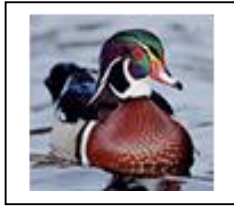


Wood Duck Whistler



East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists

August 2015 Volume 15, Issue 7



The Summer of Lizards

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Summer is for the lizards this year. Probably enjoy it more than the rest of us. Anyone inclined to stand around on the hot pavement and soak up some rays? Those lizards don't seem to mind.

Right now it's striped lizards. The first one I saw was the biggest. Back stripes were set off against bright green

sides. Several inches long that one and probably around a thumb or first finger for how big around. Probably thought I was chasing him down the sidewalk that goes to the front door.

My parents have talked about seeing these other lizards. I'd seen them around in the past. Colorful, too. Black and off-white

stripes down the body with a bright blue tail. They've seen two. I've seen a duller one. Wonder if lizards can get sun-bleached. He was a laid back lizard. He'd just run a few steps and look back. Then again when I moved. Not so scared perhaps.

How about all of you? Seeing lizards?



Our monthly chapter meeting will be held on Thursday, August 27th.

Something to think about:

East Texas Black Bear Task Force meeting August 27 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. To be held at The Science Center of the Big Thicket located in Saratoga, TX (south of Woodville). Complimentary lunch provided. RSVP to Sarah Fuller at

sarah.vivir@gmail.com or 409-383-4063.

Caddo Mounds Historical Site Saturday, September 19, 2015 1:00 PM.

Learn how to use the atlatl and other fun activities and stuff to learn about the people who use to live in the area. Neal Stilley and Rachel Galan doing the program. Contact her at 936.858.3218 or rachel.galan@thc.state.tx.us

2015 Master Volunteer Entomology Specialist

(MVES) training (September 28 - October 2, 2015 at the Tom Leroy Education Center located in the Montgomery County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office, Conroe, TX. The goal of the program is "to identify and recognize master volunteers who have received special training to support specific entomology-related programs or projects." Cost: \$325. <http://agrillife.org/insectspecialist/?p=285>

President's Corner

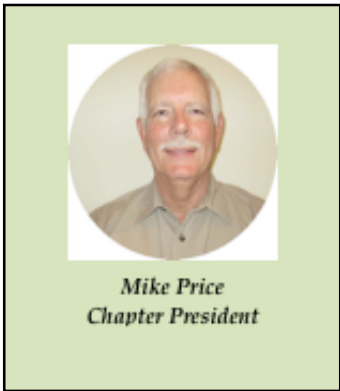
Well, it is finally August and we are halfway through summer. It has been surprisingly hot the last few weeks. It must be the total lack of rain the past 6 weeks. Usually with a wet spring the summer temperatures do not get to the 100 F mark, or so I have been told. I was joking with my wife yesterday and asked her what the best thing about August 12th is? She said she did not have any idea as sweat was slowly dripping off her after doing a little yard work early in the morning. I told her the best thing about August 12th was that it was not August 11th and we are one day closer to some cool fall weather.



In July we took a trip to Alaska to visit my daughter and her husband in Anchorage. We lived there 25 years before we moved back to Texas. Every August I wonder why we did that (moved back). But anyway, while up there getting quickly readjusted to 55 F nights and 65 F days we went deep sea

I usually talk about things going on at my farm in Shelby County, but have not been there too much lately. It is about 10 miles west of San Augustine close to the Louisiana border. I checked the weather there, and this past week the daily highs were 107 to 111. It only got to 105 in Tyler so I am glad I stayed here.

I do not usually mention things outside East Texas, but thought you might be interested in a boat trip I was on in Alaska. Got to see and hear something I never saw in person before, only on TV.



I call this picture "Living the Alaska Dream".



President's Corner (cont.)

fishing on a six person halibut charter. It was a 4 hour boat ride past snowcapped mountains to the "secret spot." We filled the boat with halibut, salmon, and rockfish on a picture perfect, calm sea, blue sky day.

We saw all the normal stuff: humpback whales one or two at a time, otters, thousands of birds nesting in rookeries on rock walls, schools of dolphins chasing the bow wake of the

boat, killer whales chasing salmon, mountain goats grazing on the sides of the mountains, sea lions resting on rock outcroppings, etc. On the way back is when the unexpected happened. We saw a pod of humpback whales moving in the distance with hundreds of seagulls circling overhead making a huge racket. The boat captain killed the engine and we drifted slowly forward. The whales disappeared

and the seagulls slowly came our way. After about five minutes the pod of close to 20 whales surfaced and breached 40 to 50 yards from our boat. We were so close we could see the krill being strained through the whales' baleen as they rose out of the water 15 to 20' and fell to the side making a huge splash. To say this was impressive would be an understatement. It was truly awesome.

Hope to see you at the monthly meeting.



Wildscapes with the Master Gardeners by Jerry Martin

On June 15, East Texas Chapter member Beverly Guthrie presented a PowerPoint program to the Henderson County Master Gardeners at their monthly meeting. Over 35 members enjoyed Beverly's presentation on creating wildscapes.

During her presentation, Beverly discussed the three main requirements of a wildscape – food, water, and shelter. The

audience enjoyed her talk and asked many questions. Hopefully the Chapter will convince Beverly to give this presentation at an East Texas Chapter meeting.

For those of you that haven't meet Beverly yet, she and her husband Phil transferred into our chapter in January of this year from the North Texas Chapter. Other East Texas Chapter members attending the meeting were Phil Guthrie,

Helen Mar Parkin, and Jerry Martin.





Honey Bees in Peril by Tamara Kratzer

We have come to accept the honey bee as one of those species we live with. Much like dandelions, squirrels, or birds. Either we watch them with butterflies attending flowers or run screaming bloody murder with a sting. Certainly the time for taking them for granted is long over. We realize they are invaluable to us while we notice something going wrong.

Beekeepers have long known them as our little helpers. They're also the first to realize when something is wrong. That is what happened back in 2006 when strange disappearances began. And by now we know that these

continued disappearances aren't normal.

Why is a still unanswered question, but there are plenty of clues. Just like us they can get sick and pick up nasty little parasites. Mites can weaken them and lead to death in large numbers. Varroa mites suck out their blood and tracheal mites can clog the tubes that they breathe through. Viruses can cause death of larvae or adults or development issues.

Other factors that affect honey bees are related to how they live and their environment. Often hives are taken to different areas to

pollinate someone's crops a number of times in a season. Perhaps this might stress them more than we know. They just don't realize they're working for us. Food quality may not always be good for them. Pollen can vary in nutrition.

An important environmental consideration is the use of pesticides. Crops are treated at various stages of their life cycles for different pests. People also treat their yards and gardens as well. Bees can be exposed at times. Systemic pesticides such as the neonicotinoids even work from inside the plants to poison what they fight against.

Apis mellifera aka European or Western Honey Bee

Studies have been inconclusive about any one single cause for what triggers the malady now known as colony collapse disorder (CCD). People don't agree on causes either, but more than likely several factors work together to stress and harm the honey bees. Debate is high on possible sub-lethal

effects of pesticides. Immune system problems seem to be evident, and even genetic reasons have come up to point to other problems within the affected bees.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a website <http://www.ars.usda.gov> under Bee Health with a load of

information about CCD, and Wikipedia has a good list and information about diseases and other problems that domestic honey bees face. For local, there is the East TX Beekeepers Association at <http://etba.info/> with informative newsletters. Take a look before the next issue for more.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT EAST TEXAS ARBORETUM

The mission of the East Texas Arboretum and Botanical Society, located at 1601 Patterson Road in Athens, is “to display, research and interpret the natural environment of the plant communities of East Texas, to provide educational activities for children and adults, to represent the past, present, and future of East Texas, and to exhibit formal gardens while maintaining the natural attributes of the site.” This hundred-acre

property, transformed from an old truck farm purchased in 1993, has three miles of gently sloping wooded trails, historic buildings, and a lovely garden maintained by the Henderson County Master Gardeners. Check out the Arboretum’s website at www.easttexasarboretum.com and click on Gardens and Trails to see photos of this beautiful site.

Unfortunately, the wind and heavy rains last spring (14” in one day!) wreaked havoc

on the grounds and structures, overflowing Willow Branch Creek and damaging footbridges, washing out trails, destroying a bat house, and leaving sand and debris everywhere. Periods of drought had weakened many of the trees, some of which have fallen across the trails. Repairs and cleanup will cost thousands of dollars. The small staff and

maintenance crew can handle the heavy duty reconstruction, but they desperately need volunteers to help with the following tasks:

Repair of the bridges: Crawley’s Crossing is currently closed because of a collapsed piling and The Two-Doug Crossing is partially covered with sand and debris.

Removal of woody plants in the bog.



The stream bed washed out over the bridge and left sand behind (below). Bobby Hill, trail guide, looks up at a downed tree over the trail (above). (Helen Mar Parkin photos.)

Urgent! Volunteers Needed (cont.) by Helen Mar Parkin

Cleanup and widening of the trails: Water rushing down the hillsides washed out the trails, cutting deep gullies and exposing tree roots. Weeds and invasive plants have encroached on the trails in some areas, making passage difficult. The construction of a new path is needed to circumvent the worst area.

Trail shelter repair and picnic area cleanup.

Replacement of the bat house.

If you would like to help, please contact Tamara Kratzer at elenagonzalestk@yahoo.com. Cleanup efforts will begin in earnest in the fall when the weather is cooler.



Wash out along the paved trail in the front area of the arboretum.



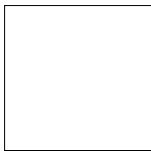
Bobby Hill pointing out how washed out one of the trails ended up.

2015 Officers & Committee Chairs

Mike Price/Lance Homeniuk - President
Lance Homeniuk - Vice President
Helen Mar Parkin - Secretary
Jerry Martin - Treasurer

Mike Price/Lance Homeniuk - Volunteer Projects Approval
Jerry Martin - Database Manager
Janet Cook - Webmaster & AT Approval
Neal Stillely - Curriculum
Laura Wilson - Curriculum & AT Approval
Brenda McWilliams - Curriculum
Helen Mar Parkin - Membership Manager
Mike Price - Membership
Brenda McWilliams - PR and Publicity
Tamara Kratzer - Newsletter Editor

Kevin Herriman - TPWD Advisor
Chad Gulley - TX A&M AgriLife Ext. Advisor



Monthly Programs

We meet the **Fourth**

Thursday

at The Nature Center

6:00 to 6:30 PM

Special Activity

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.

Directions and Dues

East Texas Chapter
Master Naturalists
Meeting Facility:
The Nature Center
11942 FM 848
Tyler, Texas 75707-5234

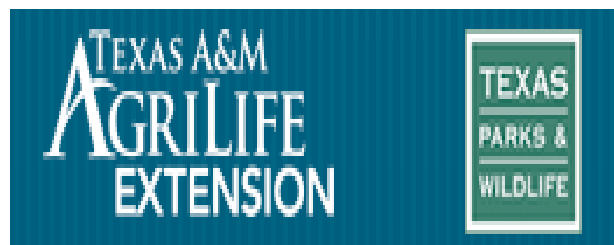
Turning off Loop 323, turn south onto North State Highway 248, (Also called University Boulevard). Turning right onto FM 848 (AKA Bascom Road), the Nature Center is located

on the right (West side). Please send \$20.00 individual (\$35.00 couple)
Annual Chapter dues to:
ETCMN Attn: Treasurer
Box 131184

*Your news, stories, comments, photos, and ideas are needed. Tell us about where you volunteer and what you're doing, **Deadline is 15th of every month!** Please send items to Tamara Kratzer at tmn.editor@gmail.com*



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