

Workshop with Van Elliott and Vin Merrill — TROPHY CLUB NATURE PRESERVE PROJECT REPORT

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE as Veronica Ruangskul (Master Naturalist 2013 intern) scurries around gathering information from her fine-feathered, seasoned bluebird friends.



The Preserve is approximately 450 acres, but Veronica's first stage of establishing bluebird habitat will encompass only 50 acres, located along the walking trails east of the pavilion; and, since bluebird breeding season begins in February, Veronica has staked out her bluebird box territory and is anxious to get boxes installed as soon as possible so the birds can search for preferred nesting locations during January.
[Note pink flag in center of picture announcing Veronica's choice for location of first nesting box.]

Van Elliott

On December 17, with bluebird stories under their wings, Van Elliott and Vin Merrill (pioneers of BBNB project LLELA 2009-2011) shared



their LLELA experiences with Master Naturalist members and interns who are eager to begin establishing bluebird habitat at Trophy Club Nature Preserve. They delivered a wealth of information and, also, provided a hands-on example of a preferred nesting box, plus DIY (do-it-yourself) suggestions for entrance opening dimension, variations for hinged door and ventilated framework, applications of heat shields, suggestions for location and height of box installation, and even the most beneficial direction in which to face the opening. They also expounded on the merits of monitoring the nesting boxes to document the dates of egg-laying, chick-hatching, and fledging.



—on stage—



Vin Merrill

If you would like to volunteer to help Veronica with installations, etc., email her at: vruangskul@hotmail.com or call her at 972-814-8187. The park is located only 13 miles south of Denton, and is easily accessed from Hwy 377. This project is ready to fly!

Article by Dorothy Thetford

Photos on this p. are courtesy: V. Elliott, V. Ruangskul & D. Thetford

Feature....**Joanne Fellows****The Snow Geese are arriving for the winter at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge:**

"Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, a haven for migratory birds and other wildlife, lies on the Big Mineral Arm of Lake Texoma, on the Red River between Oklahoma and Texas. The refuge is made up of water, marsh, and upland habitat and visitors can hike, observe wildlife, hunt, fish at various times throughout the year.

The main focus at Hagerman NWR is providing a winter home for thousands of waterfowl. Foremost among the waterfowl are Canada geese. During fall, winter, and spring, numbers can reach 7,500 or more. Other geese include white-fronted and snow geese, with a scattering of the smaller Ross' geese."

http://www.stateparks.com/hagerman_national_wildlife_refuge_in_texas.html



Check with Friends of Hagerman for Activities and The C&E Cardinal Express Tram Tour, 90 minute, schedule (Advance reservations needed, call the Refuge, 903 786 2826)

<http://www.friendsofhagerman.com/Home>

Mostly Snow Geese, *Chen caerulescens*, with a couple of Greater White-fronted, *Anser albifrons*, Geese.

The adult Snow Goose is a short-necked stocky goose that is all white with black wing tips. The juvenile Snow Goose is slightly smaller than the adults and is mostly white with some gray patches on the wings.





One Blue Goose with white
Snow Geese

The dark color of the blue morph Snow Goose is controlled by a single gene, with dark being partially dominant over white. If a pure dark goose mates with a white goose, the offspring will all be dark (possibly with white bellies). If two white geese mate, they have only white offspring. If two dark geese mate, they will have mostly dark offspring, but might have a few white ones too.



Greater White-fronted goose, *Anser albifrons*

The Greater White-fronted goose is a medium sized goose with a gray brown body and neck with the forehead and base of bill white.

Historical....

wanda odum

Whatever happened to the Red Wolf?

Red wolves once lived in the eastern part of Texas although they are now on the U.S. Endangered Species List. The number of red wolves in existence is constantly changing, but recent counts indicate that there are at least 250 animals, most of which are in captive breeding facilities in the United States.

The red wolf is medium-sized with a gray coat sprinkled with blackish hairs and occasionally yellowish or reddish hair primarily on legs and lower parts and has a nose pad more than 1" wide. Their habitat is in forests and woodlands, scrub and brush land, swamps, marshes and bogs, grasslands and prairies.

Historically, red wolves ranged throughout the southeastern U.S. from Pennsylvania to Florida and as far west as Texas. Today, wild populations roam more than 1.7 million acres throughout northeastern North Carolina, including Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. There are perhaps 25-50 in the wild at Alligator River and perhaps 10-20 in the Great Smokies. Several others live in a few other locations.



U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service

In 1962, an Austin College professor named Howard McCarley sounded the alarm about the Red Wolf and its unexpected spiral toward extinction. He pointed out that what people thought were wolves were actually coyotes or wolf-coyote hybrids.

In 1973, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act, and the red wolf was one of the first animals listed. The first goal was to protect the wolves in their remaining territory, and the government started trapping coyotes to prevent the red wolves from being genetically swamped. The effort didn't work. The wolves were surrounded by an ever-encroaching sea of coyotes.



The red wolf became extinct in the wild by 1980. 1987 saw a reintroduction in northeastern North Carolina through a captive breeding program and the animals are considered to be successfully breeding in the wild.

Roy McBride, a legendary trapper who caught red wolves for the recovery program, offers this: "They didn't leave a heritage. They didn't leave a building you could look at or dig a big hole or put in a dam. I guess the first rain that came along after the last one was caught washed out his tracks, and that was about the only sign they were ever there. We'll never have them again."

Taken from: **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;**
www.enature.com