

WOODDUCK WHISTLER



June 2011



News from President: Neal Stilley

Down by the pond there's new critter! A beaver has moved in. Just the other day I saw it munching down on some aquatic plants along the banks and watched it for about five minutes or so, and then it moved on. I came back the next day to check out the trees along the banks and sure enough there were three pine trees gnawed pretty good. This is a common thing that is often seen in East Texas and I'm not clear why pines are some times preferred. This will become a problem because there only 20 pines around the pond, and a beaver will keep on gnawing on the trees till they all gone. I best do some research on this and talk with the folks who live near by.

Down the road the Mayapples (*Podophyllum peltatum*) have been blooming and should be fruiting in the next couple of weeks. It is the **ripe fruit only** that can be eaten when they turn yellow. The Mayapples form a colony with single and double leaf plants, but it's the double leaf plant that produces the flower and fruit. Mayapple jelly is excellent and is made just like any other fruit jelly. When the fruit is at its peak **ripeness**, fermentation can take place and you'll get something that equals a ¼ glass of wine. I have picked enough **ripe** fruit in the field that had me feeling mighty good about the grocery sack full of Mayapples. Until next time, keep those eyes and ears open and enjoy the natural world around us.

Here is a cool link I just found for us birders :)

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_bk_w7000_0511.pdf

CALLING ALL MASTER NATURALIST VOLUNTEERS!

The following site will provide you with information on the Butterfly Count and the circle area being counted. Justin is looking for folks to help with the count. **Hope I see you all there.** Please contact Justin at his web site.

See article.....next two pages.....(whew)

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Points of Interest

These issues are a work in progress. Suggestions are appreciated. The Editor, may ask for an article of interest. Or if she can profile you, so others may know you, and know what drew you to becoming a Texas Master Naturalist. All work may be edited, and YOU get credit for volunteering!

Thanks!

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**NABA Butterfly Count Circle Information.
"Smith County, Tyler Texas" Count circle
The First Annual "Smith County Butterfly Enthusiasts"
Butterfly Count**

**is scheduled as June 18th, 2011. With June 25th, 2011
as the bad weather date. Anyone interested in counting,
please contact Justin.**

We have set up a circle for the purpose of learning about and counting Butterflies in Tyler/Smith Co. I hope all the information below will answer your questions, but please **email us** or call Justin (903-245-6187 during the hours of 9AM to 3PM) if you have questions.

First things first, here's a map image of the circle: **go to website >**

**Here's some information about the Circle and what we will
be doing.**

A Butterfly Count Circle for Tyler

The Smith County – Tyler TX, NABA butterfly count circle includes all of Tyler State Park. The center of the circle is the intersection of East Gentry Parkway (271) and Mcknew Street (CR376) in Tyler. The coordinates are lat= 32.379724, long= -95.280390 or +32° 22' 47.01", -95° 16' 49.40".

The following key spots are in the circle:

Tyler State Park (the real key to all of this)

The Nature Center (small but good for butterflies)

Tyler Rose Garden (good, due to the Idea & Heritage gardens there)

Bellwood Lake (another good area to see butterflies)

Headache Springs, Rose Rudman Trail and Southside Park, Peach Avenue Park, UT Tyler and Northside Park (all possible areas) I20 & State Park Road interchange (if the wild flowers are still covering the I20 ramp hillsides). Any places with wild flowers along the roadside or in fields could be good. If you have your own perennial gardens within the circle, they may be included in the count. I have divided the circle into 8 sections. The 8 sections give each group a chance to see butterflies in a variety of habitat.

A NABA butterfly count circle consists of a minimum of 4 people counting for a minimum of 6 total group hours. Like a bird count, all butterflies are identified, counted and turned in to the compiler to be sent to NABA. The Tyler, TX circle includes the city of Tyler and outlying areas in a 15 mile diameter circle. A count is considered to be a 24 hr day. We normally count from 8 AM till Noon, with a second count from 2 PM till dusk, if we need it. The fee is \$3.00 per person and that money goes to NABA to help offset their paperwork costs.

We plan to have one formal count event in 2011 on June 18th with a rain date of June 25th. All records of species and numbers will be submitted to NABA and go into their database. We will also hold at least one informal count. Typically this would happen in the spring or in the fall. The date of such a count is not scheduled yet.



There are some necessities when you go out for butterflies:

- Wear loose, comfortable, dull colored clothing, such as tan, beige or light brown.
- Don't wear white or bright colors. Jeans will work, but Kakis or Cargo pants will be more comfortable in hot weather.
- Wear a Hat to protect your head from the sun.
- Don't forget the bug repellent.
- Also you should have sturdy walking shoes and depending on the area, mud boots may be necessary.
- Bring water or other liquids, and a snack if you wish. We normally break for lunch from Noon to 2:00 PM, so you can have lunch, while the butterflies rest.
- A close focus binocular like the Pentax Papilio 6.5x21 is a necessity for making IDs.
- A digital camera is necessary if you are serious about IDs. If you can't ID the butterfly, a digital photo will let others see the butterfly afterwards and try to ID it. Take a few shots open wing and close wing and from different angles.
- A field guide is also handy. There are a few good ones in our Amazon Store, on our website.

For the count that will be submitted to NABA, someone in each group must have a close focus binocular, a digital camera with a lens of focal length of at least 10x or 300mm, and a field guide. Also, someone with knowledge in making butterfly ID's is a must. Count tally sheets will be provided for recording numbers seen of each species of ADULT butterfly. Record totals of immature forms (eggs, caterpillars, pupas) in the immature butterflies section at end of the tally sheets. These do not count in totals for individuals and species. In each group of counters, one person will be designated as the lead counter and will do the record keeping. Count sheets and fees need to be turned into Justin Valleau by 7 PM, the day of the count. We intend to have 2-4 people in each group, counting for at least 3 hours per group. We feel that works out for the best.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

All counts published in the annual report must be open to public participation. If a person wishes to participate in a count, it must be possible for him/her to find out from the compiler, or other designated contact person, the date of the count, where he/she may go within the circle to count, and how to submit results and fees to the compiler. Prior knowledge of butterflies is a plus, but not mandatory. Children are allowed on a count, if they are 13 years or older and if they are with competent adult supervision. For the Tyler Counts, please contact Justin Valleau 903-245-6187 between 9AM & 3PM.

Questions? Contact: Smith County Butterfly Enthusiasts@suddenlink.net



OUR NEWEST MEMBER AND CHAIR—HELEN MAR PARKIN

Helen Mar Parkin is a Master Naturalist who has recently transferred to our chapter from the North Texas Chapter and has been appointed by President Neal Stilley to chair the Membership Committee. Helen Mar has experience in this area as she served on the Membership Committee with North Texas.

Helen Mar and her husband, Steve, moved to Lindale in 2006 from Dallas and live on a 150 acre ranch, where Steve is raising cattle. She joined the Master Naturalist Program in 2006 and has been a member in good standing since.

After receiving her bachelor’s degree in art history, Helen Mar discovered she needed further education to be employed, so she specialized in Art Conservation and received a master’s degree from the University of New York at Oneonta. Since then she has worked at several museums in Washington, D.C., Ft. Worth, and Cincinnati, Ohio. She went into private Practice as an independent conservator of paintings in 2000 and still plies her trade when the opportunity arises, but in Lindale she is out of the mainstream of the art world.

We are fortunate to have Helen Mar as an addition to our Chapter, especially with her willingness to participate in several ways. If you have not met her, make every effort to welcome her when you have the chance.

Submitted: Tappa Burt

TPWD Budget Stalled in Texas Senate

The Texas Legislature has added key provisions to help Texas Parks and Wildlife Department manage its FY 2012/2013 budget cuts, but a vote on the state budget has stalled in the Senate. *To help, see Call to Action below.*

HB 1301 would allow visitors to state parks to contribute to TPWD. This bill is crucial, as money will be removed from the TPWD budget if it doesn’t pass.

Call to Action:

Urge your state senator to vote HB 1 out of the Senate. If it passes the Senate, we will send an alert re the next step to provide adequate funding for TPWD. Locate your senator at <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/>

Also urge your state senator to support HB 1301, to allow state park visitors to contribute to maintaining our parks.

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(Please also be aware that when you send information to your senator that you are doing this as a concerned citizen, and not as a Texas Master Naturalist!)



AT THE MINEOLA NATURE PRESERVE

Schedule of Events

Friday, May 27th 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

- 7:00 Outsiders Program – A Western Reenactment
- 7:15 Longhorn Cattle Drive
- 7:30 Chuck Wagon Dinner * & Pickin' & Grinnin' with Cowboy Ray
- 8:30 Campfire Stories by Jeff Hurley
- 9:15 East Texas Astronomers

Saturday, May 28th 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

(Shows will run approx. 45 min. unless otherwise noted)

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|-------|---|---|
| 8:00 | Birding Hike (1-1 ½ hour hike) | Ranger Boyd Sanders of Tyler State Park |
| 9:00 | Amphibian/Reptile Nature Hike (2 hr hike) | Dr. Neil Ford of the University of Texas at Tyler |
| 10:00 | Nature Hike | Bruce Cunningham |
| 10:00 | Interesting Animals | The Creature Teacher |
| 11:00 | Birds of Prey (1 st Show) | Last Chance Forever |
| Noon | Memorial Day Observance | Paul Gates |
| 12:15 | Weird & Wacky Animals | The Creature Teacher |
| 1:00 | Birds of Prey (2 nd Show) | Last Chance Forever |
| 2:00 | Really Reptiles | The Creature Teacher |

Saturday's On-Going Workshops and Demonstrations

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| 9-12 | Kids Fish | |
| 9-3 | Dutch-Oven Cooking | Lone Star Dutch Oven Society |
| 9-3 | Kids Survival Training | Ranger Joe Roach of Tyler State Park |
| 9-3 | Face Painting | Connie Lowe |
| 9-3 | The Turtle Lady | Chrissy Kelly |
| 9-3 | Build Your Own Birdhouse* | |
| 9-3 | Nature Photography | Gary Edwards of EastTexasReflections.com |
| 9-3 | Knowing Horticulture | Master Gardeners |
| 9-3 | Fire Starting and more | Master Naturalist |
| 9-3 | Forester/Author/Artist | Bruce Cunningham |
| 9-3 | Mussels of the Sabine River | Dr. Neil Ford of the University of Texas at Tyler |
| 9-3 | The Nature of Bees | Dick Counts of East Texas Bee Keepers Assn. |
| 9-3 | Painting at the Preserve | Mineola League of the Arts |
| 9-3 | Nature Stories (Stories Start on the Hour) | Mineola Memorial Library |

....And more activities and demonstrations throughout the day

* Associated with a fee

Graduating Class Of 2010



THE GOVERNOR HOGG PECAN

ON THE EVENING OF TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY, MARCH 2, 1906, TEXAS' FORMER GOVERNOR JAMES STEPHEN HOGG AND HIS DAUGHTER IMA WERE VISITING IN THE HOME OF HIS LAW PARTNER, FRANK JONES, OF HOUSTON. DURING THEIR CONVERSATION, THE GOVERNOR TOLD JONES AND HIS DAUGHTER THAT WHEN HE DIED HE WANTED NO MONUMENT OF STONE, BUT "LET MY CHILDREN PLANT AT THE HEAD OF MY GRAVE A PECAN TREE AND AT MY FEET AN OLD-FASHIONED WALNUT TREE. AND WHEN THESE TREES SHALL BEAR, LET THE PECANS AND THE WALNUTS BE GIVEN OUT AMONG THE PLAIN PEOPLE SO THAT THEY MAY PLANT THEM AND MAKE TEXAS A LAND OF TREES."

LATE THE NEXT MORNING, GOVERNOR HOGG DIED QUIETLY IN HIS SLEEP.

SHORTLY AFTER HIS BURIAL IN AUSTIN'S OAKWOOD CEMETERY, THE FIRST OF GOVERNOR HOGG'S WISHES WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE STATE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, WHO PLANTED TWO PECAN TREES AT HIS HEAD AND A NATIVE BLACK WALNUT AT HIS FEET. IN LATER YEARS, WHEN THE TREES BEGAN TO BEAR FRUIT, THE DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE AT TEXAS A&M COLLEGE (NOW TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY) GATHERED THE NUTS AND DISTRIBUTED THEM TO INDIVIDUALS, SCHOOLS, AND ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT TEXAS. THE PECAN HAD LONG BEEN A POPULAR TREE IN TEXAS, AND IN 1919 IT WAS OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED THE STATE TREE OF TEXAS BY AN ACT OF THE STATE LEGISLATURE. ITS ADOPTION IS LARGELY CREDITED TO THE SENTIMENTS GOVERNOR HOGG EXPRESSED ON THE EVE OF HIS DEATH.

IN A SPECIAL ARBOR DAY OBSERVANCE AT OAKWOOD CEMETERY SPONSORED BY THE TEXAS FOREST SERVICE AND THE TEXAS FORESTRY ASSOCIATION, IN 1969, HOGG'S LAST WISHES WERE PERPETUATED. THE RUSSELL PECAN AND THE BLACK WALNUT HAD DIED, AND THE TREES WERE REPLACED WITH A CHOCTAW PECAN AND A THOMAS BLACK WALNUT. MISS IMA HOGG, THE SOLE SURVIVING MEMBER OF THE GOVERNOR'S FAMILY, ASSISTED WITH THE PLANTING. THE REPLACEMENT TREES WERE DONATED BY THE TEXAS PECAN GROWERS ASSOCIATION, WHICH WAS FOUNDED BY THE GOVERNOR IN 1906.

THE HOGG PECAN IS LOCATED IN THE NORTHWEST SECTION OF OAKWOOD CEMETERY, IN THE CITY OF AUSTIN.

SUBMITTED: MIKE PRICE- TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST

TEXAS MAMMAL of the MONTH – June – Opossum

Also known as the Virginia Opossum, Possum, O'Possum, Possie, Opie, and "pasum" (Algonquin Indian name), this interesting mammal is America's only native marsupial (mom carries the young in her pouch) and therefore is more closely kin to an Australian Koala Bear than to a furry rodent which it somewhat resembles.

Opossums are master survivors, having wandered among us essentially unchanged for the past 75-100 million years. They are born with more teeth (50) than any other mammal, and have the interesting ability to "play dead," which in fact occurs spontaneously if the animal is sufficiently frightened.

Possums live only about 2 years in the wild and the moms produce only one or two litters of young in their short lives. A mother possum usually has about 13 teats in her pouch but may often give birth to more babies than there are teats. Thus, the first ones who manage to attach first are usually the ones who survive. The young possums complete their development in the mother's pouch, which they enter from the womb, and remain there about 3 months. Later they may be seen clinging to mom's fur as she wanders about searching for food – the original soccer mom taxicab! (Unfortunately if they happen to fall off, they're handy snacks for larger predators as mom does not worry about recovering a lost young one.)

Possums are the only non-primate with opposable thumbs (found on the rear feet), and their grasping tails assist them in gripping and climbing, useful for escaping predators. Adults do not, despite the folk legend, "hang" from their tails (their bodies are too heavy to be supported by a tail) but rather, use it for support, balance, and gripping as they move about on the ground or in tree branches.

Possums are nocturnal, and may be found prowling about in search of food anywhere left-overs are available, with the occasional forage into a local chicken coop or rabbit den. They are true omnivores as any rehabber will tell you, and they'll eat anything they find halfway inviting from small fish to insects to snakes to berries to carrion (with maggots, if you please) to thrown-out leftovers to the pet morsels you leave in the back porch bowl, to road-kill where they often become victims of a hit-and-run themselves. Possums are not territorial, but will defend an area as long as they're able to find nourishment there. Once a location is cleared of tasty morsels, they move on to another promising locale.

They are solitary and nomadic, sluggish with a strong sense of smell (other senses are not as developed). Possums are shy and secretive, and are unlikely to be seen with other possums although they may nest in someone else's den or the hollow of a fallen tree. They appear ferocious when threatened: snarling, snapping, growling, hissing and displaying their "alligator mouths" with those myriad of visible teeth. However, as many larger predators have found, much of the display is "sound and fury, signifying nothing" as Shakespeare might have observed had he encountered one.

An especially interesting fact about the opossum is that it rarely contracts rabies, which is so common in many other mammals. The reason for this is that an opossum's internal body temperature, with few exceptions, is actually too low (94-97 degrees F) to support this virus. In addition, opossums are very clean animals and have been known to stop during feeding to groom and clean themselves before the dinner mess starts to take over! The average possum would put a preening cat to shame as far as staying clean is concerned.

Remember, possums are wild animals and are not meant to be kept as pets. In addition, with the exception of permitted rehabbers or other wildlife professionals, it is illegal in Texas to keep them in captivity. If you're still not convinced, try cleaning up the very smelly waste products produced by an opossum. The smell is even more pronounced when they are startled, and this animal is definitely not amenable to litter-box training as is, for example, a bunny. If you happen upon an opossum in your back yard, remember that it is actually doing you a favor by cleaning the area for you before it moves on. Just keep your dog or cat's tempting dinner bowl inside for a few days until the possum decides to move on.

As you may have guessed, this sub-permitted rehabber is enchanted by opossums and is delighted to share her enjoyment with other Master Naturalists.

Submitted: Carol Wilcox – Texas Master Naturalist



**EAST TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST
P.O. BOX 131184
TYLER, TEXAS 75713**

**PHYSICAL ADDRESS TO TEXAS NATURE CENTER:
OFF LOOP 323 ON STATE HWT 248(OR IT'S CALLED
UNIVERSITY BLVD). RIGHT ON FM 848 (BASCOM
ROAD) ON THE RIGHT.....**



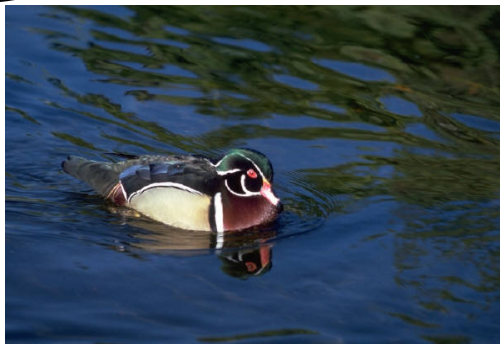
I encourage everyone to submit articles, photos, quotes, (with permission web links , and other forms of submission with written consent). To :
TMN.EDITOR@GMAIL.COM
Deadline is 15th of every month!!



*HEY WE ARE ON FACEBOOK!
East Texas Master Naturalist*



**We're on the WEB!!
Www.Woodduck.org
(Under construction)**



Our Officers, Committee Chairs, & Meeting Dates

The East Texas Chapter of Master Naturalists meetings are on the
LAST Thursday of every month @ 6:45 pm. Texas Nature Center

Neal Stilley - President	Clyde McKinney – Vice President
Carol Wilcox - Secretary	Mike Price - Treasurer
Cindi McCullough - Database Mgr	Gloria Rognile - Membership
Curriculum Chair	Laura Wilson - Newsletter & Web-Mistress

Our Advisors:

Irene Hamel & Kevin Herriman

