

Some New Twists on Cooking Fish and Game

Monday, May 1st, 2017

When Texas Parks and Wildlife collaborates with Central Market Cooking Schools on Wild Game and Fish cooking classes, we like to keep it interesting.

Take the May 9th class, for example: attendees will make Crawfish Beignets; Salt-baked Striped Bass with Olive Oil, Herbs, Lemon & Garlic Salsa; and Prosciutto-wrapped, Maple-glazed, Roasted Turkey Breast.

The meats used in the recipes are farm raised. Yet, each has a wild equivalent available for harvest with the right licenses and gear. May 14 is the last day of spring turkey hunting in the north zone for Rio Grande turkey—and for eastern wild turkey, too.

Crawfish and striped bass live in freshwater throughout Texas. Find crawfish around ponds, lakes, rivers and streambeds; tricky to catch, but lots of fun. Also check out the Texas Parks and Wildlife website for best striper lakes in the state.

A few seats remain for the May 9th Texas Parks and Wildlife & Central Market cooking classes in Austin, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Dallas, Plano and Southlake **[Note: we just received notice the Southlake class has been cancelled.]**

Let me know where you live and the kinds of game and fish dishes that interest you. Find a link for cooking class registration and my contact details on the Passport website.

Find a Central Market Cooking Class Near You when you [visit their website](#).

Learning the Ropes (Birds) from a Ringer

Tuesday, May 2nd, 2017

When I hear the word ringer, I think unfair advantage. Yet, ringers are encouraged in the Great Texas Birding Classic's Big Sit tournament.

You can have a team with all people who are beginning, and then they just have to be sure they have a ringer or two on their team who can ID the bird for them for it to go on their list.

TPW Nature Tourism coordinator, Shelly Plante oversees the event, and told me our colleague, Bob Sweeney, an attorney, is a Big Sit ringer.

You know, I've been fascinated with birds since childhood, and even in high school I was out in the field and woods with my binoculars and my book. I just think it's an exciting, dynamic part of

the natural world, and pretty easy if you're willing to put a little time into it to develop a minimum level of knowledge.

Bob says he enjoys helping beginning birders gain knowledge and confidence.

I think any teacher has a great feeling when they feel like someone in the class gets it. Someone snaps to it. That Eureka moment may come, not during the Big Sit, but it may be something that was learned during the Big Sit that is then used in the backyard, or used on a hike or communicated to another person who is wanting to start out, so maybe the light bulb when it goes on is the confidence to transmit that knowledge—I know what that is. I saw it in the Big Sit. And here's why I think it's that.

The Great Texas Birding Classic is continues through May 15th. Stay on top of the action at birdingclassic.org.

A Fungus is Finally Among Us

Wednesday, May 3rd, 2017

The fungus that causes [White nose Syndrome, a disease that affects hibernating bats](#) was detected for the first time in Texas earlier this year. Texas Parks and Wildlife mammologist, Jonah Evans says it may have been present for up to a year...

... but at levels too low to detect. So, when you look at the maps of the spread of the fungus across the United States, those maps are always going to be behind where the disease actually is.

Researchers discovered six caves in six Panhandle counties with the fungus.

These are locations where we had previously identified as the most likely for the fungus to turn up first. And sure enough, it did. And so, we had expected to see the disease and the fungus to slowly move across Oklahoma towards Texas. For me, personally, it was a bit of a surprise to have it suddenly one year we go there and it's all over the place.

For the past six years, the caves in question have come up clean when surveyed.

Likely, it came in at extremely low levels first, and slowly spread. And then, one winter's worth of growth of the fungus in all of these sites suddenly put it over that threshold where we are now able to detect it.

Find more information on White Nose Syndrome in bats, and [decontamination protocol](#) if you go caving, on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

How a Fungus May Spread Among Bats

Thursday, May 4th, 2017

Texas has the highest diversity of bats in the nation: 33 documented species in 4 families.

And [Texas] is where a lot of eastern and western bats comingle.

That's a problem, says mammologist Jonah Evans, now that the fungus that causes the bat killing disease White Nose Syndrome was [discovered this year in six Panhandle counties](#).

The other big concern is our Mexican Free-tailed bats, because they migrate and do not hibernate, they are not expected to suffer the same level of catastrophic impacts from the fungus. However, because they don't die when they are exposed to the fungus—potentially—that would make them even better at spreading it. It is sort of a bat Armageddon situation.

Mexican Free-tail bats migrate in huge numbers across the Americas, creating concern they may spread the fungus.

When really susceptible species get the fungus, usually about 80 percent of the mortality happens in the first year that the disease turns up. What that tells us is that we have to be very proactive on the front end. We have to really start doing something soon. If we wait, we're going to be trying to treat these stragglers that are left over, and the bulk of the population will be lost.

Researchers continue searching for treatments and cures. Find information about White Nose Syndrome, and [decontamination protocol](#) for cavers, on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

TPW TV- Don's Frog Pond

Friday, May 5th, 2017

Don Cash is one of the producers of the [Texas Parks and Wildlife TV series on PBS](#). At work, he creates the shows. At home, he creates wildlife habitat.

As a matter of fact, when I leave here and head home, I have my own little nature preserve waiting for me. This...is my frog pond.

Don, who lives in southwestern Travis County, started his pond about 10 years ago, first filling it with goldfish.

Now, the goldfish are really nice, but the pond attracts other animals as well. Every spring it seems [every frog in the neighborhood](#) hangs out here.

Don wanted to know how frogs find his pond, when the nearest creek is three miles away, so he asked Andy Gluesenkamp, Director of Conservation at the San Antonio Zoo, to explain.

Part of it is random chance, frogs finding it. But also, once a frog finds it, and there's a male calling, other frogs are going to be attracted to that.

Andy says frogs aren't the only ones using the pond.

When you build a fish pond you can expect other wildlife to show up. Birds will come and drink and bathe. Frogs will show up and breed and feed. And then snakes and other predators may show up and feed on those frogs.

Leopard frogs, Gulf Coast toads and myriad other critters call Don Cash's frog pond home. And it's featured on the Texas Parks and Wildlife TV show next week. [Check local listings](#).

[A Mother's Day as Big as the Outdoors](#)

Monday, May 8th, 2017

A card and breakfast in bed is a fine way to show mom your appreciation on Mother's Day; but what about [packing a picnic](#) and taking mom to a state park instead?

With [more than ninety Texas State Parks](#), there's one close to you with plenty of outdoor opportunities for the entire family. But remember: keep the focus on mom.

Do you have an active mom? Then don some sturdy footwear and sunscreen and take to the trails for [an invigorating hike \[or nature walk\]](#). Or, [bring your bikes](#) and take a freewheeling whirl around your favorite—or new favorite—park.

[Remember the binoculars for wildlife viewing](#), and a camera so you can snap selfies with your mom in nature.

And that picnic? I have a link at passporttotexas.org to [recipes that are perfect to take along on your Mother's Day outing](#).

It doesn't get much better than a picnic lunch surrounded by family and nature's beauty.

Oh, and you know that Mother's Day card you're going to give to mom no matter what? How about [tucking a State Park Pass into it](#) so she can visit Texas State Parks all year long for free. Do that, you'll be her favorite, for sure.

Find more information at texasstateparks.org.

[Government Canyon: The Nearby Wilderness](#)

Tuesday, May 9th, 2017

Comprised of more than 12-thousand acres of mostly undeveloped land, [Government Canyon State Natural Area](#), outside of San Antonio, is not a state park.

Although we're part of the Texas State Park system—we're actually a natural area. So, our focus is primarily natural and cultural resource management. However, we do provide recreational opportunities here. We have about 40 miles of hiking and biking trails.

Superintendent Chris Holm says guests experience something entirely unique when they visit the site.

It is a unique experience, as we're so close to the city of San Antonio. But yet, when you get out here and start hiking or biking into what we call the backcountry area, you think you're out in the great wilderness of the North or something.

Open for visitation Friday through Monday only, Government Canyon frequently reaches maximum site occupancy on weekends.

Almost every weekend we'll have a capacity closure because we get too many people coming out. We want people to experience Government Canyon. We want them to develop a love of the place. Stewardship. But at the same time we don't want it to be destroyed [from overuse]. And, so, there's a balancing act.

Tuesdays through Thursdays, site staff focus on resource management. There's more info on Government Canyon at texasstateparks.org.

[A Natural Area With a Place For Play](#)

Wednesday, May 10th, 2017

As San Antonio families with young children discover the close proximity of Government Canyon State Natural Area to their homes, more of them visit the site.

We were here, and folks just didn't realize it. Now, we are being discovered. Folks are coming out from the local neighborhoods—and the word's getting out.

Superintendent Chris Holm says the site offers 40 miles of rugged trails for hiking and biking. Yet, during periods of heavy rain, staff close the trails until they dry out. What's a family with kids to do? Since March, they've enjoyed a new ADA accessible playscape.

Being that we are a natural area, we went more for not the regular swings and slides and monkey bars kind of playground—we wanted something that blended more with the natural area.

And so, being able to offer things like logs and big boulders and rock steps and a little creek bed that kids can play in. It's been real popular.

Last month Government Canyon State Natural Area also opened an all-weather, one and a quarter mile accessible interpretive nature trail.

You can take a wheelchair on it. We don't allow bikes or dogs back there. Over the next year, we'll be adding in interpretive education signing to the trail as well. It's a really nice trail.

Find more information about Government Canyon State Natural Area at texasstateparks.org.

Working Together for River Access

Thursday, May 11th, 2017

Chandler River Park on the Neches River is a model for public/private partnerships that provide free access to our state's rivers, which can sometimes be hard to find.

It's certainly going to be the model that I'm going to use in the future.

Beginning in 2012, Richard Ott, an inland fisheries biologist based in Tyler, worked with a diverse group of public and private organizations to lease and develop the site.

It was complete in 2013. We then were able to get some additional grants to improve the boat ramp on the south side of the bridge. And then in 2016, with another grant, we were able to put in a kayak launch. So, we've also got that as one of our paddling trail locations. So, it's a really multi-functional location.

East Texas Woods and Water paid for the site's 20-year lease, says Ott. And TxDOT created safe parking and road improvements. Texas Parks and Wildlife develops sites based on angler input.

This was a location that traditionally anglers had concentrated, and fished on the banks, on all four sides of the bridge. And once we located where the anglers and the fish interfaced, we knew that was where we wanted to develop these access sites.

Find out where Texas Parks and Wildlife has agreements with landowners that allow public fishing and boating access through private property, on the [Texas Parks and Wildlife website](http://texasstateparks.org).

TPW TV – Coastal Birds and Birders

Friday, May 12th, 2017

The Texas coast is rich with bird life and year-round birding opportunities. Next week discover what all the fuss is about on the award-winning Texas Parks and Wildlife TV series on PBS, when ornithologist, Cliff Shackelford takes a group of birders to what he calls a “mecca”.

We are at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary on Bolivar Peninsula in Galveston County and this is a mecca for birds, for water birds, for shorebirds that use the Texas coast.

[Alice Anne Odonell] Does everybody see the skimmer, going right down that very first wave? You can always go down to the beach and see anywhere from fifteen to thirty species of birds, no matter whether it's in the spring or the hot summer time.

[Cliff] There are birds here for many reasons, for foraging for roosting and some are even here for nesting. This time of year we have least terns and Willetts.

[Birder] I see it. The least tern went back to the nest.

[Cliff] Oh good, good, good, yes excellent!

Coastal Birds and Birders airs next week on the Texas Parks and Wildlife TV series on PBS.

[Check your local listings.](#)

[Bust a Move Outdoors for Better Health](#)

Monday, May 15th, 2017

We have more than a million acres of parks and outdoor spaces in Texas, which means recreational opportunities abound, as do the health benefits of being active outside.

It's recommended adults get a full 30 minutes a day ... and children a full hour. Benefits of regular activity include: better overall bodily health as well as improved mental health.

Local and state parks offer something from everyone: from hike and bike trails, to swimming, rock climbing, paddling, and geocaching.

The opportunity for outdoor play is limited only by your imagination!

Being outside means breathing fresh air... and the varying terrain offers challenges to a workout you can't get from a treadmill at home.

Side stepping puddles, leaping up rocks, and traversing up and down hills exercise your balance and stability in addition to the cardiovascular system.

The outdoor alternative is also more affordable than the gym, as many state parks offer low-cost admission. So go ahead and get out, because life's better outside.

Find a park or scenic trail near you at texasstateparks.org.

ShareLunker Genetics — All in the Family

Tuesday, May 16th, 2017

Anglers dream of reeling in largemouth bass that tip the scales at 13 or more pounds. Called “ShareLunkers” Texas Parks and Wildlife encourages folks who catch these big fish to donate them to [Toyota Texas Sharelunker selective breeding program](#).

Since the inception of the program—we just finished our 30th year—we’ve stocked over a million fingerlings of those sharelunker offspring back into the reservoirs of Texas.

Stocking lunker offspring into reservoirs increases an angler’s chance of hooking trophy bass. Kyle Brookshear coordinates the ShareLunker program for the agency, and says biologists can trace lunker lineage.

We’re able to take a small tissue sample from each sharelunker that’s caught. We can analyze that and determine who its parents are, or who its brothers and sisters are.

This year, for the first time, [anglers caught “direct offspring” of previous lunkers](#). Although it’s taken a long time to do, it proves: from big fish, come big fish.

These ShareLunker’s are about 10 to 12 years old on average [and over 13 pounds]. It’s exciting to start to see results come in—and we should start to see more and more.

Anglers donated the “direct offspring” back to the program where they’ll become part of hatchery brood stock statewide, resulting in an increase of lunker-spawned fingerlings stocked in reservoirs.

So long term what that means is, we’ll go from stocking over a million fingerlings in the past 30 seasons of the program to stocking 6 to 8 million annually.

Will the Pros Reel in a ShareLunker This Week?

Wednesday, May 17th, 2017

When more than 100 professional bass anglers converge on one lake for a tournament, excitement runs high. And when the [Toyota Bassmaster Texas Fest kicks off today at Lake Sam Rayburn](#), east of Lufkin, the excitement amps up with the possibility of reeling in a lunker.

Well, it would be just awesome for our program.

Dave Terre, with Inland Fisheries coordinates the tournament for the agency. A lunker is a largemouth bass that tips the scales at 13 or more pounds.

For a lunker to be caught as part of this nationally broadcast TV program and this benefit event for Texas Parks and Wildlife, you know, it would be huge.

The [Toyota Sharelunker program](#) works with anglers to promote the conservation and management of trophy bass fishing in Texas.

Sam Rayburn has produced numerous Toyota ShareLunkers in the past. It would be an awesome thing [to reel one in during the Bassmaster]. But, you know what? I've made promises about catching a lunker for the past 10 years [of the Toyota Texas Bass Classic] and it has not happened. We've gotten close. And so, I've got my fingers crossed, and I'm a positive thinker—so it might happen.

Let's cross our fingers and hope for the bass-t. The Toyota Bassmaster Texas Fest is a free event that begins today and runs through May 21st at Lake Sam Rayburn. Details at bassmaster.com.

[Texas' Top Bass Lakes](#)

Thursday, May 18th, 2017

District fisheries biologists like Todd Driscoll monitor fish populations in public bodies of water.

There are 15 other people like me in the state of Texas. And we primarily monitor the fish populations in public reservoirs, recommend fish stockings, habitat improvements, set length limits and bag limits relative to harvest...

[Sam Rayburn](#) and [Toledo Bend](#) are two east Texas reservoirs under Driscoll's care. Both are nationally recognized bass lakes.

It's all about the habitat. You know, over here in East Texas, we're blessed with fairly ample rainfall during a normal year, and that means we have fairly normal water levels in both of those manmade reservoirs. And normal water levels equal pretty good habitat. And good habitat leads to very consistent fish reproduction and consistent numbers of adult fish for anglers to catch.

Twice now, Toledo Bend Reservoir claimed the number one spot on Bassmaster's list of 100 best bass lakes in the nation. And it's no accident.

Inland fisheries at Texas Parks and Wildlife—we hire good people. And we tend to be on the cutting edge of the science. Our Heart of the Hills Research Center in Kerrville helps a lot with that. And, no doubt, that along with good productive watersheds and reservoirs in Texas all lead to good fishing.

[Discover Texas' diverse fishing opportunities](#) across the state when you log onto the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

[Caring for Tournament Caught Bass](#)

Friday, May 19th, 2017

During the Toyota Bassmaster Texas Fest Tournament each professional angler has a judge onboard to weigh and immediately release their catch.

During a typical tournament, you know, anglers are allowed to keep five legal fish per person in a live well in the boat.

Inland fisheries district biologist, Todd Driscoll says immediately releasing them back into the lake reduces stress to the bass and the risk of livewell-related mortality.

Study after study have shown that you can pretty much average that at about five percent. So, during one of these tournaments, if there's a hundred bass that are caught, weighed and immediately released, ninety-five of those bass are going to be plum fine and in great shape. Whereas, with a traditional tournament—bass held in live wells and taken to the scales—around 25 percent die. So, it's five percent versus twenty five percent. And that's what makes the catch, weigh and immediate release format so much better.

Texas Parks and Wildlife perfected the format over 10 years of the Toyota Texas Bass Classic, where it was first implemented in a large, professional-level tournament—with only minor hesitation from pro anglers.

When you implement that catch, weigh and immediate release format, the entire tournament results are predicated on what that judge does. So, they're highly trained; they absolutely know what they're doing. And after one event, nearly all the tournament anglers were behind that process.

Bass Lakes in Texas

Monday, May 22nd, 2017

Texas offers some of the finest bass fishing lakes around.

To the east, Sam Rayburn Reservoir is easily this state's most popular bass tournament destination. Sam Rayburn may be the most consistent bass lake in Texas, and just finished hosting the Toyota Bassmaster Texas Fest.

Caddo Lake, on the border of Texas and Louisiana is a bass angler's dream. It's the state's only natural occurring lake. Caddo is shallow, so, if you like shallow water fishing—this lake's for you. Plenty of lunkers have come from Caddo, including one this past March that weighed in at a whopping 15.7 pounds.

Toledo Bend Reservoir is another lake we share with Louisiana, and it makes both states proud. It's been number one on Bassmasters top 100 bass lakes for two years. Over the past few years anglers have reeled in more than 100 10 pound bass from the water annually.

Down south, Falcon International Reservoir, which Texas shares with Mexico, has fish numbers that fluctuate along with the water level. Even so, Falcon's a favorite among many bass anglers because fishermen know that their next cast could produce a 10-pounder.

Find more Texas Bass lakes on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

Boat Safe, Boat Savvy

Tuesday, May 23rd, 2017

It wasn't that long ago when drought conditions caused low lake levels that kept boats and other watercraft in dry dock.

We have a lot more water now, so the lakes have changed.

Good thing, too, because Texans love being out on the water in summer. And, the upcoming Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial start of summer boating season. Tim Spice, manager of boater education for Parks and Wildlife, says **being savvy about safety keeps everyone protected** when on the water.

We can identify two major factors that you as a boater can affect in how you operate a vessel, and the things that you do in and around the water. One is wear a lifejacket. Eighty percent of those people that die from falling in the water would be alive if they had a life jacket on. And then the second thin you can do is to not drink alcohol. Alcohol affects your judgment, and you can lose your driver's license—your vehicle driver's license—the court can take that away from you if you are found guilty of boating while intoxicated.

The rules of the road as they pertain to boating, are similar but also different than those for driving a car.

The rules on the road are all designed based on the type of vessel and the maneuverability of the vessel.

Find those rules on the **Texas Parks and Wildlife website**—and on tomorrow's show.

Boaters' Rules of the "Road"

Wednesday, May 24th, 2017

If you plan on operating a boat, certain items are necessary to have on board for the safety of you and your passengers.

You should have a sound producing device, and you should have a life jacket for every person that's on board. If you're boating at night, you should have the proper lights—that are working—and we suggest a first aid kit.

Tim Spice, manager of boater education for Parks and Wildlife, says anyone born on or after September 1, 1993 is required to take boater education.

We cover lots of different things, including safety aspects of boating; the different types of vessel you may have; the rules of the road; the required equipment. Again, everyone on board a vessel needs to have a lifejacket that's accessible. We define what accessible means by law so that you don't get in trouble when you're on the water and a game warden stops to give you a boating safety check.

He advises filing a float plan with someone onshore that details where you'll be and when you plan to return, in case an emergency occurs while on the water. Remember: the rules for operating a boat are different than for a car.

There's no lines on the road; there's no speed limits, per se. There are different signs and things you have to look out for that are very different than you would in your car.

By [taking a boating safety course](#)—online or in a classroom—you'll learn those rules.

The Sport Fish Restoration program supports our series and works to increase fishing and boating opportunities in Texas.

[Texas River Access](#)

Thursday, May 25th, 2017

Legal access to Texas Rivers can be challenging.

Texas is a private land state. Over 95% of the land in the state is privately owned, and that's reflected in ownership of banks along rivers.

Tim Birdsong is a rivers biologist. Texas Parks and Wildlife's paddling trails program works with communities to create access to some of the 191,000 miles of Texas Rivers. Currently, we have 70 trails in the system.

Seventy trails, 191,000 miles of rivers—that's a drop in the bucket. There are lots of high quality river segments that aren't accessible because of this preponderance of private lands ownership. So, we look for opportunities to bring landowners into the mix, and provide a win-win scenario where we can provide a cost share arrangement; provide payments to landowners to lease private lands for public access to rivers. And this is real similar to our public hunting program that we've had in place for years.

This partnership with local landowners allows Texans to more fully enjoy the natural beauty that our rivers have to offer.

We began leasing these private lands for access to bank, wade and kayak fishing in 2012. And now, we're up to 19 different lease-access sites statewide on 10 different rivers.

Texas Parks and Wildlife seeks landowners with riverfront property strategically positioned to expand current Texas Paddling Trails, connect to parks, or provide connections to other public river access areas. Find program details on the TPW website.

Taking Texas Rivers on the Road

Friday, May 26th, 2017

If you've fished, paddled or even picnicked along a Texas river, you know how special they are. Take that appreciation on the road with a new Texas Rivers conservation license plate.

It's a really beautiful view of a Hill Country river with a kayaker and a fly angler off in the distance. It's just a really scenic landscape that points to the values that we all have for Texas rivers and rivers in general.

Tim Birdsong is a rivers biologist.

There are all these different aesthetic, and ecological and recreational and economic values tied to rivers, whether it's water supply, or flood abatement, or bank, wade or kayak fishing. Tubing. You name it. There are reasons we value rivers. And Parks and Wildlife works to conserve Texas rivers.

Fish and wildlife conservation, habitat restoration, and bank access for recreational use. The new Texas Rivers conservation plate helps to support it all.

The sale of the license plate will generate \$22 for the department for every plate sold. And, that's non-federal funding that's really important in matching federal grants that we've been able to tap to support these programs. So, if you love Texas rivers, you can show your support, and support of Parks and Wildlife's river conservation programs by purchasing a plate.

Find the Texas Rivers conservation plate and how the money's spent at conservationplate.org.

Restoring Pronghorn to its Range

Monday, May 29th, 2017

Wildlife biologist, Shawn Gray, stays busy most days in his role as Texas Parks and Wildlife pronghorn and mule deer program leader in the Trans Pecos.

I get to oversee the management and research for the two species for Texas parks and Wildlife.

This includes orchestrating the restoration of these species to their native range. Earlier this year, Texas Parks and Wildlife successfully relocated 109 [pronghorn](#).

Our surplus populations are located in the Northwest and Northeast Panhandle. We take animals from healthy populations there to boost our local populations in the Trans Pecos that have in recent years seen historic decline.

Texas Parks and Wildlife worked with partners to redistribute the animals. After trapping them, each received a health checkup; some got radio collars for monitoring.

Translocation has been one of the management tools we've been able to do to help those populations rebound. There's a whole suite of things that we do to improve populations. And, of course, we always need help from Mother Nature to make all those things work for us.

Drought was a leading factor in the pronghorn's decline in the Trans Pecos; Shawn Gray is addressing it and other range issues to ensure the pronghorn's future.

Through time and our management practices, the populations have been responding well.

Pronghorn Restoration Benefits Communities

Tuesday, May 30th, 2017

Wildlife biologist Shawn Gray finds pronghorns fascinating, and hopes you will, too.

The pronghorn is a unique mammal of North America; it's the only one found in its family. It's the fastest mammal in North America. It's a big game species.

Gray is the pronghorn program leader and oversees the Pronghorn Restoration Project. Because it's a game species, hunting them should pick up as their population grows, thus benefiting local communities.

In 2008, we issued probably like 800 buck only hunting permits. And, shoot, in 2009 or 10, we were issuing less than 100. And there's a lot to that. Not only is it the money that they get for trespass access for hunting, but the hunters come into the local communities and spend time and spend money. So, there's a lot of those economic impacts as well with a much reduced pronghorn population out here.

The Trans-Pecos pronghorn population dipped below 3,000 in 2012, and Gray says through translocation, range management, and natural reproduction, they hope to see the number rise to 10,000.

Most of the local communities in the Trans-Pecos really miss the pronghorn. And they really want to see pronghorn back on the landscape at numbers that they are used to seeing.

With the continued success of the restoration project, they may get their wish.

2017 Free Fishing Day in Texas

Wednesday, May 31st, 2017

During [**National Fishing and Boating Week**](#), most states offer free fishing days. These are days where anglers are allowed to fish on public bodies of water without a fishing license. Anyone who wishes to cast a line in fresh or saltwater may do so...freely.

This year free fishing day in Texas is June 3rd.

Every day is Free Fishing Day at Texas [**state parks that have fishing opportunities**](#). Once you pay the park entrance fee, you and yours can fish to your heart's content—while following bag limits and other regulations.

If you're not currently an angler, but want to give it a try, [**some parks have tackle loaner programs**](#). Borrow the tackle to use at the park, but bring your own bait. For very little investment, you can sample a sport that gets you outdoors and has the potential of putting food on the table.

On June 3rd in East Texas, the Texas freshwater Fisheries Center offers a day of free fishing, hot dogs, soft drinks and games. Other parks throughout the state offer Go Fish events and Kids fishing derbies on June 3rd, for a day of outdoor fun with family and friends.

Log onto the calendar page of the Texas Parks and Wildlife website for more angling opportunities.

We receive support for our program from the Sport Fish restoration Program... reminding you that Saturday June 3rd is Free Fishing Day in Texas.