and waving at him, with him staring right at me. He would hear me but would be unable to see me; and whenever I took several steps to the side, his head would not move, but he would instead keep staring, with some confusion, in the direction where he had last heard my voice.

I no longer cared about missing the upcoming hunt, nor even the whole hunting season, if it came down to that. I just wanted my brave young dog's vision back.

Whenever I went out to check his blue-blind eyes, to see if the gauze, the opacity, had faded back to bright green, I felt like weeping to see his skunky-blue, old-dog eyes rather than the beautiful eyes of jade, those eyes of the energy and lucid intensity with which he had formerly surveyed the world.

It was the weekend, but on Monday morning I drove him to town. (He was such a graceful young dog that even with his vision blurred as it was, he never stumbled or bumped into anything, nor showed any hesitation.) If you had not

known him before, you might have believed nothing was amiss; he walked with his head up, confident, pretending, I think, that nothing was wrong.

Doug, the miracle vet, who for the last 15 years has been tending to all of my dogs – through porcupine attacks, car strikes, worms, fevers, parasites, intestinal disorders, cuts, gashes and infections — took a good look at Point and marveled at the degree of damage. He said he'd probably seen a thousand dogs sprayed in the eyes by skunks, and that only about once a year was there any permanent damage. This, he added (almost as if complimenting us), was one of the worst cases he'd ever seen.

He gave me some little tinfoil envelopes of ointment and asked me to put it in Point's eyes as often as possible — every hour, if I could. I told him that I would.

I asked if Point would be able to hunt in a few days. As if I had not learned my lesson in gluttony.

Doug paused, then pursed his lips, knowing of my desire to hunt, as well as Point's.

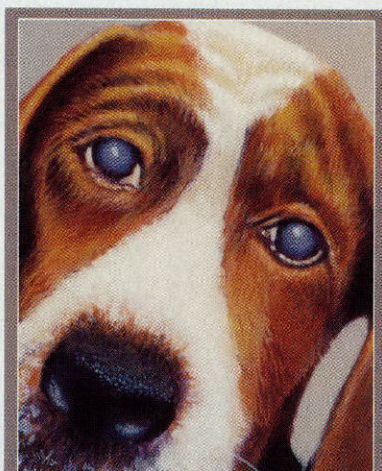
"If it's not safe, I won't do it," I said. "But I thought I'd ask."

"You could probably hunt him for an hour or so at a time," Doug said. "But you don't want the eye to dry out. It looks like the cornea has been burned. You want to keep it clean and moist. Plus, with this medicine in his eyes, he probably won't be able to scent anything; a dog's tear ducts are wired directly to his nose. The same fluids lubricate both. So all he'll be smelling is eye medicine. He probably won't be able to find any birds. But if he insists on trying, you could probably hunt him a little."

The appreciation a pet owner has for the vet who helps his or her pet is surpassed only by that of a parent for the help a doctor might give one of their children. I thanked Doug for probably the hundredth time in our relationship, and headed on home, stopping twice to smear salve into the injured eyes, which, if it wasn't my imagination, seemed to be getting clearer already.

Soon they would be burning once more with their unquenchable green fire. It was still early in the season. There were still too many birds to chase, too much country to see.

There is nothing more glorious to a hunter, or any of us, than a second chance. ★

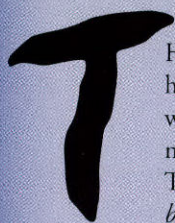


I NO LONGER CARED ABOUT MISSING THE UPCOMING HUNT, NOR EVEN THE WHOLE HUNTING SEASON, IF IT CAME DOWN TO THAT. I JUST WANTED MY BRAVE YOUNG DOG'S VISION BACK.

Wild Child

The intriguing legend of the
wolf girl of the Devils river.

BY E. DAN KLEPPER



THE NEW DAY BROKE much like the last — hazy with swelter and still as a tomb. The languid weeks of May had offered little respite to the pregnant Mollie Pertul Dent and her husband, John. The Dents, having settled in the dry, scrub-choked *bajadas* that sloped the banks of the Devils River in the badlands of Southwest Texas, wondered if a life in the empty nowhere of 1835 could ever be a good one. Mollie had thought better of it, wanting to nest closer to the Wild West settlement that later became Del Rio. But John, determined to scrape out his independence, had built the stone-and-juniper cabin in the vacant desert despite his wife's reservations, choosing the intersecting channels of Dry Creek and the Devils River as if they signaled his fortune etched across the palm of his hand. The geometry would, in the end, decipher a finality for the couple that was not unfamiliar to settlers of the mid-19th century. But for their unborn child, already awakening to the world beyond the womb, the lines of fate would reel out like spinner filament and cast the infant girl into a life completely unknown to humankind.

Mollie Pertul paused as she drew water from the spring beyond the dry draw. She could hear her husband's glee as he inspected his jackrabbit trap behind the cabin. The hares were brainless enough to fall for the night catchment, unspooked by the wicky shadow of the stick trap thrown in the moonlight. Their scrawny meat often served to placate the Dent's festering hunger.

John Dent spent the day baiting a line with bits of bloody entrails in hopes of catching and drying the sun perch that flashed smelter's orange beneath the water's tension. Mollie, belly engorged beyond discomfort, wandered among the creosote and horse cripplers, grubbing up wild garlic. She hoped that the bulbs would make the rancorous taste of the scrappy rabbit tolerable. She had been unable to keep anything down except for the pervading sense of things gone wrong. Weak and unsure, Mollie feared more for the well-being of the child than for her own, having determined that since arriving in this desert — surely the ends of the earth — her life had finished. At least the child, Mollie reasoned, was meant to have a future by simply wanting to be born.

Mollie settled along the riverbank and slipped her swollen feet into the soothing water. A low rumble startled her and she drew them back. She suspected the vibration emanated from within but was surprised and unsettled when the sound occurred again from a distance. She glanced above the limestone and watched as the plumes of dark clouds exploded slowly upward in the late afternoon sky.

The storm broke savagely just after dusk, and the Dents suffered the evening as refugees, huddled around the glow of smolder, attempting to avoid the roof leaks incessantly springing anew. Lightning ignited endlessly as if the ground erupted in magnesium. Dry Creek flashed, carrying the detritus of natural abandon, just as Mollie Pertul felt her own dam break. She knew as she worked to bring forth the child that the infant

would take its mother's life without malice.

John, frantic over his wife's suffering, decided to solicit help from a rancher's midwife miles away and set out on horseback despite Mollie's protests. As he rode, swells of rainwater rolled across the ground, refusing to breach the tension of the desert crust. Then John heard the lightning just prior to its deadly blow. The bolt lit upon John Dent like a wildcat, igniting his hat and the hair beneath it and stripping him from his horse. Neighbors recovered his body a day later as it lay soaked and blackened.

The same could not be said for his wife and daughter. Mollie Pertul clung to life long enough to wipe the blood from the tender child's weeping face then wrapped her warmly in wool against the lingering chill of the waning storm. As she began to suckle the newborn, Mollie turned her cheek against the burlap headrest and watched in horror as a pack of wolves softly nudged open the cabin door and gently circled the bed in orange shadows of firelight. It would be the last thing Mollie Pertul Dent saw of life on earth.

John and Mollie's bodies, gathered up after the storm, were cradled in pine and scripture and laid to rest. But the child never was found. It was not uncommon for wolves to steal bodies as well as souls in the dim light of puritanical thought. Folks simply assumed the infant had been devoured.

Yet within a few years, rumors began to appear describing a set of child's footprints trailing the pad prints of wolves. The companion wolf-and-child tracks were often seen patterning the mud of game trails but the sightings were met with skepticism. However, each succeeding witness invigorated curiosity and concern. Finally, in 1845, the child was spied alive.

The witness, a young boy shepherding along San Felipe Springs, was distraught but insistent in his account. Apparently naked except for the long straggled hair on her head, the girl child appeared to cavort with wolves as they attacked a herd of Spanish meat goats. The wild child vanished after short scrutiny but was seen again on subsequent occasions throughout the following year.

The frequency of the sightings inspired an organized hunt by local cowboys and, after three days, the girl and her wolf companion were tracked down and trapped in a canyon. The wolf was shot and killed after attempting to attack the posse. Once subdued, the feral child was imprisoned in a nearby ranch house. Unable to provoke her into ending the relentless howling she began after capture, the cowboys left her locked in a room to rant. After dark settled, her ululating attracted wolves from all directions, drawn out of the arroyos and canyons by her covert cries. The predators circled the ranch compound and created havoc with the livestock. Disorder erupted, and the child, taking advantage of the chaos in the lamplit darkness, disappeared.

Seven years passed before she was seen one last time. Crews of workmen were surveying the border along the Rio Grande for a stagecoach route to El Paso. They caught sight of a wild young woman pausing for a moment on a sandbar. Two wolf pups tangled at her feet. ★

As she began to suckle the newborn, Mollie turned her cheek against the burlap headrest and watched in horror as a pack of wolves softly nudged open the cabin door and gently circled the bed in orange shadows of firelight.



SPA CITY

MINERAL WELLS is no longer the Spa City of the Southwest, but a bit of the old flavor of Mineral Wells remains. The Arneson family recently purchased the Famous Mineral Water Company, established in 1904, and is bottling the famous Crazy Water — which still contains 17 milligrams of lithium per liter. Next door to the bottling company is a lush garden with 17 picnic tables. On Friday nights in spring and fall, live music featuring bluegrass and gospel is played under the

stars. Food and drink are served.

The Famous Mineral Water Company is on the edge of downtown at 209 Northwest 6th Street, just two blocks north of the Crazy Water Hotel. Call (940) 325-8870 for more information.

CLARK GARDENS

SOME 30 YEARS AGO, Mineral Wells resident Billie Clark had the idea of planting a small, immaculate garden. What she got was a gardener's paradise. She was so pleased with the flowers her husband Max planted for her that he quickly added on more gardens. Since that first planting, a dozen spectacular gardens have grown on their Mineral Wells property.

Today visitors to Clark Gardens can see at least 1,200 varieties of iris, 500 varieties of daylilies, and more than 500 antique and hybrid tea roses. Hundreds of deciduous and evergreen trees and

shrubs add striking color to the rolling Cross Timbers landscape.

Clark Gardens is five miles east of Mineral Wells, one mile off Highway 180 on Maddux Road. A marked path off the Lake Mineral Wells State Park and Trailway leads to the gardens, which are open in spring and fall only, March 15 – July 1 and August 30 – November. For more information, call (940) 682-4856.



VISITORS CAME TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THE MINERAL WATER. THE TOWN BOOMED AS A HEALTH RESORT AFTER 1885, THE YEAR CRAZY WELL WAS DUG. BY 1920 THE TOWN HAD 400 MINERAL-WATER WELLS AND WAS BILLED AS THE PLACE "WHERE AMERICA DRINKS ITS WAY TO HEALTH."

(Continued from page 37) creek making a crazy bend on the north side of the old abandoned railroad corridor.)

Just west of the Palo Pinto County line, the crushed limestone surface suddenly ends. The remaining few miles of trailway are paved with asphalt. The trail ends in the town of Mineral Wells at U.S. Highway 281. On the right is the old WMW & NW depot. George and Daurice O'Neal of Mineral Wells purchased the ramshackle station in 1981 and restored it. Today the building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In its glory days the depot contained offices, waiting rooms, a trainman's room, a baggage room and a warehouse. Some of the transoms above the double-hung wooden windows still have the depot's original green and blue translucent glass.

In 1899, the depot served 33,000 passengers; the annual traffic peaked 16 years later at almost 250,000. Most visitors came for their health, to avail themselves of the putative medicinal powers of the strong-tasting (and strong-smelling) mineral waters that gave Mineral Wells its name. The town boomed as a health resort after 1885, the year Crazy Well was dug. A demented woman who drank the well's water — which contained considerable amounts of lithium — was restored to sanity, hence the name. News of her cure spread rapidly, and Crazy Water was bottled and shipped across the country. By 1920 the town had 400 mineral-water wells and was billed as the place "Where America Drinks Its Way to Health." The waters were touted as a cure for almost every

human ailment. Among the many visitors to Mineral Wells were Wall Street financier J.P. Morgan and movie stars Clark Gable and Douglas Fairbanks. Bob Richards, 91, a native of Mineral Wells, spent a 24-hour period counting trains as they arrived at the WMW & NW depot when he was a small boy. He counted 27 passenger trains. On display nearby is a fire engine-red caboosie, sitting on what is now a very short line, about 105 feet of original rail.

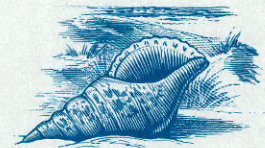
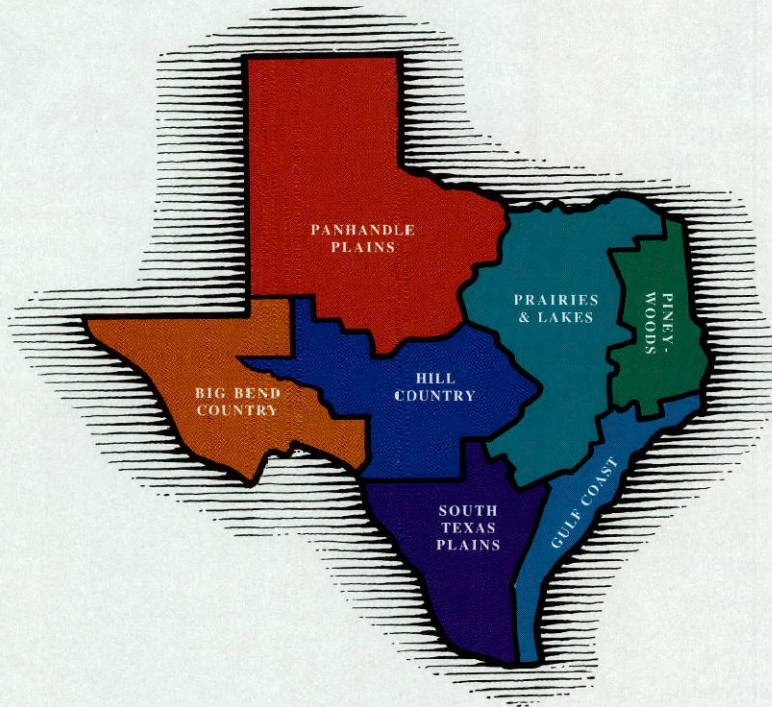
Eventually the Food and Drug Administration cracked down on the excessive advertising claims by overeager entrepreneurs, to the extent that by 1950 most of the wells and bathhouses of Mineral Wells had closed.

The decline in popularity of the town's waters paralleled a reduction in American railroads. In 1916, American railroads peaked with 254,000 route miles of line; today less than 145,000 miles of track remain, and that mileage is still shrinking. But this decline also has provided rich opportunity. A benefit of that abandonment of rails and shift to other transportation modes has been the forming of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the legislation that encourages the conversion of abandoned corridors to recreational trails. The Lake Mineral Wells State Park Trailway is a model of this new type of venue, providing hikers, joggers, bikers and equestrians with access to nature and local history. ☆

DON PRICE of *Mineral Wells* last wrote about fishing the twisted cypress thickets of Caddo Lake in the May 2001 issue.

GETAWAYS

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



GULF COAST

Jan.: Sea Center Tours, Tuesday through Saturday, Sea Center Texas, Lake Jackson, (979) 292-0100.

Jan.: Weekend Programs, every Saturday and Sunday, Brazos Bend SP, Needville, (979) 553-5101.

Jan.: Wednesdays through Sundays: Plantation House, Barn and Grounds tours, Varner-Hogg Plantation SHP, West Columbia, (409) 345-4656.

Jan. 18: Whooping Crane Bus Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

Jan. 19, 20: Beach Combing and Shelling Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.

Jan. 21: Intracoastal Whooping Crane Tour, Matagorda Island SP & WMA, Port O'Connor, (361) 983-2215.



HILL COUNTRY

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

Jan.: Bird Watching, daily



BIG BEND COUNTRY

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

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

Jan.: Desert Garden Tours, by reservation only, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Terlingua, (915) 424-3327.

Jan.: Pictograph Tours, every

Saturday and Sunday, also available Wednesday through Friday by advance request, Hueco Tanks SHP, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

Jan.: Fate Bell Cave Dwelling Tour, every Wednesday through Sunday, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

Jan.: White Shaman Tour, every Saturday, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, (888) 525-9907.

Jan. 1-31: Quail Hunting, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

Jan. 1-31: Fishing on the Rio Grande, Black Gap WMA, Alpine, (915) 376-2216.

Jan. 3-5: Hiking the High Country, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, (915) 229-3416.

Jan. 5-6, 19-20: Trail Walks, Franklin Mountains SP, El Paso, (915) 566-6441.

Jan. 12: Stories of Spirits, Magoffin Home SHS, El Paso, (915) 533-5147.

Jan. 19: Presa Canyon Tour, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

Jan. 20: Living History Reenactment, Fort Leaton SHS, Presidio, (915) 229-3613.

Jan. 20: Bird Identification Tours, Hueco Tanks SHP, El Paso, (915) 849-6684.

Jan. 20: Upper Canyon Tour, Seminole Canyon SHP, Comstock, (915) 292-4464.

Jan. 22-25: Wilderness Advanced First Aid, Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Terlingua, (915) 424-3327.

Jan. 25-27: Desert Survival, Big Bend Ranch SP, Presidio, (877) 371-2634.



except when park closed for hunting, Pedernales Falls SP, Johnson City, (830)868-7304.

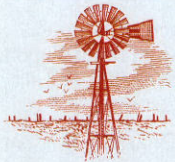
Jan.: Walking Wild Cave Tour, every Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

Jan. 18-19: Sam Bass Treasure Hunt/Mystery Game, Longhorn Cavern SP, Burnet, (877) 441-2283 or (512) 756-4680.

Jan. 5: Crawling Wild Cave Tour, Colorado Bend SP, Bend, (915) 628-3240.

Jan 7-20: Late antlerless and spike season in 25 counties, (512) 389-4505.

Jan. 21: Austin Fly Fishers meeting, Austin, (512) 918-1832



PANHANDLE-PLAINS

Jan.: Nature Walk with Llamas, by reservation only through Jordan Llamas, San Angelo SP, San Angelo, (915) 651-7346.

Jan. 19: Campfire Tales, Abilene SP, Tuscola, (915) 572-3204.

Jan. 19: Canyon Critters, Palo Duro Canyon SP, Canyon, (806) 488-2227.

Jan. 19-20: Hunter Safety Course, Copper Breaks SP, Quanah, (940) 839-4331.

Jan. 26: Eagles of the Trailway, Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway, Quitaque, (806) 983-3639 or (806) 455-1492.



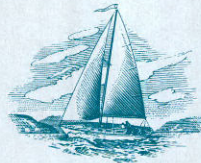
PINEYWOODS

Jan. 19: Floating the Forks, Martin Dies, Jr. SP, Jasper,

(409) 384-5231.

Jan. 26: Annual Kids Fishing Day, Lake Bob Sandlin SP, Pittsburg, (903) 572-5531.

Jan. 5, 26: Guided Nature Trail Hike, Village Creek SP, Lumberton, (409) 755-7322.



PRAIRIES AND LAKES

Jan.: Historic and Scenic Tour, by reservation only to groups of ten or more, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, LaGrange, (979) 968-5658.

Jan.: Kreische Brewery Tours, every Saturday and Sunday, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, LaGrange, (979) 968-5658.

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

Jan. 12: Winter Tree Identification, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.

Jan. 15-30: Wetlands, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, (903) 676-BASS.

Jan. 19: Evening Campfire and Sing-Along, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.

Jan. 19: Stagecoach Days, Fanthorp Inn SHS, Anderson, (936) 873-2633.

Jan. 19: Penn Farm Tour, Cedar Hill SP, Cedar Hill, (972) 291-5940.

Jan. 19-20: Origins of the Cowboy, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHS, Washington, (936) 878-2461 Ext. 245.

Jan. 26: Bass Fishing Basics & More, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, (903) 676-BASS.

Jan. 5-6, 12-13, 20, 26-27: Guided Tours, Fanthorp Inn SHS, Anderson, (936) 873-2633.

Jan. 6, 13: Kreische House Tours, Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery SHS, LaGrange, (979) 968-5658.



SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

Jan.: Kiskadee Bus Tour, every Tuesday and Friday, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, (956) 519-6448.

Jan. 12, 19: Bird Identifi-

SP	STATE PARK
SHS	STATE HISTORICAL SITE
SHP	STATE HISTORICAL PARK
SNA	STATE NATURAL AREA

cation Tour, Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit, Calliham, (361) 786-3868.

Jan. 21: Late antlerless and spike season opens in 30 South Texas counties, (512) 389-4505.

Texas Conservation Passport

Your pass to state parks and more

Free entry to state parks for a year! Buy one at any state park. Just \$50.

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/news/tcp

State Parks Offer Public Hunts

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

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

Jan. 1-4, 8-11 Caprock Canyons SP (806) 455-1492	Jan. 5-6, 7-9, 9-11, 12-13, 14-16, 16-18 (partial) Honey Creek SNA (830) 438-2656
Jan. 7-11, 14-18, 21-25 (partial) Choke Canyon SP/Calliham Unit (361) 786-3868	Jan. 7-9, 14-16, 22-24 Huntsville SP (409) 295-5644
Jan. 1-4, 8-11, 15-18, 22-25 Colorado Bend SP (915) 628-3240	Jan. 2-4, 9-11, 16-18 Inks Lake/Longhorn Cavern SP (512) 793-2223
Jan. 14-16, 16-18, 21-23, 23-25 (partial) Davis Mountains SP (915) 426-3337	Jan. 8-11, 15-18, 22-25, Jan. 29-Feb. 1 Lake Brownwood SP (940) 328-1171
Jan. 21-25 (partial) Dinosaur Valley SP (254) 897-4588	Jan. 8-10 (partial) Lake Mineral Wells SP (940) 328-1171
Jan. 1-4 Enchanted Rock SNA (915) 247-3903	Jan. 6-11 Lake Whitney SP (254) 694-3793
Jan. 6-11 Fairfield Lake SP (903) 389-4514	Jan. 7-11, 14-18, 21-25 Lost Maples SNA (830) 966-3413
Jan. 24-27 Fort Boggy SP (903) 536-1523	Jan. 11-13, 25-27 (partial) Matagorda Island SP (361) 983-2215
Jan. 6-11, 13-18 Guadalupe River SP (830) 438-2656	Jan. 7-11, 14-18, 21-25, Jan. 28-Feb. 1 Pedernales Falls SP (830) 868-7304
Jan. 6-9, 13-16 Hill Country SNA (830) 796-4413	Jan. 7-11 South Llano River SP (915) 446-3994



SIGHTS AND SOUNDS



The Front Line of News and Views

TELEVISION

Look for These Stories in the Coming Weeks:

Dec. 30 – Jan. 6:

East Texas game wardens; wilderness survival; exotic bird smuggling; hands-on environmental education for a group of Texas teenagers.

Jan. 6 – 13:

Balancing development and conservation on the Katy Prairie; mollusks; paddlers with physical disabilities learning how to kayak; water woes along the Rio Grande.

Jan. 13 – 20:

Protecting remnant prairies; wildlife rehabilitators; balancing fisheries resources while allowing fishermen to earn a living.

Jan. 20 – 27:

Snow goose over-population; snakes; Rio Grande rafting; cracking down on polluters.

Jan. 27 – Feb. 3:

Former Vietnamese refugees making a living in Texas; spiders; TPW's Game Warden Academy; hunting leases.

"TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE"

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



Learn about snakes' importance to the environment. Watch the week of Jan. 20.

Amarillo: KACV, Ch. 2 / Sat. 3:30 p.m.

Austin: KLRU, Ch. 18 / Sun. 10 a.m. / Mon. 12:30 p.m. KLRU-TOO, Cable Ch. 20 / Tues. 11 p.m.

Bryan-College Station: KAMU, Ch. 15 / Thurs. 7 p.m. / Sun. 5 p.m.

Corpus Christi: KEDT, Ch. 16 / Sun. 11 a.m. / Thurs. 11:30 p.m.

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

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

Harlingen: KMBH, Ch. 60 / Thurs. 8:30 p.m. Also serving McAllen, Mission, Brownsville

Houston: KUHT, Ch. 8 / Sun. 5 p.m. / Fri. 1 p.m. Also serving Beaumont/Port Arthur, Galveston, Texas City, Victoria

Killeen: KNCT, Ch. 46 / Sun. 5 p.m. Also serving Temple

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

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

Portales, N.M.: KENW, Ch. 3 / Sun. 2 p.m. Also serving West Texas/Panhandle area

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

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

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

RADIO

"PASSPORT TO TEXAS"

Your Radio Guide to the Great Texas Outdoors

Join Joel Block weekdays for a 90-second Journey into the Texas Outdoors. Producer Cecilia Nasti, (512) 389-4667. Check this listing for a station near you or tune in on our Web site:

<www.passporttotexas.com>

Abilene: KACU-FM 89.7 / 7:06 a.m. & 1:44, 6:01 p.m., KWKC-AM 1340 / 6:00-6:30 a.m.

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

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

Amarillo: KACV-FM 89.9 / 11:20 a.m.

Austin: KUT-FM 90.5 / 1:58 p.m., (12:58 p.m. Fr.), KVET-AM 1300 / 6:15 a.m. (Sat.) • *Austin American-Statesman's* Inside Line 512-416-5700 category 6287 (NATR)

Beaumont: KLVI-AM 560 / 5:20 a.m.

Big Spring: KBST-AM 1490 / 8:25 a.m., cable ch. 23 / 8:25 a.m., KBST-FM 95.7 / 8:25 a.m.

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

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

Bryan: KZNE-AM 1150 / 5:45 p.m.

Canton: KVCI-AM 1510 / 6:40 a.m.

Canyon: KWTS-FM 91.1 / 6 a.m. – 9 a.m. hours

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

Center: KDET-AM 930 / TBA

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



SIGHTS & SOUNDS

Columbus: KULM-FM 98.3 / 7:20 a.m.,
KNRG-FM 92.3 / 7:20 a.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Eagle Pass: KINL-FM 92.7 / 7:15 a.m.

Eastland: KEAS-AM 1590 / 5:51 a.m. &
5:51 p.m., KATX-FM 97.7 / 5:51 a.m. &
5:51 p.m.

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

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

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

Fairfield: KNES-FM 99.1 / 6:49 a.m.

Floresville: KWCB-FM 89.7 / 1:30 p.m.

Fort Stockton: KFST-AM 860 / 12:50
p.m., KFTS-FM 94.3 / 12:50 p.m.

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

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

Greenville: KGLV-AM 1400 / 8:15 a.m.

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

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

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

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

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

Huntsville: KSHU-FM 90.5 / 11:55 a.m.,
5:55 p.m.

Jacksonville: KEBE-AM 1400 /
7:25 a.m.

Junction: KMBL-AM 1450 / 6:46 a.m. &
3:46 p.m., KOOK-FM 93.5 /
6:46 a.m. & 3:46 p.m.

Kerrville: KRNH-FM 92.3 / 5:31 a.m. &
12:57, 7:35 p.m.

Lampasas: KCYL-AM 1450 / 7:10 a.m.,
KACQ-FM 101.9 / 7:10 a.m.

Levelland: KLVT-AM 1230 / 12:05 p.m.

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

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

Marble Falls: KHLB-AM 1340 / 7:20 a.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

San Angelo: KUTX-FM 90.1 /
1:58 p.m. (12:58 p.m. Fr.)

San Antonio: KENS-AM 1160 / 7:40
a.m., 12:30 & 5:45 p.m., KSTX-FM 89.1 /
9:04 p.m. Th.

San Augustine: KCOT-FM 92.5 / TBA

Seguin: KWED-AM 1580 / 7:55 a.m.

Shreveport: KDAQ-FM 89.9 / 5:33 a.m.

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KTXN-FM 98.7 / 6:50 a.m., KZAM-FM
104.7 / 6:50 a.m.

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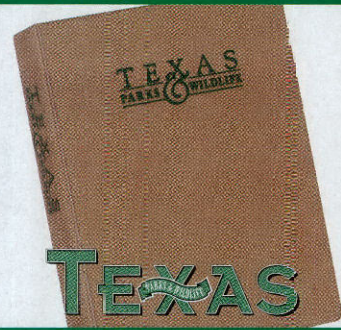


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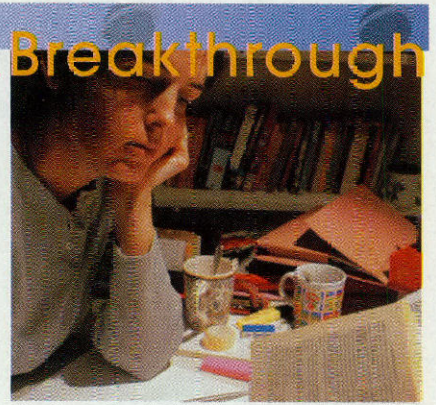
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The HappyEyes™ Floor Lamp will change the way you see and feel about your living or work spaces.

Ever since the first human went into a dark cave and built a fire, people have realized the importance of proper indoor lighting. Unfortunately, since Edison invented the light bulb, lighting technology has remained relatively prehistoric. Modern light fixtures do little to combat many symptoms of improper lighting, such as eye strain, dryness or burning. As more and more of us spend longer hours in front of a computer monitor, the results are compounded.

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...for reading...



...for working...



...and when you need a good source of light for close-up tasks.

So to bring the benefits of natural daylight indoors, Verilux, The Healthy Lighting Company™, created the HappyEyes Floor Lamp that simulates the balanced spectrum of daylight. You will see with more comfort and ease as this lamp provides sharp visibility for close tasks and reduces eyestrain.

And the effects of indoor lighting are not necessarily limited to physical well being. Many people believe that the quantity and quality of light can play a part in one's mood and work performance. Now Verilux®, a leader in healthy lighting since 1956 has developed a better way to bring the positive benefits of natural sunlight indoors.

The HappyEyes™ Floor Lamp will change the way you see and feel about your living or work spaces. Studies show that sunshine can lift your mood and your energy levels, but as we all know the sun, unfortunately, does not always shine.

You don't need the Sun to get the natural benefits of daylight

- Replicates the balanced spectrum of natural sunlight
- See with comfort and ease
- Creates natural, glare-free light
- Provides sharp visibility
- Uplifting, cheerful and bright
- Flexible gooseneck design
- Instant-on, flicker-free light

Technology revolutionizes the light bulb

- 5,000 hours bulb life
- Energy efficient
- Shows true colors
- Two light levels

Its 27-Watt compact fluorescent bulb is the equivalent to a 150-Watt ordinary light bulb. This makes it perfect for activities such as reading, writing, sewing and needlepoint, and especially for aging eyes. For artists, the HappyEyes Floor Lamp can bring a source of natural light into a studio, and show the true colors of a work. This lamp has a flexible gooseneck design for maximum efficiency and two levels of light, with an "Instant On" switch that is flicker-free. The high fidelity electronics, ergonomically correct design, and bulb that lasts five times longer than an ordinary bulb makes this product a must-see.

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—Jan L. GA

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—Kathy N. CA

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—Nita P. CA

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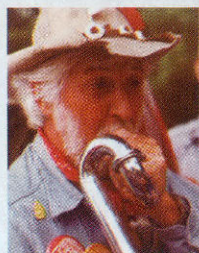
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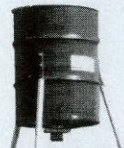
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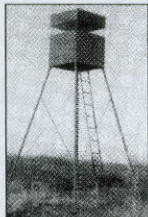
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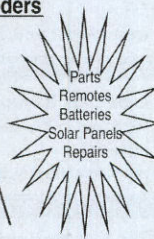
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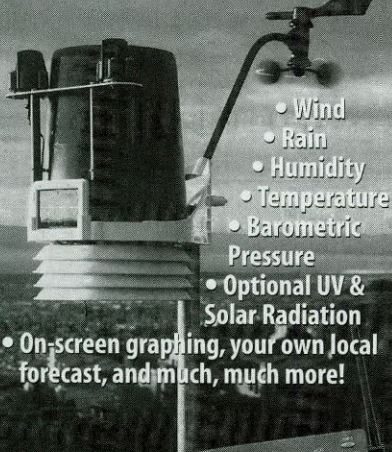
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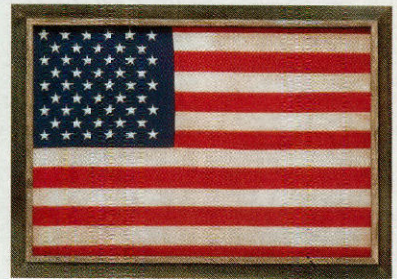
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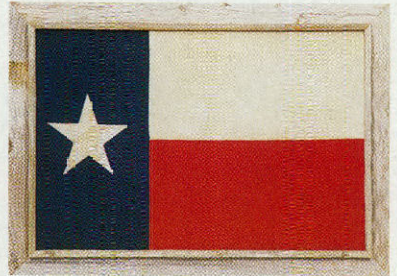
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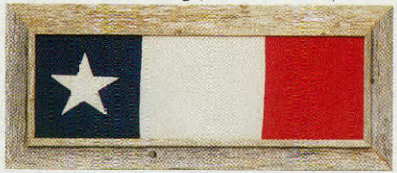
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Photographer Therese Chandler of Houston came upon this dew-covered Halloween pennant dragonfly during an early morning hike at Horseshoe Lakes in Brazos Bend State Park last summer. She knelt in the damp grass, seeking a good angle and expecting the dragonfly to depart at any moment. Using a 200mm macro lens, she was able to shoot a roll of film while the odonate remained cooperatively still.

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