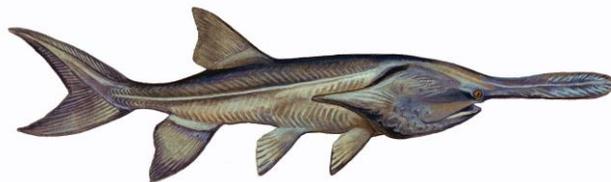




THE PADDLEFISH



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Snippets from Stella

Greetings! Hoping that you've enjoyed January and February and all the weather changes. Crazy!

It's been a very busy and productive two months with all the volunteer opportunities and the new class training and the very interesting Advanced Training opportunities. We should keep the momentum rolling as March and April are extremely busy in preparation for the 5th Annual Caddo Lake Earth Day Paddling Regatta, 4/22/17 at Shady Glade Resort. By the way, at the planning meeting in February, the committee decided to call the event a FLOTILLA instead of Regatta. Do you like that better? Regatta seems to give the impression that it is a competition and the day is intended to be F-U- N! So...the name change.

The National Fish and Wildlife Grant bird blind is going well – at breakneck speed well! Please look at this link. <https://rightshot.smugmug.com/Events/CNWR-Bird-Blind/>. Pete Wright has done a great job with planning, organizing and implementing his plan. Pete has been backed up by a solid volunteer core: Robert Averett, Jane Reynolds, Todd Dickinson, Herman Hazard, Ted Barrow, David Gilliland, Jill Wright and I hope I haven't left out anyone. Next steps are paint, log book and pictures of birds to hang in the blind. The work on the second blind is underway, as well. The E-bird kiosk has arrived and is in the visitor center. Pat Sawyer is working on the software.

Plan to be at the March monthly meeting, please. There'll be information on how you can help with the Flotilla. OH! And March is our quarterly Pot Luck. So, we'll begin the eating at 6:00 so we can begin the meeting at 6:30. Bring your favorite dish to share. The remaining dates for pot lucks will be in June, September and November.

OH, ONE MORE THING. Put on your creativity hats and pick up your wooden miniature canoe at the March meeting. You decorate them and then we use them as drawing prizes at the Flotilla.

SB

Upcoming Events:

- Mar 13 – Meeting Potluck
- Mar 18 – Work Day
- Mar 31 – 2017 Training
- Apr 1 – 2017 Training
- Apr 10 – Meeting
- Apr 14 – Work Day
- Apr 22 – Earth Day Paddling Flotilla
- May 8 – Meeting
- May 13 – Work Day

A book review – Gone for the Day, by Ned Smith

During Ned Smith's 46 year career as a naturalist, he spent many years working in partnership with Pennsylvania's state wildlife department. Mr. Smith was a long time columnist and illustrator for their magazine, Pennsylvania Game News. He also enjoyed a lifelong hobby as a self-proclaimed nature snoop. This hobby began in the pre-world war two days of his youth and continued until his death in 1985.

Gone for the Day began in the 60's as a long running series of articles for Game News. Taken from notes recorded in his field diary, the columns highlighted Mr. Smith's vast knowledge of birds, animals and plants. In 1971, he published a book by the same title that covers 4 years of snooping in his Pennsylvania mountains. His comments are interesting and well written. I learn something from every recorded day. They demonstrate his love of nature in a way that hits close to my own heart. After reading though a couple of months, I wanted to pick up my pen and start my own journal. His style reminds me in many ways of the first part of Aldo Leopold's A Sand Country Almanac. I highly recommend Gone for the Day to anyone who enjoys a slow walk in the woods.

~ Roger Geiger

Mar 12, 2017 - Daylight Saving Time Starts

When local standard time is about to reach
Sunday, March 12, 2017, **2:00:00 am** clocks are turned **forward** 1 hour to
Sunday, March 12, 2017, **3:00:00 am** local daylight time instead

Sunrise and sunset will be about 1 hour later on Mar 12, 2017 than the day before.
There will be more light in the evening.

Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2017

ATTENDING: 27 members - Kristi Thomas, Michael Mathews, Ted & Stella Barrow, Pam Andrews, Herman Hazard, Marge West, Steve & Susan Sedberry, Mickie Moore, Carl & Diane Turner, Carol Fox, Roger Geiger, Pam Watts, David & Vicki Gilliland, Linda Richtsmeier, Floyd & Ellen Anderson, Nancy Rheay, Pete & Jill Wright, Becky Gullette, Tom Walker, Sue Simmons, Celesta Ellis, new member/trainees Kim Delony, Jane Reynolds, Robert Averett, Rayla & Todd Dickinson, Lisa Egner, Pam Adams, Kay Lowery, Diann Mabus, and sponsor Vanessa Neace.

CALL TO ORDER: President Stella called meeting to order at 6:38, announcing that we would have a very brief business meeting so that we could listen to the presentation by Black Bear Alliance spokesman Nathan Garner.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES - unanimously approved with a motion by Pam, second from Vicki.

TREASURER REPORT - Unanimous approval with motion from Floyd, and a second from Carol.

Sign-up sheets are at the door, manned by Susan and Kristi, for hosting the 24/25th training session, and for attendance tonight. Please be sure to sign.

Tom Walker was presented a pin by Stella for hours served. An informative presentation by Nathan Garner of the Texas Black Bear Alliance ensued.

ADJOURNMENT - program over close to 8:00 p.m., with discussions following.

Volunteer Time - .25 (for meeting) plus travel, unless you helped with the program

Advanced Training Time - 1.25 for Nathan Garner's program

Submitted by Kristi Thomas, Secretary

Why Are My Red Squirrels Turning Black?

This As I am As I am want to do, I recently moved my RV to a new site. This time it is on the banks of Lone Star Lake only ten miles or so from the spot on Lake O' the Pines where I had been for quite a while.

This relatively short move revealed a lot of changes in the wildlife. Of course, at the old location, I was closer to some rather remote woods (a few hundred yards away in two directions). Here, it is more of a residential area. I knew there would be some differences with the wildlife that I was used to seeing and, indeed, there were some major changes. In particular, there were far fewer birds, although it turned out that there are as many species, including some that I see here and didn't see there; and vice versa. The numbers are very different. Here, it is unusual to have more than ten birds at a time on my feeders (eight of them out right now) and before, that would be very few, dozens were more likely. At the old location, I had a group of squirrels who were rather tame. Some actually came into my RV when I left the door open, to help themselves to the peanuts that I kept for them. They would also readily take peanuts from my hand and actually came to me when I called. Well, when I made my little "thck, thck, thck" sounds that I always make when any wildlife is around



There, the squirrels were the more commonly seen, Gray Squirrels, that frequent all of east Texas and throughout much of the U.S. Ah, but here at Lone Star Lake, the squirrels were fox squirrels which are less commonly seen. They are noticeably larger than the Gray Squirrels and usually reddish in color. There was one other very noticeable characteristic. Some of them were black; some of them were brownish black; and only a few were red.

Many species of squirrels have black phases, including Gray Squirrels, but they are not common. Sometimes, animals may have genetic mutations which cause this black phase, which is referred to as being a melanistic phase. Without getting into the genetic details, I will just say that generally when the melanistic phase appears in a population, it usually affects 25% of the population which would indicate that it is a recessive gene. Naturally, it is not all that simple. Genetics rarely are.

The individual hairs from the fur of Fox Squirrels is actually not one color. It usually has red, brown, and black. This is the same with Gray Squirrels, but the natural colors with them have more gray than brown and less red. When the mutations occur, the individual hair may only be black with no red or brown, which makes a black squirrel. Sometimes, the hair may have the red replaced with black or brown, which makes the brownish black squirrels. This opens a whole lot of interesting possibilities for how this genetic change affects the overall population. If it were just genetics and no other factors, then with a recessive gene, you would have 1 in four Fox Squirrels with the black color and three with the usual reddish color. But let's look at other factors that affect the color distribution within the population.

The small local population in my area consists of 9 Fox Squirrels in an approximate area of 5 acres. Of those 9, two are red, 5 are brownish black, and two are black. Genetically, with 9 squirrels you would expect 6 or 7 to be red and the rest combinations of black and blackish brown. Here we have the opposite. There must be other factors in place other than just genetics. Without careful study, there is no way to tell for sure what is causing that unexpected ratio. There well could be other factors to do with health and reproductive success that are also affected by the same genes that control the hair color. Genes often are pleiotropic which occurs when one gene influences two or more seemingly unrelated phenotypic traits. In other words, one gene may affect more than one trait such as fur color. That means that the same gene controlling the fur color may also control other factors that may make one color or the other less likely to survive to reproduce for any of many reasons.

Of course, it is also likely that there is a definite difference in survival ability between the colors. It would be easy to test that which is related to studies that I was involved in many years ago as a biologist. But all that was for another time. These days, I am content to merely sit on my steps and watch as these fun creatures play along the fence or on the nearby trees. I still think a bit about genes, pleiotropy, phenotypes, genotypes and all of that. But it is not near as interesting to me these days. I am perfectly content with trying to figure out how I am going to get that little black squirrel to get in the perfect light so he won't be too dark or reflect too much light so I can get a great picture of him and those curiously cool blue eyes.

~Michael Mathews

Financial Report for February 2017

Beginning Bank Balance, 2/1/2017		\$6,905.21
Less: Expenses		
Gifts for speakers/postage	\$146.10	
Lunch for NFWF TMN Volunteers	44.72	
Gift cards for speakers	50.00	
		-240.82
Add: Deposits		
Ending Bank Balance, 2/28/2017		\$6,664.39
Dedicated Funds – Regatta	\$2,698.41	
Undedicated Funds	3,965.98	
Ending Bank Balance, 2/28/2017		\$6,664.21

Kristi Thomas
Interim Treasurer

Collective Nouns

- A bloat of hippopotami
- A clew of worms
- A drove of pigs
- A gaggle of geese
- A herd of cattle
- An intrusion of cockroaches
- A mischief of mice
- A pack of dogs
- A prickle of porcupines
- A rhumba of rattlesnakes
- A run of poultry
- A shiver of sharks
- A stand of trees
- An unkindness of ravens

2017 Training Schedule

Session III: Friday, March 31 6:00-9:00pm at Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Karnack

Topic: Archaeology

Saturday, April 1 9:00am-5:00pm at Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Karnack

Topic: Herpetology (Morning), Botany (Afternoon)

Session IV: Friday, May 5 6:00-9:00pm at Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Karnack

Topic: Ecological Regions/Ecosystem Management

Saturday, May 6 9:00am-5:00pm at Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Karnack

Topic: Entomology (Morning), Forest Management (Afternoon)

Direct questions to: Stella Barrow by telephone: 903-672-5524 or 903-736-3063

Jill Wright by email: jillmom8788@hotmail.com



T E X A S
MASTER NATURALIST™
18th Annual Meeting
OCTOBER 20-22, 2017
OMNI CORPUS CHRISTI HOTEL

The Texas Master Naturalist 18th Annual Meeting is NOW accepting proposals for presentations! The Texas Master Naturalist Program welcomes your proposals as contributions to our agenda! Individuals wishing to present are invited to submit their proposal on the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting Call for Proposals website: <http://www.regonline.com/TXMN2017CallforProposals>

The deadline for submissions is **Thursday June 1st, 2017**. Guidelines for submitting a proposal can be found here: [Call for Proposals 2017](#)

[TMN State Reps 2017 Annual Meeting Guide](#)

February TMN 2017 Trainee Weekend



Darrell Hudson giving instructions on making animal track molds



Tom Bister, District Fisheries Biologist for TX Parks & Wildlife, presenting on Ichthyology to our trainees.

OFFICERS:

Stella Barrow
President

Susan Sedberry
Vice President

Kristi Thomas
Secretary

Charles Gillis
Treasurer

Jill Wright
New Class Director

Marge West
New Class Director

Michael Mathews
Marketing Director

Linda Richtsmeier
Membership Director

Vanessa Adams
Neace
Advisor

Doug Weir
Advisor

2017 Meeting and Work Day Calendar

MONTHLY MEETING DATES	WORK DAYS
MARCH 13 – Potluck	MARCH 18
APRIL 10	APRIL 15
MAY 8	MAY 13
JUNE 12 – Potluck	JUNE 17
JULY 10	JULY 15
AUGUST 14	AUGUST 19
SEPTEMBER 11 – Potluck	SEPTEMBER 16
OCTOBER 9	OCTOBER 14
NOVEMBER 13 – End of Year Celebration	NOVEMBER 18

Need Volunteer Hours??

WORK DAY SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2017

Stay tuned for an email from Pete or Jill Wright about work on the second bird blind. You likely will need to meet Pete at the Visitor Center to get directions to the bird blind location.

Photo of the Month – Kristi Thomas



KLT