

February 2008

Volume 9, Number 2

EFCMN Newsletter

Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists

EVENTS

FEBRUARY MEETING

Social Time: 9:00 AM
Meeting: 9:30 AM
Date: 2/21/2008
Location: Extension Office Conference Room

MARCH BOARD MEETING

Time: 9:30 AM
Date: 3/13/2008
Location: Extension Office Conference Room
Board meetings are open to members.

2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elected

President: Alex Lieban
Past President: Dave Rowley
Vice President: Lee Ann Jernigan
Secretary: Lynne List
Treasurer: George Kragle

Appointed Chairs/editor

Training: Sherrill Campbell
Publicity: Cheryl Kesterson
Projects: Dave Ford
Newsletter: Theresa Page

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues are \$15 per year and are due by January 31. A \$5 late fee is added after that date.

PROJECTS IN THE NEWS

The Heard Natural Science Museum Bird Banding project, March 2005 to present, was initiated to gather migration and banding data on birds in the Heard Wildlife sanctuary. Georgette Guernsey, EFCMN project manager, compiles and posts the data she collects to TEXBIRDS, an email discussion listserv for Texas birders maintained by the University of Houston, and to eBird, a database maintained by Cornell University. Anyone interested in Texas bird census, migration patterns, and habitat can subscribe to TEXBIRDS at listserv@listserv.uh.edu or go directly to the website at <http://listserv.uh.edu>. For background or general information on getting started with TEXBIRDS, check out the website maintained by the Texas Audubon Society at <http://moonmountaingroup.com>.

Roger Sanderson, curator at the Heard Natural Science Museum, invited Georgette to compile her bird census data and pictures into a booklet, *A Checklist Of Heard Sanctuary Birds* (2007) that is presently available for purchase in the Heard Museum bookstore. Publication of the booklet was underwritten by a \$500 grant from the Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society, <http://prairieandtimbers.org>.

Georgette, along with many other volunteers, spent numerous hours on the project walking trails, counting birds, and searching through museum archives. During the period that she was collecting her bird information, a major drought was occurring in North Central Texas. Georgette noted that, "The impoundments at the Heard Museum dried up in the fall of 2005; however, normal rainfall amounts for January, February, and March helped partially refill the sloughs and ponds. By the end of July 2006, they were dry again. Also during this time the golf course quit watering its grounds so the only reliable source of water for the ponds stopped flowing into the museum grounds. This water issue probably affected the types of birds that were in the sanctuary and their abundance."

The Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary, consisting of 289 acres and four different habitats, is located in McKinney, Texas and is part of the Blackland Prairie Ecological Region of central Collin County. The museum, whose mission is education, conservation, and preservation, opened October 1, 1967, and presently serves more

ONGOING SERVICE HOUR OPPORTUNITIES

Newsletter Articles (SH): You can receive credit for researching and writing articles for the EFCMN Newsletter. Articles must pertain to Chapter interests and cannot be political in nature. Copyrighted materials may not be included without permission of the author. Send submissions to Theresa Page, EFCMN Editor, at theresapage3@mac.com

EFCMN Publicity (SH): If you have Master Naturalist activities or projects that are open to the public, please help publicize EFCMN by writing an article for publication in the Denton Connection magazine. Master Naturalist articles may be submitted for publication by contacting Wanda Odum at WOdum10043@aol.com

EFCMN Projects (SH): A list of projects can be found online at our website: www.efcmn.org Please consider volunteering for one or more projects to help your community, enjoy activities with like-minded people, and earn service hour credit. *For those members who have difficulty working outdoors, the chapter offers service opportunities such as data entry and copying. Contact LeeAnn Jernigan at texasgirl@pwhome.com or 214-587-7286.*

Other Organizations Offering Service Hour Opportunities: Service hours are available at any time with Fort Worth Nature Center (FWNC), www.fwnaturecenter.org Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT), www.BRIT.org Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA), www.ias.unt.edu/llela and Lewisville Independent School District Outdoor Learning Area (LISDOLA).

than 100,000 visitors annually. Since its inception, 241 bird species have been observed at the sanctuary, and 61 of these have been nesting species. Additional information on the museum is available at www.heardmuseum.org.

If birding is one of your passions, contact Georgette at gguernsey@sbcglobal.net or 972-542-8089 to inquire about joining her on the Heard Museum project or on one of her birding expeditions to nearby sites such as Clear Creek Natural Heritage Area. Or you may join her on the second Saturday of each month (June through August) for a field trip at Ray Roberts Lake State Park, Isle du Bois division. Additional benefits include the joy of being outdoors, spending time with an expert birder, earning service hours, and possibly advanced training hours. e

Photograph by Georgette Guernsey is of a Yellow-Crowned Night-Heron.



FEBRUARY MEETING SPEAKER

On February 21, Kimberly Schofield, entomologist, will be educating our chapter on Phorid Flies. She will provide the history for how the study started, the impact of it's findings and the science behind it. Following her presentation, EFCMN Project Managers, Katy Jo and Bill Hammon, will present some of their experiences and photos of Phorid Flies, as well as some information about Beaver Creek Restoration.

Should be a very interesting and exciting hour. Hope you will join us!

**[President's Message **

By Alex Lieban

The Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists has a proud past. We are among the top chapters in the state when it comes to membership enrollment, member retention and involvement, and project diversity and success. However, each January we reflect on the previous year and entertain ideas designed to help improve our ability to serve the community in outreach and education. Your board of directors met on January 10th and came up with a list of goals for the coming year and a plan to achieve them.

One of our goals will be to improve communications among members concerning chapter operations, policies, and guidelines. We will be revising the operating handbook to include policies regarding the use and security of our resources and a procedure for conflict resolution. We will also include a copy of the operating handbook in the member directory. The training coordinator will include, as a part of the class training, a discussion on chapter organization and the procedures we follow in conducting our chapter affairs.

We hope to greatly improve our methods of sharing all our projects with the membership. To this end, the project coordinator will be highlighting a different project each month in the newsletter. He will be approaching each project manager in turn to request information for the article. He will also be producing a video to provide an overview of a variety of our projects at monthly meetings.

A project management course is planned for February and all project managers and prospective managers are encouraged to attend. The project coordinator will be requesting a report from each manager, due by August 1st. These reports will be used as the basis for compiling a list of nominated projects for consideration by the membership in September as an entry at the state conference for project of the year. We have also formed a team to assist project managers in preparing materials for these reports, as well as, putting together visual and written material for public presentation. The team consists of Theresa Page and Lynne List to assist in the writing and LeeAnn Jernigan and myself to add photographic elements where managers may desire them. This team is certainly open to others who wish to contribute. The project coordinator will work toward bringing managers together on occasion to share ideas, resources, and perspectives.

This year we are going to try to improve the way we integrate our new class into the active membership. We hope to achieve this by increasing exposure to ongoing projects, including workdays for class members scheduled on weekends or days not in class. We are also emphasizing the need for mentors and interns to stay in contact throughout certification, and beyond, if necessary.

Outreach is what this chapter is all about. We hope to improve our outreach through various methods. These may include greater distribution of our brochure; creation of bumper stickers; targeting groups that have been overlooked in the past, including private schools and home school groups; and a lecture series offered to the general public.

The Elm Fork chapter is teeming with talent and expertise. Our goals for the coming year are to tap that reserve effectively, and continue to serve north Texas with outstanding outreach and education aimed at conserving our natural heritage. e

TURN YOUR IDEA INTO A PROJECT (AT)

If you have an idea for a project, or you are a current project manager, and you want to learn the step by step process for selling, organizing, funding, reporting on, and completing a project, plan to attend the EFCMN Project Workshop on Friday, March 7, 9 AM to 12 Noon at the Denton County Extension Office. Project managers are encouraged to attend and to share insights and experiences. Reservations are NOT required, but for additional information, contact: Dave Rowley, Chapter Past President, at d.rowley1@verizon.net or Dave Ford, Chapter Project Coordinator, at paford2@verizon.net.

RAY ROBERTS LAKE STATE PARK ACTIVITIES

Interpretative Center Reopens: Hours are Fridays, 3-8 PM, Saturdays, 10 AM-4 PM, and Sundays, 11 AM-3 PM, March 1-July 6. The center is located across from the Park entrance.

Nature Photography Contest: The annual Ray Roberts Lake State Park Nature Photography contest has begun, and Master Naturalists are invited to submit their favorite photographs. Take a moment or three to search through those CD's you have accumulated over the past year; I'll bet there is one or more photographs that would receive rave reviews. The deadline is MARCH 15. Submit entries to: Don Whited, TWPD Education and Outreach, Ray Roberts Lake State Park, Isle du Bois Unit, Pilot Point, TX 76258; phone: 940-686-2148

Stargazing Parties (AT): Learn more about the night sky. The fun begins at dusk and lasts until 11:00 PM on Saturday, March 8. This event is being held at the Isle du Bois Unit.

Fireside Chat series (AT): Saturdays, March 1 and March 15, 7-8 PM at Isle du Bois division, Lost Pines Interpretative Area. Topics vary.

Fireside Chat series (AT): Saturdays, March 8 and March 22, 7-8 PM at Johnson Branch Unit, Oak Point Amphitheater. Topics vary.

Contact Don Whited for more information about any of these events at 940-686-2148.

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION WORKSHOP (AT)

Saturday, March 1, 10 AM - 3 PM at the Epworth United Methodist Church, 1400 S. Cooper St., Arlington, TX. The workshop will include an overview of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department rehabilitation requirements and the natural history of four species: squirrels, opossums, raccoons, and rabbits. For more information, call 972-743-7737 or register online:

www.wildcaretexas.com.



Master Naturalists' educational activities at the Fall opening of the Isle du Bois Interpretative

NATURE WALKS LBJ GRASSLANDS (AT)

Mary Curry, EFCMN Master Naturalist, leads nature walks at LBJ Grasslands. You are invited to join her in observing birds, wildflowers, dragonflies, and butterflies. Mary leads the walks on the first Wednesday of each month from 9 till 11 AM. The hike is usually about a mile. Upcoming dates are March 5 and April 2.

Wear long pants, good hiking shoes, binoculars, and bring weather appropriate things such bug spray and water. Be at the Forest Service Office by 8:45 AM. The guided walk departs at 9 sharp. If you need directions, you can call the Forest Service office at 940-627-5475. Also if weather is questionable, you can call a little after 8 AM to see if the walk has been canceled. For more information, you may contact Mary Curry at 940-466-3299 or birdercarver@earthlink.net.

Center, Ray Roberts Lake S.P.

DENTON COUNTY in the 1870's

"DENTON. Created from Fannin in 1846. Named for John B. Denton, who was killed by the Indians, on Denton creek, in 1843. Bounded north by Cooke, east by Collin, south by Dallas and Tarrant, and west by Wise. It produces in profusion all the cereals, cotton, fruits, etc. The county was settled in 1843-4 by Messrs. Medlin, Higgins, Holford, Wagoner, King, Eads, Miller, Gibson, Strickland, Carter, and others. Population in 1870, 7,251. Watered by the Elm fork of the Trinity, Clear, Duck, Hickory, Denton, and other creeks. There is a great variety and all qualities of soil; in a portion of the county, the black, waxy, which is from two to six feet deep prevailing, while in the Cross Timbers section the soil is sandy and of various qualities, the best being a black sandy loam from one-half to two or three feet deep, the foundation being clay. The prairies west of the Cross Timbers have also a variety of soil, some being rich, black and waxy, with an undulating surface, while in other portions the soil is thin and rocky, the surface being broken and hilly. In the middle and western portions of the county, as fine lands as there are in the State are found in the creek valleys, a portion being prairie. A good county for fruits, and for stock-raising."

This is the first of several articles about north central Texas in the 19th century to be included in our chapter newsletters this year. The first few articles will be citing material found in the book, *A Pictorial History of Texas, from the Earliest Visits of European Adventurers, to A.D. 1879*, fifth edition, by Rev. Homer S. Thrall, A.M., St. Louis, Mo., N. D. Thompson & Co., 1879. The book is in the writer's library along with a large map of Texas originally in the book but now framed under glass.

Reading books containing descriptions of Denton County, adjoining counties, and the general area we know as north (central) Texas can prove interesting and beneficial to us as Master Naturalists. Especially as we try to restore some of the land with native plants. Earlier accounts can give us an idea of how the land looked, how it was being used, and what we might do to restore parts of the land to its previous condition.

Incidentally, the map shows several towns or communities in the county besides Denton. These include Pilot Point, Lewisville, Little Elm, Bolivar, Elizabeth, and Green Valley. Anyone know where the last three are?

Rob Roy e

LLELA WORKDAY (S)

Thursday, February 28, 9:00 AM. Join us and work on the new boardwalk through the wetlands area at the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area. Breakfast compliments of Starbucks and lunch by REI. Home Depot stores from Lewisville and The Colony will have staff directing the work on the boardwalk. Please bring gloves and wear footwear that will work in wetland areas, like rubber boots, mud shoes, hip waders and the like. Contact Ken Steigman at steigman@unt.edu or 972-219-3926.

COLLECTING & IDENTIFYING MACROINVERTEBRATES (AT/S)

On Tuesday, March 4, 9:00 AM-12:30PM, the Benthic project group will be collecting macroinvertebrates and performing chemical testing of water at several local streams within the city. If you would like to share the experience and/or learn more about the project, contact Marilyn Turnage at marilynturnage@msn.com or 214-533-2481.

DFW WILDLIFE COALITION MONTHLY MEETING (AT)

The meeting is being held on February 24, 2-4 PM. The group meets upstairs at the REI store, located just off the westbound access road on LBJ and west of the Dallas North Tollway. A panel of wildlife rehabilitation experts with over 50 years of combined expertise will present information on raccoons, opossums, beavers, and rabbits. Topics to be discussed include the natural history of each species, common urban wildlife conflicts with a particular species, and ways to reduce or resolve conflicts humanely. The focus of the discussion will be on public education rather than wildlife rehabilitation. For additional information, contact: Kathy Milacek at kmilacek@nortel.com

THE ARMCHAIR MASTER NATURALIST (Fun & Education)

Master Naturalist reading material as suggested by members this month:

Joe Simmons recommends:

The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan. Check it out at

<http://www.michaelpollan.com/omnivore.php>

An Agricultural Testament by Sir Albert Howard. Website:

http://journeytoforever.org/farm_library/howardAT/ATtoc.html

Fritz Poppe is recommending:

No Way Home: The Decline of the World's Great Animal Migrations by David S. Wilcove. He heard this book reviewed with the author on National Public Radio recently and wanted to share the title. Fritz thought the author's comments were interesting, and in fact captivating. Wilcove published an earlier book, *The Condor's Shadow*.



MISSION STATEMENT

ELM FORK CHAPTER OF TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

To develop a corps of well informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas. The Texas Master Naturalist program is jointly sponsored at the state level by the Texas Cooperative Extension and Texas Parks & Wildlife.

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