

El Camino Real chapter Texas Master Naturalist

Regular Meeting Agenda August 11, 2022 5:30 p.m.

All Saints Episcopal Church

I. Welcome and Program

- A. Potluck meal 5:30 – snacks is the theme.
- B. 6 pm-7:15 pm: Speaker – Amanda Beckmann, Texas A&M Ph.D. student who studies Rio Grande wild turkeys. Cindy Rek introduced her and shared how she met Amanda thanks to her Master Naturalist connections.

Wild turkeys live here, while Ocellated turkeys live in Central America (they look like a mix between a turkey and a peacock). There are five subspecies of wild turkeys. Turkeys were domesticated in North America two separate times, and soon they were being moved outside their natural range.

In the 1920s turkeys were eliminated in most of their natural range and attempts to reintroduce them in the 1940s didn't work. There was more success using translocation and introductions starting in the 1950s to today. Around 5 million in 2014.

There are now Rio Grande turkeys in the Western US and Hawaii. All kinds of turkeys are moving around, and hybrids are happening. Hunting all five subspecies of turkey is called a Grand Slam. Amanda's research is to help map the subspecies using genetic data collected by hunters. She is interested in what we can learn about Rio Grande turkeys as opposed to the Eastern.

Baby turkeys are poults. They eat insects (older turkeys eat mostly vegetation). The breeding system of males involves gathering in large numbers called a lek. The Easterns don't have as much of a lek, due to fewer open areas to group in.

Amanda looked into the effect of domestication and feral environments versus urban and wild turkeys, in different populations.

[*Illumination in the Flatwoods*](#) is a book and PBS documentary on poult behavior. Link is to Amazon.

Summary

Humans and turkeys have been closely associated for thousands of years

The current distribution of wild turkeys is the result of management actions

RGWT females choose from males making cooperative displays on a mobile lek

Modern turkeys have unique relationships with humans that should be reflected in their genomes

- II. Meeting – 7:30 pm
 - A. Thanks to all who brought food. A WHOLE NEW AC WAS INSTALLED on August 8. We are very grateful to our hosts for providing the cool meeting space.
 - B. Visitors interested in joining our chapter were in attendance.
 - C. County Annex move is not happening soon.
 - D. Upcoming events - these are listed in the ECRTMN email from Janice Johnson each week.
 - a. Usually, it's perfect. We are very grateful to Janice for her dedication and hard work!
 - b. Landowner's workshop on Wildlife Habitat is tomorrow in the Civic Center in Milano.
 - c. Birding with Texas AgriLife is August 15.
 - d. Linda Jo is sponsoring a tour of the T Tour of TAMU Biodiversity Research Teaching Collection (BRTC) on September 20.
 - e. October 20-23 is the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting in Houston.
 - f. October 29 Balcones Canyonland hike
 - g. November Nature Days at the Wildscape every weekend
 - E. Recruiting for new class in January of 2023 – Please share the flyer that was sent to you via email. Don has put the physical copies in the storage area. You can take them to share with folks. Some were distributed at the end of the meeting to go to our associated organizations and friends of the chapter.
 - F. Chapter Christmas Party will be December 9 at Milam Community Theater building formerly the Williams Event Center– please put on your calendars. Bringing desert will give you hours, or you can decorate a table.
 - G. New class has 5 committed new members already.
- III. Board and department reports
 - A. Vice President Liz Lewis – upcoming speakers
 - a. September: Debi Sorenson on vultures
 - b. October: Mary Melton
 - c. November: Alan Rudd
 - d. December: party
 - B. Treasurer Mike Connor – The current balance is \$3,708.59. The decrease from our usually \$5000 is due to the purchase of a new laptop , storage cabinet, and recent printings.
 - C. Secretary Sue Ann Kendall
 - a. Approve minutes from last meeting – Sandra D. moved to approve, Pamela Neeley seconded; motion passed.
 - b. We need new blog posts, such as banana cockroaches, the drought, or anything you see.
 - D. Membership Lisa Milewski
 - a. Recertification: Connie Anderle
 - b. Milestone Award: Donna Lewis 10,000 hours
Congratulations to Donna from all of us. We will give it to her next month. Donna has made many amazing contributions to the community during those 10,000 hours. She is a great friend and mentor.
 - c. Remember to contribute your volunteer hours, because they contribute to your milestones. Keep at it, and you can get it.
 - d. Thanks to Lisa for keeping track of all our hours.
 - E. Communications Don Travis/Asst. Michelle Lopez – not in attendance.

- F. AT Coordinator Pamela Neeley –
 - a. AT hours apply in Milano at the Post Oak Savannah Landowners' Meeting.
- G. Project Coordinator Donna Lewis – not in attendance.
- H. Student Training Coordinator Kathy Lester/Asst. Alan Rudd – Kathy had a sick dog, so Alan presented.
 - a. Our training class is well worth it, says Alan. It's self-improvement. We get so many real researchers coming in to share.
 - b. And our meetings have talks from us and from researchers. It's a good variety.
- I. State Representative Linda Jo Conn – lots of awards from Linda
 - a. Recommends Craig Hensley
 - b. Someone ID'd an observation from eight years ago.
 - c. Linda Jo attained 30,000 observations last Wednesday. What an achievement and what a great contribution to research on nature in Texas. **Congratulations!**
 - d. Gold Star awards for helping out Linda Jo: Catherine Johnson said the Wildscape is buzzing with pollinators! And Victoria Everett said go lizard hunting, snake, and scorpion hunting.
 - e. Linda Jo gave herself the iNat award to herself for finding moths for Moth Month in this bad time for them.

IV. New Business

- a. Sue Ann Kendall is looking for people to join her in carpooling to the TMN annual meeting. Sandra D. and Debi Sorensen indicated interest. UPDATE: Sue Ann is now leaving a day earlier to visit friends. Oops.
- b. TMN Tuesday was wonderful this month. Craig Helmsley explained what interpretation is and really made it personal and meaningful. <https://txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays/#august2022>
- c. Cindy Rek suggests field trip to the birding center Amanda mentioned in her presentation. Liz Lewis will look into it.

V. Adjourn

Sue Ann Kendall moved to adjourn; Gene Rek seconded; motion passed.

1.25 hours AT at Chapter Meeting/Other venue;

.75 hour VE: Administrative Work, Chapter Meeting;

1 hour VE: Administrative Work/Hospitality if appropriate.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Ann Kendall, Chapter Secretary



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