

**This program runs at 520 am Monday thru Friday**

**Various days cover topics of Environment, Texas Heritage & History, and Wildlife Conservation.**

July – September 2014

### **Safety/Regulations: Fireworks in Parks**

Tuesday, July 1st, 2014

When it comes to celebrating our nation's birthday at Texas state parks, bring the barbecue, watermelon and the outdoor games...but leave the fireworks at home.

*06—It is illegal in Texas state parks...it is a Class C misdemeanor to possess fireworks in a state park.*

We're not trying to put a damper on your Independence Day fun, but Wes Masur, state park law enforcement coordinator at Texas Parks and Wildlife, says parks are no place for personal pyrotechnics. Even sparklers get two thumbs down.

*09—Within the state park system we have different types of wildlife and different types of grasses and we don't want to get any type of forest fire started...people are there to enjoy the state parks.*

Devastating wildfires have started for much less. While some state parks offer organized fireworks displays, not everyone appreciates these holiday light shows even when they are sanctioned.

*05—Some people don't like fireworks...the noises that go along with that stuff—we just don't allow it in the state parks.*

Find out which state parks offer public fireworks displays this year, at the [Texas Parks and Wildlife website](#)

### **Parks: A Seaside Park's Rebirth**

Wednesday, July 2nd, 2014

Sea Rim State Park in Sabine Pass is unique in the Texas park system.

*07—It's one of the most unique parks in the system, because it is the only park where the marshlands meet the Gulf of Mexico.*

Ben Herman is Sea Rim's superintendent. He says the diversity of ecosystems makes this park a standout – and an interesting place to live.

*16—You have such a wide variety of ecosystems – both in the marshlands and on the surfside – that the joining of those two are pretty cool. I always joke on one side of my house I have mosquitoes and alligators and on the other side I have sharks and seaweed.*

The natural world is as brutal as it is beautiful. In 2005 Hurricane Rita tore up Sea Rim, but before it could fully recover, Hurricane Ike brought destruction in 2008.

*06—Which were pretty devastating blows for the park. We basically lost all of our facilities and all of our utilities.*

TPWD closed the site for repairs. As recently as one year ago, when Herman joined the park, things looked bleak.

*16—There was very little out here. We had to completely rebuild all of our logistics and all of our infrastructure. So now, being able to roll it back out to the residents, and everybody who wants to come up and enjoy Sea Rim, is a very proud moment for us. It was a long time coming.*

The park celebrated its grand reopening June 20. How the park is nearly better than before. That's tomorrow.

## **Parks: Sea Rim — Better than Before**

Thursday, July 3rd, 2014

Hurricane Rita in 2005 and Ike in 2008 destroyed Sea Rim State Park in Sabine Pass.

*06—You can kill the facilities, but what you can't kill is the park, itself. Because the park, itself, is memories.*

Ben Herman is Sea Rim's superintendent. After years of planning and hard work, Sea Rim had a grand reopening June 20; it's fully functional now, and ready for visitation.

*08—That is something that is a proud moment for us, a true legacy for us as a park staff, because we get to have people come build those memories again.*

Staff used lessons learned from the hurricanes – in conjunction with Dade County Florida Building Standards, which is ground zero for many Atlantic-spawned mega-storms – to guide their rebuilding efforts.

*15—So, everything we put out here is built on Dade County standards and is able to withstand pretty severe weather. Of course, you know, Mother Nature is always going to have the upper hand on us, but we're very confident that it will be able to stand up to most everything that's thrown at us out here.*

Sea Rim State Park offers RV and primitive beach camping, fishing, paddling trails, wildlife viewing. Oh, and don't forget the breathtaking sunrises and sunsets.

*13—We have from horizon to horizon sunsets and sunrises. And, man, they are beautiful – they light up the entire sky. And you can see them out here like you can't see them any other place because there's nothing to block them.*

Make [camping reservations online](#) at the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

## **TPW Magazine: “Upstream, Downstream”**

Friday, July 4th, 2014

Continued drought and a growing population are taking their toll on the Colorado River. This important source of water for humans and wildlife stretches 600 miles from west Texas to the Gulf of Mexico.

*11—The Colorado River is the lifeblood of the state of Texas because it runs right down the center [of the state]. It supports every single kind of Texan, [from] old cowboys and little fishes to everybody in-between.*

In the July issue of TPW magazine, writer, Jenna Craig, provides an overview of the challenges regulatory agencies face regarding distribution of the resource among its users. She said, in the water game, no one emerges a winner.

*18—We simply do not have enough water to meet everybody's needs—and that is nobody's fault. There is no way [so far] that anyone has [devised] a way to distribute the water to meet everyone's needs that won't be upsetting to somebody.*

What we need is rain, and a lot of it, falling in recharge and runoff areas. Until then, personal responsibility must be part of the overall management strategy.

*15—Conserve water. Think about what you're doing. Think about the kind of plants you have in your yard [for example], and how often you water. Is watering your yard the most important thing you do with that resource? That's a choice we make. [Remember: what you do] doesn't just affect you and your yard. It affects everybody.*

Find Jenna Craig's article—Upstream, Downstream—in the July issue of [Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine](#).

## **TPW TV: Boat Builder**

Monday, July 7th, 2014

Houston architect Skip Johnson builds boats for fun.

*10—However elegant and beautiful a boat looks, it looks that much better in the water gliding out in front of you; that's their function in life.*

And the boats he builds achieve their destinies. During a TPW PBS TV segment this week, he shows off his skills.

*09—I came up with the idea of a kind of a semi jet drive. All of the sail fru-fra is stuff I've added just to play around with here recently.*

While Skip builds boats for fun, he puts some through their paces in competitions like the annual Texas Junior Safari.

*03—The boat did real well. It just needs a better motor.*

In the end, Skip Johnson says building boats and entering competitions isn't about winning prizes...it's about beauty.

*06—Just my personal opinion, but anyone that looks at one of these boats and doesn't see beauty in it doesn't have a soul.*

[ 16—Start Lyle Lovett song: If I had a Boat]

The Boat Builder segment airs the week of July 13 on the Texas Parks and Wildlife PBS TV series. Check your local listings.

## **Invasives: Aquarium Trade**

Tuesday, July 8th, 2014

We love the scenario from the Pixar film *Finding Nemo* where a cute little aquarium fish escapes back into the wild. The problem is most of these captive species aren't from Texas. Luci Cook-Hildreth is Texas Parks and Wildlife's Inland Fisheries Division.

*18—Even really smart people sometimes don't understand that a fish is not just a fish and water is not just water. They go, "I have a creek in my backyard, and I have a fish that's too big for my tank. Well, why don't I just set him free?" And they don't understand that there's a lot of biological and ecological ramifications to that decision.*

When these non-native fish thrive, they out-compete native Texas fish populations.

Cook-Hildreth says the internet makes buying exotic species of fish easy and practically impossible to regulate. Despite state laws, there seems to be a constant supply – and demand—for illegal species...and for good reason.

*16—Folks that are interested in selling illegal fish have the potential to make thousands of dollars on these fish. And we can slap a fine on them, for \$200 or \$300 dollars; it's really just the cost of doing business for these folks.*

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program supports our series... and receives funds from your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motor boat fuel.

## **Invasives: Aquarium Trade, 2**

Wednesday, July 9th, 2014

How far would you travel to ensure the future of your favorite exotic aquarium fish?

*06—We had some folks telling us that they would go as far as 50 miles to find an appropriate body of water.*

You may think releasing your pet fish into Texas waters, when you no longer want it or can care for it, is humane. Yet exotic aquaria species disrupt natural ecosystems and out-compete native fish for resources.

Priscilla Weeks is a senior research scientist at the Houston Advanced Research Center. Her team used a Texas Parks and Wildlife grant to research why people release their fish into Texas waters.

*14—I think there might be a stereotype where folks think that it is easy, emotionally, just to release a fish. But actually what we're finding is folks are very attached to their pets.*

Research shows whether a person gets rid of their fish depends on personal preference like a fish's behavioral or physical attributes. Weeks says oftentimes if those attributes change, so does the owners' interest in the fish.

Weeks says some people think releasing a fish is the only option, but, among the alternatives are euthanizing it, and the less drastic: taking it back to the pet store.

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## **Invasives: Tilapia**

Thursday, July 10th, 2014

When you hear the word tilapia, you may think of a savory meal with lemon butter sauce, but you probably don't think of the term "invasive species."

*11—Tilapia are great to eat. They're raised as a food fish, and they're quite tasty. They're quite popular in restaurants. But the problem is when they're in our natural waters they are upsetting the ecosystem.*

Originally established in fish farms as a food source, Tilapia eventually ended up in Texas waters.

Gary Garrett, a former Texas Parks and Wildlife fisheries biologist, says tilapia pose a threat to large mouth bass and other native species.

*16—They build big pit nests and in doing that they stir up a lot of the sediment. And it's been shown, for example, with large mouth bass, all that sediment stirred up and settling back down will often kill large mouth bass eggs.*

And because of the delicate nature of the food chain, this behavior has the potential of damaging the entire ecosystem.

Texas Parks and Wildlife has regulations for tilapia, but because they're widespread statewide, they are difficult to control. But if you like to fish, Garrett says, there's one way you can help.

*02—Don't throw them back. If you catch them, keep them.*

So, next time you reel in tilapia, turn on the grill and get cooking.

## **Recreation: Natural Swimming Holes**

Friday, July 11th, 2014

You don't have to hunker down indoors this the summer when the temperature starts to climb. In fact, many state parks offer a cool alternative to air-conditioned cabin fever with a number of natural swimming holes...

Public swimming pools can be fun if you like noise and crowds. If you prefer peaceful playtime, float your cares away at [Blanco State Park](#), 40 miles north of San Antonio. Here you'll find cool, clear, spring-fed swimming for anyone seeking refuge from the long Texas summer.

Just 10 miles north of Beaumont is [Village Creek State Park](#), and a free-flowing stream, popular with tubers and paddlers.

Located about one hour from Fort Worth, [Dinosaur Valley State Park](#) allows visitors to swim in the same Paluxy River where dinosaurs roamed 113-million years ago.

[Garner State Park](#) near Uvalde is home to 10 acres of Frio riverfront, giving visitors plenty of space to swim the clear water, scoot the rapids in inner tubes, or even rent pedal boats.

Find listings for river and creek swimming sites at state parks at [texassstateparks.org](http://texassstateparks.org). You'll also find a list of sites with lake swimming, and even some with ocean swimming. Or, if you prefer swimming pools, there's a directory of parks offering those controlled environments to beat the heat. And don't forget your sunscreen!

## **Angling: Red Snapper**

Monday, July 14th, 2014

Seasoned anglers may roll their eyes when I make this confession, but I have been using “redfish” and “red snapper” interchangeably. This—I know now—is wrong.

*11—Red snapper is different from what people commonly refer to as redfish or red drum. So, yes. Two different species. Red snapper and red drum... of which red drum is often referred to as redfish.*

Thank you, Jeremy Leitz [LEETZ], for clearing that up. Jeremy is with coastal fisheries. These species are easy to tell apart: Red drum is more streamlined and has a black dot on its tail; red snapper is chunkier and...well...redder.

*08—Red snapper are typically found in deeper waters along structures such as artificial or natural reefs. While red drum are in the gulf, they’re typically more sought after in our bay systems.*

I’m telling you this because Parks and Wildlife’s Coastal Fisheries division requests your help with a voluntary red snapper survey, which makes accurate identification of the species vital.

*14—What we’re asking of recreational anglers is that after a fishing trip, they log onto a website to record the number of red snapper that trip harvested. Only one angler needs to report per party, but again, after you’re done with your trip, log into the website and report the number you have caught.*

The survey is a pilot program that continues through May 2015. [Find it on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.](#)

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program supports our series; it’s funded by your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motorboat fuel.

## **Angling: Red Snapper Survey**

Tuesday, July 15th, 2014

Sometime this summer saltwater anglers will have red snapper on the half shell sizzling on the grill.

*03—It’s certainly one of the most highly sought after [fish] in the gulf – both here in Texas and in other states.*

And TPW wants to know more about your catch. Jeremy Leitz [LEETZ] works in coastal fisheries at Parks and Wildlife. He says the division started a one-year pilot program in May 2014 to collect information about red snapper harvests from recreational anglers.

*11—We’re going to use that information we collect directly from anglers alongside our routine creel surveys to get a better estimate of the number of red snapper that are being caught by recreational anglers. One will validate the other one.*

Leitz says one person in the angling party can fill out the online survey for everyone involved.

*08—It’s a quick, short, three-four question survey: date of the trip, how many fish were caught, how many people in the angling party. It will take just a few seconds to fill out.*

Filling out the survey is voluntary; [find it on the TPW website.](#)

*12—Our routine creel surveys typically last from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. A lot of these folks may not come in until later in the day. So, this reporting website will catch some of those later anglers, and so we'll see if we're still matching up with our creel surveys.*

Data from the survey will help biologists better manage the species, and improve fishing for all. The WSFR program supports our series; it's funded by your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motorboat fuel.

## **Stewardship: Sycamore Canyon Ranch**

Wednesday, July 16th, 2014

Ruthie and Johnny Russell, with their sons McLean and William, own and operate the 87-hundred acre Sycamore Canyon Ranch—along the Devil's River in Val Verde County. This family understands the importance of preserving the wide, open spaces for both livestock and wildlife.

*15—We don't want fragmentation to occur here. We love the open spaces. And you really can't protect water, wildlife and habitat without big, open spaces. If I were a billionaire I'd buy as many ranches as I could and protect them. [laughs]*

Ruthie says their goal is to protect, share and communicate the public benefits of private lands stewardship, including preserving beautiful vistas, native wildlife habitats, clean air and water.

*08—We look at this as a wilderness area. A wild area. We want to preserve it. We want to protect it. And, it's just the perfect wild place to protect.*

Some range management strategies they've used include deferred grazing and aggressive whitetail population control. In addition, they put their ranch under a conservation easement to protect it for generations.

*11—My brother and I were both raised on ranches and in the outdoors. It would never have crossed our minds had this not been put under a conservation easement to sell this land.*

The Russell's Sycamore Canyon Ranch is a regional Lone Star Land Steward Award winner for 2014.

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## **Wildlife: Texas Bumblebees**

Thursday, July 17th, 2014

Bumblebees are the bomb—or per their genus: *bombus*. Texas has nine native species of this big, slow-flying, black and yellow insect. They're effective pollinators of our native plant species, and many food crops, too.

This is the time of year when they start to wind down.

*18—At the end of the summer, the queen that started the colony gives birth to new queens. The old queen dies and all her workers die. But the new queens mate, find a hole in the ground, spend the winter there, come back out in the spring, and she starts a whole new colony.*

Michael Warriner... an invertebrate biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife... tells us how this queen bee does it.

*36—In early spring—February and March—the new queen comes out, and she's foraging. [She] finds a nest site, and she starts making what's called a “honey pot.” It's a little waxen thimble, and she fills that with food. Then she accumulates pollen and makes a big pollen ball. Then she lays eggs, and she stays there [tending to the nest and larvae till hatch]. And those are her first workers. Once her first worker daughters mature, she stays there [in the nest] full time—her main business is laying eggs. But, getting started is pretty much all on her: getting all the food and having the reserves to stay put and raise that first batch [of young].*

Learn more about Texas Bumblebees at [Texasbumblebees.com](http://Texasbumblebees.com).

## **Wildlife: Become a Bumblebee Watcher**

Friday, July 18th, 2014

Do you like the idea of bird watching, but don't have the patience to learn about every bird species? Then, maybe you should try bumblebee watching, instead.

*12—Bumblebees could be a new kind of hobby for folks. Birdwatchers have to learn hundreds of birds. There are only nine bumblebees [species] in Texas. And so it's just a matter of learning their color patterns.*

Michael Warriner is an invertebrate biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife, and curates the website [texasbumblebees.com](http://texasbumblebees.com).

*18—In Texas, we have nine bumblebee species. And, fortunately, bumblebees are large bees; they're pretty noticeable because they have a pattern of black and yellow. But, each one of the nine differs a little bit in terms of how much yellow they have on – let's say – on the front part of their body versus the rear....*

Tracking these insects – and reporting back to biologists like Warriner – can provide needed information about the status of bumblebees in Texas. What you may not know is ...these native bees are facing threats.

*16—They've lost habitat. Pesticide use is another concern. And also, there's been the importation of bumblebees from Europe into this country, which has brought in parasites and diseases that may be impacting them. So, there's a lot of concern how they're faring in North America.*

Find a chart on bumblebee identification and where to report sightings at [Texasbumblebees.com](http://Texasbumblebees.com).

## **Camping: Affordable Family Fun**

Monday, July 21st, 2014

Before the school bell rings for the fall semester (it's closer than you think) gather the family for a camping getaway—or two. With parks in every region of Texas, your destination is only a short drive away.

Most state parks have campgrounds, and some of those have water and electric hook-ups. Several parks also accommodate RVs for those who wish to bring the comfort of home with them to the great outdoors. Before hitting the road, though, check to see if RV connections are available at your chosen park's campsites.

For the pampered camper, check out state parks that offer cabins and lodges. Historic landmarks and secluded ranches make for a relaxing getaway.

When tent camping, remember to properly dispose of food waste to discourage unwanted animals visitors; and always pack out what you pack in.

Another reminder: you are not just a visitor, you are part of the natural world, and as such, it is your responsibility to keep it healthy and inviting to others. Play nice.

If you've never been camping before, and feel somewhat unprepared for what's ahead, go on and sign up for one of our Texas Outdoor Family workshops. TPW staff will school your family on outdoor basics in a fun-filled weekend. Class is in session.

Find more outdoor opportunities at [texasstateparks.org](http://texasstateparks.org).

## **Wildlife/Food: Eating Insects**

Tuesday, July 22nd, 2014

Bugs have a way of showing up just as you unpack your picnic. But what if you welcomed their presence? No, not as guests... as snacks.

*04—They really do have a crunch [crunches]; really similar to roasted nuts.*

That's Robert Nathan Allen, who was just then crunching a toasted cricket. He's founder of the Austin, Texas based nonprofit Little Herds ([www.littleherds.org](http://www.littleherds.org)).

*08—And we focus primarily educating the public and particularly children about edible insects and why and how we can adopt them into our diet.*

We call eating insects as food Entomophagy; it's commonplace among 80% of the world's population. But we westerners steer clear.

*19—Once western societies started becoming very agriculturally based, particularly in northern climates, it just became ingrained in our society that insects are dirty. And so, that idea has continued to be passed down generation to generation in these western cultures. Whereas in the tropical environments where the habit has continued, it's just another food source.*

The thing is, we already eat more than 400 insects a year without knowing it. Allen says by intentionally swapping insect protein for animal protein we can feed ourselves and help the environment. That's tomorrow.

We record our series at The Block House in Austin, Texas, and Joel Block engineers our program...

## **Conservation/Food: Eating Bugs to Save the World**

Wednesday, July 23rd, 2014

Experts predict the world's population will increase to nine billion people by 2050. That's two billion more mouths to feed. And Robert Nathan Allen says an eco-friendly protein to help nourish the masses is insects.

*07—Compared to say a cow, where we can only really eat about forty percent of the cow, with insects; we can eat most if not all of them.*

Allen founded the nonprofit Little Herds to educate the public about insects as a nutritious alternative food source. Insects are high in protein and rich in fiber and micronutrients. Currently 70% of agricultural land supports meat production, which limits the industry's future growth.

*15—So, with insects, we can raise them in a modular fashion vertically on a fraction of the land as traditional livestock, with a fraction of the water, with a fraction of the feed, and end up with more nutritional valuable protein.*

It's a huge leap from eating burgers to bugs. For the brave ones, Allen recommends obtaining edible insects from farms that raise them for human consumption.

*11—That way we can assure that they're raised in a hygienic, safe, clean environment. We can make sure that there's no risk of diseases and parasites, and we can make sure that they're eating a clean, wholesome diet.*

According to a UN report, over 2 billion people worldwide already supplement their diet with insects. Intrigued? Learn more about edible insects at [littleherds.org](http://littleherds.org).

## **Conservation: Tanksley Land Company**

Thursday, July 24th, 2014

A family ranch since the 1920s, the Tanksley Land Company's goal is to leave their 25-thousand acre property in Far West Texas in better shape than they found it.

*05—It's all about water out here: preserving and directing it to your benefit.*

1989 when Betty and her late husband Ben took over management, creosote and tarbush dominated the landscape; grasses and water were scarce.

*16—Ben's vision was to preserve water and to direct the water to the benefit of the ranch. He was building some small dams and some large dams and did a lot of what we call divots. Little small defilades.*

These methods supported better water infiltration and runoff capture, and also created numerous small oases of green grass and forbs for wildlife. Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist Mike Janis says the Tanksley's innovative management helped them win a regional Lone Star Land Steward Award.

*18—We're recognizing the Tanksleys for this award not because they did a great job implementing lots of things that we recommended at Parks and Wildlife. The roles are really kind of flipped in this situation. We've been able to take things we've learned that Ben was willing to try and share that information with other landowners who are interested in accomplishing similar goals.*

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program supports our series and provides funding for the Private Lands and Public Hunting Programs.

## **Birding: Gateway to Nature Appreciation**

Friday, July 25th, 2014

Legendary Birder, Victor Emanuel, views birding as a gateway to nature appreciation.

*10—Well, it's the best way for people to get connected to nature, because birds are the most obvious part of nature visible to us. A lot of the mammals are active at night. But birds are here; they're all around us.*

Emanuel says it's the fact that they are so visible that makes them interesting.

*15—Birds are some of the most visible creatures around us. You have the song of birds, you have the motion of birds, the fact they can fly. A cardinal, a blue jay, a duck on a pond... they're large enough and so they attract our attention in a way that smaller creatures don't.*

Victor Emanuel has spent a lifetime watching birds around the world. And while all birds are watchable, he says that doesn't mean he likes them all.

*17—I actually have a prejudice against introduced birds that are a problem, like starlings. They're a beautiful bird, actually, with the colors on them in the sunlight. But they take over the nest of native birds, and throw out the young and eggs, so they don't get to raise their young and eggs. But, yeah, they're all watchable.*

Find [birding information](#) on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

## **Wildlife: Hummingbirds Return to Texas**

Monday, July 28th, 2014

Summer is a great time for hummingbird viewing in Texas.

*03—Obviously the places people see them most often is around feeders.*

Mark Klym is in Wildlife Diversity and a hummingbird enthusiast. Attract hummingbirds to your yard with a hummingbird feeder filled with a solution of one part sugar to four parts water. Once you've installed a feeder, Klym says to keep the contents fresh.

*08—During the summer months you want to change that every two to four days. During the winter months, you might get away with four to six days, but certainly no longer than that.*

If you'd prefer to see hummers in the wild, you're in luck: we have eighteen species of the bird in Texas. But you have to know where to look.

*18—if you're looking on the wild, you're going to want to look in areas where there are a number of flowering plants available. They do require shelter, so they're going to be around evergreen or well-leaved trees – depending on the season. And they're also going to be found where there's water. Water is a critical element of their environment, and they're going to be found where there's water.*

Find information about hummingbirds, and hummingbird festivals on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

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**August 21-23, 2014: Davis Mountains Hummingbird Festival** – The “Hummingbird Capitol of Texas” will host 3 days of lectures, viewings, field trips and discussion on the hummingbirds found throughout the Davis Mountains. Various locations will be available for viewings.

**September 18-21, 2014: HummerBird Festival Rockport and Fulton, Texas** — One of the largest and most popular hummingbird festivals.

## **Birding: Hummingbird Roundup**

Tuesday, July 29th, 2014

While the mockingbird might be the official state bird of Texas, every July it's the hummingbird that earns a place of distinction in the state.

*08—July is usually the start of our hummingbird migration when we've got thousands of ruby throated hummingbirds heading this way from the northern regions.*

Texas Parks and Wildlife's Mark Klym coordinates the annual survey, the Hummingbird Roundup, in Texas.

*07—The round-up really provides us with information about the hummingbird population here in Texas and gives us an idea of where they're being found.*

We've [documented 18 species in Texas](#). While the bird count takes place year-round, the birds are more prevalent in the state from July to October.

*19—This would be a good time to start looking at possibly increasing your number of feeders if you have a yard that is going to be actively used by hummingbirds...the best way to get hummingbirds in your yard is to [prepare a good hummingbird garden](#). Lots of plants that will feed the birds, salvias, Turks cap, trumpet vine.*

Take part in the Hummingbird Round-up and [receive your own survey kit](#)...find out how... when you log onto the Texas parks and Wildlife website.

## **Hunting/Regulations: HIP Certification**

Wednesday, July 30th, 2014

If you plan on hunting migratory game birds in Texas this fall, you need to be HIP – HIP certified, that is. [HIP stands for Harvest Information Program](#).

*15—It's purpose is to gain information on waterfowl and migratory bird hunters nationwide. Basically a name and address and a little bit about their previous year's hunting activity—as well as what they plan on hunting what they plan on hunting in the upcoming year.*

Kevin Kraai is Waterfowl Program Leader. He says the HIP program helps wildlife professionals improve resource management practices as well as track various waterfowl populations throughout the country.

*05—It's a very useful tool in setting the future year hunting regulations and management decisions.*

Being a HIP certified waterfowl hunter isn't just a good idea—it's the law.

*11—Officially it is a requirement by law that every individual that plans on hunting migratory birds in the state of Texas us HIP certified. If you are not HIP certified and you are hunting migratory game birds, you are subject to game violations.*

Become HIP certified; find information on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

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## TPW TV: Purple Martins

Thursday, July 31st, 2014

Andy and Julia Balinsky are landlords in Austin... and their tenants are a colony of purple martins.

*02—They are the largest North American swallow.*

Most swallows build their own nests, but purple martins prefer existing structures in which to raise their young; this makes them increasingly reliant on people like the Balinskys. Yet, this bird/human dependence is not new.

*08—Native Americans put up gourds [for the birds] long, long ago. And this bird associates safety with humans.*

The colony of purple martins is in good hands with Andy and Julia, who perform regular maintenance on the nest boxes for the birds' health and safety.

*05—We have to clean them out. We have to purchase new structures from time-to-time and [do] some maintenance.*

The couple's job also involves evicting unwanted tenants like house sparrows, which often hijack martin nests.

*08—They're pretty nasty. They'll go in and peck the purple martin eggs; they'll be mean to the babies. It's bad news, so, we discourage them from being here.*

Get to know the Balinsky's and the birds in a segment airing this week on the TPW PBS TV series. Check your local listings.

## Boat | Fish: New Regulation — Drain That Boat

Friday, August 1st, 2014

By now you're aware of the zebra mussel; it's an invasive freshwater species first detected in North America more than 25 years ago in the Great Lakes. By 2009 the species made its way to Texas Lakes.

*08—Texoma was first, and now we've got them in five other reservoirs around the state. And now we're trying to slow or prevent the zebra mussels from getting into the other public water bodies.*

Ken Kurzawski oversees regulations for inland fisheries. Zebra mussels reproduce quickly and outcompete native freshwater species – like sport fish – for food.

*12—And on top of that, they have a way to attach to structures—boats and things—that cause billions of dollars of damage in other parts of the country where they get into [municipal] water pipes and on structures where they have to be cleaned off.*

Those are the kinds of outcomes Texas Parks and Wildlife and its partners want to avoid in Texas. On July 1 (2014) a new regulation went into effect mandating all boaters drain their boats before leaving public waters.

*10—Any water that you uptake in your bilges, live wells, has to be drained from your vessel when you're leaving those waters, or approaching another public water. And that's statewide in all fresh waters.*

Find additional information about this regulation, including how it pertains to transporting live fish while angling, and how to correctly clean, drain and dry your boat at [texasinvasives.org](http://texasinvasives.org).

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## **Hunting: Dove Season Forecast 2014**

Monday, August 4th, 2014

Despite exceptional drought along the Red River in North Central Texas and the extreme Panhandle, ample spring rains elsewhere promise good dove hunting this season.

*14—Last year at this time about 45% of the state was either in an extreme or exceptional drought. [When] we get to those levels we see large-scale [negative] changes with habitat. And this year, we're only at about 20%; so we've had a lot more precipitation around the state.*

Biologist Shaun Oldenburger says the season includes mourning and white-winged dove—but don't expect to hunt them in the same place.

*08—With white-winged dove, over 90% of our white-winged doves in the state of Texas breed in suburban or urban locations compared to most of our mourning doves which tend to be more rural.*

For white-winged dove, consider setting up in grain fields and pastures nearby urban and suburban areas...

*15—...that may have good croton, or sunflower crops and then vetch, pigweed – stuff like that. For mourning dove, we look for perching habitat, we look for water and we look for food. And if you have a combination of those things, you usually can have a fairly decent hunt in those types of locations.*

Find more information about dove season on the [Texas Parks and Wildlife website](#).

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program supports our series; it's funded by your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motorboat fuel.

## **Hunting: Preparing for Dove Season**

Tuesday, August 5th, 2014

Unlike hunting other game where one or two people sit quietly in a stand or blind, dove hunting is social.

*12—Yeah. And one of the big traditions that we do see in Texas is family and friends getting together for the opening of dove season. It seems to be a very popular thing to do around Texas. And you can talk and have conversations while you're dove hunting.*

Biologist Shaun Oldenburger says before you hunt dove on your own or with others, you have to have all your ducks in a row, so to speak.

*22—Make sure – obviously – you have your right hunting license. You are going to need a migratory game bird stamp – a Texas stamp. And you're also going to have to go and get HIP certified before you go dove hunting or you go hunt any other migratory game bird in the state of Texas. A lot of times September first approaches us*

*pretty quick; we just want to make sure folks get the right licenses before they head into the field, and to also go out and actually practice with a shotgun before September first.*

Opening day for dove in the north and central zones is September first, Labor Day. It opens September 20 in the south zone.

*08—Per Fish and Wildlife Service regulations, the season will be 70 days this year. And the bag limit will be 15, which includes both mourning doves and white-winged doves.*

Find complete dove season information on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

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## **Hunting | Tech: Outdoor Annual Goes Mobile**

Wednesday, August 6th, 2014

People who buy hunting and fishing licenses rely on a printed booklet called the Texas Outdoor Annual.

*04—And inside the printed booklet they'll find hunting and fishing regulations.*

You'll find those regulations on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website, too.

*04—[But] our website is hard to take with you if you're in the blind and you do not have cell service.*

Developing efficient ways to access information is among Tim Peterson's priorities. He's director of creative and interactive services at Parks and Wildlife. Making an electronic version of the outdoor annual, with simple, intuitive navigation—accessible in cell-challenged locations—necessitated creation of an app.

*22—Well, as you know, smart phones and tablets have become more popular among the general population, but we've also noticed that our hunters and anglers are also using those devices. And we are offering it, really, as another way for them to learn about regulations while they're in the field, and also be able to do searches based on location.*

The FREE Texas Outdoor Annual app is available for download for both apple and android devices wherever you get apps. Tim returns tomorrow to tell us about one of the many features of the app.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program supports our series; it's funded by your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motorboat fuel.

## **Hunting|Tech: Using the Outdoor Annual App**

Thursday, August 7th, 2014

The Texas Outdoor Annual is a handy printed and online guide filled with valuable information for hunters and anglers. And it just got better because now it's an app.

*08—Smart phones and tablets have become more popular among the general population, and our hunters and anglers are also using those devices.*

Tim Peterson—director of creative and interactive services at Texas Parks and Wildlife—says the new app takes the guesswork out of which regulations apply to your location.

*28—If an angler's sitting in a particular water body or lake, or near or water body or lake, they can use the GPS function in the APP, locate the lake that they're at or near, and they can see bag limits and exceptions for that particular lake. In addition, same goes for hunting. Same goes for hunting. If a hunter is in a blind, they can pull out the APP, and using the GPS functionality of their device, they could see which county they were in, and they would see the bag limits and season dates for that particular county.*

The app is free and available for download now for apple and android devices. The Outdoor Annual app will improve over time providing hunters and anglers up-to-the minute information for a successful experience

*08—The first version will include fishing reports. So, you will be able to see what's biting at a particular lake at a particular time.*

Find information on where to download the app for free on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Website.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program supports our series, and is funded by your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motorboat fuel.

## **TPW TV: Winter Waterfowl Wonderland**

Friday, August 8th, 2014

In east Texas near Palestine, the flooded bottomland hardwood forest at Gus Engling Wildlife Management Area is a winter wonderland for waterfowl.

*06—It's really a neat opportunity for the ducks that are here. We try to keep more water [in the forest area] and make things better for them while they are here.*

Tucker Slack, a wildlife biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife, says the diversity of ducks is outstanding at the Wildlife Management Area.

*10—Normally the ducks we'll see are going to be wood ducks. Wood ducks live here. You'll see mallards, but you'll also see pintails... ring necks...so there's quite a diversity of ducks that you'd see here.*

The bottomland hardwood forest at Gus Engling is in nearly pristine condition.

*07—A lot of your bottomland hardwoods throughout our state and nation have really been logged and have had tremendous impact by people.*

Slack says some wood ducks are year round residents; however, their population was once in decline.

*14—It caused some concern, and one of the things it brought about was artificial nest boxes. So, the wood duck nest boxes were really one of the first large-scale attempts that people were able to make, and it's really been quite a success story as far as the wood duck goes, and their population.*

Wood ducks, and other waterfowl and wildlife, thrive in this untamed land.

*06—It's really important, for a lot of reasons, to have these wild spaces. One of them is for the animals, themselves. They need somewhere that they can call home.*

See Gus Engling Wildlife Management Area and the wood ducks this week on the Texas Parks and Wildlife PBS TV Series. Check your local listings.

## Education: Outdoor Outreach

Monday, August 11th, 2014

Texas parks and Wildlife offers a variety of enhancements for teachers and educators to use in and out of the classroom.

*19—We offer outdoor skills training; we offer additions to curriculum – all kinds of supportive materials – to help people introduce youth to the outdoors and to outdoor skills so that they become more aware of their surroundings, enjoy the natural world, and feel connected to our natural resources.*

Nancy Herron is Director of Outreach and Education. Water is a vital issue in Texas, and a curriculum on Aquatic Ecosystems of Texas provides a template for better understanding the resource and its users.

*31—Without a basic understanding of how our aquatic systems work, it's going to be very difficult to make those tough decisions that are facing us, such as how much water we need to have in a stream? Isn't that an unusual question? I mean, it's not something that people normally would think about; how would you even understand how to approach that question? Our folks are going to be making a lot of tough decisions in the future as we balance the needs of people and the environment. And we need to have a good understanding of how the environment works to do that.*

Find the [electronic student and teacher guides for Aquatic Ecosystems of Texas](#) on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website, and partner websites: the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, and the Hart Research Institute.

## Education: Archery in Schools

Tuesday, August 12th, 2014

Archery—the original shooting sport—fell out of favor as a component of physical education in public schools some years ago. But, now, thanks to the [National Archery in Schools program](#), interest in the sport is growing fast.

The National Archery in Schools program certifies teachers as instructors. Educators learn the program just as they will teach it to their students.

*06—It's an all day workshop to become a certified instructor. They learn with the same equipment and the same method.*

Burnie Kessner is archery coordinator for Texas Parks and Wildlife.

*10—We use international style archery. It's bulls-eye target faces, Olympic size. We use Olympic whistle commands, and they learn the same way worldwide.*

Kessner says while certified instructors prepare students for tournaments, the successes a child experiences extend beyond the bulls-eye.

*13—So, when a kid is shooting archery, and they're on the shooting line—they're all the same. So, it doesn't matter what kind of home they go home to after the tournament, when they're at the tournament, they're the same as everyone else. So, that's the self-esteem building piece; it's standardized.*

Learn more about bringing the Archery in Schools program to your district on the Texas parks and Wildlife Website.

Our series receives support from the Wildlife and Sport fish Restoration Program... working to increase fishing, hunting, shooting and boating opportunities in Texas.

## **Big Time Texas Hunt: Grand Slam Winner**

Wednesday, August 13th, 2014

Do you know when you're lucky? Houston resident Kelly Hill does. He won the annual Big Time Texas Hunts grand slam package the very first time he entered.

*06— I've heard that people have entered for several years and haven't won it. So I know I'm a very lucky guy.*

The Grand Slam gives one winner four separate guided Texas big game hunts: desert bighorn sheep, white-tailed deer, pronghorn and desert mule deer.

*14—I've been on the whitetail hunt, and I've been on the mule deer hunt. And they were both absolutely amazing. I'm about to go on the desert big horned sheep [hunt], and then I think sometime in September or October is the [pronghorn] antelope.*

The Texas grand slam is one of eight premium guided hunt packages offered in Parks and Wildlife's Big Time Texas Hunts program.

*19—If you were to actually go and pay for one of these hunts – they are very expensive. The fact that Texas Parks and Wildlife has coordinated with these properties that have opportunities to take one of these trophy animals – it's amazing. And the fact that it's nine bucks...nine bucks is a pretty cheap entry fee.*

You can [enter to win the Big Time Texas Hunts through October 15](#). Purchase entries online for \$9 each or for \$10 each by phone, mail or where you buy hunting licenses.

All proceeds from Big Time Texas Hunts benefit wildlife conservation, research and public hunting in Texas.

## **Big Time Texas Hunts: Sharing the Experience**

Thursday, August 14th, 2014

The first time Kelly Hill of Houston heard of Big Time Texas Hunts was in a hunter Education class.

*14—I went and researched it when I got home; and I was like – this is amazing. Nine bucks to enter online; I took a certain amount of money and spread it over the ones that I was interested in, and I put six entries in for the grand slam, and one of them hit.*

The Grand Slam gives one winner four separate guided Texas big game hunts: desert bighorn sheep, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope and desert mule deer. The winner may bring guests along on some of the hunts. Kelly brought his dad on the first one.

*14—I took him with me on the mule deer hunt, and it was just really good to have him out there. And then I took a friend of mine to the whitetail hunt, and they accommodated me and the non-hunter with me. So, it's been absolutely amazing.*

Although Kelly Hill won the Texas Grand Slam, that won't keep him from buying entries for Big Time Texas Hunts for years to come.

*04—Absolutely. Oh, I'm going to continue to put in and hopefully get drawn again.*

#### [Are you feeling lucky?](#)

Hunters may purchase entries for this year's eight premier hunting packages, including the Grand Slam, for nine dollars online or ten dollars by phone, mail or at license retail locations through October 15.

Proceeds benefit wildlife conservation, research and public hunting in Texas.

### **History|Tech: San Jacinto Monument's Earth Cam**

Friday, August 15th, 2014

Mounted 540 feet in the air, just below the 220 ton stone star on the San Jacinto monument in La Porte, an earth cam keeps 24 hour vigil over the battlegrounds. But it's not the only monument with an eye in the sky.

*17—There's an earth cam at the Washington monument, there's an earth cam at Mount Rushmore; there's an earth cam on the Empire State building. As a matter of fact, there are about 50 earth cams in Texas, and by the time we get done with this conversation, there might be 51.*

Larry Spasic (SPA-sick) is president of the San Jacinto Museum of History. Will virtual visitation keep people from actually visiting?

*21—Although we give a little sampling of what's out here, we certainly don't show everything that is available out here. And I think when people who might not normally be interested in coming out here, go to our web cam and look out at the battlefield and the port – they might be enticed to come out here.*

Nevertheless, Larry Spasic says logging onto the earth cam on the San Jacinto monument is the next best thing to being there.

*16—Well, I think it's very important that people from distant places that might not be able to visit a site, at least be able to see it and learn a little bit about it by having an internet connection and virtually visit via earth cam.*

Find a [link to the earth cam](#) at [passporttotexas.org](http://passporttotexas.org).

### **Hunting | Tech: Drawn Hunts Online**

Monday, August 18th, 2014

For the past couple of decades hunters who put in for drawn hunts on Texas public lands did so by mail.

*20—We would have to provide a booklet that we would mail to customers (or mail to our [regional] offices for folks to pick up) that they would browse through. They would hand write applications that would have to be*

mailed to Austin; we would have to open those applications up and process those application fees and manually enter them into a computer drawing system.

Kelly Edmiston, public hunting coordinator, says that was just the tip of the manpower and paperwork iceberg.  
[This year everything moves online...](#)

*16—You need to have access to the internet, obviously, to get to the parks and wildlife web pages to get into our new online system. You will need to have an email account, because that is how we are going to communicate with you. You're going to need to have a credit card; you're going to be making your payments to your application fees and permit fees online.*

When you log on to the site, Kelly says it will feel familiar.

*11—We actually made the appearance of these hunts visually similar to how we used to display that information in the book. So, it will kind of look the way it used to when you were looking at it on a printed page.*

We'll have more about the new online drawn hunt system tomorrow.

We record our series in Austin at The Block House and Joel Block engineers our program.

## **Hunting | Tech: Drawn Hunts Made Easy**

Tuesday, August 19th, 2014

In July the Texas Parks and Wildlife drawn hunt system entered the 21st Century when it moved completely online.

*07—What I like about the system is everything works here real time. So, the moment you apply, you can see real-time what you have.*

Kelly Edmiston, public hunting coordinator, says folks with hunting and fishing licenses or those who applied for drawn hunts in the past are already in the system.

*19—if you are a previous customer, you can hit “check status” button; enter your last name and date of birth, and the customer number from your hunting or fishing license and find your account. You can see your loyalty points – or preference points – and see your history. And from there, you are allowed to just go right in and start applying for hunts, or browsing the catalog to see our available hunts.*

The [FAQ section on the drawn hunts webpage](#) offers more ways to locate or create an account.

*24—When you apply online and provide an email address, our customers are going to receive an email immediately after we do a drawing notifying them of their success. And, if they haven't been successful they still can go online seven days a week, 24-hours a day to access their hunting information. Plus, if you've won, you'll be able to pay for your permits online and get your permits sent to you by return email.*

Find [a link to the new online drawn hunt system](#) at [passportteexas.org](http://passportteexas.org).

## **Fishing: Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame**

Wednesday, August 20th, 2014

The Texas Freshwater Fishing Center in Athens, Texas opened its doors in 1996; at the same time, it established the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame.

*07—And has inducted an individual or an organization almost every year since then.*

Larry Hodge is the center's spokesperson. He says they'll accept nominations for new inductees through November 1, 2014.

*22—The criteria basically are that it has to be a human being – and deceased individuals are eligible for nomination, or an organization. In both cases, they must be Texas based. Either a Texas resident if it's a person, or a Texas based company or other organization if it's an angling group or something like that.*

[Find nomination forms on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website](#). The hall of fame isn't about honoring people who caught the biggest or most unusual fish.

*07—Correct. It is a way to honor people who have given back to the sport of freshwater fishing.*

Such as through conservation, or charitable work, or ways that making freshwater fishing better for all...

Learn more about the nomination process tomorrow.

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### **Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame Nominations**

Thursday, August 21st, 2014

Induction into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame doesn't involve reeling in big fish.

*07—Correct. It is a way to honor people who have given back to the sport of freshwater fishing.*

Center spokesperson, Larry Hodge, says achievement in conservation, charity work and innovation makes judges take notice of worthy nominees.

*15—Those folks don't always get a lot of recognition. So, it was felt that establishing a freshwater fishing hall of fame would be a way to recognize deserving individuals who have made a contribution to freshwater fishing in Texas.*

Any Texas-based individual or organization is eligible for nomination. Find criteria and forms on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Website. Hodge adds the more detailed nominators are, the better their candidate's chances.

*19—The committee of 12 that goes through the nominations and actually selects the person or organization for induction, may not know anything about that particular nominee. So, we encourage people to do some research, provide as much information as they can, and tell us that person's story.*

[Submit nominations through November 1, 2014](#). There's additional information about the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame, and what the inductee receives, on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

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## **TPW TV: Leave No Trace**

Friday, August 22nd, 2014

Some life lessons are classic, such as: pick up after yourself or be considerate of others. These behaviors are appropriate outdoors, too, and won't limit your fun, as former Texas Outdoor Family guide, Lindsay Davis explains:

*50—It is possible to both preserve and enjoy the great outdoors. We call this Leave No Trace. Research the area you're visiting; check for burn bans and other restrictions. Once you're out in the park, stick to the trails. Going off trail tramples vegetation and disturbs wildlife. If you pack it in, pack it out. Properly dispose of your trash in a dumpster or trash receptacle. Want some natural souvenirs? Take pictures. It's a violation of state law to remove resources from the park – things like rocks, plants and other natural objects. Respect wild animals in their natural habitats, and from a safe distance. Never feed wildlife. And finally, be considerate of other visitors. Avoid walking through others' campsites, keep the volume down, and respect the park's quiet hours so folks can enjoy the sounds of nature.*

View a segment with Lindsay Davis on Leave No Trace the week of August 24 on the Texas Parks and Wildlife PBS TV series. [Check your local listings](#).

## **Birding: Know Your Birds**

Monday, August 25th, 2014

Some bird species in Texas are ubiquitous – but that doesn't mean we notice them.

*17—Ubiquitous simply means they're all over the place. We might tune them out as just like background noise; we don't really look at them. But once you start tuning in and really looking at them you're like, what is that? I've never seen that. But, you know, it was always there. You just didn't look.*

Non-game ornithologist, Cliff Shackelford, compiled a list of 12 such species he says every Texan should know.

*19—This arose from questions over the years that I've received about, "Hey, what's that dark duck we see when we drive over the ridge?" Or, "What's this weird striped bird at our bird feeder?" And when you get that kind of call over and over and over, you realize there are some really common birds that people don't know what they are. So, that's kind of how I generated that list of twelve.*

Find the list in the August/September issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine. And while Cliff says there's no order to the list, a special species takes the number one spot.

*05—I had to start the list with our state bird of Texas, which is the mockingbird.*

Find the article [Twelve Birds Every Texan Should Know by Cliff Shackelford](#) in the August/September issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine.

Tomorrow, some of our other feathered friends that made the list...and why.

## TPW Magazine: 12 Birds Every Texan Should Know

Tuesday, August 26th, 2014

Texas Parks and Wildlife non-game ornithologist, Cliff Shackelford, compiled a list of 12 bird species he thinks every Texan should know.

*10—No two experts or seasoned veterans in this field are going to come up with the same 12 birds. I'm sure people are going to go: Why didn't he pick this? Why didn't he pick that?" Well, it's just personal preference.*

In addition to personal preference, birds made the list based on questions he receives from the public about unfamiliar species they see.

*22—Yeah. And then, the other thing I did is I thought about species that have statewide ranges that you could be in just about any corner of the state and see. Of course, some of these are wetland occurring, and if you're out in the very dry parts of West Texas, you might not see them; but eventually you're going to cross a creek or pond or something and potentially see a Killdeer or a Great Blue Heron.*

Killdeer and Great Blue Heron are on the list of 12, which is in the August / September issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine. The Northern Mockingbird, Red-tailed Hawk, Barn Swallow, Turkey Vulture, Cattle Egret and others also made the list — including the house sparrow, which is a non-native species.

*10—And it's not even a true sparrow—it's a weaver finch—and it's in a totally different part of your bird book; that's why I put that one in there. It's just so atypical for a sparrow.*

Find the article [Twelve Birds Every Texan Should Know by Cliff Shackelford](#) in the August/September issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine.

## Wildlife: White Nose Syndrome Update

Wednesday, August 27th, 2014

North America's bats are dying off at an alarming rate.

*06—The current estimate is more than 5.7 million bats have been killed by white nose syndrome. Texas Parks and Wildlife mammalogist, Jonah Evans, says it's been spreading south and west.*

*12—The closest [to Texas] it's been confirmed is in Mississippi. And it does continue to be found further and further west – closer to Texas. So, we're very concerned that it could get here.*

Researchers thought they'd discovered the fungus in an Oklahoma bat colony in 2010; additional testing proved the sample similar, yet unrelated and non-lethal.

*05—That is a huge relief, because that was next door, and we were just terrified that it was coming.*

White Nose Syndrome, which forms a fungal mat over the faces of hibernating bats, thrives in cooler climates. This makes Texas officials hopeful state bat colonies will remain unaffected; nevertheless, [they will remain vigilant](#).

*11—The place that we've identified as most likely to be susceptible to white nose syndrome is up in the Panhandle, where there's a fair number of hibernating bats, and it gets cold.*

How the white nose fungus moves from one area to another, and what we can do to slow its progress. That's tomorrow.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program supports our series... and receives funds from your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motor boat fuel.

## **Wildlife: White Nose Syndrome on the Move**

Thursday, August 28th, 2014

First discovered in 2006 / 2007 in upstate New York, white nose syndrome—a fungus that afflicts cave-hibernating bats—has killed an estimated 6 million animals thus far.

*09—Texas is home to 32 species of bats; 18 of which are known to roost in some way, and many of those hibernate.*

Texas Parks and Wildlife mammalogist, Jonah Evans says Texas bats are currently disease free, but not home free. [Take migratory Mexican freetail bats](#), for example.

*32—There is concern that they could act as a vector for the disease. So, if they get exposed to it – maybe they're carrying it – and then they migrate down into Central and South America, and they expose a lot of other migratory bats that could then bring the disease into the western portion of the United States. So, it's a lot of speculation, but there's some concern that Texas could be a gateway from the eastern part of the US to the western if it gets into the migratory bats and then they expose a lot of the hibernating bats in the west.*

Something that's not speculation is how humans spread the disease from cave to cave, and how they can protect against it. That's tomorrow.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program supports our series... and receives funds from your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motor boat fuel.

## **Wildlife: Prevention of White Nose Syndrome**

Friday, August 29th, 2014

If caving is one of your pastimes, here's something you should know: a fungal disease called white nose syndrome has been killing North American bats since 2006.

*07—There are certain caves where bats hibernate where 90 to 100 percent of the bats that hibernate in that cave have died from the disease.*

The fungus is also found in European caves though the bats there are essentially immune. This suggests the fungus may have evolved with their bats. [Texas Parks and Wildlife mammalogist, Jonah Evans](#) says researchers speculate people who visited European caves may have unwittingly brought fungal spores into North American caves on shoes or other gear. To prevent the spread of white nose fungal spores by humans...

*10—Avoid entry into caves if at all possible, otherwise do a very stringent decontamination and be really careful about getting leaned up when you leave a cave.*

[Find decontamination protocol](#) at [passporttotexas.org](http://passporttotexas.org).

So why care? Bats are beneficial agricultural allies, eating tons of insects during their nightly flights, allowing farmers to reduce or eliminate insecticide use on food crops, and save money. They also serve as pollinators of important crops and are just fascinating animals.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program supports our series... and receives funds from your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motor boat fuel.

## **Wildlife Research: Banding Mourning Doves**

Monday, September 1st, 2014

Mourning doves are the focus of an ongoing, nationwide banding study.

*17—We're banding mourning doves to determine harvest rates or percent of fall population taken by hunters. We'll also determine survival rates, and where they go, and when they get there and when they leave.*

Jay Roberson, wildlife research supervisor, said returned bands also help estimate population size – which ties directly into the national harvest strategy. He invited me to observe as he banded doves.

*07—And we're going to go and take some birds out of the traps and see what we've got and put the right band on the correct leg.*

The trapped bird flapped excitedly as we approached. Jay covered the cage with an old blanket to calm the animal. Taking it from its cage, he brought it to a picnic table for banding with a small silver ring that fit easily around the bird's leg.

*14—Those are the bands for the adults and the unknown age birds. Now I slip the open band in the pliers over the lower leg. And now I'm going to crimp that pliers down until it closes.*

After Jay determined the animal's age, he transcribed the number of the band, the date and location into a book, and then released the bird.

If you harvest a banded mourning dove, report it by calling the number on the band. The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program program supports our show and provides funding for the Private Lands and Public Hunting Program.

## **Research | Hunting: Reporting Banded Doves**

Tuesday, September 2nd, 2014

An important game bird in Texas, [the mourning dove \(although there are other dove species in Texas\)](#) is the subject of a nationwide banding program. By crimping tiny silver bands around their legs, biologists track the harvest rates of these birds.

*08—We'll also determine survival rates, where they go, when they get there, and when they leave. And all kinds of good information.*

Jay Roberson... wildlife research supervisor at Parks and Wildlife...says the bands are small, but packed with information.

*13—And it has the toll free number on it that people can call. And a nine digit number and the office location of the bird banding lab in Laurel Maryland.*

Newer bands even have a website where hunters can report their findings. Roberson asks dove hunters to examine their harvest for leg bands. The information on the bands hunters supply is invaluable when managing the species.

*19—All the work we put in on banding doves is for naught, if they're not reported by hunters or people who find them. And, it's very important that hunters check their birds that they bag – make sure that their birds are banded. If they are, we ask they report the number to the toll-free number: 1-800-327-BAND.*

Find more information about reporting dove data when you visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

Our show's receives support from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, which provides funding for the Private Lands and Public Hunting Programs.

## **Recreation: Texas Paddling Trails**

Wednesday, September 3rd, 2014

There's nothing like being on the water, close to nature, in a kayak or canoe.

*17—Our feeling is that if we can get people on the water, they will see what Texas is all about. Then they'll start to get on board with the conservation, and the athleticism of paddling, and fall in love more with Texas and what we do here at Texas Parks and Wildlife.*

Ron Smith, with Inland Fisheries, says Texas communities recognize the value of developing paddling opportunities with the Texas Paddling Trails Program. Trails benefit residents and visitors, but also the communities in which they exist.

*21—We go back to the communities, and the communities report back to us, that there's a stronger economic impact in their area because of the trails. They're starting to see boats on top of cars going through town. People are cleaning up the waterways. [There are] just many, many indicators that the program is working.*

Think your community could be the next great paddling destination? First, you need a community partner...

*12—And organize it on a local level, and then submit an application to us. And that application is on our website; they can dill it out and submit it to us, and we'll be happy to take a look at their trail.*

A new trail opens this week in the Big Thicket...that's tomorrow.

## **Recreation: New Paddling Trail**

Thursday, September 4th, 2014

Outdoor enthusiasts have access to more than 500 miles of paddling trails throughout Texas.

*04—We want to grow our inventory of trails as large as the state will allow.*

Toward that end, Ron Smith, of Inland Fisheries, says a new trail opens this week in East Texas.

*06—It's located right next to and through the Big Thicket down in Beaumont, Texas.*

Smith says access to the trail is easy. And, while it's suitable for novices, seasoned paddlers will enjoy it, too, as it offers variety.

*10—The trail goes up through Cook's Lake, and then it goes across the bayou back into Big Thicket; then it comes back out on Scatterman Lake, and then you come down the Neches River.*

At which point you can head back to dry land at the take out point. And if you're interested in paddling this new trail...

*14—Well, they're going to try and launch it with their Big Thicket rally on September the sixth, on a Saturday. And, from what I hear, they have already 100 boats signed up to do it. So, there'll be a lot of paddlers out there that day.*

Find information on all the [paddling trails in Texas on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website](#).

## **Hunting: Gun Safety**

Friday, September 5th, 2014

Hunters are taking their firearms out of the gun case and preparing them to go afield this fall. Prep work should also include reviewing gun safety rules.

*15—Number one: always point the muzzle in a safe direction. Number two: Treat every firearm as if it were loaded. Three: Be sure of your target; what's in front as well as beyond. And, then the fourth is unload your firearms when not in use.*

Robert Ramirez, Texas Parks and Wildlife hunter education manager, says his department produced a new video – available on YouTube September 6th – illustrating the first four, of ten, rules.

*05—in our hunter education course, obviously, we go over all ten gun safety rules.*

Ramirez says you and your hunting party should commit the first four rules to memory before going into the field.

*03—Firearm safety is everyone's responsibility.*

And if you have not taken hunter education, or need a refresher, it can only serve you well.

*20—[Hunter education is for everyone](#) who is planning on going afield regardless of age. In the state of Texas, it is mandatory certification if you are going to hunt – 17 years of age or older. There is a grandfather date of September 2, 1971; if you're born on or after that date, it's mandatory [to take] if you're going to hunt alone.*

Visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife website to find hunting rules and regulations, as well as hunter education classes – including online certification classes.

## **Hunting | Tech: New Online Drawn Hunts System**

Monday, September 8th, 2014

The Drawn Hunts system (on public and private land) is online only now and streamlines the application process. Adult application fees are \$3 per adult, except Private Lands and Guided Hunt categories, which are \$10.

*16—Our applications are not all at one time; they're actually distributed through the month of August into January. We have regular gun/deer in September, and feral hog and exotics...and some of the later hunts for feral hog and spring turkey will actually go into December and January.*

Kelly Edmiston, public hunting coordinator, says there are more hunts available than in years past, and selection notification will be faster than ever.

*20—We will probably be able to draw one to three business days after a deadline because we're not having to rely on data and mail and late arriving applications. Before you had to get it here by 5 o'clock the day of the deadline. Now, because it's online, you'll basically have until that last day – probably up until 11:59 [p.m.]—to be able to submit an application.*

Preference points of the past are loyalty points today.

*22—You can now apply more than once within a category. Your loyalty points will still apply to each application you submit in that category equally. So, if you have five preference points for a gun/deer either sex category, and you submit three gun/deer either sex applications, each at a different area, you're going to get five points on each of your three.*

[Access the online drawn hunt system from the hunting section on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.](#)

## **Hunting: Early Teal Season**

Tuesday, September 9th, 2014

[Early teal season](#) provides waterfowlers an opportunity to harvest ducks before the regular season opener in November. Whether hunters get a nine day or sixteen day season depends on the birds.

*15—if the breeding population is above 4.7 million, you're allowed a 16 day, 6 bird [daily] bag limit season. If it's below 4.7 and above 3 million, you have a nine day season. Anything below—I believe it's 3 million—the season's closed.*

Kevin Kraai (CRY) is waterfowl program leader for the wildlife division of TPW. It's been a good year for teal.

*15—We've had a sustained long-term wet period [this year]. Couple that with some timely Farm Bill programs—such as the Conservation Reserve program—that put large amounts of upland grass on the landscape. And the blue wing teal have just responded favorably to that.*

A 16 day season opens Saturday, September 13 and closes Sunday, September 28. Kevin Kraai says to make sure you're prepared.

*11—Each hunter has to be certified in the Harvest Information Program. Additionally, they will need to have a migratory game bird stamp, offered by the state of Texas. As well as a [federal] waterfowl duck stamp.*

Find hunting information for all game species on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program supports our series... and receives funds from your purchase of fishing and hunting equipment and motorboat fuel.

Good environmental conditions in teal's northern nesting areas mean more birds and a 16-day early season in Texas.

*16—Blue-wings are the most abundant, and are very common to Texas early and late in the year. Green-wing teal are kind of our winter residents. And Cinnamon Teal, for the most part, are more of a western bird. They're not real common in Texas, but we do encounter them from time-to-time.*

Kevin Kraai (CRY), waterfowl program leader for Texas Parks and Wildlife, says teal do not behave quite like other duck species.

*24—One thing I like to tell hunters is these birds are actively migrating this time of year; it's very dynamic from one day to the next. So, just wake up and go. You never know if today is the day that the migration is going to be strong. You can go out one day and there will be nothing, and go out the next and be covered up in them. So, I just say wake up and go. Find good shallow habitat, shallow water that has abundant food. And there's a really good chance there'll be teal there that day.*

The season opens Saturday, September 13 and closes Sunday, September 28, with a six bird daily bag limit.

*19—We haven't looked this good in a long time. Right now we have abundant freshwater, from the Texas High Plains in the panhandle, all the way down to the Texas coast.*

Opportunity awaits. Find more hunting information on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program supports our series.

## **Nature: Chihuahuan Desert**

Thursday, September 11th, 2014

The Chihuahuan Desert Region is the third largest desert region of the Western Hemisphere and the second largest in North America. But many Texans know little about it.

*13—I don't know why they don't know a lot more about the Chihuahuan Desert [region]. My guess is, when they think of West Texas, they think of Marfa and the art community; they think of McDonald Observatory, they think of Big Bend National Park and the State Park...*

...Not realizing those places lie within this unique desert ecosystem. Cynthia Griffin is Executive Director of the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, or CDRI, in Fort Davis.

*18—The Chihuahuan Desert [region] encompasses about 220-thousand square miles. Most of it is in North Central Mexico. But it also comes into West Texas basically west of the Pecos River. It's in South Central New Mexico, and it's in a small part of Southeastern Arizona.*

Griffin says the range of elevations in the Chihuahuan Desert Region make it unique.

*23—And it goes anywhere from a thousand feet above sea level up to ten thousand feet. And that large diversity in elevation accounts for the flora and the fauna, and it also accounts for the temperatures. Unlike the other deserts, we have a lot of coolness and we have more rain than they do because of that elevation range.*

We'll have more on the desert tomorrow. Until then read about the Chihuahuan Desert Region in the Aug/Sept issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine.

## **Nature: Diversity in the Chihuahuan Desert**

Friday, September 12th, 2014

Say the word desert, and –and an image of a bleak and lifeless place may come to mind. That may be true for some deserts – but it's not true for the Chihuahuan Desert Region.

*07—It's one of the most diverse places for both plants and animals in this country, and frankly, in the world.*

That's not including tropical and subtropical regions, of course. Cynthia Griffin is Executive Director of the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, or CDRI, in Fort Davis...located within the 220-thousand acre ecosystem.

*29—There are over 3-thousand plant species on the Chihuahuan; it is a center of diversity for cacti. Our cactus greenhouse has some of the most rare and best examples of cactus found in the Chihuahuan Desert. There are more reptiles on the Chihuahuan than there are on the Sonoran. There are more birds on this desert [region] than in the Everglades. And in the Davis Mountains, we have 16 of the 18 species of North American Hummingbirds.*

The Chihuahuan Desert Region has an elevation range from 1-thousand to 10 thousand feet above sea level, and it is isolated from other North American deserts.

*10—So there's not the bleeding over. And, so because it's large, and because of its range of elevation, you will find species here that you will not find anywhere else.*

Learning about deserts isn't as dry as you once thought.

Find out more about the Chihuahuan Desert Region in the [Aug/Sept issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine.](#)

## **Nature: Why Leaves Turn Color in Fall**

Monday, September 15th, 2014

'Tis the season when we see foliage turn colors. If you're like me, you wonder why, and what purpose it serves.

*13—Right. It's kind of like, why is the sky blue type question. But the interesting thing about fall color is it doesn't really have a purpose. It's the result of some chemical processes that occur in the leaf.*

Damon Waitt (WAIT) is director and senior botanist at the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin.

*11—When you think about being a leaf during the wintertime... it's not a good time to be a leaf. Especially if you're a thin flat one. Because, cold temperatures are going to kill that leaf.*

So, these trees cut their losses as seasons change.

*21—They want to capture all those good chemicals out of the leaf before winter and put them back in the tree and store them in the roots. And so that's what they start to do when the nights get longer, which is a signal that winter is coming. A consequence of that is the leaf is no longer making chlorophyll; other pigments start to show up.*

Damon Waitt likens this process to recycling.

*17—Yes, trees are great recyclers. They don't want to waste all those great chemical compounds that are out in the leaf that have been doing work all summer long, and in the spring, causing the plant to grow. So, they recycle the chemicals they can, and then dispose of the leftover material that's in the leaf.*

That leftover material is what you rake every fall. More fall foliage tomorrow.

## **Nature: Why Leaves Change Color in Fall**

Tuesday, September 16th, 2014

Why is the sky blue? Why do birds sing? Why do leaves turn color in fall? We've got you covered on fall foliage. It begins with longer nights...

*16— ...which is a signal that winter is coming. And, a consequence of that is the leaf is no longer making chlorophyll and other pigments start to show up. Some are already there, some are produced after the leaf stops making chlorophyll.*

Damon Waitt (WAIT) is senior director and botanist at the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin. Another part of the “coloring” process is when leaves seal themselves off from the trees.

*22—And it's during that time that the leaves are changing color. Because one of the coolest colors, of course, is red and purple. You know, the Big Tooth Maple colors. That's actually a pigment called anthocyanin, and it's produced when that leaf is cut off from the rest of the plant. And the sugars that are still left in that leaf will actually convert to this pigment and turn red.*

A chemical process (triggered by longer nights) causes leaves to change color. However, other variables affect the depth of color.

*10—So, there are a lot of things that can affect how deep the reds are: temperature, sunlight...all these things have an effect on the expression of these different colors. And, that's why each fall is different.*

Now, go forth and amaze your friends with your new found knowledge. The 17-thousand acre Powderhorn Ranch in Calhoun County has a long, fascinating past, and a bright future, thanks to a coalition of partners that raised nearly 38-million dollars to help purchase the land.

*04—This really took the proverbial village to help put this project together.*

Texas Parks and Wildlife Executive Director, Carter Smith says the expansive tract of pristine coastal prairie will be preserved for all Texans, including native flora and fauna.

*18—The Powderhorn Ranch has been the dream of the conservation community for almost a quarter of a century. And, everybody has recognized its scale, its incredible ecological integrity and biological uniqueness. And, as we see more development, more activity, we've recognized the criticality of protecting places that scale like the Powderhorn.*

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation raised most of the money for the \$50 million project, which includes an \$8 million endowment to fund ongoing habitat management and restoration.

*17—Every single attitudinal survey shows that Texans care about their coast. They're passionate about it. It's conservation. They value the water that flows into it, and is present there. And so, this is one of those places that are going to be there for future generations. And, there's just a special comfort in knowing that.*

For more information about the Powderhorn Ranch project, visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

## **Conservation: Lone Star Land Stewards**

Thursday, September 18th, 2014

The key to healthy habitat and wildlife populations rests in the hands of landowners. In Texas, we honor their skillful management.

*09—Lone Star Land Steward is an award program where we recognize those landowners in Texas who are doing an exemplary job of managing their habitats and their wildlife.*

Linda Campbell oversees the state's Private Lands and Public Hunting programs.

*13—We have all kinds of focus on these landowners. We have a great diversity of people. We have a regional award for each of the ten eco-regions. And then we have an overall award, the Leopold Conservation Award, for the overall statewide land steward.*

Nominations for the awards opened June first, and will continue until the end of November.

*23—Nominations can come from the landowners themselves, or those that assist them. We will take nominations from any member of the public. All of those nominations are evaluated, and we do site visited on those. We just want to make sure that we hold up those who are doing such an excellent job managing the resources of Texas.*

[Find nomination forms on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.](#)

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program supports our series...and funds the Private Lands and Public Hunting programs.

## **TPW TV: Kickapoo Cavern**

Friday, September 19th, 2014

At Kickapoo Cavern State Park near Bracketville ... nature is almost untouched, the way it used to be.

*06—It's a great place to just get away from it all. You can unplug from all the distractions of the city, and just get back in touch with nature.*

Mark Garrett, is a ranger at the park, which offers visitors 64-hundred acres of birding, hiking, and mountain biking. That's just what's above ground. Below, in the cavern, ranger Steve Blair says there's even more to explore, and regularly takes park visitors down under.

*17—You've got twin columns; the column on your right is the largest column in the state of Texas. It's eighty feet high, which is a little over 8 stories. You can see the different colored drapery off of it – all the jellyfish looking stuff – I see Mother nature at its best.*

From the depths of Stuart Bat Cave at Kickapoo Cavern State Park, Mexican Free tail bats emerge nightly throughout summer to the delight of visitors.

*10—The bat flights are pretty spectacular. There are 500-thousand bats here at the cave. It takes approximately an hour and a half for all the bats to get out of the cave.*

Ranger Mark Garrett says park staff works hard to keep the site as natural as possible so we can all...

*03—Enjoy a part of Texas a lot of people have never seen.*

View a segment about Kickapoo Cavern SP this week on the Texas Parks and Wildlife PBS TV series. Check your local listings.

## **Hunting: Big Time Texas Hunts Deadline Nears**

Monday, September 22nd, 2014

Big Time Texas Hunts offers entrants a chance to win any of eight premium hunt packages on some of the finest private ranches and prime wildlife management areas in the state.

*09—We bill it as once in a lifetime type of hunts. [We have] Really great hunting packages for deer, and birds, and waterfowl, alligator...*

Linda Campbell is program director for Private Lands and Public Hunting at Parks and Wildlife.

*13—These are fully guided hunts, and so everything is provided: lodging and food; all the guiding is also provided. You just have to get yourself to the location. But other than that – everything is taken care of, including the taxes on the hunt, itself.*

Each hunt package is a different drawing; enter as many of the drawings as many times as you like. Entries cost \$9 online or \$10 by phone, mail or at retail locations where you buy licenses. **Deadline to enter is October 15.**

Some Big Time Texas Hunt packages permit winners to bring along a friend.

*16—The Whitetail Bonanza, for example. The Exotic Safari – you can bring hunting companions with you. The Grand Slam, which is the hunt for the premier big game animals in Texas – pronghorn, big horn sheep, mule deer and whitetail – you can bring a non-hunting companion on that one.*

All proceeds from Big Time Texas Hunts benefit wildlife conservation, research and public hunting in Texas.

We record our series at The Block House in Austin, Texas and Joel Block engineers our program.

## **Wildlife: Ocelot Mortality in South Texas**

Tuesday, September 23rd, 2014

An estimated 50 **endangered ocelots** survive in the thick brush and shelters of the Lower Rio Grande Valley... including Cameron County. As the human population there grows, so do cat/car run-ins. The USFW service reported four ocelot deaths on Highway 100, which goes to South Padre Island, in as many years.

*09—TXDOT is working with US Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the best way to keep ocelots off the road, but also allow for disbursement into other habitat areas.*

When it comes to roads and wildlife, TXDOT gets involved. Octavio Saenz works out their Pharr office.

*19—We're also trying to determine the best locations to place wildlife crossings to allow the ocelot and other wildlife to travel under the roadways. And, in the interim, we're trying to determine the best locations to fence and allow the ocelot to travel across the roadways at narrow locations to minimize the number of mortalities on the roadway.*

Until then, if you live in or are visiting that area of Texas, be aware of who and what shares the road with you.

*13—In Cameron County, look out for the wildlife crossing signs; slow down to a safe speed when you see the signs. And also, be alert – especially during the dawn and the dusk hours – when the ocelot will be most likely traveling.*

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program supports our series.

## **Camping: Texas Outdoor Families**

Wednesday, September 24th, 2014

Longer nights and cooler temperatures make fall an ideal time for overnight camping at a Texas State Park. But if you're new to the activity and don't know a tent flap from a flap jack, the **Texas Outdoor Family program** can help.

*05—We provide them some gear and get them a little more comfortable before they actually get out there and do it on their own.*

Lindsay Carter is a Park Ranger with the Texas Outdoor Family program. During weekend workshops, rangers and volunteers teach families how to set up camp and get comfortable with the gear. Then there are activities.

*14—We love having planned activities for them, which is, of course, not required – but stuff that they can do if they want to hang out with us. Kayaking, geocaching, fishing, outdoor cooking...things like this. We like to have a lot of activities to keep them busy while they're out there.*

Up to six people per family can sign up for a one or two night workshop. It's \$65 for one-night workshops and \$85 for two-night workshops. TOF provides the tents and cooking gear...

*10—We ask that they bring groceries that they would like for the weekend. Sleeping bags. Pillows. We have a list on our website of things to bring. But, basically, that's it.*

Texas Outdoor Family workshops take place throughout the state beginning this month. Visit the Texas Outdoor Family page at **texasstateparks.org** to find one close to you.

## **Recreation: Geocaching in State Parks**

Thursday, September 25th, 2014

State park visitors hunt for containers filled with trinkets when they're geocaching. Yet, in time, they discover the real treasure is spending time in nature.

*03—I guess maybe that's the secret cache; the unknown one.*

Cassie Cox, with the Texas Outdoor Family Program, aims to change that. The staffs of the Texas Outdoor Family program and state parks teach visitors geocaching as a way to connect them with the natural world.

*17—It's bridges nature and technology. It uses that technology to encourage children, and families and other people to get outdoors, and to get on the trail. You have a mission [to locate a cache], and you're using that technology to help you find it. And along the way you may discover things that you haven't ever seen before.*

Like wildlife, plant life, or unusual geologic features.

Using coordinates from geocaching.com and a hand-held GPS or smart phone, visitors hit the trail...and ideally... don't stray far from it.

*08—It's best to stay on the trail – that's a Leave No Trace principle. It helps you be safe, and it helps protect the resources in the park.*

**September is the time to learn about geocaching;** it's the outdoor activity of the month at Texas State Parks.

*09—Just go on the [TPW] webpage, look at a park near you to see if they're offering geocaching workshops. Trust me, you'll have a great time; it's addicting. It's so much fun.*

## **TPW TV: Beneath the Surface**

Friday, September 26th, 2014

Cast your gaze across the Texas landscape and its majesty and diversity become evident. Yet to experience the full depth these qualities you must dig deeper; go beneath the surface.

*07—All these things behind me are not mountains. They're the edge of the rim of the canyon; we're 800 feet below the level of the ground.*

That's ranger Randy Ferris talking about Palo Duro Canyon.

*12—This is like a reverse mountain. I mean, everything is flat; if you've driven across the Texas Panhandle, it's like driving on the world's largest billiard table. And then we get to Palo Duro Canyon, and the bottom just drops out of it.*

Hidden worlds also exist below the surface of fresh and salt water – especially saltwater. Sylvia Earle, Advisory Board Chair, at the Harte Research Institute, says we must treat the Gulf with care and reverence or lose it.

*17—We have in the past thought it was free, and infinite in its capacity to recover no matter what we did to it. But we're learning that unless we take care and understand that this is a shared ocean, and that we need to work together to understand it, take care of it, and to use it – but don't use it up.*

View a segment on the Texas Parks and Wildlife PBS TV series called Beneath the Surface this week. Check your local listings.

## History: Telling Texas' Stories

Monday, September 29th, 2014

Jennifer Carpenter is a historian with State Parks.

*08—We are charged with anything relating to history of the state park system and historic preservation of structures throughout the state park system and our at historic sites.*

Much of her job involves detective work. Lately she's been hot on the trail of Englishman William George Hughes, a 19th Century Hill Country Sheep Rancher. Parts of ranch lie within the boundaries of a parcel Texas Parks and Wildlife is developing called ABK, or Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area in Kendall and Bandera counties.

*13—So, we had a name, but we didn't really know what it meant. We went to the county court houses and dug through lease records and probate record, whatever we could try to find. So we would kind of search around in different repositories through Texas.*

And the digging paid off.

*19—The University of Texas at San Antonio had the Garland A. Perry papers; and he wrote a book on William George Hughes. He, I guess, had contacted the Hughes family descendants and they shared with Mr. Perry a vast collection of family photographs, papers, business materials. It was just a great cache.*

Jennifer Carpenter shares more about this 19th Century Englishman turned Texan and his role in the economic development of the Hill Country tomorrow.

## History: William George Hughes

Tuesday, September 30th, 2014

Englishman, William George Hughes came to America after the Civil War; he was 18 and penniless. He settled in the Boerne area, found work, and eventually saved enough money to buy land where he raised sheep and goats.

*07—He's the American Dream in a way; he came over penniless and managed to make a nice life for himself and his family.*

Historian, Jennifer Carpenter says Hughes was an entrepreneur and natural leader.

*15—So, he definitely left an impact on the economy; he founded a stagecoach company that ran between Boerne and Bandera County. He was a civic leader for the area. And, I think if he had lived a little bit longer he probably would have become one of the preeminent ranchers of the area.*

Hughes died tragically in a train accident transporting his livestock. He was only 42.

*24—He would travel around the country selling them, or making sure people were aware of his ranch and what he offered. And, I guess he traveled pretty close to his animals. He would be in one of the cars with them. And*

*he was on his way to Paducah, KY – I believe – enroute in Illinois, and apparently his train collided with another. And he was asleep at the time – at least that's what the news report led me to believe. The impact caused him to die instantly.*

The animals survived. His wife settled his estate, sold the ranch, and moved with their three children to the east coast.

Learn more about other early Texans on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.