

# WOODDUCK WHISTLER



## ShareLunker

A video of the processing of **ShareLunker** 531's eggs and is the first **ShareLunker** to spawn this season.

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Our Member of the Month:  
**Tappa Burt**



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LINKS  
TO  
MAKE  
YOU  
THINK

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## Crane Fly WHAT IS THAT!

I used to call them "Texas mosquitoes."

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## Herbarium Project

Wednesday, 4/25,  
1:00 PM workshop  
will be at Old Sabine.

Herbarium Group is dedicated to collecting, identifying, pressing/drying, and mounting plants in our area.

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## Caddo Mounds Page 3



President's Corner  
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## May 2012 Newsletter

*The Woodduck Whistler is a monthly publication of the East Texas Chapter of Master Naturalists program. Send us your stories, comments, photos, and ideas. Here are some tips for getting the most from our newsletter:*

- Every newsletter contains many links. Look for text in different colors, text in bold, or web addresses.
- Many images contain links, too. Photos, logos, and graphics may have a link embedded.
- Emails are always linked.
- Just mouse over any of these features to see the link and then use CTRL/click to access it.

You may be surprised where the links will take you and what more you can learn. Happy reading from your Editors and roving reporters,  
Barbara Thompson and Mary Ann Nilson



## Volume 8 - Issue 5



Join us at our East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists Monthly meeting on **Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 6:45 PM** at The Nature Center. Our Guest Speaker will be Dr. Paul Shaw from CESSE (Center for Education in Space and Science).

His topic will be **Star Gazing & Light Pollution**. Come early and get to know each other.

(See page 4 for the Star Gazing & Light Pollution promotion article)

**Spring Spider Lily  
Hymenocallis liriosme**

The East Texas Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists keep trash picked up on a two mile section on CR 1804. This month two groups volunteered in cleanups. Conflicting schedules preventing me from participating but I did drive through the area after the cleanup and some heavy rains. I spotted this flower floating in the water and observed several plants holding their blooms a foot above the water.



This is a Spider lily. It is very similar to the bog lily with the strap like leaves but the flower is different with a round white cup with six long stamens that resemble the legs of a spider. It is very fragrant, some say it is a lemony scent; I really could not call it lemony. The plant originates from bulbs and grows best in moist soil or water up to 2 inches. This flower comes from a large family: (Amaryllidaceae). With plants, the advantage is every plant must have a botanical name that is associated with them only; in this case, it is Hymenocallis liriosme. As a result many of the members have the same common name or nickname. For this plant, the common name is Spider lily, which is also used in association with other plants in the family. Besides spider lily, the flower goes by spring spider lily. This is a native plant in AR , LA , MS , OK, and TX; it is found growing in flood plains, bottomland, ditches, ravines, repressions, marshes, stream banks, prairie, plains, meadows, pastures, and savannahs.

*Joe Roach*



**Falcon ShareLunker Produces Large Spawn**

ATHENS, TX - Toyota ShareLunker #531, caught from Falcon International Reservoir March 16, spawned more than 44,000 eggs March 29.

Pure Florida ShareLunkers are paired at TFFC with pure variety of education, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) hatchery staff removed the eggs from the spawning mat, counted them and put them into a hatching jar. The eggs will hatch in three or four days, and the fry will be raised to about 1.5 inches in length before being stocked.

A video of the processing of ShareLunker 531's eggs may be viewed on the ShareLunker program [Facebook page](#) ShareLunker 531 was caught by Gary Wingate of Amarillo and is the first ShareLunker to spawn this season. Multiple spawns from the same fish are not uncommon. Six of the current entries are pure Florida largemouth bass and are being held for spawning. Those fish came from Lakes Falcon, Austin (two fish), Fork, Ray Roberts and O.H. Ivie. So far this season 12 ShareLunkers have been

caught from six different lakes: Falcon, Austin, Fork, Toledo Bend, Ray Roberts and O.H. Ivie. Each lake producing an entry into the ShareLunker program during the season receives a portion of all the fingerlings produced. Pure Florida ShareLunkers are paired at TFFC with pure Florida males that are themselves the offspring of ShareLunkers. This selective breeding process is intended to result in offspring that have the best possible genetics. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure that genetic diversity is maintained. DNA testing allows Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to determine the parentage of and relatedness among ShareLunker offspring.

The Toyota ShareLunker Program is made possible by a grant to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Foundation from Gulf States Toyota. Toyota is a long-time supporter of the Foundation and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, providing major funding for a wide variety of education, fish, parks and wildlife projects.



## Looking for something fun to do? Then look no further than the Texas State Railroad!



Enjoying a relaxing steam train excursion through the piney woods of East Texas on the Official Railroad of Texas.

During this nostalgic journey expect to see bandits, but not to worry, The Lone Ranger (R) will save the day. Visitors can experience personal table service in the premium Lone Star Class Adults Only or Family Car or choose the coach or open air cars. All tickets include a deluxe box lunch. The railroad also offers many special events throughout the year including The Popular Express™ Train Ride, Peanuts™ events Snoopy, Railfest, Dinner Trains, and more! For more information, call 888-987-2461 or visit [www.TexasStateRR.com](http://www.TexasStateRR.com)

Caddo Mounds site is 25 miles south on Highway 84, six miles down Highway 21.

## Caddo Mounds - Built more than 1200 years ago... Visit ancient Texas history!



The 397-acre Caddo Mounds site, is a [Texas Historical Commission](#) property.

*Children from Caddo Nation perform a traditional dance in front of the burial mound*

This ancient Texas history is located in Cherokee County, west of Nacogdoches. Built more than 1,200 years ago by a group of Caddo Indians known as the Hasinai, the site was the southwestern-most ceremonial center for the great Mound Builder culture, which spanned the eastern North American woodlands for more than 2,500 years.

First opened to the public in 1982, the site consists of two temple mounds, a burial mound and a large portion of the adjacent village area. Today, a walking trail guides visitors around the earthen mounds. A visitors center with exhibits and displays is also on site for visitors to learn about the everyday life of the early Caddo people. Learn more about the [history of Caddo Mounds](#).

[Texas State Railroad](#), 25 miles north on Hwy 84 in Rusk [Mission Tejas State Park](#), 6 miles west of Caddo Mounds,

### Snowberry clearwing moth, (*Hemaris diffinis*, Lindale, Texas) Photo and article by Mary Ann Nilson

Getting older and less mobile does not mean you cannot still get out and enjoy nature. About four o'clock in the afternoon sitting on the front porch in our rockers my husband spotted this creature hovering over the front lawn sipping nectar from the flowers through a long feeding tube. Quickly I grabbed my camera and snapped this picture. What is this? An internet search revealed it is a **Snowberry clearwing moth**. Moths are nocturnal, right? Well, not necessarily. In fact, there are quite a few diurnal moths.

The Snowberry clearwing is one of them. They look and act like a cross between a bumblebee and a hummingbird, they even feed in the same way. They can remain suspended in the air in front of a flower while they unfurl their long tongues and insert them in flowers to sip their nectar. Like all Lepidoptera, their wings are covered by scales, some species lose many of the scales from patches on their wings, so they are called clearing moths. The genus *Hemaris* are day flying moths, (represented in North America by four species, and Bee Hawk-Moths in Britain), and in the Spinx family collectively called Clearwings or Hummingbird moths. The Snowberry clearwing (*Hemaris diffinis*) moth about the size of a bumble bee and the larger Hummingbird clearwing (*Hemaris thysbe*) moth about the size of a baby hummingbird are very similar; but according to [butterfliesandmoths.org](http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org), *Hemaris diffinis* always has black legs and *Hemaris thysbe* always has pale legs. By observing what is going on around me, even though I am less mobile, I could sometimes learn more while rocking on the porch and contemplating Nature from that perspective than hiking in the woods and fields!



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFHOPSds7A0> Video shows a Snowberry clearwing feeding.  
<http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Hemaris-diffinis> site shows Attributes of *Hemaris diffinis*.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lepidoptera> a large order of insects that includes moths and butterflies.



Light pollution is a term for the excessive or obtrusive of artificial light into untended environments by human beings either directly or indirectly. It causes such things as sky glow, glare, light trespass, and light clutter. It also causes decreased visibility at night and has been shown to waste energy.

Though not sometimes considered, the sky above is our largest natural environ. But the threat of increased light pollution is rapidly destroying this habitat. This is a grave concerning for those who cherish these resources especially astronomers. Most observatories are above the clouds and away from cities for university facilities and professional astronomers. Thus, light pollution hits the amateur astronomer and the naturalist the hardest.

Should efforts to curb this intrusion into our existence fail, there may come a time when we will not be able to see the stars even on clear nights. Efforts by astronomers at all levels and other conservation groups are being rallied to protect this valuable resource. Such groups as the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) have identified problems sources and presented solutions that all of us may benefit from and will also help reduce light pollution plus give us a chance to show our posterity a glimpse of eternity and the heavens.

Information from: Paul R. Shaw, M.Sc., AAPT, ASET Center Support Staff Center for Earth and Space Science Education.

## Our Member of the Month



### "Tappa" Burt

Meet Helen "Tappa" Burt, a member from the original class, which was formed in the fall of 2000. The first class was group of 28 members who formed our East Texas Chapter of Master Naturalists.

"Tappa" has been active over the years helping in various areas to get our group off the ground and now she is hoping to pass on some of the work to those of us now becoming active in the Chapter.

Raised in Tyler as a child, and enjoying the East Texas outdoors, hunting and fishing with her father, when she decided to retire, she looked forward to returning to the woods of East Texas. Today you will find "Tappa" in her cozy home nestled among the woods that overlook a small peaceful private lake, surrounded by nature.

When "Tappa" retired she left behind a busy life, that found her raising 4 children, (a daughter and 3 sons), living in several regions of the United States, plus 3 1/2 years in France, while her husband was in the military. Settling in the Austin, Texas area, "Tappa" has served Texas and the United States for many years working in the social services field, devoting the majority of her time to helping children. We know that she has enjoyed numerous accomplishments in her field of expertise, along with helping to get our East Texas Chapter of Master Naturalists established.

"Tappa's" interest in the outdoors over the many years is what got her involved with our Chapter along with her involvement in the local Audubon Society. She simply loves nature and from her living area you can watch the birds and squirrels as they frolic among the many trees in her backyard and the woods beyond.

## Clymers Meadows



The 1,400-acre Clymer Meadow Preserve contains some of the largest and most diverse remnants of the Blackland Prairie—the Texas version of the tallgrass prairie.

Named for pioneer Jim Clymer, who bought the first tracts in the 1850s, Clymer Meadow serves as a center for study of the Blackland Prairie and has been the site of more than a dozen scientific investigations ranging in scope from inventories of prairie invertebrates to noxious weed control.

Because of the prairie's rich agricultural soils, more than 99 percent has been cultivated, making the tallgrass the most-endangered large ecosystem in North America. The prairie provides habitat for a great number of seasonal bird species.

For your personal visit to Clymer's Meadow click on the links below:

[Gone With The Wynns to Clymers Meadows](#)

[The Nature Conservancy](#)



Jim Eidson

**April 21, 10am-4pm, Saturday,**  
 Earth day at Camp Tyler  
 Tyler, Tx Contact Rodd Wayne:  
 903-262-1269

**April 21, 10am-2pm, Saturday,**  
 Piney woods Native Plant Center  
 (Raguet Street) 5th Annual Earth  
 Day Celebration Flyer: [http://  
 www.sfasu.edu/campusrec/578.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/campusrec/578.asp)

**April 22, Sunday, Happy Earth Day**



**April 26, Thursday, 6:30 meet and greet, 6:45pm Chapter Monthly Meeting, Topic: Star Gazing and Light Pollution by Paul R. Shaw, M.Sc., AAPT, ASET, Center Support Staff, Center for Earth and Space Science Education, Tyler Junior College**



**April 27 Friday & again April 28, Saturday [New East Texas Fish Hatchery to Hold Open House April 27 and 28](#) - ATHENS—** Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) officials have announced that the new John D. Parker East Texas State Fish Hatchery (ETFH) will be open for public viewing.

**April 28, Saturday, 8am,**  
 Bird Tyler State Park with Boyd Sanders.

**May 5, Saturday,**  
**Happy Cinco de Mayo**  
**Chapter Activity Day,**  
 The Nature Center,  
 11942 FM 848, Tyler, TX



**May 5, Saturday, [Cinco de Mayo Celebration at Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center May 5](#) ATHENS**  
 —The annual Cinco de Mayo celebration at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. May 5.

**May 5, Saturday, 8am, Bird Tyler State Park** with Boyd Sanders. Come out to Tyler State Park and do some birding most any Saturday at 8am and we will have a bird tour to the hotspots in the park.

**May 6, Friday, 7pm:** a free one-night screening of "Ghost Bird" at in The Cole Art Center @ The Old Opera House in downtown Nacogdoches. The documentary received the Cine 2010 Golden Eagle Award and the Southern Soul of Independent Film Award. Cole Art Center is located at 329 E. Main St. For more information, please call (936) 468-1131.

All Abuzz About Bug! <http://bugguide.net/node/view/15740> We are an online community of naturalists who enjoy learning about and sharing our observations of insects, spiders, and other related creatures. [Misc. Newsletter Photos by Mary Ann Nilson, Lindale, TX]

**May 11, Friday, 2pm-7pm,** Dallas Annual Butterfly Plant Sale at Texas Discovery Gardens enjoy native and adapted plants. Plant Safari (Preview Day) - **New Date!** May 11, 2012 from 2 pm – 4 pm An annual butterfly plant sale may 11-12. Texas Discovery Gardens, Dallas Texas. (they will have 3 species of native milkweed.



**May 12, Saturday 10am-2pm**  
 VSH Wildscape Workday, The Nature Center, 11942 FM 848, Tyler, TX 75707

**May 12, Saturday, [International Migratory Bird Day](#)** Tyler State Park 8 AM-3PM Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day (903) 597-5338

May 13, Sunday,  
Happy Mothers Day



From Mary Ann's Garden

**May 18, Friday 10am-5pm, AT \$10 Texas Amphibian and Mussel Watch Train the Trainer Workshops** Tuscola, Texas [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/texas\\_nature\\_trackers/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/texas_nature_trackers/). Abilene State Park, 150 Park Road 32, Tuscola, Texas. Registration required: Jan Carrington at (325) 665-8594 or [mjcarrington@att.net](mailto:mjcarrington@att.net) Learn how to identify amphibian and freshwater mussel species and participate in scientific research as members of an important Texas Nature Tracker Partnership. CPE and TEEAC credit available for educators.

**May 18, Friday, 8:30-4:30 BIRDING-BY-EAR WORKSHOP** (\$75), is starting on the SFA campus in Nacogdoches during the **LONE STAR REGIONAL NATIVE PLANT CONFERENCE** Join Cliff Shackelford as he teaches a full-day course on learning birdsong during the 6th Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference hosted by the SFA Gardens. The course, Inside and outside classes includes a sack lunch and transportation to our field sites, is \$75/person; all proceeds go to the Piney woods Native Plant Center. <http://sfagardens.sfasu.edu> or email Dawn Stover at [dparish@sfasu.edu](mailto:dparish@sfasu.edu).

Lindale American Legion Entrance



**May 19, Saturday, 8am-4pm, Armed Forces Appreciation Day,** Lindale American Legion, If you would like a **FRE E 10x10 booth** to sell or advertise a club, items to display, etc., Contact ETCMN Mary Ann Nilson, 903-882-5366



**May 19, Saturday, 8am, Bird Tyler State Park** with Boyd Sanders.

**May 24, Thursday, 6:30 meet & greet, 6:45 Chapter Monthly Meeting,** Friends of the Neches River by Michael Banks, Co-Director of the Friends of the Neches River.

**May 26, Saturday, 8am-5pm, Mineola Nature Fest,** Mineola Nature Preserve

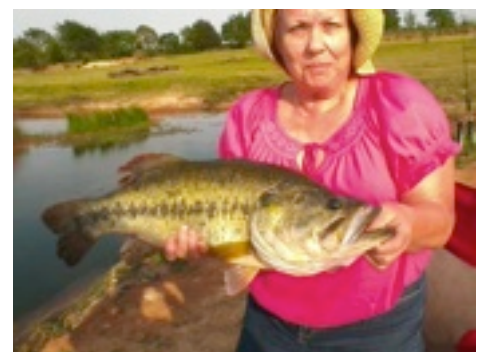


**May 26, Saturday, 8AM, Bird Tyler State Park** with Boyd Sanders

**May 28, Monday, MEMORIAL DAY** Quotes, Poems, Pictures and Interesting Facts: <http://www.e-forwards.com/2011/05/memorial-day-quotes-poems-pictures-and-interesting-facts/>



**June 2, Saturday, Legendary Anglers to be Inducted into Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame - National Fishing Day 9AM-4 PM,** Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, ATHENS—Professional angler Tommy Martin of Hemphill and lure manufacturer and angler Lonnie Stanley of Huntington will be inducted into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame June 2, 2012, at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens. (903) 670-2266



**ETCMN Barbara Thompson's backyard catch of the day!**

**National Fishing and Boating Week- June 2-10**

## "Links to make you Think"

### Texans love their parks:

As of April 15 almost \$2 million has been raised in support of the Texas State Parks system.

The Texas State Parks System which started 2012 facing a \$4.5 million budget gap because of last year's record drought, heat and wildfires. A total of \$1,915,415.13 in donations has been donated since Texas State Parks Department leaders appealed for help last December.

In the last month alone, \$521,853.91 of that amount has come in since March 15. Leaders say the most important thing people can do to help this spring is to visit state parks, since visitor fees pay for about half the cost to operate the state park system. For information about visiting parks, or to make a donation, go to

[www.texasstateparks.org](http://www.texasstateparks.org).



Web Photo:

New web site for big game: Hunters and landowners can now access the new Texas Big Game Awards site for the latest news, entry photos, award celebration information and more. In its 21st year, the TBGA is a joint program by Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Texas Wildlife Association to promote hunter education and wildlife management and to highlight the vital role hunters play in habitat conservation. The new site is at: [www.texasbiggameawards.org/](http://www.texasbiggameawards.org/).

### Swimming Eagle Video!

Ingenuity....that's why this is our national bird. This footage was taken at Mallard Lakes subdivision in Baton Rouge.

Someone had shot a nutria, and it was floating dead in the water. I can't believe what this eagle did to bring that nutria in. I never saw an Eagle doing a breast-stroke before.

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/87xNpOYQI4?rel=0>

### Old Oak at Ken Hands home on Hwy 16, Lindale, TX



"[Birding Warblers](#)" Jessie Barry and Chris Wood in late April 2011 they found 18 warblers in Texas in 24 hours. [Watch now.](#) Happy birding!

The Pitbull verses the kitten video:

<http://sorisomail.com/partilha/188658.html>

Identification, Images, & Information For Insects, Spiders & Their Kin For the United States & Canada

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/51596>

The Agricultural Revolution: Crash Course World History #1

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=fvwpb&NR=1&v=Yocja\\_N5s1I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=fvwpb&NR=1&v=Yocja_N5s1I)  
John Green investigates the dawn of human civilization. John looks into how people gave up hunting and gathering to become agriculturalists, and how that change has influenced the world we live in today. Also, there are some jokes about cheeseburgers.

### East Texas Farm and Ranch Club

Web Site: <http://easttexasfarmandranchclub.com/>

Look us up on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/East-Texas-Farm-and-Ranch-Club-Scholarship-und/120014641420981>

A list of weeds can be found at the following web site: <http://essmextension.tamu.edu/plantsdev/common-name-list/>

You can read past issues of ETCMN, The Whistler Duck Newsletter by visiting our website at <http://txmn.org/etwd> and clicking "Newsletter" then the month you would like to view.

EVENTS: East Texas Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists do not recommend or endorse items of interest published in The Woodduck Whistler. Items of interest are for information only.

## The Nature Center Herbarium Project - Tyler



The East Texas Chapter Master Naturalist (ETCMN) Herbarium Group is dedicated to collecting, identifying, pressing/drying, and mounting the plants of the 10 counties of the ETCMN.



Our goal is to provide teaching materials for outreach to both adults and children, and to preserve plant history of Smith County. At this point we have over 380 specimens in our collection, most of which have been mounted. The collection has been enlarged through donation of specimens from University of Texas-Tyler Botany department. The collection is stored in the main building at TPWD Tyler Nature Center. The collection is preserved in a cabinet specifically designed for plant specimens and was donated through a grant from East Texas Woods and Water.

Authorities at BRIT (Botanical Research Institute of Texas) have noted that Smith County is among several counties in northeast Texas that is botanically under-collected. This means we have an opportunity to identify plants not yet identified in these counties. The Nature Center Herbarium is intended to be an

educational tool for school children, the general public, and to provide assistance in identifying invasive plants to the community, and assist landowners in identifying plants that are endemic to this area of Texas. A computer database has been developed and we are hoping to get it on our website in the not too distant future.

If you bring a specimen for identification: Please collect as much of the plant as possible including the roots, leaves, fluorescence, fruit, etc. If the plant is plentiful, bring several so everyone in the workshop will have a sample to work with. Clean as much dirt as possible from the root system, put the specimen in a plastic zip-lock type bag, breath into the bag to provide moisture and, refrigerate until you are ready to bring the specimen to the workshop. A specimen should keep for several days in the refrigerator. These workshops are intended to teach the keying process, plant characteristics, vocabulary, etc. We have no professional botanists so we will be learning together. Several of us have been collecting and learning for several years so we do have some background and at times, have access to several TPWD employees who can assist us.



Gloria Rognlie,  
Project Coordinator.  
Wednesday, 4/25, 1:00  
PM workshop will be  
at at Old Sabine  
Bottom Wildlife  
Management Area in

Lindale. This area has many specimens not found in other areas. Specimens collected in this area will be collected for both OSBWMA and The Nature Center. Tappa Burt (903) 882-5532 will be leading the workshop. For questions, contact Tappa at [tappa@hughes.net](mailto:tappa@hughes.net). Tappa's cell will not work at OSBWMA so you will need to call the OSBWMA office (903) 881-8233 if you need to contact Tappa.

## May Management Tip of the Month

by: Billy Higginbotham, Professor and Extension Wildlife and Fisheries Specialist-Texas AgriLife Extension Service



Forages planted for deer should:

- produce at least 2,000 pounds of dry weight forage per acre,
- be plants the deer will readily eat,
- meet the nutritional needs of deer (at least 16% crude protein content in late summer), and
- be available when deer need them most (July, August and January/February).

Make spring plots larger and plant fewer of them to spread out the browsing pressure. In the fall, plant many small, cool-season plots at the rate of 1 acre per 100 acres of habitat.

From "Wildlife & Fish"  
Management Calendar

You can obtain the complete calendar ("Order the full calendar B-6197 for \$9.95 + tax and shipping from the Texas AgriLife Bookstore ([agrilifebookstore.org](http://agrilifebookstore.org)) or by calling 888-900-2577).



# Crane Fly Season

Common Name: Crane fly -

Scientific Name: Varies - Order: Diptera



Article and Photo by Mary Ann Nilson

## HUGE CUTTER ANT HILL!

Fascinating!

Video of a huge ant hole that was filled in with cement and dug up to see what it looked like. Very interesting and video is short. <http://www.dump.com/2011/08/30/worlds-biggest-ant-hill-video/>

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Cliff Swallows, Lindale, Texas



April 2012 Photo by Mary Ann Nilson

### [East Texas State Fair Farmers Market](#)

Time to start getting ready for opening day!!

It won't be long...onions planted, strawberries planted, potatoes are in the ground. Market opens May 5th.

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Six-Legged Giant Stick Insect, thought extinct, found in a secret hideaway, hidden for over 80 years, labeled a "tree lobster".

Click on the link for the story.

<http://tinyurl.com/6-legged-giant>

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Everything you would want to know about fishing—from how-to videos and where-to-go locators to weekly fishing reports—can be found on TPWD's website: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/fish/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/fish/)  
**-- You can even buy your license online.**



The End

These things have been trying to get inside our apartments and houses in this area for a month now. One can hardly open a door without one of them falling inside or fluttering about. I knew they were harmless, but didn't know what they were. I used to call them "Texas mosquitoes."

However, they are not mosquitoes at all, but Crane flies. Some people think these look like Texas-sized mosquitoes. They have also wrongly been called "mosquito hawks." Crane flies are large tan-colored fragile flies with long legs. Adults and larvae do not feed on mosquitoes. Larval forms of crane flies are grey-brown cylindrical larvae which may bear fleshy lobes on the (posterior) end. Occasionally, the segments towards the end of the body can be greatly expanded.

There are many species of these flies that occur in Texas. The term "mosquito hawk" generally refers to dragonflies (Odonata), but could also refer to the large true mosquito species in the genus, Toxorhynchites (Diptera), which have larval stages that are predaceous on mosquito larvae.

Larvae are often encountered under layers of decomposing leaves in wet locations such as ditch banks in December and January. Adults emerge in February and March.

Larvae have chewing mouthparts. Crane fly larvae feed primarily on decomposing organic matter. Adults do not feed. They commonly occur in moist environments such as woodlands, streams and flood plains although some species inhabit open fields, dry rangeland and even desert environments. In compost piles, they often occur on the soil surface below the pile of decaying vegetation. Some species have been reported to feed on roots of forage crops, turf grasses and seedling field crops. Usually their presence causes little concern because they are assisting in the process of decomposition. Larvae have not been reported to feed on vegetable transplants or garden plants in Texas. Adults have long slender legs which are easily broken and may be missing in some specimens.

Large numbers of adult crane flies can be a nuisance indoors, but are medically harmless, and not generally considered a pest. They are clumsy, erratic flyers and can be easily swatted or caught by a housecat, as some of my neighbors will testify.

For additional information, contact your local Texas AgriLife Extension agent or search [for other state Extension offices.](#)  
<http://insects.tamu.edu/fieldguide/bimg215.html>

**East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists**

P.O. Box 131184  
 11942 CR 848, Tyler, Texas 75707  
 Tyler, Texas 75713

**Directions to the THE NATURE CENTER:**

Turning off Loop 323, turn onto North State Highway 248 (Also called University Boulevard). Turn right onto FM 848 (Also called Bascom Road)  
 The Nature Center of Tyler is located on the right.

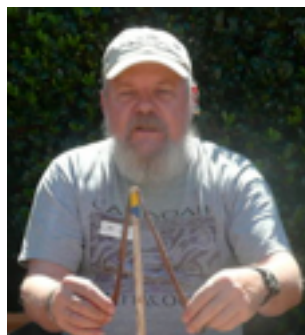
**Monthly Meetings**

We always meet the **Fourth Thursday** of each month, 6:45pm, at The Nature Center  
 11942 CR 848, Tyler, Texas 75707

Join us at **6:30 PM** for socializing and let's get to know each other before our **6:45 PM** meeting.  
 Bring a friend, invite a guest, everyone is welcomed.

**Officers & Committee Chairs**

- Neil Stilley** - President
  - Mike Price** - VSH & Vice President
  - Janet Cook** -Secretary
  - Laura Wilson** - Treasurer
  - Richard LeTourneau** - AT
  - Cindi McCullough** -VHS & Database Records
  - Helen Mar Parkin** - Membership
  - Laura Wilson/Janet Cook** -AT & Curriculum
  - Jay Dickson** - Public Relations & Outreach
  - Barbara Thompson/Mary Ann Nilson** - Newsletter
  - Kevin Herriman** - TPWD Advisor
  - Chad Gulley**- AgriLife Advisor
- The Woodduck Whistler is a monthly publication of the East Texas Chapter of Master Naturalists program. News, stories, comments, photos, and ideas are welcome.*  
**Deadline is 15th of every month!!**  
 Please send items to Barbara Thompson or Mary Ann Nilson at [tmn.editor@gmail.com](mailto:tmn.editor@gmail.com)



**President's Corner  
 - May 2012**

Greetings All,

The rains we had a while back were just what the frogs and toads at the pond needed. The Gray Tree frogs and Woodhouse's Toads were in force, singing their songs filling the air with life. The Rio Grande Chirping Frogs survived the summer drought and can be heard around the house with their bird like sounds. Recent rains in East Texas have made a comeback for the lakes and wetlands. Hopefully we'll have a mild summer this year.

On recent trips to Houston I had opportunities to pass through Memorial Park and saw firsthand the devastation caused by the drought last year. This city park is big and had beautiful pines along the roads that pass thru the park, now it looks like a placed that has been over harvested. Lots of trees are gone with big gapping spaces here and there. Some folks there say that the drought was compounded by the vast amount of concrete and black roof tops.

This increases heat which creates an extra drying out factor that was unfavorable for the trees, knocking out about 70% of the big trees. The place looks devastated but it not the first time the area has looked bad and should recover in time.

My recent trips to Houston were to teach archeology programs at the Fey School, a private school along Buffalo Bayou. The themes dealt with fishing camps on Buffalo Bayou, one modern (1950's) and the other a prehistoric one (1000 A.D.). The artifacts or trash from level one, the 50's fishing camp included old fishing lures, film can, tent stakes, 20 gauge shot gun shells, metal corner for a wooden cot, plus a few more things. Now the artifacts from level two, the prehistoric camp site included fish bones, alligator bones, shellfish, stone tools, and pot-shards. This site gave the students an opportunity to see that people of the past at one time or another harvested similar resources at one site along the bayou. The schools backyard borders the bayou and is part of their ecology program. My wife pointed out that it was pleasantly ironic that I should be teaching children on the same bayou where I spent so much of my own childhood, developing my earliest naturalist skills and looking for artifacts!

Take care my friends, Neal Stilley



Texas Nature Center