



PUBLICATION OF TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST, ELM FORK CHAPTER

# Naturalist News

## “Undercover guy” — Texas Toad



*Photo courtesy Jonathan Reynolds*

On the web:  
[www.txmn.org/elmfork](http://www.txmn.org/elmfork)

On Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistElmFork/](https://www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistElmFork/)

**Special points of interest:**

- Recognitions in October
- Some Interesting things happening
- Project Feeder Watch started November 10
- Pesky Insects this Winter

## Juvenile Cottonmouth/Water Moccasin photos by Chuck Swatske



Taken at LISDOLA during the class of 2018 field trip at LIS-DOLA.



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# Recap October Regular Monthly Meeting

## Awards:

Initial certification: Gay Campbell

Photos by Denise Remfert

## Recertifications:

Robert James; Claire Kamego; Marian Kester; Beverly Lyttaker; Alice Mankoff; Denise Remfert; Harley Shepardson; Marilyn Turnage; Nancy Waldo

Project leaders spoke about **Texas Native Plant Art Exhibition; Wildlife Rehab & Education; Fly Fishing**

Marilyn Blanton



Barbara Kraus



Richard Johnson



Program "The Urban Harvest: Foraging in the City" was presented by Daniel Cunningham



## Coming Up—November Monthly Meeting

Information comes from  
Rita Lokie

The speaker for November meeting will be Christine Gurley.

**Presentation:** Painted Buntings are common summer residents in North Texas, but despite their popularity, there are still many things we do not know about their breeding behavior. A team of researchers from the University of North Texas at Denton is studying the Painted Buntings living at Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA). Christine Gurley, a member of the research team, will describe the team's current work, including the difficulties of studying songbirds in the wild and the mystery of Painted Bunting "green males."

**Biography:** Christine Gurley is studying Painted Bunting breeding ecology for her Master's degree at the University of North Texas in Denton. She received her Bachelor of Sciences in Biology from Trinity University in 2016, and has done a variety of volunteer work for environmental outreach and to improve educational access for underprivileged children. She intends to pursue a career in bird research and conservation. She is a supervising member of the ongoing Painted Bunting research project at LLELA.



Christine with one of her Painted Buntings

Program "Painting  
Bunting Breeding"  
will be presented by  
Christine Gurley

### Painted Bunting

**A** joyful jubilee  
of rainbow-radiant glee  
the playfully painted bunting  
as a blushing bride to be.

Cheerfully chirping winged  
wildflower wandering in the wind  
welcoming the sweetness of spring.

[allpoetry.com](http://allpoetry.com)

## Read and Learn—Features



At Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center

*Article from w odum—photo by  
Jonathan Reynolds*

### History of the Mesquite Tree

**T**he mesquite tree (*Prosopis glandulosa*) is in the family Leguminosae, or pod-bearing trees. There are seventeen genera and over thirty species of pod bearers native to North America, the best known of which are the various species of locust trees. Mesquites grow in arid regions and cover some 100 million acres in the southwestern states and Mexico. Texas is home to over 50 million of those acres.

Honey mesquite, honey pod, algarobo, velvet mesquite, common mesquite and western honey mesquite are all varieties of the “lowly” mesquite tree. Mesquite is more of a bush in the desert plains but in other areas they can grow an average of 20-40 feet tall. The thorny tree flowers and produces beans in the autumn and has a root system that can grow more than 100 feet in search of water which makes it a hardy survivor in harsh climates.

Many years before the first Anglos settled in Texas, Native Americans used mesquite in its entirety. It was an integral part of their culture. The thorns became sewing needles; the inner bark was used for baskets and fabric; bean pods were used for food and to make medicinal teas; the sap was used for black dye and sweet gum; and the wood was used for arrows and bows for hunting.

Early settlers used the hardy mesquite for fence posts, wagon wheels and furniture, as well as fires for warmth and cooking. Mesquite slabs even served as street and walkway paving.

In modern times, mesquite is a popular wood for barbecue fires; flooring and staircases (because of the ideal durability); furniture such as rocking chairs, desks and tables; for doors, paneling, lumber, fence posts; and artistic carvings. It is a stable wood and long-lasting. Although considered a nuisance to many farmers and ranchers, this native tree has a long and important history.

Source: [www.louqart.com/mesquite\\_history](http://www.louqart.com/mesquite_history)

I grew up in arid, hardy west Texas, and as kids we had additional uses for the mesquite tree—it was something to climb, hang a swing from, and to play underneath with my brother (when he allowed it). We thought it was a shade tree because we didn’t know any better!

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We halted beneath a mesquite-tree and bore away an armful of pods that horses, mules, and Indians love. They are several inches long, in clusters, bright buff changing from green, and filled generously with beans which rattle as they mature. ~Estelle Thomson, “An Autumn Drive in California,” 1892 [quotegarden.com](http://quotegarden.com)

## 2018 Class Update from Jan Deatherage

### Watch Out! Here Comes the EFC Class of 2018.

You may have seen them in our Chapter meetings. They've been seen at LLELA, Clear Creek, Benthic Monitoring, the AgriLife Office, Board meetings, and lots of helpful places already. You're likely to see a whole lot more of them in the weeks and months to come.

Thirty-two highly motivated, enthusiastic new members are ready to help us tame the trails, teach the kids, count the birds, restore the prairies, track the wildlife, and make us a better chapter. Please help them find a place in our organization and play a valued part in our mission. We will all reap the rewards.

Something is  
happening on the  
ground!





Dooley Rucker



*Field Notes in Focus*



A place to showcase your photos of fauna and flora (send to w odum, NN editor)

*From the gallery of Jonathan Reynolds—Gayfeather (Liatris punctata var. mucronata) at North Lakes*

Of Interest

## 2018 VMS Team

We are busy approving hours and wanted to pass along a few tips to make your VMS experience go smoothly. If you have any questions on logging hours please contact the VMS Team at [efctmn.vms@gmail.com](mailto:efctmn.vms@gmail.com)

### VMS TIPS

#### NEW PROJECTS FOR 2018

**P180308 - Wildlife Rehab and Education, includes Opportunities OT, PO, TR.**

Note: Texas Metro Wildlife Rehabilitators has been renamed Wildlife Rehab and Education

**P180913 - Valley Vista Nature Park, includes Opportunities NPA, RM.**

**New Opportunities available for Projects:**

**P040512 FR: BioBlitz at LLELA**

**P160908 PO: Furneaux Creek/Mayors Monarch Pledge**

#### TMN State Conference

AT: includes field trips, keynote speaker and featured speakers.

#### AT: Chapter Approved

Travel time to and from the field trips is not included.

Service: any assistance you provided prior to the conference, including making Silent Auction items, and during the conference.

#### Chapter Administrative Work: 'State Meeting'

If you were a featured speaker enter your prep time and actual time presenting under **Community Presentations**.

Who is approving your VMS hours:

If your last name begins with A – L, Kevin Frerich, [kevrer@verizon.net](mailto:kevrer@verizon.net). If your last name begins with M – Z, Ray Krueztfeld, [rekdtx@verizon.net](mailto:rekdtx@verizon.net). Mary and Denise will back-up Kevin and Ray if needed. 2018 class members, Ray, with Mary as back-up.

#### VMS STATS OCT YTD:

Service Hours: 21,101

Advanced Training Hours: 2,449

177 of 203 active members have hours logged.

109 members have Re-Certified in 2018.

Of Interest

# PROJECT FEEDER WATCH

starts November 10.

Any observations photographed can also  
be posted to  
iNaturalist.

See you at the feeders...



Above: Red-bellied Woodpeckers      Background: Red-shouldered Hawk

Below: Red-bellied Woodpecker (L) and Downy Woodpecker (R)



Photographs submitted by Mary Morrow, 2017-18 PFW

## Of Interest

# Extreme Weather Will Cause Pest Pressure to Peak this Fall and Winter

### NORTHWEST:

**Summer Recap:** Record wet spring and unseasonably dry summer with wildfire conditions. From having one of its wettest spring seasons on record, followed by unseasonably dry conditions and wildfires throughout summer, warm and wet winter conditions will cause already booming rodent populations to scurry indoors in search of food and shelter.

### SOUTHWEST:

**Summer Recap:** Warmest spring and summer on record. Despite having its warmest and driest season on record, cold and wet winter conditions will drive rodents and other overwintering pests such as stink bugs and lady beetles indoors earlier than usual.

### SOUTH CENTRAL U.S.:

**Summer Recap:** Drought conditions across the entire region. Drought conditions this summer will cause rodent pressure to spike in the fall and winter seasons as they search for water and food. Isolated areas throughout Texas that had excessive rainfall should also be prepared for increased mosquito activity this fall.

### NORTH CENTRAL U.S.:

**Summer Recap:** Flash flooding in the north and wildfires in the south. Flooding in the northern part of this region in the summer coupled with expectations for a wet winter ahead will push rodents indoors, and may also increase cockroach and ant pressure as these insects search for higher ground.

### GREAT LAKES, OHIO VALLEY & MIDWEST:

**Summer Recap:** Upper half of region was hotter and wetter than usual. Flash flooding in the north coupled with a warm and wet winter will help mosquito populations thrive throughout fall. Drier conditions expected in the southern part of the region will drive ants indoors in search of moisture and food.

### SOUTHEAST:

**Summer Recap:** Unseasonably wet spring and summer due to subtropical storm Alberto. Subtropical storm Alberto damped tons of rain on the southeast, allowing mosquito populations to flourish. Excessive moisture left behind in the wake of Hurricane Florence in the southernmost parts of the region will also likely spur prolonged termite and ant activity this winter.

### NORTHEAST & NEW ENGLAND:

**Summer Recap:** Record heat and rainfall across the entire region. After a record-setting hot and wet summer and calls for an even wetter winter ahead, expect ticks to remain active longer than usual. Lady beetles and stink bugs will thrive with increased rainfall as well, with mice and rats moving indoors as temperatures cool.



Bug Barometer Fall Winter 2018

From Karen Magnum: This website produces a Bug Barometer so you can see what's coming in the months ahead.

<http://www.pestworld.org/news-hub/press-releases/the-pressure-is-on-this-fall-and-winter-pest-pressure-that-is/>



## It's a Bug's Life

**I**n between darkening shadows  
 and the bright light of the meadows  
 it's there anyone can find it full of life.  
 Where a lazy caterpillar  
 and a moth they call the Miller  
 from their warm silky cocoons emerge alive.  
 And where that slick old trap spider  
 snatches prey walking beside her  
 as unsuspecting bugs become a quick meal.  
 Where the tiny titmouse hurries  
 with mouth full of tiny berries  
 but you can never hear him this loudly squeal.  
 When the honeybees go buzzing  
 while jimi cricket is fussing  
 trying to decide on a rickety song.  
 As a black ant goes on searching  
 on a dry oak leaf is perching  
 while the line goes marching hurriedly along.  
 Over a quiet rolling stream  
 a butterfly, color of cream  
 she stops to take a few tiny thirsty sips.

As a frustrated dung beetle  
 with his ball of smelly doodle  
 now has to make a few more dozen of trips.  
 Wiggly earthworm on the surface  
 peeks up hearing a ruckus,  
 decides to go back into the warmth of loam.  
 And a horsefly going sideways  
 wings invisible quickly sways  
 over the green pond he constantly will roam.  
 As an aphid upon red rose  
 smells perfume holding its own nose  
 realizing he's made terrible mistake.  
 While a grasshopper goes hopping  
 on the blades of grass dew soaking  
 from the morning mist gliding from the blue lake.  
 These two places all are teeming  
 with creepy crawlies convening  
 in the meadow is where they all love to thrive.  
 So take a magnifying glass  
 under stones and leaves of green grass  
 this is where a bugs life really comes alive.

allpoetry.com



# Those Who Built this Issue of Naturalist News



w odum, editor NN, class 2005



Dorothy Thetford class 2001



Becky Bertoni class 2015



Denise Remfert class 2015



Mary Morrow class 2014



Judi Elliott class 2009



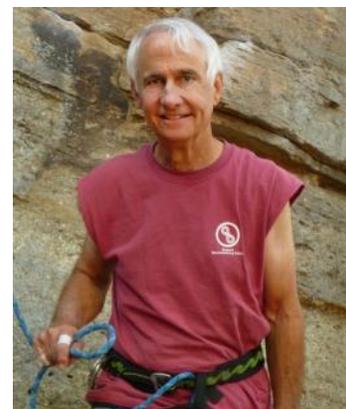
Jan Deatherage class 2011



Chuck Swatske class 2018



Rita Lokie class 2013



Jonathan Reynolds class 2014



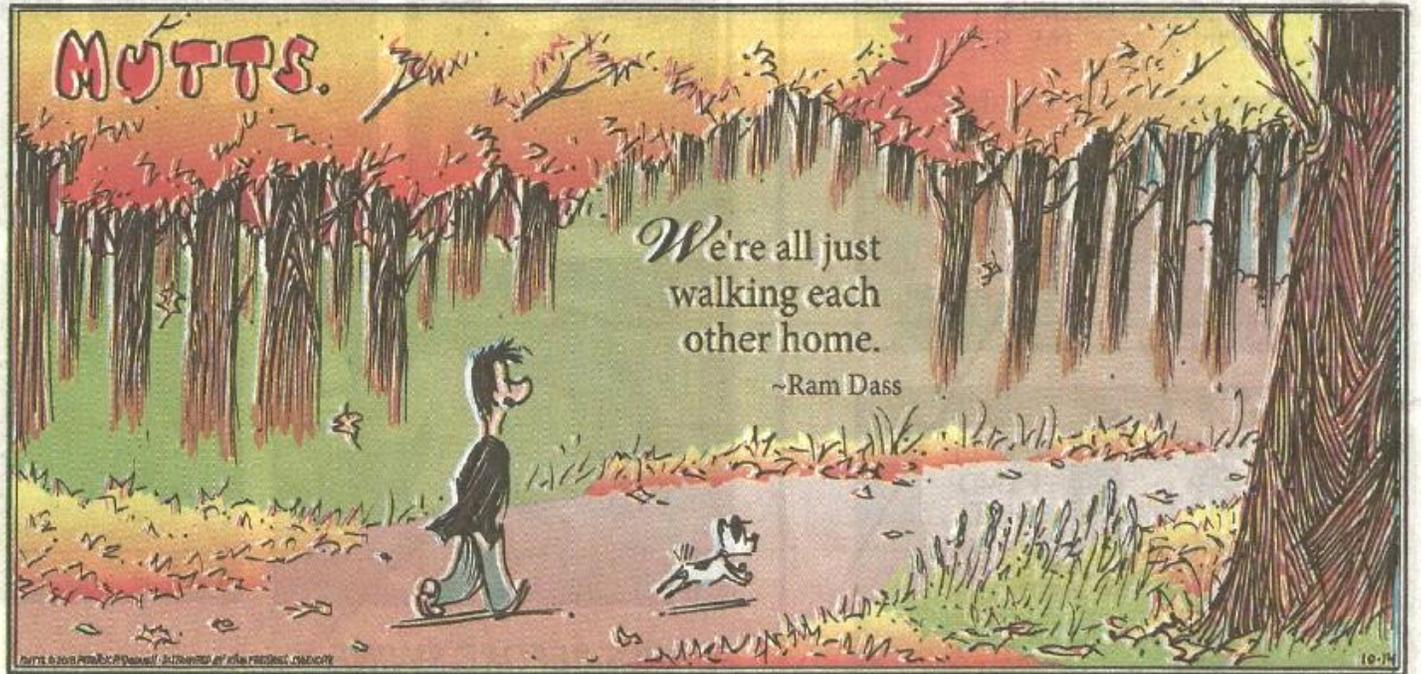
Karen Mangum (photo unavailable) class 2000

*Final Word*

**Just a  
reminder  
from Becky  
Bertoni!**

MUTTS

BY PATRICK MCDONNELL



If you have a “final word”, send to wanda odum, NN editor

**Thank You!** *To all who contributed to this month's issue of Naturalist News.*



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*Palette in the sky—Photo courtesy Dorothy Thetford*

**Our mission . . .** *”to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our community”*

**Our vision . . .** *“In our community, Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program will be recognized as a primary source of information, education and service to support natural resources and natural areas today and in the future.”*



## Board of Directors

- PRESIDENT—Adelaide Bodnar
- IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT—Don Fikes
- VICE-PRESIDENT—Brent Farler
- SECRETARY—John Williams
- TREASURER—Brenda Wellenreiter
- CLASS REPRESENTATIVE—Kathryn Wells & Robert McLaughlin
- MEMBER-at-LARGE—Bill Coleman

Communication: e-mail Donna Wolfe; website Martha Peet; Naturalist News Wanda Odum

Opportunities/Projects: Diane Kohlhasse

Publicity: Jan Deatherage

Training: Jan Deatherage

Programs & Field Trips: Rita Lokie

Membership: Mary Morrow

Hospitality: Linda Cox

Resource Room: President

### ADVISORS:

Janet Laminack, Extension Agent

TPWD—Ricardo Torres

**Regular Monthly Chapter Meetings**  
9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month. Chapter meetings are open to the public.  
Next meeting on November 15, 2018  
Breeding Behavior of Painted Buntings  
November meeting at: Southwest Government Bldg, 6200 Canyon Falls Dr., Flower Mound, TX

**Board Meetings**  
The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met November 8, 2018. Next monthly Board meeting is December 6, 2018.  
Monthly Board meetings are open to members.