



The Alamo Inn sign welcomes bird watchers from all over the world, including these recent visitors from the United Kingdom. | Keith Hackland, Alamo Inn

Keith Hackland, Owner, The Alamo Inn, Alamo, Texas

For Keith Hackland, owner of the Alamo Inn B&B, the National Wildlife Refuge System is both a livelihood and a consuming passion. His inn is located in the center of Alamo, Texas, which has a new logo touting the city as “Refuge to the Valley.” The Alamo Inn serves as home base for birders and butterfly watchers who come from all over the world to see the 521 bird species and 330 species of butterflies that can be found on the nearby Santa Ana and Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuges and other nearby lands. Hackland also runs Alamo Outdoor, a store that sells binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, and other bird and wildlife watching gear, and supports local naturalists by connecting visiting birdwatchers with private guides to help them find rare birds on the refuges.

“More than 90 percent of my guests are birders, and they spend their money in Alamo at local restaurants, stores, and gas stations,” says Hackland, who estimates that his business alone helps generate full- and part-time jobs for 30 local people. “When I first opened 11 years ago, I had four suites and no visitors,” Hackland relates. “Now, with 16 suites, I’m turning people away.” The City of Alamo, its Chamber of Commerce, and its Economic Development Corporation recognize the special contribution nearby refuges make to the local economy. Hackland, who also serves as president of the Friends of the Wildlife Corridor and is a board member of the Friends of Laguna Atascosa NWR, is proud that the Alamo business community recently provided funds to the Friends group to create an attractive new website for refuge visitors.