

*Clifton Tyler's Club...*

# The oldest goose hunting club in Eagle Lake

Preparing for waterfowl hunting season each year goes far beyond leasing land and hiring guides for Clifton Tyler. "One of the most often asked questions is why hunters can't hunt the natural ponds that form on the prairie," Tyler commented.

The answer may surprise you... "Because there aren't any," he said. They hamper farming operations, so in working land farmers cut drainage slopes so the natural prairie formations will not hold water.

Each year, Tyler and his crew rework those natural pond areas so they will hold water, at least for the season. Once drainage lines are closed, hunting operations depend on rain to fill them. If not, Tyler said he would even go to the expense of having water pumped in. All in all, 20 to 30 ponds are created each year.

Even after the ponds are covered with birds, hunters aren't allowed to stalk their prey at the water's edge. Tyler stated the ponds are for attracting the birds

into certain field areas and to hold them there. Without water, the birds would fly on to other areas.

Tyler and his guides know where that water is and put hunters into an area a field or two away. This placement enhances the morning's hunt and explains the reason hunters need to be in the fields well before shooting time. They want to make sure all is ready when the birds come off the water.

Clifton has a long history of working with visiting hunting groups and has been one of the top duck and goose guides in this area for more than 20 years.

He has put that experience into his own duck and goose hunting club known as the Clifton Tyler Goose Hunting Club. It has thousands of acres of top rice land scattered across the Eagle Lake and Garwood prairies.

The rice prairies of Eagle Lake and Garwood are the winter home for the largest concentration of wild geese in the world.

"Run and Shoot" provides

some of the best hunts of the year. All hunters enjoyed the action very much.

"I was surprised by the number of successful decoying hunts. It had always been thought that by Feb. geese are too smart to decoy. This simply is not correct," Tyler said. "With proper conditions, we have enjoyed some outstanding decoying shoots. I believe that the main factor is a lack of hunting pressure during that time of the year. The geese are calm and inclined to maintain their anticipated flight patterns."

The Tyler Hunting Club will

again offer the "Run and Shoot" which is for snow geese only. This will take place during late Jan. and Feb. when there's not much pressure in the fields, allowing the hunters and guides greater mobility. It is also meant to be a fun time for everyone involved.

The price is \$100 per man which will allow those thinking about hunting geese, but not sure if that's what they would like to do, to take part in the experience without incurring a large expense.

Tyler's Club can accommodate up to 60 hunters with a four-perparty minimum.

A guide will be provided for each hunt from legal shooting time until noon only. Decoys, white spreads and parkas are furnished. Every guide has his own trained retrievers. Tyler, who has lived in this area all of his life, has experienced guides available for the hunter.

For reservations, you may contact Ida or Clifton Tyler at 979-732-6502 (Columbus); write to 104 Shult Drive, Columbus, Texas 78934. Or you may visit their web site at <http://www.texasgoosehunt.com>.

## Adopt-a-Prairie Chicken update

By Mark Klym, Texas Parks & Wildlife

The fall meeting of the Attwater's prairie chicken recovery team held at the Caldwell Zoo in Tyler presented some interesting and informative changes and challenges to the team. The meeting, held primarily to plan pairing and arrange transportation for birds prior to the upcoming nesting season, gave representatives from 5 of our 6 breeding sites and the two refuges an opportunity to discuss last year's successes and challenges and plan for the coming year.

The big news at the fall meeting was the development of the new facilities at Caldwell Zoo, facilities the team toured when they were little more than concrete foundations in the ground. Caldwell Zoo hopes to house 5 pair of Attwater's this year.

Expansion is occurring at some of the existing sites as well. Fossil Rim hopes to expand their indoor facilities, allowing space for brooding and pens for raising young. San Antonio hopes to have 6 more pens and a chick-rearing building shortly.

The refuges were directly hit by the unusual spring weather along the coast this year. Birds that had originally been transferred to Texas City had to be brought back to Eagle Lake because of flooding. Raptors continued to be a challenge at both facilities. About 50 birds were held over the winter in captivity to avoid the heavy losses attributed to weather and raptors.

Several studies are ongoing at both refuges that should shed some insight into the impact the captive breeding program has on the young birds' ability to avoid predation. Melissa Burns of Texas Christian University is researching in this area along with staff from the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge. This knowledge may help in the long range survival of this bird.

With only 40 known birds left

in the wild, the situation for the Attwater's prairie chicken (APC) is serious, but there have been some positive developments, including ways the public can help.

The Adopt-a-Prairie-Chicken program has allowed us to donate money to the zoos to help offset the cost of raising captive-bred birds. One bird may cost \$25 to feed to an age when it can be released into the wild.

Since these birds are so seriously endangered, and since most of the zoos do not have these birds on display, this can become a significant cost. The Adopt-a-Prairie-Chicken program is a way anyone can get involved to help.

Various groups participate in the Adopt-a-Prairie-Chicken program, including corporations, non-profit organizations, school classes, community service groups, wildlife groups and individuals. Texans and wildlife enthusiasts from across the nation have taken an active interest in this bird's future.

For more information about the Adopt-a-Prairie-Chicken program, contact Klym at 512-389-4644 or by e-mail ([mark.klym@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:mark.klym@tpwd.state.tx.us)).

### ATV & Boat Repair

#### EAGLE SERVICES

DOMINIK MOSZKOWICZ

401 W. FM 3013 • Eagle Lake, Texas 77434

979-234-5766

## B & S Bird Taxidermy



221 East Main St.  
Eagle Lake, Texas 77434

Studio:  
979-234-BIRD (2473)

*Bobby & Shelly Wied, Owners*

**NATURAL HABITAT SCENES &  
WORLD-WIDE SHIPPING AVAILABLE**

### EAGLE LAKE DRUGSTORE

&

### Radio Shack®

979-234-2502 • 702 S. McCarty • Eagle Lake

### Attention Hunters!

*Make Just One Stop For...*

#### PHARMACY

- Prescriptions you may have left at home
- Film
- Disposable Cameras
- Gift Items

#### RADIO SHACK

- Batteries of all kinds
- Cell Phones •2-Way Radios
- Telephone to call home
- "If you've got questions, we've got answers."

MasterCard • Discover • VISA  
American Express • Prescription Cards