



BIG THICKET BULLETIN

ISSUE 171



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ASSOCIATION

PARTNER IN PRESERVATION

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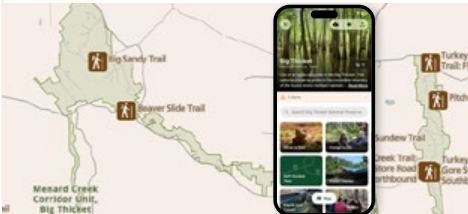
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The Mystery Cabin & Big Thicket Homeowners

Captain Bruce Walker, BTA President

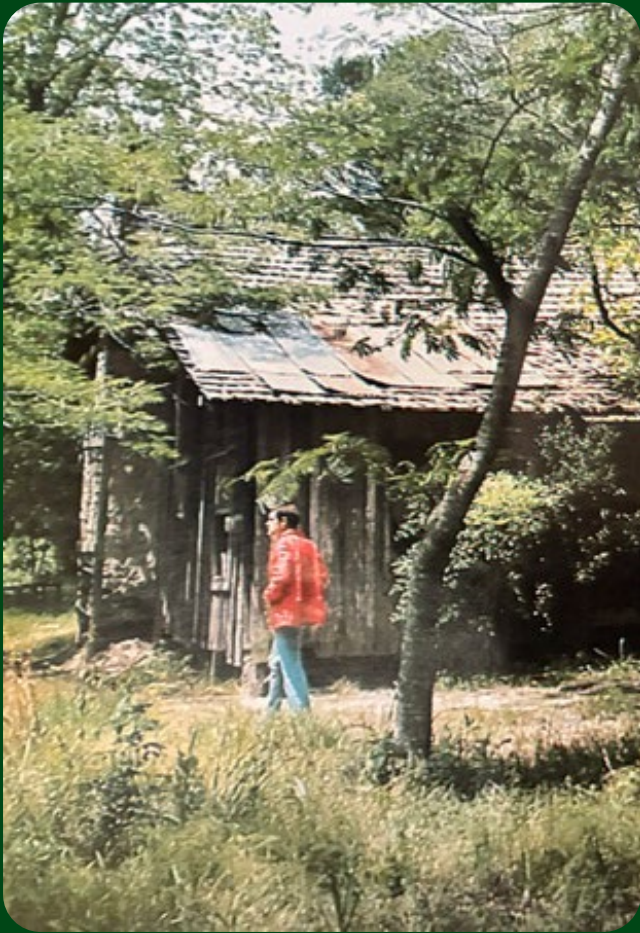
I received an inquiry from Dr. Ed Roland regarding a Liberty County log cabin that the BTA dismantled and reconstructed in Saratoga. After graduating from Texas Tech with an MA Degree in Museum Science, Ed Roland’s first job was Director of the Big Thicket Museum. During his two-year tenure (1976-1977), he was charged with overseeing dismantling the cabin, numbering and sketching the logs, and reconstructing the cabin. I had no knowledge of this cabin or what happened to it, so I turned to Maxine Johnston, Billy Hallmon and David Lewis. Billy Hallmon was excited by the fact that Roland was asking about the cabin. He said that he had a magazine featuring the Big Thicket, which included a photo of “the cabin”. The magazine article was from a publication called SCENE, published by Southwestern Bell in 1977. Billy said that the cabin was abandoned after the Preserve was established. NPS removed it from the Turkey Creek Unit. It was never restored. That’s when I realized that these guys were talking about two different cabins! The fate of the Saratoga-reconstructed cabin remains a mystery. If you know anything about this, please let us know.

The “mystery” cabin piqued my interest in the cabins that were home to the folks who lived in the Thicket. Were they bought out by the government? How many owned the property? What was the agreement between the Department of Interior (DOI) and the homeowners? How many cabins were there?

Between 1966 and 1974, there were twenty-eight bills with various proposals presented in Congress. During one congressional hearing the “Save Our Homes and Land Committee” testified that between 200 to 400 families would be displaced, if a certain bill (Congressman Eckhardt’s bill) would become law. Fortunately, when the final bill was signed establishing the Preserve in 1974 only a few homes were included within the boundaries of the Preserve. The bill offered homeowners within the Preserve the opportunity to remain in their homes for up to twenty-five years, or until the owner’s death or the death of the spouse, whichever occurred last. The DOI employed several strategies to ensure that homeowners were fairly compensated.

The BTA played a pivotal role from 1964 until the bill was passed. As new bills were proposed BTA worked to find common ground between contending groups: timber industry vs. preservationist, rural vs. urban interest. Even members of the Texas congressional delegation offered different bills with varied solutions favoring their district’s constituents.

The more I learn about the history of the Association and our efforts the “Save the Thicket” the prouder I am to be associated with the BTA.



Cabin. Image credit – SCENE, published by Southwestern Bell, 1977

Sources: James J. Cozine, Jr. “Saving The Big Thicket” (#4 Temple Big Thicket Series)

Strong Partnerships, Lasting Impact: Supporting the Big Thicket Association

Diane Thompson, BTA Executive Director

Big Thicket Association (BTA) is deeply appreciative of grants and sponsorships received from local partners.

2026 Sponsors include: Sabine **Neches Navigation District**, Port of Beaumont, TotalEnergies, and Beaumont CVB.

2026 Grantors include: Lower Neches Valley Authority, Port Arthur LNG, Foundation for SETX, ExxonMobil, and Hancock Whitney Combined Trust Grant.

BTA operates Neches River Adventures and offers Environmental Education aboard the Ivory Bill. The Ivory Bill isn't just a boat, it's a floating classroom. Students K-12 dig into river health indicators, native and invasive species, watershed dynamics, and conservation challenges specific to the region. Students collect data that connects classroom learning with tangible environmental phenomena, fostering critical thinking and a deeper sense of connection to the natural world.

At the heart of the BTA's mission is empowerment: equipping the next generation with the knowledge and passion to protect our waterways. In an era where environmental challenges are front and center, this floating classroom offers an unforgettable journey toward stewardship and respect for our shared home.

The Neches River Rally is more than a day on the water; it's a celebration of the Neches River and the incredible natural and cultural resources of the Big Thicket. Each year, paddlers, families, volunteers, and outdoor enthusiasts come together to explore the river, the Big Thicket National Preserve, build connections, and support conservation.

Big Thicket Day is an annual event held at Collier's Ferry Park and FREE to the public. It is a celebration of the founding of BTA and The Big Thicket National Preserve. Lunch is served to hundreds, guests experience exhibitors, kayak lessons, FREE rides on the Ivory Bill boat, live music, and more!

Thicket of Diversity/FRSLC maintains an all-taxa inventory of the Big Thicket National Preserve. Researchers continue to document species that are new to the Preserve, the state, the United States, and, in some cases, new to science. The Field Research Station also provides opportunities for researchers and students to spend time in the field, conduct research, and experience the Big Thicket firsthand while lodging nearby. BTA operates the FRSLC for the Big Thicket National Preserve.



Benthic hunting



Big Thicket Day on the Neches – BTA booth



Neches River Rally swamp paddling

We are grateful for those who believe in the value of this remarkable place and choose to stand with us in protecting it. Together, we are preserving the Big Thicket, inspiring the next generation of stewards, and ensuring that its natural and cultural treasures remain for generations to come.

Neches River, Wild Heart of East Texas

Amy Pramuk

Beaumont’s historic Jefferson Theatre filled with riparian spirit as the Heritage Coalition gathered to celebrate the 110th birthday of the National Park Service and the remarkable landscape Southeast Texans have spent generations working to protect.

The Big Thicket Association joined the Sierra Club, Big Thicket Natural Heritage Trust, Big Thicket Biosphere, National Parks Conservation Association, and other conservation partners for an afternoon devoted to Big Thicket National Preserve and the river flowing through the heart of its story, the Neches.

The program opened with a short film celebrating the astonishing biodiversity of the Big Thicket, followed by “The Neches River: Wild Heart of East Texas”, a documentary produced by Ellen Temple exploring the ecological significance of the river and the decades of advocacy that have helped preserve its wild character.

Among those featured in the film was Julie Shackelford, Texas State Director for The Conservation Fund, whose work since 2004 has helped protect more than 100,000 acres across Texas. Shackelford also helped establish the Neches River’s first designated paddling trail.

The story continued beyond the screen with a panel moderated by Cary Dupuy, Texas Regional Director of the National Parks Conservation Association and a native East Texan, who described the Big Thicket as “a special place to conserve” for its natural and cultural heritage.

Joining Shackelford were Adrian F. Van Dellen, associate producer of the documentary, and Ellen Buchanan, president of the Big Thicket Natural

Heritage Trust. After retiring from the U.S. Air Force, Van Dellen settled in East Texas and found inspiration in its pineywoods and river bottomlands. His landscape and wildlife photography has become a visual testament to the Neches and the biodiversity its forests and wetlands sustain.

Buchanan, a lifelong Big Thicket native, brought a deeply rooted perspective to the conversation. Her conservation work includes service with the Texas Water Development Board’s Neches River Flood Planning Group, where the futures of communities, waterways, and wildlands continually intersect.

In the Jefferson lobby, visitors met organizations carrying this work forward and learned about opportunities to experience and understand the Thicket firsthand.

The afternoon celebrated more than an anniversary. It celebrated an inheritance.

America’s first national preserve exists because people understood that some places are too intricate, too beautiful, and too important to lose. The Neches still flows through the heart of that inheritance, reminding us that conservation is never finished. It is a promise renewed by each generation willing to know a place, love it, and protect it.

Neches River: Wild Heart of Texas has been presented in Lufkin and Crockett and is slated for viewing in Austin, Marshall, and Nacogdoches. The film’s schedule and a link for home viewing can be accessed at <https://www.nechesriverfilm.com/>





Mitch Urban



Big Thicket Association 2026 Conservation Awards

Mary Catherine Johnston, BTA Director

The Big Thicket Association is proud to announce its 2026 Conservation Awards: Honorees will be recognized at Big Thicket Day, October 10, at Collier’s Ferry Park, at 9:30 a.m. Congratulations Mitch Urban, Ira V. “Ike” McWhorter, Jr., Jeff Rogers, and Randy Beehn!

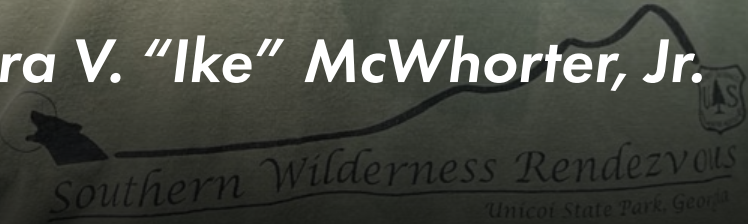
Mitch Urban, Thomas E. Lubbert Superior Achievement Award

This award recognizes a National Park Service employee of the Big Thicket with at least three years of service, whose performance is outstanding, whose contributions to the Preserve are significant, and whose work exemplifies exceptional dedication.

Mitch Urban of Minnesota earned his Bachelor of Science degree in 2005 from Minnesota State University in Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services and began his conservation career at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. In 2013, he worked as a fisheries biologist at the Nevada Department of Wildlife. From 2015 to 2021, Mitch supported his wife’s career as the stay-at-home dad for two children. In 2019, the family moved to Texas. Urban earned his Master of Science degree in 2023 at Northwest Missouri State University in Geographic Information Science. Says Big Thicket National Preserve Superintendent Prokopetz, “Mitch is an exceptional staff member of the Big Thicket’s Resource Division and is critical to BITH’s restoration work.”



Ira V. "Ike" McWhorter, Jr.



**Ira V. "Ike" McWhorter, Jr.,
R. E. Jackson Conservation Award**

This award honors R.E. Jackson, President of the East Texas Big Thicket Association, whose preservation efforts began in the late 1920's and continued until his death in 1957. It recognizes extraordinary and outstanding contributions to conservation, scientific research, and leadership that exhibits exceptional service.

Ike McWhorter of Silsbee spent much time with Geraldine Watson, a famed naturalist who shared knowledge of the biodiversity of the Big Thicket. Geraldine recommended the young man for a management job in the newly acquired Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary. The first employee hired by the Texas Nature Conservancy, Ike over the course of 23 years developed strategies for stewardship and restoration and pioneered the Conservancy's prescribed burning program, served as director of the Piney Woods Conservation Initiative and manager of the Sandyland. As the Texas chapter's state fire manager, he used prescribed fire to reduce hazardous fuels, lower the risk of devastating wildfires, improve habitat for endangered species and restore fire-adapted ecosystems.

After leaving the Conservancy, Ike earned a Master of Science degree in forestry and fire management at Stephen F. Austin University. Hired in 2004 as a Fire Ecologist by the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas, Ike worked for the Forest Service for 20 years and was instrumental in developing the prescribed burning program for Upland Island Wilderness and in promoting longleaf pine restoration in the National Forests as well as private lands. Retiring in 2025, he now does ecological consulting work for private landowners.



Jeff Rogers, Environmental Sustainability Business Award

This award highlights unique contributions to conservation; it's the first time a local business has received this distinction.

Jeff Rogers of Orange is the Texas Forestry Association President-Elect, past president of the Southeast Texas Forestry Landowners Association (SEFTLA), and owner of Rogers Lumber Company, a 4th-generation sawmill. He has worked closely with the Longleaf Alliance and Black Bear Alliance to provide programming opportunities not only to SEFTLA members, but Southeast Texas landowners as a whole. Jeff demonstrates deep devotion to sustainability and restoration in forestry!



Randy Beehn, Maxine Johnston Distinguished Service Award

This award honors special achievements, service, and volunteerism.

Randy Beehn is a driven leader with 45 years' experience working in construction management. He retired in 2013 as Principal Project Construction Manager, and now dedicates much of his free time to volunteer work. Beehn served leadership roles in Texas Master Naturalist and the Big Thicket Association and was a BTA director from 2017 to 2024. As the President of Sabine-Neches Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist, he logged over 5,000 volunteer hours.

Randy is committed to the Big Thicket National Preserve's Long Leaf Pine Restoration Program and participates in their annual planting days. He donated the greenhouse located behind the Visitor's Center and shares homegrown plants with other nature groups to further restoration efforts.

BITH: Digital Help to Plan Your Trip

Megan Urban, Big Thicket National Preserve, Chief of Interpretation and Education

One of the ways that Big Thicket staff engage with visitors is through digital media: social media, the NPS website, and the NPS app. Here at Big Thicket, we have Ranger Scott whose job is to make sure that we stay up to date on information and relevant on those different platforms, and he does a fantastic job!

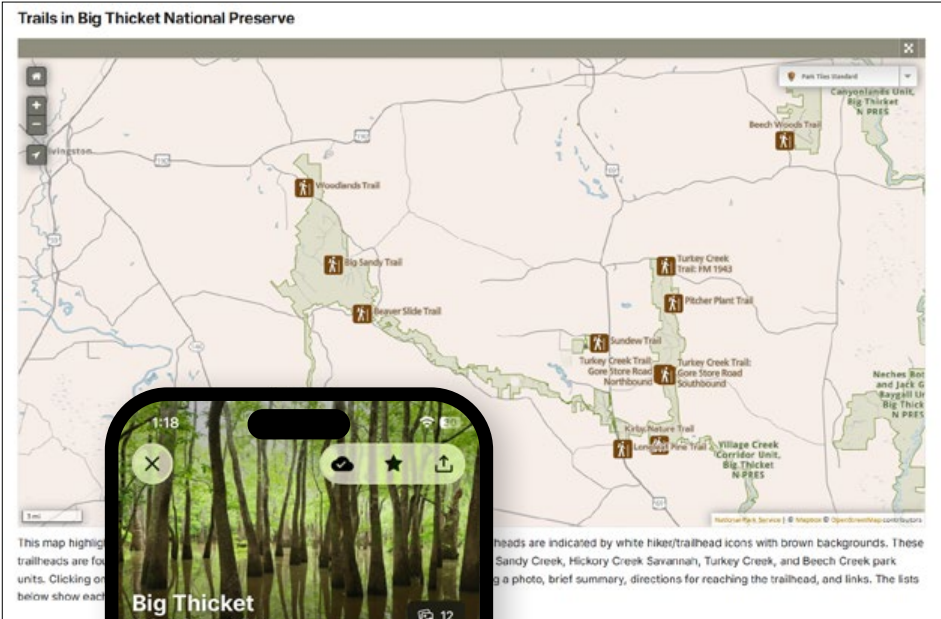
On the NPS website and app users can provide feedback by clicking/tapping a form that asks, "Was this page helpful?" For FY 2025, NPS.gov averaged 62% helpful. During that same time, Big Thicket's website, nps.gov/bith, averaged 74% helpful, which is a great metric to see! We encourage visitors to use our website and app to help plan their trip, and to see that we are achieving that goal is fantastic.

Our new hiking page features every trail in the preserve. The page shows where trailheads are on the map and lists each trail by the unit in which it is located. Additional pages organize hikes by length, type of hike (loop or out-and-back), and scenery. Users can click on each trail to get detailed information about the hike and look at a photo gallery of scenery from the trail. This information is wonderful to have before visiting Big Thicket.

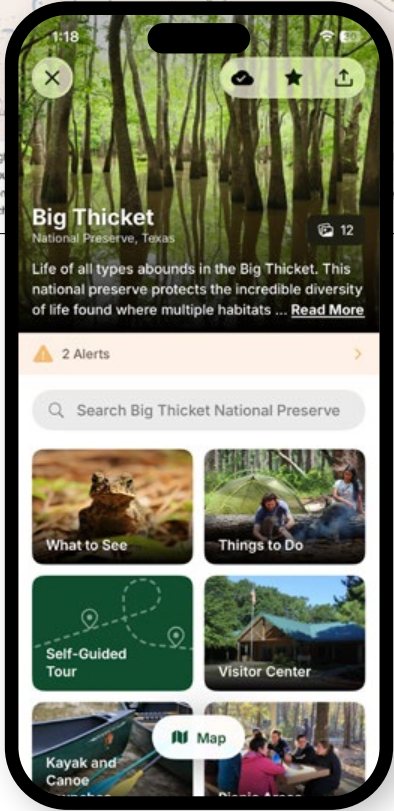
Another popular page on our website is the hunting page. We aim to provide hunters with all the information they need to plan a hunting trip to Big Thicket. Clear information on seasons, locations, regulations, previous seasons' statistics, and FAQs is updated regularly.

The National Park Service app is free, features all 400+ parks in the NPS, and has many useful features. Check out the Big Thicket page on the app to explore a map of the preserve with every trail, boat launch, and other points of interest. One of Ranger Scott's favorite features is the ability to create lists, such as parks visited or a parks wish list. You can also download a park's page for offline use. Search for "National Park Service" in your app store today!

Next time you are looking for more information about Big Thicket, remember that Ranger Scott works hard to make sure the digital information is readily available and easily accessible for everyone!



Hiking Trail map on NPS website



Screenshot of NPS app

Science Café: Edible Plants

Amy Pramuk

The Logon Café & Pub filled with a lively crowd of familiar and new faces for the Big Thicket Association’s quarterly Science Café, where members and newcomers gathered to discover just how much sustenance, history, and story are woven into the remarkable landscape we call home.

Texas Master Naturalist and herbalist Jackie Parker, owner of Sacred Moon Massage, LLC, guided the evening with the kind of enthusiasm that turns a lecture into a conversation. She arrived with field guides, fresh specimens, and plenty to share.

Sprigs of yaupon holly, North America’s only native caffeinated plant, passed from hand to hand alongside magnolia leaves, bright Turk’s cap blooms, fragrant pine needles, and reishi. Jackie explored the traditional uses of familiar species and the remarkable ways people have learned to find food, medicine, and useful materials throughout the forest, even turning to the inner bark of certain pine trees. Just as importantly, she challenged the audience to look closely. Learning to distinguish an edible plant from its imitators drove home a valuable lesson. Knowing a plant well enough to forage it safely means knowing what it is not.

Familiarity, it turned out, is not the same as knowledge.



As leaves and questions circulated through the room, plants that had long blurred into the green background suddenly sharpened into focus. Each became an invitation to look again, and perhaps to fall in love with the Big Thicket all over again.

Jackie tempered that curiosity with caution. Foraging begins with confident identification, but it should end with restraint. Some protected lands prohibit collecting altogether, and where harvesting is permitted, good stewardship means taking thoughtfully and leaving plenty for wildlife, regeneration, and those who come after us. She pointed attendees toward resources including Foraging Texas, Eat the Weeds, and Ginger Webb’s Medicinal Minutes for further study.

The evening captured what makes the Science Café series so special. Inside the easygoing atmosphere of The Logon, science shed its formality and became conversation between neighbors, curiosity, and the extraordinary landscape just beyond the door.

Attendees left knowing a few more names for old friends along the trail, and perhaps seeing the Big Thicket with renewed wonder, not simply as wilderness to admire, but as a living library to know, respect, and protect.



Jackie Parker. Image credit – Diane Thompson

L to R: Mary Catherine Johnston, Jackie Parker, Diane Thompson, Captain Bruce Walker. Image credit – Amy Pramuk

Jackie Parker and the Beatles. (John Lennon: “There’s a Turk’s-cap in me soup!”) Image credit – Amy Pramuk

Where River, Sound and Summer meet

Amy Pramuk

Summer arrived in the Lower Neches River Corridor beneath thunderclouds.

Heavy storms moved across Southeast Texas earlier in the day, leaving the forest rain-washed and the river beneath a lingering gray sky. But by evening, the weather had relented, and the Big Thicket Association's Ivory Bill slipped away from the dock for a Summer Solstice Forest Sound Therapy Eco-Art experience on the Neches.

The summer solstice marks the longest day and shortest night of the year, an ancient turning point in the seasonal calendar and a fitting occasion to gather outdoors in celebration of light, nature, and community. Here in the Big Thicket, that celebration took on the character of the place itself.

As the Ivory Bill traveled through the Lower Neches River Corridor, music mingled with moving water, wind, and the evening forest. Latricia Badgett of Blue Lotus Rising American Shaman and The Hot Grits brought her handcrafted flute and drums aboard, filling the river with rhythms and melodies at home among the cypress.

Yuko Joyshire and her husband, Joseph, joined the soundscape with crystal singing bowls tuned to 432 Hz, their resonant tones carrying softly across the water. Guided meditations offered moments to become quiet, notice the living landscape, and experience the river with greater intention.

Even the refreshments reflected the season. Guests shared locally grown blueberries from B&M Farms alongside other summertime treats, bringing another small piece of Southeast Texas into the experience.

At the helm, Captain Nick Huckaby, assisted by Deckhand Curt Thompson, carried the gathering safely along the Neches as the weather continued to clear. Near evening's end, the clouds parted just enough. Golden sunlight appeared between the trees, illuminating the water and giving everyone aboard a glimpse of the solstice light we had gathered to celebrate.

There is something special about bringing the creativity of our community into conversation with the natural world. Music sounds different over water. Silence feels different beneath cypress trees. People arrive, begin talking, listening and laughing, and share an experience of a landscape that belongs to all of us to know, appreciate and protect.

To the fathers who chose to spend part of Father's Day with us, thank you for sharing your day on the river.

The storm passed. The music rose. The sun appeared.

And summer began on the Neches.



Latricia Badgett on flute

Yuko Joyshire on crystal singing bowls

Summer solstice participants

All images by Amy Pramuk

Editor's Corner: Indigo Bunting

Phoebe H. Dishman, BTA director, Bulletin editor

"Indigo." An elegant hue
twixt purple deep, and standard blue.
A huge cash crop in days of old,
dye from the plant was called "blue gold."
Farmed for leaves, this fine legume,
and oh, the beauty of its bloom!

Next comes "bunting." Curious name.
To guess its meaning is our game.
Baby bedclothes? Flag décor?
Tap with a bat so runner can score?
Thrilling "scrap of sky with wings"?
That's the one, long may he sing!

'Twas grandmother Ruth who taught my eye
to love the birds of field and sky.
She stopped the car for a flash of blue
(that's what excellent teachers do.)
Indigo bunting, she did say.
And joy surged up, down Arkansas way!

My little girl heart, it skipped a measure
at the wonder of such treasure.
And now a friend on the BTA board
adds more indigo to my hoard:
A scene he captured with great care—
its centerpiece, a bunting fair!

I studied the image for some time,
then out of the blue there came a rhyme—
the words a Blue One might be saying
or, if you like, he might be praying:

"I'm Indigo Bunting, in a cleft:
That's my Missus on the left.
On my right, an ominous Furry—
Feeling crowded, better hurry!
After I finish this good seed,
Up to the treetop I will speed!"



*Indigo buntings and gray squirrel.
Image credit – Bart Gaskin*

Big Thicket Bestiary: The Vultures Overhead

Ashley Kelahlyah, BTA director

See a large bird circling low and slow over a Big Thicket clearing, and most people reach the same conclusion. Something has died. That assumption isn't wrong, it's just incomplete.

Two species patrol the Big Thicket skies; the turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*) and the black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*). Both are obligate scavengers, meaning carrion makes up nearly their entire diet, and both do a job nobody else wants. Their stomach acid is corrosive enough to destroy pathogens like anthrax, botulism, and rabies, neutralizing diseases that could otherwise spread through soil, water, and other scavengers. Every bird circling overhead is functioning as a small, airborne sanitation crew.

They're also more different from each other than they look at first glance.

Turkey vultures are largely solitary hunters with an exceptional sense of smell, able to locate carrion even under a forest canopy.

Black vultures have a poor sense of smell and make up for it by watching where turkey vultures descend. But black vultures are the more social of the two. They form close family groups, share food with relatives, and keep feeding their young for months after fledging.

So, is it a turkey vulture or black vulture?

Once you know what to check, telling them apart is easy.

Head Color:

- ☐ Turkey vultures have a bare red head as adults (juveniles are gray).
- ☐ Black vultures have a gray-black head at every age.

Wings in Flight:

- ☐ Turkey vultures show a two-toned underwing; dark near the body, with silvery-gray flight feathers along the trailing edge.
- ☐ Black vultures show a broad silvery-white patch across the outer half of the wing — from about the middle of the primaries out to the tip — set against solid black everywhere else.

Flight Style:

- ☐ Turkey vultures soar low in a shallow V, called a dihedral, and rock unsteadily side to side.
- ☐ Black vultures soar higher, hold their wings flatter, and mix quick, choppy wingbeats with short glides.

Finding Food:

- ☐ Turkey vultures lead with their sense of smell.
- ☐ Black vultures lead with their eyes and social cues; often let a turkey vulture do the finding for them.

So next time you see a gathering of vultures soaring in the Big Thicket sky, it's worth a second look...not as an omen, but as a neighbor doing an unglamorous job well.

Sources: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Cornell Lab Bird Academy, and The National Park Service





SAVE THE DATES

Neches River Adventures

Tour the Neches River’s backwater channels into the Big Thicket National Preserve and downriver to the Port of Beaumont aboard the Ivory Bill. Private Charters continue year-round and Saturday Public Tours are offered March - November (fees apply). Fall semester Environmental Education School Field Trips are available Free to all qualifying area schools. Our “floating classroom” offers educational opportunities for teachers and students. The TEKS aligned curriculum includes a 2-hour Field Lab for 5th - 12th grades, as well as a 1-hour Habitat Lesson for pre-K - 4th grade. <https://www.nechesriveradventures.org>

Eco-Art Boat: Sunset Fall Equinox

September 20th – 5:00 to 7:00pm - LNVA Saltwater Barrier Boat Ramp – 6790 Bigner Road - Beaumont, TX 77708 – Preregistration Required (Fees apply.)

Big Thicket Day on the Neches

October 10th – 9:30am – 3:00pm Collier’s Ferry Park on the Neches - Free family friendly event - Exhibitors and vendors, activities for children, live musical entertainment, a keynote speaker, and lunch. Plus, free Ivory Bill boat tours into the Big Thicket National Preserve. No registration required.

Eco-Art Boat: Sunset Tour to Reserve Fleet

October 18th – 4:00 to 6:00pm - Beaumont Marina – 560 Marina Drive - Beaumont, TX 77701 - Preregistration Required (Fees apply.)

Big Thicket National Preserve Events

Join rangers for free programs and special events, including night hikes, nature walks, canoe trips, and much more!

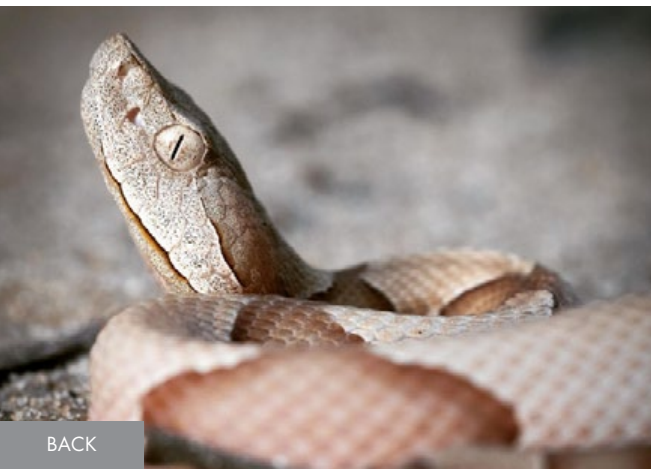
<https://www.nps.gov/bith/planyourvisit/calendar.htm>



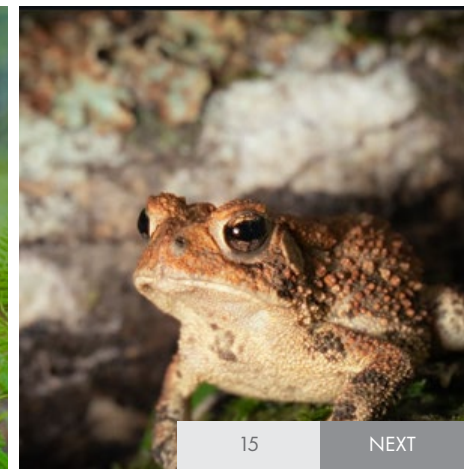
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Web Sites

Big Thicket Association
www.bigthicket.org

Big Thicket Natural Heritage Trust
www.bigthickettrust.org

Big Thicket National Preserve
www.nps.gov/btth

Conservation Fund
www.conservationfund.org

Gulf States Mycological Society
www.gsmyco.org

National Audubon Society
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org
www.houstonaudubon.org

National Parks Conservation Association
www.npca.org

Native Plant Society of Texas
www.npsot.org

Nature Conservancy
www.nature.org/texas

Neches River Flood Planning Group
www.nechesfloodplanning.org

Outdoor Nature Club, Houston
www.outdoornatureclub.org

The Portal to Texas History
www.texashistory.unt.edu

Sierra Club Golden Triangle Group
www.sierraclub.org/texas/golden-triangle

Texas Black Bear Alliance
texasblackbear.weebly.com

Texas Conservation Alliance
www.TCAtexas.org

Texas Master Naturalist Association,
Sabine Neches Chapter
www.txmn.org/sabine

Village Creek State Park
tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/village-creek

Big Thicket Association Mission

The purposes for which the Big Thicket Association is organized are

- » To work for the preservation of the flora, fauna and historical culture of the Big Thicket area
- » To promote the conservation of natural resources and natural history of the Big Thicket area, and education for same
- » To maintain and perpetuate, so far as possible, the many species of trees, plants and animals found in the Big Thicket area, and to do whatever else may be done to preserve for posterity the abundance of flora and fauna and natural beauty with which this area has been endowed
- » To promote and to fund research contributing to knowledge of the Big Thicket area
- » To publish or support publication of cultural and scientific Big Thicket literature
- » To promote the welfare of the Big Thicket National Preserve

For more information about the Big Thicket Association and upcoming events, please click here to visit us online.

Follow Us



Thanks to Penny Clark and Lamar University Special Collections, BTA Bulletins from BTA's inception forward are now available online through The Portal to Texas History, a digital repository hosted by the UNT Libraries. Go to texashistory.unt.edu, then search on Big Thicket Association Bulletins, for a fascinating look at our history.