

Gabe Anderson

Spring Break Trip Journal

**3/19/2006**

Left Pittsburg this morning under cloudy skies. Weather was not to promising. We began our long journey southward. Our first stop and night was supposed to be spent at Tyler State Park. As we moved southward temperatures began to increase and I noticed that several more flower varieties were already in bloom. As we moved southward the soil and other vegetation also began to change. Unfortunately, for us the weather did not change. Our night at Tyler State Park was a very long and eventful night. A storm moved in late that night and managed to soak all of us and our gear. Night was not all that bad, except the lightening did get fairly close a few times.

**3/20/06**

This morning we left Tyler State Park, a little late due to the weather the previous night. Early in the morning I saw a grey squirrel at camp, which was a change of pace from the normal red squirrels common back home. Also noticed that the dogwoods are already in bloom here. As we began our travel towards Austin, to pick up our collecting permits, a number of other blooming flowers became visible along the roads. The Texas State flower Blue Bonnets were very common along the roadside as well as some Indian's paintbrush. We made our first stop to seine and had good luck for the one location. We got somewhere between 8-12 new species to add to our collection from the Colorado River. I also noticed major biomes changes as we moved southward throughout the day, the conditions became much more arid, and tree and shrub growth were less, and cactuses became a common site as we continued into the south part of Texas. At Lake Texanna we managed to catch a small channel catfish while fishing from the dock, and we also a saw a few alligators from the dock. Tomorrow's plan is to continue south and stay on North Padre Island for the evening; we will see how that turns out.

**3/21/06**

After getting up this morning, we got camp cleaned up and continued south. Are plan for the day was to visit the Aransas Wildlife Refuge and take the driving tour. Along the tour, we saw whooping cranes, as well as several wild hogs from the observation tower. After that, we continued to North Padre

where we were to camp for the night. We did stop and seine on site along the way at our first saltwater site and added a number of new species to our collection.

**3/22/06**

After another long and wet night of camping on North Padre Island. This morning we got up and left North Padre Island. Did not have to good of weather while we were on North Padre, so that put a bit of a damper on peoples moral. The night on the beach was a very windy, sandy night followed by a bit of rainfall. The weather kept us from doing any sort of seining but we did see a Portuguese-Man-O-War on the beach. After leaving North Padre we headed to the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi. The aquarium was neat; it was nice to see the larger versions of many of the fish we had been seining. We also saw a lot of fish, which I would love to catch in the future such as some huge Tarpon. After the visit at the aquarium, we traveled on to our final campsite at the Adolf Thome County Park. Weather is beginning to get nice and it should prove to be a good final destination. Once camp was made we had a sloppy joe dinner, and managed to catch a few more fish with cast nets and while fishing from the fishing piers. We also met two other fellow biologists that were camping nearby from Murray State. They were both very nice people and we enjoyed the added company. Tomorrow, the plan is to go into Mexico for a bit, and see the sights it should be fun.

**3/23/04**

Woke up this morning after yet another cold rainy night. The plan for the day was to tour the Laguna Atascosa Wildlife area and drive the nature loop. The drive was good, there were many unique shorebirds along the way, and there was a very neat photography blind near the visitor's center that allowed me to take several neat photographs. I got a few great pictures of roadrunners, and green jays. After leaving the Atascosa refuge we traveled into Brownsville and on the Matamoras Mexico for the afternoon. We spent the afternoon in Mexico checking out all of the local sites and doing a little bargaining along the way. Overall, Mexico was a very neat experience, however I did realize that I would not want to live there. After and enjoyable afternoon, we headed back to camp and had a great shrimp dinner which was excellent. Did some fishing off the dock and did catch an Atlantic Stingray, which was a new species for the trip. Tomorrow's plan is to do a lot of seining and hopefully add a few more species to the list. The plan is to hit the mouth of the Rio and South Padre Island at Laguna Madre.

3/24/06

We woke this morning and continued our journey, today we headed to Laguna Madre and the Mouth of the Rio Grande River in hopes of finding a few more species. We were able to find a few new species, including a new species of pipefish and several Sargassum fish so it did prove to be a very good trip. Later that afternoon, we had the chance to cruise through South Padre island and were able to find another goby species along the south side of the island. After our day seining we headed back to camp where we had left over shrimp with alfredo, which was excellent. I definitely think we are spoiled on these trips with all the good food. Tomorrows plan is to begin our long journey back to Kansas.

3/25/06

We got up early this morning and headed north from camp. I was somewhat sad to be going as the weather had finally let up over the last couple of days and been relatively nice out over the course of the last two days. As we traveled north, the warm temperatures that we had been used to all week began to cool off. The trip back was a very long trip and did get kind of boring in the car, but overall it was a very successful trip as we collected a between fifty and sixty different species, that should give us several species to begin keying over the next few weeks.

South Padre Jetties?  
Molly Millers?