

The Nature Writers of Texas

The best nature writing from the newspaper, magazine, blog and book authors of the Lone Star State . . .

Friday, March 07, 2003

Ro Wauer Bio

*from the Introduction of "Naturally South Texas," a book (2001)
filled with Ro's Nature Notes*

It seems to me that I have been writing nature notes for as long as I can remember. Even before high school I wrote short observations about tropical fish that I raised, various birds, snakes, and lizards that I found in a nearby field, an injured American Kestrel that I nursed back to health, and almost anything else that caught my attention. All of these notes have been lost along the way.

Later, when my "fork in the road" led me into the National Park Service, where I worked for thirty-two years before retiring in 1989, I found myself writing nature notes on the various parks in which I worked: Crater Lake, Oregon Caves, Death Valley, Pinnacles, Yosemite, Zion, Big Bend, Bandelier, Great Smoky Mountains, and Virgin Islands.

When the Park Service began emphasizing interpretive outreach, I also began writing nature notes - maybe they should have been called environmental theses - for several local newspapers. It was a good way to inform readers about our parks and environmental concerns, to help people better understand the natural world that we all most depend upon for our long-term subsistence. I felt it was a significant contribution. Perhaps African conservationist Baba Dioum expressed that reason best: "For in the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught."

After I retired from the National Park Service, Betty and I moved to Victoria, primarily so that she could be closer to her four sons and their families. South Texas also fit well into my agenda of enjoying the outdoors in what undoubtedly is the best birding [and butterflying more recently] area anywhere in the United States. However, it was almost immediately apparent to me that the local newspaper, the 'Victoria Advocate,' did not give adequate attention to the natural world around us. Although the dramatic natural events were well covered, day-to-day happenings in nature, those things that I happened to be most interested in, were often ignored.

Almost a year later, publisher John Roberts agreed to a series of nature notes for the Sunday 'Lifestyle' section, and my nature notes have run without interruption every Sunday since the first one appeared on April 24, 1994. The intention on my part is to help the reader better understand and therefore appreciate and help protect our fragile natural world. And finally, a quote from John Harsen Rhoades:

Do more than exist - live.
Do more than touch - feel.
Do more than look - observe.
Do more than listen - understand.
Do more than talk - say something!

posted by tony gallucci @ 5:38 AM