

What to look and listen for to know your ducks...

Habitat, action, color, shape and voice — all help distinguish one species from another.

Shallow marshes and creeks normally attract few divers; large, deep bodies of water are not usual feeding grounds of puddle ducks.

The maneuvers of a flock in the air can help indicate the species. Mallards, pintails, and widgeons form loose groups; teals and shovelers flash by in small bunches; mergansers often appear in single file; canvasbacks shift from waving lines to temporary V's; red-heads "boil up" in short flights from one end of a lake to the other.

Closer up, individual silhouettes can show large heads or small, broad bills or narrow, fat bodies or slender, long tails or short. Trained observers also iden-

tify ducks from the wing beats; they may be fast or slow, short rapid flutters or long strokes.

At close range, color areas can be positive. Depending on light conditions they may or may not appear in their true color, but their size and location are a key to the identity.

The sound of wings can be as important as that of voice. The pinions of goldeneyes whistle in flight; the swish of wood ducks is different from the steady rush of canvasbacks. Not all ducks quack; many whistle, squeal or grunt. Experience can teach you the difference.

PINTAIL

Found in every flyway, most plentiful in the west.

Extremely graceful, fast flier,

Attwater

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mark fences and indicate unauthorized entry is prohibited.

The refuge is home to many species in addition to the Attwater's prairie chicken. Among the migratory species which use the refuge are large numbers of waterfowl, white tailed hawks, crested caracaras and roseate spoonbills.

There is also a chance you may see one of the bison recently added to the Refuge.

Resident species often seen are white tailed deer, armadillos, bob-

white quail and skunks. Several species of snakes also make their homes there.

The general public may observe and photograph many of the species along the refuge's five-mile automobile tour route and/or two walking trails.

Unfortunately, the chances of seeing an Attwater's Prairie Chicken are very slim due to recent declines in their population.

Tours may be arranged by calling 409-234-3021.

fond of zig-zagging from great heights before leveling off for a landing. Equally agile on land; visits croplands to glean food.

Drakes whistle; hens have a hoarse quack.

MALLARDS

Most common duck. Extremely hardy, wintering as far north as it can find open water.

Flocks often leave the water in early morning and late afternoon to feed in nearby harvest fields, returning to marshes and creeks to spend the night.

The flight is not particularly rapid; voice of the hen is a loud quack; of the drake, a lower-pitched kwek-kwek.

BLACK DUCK

A bird of the eastern States, using the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways.

Shy and wary, regarded as the wariest of all ducks.

Often seen in company of mallards, but along the Atlantic coast frequents the salt marshes and the ocean much more than mallards.

Flight is swift; usually small flocks, in V's or angular lines.

Voice is duplicate of mallards.

GADWALL

Not plentiful anywhere; greatest numbers in the Central flyway, fewest in the Atlantic flyway.

The only puddle duck with white in the speculum.

Small, compact flocks fly swiftly, usually in a direct line. Wing beats are rapid.

Drakes whistle and kack-kack; hens quack like a mallard hen, but softer.

WIDGEON

Nervous birds, quick to take alarm. Agile fliers, usually in compact flocks. Flight is fast, irregular, with many twists and turns. White belly and forewing very conspicu-

ous in the air.

When feeding, often accompanies diving ducks and robs them of food brought up from depths beyond the widgeon's capability.

Drakes whistle; hens utter a loud kaow and a lower qua-awk.

SHOVELER

Early fall migrant; usual flight is steady and direct. When startled, (See Know, Page 15)

Riverlake, quiet country lodging

Riverlake is a working farm located on the Colorado River five miles southwest of Eagle Lake. Lodging is in a three bedroom farmhouse, centrally heated and air conditioned.

We provide a "fix-it-yourself" light breakfast consisting of coffee, tea, sweet rolls, juice and dry cereals, as well as light snacks. You are welcome to use the well-equipped kitchen or the outdoor grill to do your own cooking.

Included in your stay at Riverlake is fishing in the two lakes. Bass and perch fishing are best in the larger lake while most catfish are caught from the small one.

Access to the lakes is included with house reservations only.

A reservation for at least two nights is required on weekends and holidays. Check in time is 3 to 6 p.m. Please make prior arrangements for later arrivals. Check out time is 1 p.m.

Please, no pets in the house. Kennels are provided.

A 50% deposit is required to assure your reservation; balance due upon arrival. After your deposit's received, there's a \$20 handling fee if cancellation is made.

If cancelled within seven days of reservation, the entire deposit is retained, but you may re-schedule.

Contact Charles or Kate Spalinger at 409-234-2492; 204 W. Center, Eagle Lake, TX 77434.

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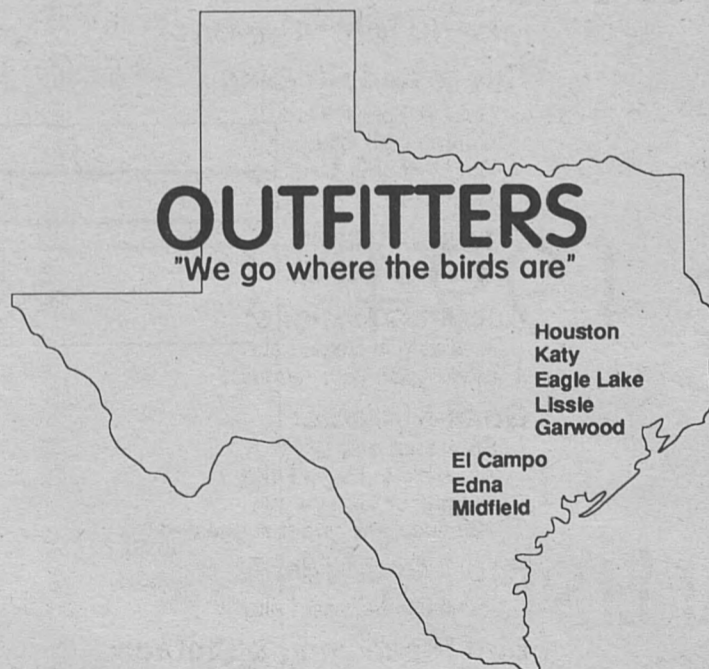
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