

FLOUNDER | SEA TURTLES | BLANCO | ANGELINA

WWW.TPWMAGAZINE.COM / JUNE 2012

# TEXAS

PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

## Hidden Gems

Discover 10 of Texas' overlooked state parks.

\$3.95

\$3.95US



0 71896 47805 11



2012 TOYOTA TUNDRA

# GOES TOW TO TOW WITH ANY TRUCK OUT THERE.

381 horses, 401 lb-ft of torque, and a 5-ton towing capacity.  
It's not just J.D. Power and Associates' "Most Dependable Large Pickup"  
7 years running, it's the full-size truck built for the full-size haul.

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



OFFICIAL VEHICLE OF  
THE TEXAS PARKS AND  
WILDLIFE FOUNDATION



OFFICIAL VEHICLE OF  
THE TOYOTA TEXAS  
BASS CLASSIC



381 horses, 401 lb-ft of torque, and a 5-ton towing capacity with available 5.7L V8 engine.

The Toyota Tundra received the fewest number of problems per 100 vehicles among large pickups in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2006-2012 Vehicle Dependability Studies.<sup>SM</sup> 2012 study based on 31,325 consumer responses measuring problems consumers experienced in the past 12 months with three-year old vehicles (2009 model-year cars and trucks). Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed October-December 2011. Your experiences may vary. Visit [jdpower.com](http://jdpower.com).



An underwater photograph of a fish and a sea turtle. The fish is in the upper right, and the sea turtle is in the lower right, swimming towards the left. The water is a deep, clear blue-green color.

# Features

## 26 10 Hidden Gems

*By Rob McCorkle*

Beat the crowds and discover 10 of Texas' overlooked state parks.

## 36 Rebounding Flounder

*By David Sikes*

Comprehensive effort brings the flatfish back from the edge of obscurity.

## 44 Saving Sea Turtles

*By Rusty Middleton*

Dedicated volunteers continue to fight serious threats to Gulf populations.

# C O N T E N T S

J U N E 2 0 1 2



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

# Departments

## 8 At Issue

By Carter P. Smith

## 10 Mail Call

Our readers share their ideas.

## 12 A FISH A DAY

By Dyanne Fry Cortez

Keith Miller completes his yearlong quest and encourages kids (and parents) to go fishing.

## 14 HATCHERY MILESTONE

By Steve Lightfoot

Coastal facilities mark 30 years of raising fish.

## 15 FLORA FACT: KNOBBY KNEES

By Karen H. Clary

Ancient bald cypress trees offer shade and useful building material.

## 16 WILD THING: WHEN IS A RABBIT NOT A RABBIT?

By Dana Wright

Despite its name, a jackrabbit is actually a hare.

## 18 PARK PICK: CCC LEGACY

By Walt Bailey

Huntsville State Park visitors still enjoy the labors of Depression-era projects.

## 20 SKILL BUILDER: TEN CURES FOR 'I'M BORED!'

By Nancy Herron

These great ideas can help get your kids outdoors this summer.

## 21 PICTURE THIS: OUT OF THE MIDDLE

By Earl Nottingham

The Rule of Thirds brings visual energy to photographs.

## 24 Three Days in the Field

By Cameron T. Dodd

A River Runs Through It: Straddling the riverbanks, Blanco offers a quiet alternative to urban life.

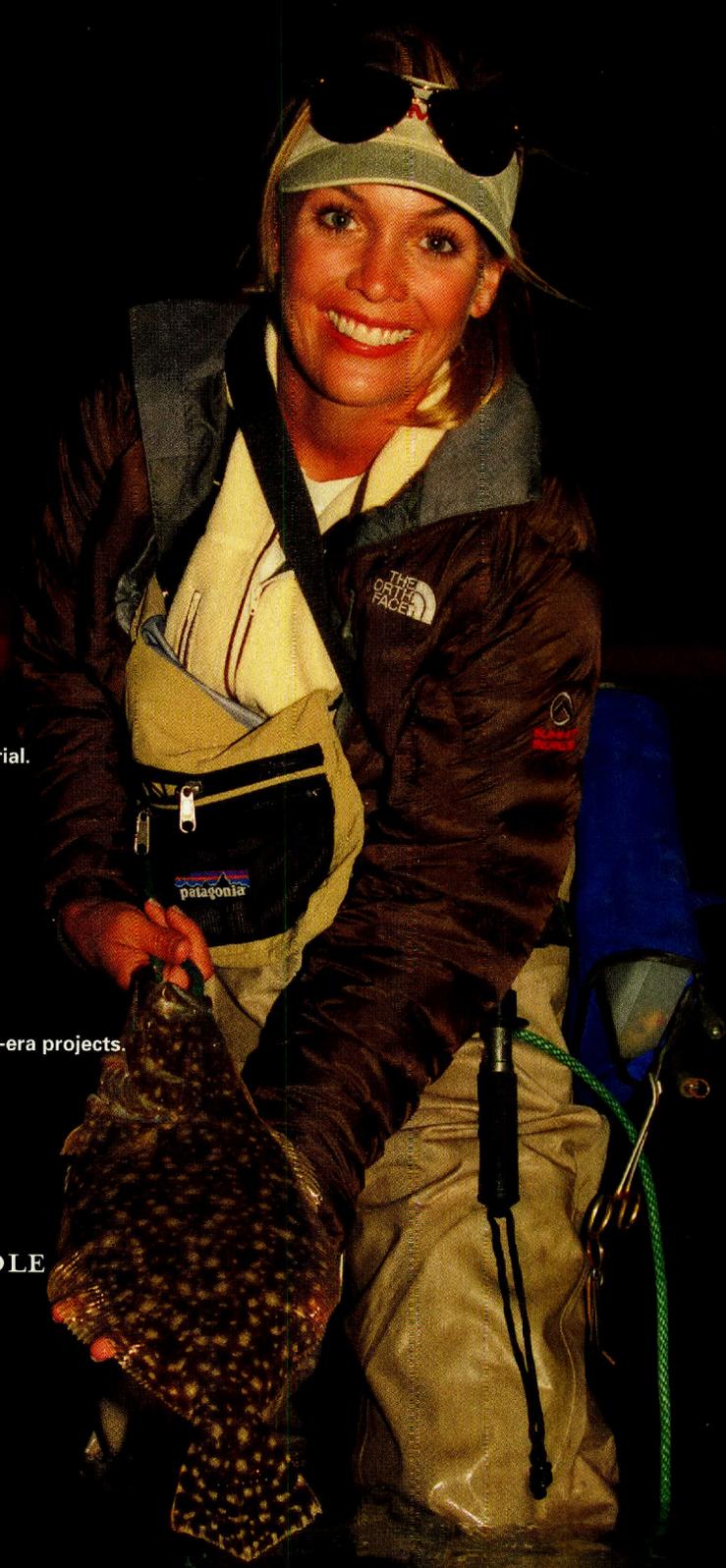
## 50 Legend, Lore & Legacy

By Russell Roe

Pineywoods Pochontas: Friendly Angelina bridged cultures, serving as a guide to the French and Spanish in Texas.

## 58 Parting Shot

By Chase A. Fountain



## Covers

**FRONT:** Red-rock hills provide a dramatic backdrop at Caprock Canyons State Park, one of the park system's hidden treasures. Photo © Tom Fitzharris

**PREVIOUS SPREAD:** Green sea turtles, once almost wiped out along the Texas coast, have been seeing an increase in numbers. Photo © Tim Fitzharris

**THIS PAGE:** Nighttime flounder fishing near Port O'Connor. Flounder have rebounded after a precipitous decline in population. Photo © Grady Allen

# TEXAS

THE OFFICIAL OUTDOOR MAGAZINE OF TEXAS



**Yes!** Send me *Texas Parks and Wildlife* magazine at 70%\* off the cover price!

*Great Deal!* →  10 Issues for \$12

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

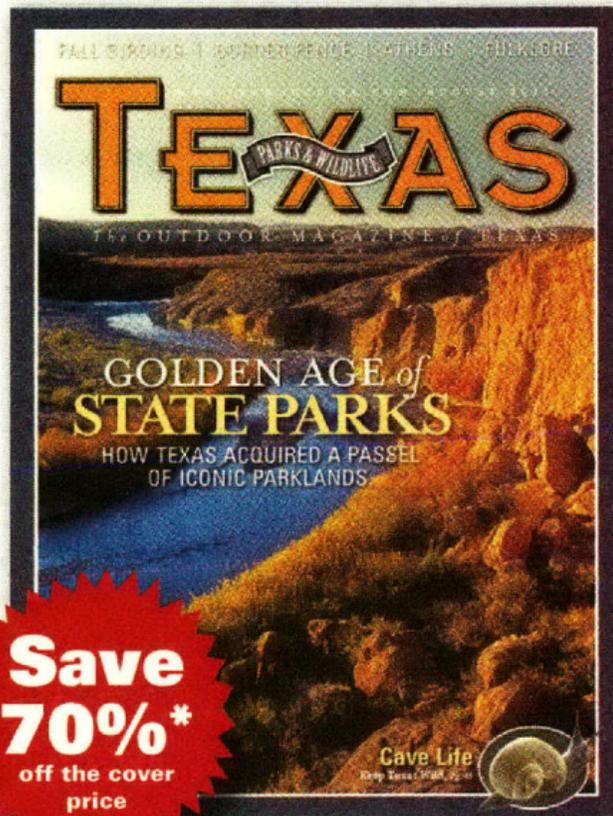
Please e-mail me new features and offers from *Texas Parks and Wildlife* magazine.

Payment enclosed     Bill me later

# TEXAS

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

6206SW



Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.  
This offer good for new U.S. orders only.  
Ten issues produced annually.  
\*Based on regular newsstand price of \$3.95.

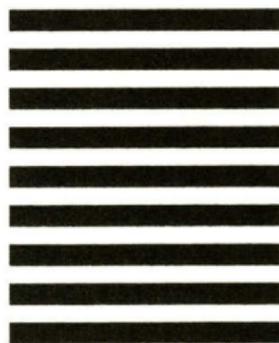


Printed on recycled paper

Visit us at  
[tpwmagazine.com](http://tpwmagazine.com)



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**ORDER NOW!**  
**SAVE 70% OFF**  
**THE COVER PRICE.**



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 633 FLAGLER BEACH, FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE  
PO BOX 421105  
PALM COAST FL 32142-6458





# TEXAS

THE OUTDOOR MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

JUNE 2012, VOL. 70, NO. 5

## GOVERNOR OF TEXAS

Rick Perry

## COMMISSION

T. Dan Friedkin, Chairman **Houston**  
Ralph H. Duggins, Vice Chairman **Fort Worth**  
Antonio Falcon, M.D. **Rio Grande City** S. Reed Morian **Houston**  
Dick Scott **Wimberley** Karen J. Hixon **San Antonio** Bill Jones **Austin**  
Dan Allen Hughes, Jr. **Beeville** Margaret Martin **Boerne**  
Lee M. Bass, Chairman-Emeritus **Fort Worth**

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

## MAGAZINE STAFF:

**Randy Brudnicki** Publisher  
**Louie Bond** Editor  
**Russell Roe** Managing Editor  
**Brandon Jakobait** Art Director  
**Mark Mahorsky** Layout Design  
**Earl Nottingham** Chief Photographer  
**Chase A. Fountain** Photographer  
**Ana Kirk** Business Manager  
**Catherine Groth** Photography Intern  
**Anna Pope** Editorial Intern

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

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

## CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Grady Allen, Russell A. Graves, Wyman Meinzer

## EDITORIAL OFFICES:

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

## ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES:

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

## SUBSCRIPTIONS:

(800) 937-9393

*Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine (ISSN 0040-4586) is published monthly with combined issues in January/February and August/September by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744. The inclusion of advertising is considered a service to subscribers and is not an endorsement of products or concurrence with advertising claims. Copyright © 2012 by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. No part of the contents of this magazine may be reproduced by any means without the permission of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. The magazine is not responsible for the return of unsolicited materials provided for editorial consideration.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE: \$18/year; foreign subscription rate: \$27.95/year. POSTMASTER: If undeliverable, please send notices by form 3579 to Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine, P.O. Box 421103, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1103. Periodicals Postage Paid at Austin, Texas, with additional mailing offices. SUBSCRIBER: If the Postal Service alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year.

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



## SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

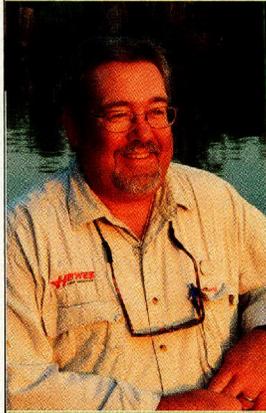
SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES ONLY, PLEASE.  
PHONE: (800) 937-9393  
7 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Monday-Friday



# In the Field

## DAVID SIKES

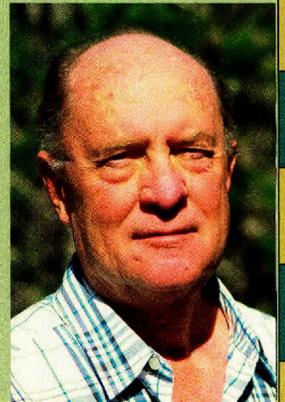
has been the outdoors columnist for the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* since 1998, covering fishing, hunting and state and federal fish and wildlife regulations. In this issue, David writes about Texas' remarkable flounder recovery. He cannot recall when he caught his first flounder,



but he does recall mistaking a flatfish on his hook for a stingray many years ago in Louisiana, where he grew up. As an advocate for natural resources, David has promoted sensible regulations for wildlife and fisheries as well as policies that preserve and enhance the habitats that support both. David is president of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association and lives on North Padre Island with his biologist wife, Katie.

## RUSTY MIDDLETON

assumed until recently that sea turtles were so rare on the Texas coast that few visitors would ever see one in the wild. That was before he walked out on Packery Channel Jetty near Corpus Christi a couple of years ago and immediately began seeing young green sea turtles grazing among the rocks. Rusty was delighted, and then curious. He had been going to the coast most of his life and had never seen so many turtles. He wondered: Where were they all from? Why had he not heard about them before? He explores those questions in this month's "Saving Sea Turtles." There is some good news, but it isn't time to celebrate recovery yet.



## DANA WRIGHT

who wrote this month's Wild Thing on jackrabbits, has worked for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as a wildlife biologist in the Panhandle for the past 20 years. Dana grew up hunting, fishing and exploring on her grandparents' ranches in the Texas Hill Country. Her grandmother went deer hunting every year until she was well into her 80s and shared



her love of hunting and fishing with her grandchildren. Dana has passed this tradition on to her children. Dana hopes to pass along to others her love of the critters and plants that inhabit Texas and teach others the importance of conserving these resources so future generations can enjoy them. She appreciates the wildlife, plant and habitat diversity that can be found in the Panhandle, including jackrabbits.

# AT ISSUE

FROM THE PEN OF CARTER P. SMITH

**Bedecked in his trademark Stetson**, blue blazer, bowtie and cowboy boots all the while chomping on an ever-present and well-chewed nub of a cigar, the late Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioner John D. Parker was hard to miss, even in the largest of crowds. Notwithstanding his sartorial flair, Commissioner Parker's gift for waxing tirelessly, forcefully and passionately about the state of the state's fish, game and outdoor heritage drew an appreciative crowd wherever his travels took him.

And so it was fitting on a warm, breezy morning in late April that several hundred people gathered just a stone's throw away or so from the dam at Sam Rayburn Reservoir to dedicate the state's newest fish hatchery in his honor and memory. The expansive and stately John D. Parker East Texas Fish Hatchery in Jasper County is an apt tribute to a man who proudly cherished and championed the beloved woods and waters of his Pineywoods home ground.

It is not every day the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department gets to open a new fish hatchery, and this one in particular was a long time coming. The new facility takes the place of the former Jasper State Fish Hatchery, which was built in the early 1930s using mule teams to dig the ponds and CCC men to carry out the building construction. While the aging hatchery had ably served the state and its fishery needs for some 80-odd years, the time for a replacement had long since come.

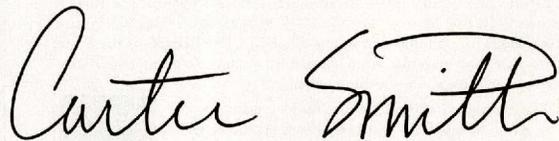
Thanks to a broad, multifaceted partnership led by Jasper County officials, TPWD's Inland Fisheries team was able to secure an approximately 200-acre site on land formerly owned by the Temple-Inland Co. With the generous commitment of 10,000 acre-feet of water annually from the Lower Neches Valley Authority, funding authority from the Texas Legislature and the contributions of a host of other partners, plans for the new hatchery quickly took shape.

The new hatchery encompasses more than 34,000 square feet of indoor spawning facilities and 60-plus outside brood-rearing ponds, all designed with the most sophisticated and state-of-the-art water management and fish production features. Once in full production mode, our Inland Fisheries team of biologists and technicians expect to produce up to 5 million fingerlings annually of largemouth bass, catfish, sunfish and other species. The hatchery will support the department's longstanding fisheries stocking and genetic improvement efforts, which have helped catapult Texas lakes into some of the best fishing grounds across the country.

Those in attendance for the dedication event that April morning would be quick to tell you that none of this would have happened without the funding contributions of one of the agency's largest and most important constituencies. I am talking about, of course, Texas anglers, who each and every year purchase \$5 freshwater fishing stamps along with their fishing licenses. The proceeds from that stamp are restricted exclusively for the department's use in maintaining and enhancing the state's five freshwater hatcheries and for raising fish for stocking in Texas' 800 public reservoirs and nearly 200,000 miles of rivers and streams.

Commissioner Parker would have been proud, awfully proud, of this grand new fisheries facility bearing his name. We certainly are.

Thanks for caring about our wild things and wild places. They need you more than ever.



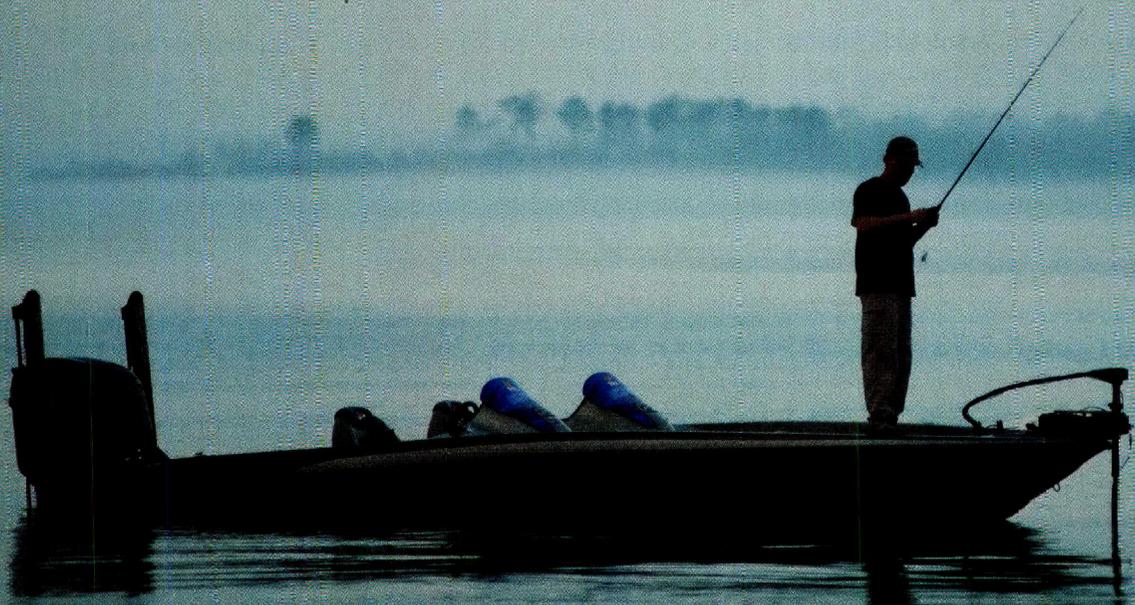
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*The John D. Parker East Texas Fish Hatchery is an apt tribute to a man who proudly cherished and championed the beloved woods and waters of his Pineywoods home ground.*

*Texas Parks and Wildlife Department mission statement:*

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

# Light on weight, not performance



## FALCON BUCOO MICRO ROD

- Graphite construction allows for a more lightweight and durable rod
- 10 Fuji® stainless steel aluminum-oxide micro guides offer smooth line movement
- Line weight: 12 to 25 lbs.

**129<sup>99</sup>**  
EVERYDAY!



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

Visit [academy.com](http://academy.com) to find a store near you



# MAIL CALL

PICKS, PANS AND PROBES FROM OUR READERS

## FOREWORD

There comes a moment each spring when something sparks my coastal daydream. I was happily indulging my spring fever with a lunchtime ramble through the woods, and there he sat in the middle of the path, immovable. Even if he'd had one, that red-eared slider probably wouldn't have cocked a curious eyebrow in my direction. There was only one thing on his mind, and that was relaxation in the afternoon warmth.

Don't we all dream of those long days of soaking in the sun, the world slowed down to a turtle's pace? Suddenly, my toes longed to be free to dig in the soft coolness of the sands of Galveston. I wanted to stop time on the deck of a boat off the coast of Port A while I awaited the unpredictable arrival of my supper at the end of a fishing line, lulled by the gentle rocking of the waves. The seagulls at Corpus Christi Bay were singing my name like sirens luring sailors. Oh yes, it's definitely time to head to the beach!

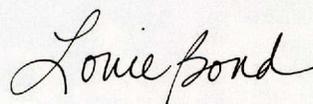
David Sikes has been kind enough to take a moment away from his writing duties at the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* each summer to take us on a fishing trip — this year it's a hunt for flounder. Along the way, we'll learn a thing or two about flounder biology and conservation.

Rusty Middleton updates us on the plight of sea turtles. They've had a rough go of it in recent years — oil spills and freezes have complicated their recovery process, but the long-term prognosis is cautiously hopeful. Who can resist their adorable faces or the amazing display of their eggs hatching on the beach?

For those who prefer their trees nontropical and their water salt-free, we take a look this month at some parks whose names aren't quite as familiar as Garner or Enchanted Rock. The best thing about visiting a lesser-known park? It's full of surprises, not people. Find out more about 10 hidden treasures from Rob McCorkle, who has visited more state parks than any 10 people you know.

Also in this issue, *TP&W* Managing Editor Russell Roe takes a look back at the legend of Angelina, the Pocahontas of Texas.

It's all a day in the life here at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Pelicans and turtles, bass and flounder, white-tailed deer and trails to mountaintops, deserts of blooming yuccas and waterfalls tumbling down limestone cliffs — get outside and enjoy it all!



LOUIE BOND  
EDITOR

## LETTERS

### THE STATE OF GAR

I just picked up our copy of your magazine and could not help but comment on the article written by Amber Conrad ("Shoot That Fish," March 2012). I saw no mention of alligator gar being put on the endangered species list recently by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. In the past few years, I have witnessed many of these bow hunters shooting everything they could and leaving a lot of them to die. If I am not mistaken, the bag limit is now one and with heavy penalties for going over. Amber, I did enjoy your article.

ROBERT STEIN  
Spring



"The Texas horned lizard or horned toad may have found itself as a young Texas boy's curious pet or pocket filler."

BILL NEWNAM  
Floresville

KEN KURZAWSKI OF TPWD'S INLAND FISHERIES RESPONDS: Alligator gar are not listed as a threatened or endangered species in Texas. Populations exist in numerous rivers throughout the state. Biologists have been concerned about potential overharvest

because of the spike in interest in fishing for large fish such as alligator gar. The daily bag limit was changed to one fish per day in September 2009 to protect the health of these populations.

### GORMAN FALLS ACCESS

My husband and I enjoy reading the articles in *Texas Parks & Wildlife* and have been fortunate enough to visit a lot of places in our wonderful state. The article "Best of Texas" (April 2012) was no exception, and we learned a few new places to visit; however, the information about Gorman Falls is misleading. We visited Gorman Falls before it was a state park and loved the area. We made a special trip several miles out of the way to visit this beautiful falls again after it was in

# MAIL CALL

the state park system only to discover that you could go only on guided tours at certain times on the weekend.

We were terribly disappointed to learn that even though our tax money had purchased this beautiful area, we were not allowed to visit unless we stayed another five days. This was about four years ago, and I hope the availability to view the falls is more user-friendly now.

BILL AND ELISKA GREESON  
*Longview*

**COLORADO BEND PARK SUPERINTENDENT KELBY BRIDWELL RESPONDS:** *Gorman Falls and the thousands of acres surrounding it opened for public day use in August 2007. Guided tours to Gorman Falls are also available every Saturday at 2 p.m. There are several trails for visitors to take to the falls, with the shortest trail providing a 3-mile round-trip hike. Before 2007, the Gorman area was closed to the public to better protect some of the park's delicate natural and cultural resources and to learn more about them so we could make sound management decisions. Since opening the area to the public, we have found that most visitors practice great park stewardship.*

## PLIGHT OF THE HORNED TOAD

I am 47 now and an avid outdoorsman. The picture and commentary of "Best Cool Critter" hit home ("Best of Texas," April 2012).

Because of its less-than-stealthy appearance, the inability to bite and the lack of agility and speed — not to mention the awesome ability to spit blood from its eye as a defense mechanism — the Texas horned lizard or horned toad may have found itself as a young Texas boy's curious pet or pocket filler, thus rendering the population depleted for later generations of youths and curious boys looking for that prehistoric relic or oddity.

I know that my days were filled with hunting expeditions and search missions during my youth in South Texas, and I am sure that I unwittingly helped contribute to the decline of the population. These are the very reasons for educating the next generation, but we also must walk a fine line so as not to stifle that unbridled curiosity and intrigue that is unique to every young boy and young explorer, finding new experiences and

critters to enjoy and interact with firsthand. Conservation, what a concept.

BILL NEWNAM  
*Floresville*

## KEEP THE PRINT EDITION

No thanks to a digital-only *Parks & Wildlife*, for a purely selfish reason. I'm a senior citizen. I don't have a computer, cellphone or any of that electronic stuff and am too old to start and too broke to afford.

MARTY DAVIS  
*New Braunfels*

### Sound off for Mail Call

#### Let us hear from you!

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

#### Write to us at

*Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine,  
4200 Smith School Road,  
Austin, TX 78744.

**Fax us** at 512-389-8397.

**Email us** at [magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:magazine@tpwd.state.tx.us)  
We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity.

**Hunt and Fish  
for Free-Forever!**

Enter to win a Lifetime License!

ONLY  
**\$5**  
PER ENTRY

Now, wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold, you can buy a chance to win a Lifetime Super Combo License.

This special license gives you the privilege to hunt and fish in Texas without ever having to buy another state license or stamp!

Enter by June 27, 2012 to be eligible to win. The winner will be drawn June 30, 2012.

# LIFETIME LICENSE

★ DRAWING ★



Winners can keep the license or give it as a gift to family or friends in Texas. Only Texas residents are eligible to win. Winners also receive a 1-year subscription to *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine.

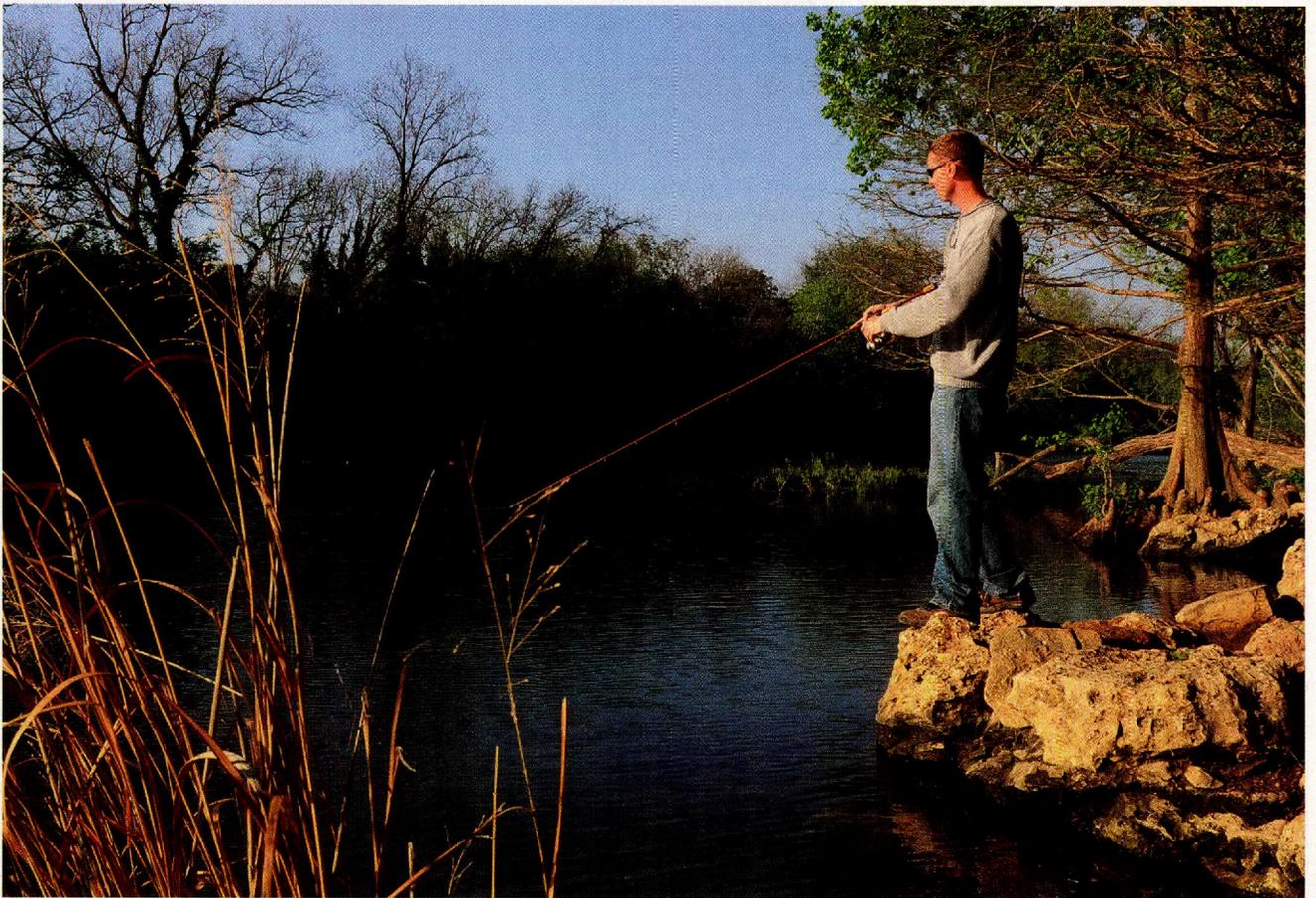
Visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/lifetimedrawing](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/lifetimedrawing) for complete rules and information.

# SCOUT

NEWS AND VIEWS IN THE TEXAS OUTDOORS

## A FISH A DAY

*Keith Miller completes his yearlong quest and encourages kids (and parents) to go fishing.*



**On April Fool's Day 2011, Keith Miller** set out on what some might call a fool's errand. He proposed to catch a fish every day for a year.

Miller figured he had a fighting chance. He'd done it once before, without fanfare, as a purely personal challenge. This time, he chose to tell the world and invite the public to share the adventure. The idea was to generate some buzz around his favorite sport and encourage others — especially children — to give it a try.

Over the next 12 months, including that “leap day” on Feb. 29, the Waco angler fished streams, lakes, ponds and bays all over Texas. He caught catfish, sunfish, crappie, ladyfish, snook and assorted other species, using only artificial lures. Kids and their parents turned out to fish with Miller at state parks and special events. He cast his way through a punishing drought, record high temperatures and two strep-throat infections.

When he crossed his self-imposed

finish line on March 31, 2012, Miller had more than 800 fans following his quest on Facebook. A pledge drive associated with his challenge helped the Houston-based Junior Anglers and Hunters of America (JrAHA) raise funds to take 400 inner-city kids on fishing trips this year.

All of which leaves Miller feeling that his quest really made a difference.

“I get notes and I hear from people in person how I've inspired them to get out fishing and take their kids,

PHOTOS BY CHASE A. FOUNTAIN/TPWD

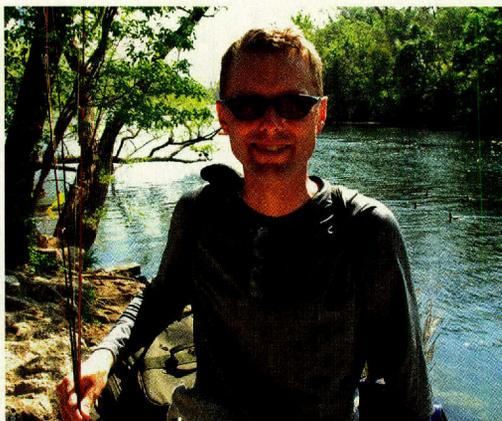
their church members," he says. "That never gets old. I heard it so many times throughout the year."

Miller knows a lot about where fish hide, how weather affects them and what types of lures they'll take. He is not, however, a professional angler. He works in the compliance office at the Baylor University athletics department, making sure every athlete is eligible to play. The university sits right on the Brazos River, and he caught some of those fish on his lunch hour.

Favorite fishing buddies include his wife, Heather, who went along on several trips, and 5-year-old nephew Mason, who knows how to reel in a bass. Last Christmas, his niece and nephew gave Miller a set of hand-decorated "fishy banks" stuffed with spare change. They asked him to give the money to JrAHA so other kids would get a chance to fish.

Miller also developed a following among kids in his neighborhood, who enjoy fishing with him in subdivision ponds. Their enthusiasm helped keep him on task.

"I'd get home from work and the kids would just be lined up ready to go. You can't deny a bunch of little kids waiting outside with fishing poles in hand. It's a great motivation,"



he says, laughing.

While this past year was a lot of fun, Miller won't say it was easy.

"This is not a task to take on lightly," he said. "It's a huge mental undertaking, a huge physical undertaking, even if we had perfect weather every day. To have ponds and rivers and creeks dry up the way they did [in summer 2011], it really did get difficult to find places that I could access and fish that were willing to be active." ☆

— Dyanne Fry Cortez



Keith Miller of Waco caught a fish a day for a year and invited the public to share the adventure. He traveled across Texas and fished in streams, bays, lakes and ponds, inspiring kids and parents along the way.

## NEW SPORTS TECHNOLOGY

# New lure's catch rate may be too high for some tournaments.

**Uses aerospace technology to mimic a real fish -- wins 19 to 1 in contest.**

NEWARK, DE— A small company in Connecticut has developed a new lure that mimics the motion of a real fish so realistically eight professionals couldn't tell the difference between it and a live shad when it "swam" toward them on retrieval. The design eliminates wobbling, angled swimming and other unnatural motions that problem other hard bait lures. It swims upright and appears to propel itself with its tail.

Curiously, the company may have designed it too well. Tournament fishermen who have used it said it's possible officials will not allow it in contests where live bait is prohibited. They claim it swims more realistically than anything they have ever seen. If so, that would hurt the company's promotional efforts. Winning tournaments is an important part of marketing a new lure.

### 3 to 1 advantage

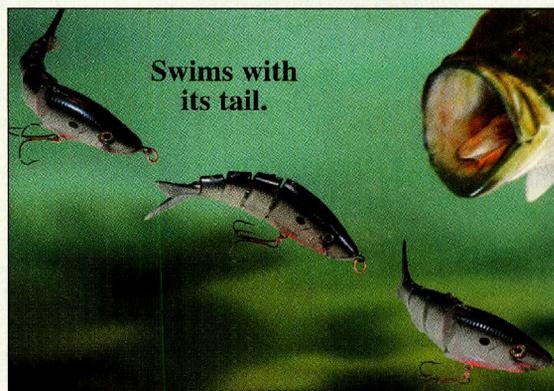
Eight veteran fisherman tested the new lure (called the KickTail® XL-5) on a lake in Florida. The four using the KickTail® XL-5 caught 41 fish versus 14 for the other four. In

one boat the KickTail won 19 to 4. The KickTail® XL-5 also caught bigger fish, which suggests it triggers larger, less aggressive fish to strike.

The KickTail® XL-5's magic comes from a patented technology that breaks the tail into five segments. As water rushes by on retrieval, a little-known principle called aeronautical flutter causes the tail to wag left and right, as if the lure were propelling itself with its tail. Unlike other hard baits, the head remains stationary—only the tail wags. A company spokesman told me this.

"Marine biologists will tell you that the more a lure swims like a real fish, the more fish it will catch. Well, the only live thing the KickTail® XL-5 doesn't do is breathe. It's always swimming wild and free."

Whether you fish for fun or profit, if you want a near 3 to 1 advantage, order the KickTail® XL-5. The company guarantees a refund, if you don't catch more fish and return the lures within 30 days. There are three versions, a diver, a floater and "dying shad" with a weed-guard. A set of 3 costs



Swims with its tail.

New lure swims like a real fish--nearly triples catch in Florida contest.

\$29.95. There is also a "Super 10-Pack" with additional colors for only \$79.95, a savings of almost \$20.00. S/h is \$7.00, no matter how many you order.

To order call 1-800-873-4415 (Ask for item # kts), or click [www.fishingtechtoday.com](http://www.fishingtechtoday.com) anytime or day. Or send your name, address and a check to Scientific Edge LLC (Dept. KT-555), 40 E. Main St., Suite 1416, Newark, DE 19711. The KickTail® is 4 inches long and works in fresh and saltwater.

KTS-14H © Scientific Edge LLC 2012 Dept. KT-555

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

# SUMMER ACTION!

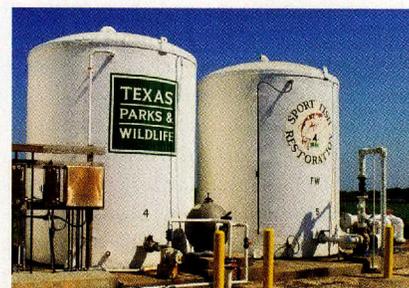


Texas. Island style.™  
**Port Aransas**  
& MUSTANG ISLAND

www.PORTARANSAS.ORG | 800-45-COAST

## Hatchery Milestone

Coastal facilities mark 30 years of raising fish.



**The marine hatchery system has played a major role in the revival of redfish along the Texas coast.**

**Putting blackened redfish on the menu** back in the 1970s would have helped land the popular game fish on another list, for protected species, had it not been for an ambitious fisheries management initiative that included development of the Texas marine fisheries hatchery system.

Providing a jump-start to a red drum fishery depleted by commercial fishing pressure was the impetus for constructing the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's first marine fisheries hatchery, the CCA Marine Development Center, now celebrating its 30th anniversary.

In 1980, the Gulf Coast Conservation Association (now CCA Texas) announced plans to partner with Central Power and Light Company and TPWD to build the world's largest red drum hatchery at the Barney Davis Power Plant in Corpus Christi.

The CCA provided funding for the construction of the original hatchery as well for an expansion in the late 1980s, helped by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration Act. The hatchery began operating in 1982.

In 1985, Dow Chemical Co., CCA and TPWD, with help from the Sport Fish Restoration Act, hatched a plan to construct a red drum hatchery and education center, called Sea Center Texas, in Lake Jackson.

The Perry R. Bass Marine Fisheries Research Station in Palacios was the third hatchery on the coast.

Since 1983, 624 million hatchery-raised red drum fingerlings have been released in Texas waters. The CCA

Marine Development Center produces between 30 and 50 percent of the 24 million fingerlings released annually along the coast. It is also one of the premier marine aquaculture research facilities in the United States and is well known to scientists around the world.

"The recovery of red drum is the result of a combination of management strategies, including fisheries monitoring, protection by banning commercial sale and prohibiting netting, and through the hatchery stocking program," said Mike Ray, TPWD Coastal Fisheries Division deputy director.

In recent years, coastal fish hatcheries have increased the emphasis on spotted seatrout and southern flounder population recovery, stocking 65 million spotted seatrout fingerlings and more than 20,000 southern flounder fingerlings.

Hatcheries have achieved significant advancements in southern flounder spawning, larvae incubation and fingerling raising techniques. More refinement is needed to reach the ultimate goal of developing a large-scale production program.

In addition, hatcheries remain well positioned to respond to disasters such as freezes, harmful algal blooms, hypoxia and pollution events that can result in major losses to recreationally important fish populations.

The hatchery system relies on significant contributions from dedicated sportsmen's organizations such as CCA Texas and the Saltwater-fisheries Enhancement Association (SEA). ★

—Steve Lightfoot





# Knobby Knees

Ancient bald cypress trees offer shade and useful building material.

**Nothing beats the shade of a** majestic bald cypress tree on a hot summer day, especially if you are floating down a river looking up at one.

In Texas, bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) trees grow along freshwater rivers and in swamps from the Edwards Plateau east through the Pineywoods and south to the Gulf Coast. The roots produce those strange-looking conical "knees," thought to help support the tree and perhaps aerate the submerged roots. Bald cypress swamp forests make a unique, incredibly beautiful and productive ecosystem.

The genus name, *Taxodium*, means "yew-like" in Greek, alluding to the feathery leaves that resemble yew tree leaves. The species name, *distichum*, refers to the way the leaves are arranged on two sides of the branches. In the fall, the tree goes "bald" when the leaves turn orange and drop from the tree.

Bald cypress trees are among the oldest living group of trees on earth. Twenty million years ago, their ances-

tors grew across Europe, Asia and North America. Today, bald cypress trees grow only in the United States, where their native range peters out on the Edwards Plateau. A sister species, Montezuma cypress (*Taxodium mucronatum*), grows along the Rio Grande. Two Texas rivers, the Sabine and Sabinal, take their names from *sabino*, Spanish for cypress.

Bald cypress are among the biggest, tallest and longest-lived trees in Texas. Some have reportedly reached an age of 800 to 1,200 years. When young, they're shaped liked Christmas trees, but as they age, the crown tends to open up and the branches lift skyward, forming a massive, lofty, overarching canopy. Bald eagles and ospreys take full advantage of the height of these trees to nest on the river.

The seeds are produced in woody cones and feed squirrels, wild turkeys, wood ducks and other waterfowl and wading birds. Cypress wood contains cypressene, an oil that renders the wood decay-resistant and durable. The wood



has been a favorite for construction wherever it grows, especially for outdoor uses such as boats, dock pilings, siding and roof shingles.

Native Americans carved single log canoes from the trunks. Early European settlers used the lumber to build notched log cabins, sheds and barns. The remains of some cypress buildings can still be seen today in the Hill Country. ★

—Karen H. Clary

## Understated Elegance

*Understated Elegance*



Call Today For Pre-Purchase Consultation. 512-259-1585.

LARUE  
TACTICAL

www.larue.com

Copyright © 2011 LaRue Tactical. All Rights Reserved.



# When Is a Rabbit Not a Rabbit?

*Despite its name, a jackrabbit is actually a hare.*

**Bugs Bunny's not a rabbit?** Nope, looking at the length of his ears and legs, he's most probably a hare.

The difference between hares and rabbits is not only the length of their ears and legs, but also the way they look when they're born. Hares have precocial babies, which means they are born fully haired, eyes open and ready to hop. Rabbits have altricial babies, which means they're born hairless, eyes closed and totally dependent on mom.

The jackrabbit we see in Texas is the black-tailed jackrabbit, *Lepus californicus*. Like Bugs, he is not actually a rabbit, as his name implies, but a hare. Early settlers of the Southwest noted the animal's long ears and called it a "jackass rabbit," which was later shortened to the current common name.

The black-tailed jackrabbit can be found throughout most of Texas and as far west as California. As the name implies, it has a black stripe on its tail



The black-tailed jackrabbit, distinguished by its long ears, can be found throughout most of Texas. It escapes predators with its long legs and zigzag running patterns.

that extends up the back, but otherwise is a grayish color on top and white underneath. A jackrabbit can reach a length of 24 inches and weigh

from 3 to 9 pounds; females are larger than the males. Their long legs allow them to outrun most predators — they can reach speeds of 35 mph in zigzag fashion. Pound for pound, jackrabbits can outjump any critter in these parts, covering approximately 20 feet in a single bound. Those long ears are used not only for hearing, but also as a cooling system, dispensing body heat on Texas' hot days.

Jackrabbits breed throughout the year and can have anywhere from two to six litters per year with an average of three or four leverets (baby hares) per litter. The gestation period is about 45 days, and once the babies are born, it's not too long until they are out on their own. They grow rapidly and reach adult size in about seven to eight months. Jackrabbits do not dig burrows; they make depressions in the ground, usually under a bush, and use these areas to give birth or rest in during the day.

A jackrabbit's diet consists mostly of woody vegetation during the winter and a feast of grasses, weeds and cacti the rest of the year. They get most of their water requirements from the vegetation they eat. It takes 128 jackrabbits to consume as much vegetation as one cow or seven sheep. ★

— Dana Wright

LEFT PHOTO BY TPMD, RIGHT BY BILL HARVEY/TPMD

**Lake Whitney**  
Centrally Located  
Four Seasons of Fun

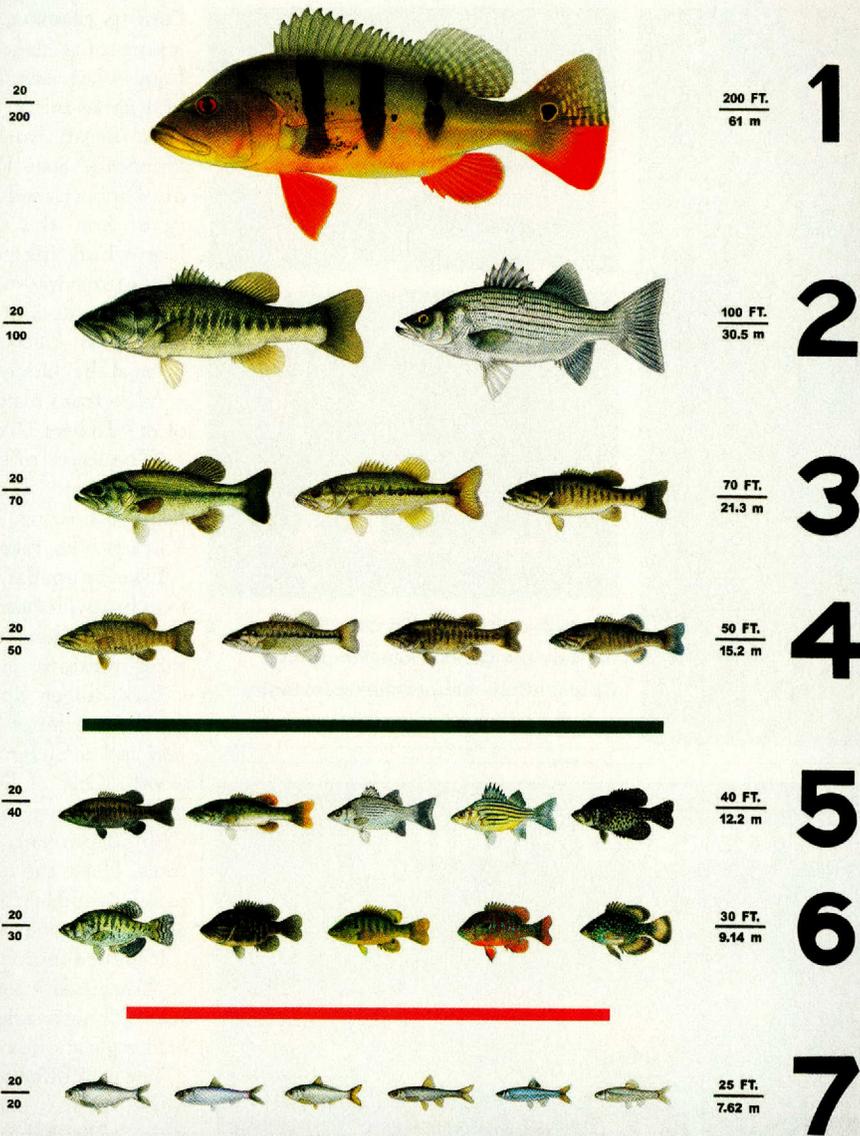
**Cabins  
Rental Cottages  
Full Service  
Resorts  
Luxury B&B's  
Reunion Facilities  
Corporate Retreats**

**Boat Rentals  
Award Winning Marinas  
Fine Dining  
Golf  
Skiing & Wakeboarding on  
the Brazos  
Canoe Trips on the Brazos  
Outlet & Antique Shopping  
in  
Clifton, Hillsboro, Meridian,  
& Whitney**

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

Based on a visual angle  
of one minute

SEE WHAT'S OUT THERE\*



**COSTA 580P AND 580G RX LENSES.** The world's clearest sunglasses are available in prescription. So instead of flipping between your eyeglasses and shades, you'll enjoy Costa's advanced technology in both 580P and 580G Rx lenses. The result: you'll see deeper colors, sharper contrast and more fish on your hook. Find an authorized retailer at [costadelmar.com](http://costadelmar.com)

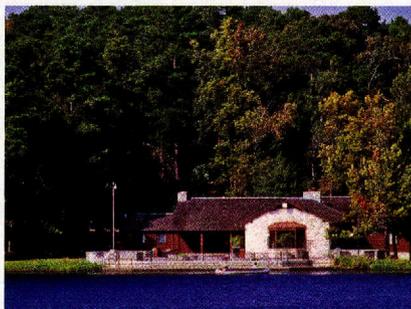
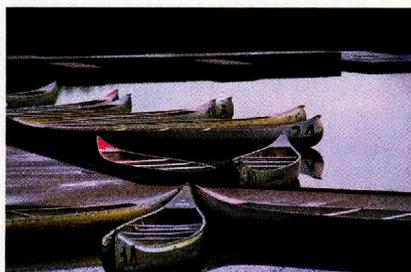


**COSTA | RX**



# CCC Legacy

Huntsville State Park visitors still enjoy the labors of Depression-era projects.



Huntsville State Park's Lake Raven, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, offers visitors the opportunity to swim, canoe, fish or just relax.

**Fading photos, old suitcases, the** report of a dance held in 1937 — to Frances Dibbern, these items tell the story of a park's birth. She and her husband, Pick, began working as volunteers at Huntsville State Park 11 years ago. Early on, Dibbern read an article on the history of how the Civilian Conservation Corps built the park. This gave her the idea of making suitcase exhibits of CCC life at Huntsville. She put her first one together in 2005, and they've exhibited them at the park every February since.

Aside from history, what does the park offer? To hear Dibbern tell it, quite a lot.

"The legacy of the CCC would be the activities here," she says. "You can picnic, fish, go boating, kayaking or canoeing. You can hike, bike or ride a horse."

Lake Raven, the lake that the CCC built for Huntsville, also offers a swim without chlorine. Dibbern describes it as "swimming in rain water."

Park ranger Royce Blackwell says the park's 19 miles of hiking trails offer both easy and challenging treks through dense woods. One of Dibbern's favorite hikes leads to an intersection of the Chinquapin and Prairie Branch Loop trails. Here, the terrain transitions from piney woods to marsh, as the trail becomes a wooden boardwalk.

It's much more than good exercise.

"You never know what you're going to see," Dibbern says, noting she once saw a bald eagle at one of Lake Raven's inlets.

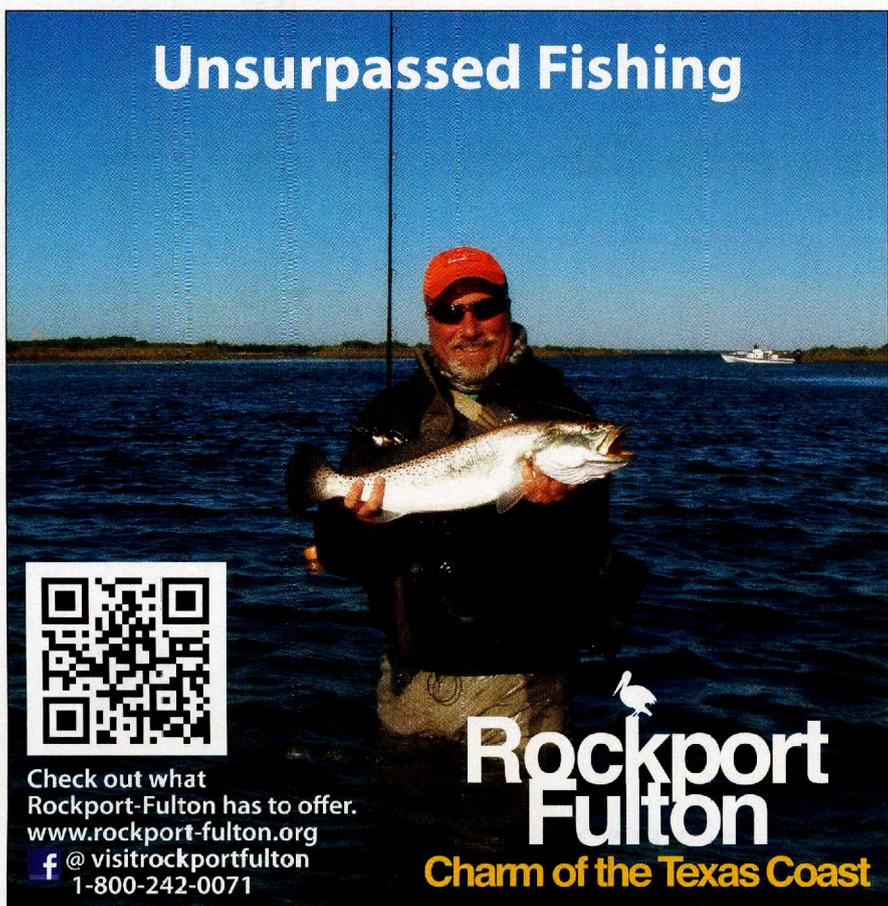
The park offers many birding opportunities. Dense plant life provides rich stores of food that migratory birds need. Pileated, red-bellied and red-headed woodpeckers also appear frequently to reward patient observers.

Another legacy of the CCC, the park's group recreation lodge served as a dance hall with a jukebox during the 1940s and 1950s. Today it accommodates up to 200 guests for parties and other events. The park also offers picnic tables, tent and RV campsites, a nature center with natural history exhibits and interpretive programs on weekends.

Huntsville State Park is located 6 miles southwest of Huntsville, off Interstate 45 on Park Road 40. For information, visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntsville](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntsville) or call 936-295-5644. ★

—Walt Bailey

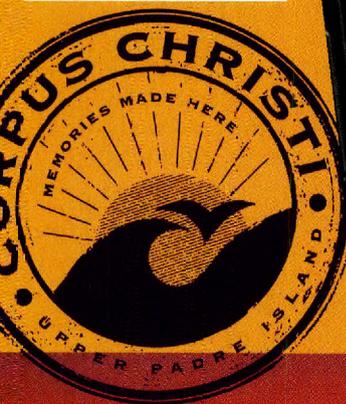
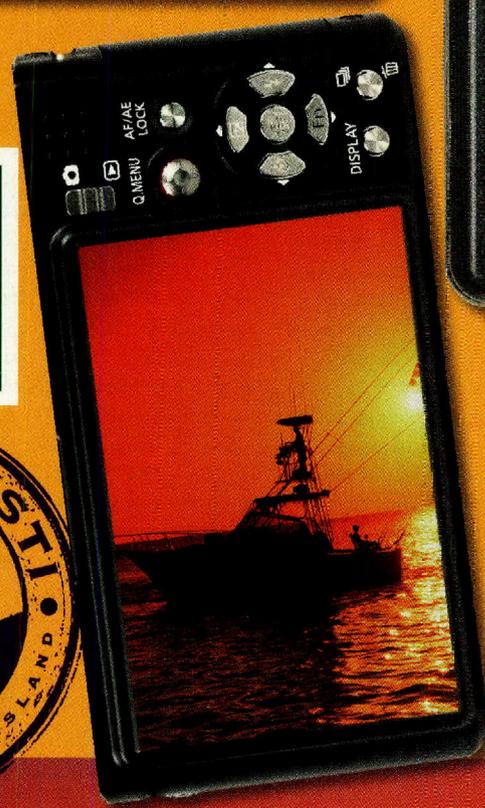
## Unsurpassed Fishing



Check out what Rockport-Fulton has to offer.  
[www.rockport-fulton.org](http://www.rockport-fulton.org)  
f @ visitrockportfulton  
1-800-242-0071

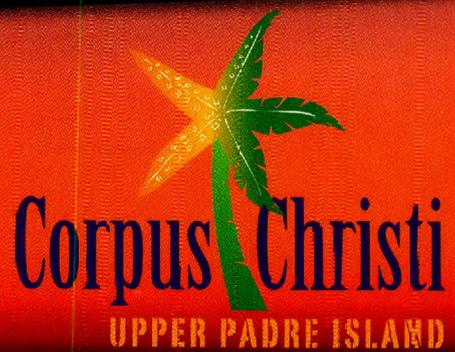
**Rockport  
Fulton**  
Charm of the Texas Coast

LEFT AND TOP PHOTOS BY EARL NOTTINGHAM/TPWD; BOTTOM BY BILL REAVES/TPWD



## A SINGLE DAY LASTS A LIFETIME.

Watching a great blue heron feeding in a shallow bay, fighting a yellowfin tuna, finding a sand dollar on a quiet stretch of beach or watching the sky light up as the sun drops below the horizon. Corpus Christi/Upper Padre Island is a place to make lasting memories; it's an urban city with its own miles-long sandbox, not a place to get away but a place to come home to. Come to play, learn and reconnect with nature and family. Don't forget flip flops and a camera, because memories are made here.



**MEMORIES MADE HERE**  
VISITCORPUSCHRISTITX.ORG

800.766.BEACH (2322)

# Ten Cures for 'I'm Bored!'

*These great ideas can help get your kids outdoors this summer.*

**When kids or grandkids lament, "I'm bored!"** try these free or low-cost cures for restless kids to get them physically active, unplugged and using their imagination.

**10. Extreme treasure hunts.** Look for signs of an animal or plant family, camouflage, trap or hideout. Younger kids can search by sight or sound for things that start with each letter of the alphabet or the first letter of their names and their friends' names. Have them tell about, draw or take a picture of their finds.

**9. Egg carton collections.** Pick a theme, such as "rocks with more than three colors," and fill up an egg carton with a specimen in each hole. If you are in a state or national park, put the items back before you leave.

**8. Build a fort.** Tell kids it's OK to move things around and get dirty when

they build. It all comes out in the wash.

**7. Kid-crazy picnics.** Challenge children to make snacks that look like what they find outside, like spiders made with pretzel stick legs on cheese cube bodies. Imaginative and healthy!

**6. Blast from the past.** Remember hide-and-seek, freeze tag, TV tag, Marco Polo, Mother May I?, Red Rover, jump rope, leap frog, crack-the-whip and tug-of-war? They're still fun! Get kids started and they will come up with their own variations.

**5. Cameras! Action!** Make a movie with a video camera, still camera or drawings. Kids can make up wonderful outside adventures and then treat you to their storytelling.

**4. Play Picasso.** Whether it's in the park or the backyard, art is everywhere. Paint rocks. (Remember pet rocks?) Or use a piece of paper and a crayon and take rubbings of tree bark, interesting rocks and cemetery markers — anything with texture. Try putting watercolors on fallen leaves and pressing them on paper. Make sandcastles or mud pies, or just lie on the ground and try to see images in the clouds.

**3. Obstacle courses.** Let the kids create their own obstacle course using things around the house and yard. Try hula hoops, small logs, different things to jump or climb over. Even the dog can get into the act.

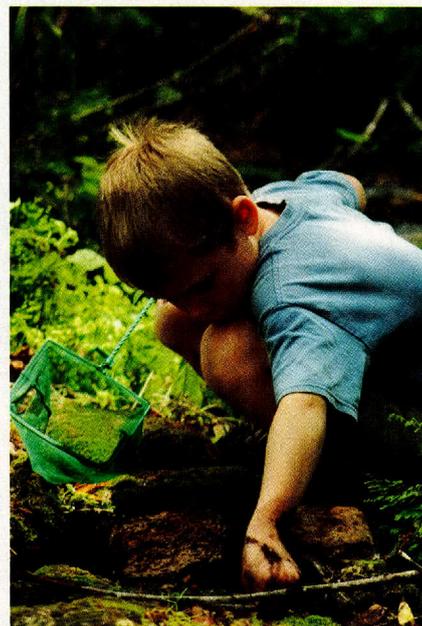
**2. Jungle explorers.** OK, maybe it's the park or backyard, but take a magnifying glass, a net, a jar and a piece of paper and open the biggest encyclopedia of discoveries ever. Make up names for animals and plants you see. Make bird feeders, toad abodes and animal homes. Pitch a tent for a junior scientist's remote field station.

**1. Head to a park with the kids.** Play, hike, swim, fish, camp and take in a special program. Time outside with people you love is the best cure for all sorts of things, and helps us be healthier, happier and smarter!

## Park Tips

Worried about what to take or do at the park? Here are some tips:

Take a sense of humor. There's always one person who's not happy.



Children will find plenty to explore if you give them a net, jar or magnifying glass. Building forts and going on treasure hunts will also keep them engaged.

Accept this and just keep going. The less attention you give, the quicker it passes. Frequent breaks and easygoing attitudes go a long way.

Slow down. Set big goals aside and let kids set the pace. Stop to laugh, explore and smell the flowers. Sing songs. Be fascinated by rocks. Skip stones. Build castles in a sandy part of the trail. Relax and enjoy nature.

Take snacks. Bribery gets you everywhere. Plan for frequent stops with several light and healthy snacks along the way. Kids can carry the snacks in a day pack. Take drinking water and some hand wipes. Stop every 20 or 30 minutes and let them choose the snack for that stop.

Dress to get dirty. Worried about pictures of dirty kids? The expressions on the faces of kids who get to explore are priceless.

Plan for discovery. Learn to identify one or two of something — a tree with some distinctive identifier (bark, shape or leaf); an easily heard bird song (cardinals are good first birds) or frog call (such as the rock-clicking sound of the leopard frog); or a flower that's blooming; or a dragonfly, algae or duckweed. No need to be a walking encyclopedia. If you get a lot of "What's this?" or "Why?" questions, ask them what they think. That's how science was born. ★

*Cowboys  
Canyons  
& KICKS*

*You'll find rugged beauty, starry skies, renowned museums, Route 66 and steaks too big for your plate in Amarillo, the city that tops the Texas Panhandle.*

Step Into The Real Texas

**AMARILLO**

800-692-1338

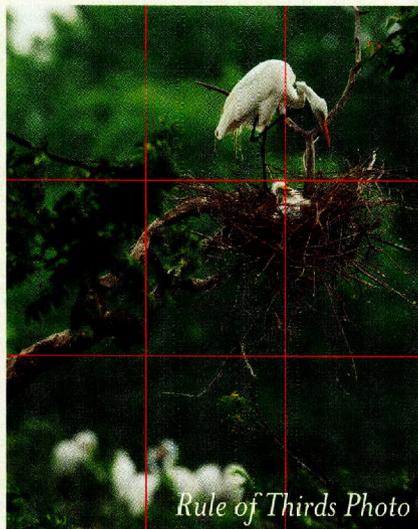
www.visitAmarilloTX.com

# Out of the Middle

*The Rule of Thirds brings visual energy to photographs.*



*Centered Photo*



*Rule of Thirds Photo*

The image at left is a typical "bull's eye" photograph where the primary subject is centered in the frame. It could be made more engaging by recomposing the subject. In the right image, the camera has been shifted slightly so that the subject is placed not only in the top third of the frame but also along the right-hand third, giving a sense of height to the nest as well as allowing the viewer's eye to travel into and interact with other elements of the scene, particularly the other birds at the lower left.

For most of my kindergarten career, I was the kid who always colored outside the lines — that is, until the day that my teacher, Miss Sally informed me that the "rule" was to always color inside of the lines. When I followed her advice, the bunny rabbit and squirrel shapes on freshly mimeographed paper suddenly looked "normal" when colored in.

Photography has its own time-tested rules when it comes to the ways in which we can create more exciting images. One of those ways is by the use of good composition, which helps ensure that any photograph, regardless of subject matter, arrests the attention of the viewer and becomes an engaging visual statement rather than an average snapshot. Even before the first camera was invented, artists used basic rules of composition to visually "grab" the viewer's eye and lead it through a painting in a controlled manner by the masterful placement of objects, shapes and lines, making their artwork more of a visual story to be "read" rather than just seen.

One of the most rudimentary rules of composition, and one of the simplest, is known as the Rule of Thirds. The photographer visualizes the scene in the viewfinder as divided into nine equal parts created by two equally spaced hor-

izontal and two equally spaced vertical lines (like a tic-tac-toe pattern) and then places the main subject or focal point of the scene at the intersection of two of the lines. This moves the subject away from the more static center of the image to a position where it has more "weight," thereby creating a visual tension and energy.

One of the most common mistakes of beginning photographers is to place the main subject directly in the center of the frame. This is called a "bull's eye" shot and makes a photograph less interesting than it could be with more dynamic composition. One reason there are so many "bull's eye" pictures taken is that most cameras by default will auto-focus in the center of the frame, compelling the photographer to place the subject there. Learning to change the auto-focus points in the viewfinder or focusing manually will free up the photographer for more interesting compositional possibilities.

Sometimes, though, it's fun to embrace our inner rebel, break the rules and color outside the lines. Next month, we'll explore some diversions from the basic rules of composition and see how they can lead to dynamic photographs. ★

—Earl Nottingham

## SIGHTS & SOUNDS

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE TV AND RADIO



### May 27–June 2:

Stop salvinia; volunteers help keep the coast healthy; habitat and conservation education; Palmetto State Park; Clear Creek Ranch; turkeys in the trees.

### June 3–9:

Buescher open for business; David Campbell profile; useful desert plants; land trusts; Trinity Bluff wildlife ranch; owls at home; Guadalupe River falls.

### June 10–16:

Shallow water boating

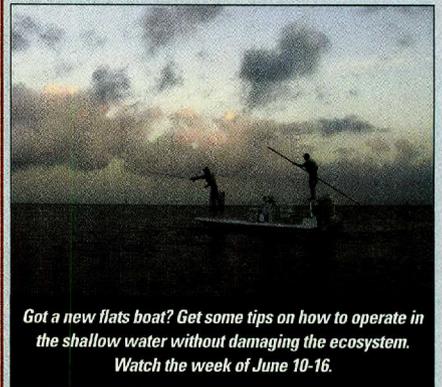
tips; Houston's urban parks; Hailey Ranch renovation; Lake Tawakoni State Park; see sea oats.

### June 17–23:

Wadefishing the coast; animal rehabilitators; big views at Big Spring; Half Brothers ranch; Texas skies.

### June 24–30:

Fort Leaton State Historic Site; outdoor social clubs; Game Warden Shawn Hervey; traveling the Red River; bird's-eye view of the coast.



Got a new flats boat? Get some tips on how to operate in the shallow water without damaging the ecosystem. Watch the week of June 10-16.

### TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

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

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



### RADIO

YOUR RADIO GUIDE TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS

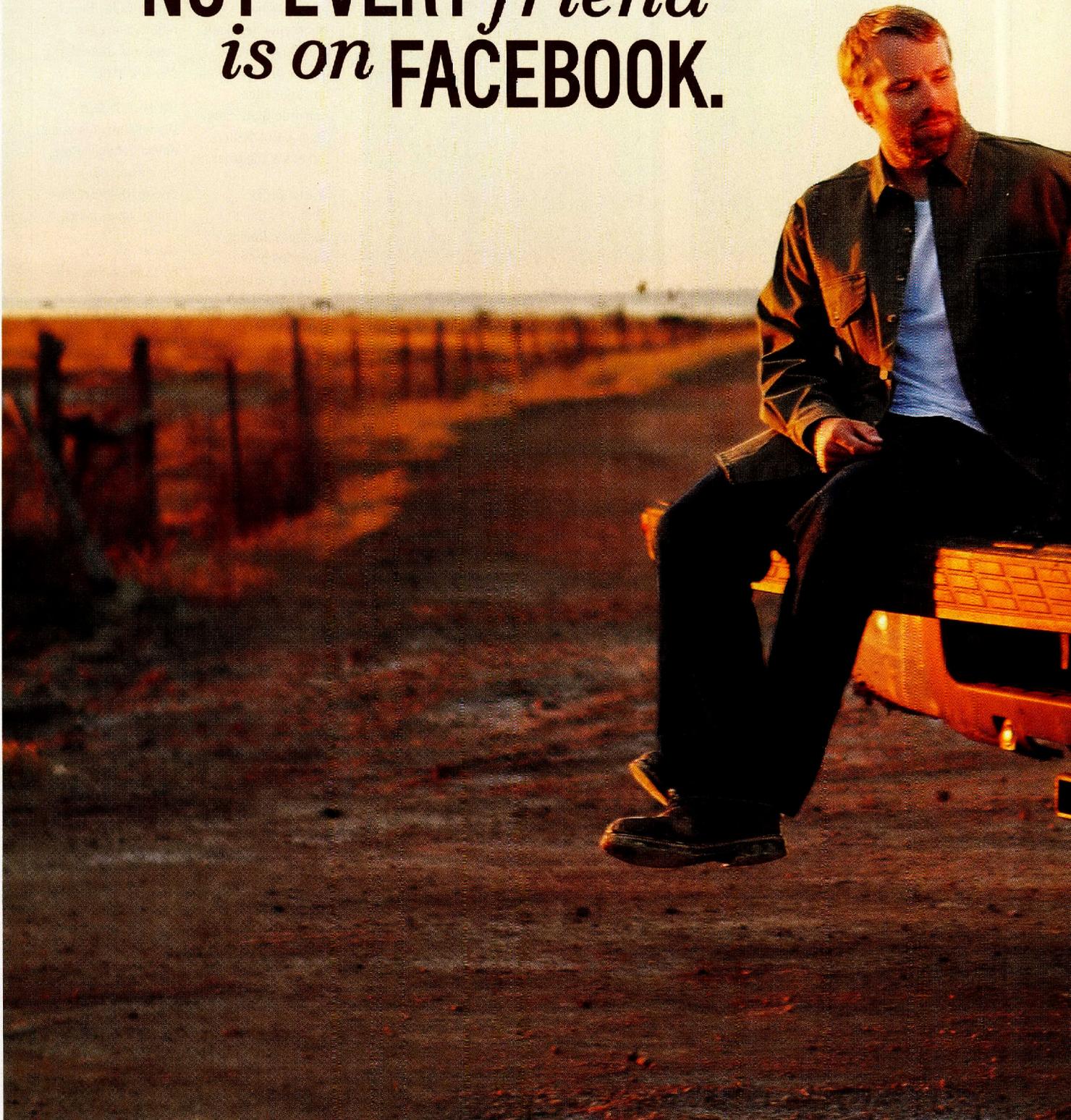
Passport to Texas is your radio guide to the Great Texas Outdoors. Visit the website, [www.passporttotexas.org](http://www.passporttotexas.org), to find a station near you that broadcasts the show, or listen online.

### PASSPORT TO TEXAS

Join host Cecilia Nasti weekdays for a 90-second excursion into the Texas Outdoors. Find a station near you, or listen on the Web at [www.passporttotexas.org](http://www.passporttotexas.org)



**NOT EVERY *friend***  
*is on* **FACEBOOK.**



1 Dependability based on longevity: 1981–July 2011 full-size pickup registrations.

**Chevy Silverado Half-Ton. The most dependable, longest-lasting full-size pickups on the road.<sup>1</sup> Because man's best friend deserves man's best truck. THERE'S LIFE TO BE DONE.**





chevy.com/silverado

Chevy Runs Deep 

# 3 Days in the Field / By Cameron T. Dodd

DESTINATION: BLANCO

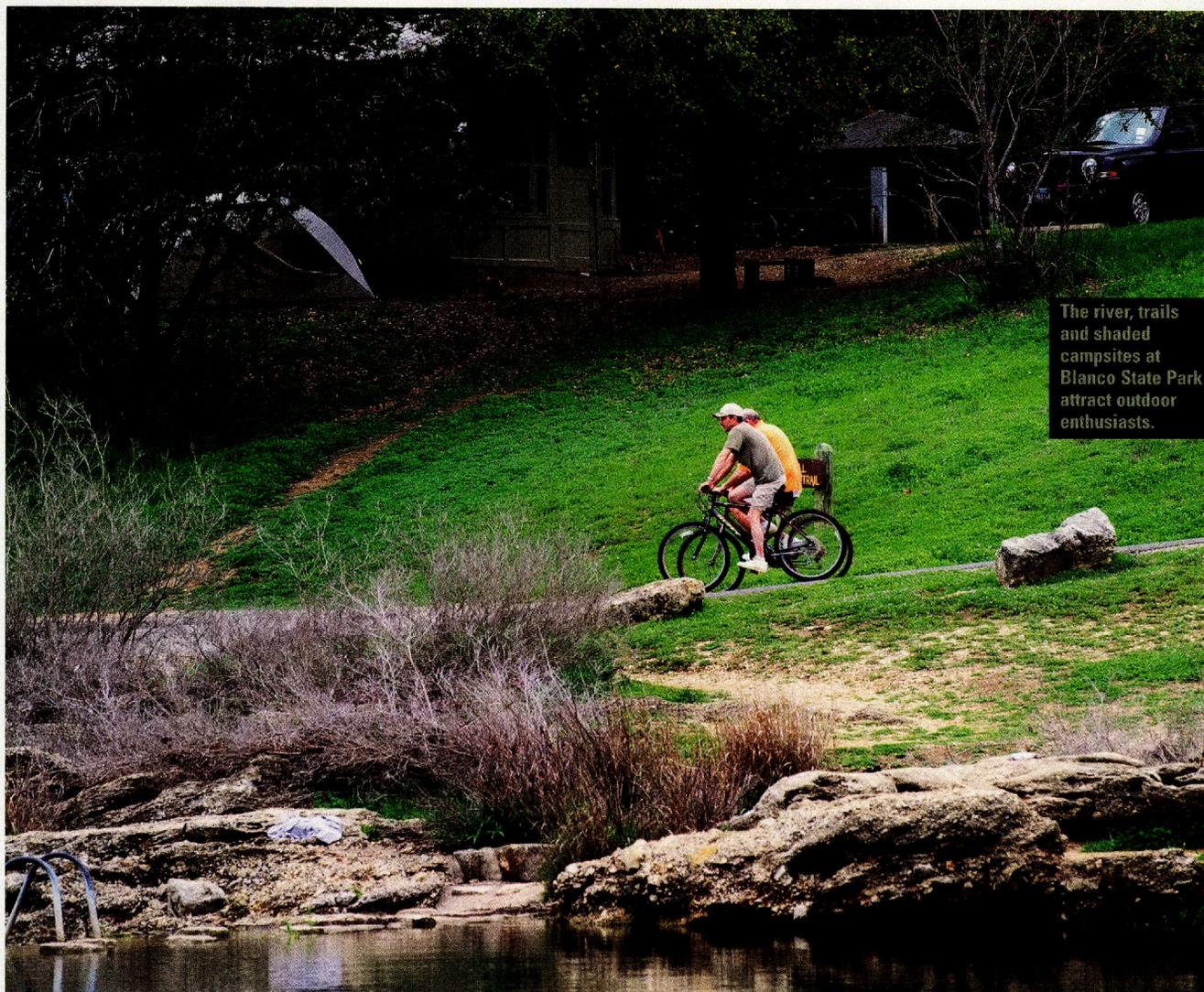
TRAVEL TIME FROM:

AUSTIN – 1 hour / BROWNSVILLE – 5.5 hours / DALLAS – 4.25 hours

HOUSTON – 3.75 hours / SAN ANTONIO – 1 hour / LUBBOCK – 6.5 hours / EL PASO – 8 hours

## A River Runs Through It

*Straddling the riverbanks, Blanco offers a quiet alternative to urban life.*



### Near Blanco on U.S. Highway

281, the speed limit drops to 35 mph. "Please Slow Down, Enjoy Our Town," the welcome sign requests.

And things do slow down here. Headline news here was a proposal to put a statue of LBJ on the courthouse lawn and an audit that showed Blanco in good financial shape. In fact, Blanco is doing so well, it is remodeling an older

school and building a new school.

I expected to find a quaint Hill Country town with an interesting history and some better-than-average baked goods. I found all that, but I also found thoughtful people who have purposefully chosen a life away from the big city, with a real sense of small-town pride and civic commitment. Culture and history are a priority in this town

of more than 1,500. When I visited, Blanco residents were busily compiling a cookbook to help save their state park and throwing a party to help a neighbor overwhelmed with medical bills.

My first night, I camped under the stars at Blanco State Park. Several playgrounds, well-maintained bathrooms with showers and an abundance of campsites equipped with water and elec-

tricity make this park an easy family camping destination. A pavilion constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps sits overlooking the park and makes for a great — not to mention pleasantly shady — picnic spot. Several nature trails allow you to lose yourself in the woods along the water's edge.

The park straddles the Blanco River, and several CCC-constructed dams create swimming holes that are the park's main attraction on hot summer days. When the air stills and the temperature peaks in late afternoon, visitors enjoy the

showers beneath the dams' spillover and float in the cool pools. Kayaks, tubes and canoes can be rented in the park.

Perch, catfish and bass are abundant here, making fishing another one of the park's draws. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department stocks the river with trout in winter.

I dedicated the next day to getting to know the town. Once the county seat of Blanco County — an honor lost to Johnson City in 1890 — Blanco is built around a historic courthouse, which now serves as a visitors center as well as

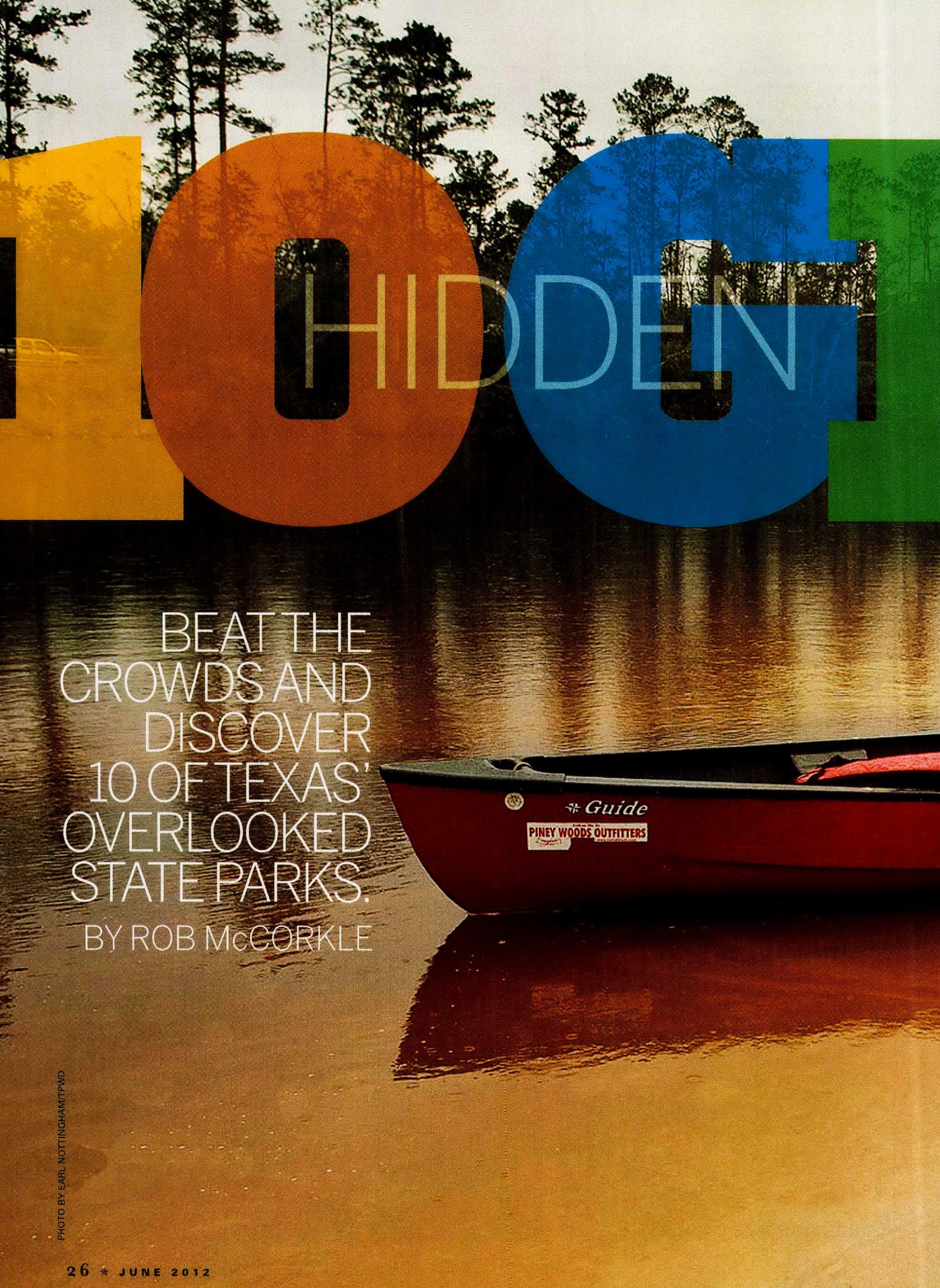
an attractive centerpiece to the vibrant town square. On the third Saturday of the month from March to November, the courthouse yard is the site for Blanco's Market Day, where local artisans and farmers come out to sell their crafts and goods.

In addition to fine antique stores and art galleries, some of the Hill Country's best dining can be found on or near the square in downtown Blanco. For classic diner fare, try the Bowling Club, with staples like hamburgers and BLTs. The

(continued on Page 52)



Artisans and farmers make their way to the courthouse grounds for Blanco's Market Day, top left and right; the Blanco Pioneer Museum, above left, features World War II artifacts preserved by Blanco residents; visitors can find friendly lodging at Blanco County Inn and Guesthouses, left; the Uptown Blanco Restaurant serves up tasty fare.



# 10 HIDDEN

BEAT THE  
CROWDS AND  
DISCOVER  
10 OF TEXAS'  
OVERLOOKED  
STATE PARKS.

BY ROB McCORKLE

PHOTO BY EARL NOTTINGHAM/TPWD

# TEXAS



Canoeing at Village Creek State Park.

# T

EXAS STATE PARKS MAKE UP A SPRAWLING SPIDER WEB OF MORE THAN 90 sites stretching from Amarillo to Brownsville and El Paso to Sabine Pass. Most of us have frequented or at least heard of iconic parks like Bastrop, Garner, Palo Duro Canyon and others. But what about the lesser-known, unpolished gems in remote pockets of Texas just begging to be discovered?

Whether you're looking for an off-the-beaten-path spelunking adventure, a glimpse of prehistoric Texas, a place for your kids to see a longhorn or bison, the perfect spot to pitch a tent beneath starry skies or simply a peaceful refuge from frenetic urban life, the following 10 unsung state parks have you covered.

Consider spending a day, a weekend or a week in one of these under-the-radar parks and discover why "Life's Better Outside."



## 1

### **VILLAGE CREEK STATE PARK** Lumberton, Hardin County



Texans unfamiliar with East Texas' otherworldly Big Thicket should spend some time exploring the primitive forests and backwater sloughs within this Southeast Texas park to lose themselves in a world of carnivorous plants, slithering reptiles, flitting birds and hundreds of flowering plants.

Its location on a major Neches River tributary and proximity to Beaumont and Interstate 10 make Village Creek a handy place to immerse yourself in a 1,100-acre pocket of the sprawling national preserve, whose ecological diversity has earned it the moniker of "biological crossroads of North America."

Park visitors can take in the primitive sights and sounds of the Big Thicket by paddling the new Village Creek Paddling Trail that begins at FM 418, meanders through a riparian wonderland and ends at the state park takeout. Rent from an upstream concessionaire or bring your own kayak or canoe, grab one of the several dozen shaded campsites and spend the day paddling the tea-colored waters before kicking back around a cozy campfire. Book way ahead of time if you're planning to "rough it" in the bluff-top, climate-controlled, eight-person cabin.

Eight miles of marked hike-and-bike trails, license-free fishing and interpretive programs on the park's abundant wildlife, including more than 200 bird species, add spice to this outdoor "gumbo."

**For more information, call (409) 755-7322 or visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/villagecreek](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/villagecreek).**

## 2

### **SEMINOLE CANYON STATE PARK & HISTORIC SITE** Comstock, Val Verde County



Tucked into the hardscrabble Lower Pecos River canyonlands just below the confluence of the Rio Grande and Pecos River, Seminole Canyon State Park & Historic Site provides compelling insight into 12,000 years of Texas history.

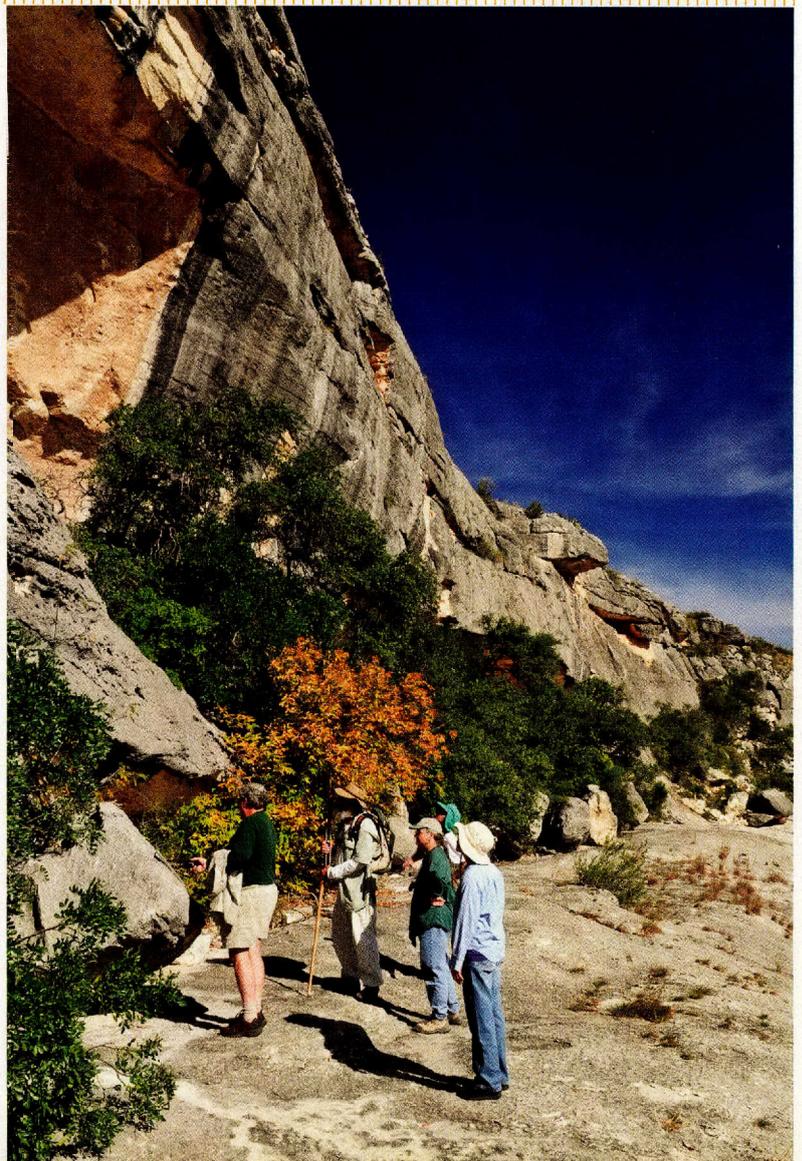
Most travelers stop by the 2,172-acre park to see the mesmerizing 4,000-year-old Native American rock art. Multihued and polychromatic blood-red and black pictographs of shamans, animals and other fantastical figures can be found on the walls of Fate Bell Shelter.

Stop by the visitors center to view exhibits about the region's unique natural and cultural resources, as well as dozens of Lower Pecos artifacts. A new video provides an overview of the pictograph sites within the park and touches on present efforts to preserve the pictographs. You can also discover the park's link to late 19th century black Seminole Indian scouts and the 1880s Transcontinental Railroad.

The park offers more than 10 miles of hiking and biking trails, including a recently opened segment that skirts the canyon rim and offers breathtaking views.

Campers can choose from among 23 water-electric campsites, eight water-only tent sites and 15 primitive sites. A restroom with showers is available.

**For more information, call (432) 292-4464 or visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/seminolecanyon](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/seminolecanyon).**





# WHEN THE WILD CALLS ROAR BACK

## RAM 1500 OUTDOORSMAN

★ 5-YEAR / 100,000-MILE POWERTRAIN WARRANTY<sup>1</sup> ★

ON/OFF-ROAD TREAD TIRES ★ 20 MPG HIGHWAY<sup>2</sup>

CLASS IV TRAILER HITCH ★ 32-GALLON FUEL TANK<sup>3</sup>

AVAILABLE RAMBOX WITH MOPAR GUN AND FISHING ROD HOLSTER<sup>4</sup>

★ ★ 4- AND 7-PIN TRAILER WIRE CONNECTORS ★ ★

GUTS & GLORY  RAM

[RAMTRUCKS.COM/GUTSGLORY](http://RAMTRUCKS.COM/GUTSGLORY)

1) See a dealer for a copy of the Powertrain Limited Warranty. 2) EPA estimated 14 city/20 hwy mpg, Ram 4x2. 3) For 1500 Crew Cab, fuel capacity varies by cab style and weight class. 4) Optional features sold separately. Mopar, Ram and RamBox are registered trademarks of Chrysler Group LLC.







◆◆◆◆ 5 ◆◆◆◆

## KICKAPOO CAVERN STATE PARK

Brackettville, Kinney/Edwards counties



First impressions can be deceiving for first-time visitors to this scruffy and remote Southwest Texas park that lies at the intersection of the Chihuahuan Desert, Edwards Plateau and South Texas plains.

Much of the park's magic lies beneath the surface in 20 known caves. The largest and only cave open to the public is the namesake cavern, accessible through guided flashlight tours every other Saturday. Advance reservations are highly recommended and can be made by calling the park.

Couch potatoes need not apply for the two-hour tour of this 4-million-year-old subterranean wonderland filled with trickling water, giant boulders and bizarre-looking, dissolved-limestone formations. Check out the state's largest speleothem — 80-foot, twin crystalline calcite columns.

Regular access to the 6,300-acre park became available on

June 1, 2010, after more than 20 years of restricted park access to what was formerly the Sargeant Ranch. The park is open four days a week, Fridays through Mondays.

From March through October, visitors gather at dusk in front of Stuart Bat Cave to watch Mexican free-tailed bats emerge to forage for insects.

Eighteen miles of trails accommodate birders, hikers and mountain bikers. Birders have recorded more than 240 bird species, including the endangered black-capped vireo and golden-cheeked warbler.

Be sure to climb the Sargeant Memorial Lookout Trail located right behind the park headquarters for a bird's-eye view of the park. Campers can choose from 20 campsites, including 15 in the main campground, which has restrooms and showers.

**For more information, call (830) 563-2342 or visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/kickapocavern](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/kickapocavern).**

6

**ESTERO LLANO GRANDE STATE PARK**

Weslaco, Hidalgo County



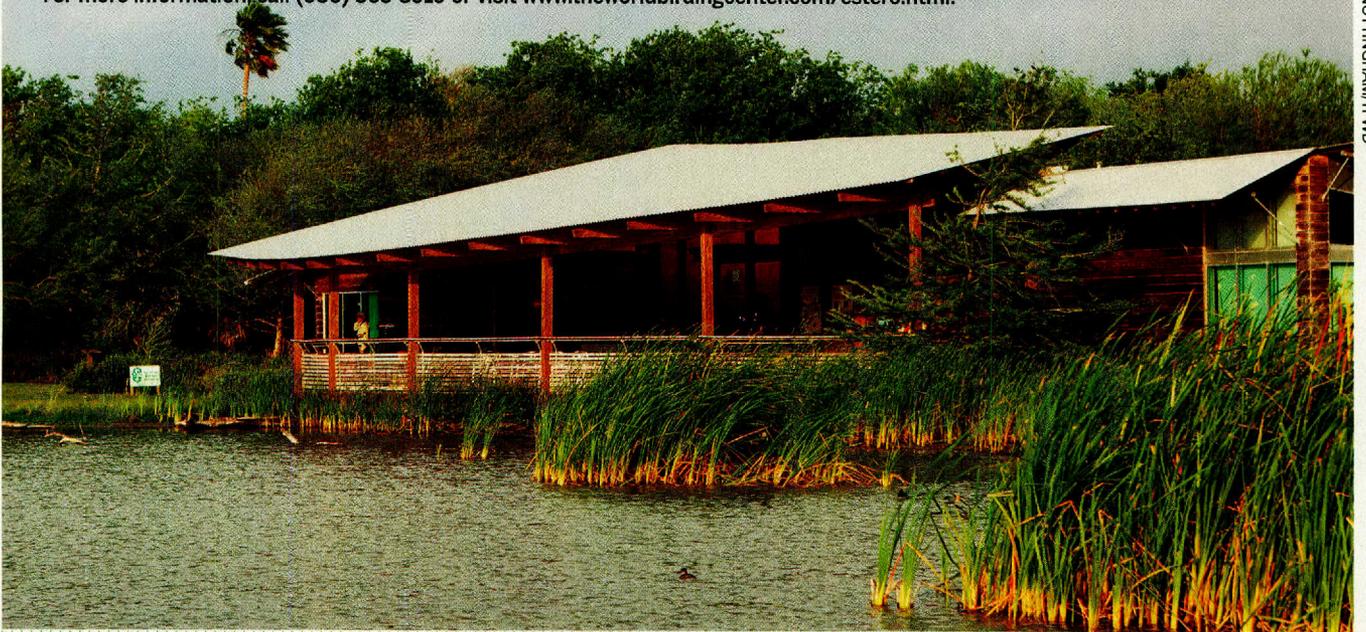
Like a well-fed 5-year-old, this World Birding Center site is enjoying a tremendous growth spurt, as nature lovers from near and far discover its natural bounty.

Since opening in 2006, the park has grown from 146 to 230 acres and become one of the top birding destinations in the feather-crazy Rio Grande Valley. It is the buckle on the belt of nine WBC sites strung along 120 miles of the Rio Grande.

Estero Llano Grande, which in Spanish translates to “a wet place on the big plain,” hosts an array of wildlife attracted to its diverse habitat, highlighted by extensive re-created wetlands and the adjacent Arroyo Colorado. More than 300 species of birds, as well as a cornucopia of wildlife, such as alligators, bobcats, frogs, turtles and snakes, thrive amid thick thornscrub, grasslands and tropical-feeling forests of sabal palm, Texas ebony, bald cypress, anaqua, cedar elm and acacia.

Fourteen-passenger trams cruise a network of park roads to provide visitors with excellent opportunities to view occasional rare birds, as well as specialty birds such as the common pauraque, great kiskadee, Altamira oriole and plain chachalaca. Trails, lakeside observation decks and boardwalks (some wheelchair-accessible) provide an intimate wildlife-viewing experience.

For more information, call (956) 565-3919 or visit [www.theworldbirdingcenter.com/estero.html](http://www.theworldbirdingcenter.com/estero.html).



KICKAPOO CAVERN © LAURENCE PARENT; OTHERS BY EARL NOTTINGHAM/TPWD

7

**FORT RICHARDSON STATE PARK & HISTORIC SITE**

Jacksboro, Jack County

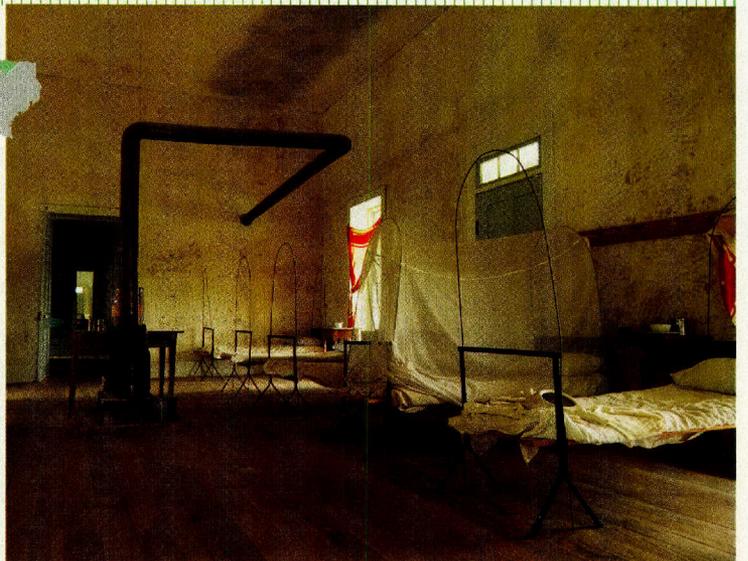


Fort Richardson personifies a hybrid site in the Texas state park system. It is both a recreational park and a historic site that played a crucial role in Texas' post-Civil War Reconstruction and Indian Wars.

Established as an “occupational fort” by the U.S. Army in 1867, the northernmost fort in a chain of frontier citadels, Fort Richardson served in the early 1870s as a staging site for Col. Ranald MacKenzie’s campaign against Native American raiders from the Fort Sill, Okla., reservation. His troops’ victory in the 1874 Battle of Palo Duro Canyon ended southern plains Indian hostilities.

Immerse yourself in frontier history by touring the showcase fort hospital, the commander’s quarters and other original restored buildings and ruins. Fort grounds are open to both self-guided walking tours and guided daily interpretive tours.

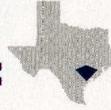
The fort’s location on scenic, wooded Lost Creek and nine miles of multi-use trails afford ample opportunities for picnicking, fishing, hiking, horseback riding and nature study. Look for red-eared sliders and other wildlife along the creekside nature trail or look for birds along the new quarter-mile Kicking Bird Trail. The 10-mile Lost



Creek Reservoir Trailway invites longer excursions.

Campers can choose from 53 campsites accommodating tent campers and RVers alike, as well as 11 screened shelters and five new equestrian campsites.

For more information, call (940) 567-3506 or visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fortrichardson](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fortrichardson).



## GOLIAD STATE PARK & HISTORIC SITE

### Goliad, Goliad County

Today's Texans should heed the Texian Army's fevered cry of "Remember Goliad!" at the Battle of San Jacinto and remember to visit this fascinating site.

Goliad State Park's 188 acres encompass three historical sites along the San Antonio River. Start with a tour of the gleaming white stucco Mission Espiritu Santo, established in 1749 to "civilize" the Native American tribes. Four camping areas and access to a 6-mile hike-and-bike trail and the Goliad Paddling Trail complete the package.

The recently renovated mission offers glimpses into pre-colonial and Spanish colonial history dating back some 300 years. Take a guided tour of Espiritu Santo's scenic grounds, historical exhibits, picturesque chapel, granary and workshops.

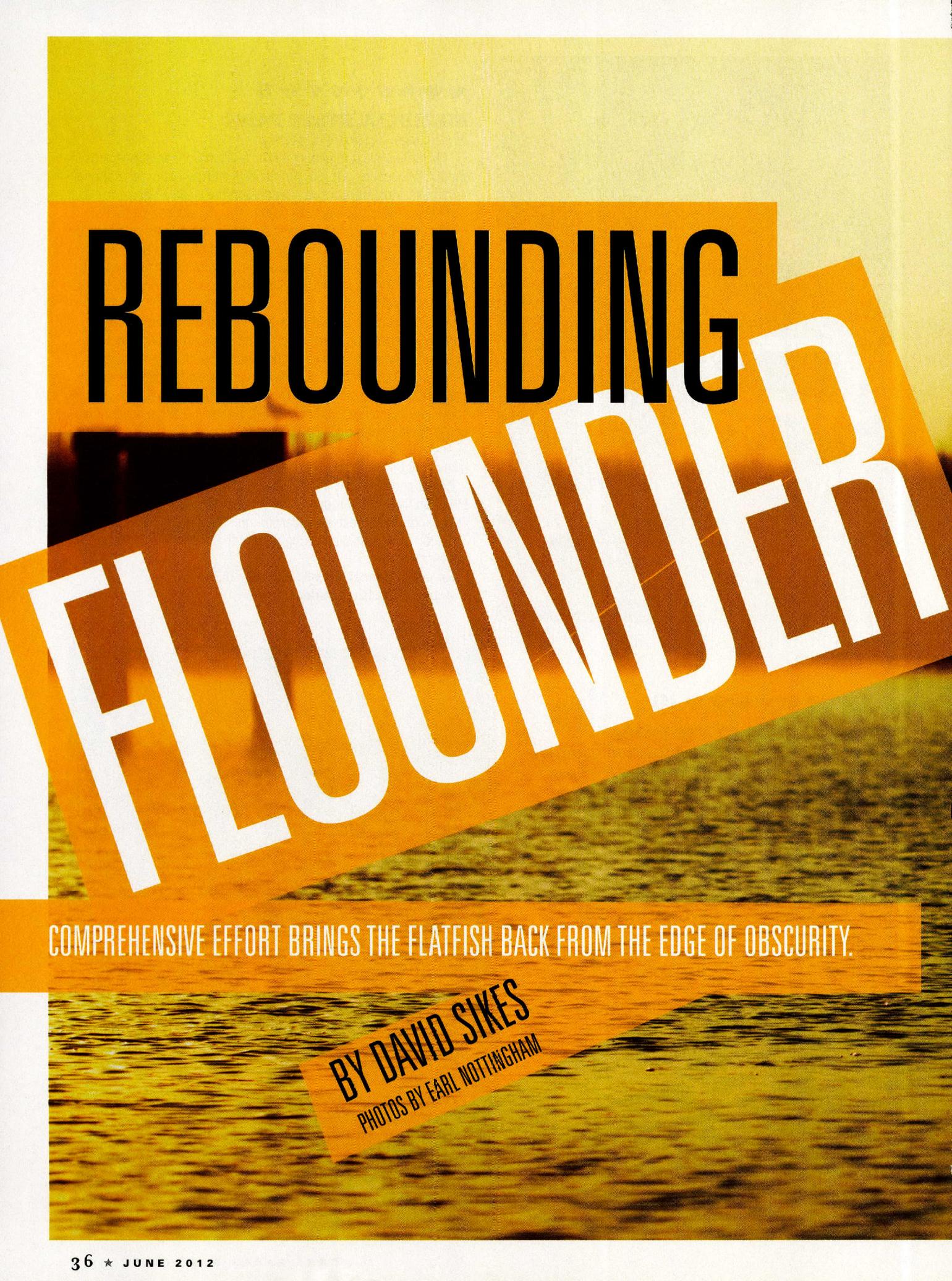
Two other historic sites — the remnants of Mission Rosario (four miles west of Goliad) and Zaragoza's Birthplace (a half-mile south of the park adjacent to Presidio La Bahía) make up the rest of the park. Nearby stands the Fannin Memorial, commemorating the 1836 execution of Col. James Fannin and 341 of his captured Texian troops by Mexican troops during the Texas Revolution.

The word is getting around, too, about the park's plentiful wildlife and wildflowers, colorful birds, wooded campsites, screened shelters and large swimming pool.

For more information, call (361) 645-3405 or visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/goliad](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/goliad).







# REBOUNDED

# FLounder

COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT BRINGS THE FLATFISH BACK FROM THE EDGE OF OBSCURITY.

BY DAVID SIKES  
PHOTOS BY EARL NOTTINGHAM



# FORMER RODEO RIDER DANNY ADAMS II HELD SECURELY TO THE BOAT'S BUCKING BOW WITH A TAUT LINE WRAPPED TWICE AROUND HIS FIST AS HE BARKED THE NAMES OF LANDMARKS TO GUIDE HIS FATHER AT THE WHEEL.

I watched with wide eyes as a number of blurry shapes came into focus and faded as quickly while the intrepid young Adams motioned with his free hand the directions his father should steer. Duck blinds didn't become duck blinds in my vision until they were almost near enough to touch.

I strained in vain to see more clearly while I struggled to conceal my trepidation to my boat mates, but surely I was betrayed by my white-knuckled grip on the boat's center console. Maybe they wouldn't notice the fear in my eyes, mercifully masked by the tiny water droplets covering the lenses of my glasses.

Together the veteran Rockport guide and his namesake son skillfully steered their vintage Majek skiff onward, almost blindly, into the unknown. Actually, our course from Goose Island State Park into Aransas Bay that foggy November morning was mostly unknown only to me.

The year was 1998, and this was my inaugural adventure as the outdoors columnist for the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* newspaper. At the request of my predecessor on the outdoors desk, the Adamases had graciously agreed to help me with a flounder story — a story that poor visibility threatened to derail.

My anxiety was somewhat lessened that day by the presence of veteran *Caller-Times* photographer George Gongora, who was there with his Nikon to make sure my first offering would be well-documented on 35mm film.

The fog eventually lifted that morning along with my spirits, allowing us to

catch enough flatfish for a newspaper article and photos. I could not have predicted that 13 years would pass before another rod and reel flounder story appeared in the *Caller-Times*.

This was not for lack of trying.

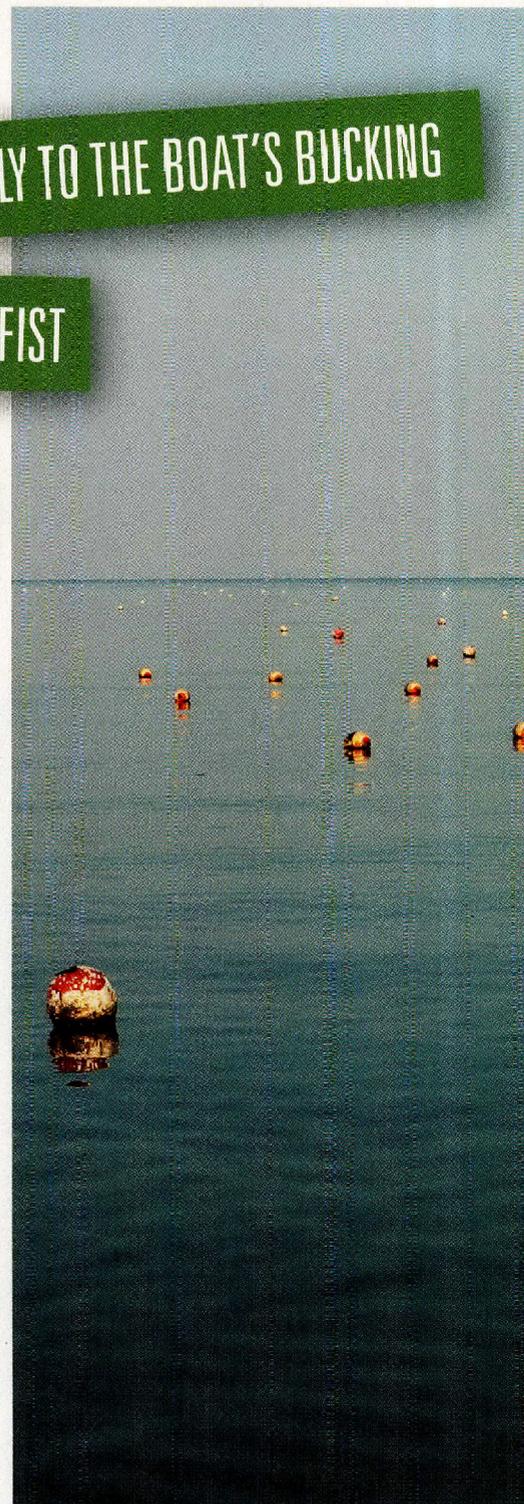
For more than a decade after 1998, flounder would become an incidental catch for anglers in the Coastal Bend and parts southward. Nighttime giggers continued to enjoy some level of success throughout this period, mostly when flounder were concentrated and vulnerable during their annual spring and fall parades to and from the Gulf.

But rod and reel success had become cause for celebration or secrecy around Corpus Christi and Rockport, where flatfish had once flourished. For old-timers, flounder had become fabled characters in "remember when" stories that always included lament for the good ol' days when anglers caught flounder intentionally or not.

During the 1990s and 2000s, optimism began to wane among anglers hoping for a resurgence of the Texas flounder population.

Speculation to explain the demise ranged from blaming shrimpers with their indiscriminate nets and commercial giggers with their lights and tridents to pointing fingers at silted-in Gulf passes such as Cedar Bayou and limited freshwater inflow from dammed rivers.

Biologists were slow to blame without proof, though Larry McKinney, then director of Coastal Fisheries for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, suggested that any effort to establish a flounder restocking program should be



Chester Moore, left, and Marcus Heslin search for flounder among crab traps on a calm Sabine Lake in Southeast Texas.





tied to curbing incidental catches inherent in shrimping practices at the time.

Meanwhile, those same biologists reluctant to voice a cause-and-effect theory were busy gathering data that proved there was a serious problem with the flounder population. On paper, the decline was steady and undeniable based on state gill-net surveys, which provided evidence that annual recreational and commercial

harvests had gone from 700,000 in the late 1980s to fewer than 150,000 in 2007, when the population bottomed out.

Two years later, TPWD reacted with sweeping changes to flounder regulations. The department reduced the recreational bag limit from 10 fish daily to five. Commercial giggers were restricted to 30 fish per night rather than the previous 60. The new rules

further prohibited recreational and commercial gigging during peak migration in November. Rod and reel anglers still were allowed to keep two flounder per day during November.

Coupled with these changes, the unpredictable Texas weather provided help in 2008 when a chilly winter boosted the spawning success of the flounder population. The result has been remarkable, prompting some peo-



ple to compare it with the historic recovery of redfish in the 1980s after TPWD outlawed gill-netting and declared the popular species a game fish.

Such comparisons might be premature, but the turnaround is no less impressive. Recent gill-net surveys reveal a flounder population at its highest since 1998. Based on the department's twice-annual gill-net sampling, the coastal flounder population is double what it was just three years ago and five times higher than it was in 2007.

A closer look at the dynamics and circumstances that led to the recovery reveals this was not an overnight occurrence but rather a process. Outdoors writer and radio personality Chester Moore of Orange knows this better than most. Moore is one of the state's

most vocal flounder champions, campaigning for flounder reform for more than a decade through his professional and volunteer work.

Moore refers to flounder as "the fish of the people" because of its easy access from shorelines, passes and piers. He characterizes the sequence of events that gave flounder back to the people as a perfect storm created by angler interest, research, funding and timely regulation changes.

Ever before the population cratered, TPWD biologists were collecting research specimens along the coast through the department's Texas Gulf Coast Roundup events. This program invited anglers to donate live trout, redfish, flounder and other species for research. For many, this

was an introduction to the department's Coastal Fisheries Division. The program also provided Moore an opportunity to establish himself as a valuable ally at the newly opened Sea Center Texas in Lake Jackson, where he lobbied for increased flounder research. At the time, TPWD hatcheries were releasing millions of spotted seatrout and redfish into Texas bays.

By comparison at the time, species such as croaker, tarpon and flounder received little attention.

On another front, the department began to take steps to reduce the impact of bay shrimping on juvenile flounder. By 2002, devices to cut down on incidental catches, known as bycatch, were mandatory on trawlers, and the state, with the help of several conservation



organizations, had begun a program that included buying and retiring bay trawler licenses. At the time, there were 3,200 bay shrimping licenses issued. Nobody is certain how many of these were active. Since then, 57 percent of the state's bay/bait shrimping licenses have been retired. TPWD Coastal Fisheries Director Robin Riechers estimates this effort has reduced bycatch by 40 percent since 1996.

Soon the University of Texas Marine Science Institute and UT's Fisheries and Mariculture Laboratory in Port Aransas began taking a closer look at flounder as a possible candidate for captive breeding, a precursor to any stocking program. Fisheries biologist Joan Holt's research into captive breeding and survivability of southern flounder included studies of how temperatures affect newborns, flounder's dependence on fresh water and the optimum habitat during early stages of the flounder's life cycle. Her work led to a fledgling stocking program that ultimately involved individuals, academia, conservation organizations and

more than \$100,000 in additional funding to TPWD's premier flounder effort at Sea Center Texas. CCA's generosity was complemented by that of a Corpus Christi-based organization called Saltwater-fisheries Enhancement Association, which contributed cash and in-kind flounder assistance totaling about \$300,000 toward Holt's research in Port Aransas and to the CCA Marine Development Center run by TPWD in Corpus Christi.

The stocking program is young but growing. Since 2006, TPWD has released 20,323 inch-long fingerlings into Sabine Lake, Aransas Bay and Galveston Bay. Much of the future success of the program will rely on what's happening with the department's stock enhancement at Sea Center Texas and at the Perry R. Bass Marine Fisheries Research Station and the CCA Marine Development Center.

Sea Center staffers rely on the two decades of institutional experience that makes Texas the leader in mariculture and fish stocking technology. But raising flounder is very different from producing and preparing redfish and trout for release, says David Abrego, director of Sea Center Texas.

Abrego says the process is labor-intensive and demands more attention to detail than required by other species. To heighten spawning success in tanks, Sea Center biologists originally had to manually manipulate flounder to release eggs and milt, and then mix the two in a confined container for optimum fertilization. More recently, the flounder have been more likely to spawn successfully on their own.

Until recently, nobody knew how sensitive tiny flounder can be to temperature. Tanks must be maintained at a range of 62.6 to 66.2 degrees for larvae to survive. And if they do survive, hatchery workers must periodically separate the fry by size to prevent the faster-growing fish from eating their smaller counterparts. If all goes well after 75 days of nurturing, the fingerlings are ready for release.

The program made remarkable progress. With each success, Chester Moore was there, cheering the effort.

dedicated state biologists.

Holt's partnership with TPWD hatchery biologists resulted in the first experimental release of flounder into Aransas Bay in 2006. Much of this research would not have been possible without funding assistance from the Coastal Conservation Association Texas, which donated \$700,000 that year to the Marine Science Institute for a 3,000-square-foot facility designed to grow and study larval stages of flounder and other species.

Since then, CCA Texas has given

BASED ON THE DEPARTMENT'S TWICE-ANNUAL  
GILL-NET SAMPLING, THE COASTAL FLOUNDER POPULATION  
IS DOUBLE WHAT IT WAS JUST THREE YEARS AGO  
AND FIVE TIMES HIGHER THAN IT WAS IN 2007.

**Chester Moore, one of the state's most passionate flounder advocates, brings in a healthy flounder from the saline waters of Sabine Lake.**



The first flounder release of fingerlings from Sea Center Texas came in 2009. Moore's 3-year-old daughter, Faith, used a small dip net in a ceremonial release that day.

That same year, TPWD decided the time was right to propose regulation changes. When the department took this message on the road, attendance at public meetings proved that Texas anglers agreed. The public was ready to save the quirky flatfish with the funny shape.

While some people may have denied there was a problem, a prominent voice rose from commercial giggers of the Coastal Bend. These longtime fishermen came with cautionary tales of a fishery in peril, calling for a stop to the wholesale harvest of flounder during the fall run.

Department biologists told the crowds that a November ban on giggering would boost the flounder population by 54 percent after four years. Unless something was done, they said, flounder would continue sliding into obscurity as a viable Texas species. Survey data showed that the population had fallen to nearly half the 1990s level. Overwhelmingly, the public favored changes in the regulations.

The latest gill-net surveys reveal that all Texas bays are showing a boost in flounder numbers, according to Mark Fisher, TPWD Coastal Fisheries science director. Most bays have doubled their flounder numbers from the previous year. Last fall's surveys show a record high for Aransas Bay. Galveston Bay and Sabine Lake posted the second-highest flounder numbers on record for those bays. Flatfish tallies from the West Matagorda Bay and Aransas Bay fall gill-net surveys were six and 11 times higher respectively than the results from the fall of 2007, when the population was at its lowest.

Anecdotally, recreational anglers

along the middle and lower coasts report impressive catches of flatfish today where flounder catches had become rare for at least a decade. Even the normally flatfish-stingy Laguna Madre is producing surprising numbers of flounder for casual anglers.

The department's survey results bear this out with about a 40 percent improvement in numbers for the Upper and Lower Laguna Madre, located at the southernmost reach of the flounder's range. In 2007, dozens of state-set gill nets in spring captured no flounder in the Lower Laguna Madre. And not a single flatfish was entered in the 2007 Texas Inter-

national Fishing Tournament, the region's biggest fishing competition.

"Angler catches have been very good," Fisher says. "And the largest flounder are coming from the Upper and Lower Lagunas. The fish are averaging 17 inches, and we've seen several 24-inch fish. A lot more trips are returning with flounder."

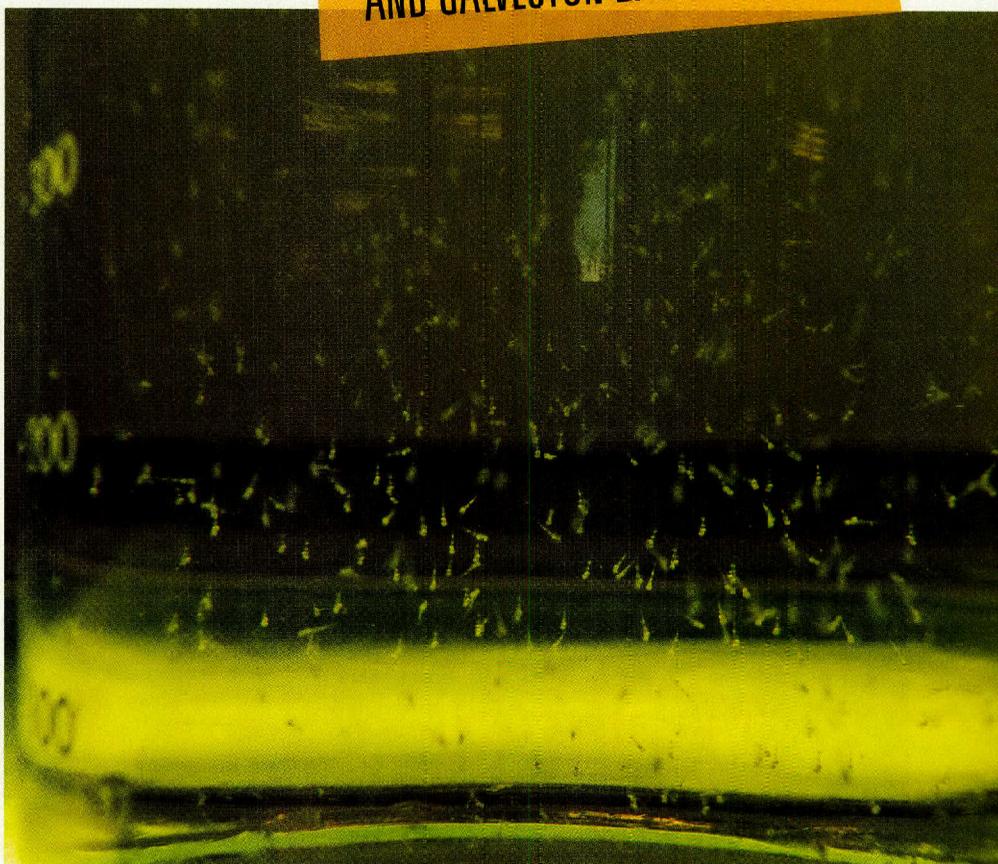
Today, as a result of the flounder surge from a decade-long, comprehensive effort, the Texas Slam — the coveted and elusive trifecta of bay fishing glory involving a single-day catch of a trout, redfish and flounder — may also have been snatched from the grasp of obscurity. ★

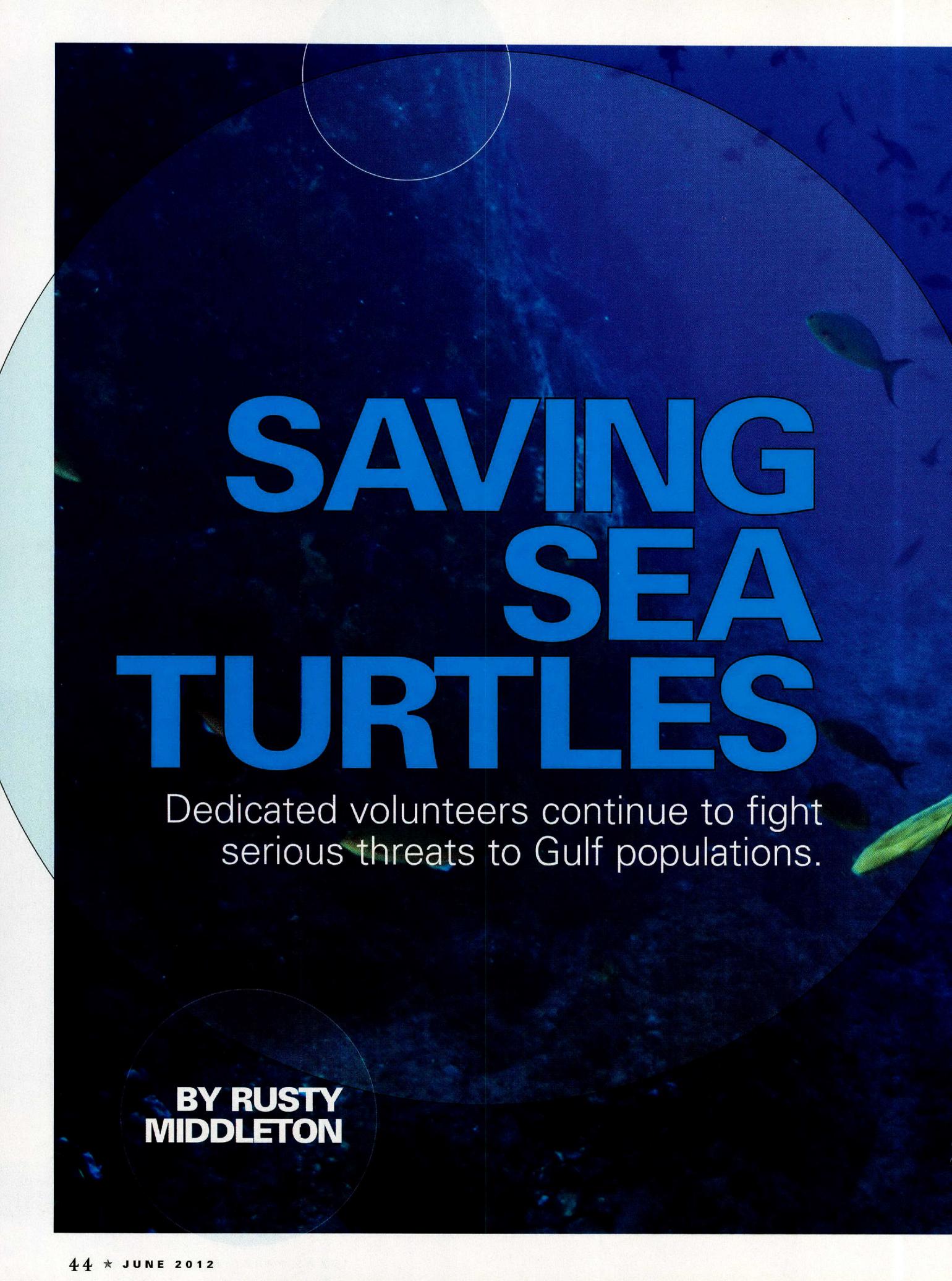
THE STOCKING PROGRAM IS YOUNG BUT GROWING.

SINCE 2006, TPWD HAS RELEASED 20,323 INCH-LONG FINGERLINGS INTO SABINE LAKE, ARANSAS BAY

AND GALVESTON BAY.

**Shane Bonnot, hatchery biologist at Sea Center Texas in Lake Jackson, looks over one of several flounder brood stock tanks where fertilized eggs will be recovered. At right, tiny flounder fry dart around in water from the hatchery's rearing tanks.**



An underwater scene with various fish swimming in deep blue water. A large, semi-transparent circular frame is overlaid on the image, centered on the text. The text is in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

# SAVING SEA TURTLES

Dedicated volunteers continue to fight serious threats to Gulf populations.

**BY RUSTY  
MIDDLETON**



Loggerhead turtle at the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary in the Gulf of Mexico.

PHOTO © JESSE CANCELMO



**E**arly February 2011 found Texas frozen with an unusually frigid blast that stretched its icy fingers down to the coast. At sea turtle restoration facilities, phones rang off the hook with reports of turtles that appeared to be paralyzed or dead. The phenomenon is known as cold-stranding, a condition caused by sudden drops in temperature.

**This page:** After a “cold-stranding” event in 2011, volunteers and wildlife workers rescued hundreds of sea turtles along the coast.  
**Opposite:** A turtle is bundled up during a 2007 rescue.

“We prepare ahead of time for cold-stranding events, but no one was ready for the sheer size of that one. It took on epic proportions,” says Jeff George, curator of Sea Turtle Inc. on South Padre Island.

For the next four days, George, his staff, volunteers and personnel from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and National Park Service worked around the clock frantically rescuing more than 1,000 turtles (mostly green sea turtles) from the shallow, chilly waters and shores of the Laguna Madre. The first ones found were more likely to survive; after three or four days passed, most of the ones they found were dead. In all, they rescued and released 735, after they were treated and tagged.

Farther north at turtle facilities at Padre Island National Seashore and at Texas A&M University–Galveston, the story was similar but on a smaller scale.

In all, more than 1,600 cold-stranded turtles were found. Of those, about a



# lock in your SAVINGS

Save 70%\*  
 10 issues for \$12.00

Name

(Please Print)

Address

City/State/ZIP

**E-mail** Please e-mail me new features and offers from *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine.

# TEXAS

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

My payment is enclosed.       Bill me later.

Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. This offer good for new U.S. orders only.  
Ten issues produced annually. \*Savings based on regular newsstand rate of \$3.95.

6206SS

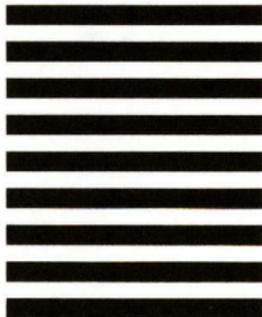


Printed on recycled paper

Visit us at [tpwmagazine.com](http://tpwmagazine.com)



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 633 FLAGLER BEACH, FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE  
PO BOX 421105  
PALM COAST FL 32142-6458





# The Gift of the Great Outdoors!

Subscribe now and receive 10 issues for just \$20 and give a gift subscription at **no additional cost**. That's 2 subscriptions for \$20!

## ENTER MY SUBSCRIPTION:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ [please print]

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please e-mail me new features and offers from *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine.

## SEND MY GIFT TO:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ [please print]

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

PAYMENT ENCLOSED  BILL ME

CHECK HERE IF YOU ARE ORDERING  
ONE SUBSCRIPTION ONLY\*

Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. This offer good for new U.S. orders only.\* Cost if only one subscription ordered is \$12.

Please list additional gifts on a separate sheet of paper (\$10 each). Ten issues produced annually.

Complimentary  
Gift Cards  
Included

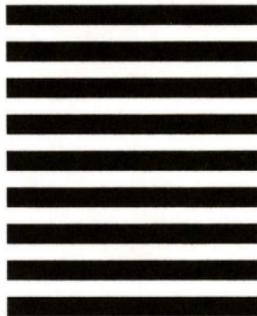


Printed on recycled paper

Visit us at [tpwmagazine.com](http://tpwmagazine.com)



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 633 FLAGLER BEACH, FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE  
PO BOX 421105  
PALM COAST FL 32142-6458



thousand survived and were released.

“It was grueling,” George says. “It took me about a month to get over it.”

It was by far the largest cold-stranding event on the Texas coast since serious turtle recovery efforts began in 1978. Ironically, it was also a sign of progress. Counting nests is the only way to assess sea turtle populations. For the most part, greens don’t yet nest in Texas, so no one really knows how many there are in state waters. Finding 1,600 stranded is an indicator that there are many turtles where there used to be virtually none.

“Greens have seen exponential growth,” says Tasha Metz, a Texas A&M–Galveston turtle research scientist who has studied greens near South Padre Island.

George agrees. “Green sea turtles are beginning to nest again on the Texas coast,” he says. “We are seeing a few every year. Twenty years ago there were 40 to 50 nests on the northern Mexico Gulf coast; now there’s around a thousand. We know they are here year-round nowadays. They are probably spreading north.”

Historically, green turtles and other species of turtles were abundant on

the Texas coast, but after the Civil War, canneries exploited them for food until they were essentially extirpated by about 1910.

“Now we are getting them back,” George says with a smile.

It is far too soon to declare victory in the restoration effort, but of the five species of sea turtles in Texas waters, two have shown significant increases in numbers in recent years.

In 2011, the more well-known Kemp’s ridley had the most nests (199) on Texas beaches ever recorded. However, 10,000 nesting females worldwide would need to be counted in a season before consideration is given to changing the turtle’s status from endangered to threatened. In fact, Kemp’s ridley is considered the most endangered sea turtle on earth. (All species in Texas waters — leatherback, hawksbill, loggerhead, green and Kemp’s ridley — are listed as either threatened or endangered.)

There are reasons for cautious optimism. Not only does Texas have more Kemp’s ridley nests now, but many more nests (20,000) also exist on northern Mexico beaches, especially at the Rancho Nuevo Sanctuary in Tamaulipas. Indeed, it was Rancho

Nuevo that seeded the nesting program in Texas with about 22,000 Kemp’s ridley eggs from 1978 to 1988. In addition, infrastructure, equipment, personnel, a small army of volunteers and massive public support all give hope for eventual restoration.

That said, there are still plenty of reasons to worry. The situation was worsened by 2010’s massive Gulf oil spill. Many Kemp’s ridleys were foraging in the vicinity of Deepwater Horizon when it exploded; 456 oiled turtles were collected afterward. No one knows how many were killed outright. Studies are ongoing to determine whether contamination from the spill is passing through the food chain and even from generation to generation.

Florida marine biologist and sea turtle expert Blair Witherington says the effects of the spill can be subtle and take years to manifest. Kemp’s ridleys can take 15 years to reach sexual maturity, so it could be a long time before anyone fully understands the extent of the damage.

“[The oil spill] created an awful lot of long-term uncertainty for turtle restoration,” says Donna Shaver, director of the Sea Turtle Science and



Historically, green turtles and other species of turtles were abundant on the Texas coast, but after the Civil War, canneries exploited them for food until they were essentially extirpated by about 1910.

PHOTOS © SETH PATTERSON



In spite of decades of refinements to turtle excluder devices (TEDs), which allow turtles to escape from nets and are mandated by federal law, shrimping is still killing turtles. The reasons are many.



**Above:** To protect sea turtles from injury and drowning, shrimpers such as Joey Molina are required to use turtle excluder devices on their nets to let turtles escape. **Right:** TPWD employees Mike Ray and Melinda Dunks prepare sea turtles for release after a 2007 cold snap.

Recovery Division at Padre Island National Seashore.

There are numerous human-related threats to sea turtles — changes to nesting beaches, collisions with boats, dredging, ingestions of plastics, etc. — but the most serious single threat is the shrimping industry. As far back as 1990,

the National Academy of Sciences documented that “shrimp trawling kills more sea turtles than all other human activities combined, and the annual mortality estimate may be low by as much as a factor of 4.”

In spite of decades of refinements to turtle excluder devices (TEDs), which

allow turtles to escape from nets and are mandated by federal law, shrimp-ing is still killing turtles. The reasons are many.

“Freedom of Information Act documents obtained by environmental groups in 2011 revealed the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) management was steering enforcement officers away from TED inspections,” says Carole Allen, Gulf director for the Sea Turtle Restoration Project. “This lack of commitment to enforcement also applies to most Gulf state fish and wildlife agencies. For example, the state of Louisiana refuses to allow its game wardens to enforce TED regulations.”

TPWD is an exception in that it includes TED regulations in the normal course of fisheries enforcement in state waters. Lt. Fred Ruiz, captain of a 65-foot TPWD fisheries boat, thinks cooperation from Texas shrimpers is pretty good.

“Only a few of them that I check are out of compliance,” he says.

But the turtles are still dying. More than 900 washed up on Gulf shores in early 2011. Scientists extrapolate that the real number of deaths could be as high as 18,000 because only a small percentage of dead turtles are actually seen. Necropsies from NMFS studies showed that most died not from ingested oil, but from drowning, meaning they were likely caught in shrimp trawls. Environmental groups promptly initiated a lawsuit against NMFS for failure to enforce the Endangered Species Act.

“One problem is that the ESA regulations have a gaping loophole when it comes to TED devices,” says Allen. “TEDs aren’t required on skimmer trawlers.”

Skimmer trawlers are smaller boats with smaller nets that operate mainly in shallow water. They are not allowed in Texas, but Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi have lots of them. Although they were once fairly rare, skimmer trawlers now make up about two-thirds of the Louisiana shrimp fleet. About the only limitation placed on these boats is that they must shorten the trawl time so that any turtles caught will theoretically not be held underwater longer than they can hold

their breath.

“How is that going to be enforced?” asks Allen.

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration instituted a mandatory TED program for deep-water shrimp boats in 1987 after a voluntary program elicited only about 1 percent compliance.

The TED mandate brought on decades of confusion, legal chaos, angry recriminations from shrimpers, changing and sometimes contradictory regulations and, of course, lawsuits. Today the shrimping industry’s trade association, at least, is resigned to the mandate. The Southern Shrimp Alliance exhorts shrimpers to install and use TEDs correctly.

“Compliance has decreased recently,” alliance Executive Director John Williams says. “A fishery can be closed if violations do not stop immediately.”

Many individual shrimpers remain resistant.

“We don’t like them,” shrimp boat deckhand Joey Molina says, holding a TED in his hands on the Galveston boat docks.

Ben Higgins, program manager at NOAA’s sea turtle lab in Galveston, sees some irony in the attitudes of Molina and other shrimpers.

“NOAA has been working on improving TEDs since about 1978,” he said. “They have been refined to the point where they actually benefit trawling by excluding ocean debris as well as turtles. I think there are a growing number of shrimpers who should like TEDs.”

Higgins and NOAA do not focus solely on controlling the shrimpers in their efforts to protect sea turtles. Longline fishing is also a very serious and growing threat. A first-of-its-kind study by Duke University estimated that, worldwide, 250,000 loggerhead and 60,000 leatherback turtles are inadvertently snared by longline fishing each year.

Longlining is devastating to turtles and many other nontarget species such as sea birds, sharks and even seals because it is a nonselective fishery. Up to 40 miles of line, baited with thousands of hooks, is played out

behind factory trawlers and left in the water for up to 16 hours. Those hooks can catch or snare virtually any animal that investigates the bait. NMFS has recently further restricted longlining in the Gulf after studies estimated that as many as 1,000 sea turtles were caught on longlines over an 18-month period.

“We have two choices — either shut down the fishery or find a solution,” Higgins says. NOAA has found a partial solution in specially designed round hooks that can greatly reduce the incidental take of turtles. These hooks are now required in U.S. waters. Unfortunately, that amounts to only a small fraction of worldwide longlining.

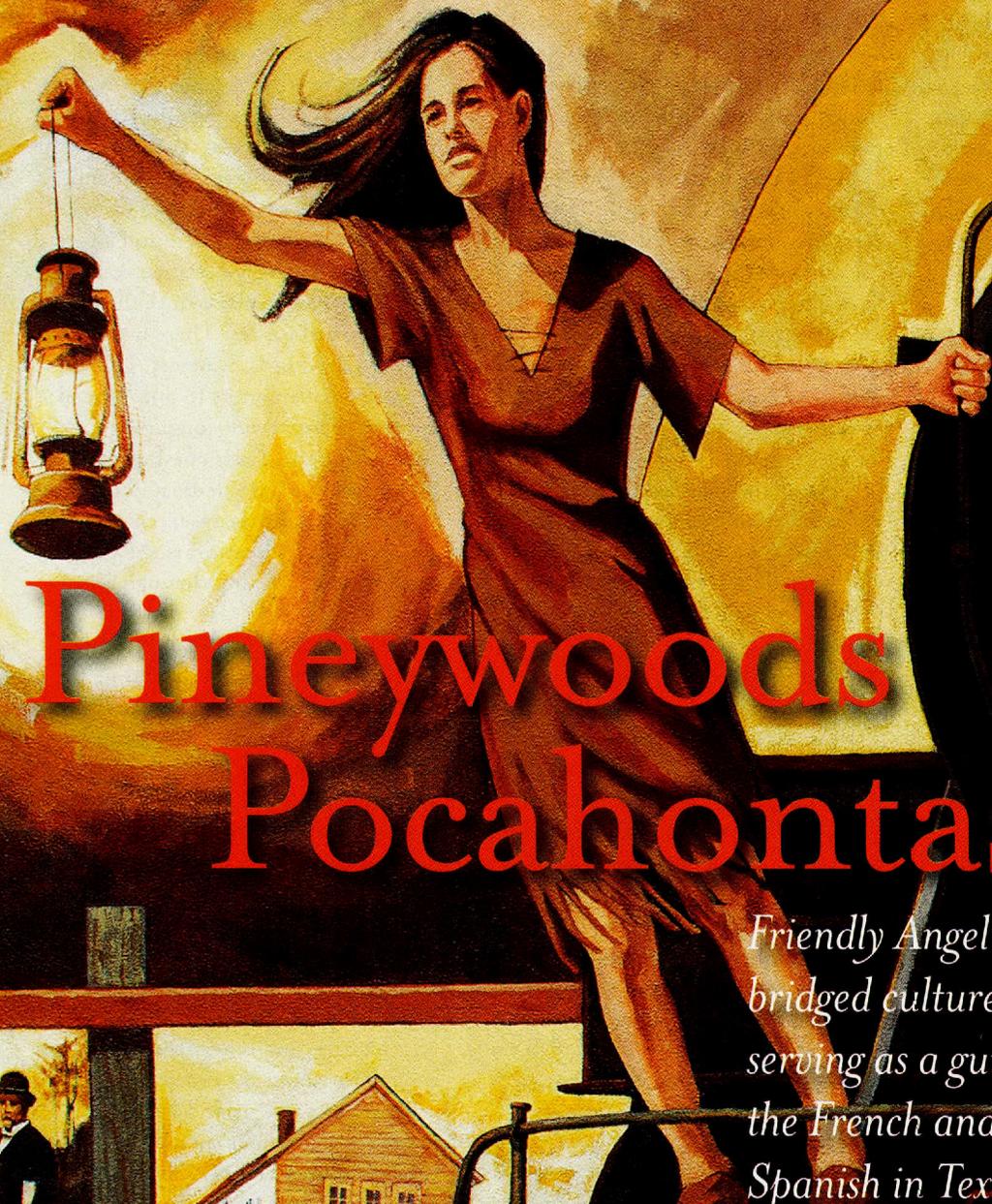
All along the Texas coast, scientists and advocates have dedicated their careers to sea turtle research and protection. Dedication is the common thread running through all of their efforts.

In Galveston, Higgins and scientist Lindsay Howell donate spare time for a small turtle hospital that has no funding for staff. Metz continues to pursue turtle research even when she doesn’t have adequate grant money. Her assistant, graduate student Katie St. Clair, donates her time by managing the beach turtle patrol.

Allen with the Sea Turtle Restoration Project in Houston has been a tireless advocate for decades. In Port Aransas, Tony Amos has rescued and rehabilitated sea turtles and other animals without a salary for about 30 years.

Shaver at Padre Island National Seashore sometimes spends days at her turtle hatching facility, sleeping at night on a cot in her office. During the cold-stranding of 2011, she spent thousands of dollars of her own money for urgently needed equipment that couldn’t wait. Other workers at Padre Island endured long days slogging through the mud and frigid temperatures to rescue turtles during the cold-stranding. The same can be said for George, his staff and volunteers at South Padre Island.

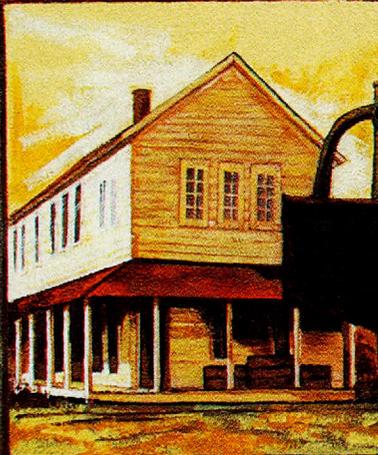
Though slow to recovery, sea turtle restoration efforts continue through the valiant and unsung dedication of these volunteers and so many others. ★



# Pineywoods Pocahontas

By Russell Roe

*Friendly Angelina  
bridged cultures,  
serving as a guide to  
the French and  
Spanish in Texas.*



WINTER



**She's been called the Texas version** of Sacajawea and the Pocahontas of the Pines. She's the only woman for whom a Texas county and river are named. A national forest bears her name as well.

Who is she? She's Angelina, a Native American woman who befriended the early Spanish mission priests and served as an interpreter and guide for French explorers.

Most Texans have probably never heard of her, and her life remains shrouded in mystery and romantic legend. It's been 300 years since she inhabited East Texas' forests, after all. Her name lives on, however, in Angelina County and the Angelina River, and she remains entrenched in the history of East Texas.

"She's a great historical figure," says Bob Bowman, an East Texas historian and author. "It enriches East Texas, the Angelina story."

Jonathan Gerland, the director of the History Center in Diboll, uses her story when telling people outside the area about his work.

"Instead of first saying we're near Lufkin, I proudly say, 'We're in southern Angelina County, the only county in the state named for a woman,'" he says. "It always brings out a reflective, pondering expression of, 'I never knew that before.' Nearly everyone, male and female, seems pleased with the observation."

Angelina's first recorded appearance comes at the time of the establishment of the first Spanish mission in East Texas, San Francisco de los Tejas, in 1690. The mission, near the Neches River, was set up to spread Christianity and to keep an eye on the French, whose intrusions into the area were a cause for Spanish concern. The La Salle expedition had shifted the Spanish focus from western Texas to eastern.

Mission leader Father Damian

Massanet, in his visits to a Hainai village, came across a native girl who possessed a bright intellect, a striking appearance and friendly personality. The Hainai were the head tribe of the Hasinai confederacy, part of the Caddo nation. The girl expressed a desire to learn Spanish, and she began to help the missionaries.

The Spanish priests and soldiers, charmed by the cheerful nature of the girl, gave her the name Angelina, or little angel. They called her village Angelina's village, and they called the stream nearby Angelina's river.

In 1693, the missionaries, facing harsh conditions and growing suspicions from the Indians, abandoned the mission, and Angelina went with them to Mexico to pursue her studies. She studied at Mission San Juan Bautista, the gateway to Spanish Texas, south of present-day Eagle Pass, where she grew proficient in Spanish and joined the church. After a decade, she returned to East Texas.

Angelina appears in the journals of Spanish missionaries and French explorers as a guide, mediator and interpreter between the native tribes and the Spanish and French. Since the native tribes left no written record of the time, what we know of Angelina comes only through the Europeans. In 1712, a member of the party of French Canadian explorer Louis

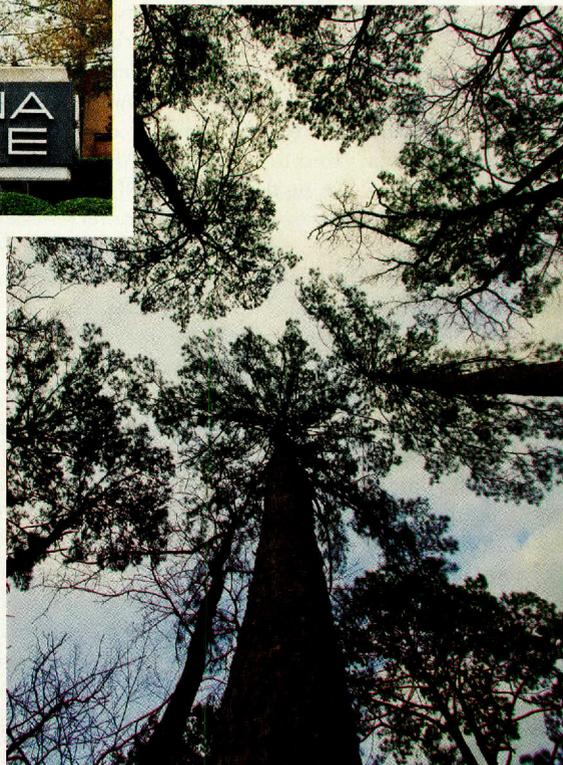
Juchereau de St. Denis noted that a woman named Angelique, "who had been baptized by Spanish priests on a mission to their village," helped St. Denis hire guides from her tribe.

Spanish ventures in East Texas generally came in response to French activity. In 1716, the Spanish returned to establish missions and presidios in East Texas, and a member of the Domingo Ramón expedition wrote that the group "had recourse to a learned Indian woman of this Hasinai tribe." The Spanish re-established Mission San Francisco de los Tejas, and they established a companion mission in Angelina's village, Mission Concepción. The mission lasted until 1719, when the Spanish withdrew during the Chicken War with the French.

In 1718 and 1719, Angelina translated for an expedition that founded the Alamo in San Antonio, and was described in a journal as a "sagacious Indian interpreter."

Angelina is also believed to have rescued French officer Francois Simars de Bellisle, who was marooned near Galveston Bay in 1719 after overshooting his intended destination of Louisiana. Bellisle's four companions died of starvation or exposure that winter, but Bellisle

The Caddoan Angelina, opposite page and bottom left, is portrayed in murals in downtown Lufkin; a college, left, and a national forest, below, are named after her, in addition to a river and a county.



managed to stay alive by eating oysters and worms. He was captured by coastal Native Americans who treated him as a slave, and was subjected to cruel treatment and hard labor and forced to stay naked. Bellisle managed to write a plea for help and gave it to visitors with instructions to deliver it to "the first white man." The note ended up in the hands of St. Denis, who sent Hasinai to rescue the castaway.

Bellisle stayed with Angelina at her village while he recovered. Angelina "served me with all the best she had, and she had as much love for me as if I had been her child," Bellisle wrote. "This Indian woman, called Angelica, had lived with the Spanish since her childhood. That is why we understood each other so well." Angelina sent her two children to guide him to Louisiana, and he reached the French post at Natchitoches in February 1721.

The final written account of Angelina comes in 1721, when the Spanish returned to East Texas to re-establish the missions abandoned after the French invasion of 1719. Angelina was among the group of leaders who welcomed the expedition of Marquis de Aguayo to her village, and she served as the group's interpreter "because she could speak the language of the Spanish as well as the Tejas," a member of the expedition wrote. Angelina helped revitalize the missions in the years to come.

With her name attached to a county and river, Angelina continues to have life to this day in East Texas.

"The fact that we have a county named after her gives some weight to her legacy," Gerland says.

Without that, she might have become obscured in the mist of history. The river has carried her name for centuries. The county took her name when it was broken off from Nacogdoches County in 1846 (the Angelina River divides the counties). Angelina National Forest was established in 1936.

And if you drive around Lufkin, the Angelina County seat, you'll see her name and image. A statue of Angelina stands outside the Lufkin Civic Center. A striking, 30-foot-tall face of Angelina looks out over Cotton Square in downtown Lufkin as part of a historical mural done by artist Lance Hunter in 1991.

Hunter sees Angelina as a pivotal figure. "I saw her as the starting point to represent the Native American population and also certainly her assistance with the early Anglo settling of the region. The strands of her hair are reaching into the future," says Hunter, who also painted Angelina riding on the front of a train in another Lufkin mural.

Around the county, there's Angelina College, Angelina Playhouse, Angelina Title, Angelina Counseling, Angelina Manufactured Homes and Angelina Bath and Custom Marble. Here's a business idea: Angelina Guiding and Interpreting Services. There's Angelina Church of Christ, but no Angelina Catholic Church. To the folks at Angelina Septic Tank Cleaner: Come on, let's have some respect here. We're talking about one of the first women of note in Texas history.

The name Texas comes from "tejas," which is the Caddo word for "friend." The state motto "Friendship" is also derived from this. The Spanish missionaries called the Caddo homeland "the kingdom of tejas," and that name became the name of our state. Texans still pride themselves on their friendliness.

By all accounts, the Caddoan Angelina was a friendly, welcoming person, bridging cultures and helping those who played an early role in what became our state. She exemplifies the idea of "tejas." Could it be, then, that Angelina, the "little Indian maiden," is the person who best represents the ideal that gave Texas its name and identity? Maybe we should name something else for her, or at least consider that she might have been Texas' first friend. ★

(continued from Page 25)

staff seems to know everyone in the lunch crowd on a first-name basis. On the square, the Redbud Café serves slightly more upscale sandwiches, as well as quiches, soups and salads, plus live music on weekends.

Haute cuisine is served up at the Uptown Blanco Restaurant on the west side of the square. Housed in the old prison and attached to the Uptown Blanco arts complex, the restaurant features a menu you'd expect to find in downtown Dallas or Houston but made with regionally produced ingredients for a local flavor you won't find in the big city. After trying out Sunday brunch and tasting the prime rib, I understood why *The New York Times* last year recommended readers make a stop here. Dining under the pressed tin roof and looking out the front window at the historic courthouse, I couldn't help but feel thrown back in time and upward in class.

The Uptown Blanco complex also serves as a cultural center for the town. With a theater, ballroom, art center and textile studio, Uptown Blanco makes it possible to attend a painting class, watch a play and dance the night away, all in the same building.

Blanco's cultural interests extend beyond food, drink and art. The Blanco Pioneer Museum features a World War II exhibit of artifacts preserved over the years by Blanco residents. Former Blanco postmaster and veteran Roy Byars approached museum director Nell Krueger about displaying the photos he took during his tour of duty, which included the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp. Krueger and fellow museum volunteer Linda Howard put an ad in the paper requesting more WWII relics. The response was enormous, and now the exhibit extends into the garage, where pieces of the USS

Blanco County, which landed at Normandy during the invasion, can be seen. Inside, visitors can find everything from old front pages of *Stars and Stripes* to photos taken by Howard's father from the back window of his fighter plane.

"On opening night, no one wanted to leave," Howard recalls.

After immersing yourself in art and history, you'll find that Blanco is just the place to relax and to refresh. Just north of downtown on U.S. Highway 281, the Real Ale Brewery has drawn attention to Blanco for its variety of handcrafted beers that are lovingly served in every restaurant in town as well as distributed across the state. I stopped by for the brewery's anniversary party and found folks there from all over Texas. On a tour of the factory, many enthusiasts asked about the craft of brewing and listened attentively for ways to improve their own home brews. Year-round, visitors can stop by on Friday afternoons for tours and tastings.

We strolled back through downtown, down through Bindseil City Park, and took a last dip in the river. We retired back to the Blanco County Inn, where co-proprietors Ralph and Deborah de Leon, who had kindly reorganized their reservations earlier to let me shower off my camping grime before lunch, gave us one last helping of their gracious Southern hospitality.

I can see now why so many people choose Blanco as a place to retire. Whether people are returning after living away for years or finding the place they've always belonged, no one could have a hard time calling Blanco home. As Nell Krueger told me: "People like the way of life here that they don't find anywhere else. Maybe you'll decide you ought to live here, too." ★

Outdoor Activity  
of the Month

Need a new interactive  
gaming device to connect  
with your kids?

# Free Fishing in State Parks!

There are no entrance fees for kids  
12 and under, and everyone can fish  
without a license at more than 50  
state parks across the state. Grab your  
rod and reel and get out and enjoy  
one of America's greatest pastimes!



Life's better outside.®



Healthier,  
Happier,  
Smarter.



Sign up for Texas State Parks promotions and updates  
to receive Outdoor Activity of the Month ideas, events  
and places to play in nature: [tpwd.state.tx.us/email](http://tpwd.state.tx.us/email)

Find events and other fishing information at:  
[texasstateparks.org/spfishing](http://texasstateparks.org/spfishing)

Thanks to our  
Outdoor Activity of  
the Month Partners



GOODS AND SERVICES FOR THE OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST

# OUTDOOR

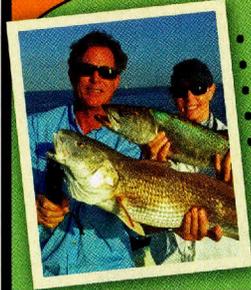
M A R K E T P L A C E

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION & MECHANICAL SPECIFICATIONS: (512) 799-1045

## FISHING & BOATING

### Rockport RedRunner

Captain Chad Verbugt



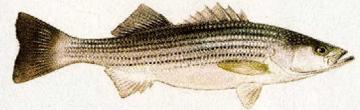
- Full Day / Half Day
- Baffin trips
- Kayak Rentals
- Kayaks Shuttle Drop off / pick up
- Nature Boat Trips for Photography and Private Whooping Crane Tours

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

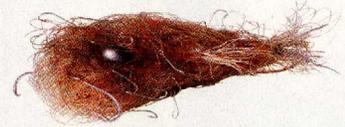


Call (361) 463-6545  
rockportredrunner@yahoo.com  
www.rockportredrunner.com

## STRIPER



## STRANGLER



Litter poses a threat to the health and safety of wildlife, natural areas, people, and communities.

Want to improve the waterways in your community? The Lake and River Cleanup Program provides Texans with FREE materials needed for cleanup events.



WHO KEEPS TEXAS BEAUTIFUL? YOU DO.



KEEP TEXAS BEAUTIFUL  
www.KTB.org 1-800-CLEAN-TX

Thanks to The Dow Chemical Company for its media sponsorship.  
The freshwater fish illustration was provided by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

## PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

### CRAWFORD & COMPANY

PERFECT FOR FATHERS DAY



Hand Crafted, Personalized Boot Jacks and Coaster Sets.

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

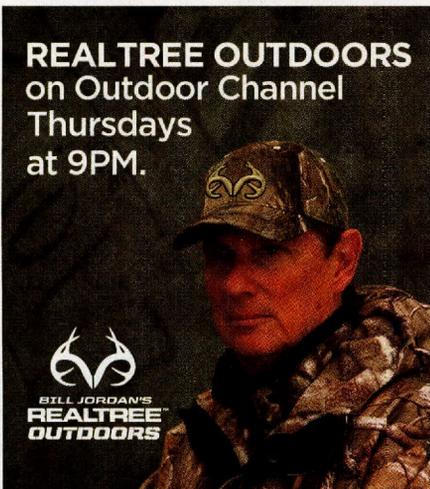
### ENCHANTED ROCK ECO-TOUR

**Certified Interpretive Guide**  
Customized Guided Interpretive Hikes  
Natural and Cultural  
History, Geology, Ethnobotany, and  
Archaeology

Rock-About Adventures (512) 415-0804  
www.rock-about.com

## HUNTING

REALTREE OUTDOORS  
on Outdoor Channel  
Thursdays  
at 9PM.



# GOT PRIME PROPERTIES?

# SELL THEM FAST

## Call Jim Stone/512-799-1045

## jim.stone@tpwd.state.tx.us

# SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND...

**ENJOY** – each issue brings you  
breathtaking photography of Texas  
wildlife and spectacular destinations.

**LEARN** – every month you'll receive advice  
from the state's foremost outdoor authorities.

**SAVE!** – subscribe now and save  
70% off the newsstand rate!

Visit us online at  
[tpwmagazine.com](http://tpwmagazine.com)



Printed on recycled paper



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

## BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

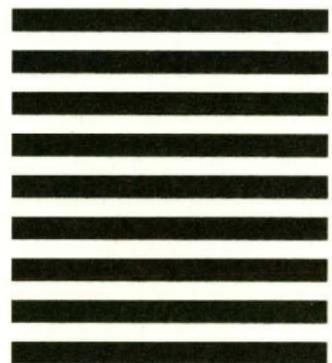
FIRST-CLASS MAIL

PERMIT NO 17897

HOUSTON TX

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

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



# FREE INFORMATION

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

**We pay the postage!**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
ZIP

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

## GET FREE INFORMATION FROM ADVERTISERS

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

Or you can call us toll-free at:  
**877-526-7924**

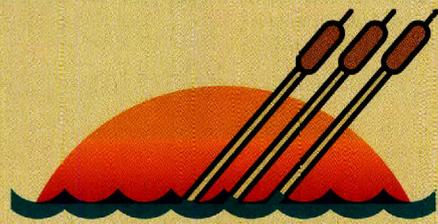
Our e-mail address is:  
[atorres@houstonlighthouse.org](mailto:atorres@houstonlighthouse.org)

**TEXAS**  
PARKS & WILDLIFE

The OUTDOOR MAGAZINE of TEXAS

TPA206A

ACCOMMODATIONS



KARANKAWA VILLAGE

"for the good life on the gulf"

THE LODGE & CATTAILS



The ambience is casual at The Lodge but the amenities are luxurious. Each of the eight rooms are uniquely styled, featuring the finest organic bedding, large bathrooms and original artworks. Gourmet coffees and flat screen televisions are found in each room and two outdoor living rooms with fireplaces are yours during your visit. Our popular mercantile shop, Cattails, is part of the Karankawa Village just across the boardwalk. Here you will find more of the finest coffees, wines, cigars, gourmet foods, artwork, clothing and homewares.

Phone: (979) 863-7737

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



RIO FRIO LODGING & NATURE CENTER



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

Birding, Bat Flight, Kayak & Nature Tours

13th Annual Nature Quest

April 25, 26, 27, 28, 2012

[www.texasnaturequest.com](http://www.texasnaturequest.com) • 830-966-2320

[www.hillcountryadventures.com](http://www.hillcountryadventures.com) • [www.friolodging.com](http://www.friolodging.com)

REAL ESTATE

EDNA TO EDEN.

**LANDTX™**  
BEST RANCHES. BEST FOLKS.

➤ RANCH BROKERAGE, CONSULTING AND EVALUATION

➤ CUSTOM HIGH-END RANCH MAPS

➤ AUCTION/PRIVATE TREATY SALES

[www.landtx.com](http://www.landtx.com) – [dec@landtx.com](mailto:dec@landtx.com)

210.422.4676 – 830.997.8616

FREDERICKSBURG – MASON

2012 IS GOING TO BE A "SPECIAL" YEAR FOR TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE MAGAZINE!

Don't miss the opportunity to reach more Texas outdoor enthusiasts in the most cost effective way, ever! For details.....

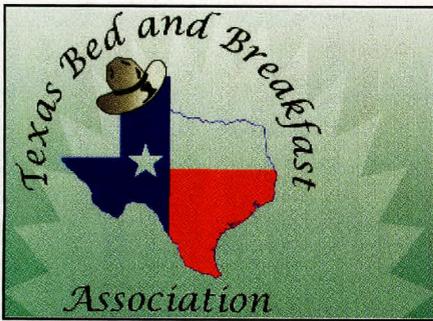
Call Jim Stone at 512-799-1045

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE  
**FREE**  
Information!

To receive more information on our advertisers, fill out the card at left or go to [www.tpwmagazine.com/advertising/thismonth](http://www.tpwmagazine.com/advertising/thismonth) or scan the QR code below with your smartphone.

1. **Amarillo, pg. 20**  
800-692-1338  
[www.visitAmarilloTX.com](http://www.visitAmarilloTX.com)
2. **Corpus Christi CVB, pg. 19**  
800-766-BEACH (2322)  
[www.visitcorpuschristitx.org](http://www.visitcorpuschristitx.org)
3. **Lake Whitney, pg. 16**  
[www.getawaycapital.com](http://www.getawaycapital.com)
4. **LaRue Tactical, pg. 15**  
512-259-1585  
[www.larue.com](http://www.larue.com)
5. **Port Aransas, pg. 14**  
800-45-COAST  
[www.portaransas.org](http://www.portaransas.org)
6. **Rockport-Fulton, pg. 18**  
800-242-0071  
[www.rockport-fulton.org](http://www.rockport-fulton.org)





**THIS MONTH'S INNSIDER CHOICE is**  
**The Gruene Mansion Inn**  
**of the Guadalupe River**  
 The Gruene Mansion Inn is next door to Gruene Hall, the oldest dance hall in Texas. Shop, dine, float, dance & relax while staying at one of the premier B&Bs in Texas.

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



**THE GRUENE MANSION INN**  
 NEW BRAUNFELS, TX

**THE INNSIDER**

**FOR ADVERTISING**  
 CALL JIM STONE/512-799-1045  
[JIM.STONE@TPWD.STATE.TX.US](mailto:JIM.STONE@TPWD.STATE.TX.US)

**TX BED & BREAKFAST ASSOCIATION (TBBA)**

**BELLVILLE**

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

**COMFORT**

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

**HUNTSVILLE**

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

**FREDERICKSBURG**

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

★ **Settler's Crossing Bed and Breakfast.**

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

**NEW BRAUNFELS**

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

**GRUENE**

★ **The Lamb's Rest Inn.** Located on the Guadalupe River. Featuring garden with fountain, pool, and hot tub, private balconies and fireplaces. Delightful breakfasts often served *al fresco*.  
[www.lambstrestinn.com](http://www.lambstrestinn.com) (888) 609-3932

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

**ROCKPORT**

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

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

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR HOLIDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, BIRTHDAYS, COMPANY GIFTS ETC...  
**TBBA**  
**Gift Certificates**  
 ORDER ONLINE ON A SECURE SERVER  
[WWW.TEXASBB.ORG](http://WWW.TEXASBB.ORG)

# ZEBRA MUSSELS HIDE HERE.

**CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY YOUR BOAT.**

**Clean Your Boat. Save Your Lake.**  
 Zebra mussels are small invasive species that can spread from lake to lake by hitching a ride on your boat and trailer. One female can have up to a million microscopic larvae. They mature quickly, attach to hard surfaces and can damage your boat and engine. They hurt aquatic life, ruin ecosystems and fisheries – even affect your water supply. You can keep that from happening by cleaning your boat, motor, trailer and gear of all debris and draining it of all water. Then dry it for at least a week or wash it all with hot, soapy water before boating in another waterbody. Learn more at [www.texasinvasives.org](http://www.texasinvasives.org).

**HELLO ZEBRA MUSSELS. GOODBYE TEXAS LAKES.**





"I'm a bit sad that my fiance and I didn't know about Stauer before we got engaged. This ring is so much more clear and sparkly than my real diamond!"

— P.T. FROM BALTIMORE, MD

Limited  
to the first  
2500 respondents

## URGENT: Diamond Ring Recall

Experts warn that millions of rings may be "romantically defective" when compared to the spectacular 4-Carat DiamondAura® Avalon

She loves natural diamonds. She loves you even more. But when even the skimpiest solitaires sell for as much as \$1,200, it's time to reconsider your relationship...with diamonds. Have you recently overpaid only to be underwhelmed? Send it back. You can do bolder. You can do brighter. You can own the Stauer 4-Carat DiamondAura® Avalon Ring for under \$100.

When "cute" is a four-letter word. If you want to make a romantic impression, go big. Cute doesn't cut it. Your love deserves to be wowed. If you're a billionaire with money to burn, turn the page. Everyone else? What you read next just might change your love life. There's only one way to find out...

We rewrote the rules of romance. Only Stauer's exclusive lab-created DiamondAura gives you the luxury look of large-carat diamonds for a fraction of the price. The ingenious DiamondAura process involves the use of rare minerals heated to incredibly high temperatures of nearly 5000°F. After cutting and polishing, scientists create a faultless marvel that's optically brighter and clearer with even more color and fire than a "D" flawless diamond.

Our exclusive DiamondAura jewelry features all of the classic specifications, including color, clarity, cut and carat weight and is hard enough to cut glass. You get the look of natural stones, without the outrageous cost.

Experience the luxury of money in the bank. We "built" our own mined diamond version of this ring online at a popular jewelry site and the grand total was \$77,767! Today you can wear this 3 3/4 carat lab-created DiamondAura solitaire, accented with 32 gleaming DiamondAura rounds in fine .925 sterling silver for only \$99! That's good, but you



**EXCLUSIVE BONUS OFFER!**

Order today to get these 1-Carat DiamondAura® sterling silver studs

**PLUS**

\$300 in Stauer Gift Coupons!\*

deserve better. Order now and we'll include the matching 1-Carat DiamondAura Avalon Earrings and \$300 in Stauer Gift Coupons... absolutely FREE. That's right, 5 total carats of DiamondAura in sterling silver for under \$100. Plus, one dozen \$25 coupons that you can use at Stauer every month for a full year. Talk about money in the bank!

Your satisfaction is guaranteed. If for any reason you don't absolutely adore your DiamondAura Avalon Ring, return it within 30 days for a full refund of your purchase price. But we promise that once you get a look at the Avalon up close, you'll see love in a whole new light.

**DiamondAura® Avalon Ring (4 ctw)—~~\$295~~ \$99 + S&P**

Specify ring whole size 5-10 when ordering.

Receive FREE earrings with purchase of the Avalon DiamondAura® Ring \*PLUS receive \$300 in Stauer Gift Coupons per order FREE—\$25 to use every month for 12 months, with NO MINIMUM PURCHASE REQUIRED.

Call now to take advantage of this extremely limited offer.

Promotional Code AVR314-03

Please mention this code when you call.



Stauer has a Better Business Bureau Rating of A+

For fastest service, call toll-free 24 hours a day

**1-800-721-0357**

**Stauer®**

14101 Southcross Drive W.,  
Dept. AVR314-03  
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337

www.stauer.com

# PARTINGSHOT



On a cold January night, *Texas Parks & Wildlife* photographer Chase A. Fountain set up his gear to shoot star trails at Caprock Canyons State Park. "Shooting star trails and stacking them into one image takes a lot of time and commitment," Fountain says. "Rather than shooting just one long exposure, I shot a series of 12 five-minute exposures and then compressed them into one image." What made the shoot even more memorable were the howling coyotes less than 50 yards away, Fountain says.

#### IMAGE SPECS:

Nikon D300 with Sigma 10mm-20mm f/4.5 lens, f/6.7; 12 five-minute exposures stacked into a single image using image-stacking software.

Texas Auto Writers Association

# TRUCK OF TEXAS.



Powerful. Capable. Fuel-efficient.\*

**This is the future of truck**

**THE 2012 F-150**

FORD.COM



\*3.5L EcoBoost® 4x2. EPA-estimated 16 city/22 hwy/18 combined mpg.

# Walmart

Save money. Live better.

**Hank Parker**, host of "Hank Parker's Outdoor Magazine" and 2-time Bassmaster Classic champion

**Your source** for top brands at low prices.

Find all these brands and more at your local store.

**Ugly Stik**

**REBEL**

**ZOOM**

**Berkley Trilene**

**Berkley Powerbait**  
Fish bite and won't let go!

**TEBCO**

**FLANO TACKLE SYSTEMS**

**Rapala**

**EDGE CLAW**

**Strike King LURE COMPANY**  
#1 IN FISHING LURES

