



# Wood Duck Whistler

## February 2026



## A Message From President Carol Lanthrum

Greetings, my fellow Master Naturalists!

It seems like things start a little slower in winter. It's cold and nature is quieter. However, our spring training class has started, and of course there are ways you can help, and earn AT and VSH!

Kay Jenkins, Director, and Wanda Rauscher, Co-Director, have been working hard to get speakers and students. At the time I am writing this message, we have 10 students, somewhat less than previous years.

Retention of new students after their initial training is always important to the growth of our chapter. We all know that not everyone continues after initial training for many reasons: not what they expected; life/work issues; not feeling a part of the group. The last one is something each of us can help with.

- **Mentor!** Karen Rueb-Hall is facilitating the mentor program. Be a mentor. It is a great way to get to know the new students! You help students by having someone they can call with questions about VMS and class work. Your encouragement helps the student complete the curriculum and certification requirements. You are also their social connection to the chapter. Introduce them to current members, especially ones that share an interest of the student. Invite them to volunteer activities you are doing.
- **Attend classes and field trips, following the Director's guidelines.** If you are not a mentor, just talk to the students; make them feel welcome, needed and important. Kay will keep you informed about how you can attend classes and help with field trips.

### **Chapter Meeting Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 6:30 PM at Tyler Nature Center**

Speaker TBA

Our first board meeting is **Sunday, February 1st** at the Tyler Nature Center. If you are new to a director position, meet from 2 to 3 pm with the person who was the director last year. This is a great time to find out all the details of the position, what happened last year, and get ideas for 2026.

The full board meets at 3pm. Come with ideas about how we can make 2026 a successful year for our chapter, and the way your area can contribute to our success.

All members are invited to attend the board meeting. It is not limited to directors.

ETCMN Monthly Chapter Meeting are held the fourth Thursday of the month at the Tyler Nature Center, 11942 FM 848, Tyler, TX 75707. Meet and greet at 6:45 PM; meeting at 7:00 PM.

Everyone is welcome!

If you are interested in learning more about the business side of the chapter, all ETCMN Members are invited to attend the quarterly chapter Board Meetings.



**Recertification Awards  
Presented  
January 22, 2026**

**Initial Certification  
Dennis Minor  
Zachary Woods**

**2025 Recertifications  
Anton Yastrebov**



The Wood Duck Whistler is a monthly publication of ETCMN. News, essays, comments and ideas are always welcome. Please email them to Casey Boggs at [caseylynnboggs@gmail.com](mailto:caseylynnboggs@gmail.com)

**AT Opportunity:** 2 hours for each class under AgriLife Seminars

Entomology Short Course

Description:

This class is a short dive into the huge world of entomology. Through a four-class series- each 2 hours long- participants can learn about the basics of entomology.

Classes cover arthropod classification, identification of common insect orders, identification of common arachnids, and beneficial arthropod groups.

Class is open to anyone. If you have taken the Master Volunteer Entomology Advanced Training, some material may be repeated. No volunteer hours required/no certification offered after class is complete.

Registration link here:

<https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/ereg/newreg.php?>

There is an **AT opportunity** for Bat Project Acoustic Monitoring: TMN AT Report Hours

Below is the link to register for the Texas Nature Trackers first 2026 BAT Project webinar. Details and agenda on registration page.

Event: Virtual on Teams: February 13th 6:00-7:30PM

[BAT Project Webinar Link](#)

# What's Coming Up?

by Kay Jenkins

## Spring 2026 New Member Training

Plans for the Spring 2026 new member training are being finalized. Classes start on January 20, 2026 and end on May 19, 2026.

Co-directors, Kay Jenkins and Wanda Rauscher, will be reaching out to members to encourage you to invite friends to sign up for the training. Two new field trips are included in the 2026 training. In March, the class will go to Longview Arboretum for training and in May the class will go to the Richland Chambers Wildlife Management Area. The May field trip will be led by staff from the Tarrant County Regional Water District who partner with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in building and managing the wetlands on site. Opportunities for current members to volunteer to help with the training classes will be announced soon.

## Spring Workdays at the Tyler Nature Center

Spring brings opportunities for members to help spruce up the wildscape at the Tyler Nature Center during cool weather. Upcoming Saturday workdays are **January 17, February 7** and **March 7** starting at **9:00 a.m.** We usually work until noon, but volunteers can come and go as they are available. We plan to submit grant proposals to help fund the purchase of new plants and mulch for the wildscape.

Please contact Kay Jenkins at [kvjenkins86@gmail.com](mailto:kvjenkins86@gmail.com) if you plan to come to one of the workdays so she can let you know if a workday is changed due to weather or other concerns.

## Meetings In the Community

[Tyler Audubon Society](#) – 2nd Tuesdays, 6:30 PM, location TBD

[NPSOT](#) - Tyler - Our first meeting of the year will be a brief (but very necessary) business meeting on **Monday, February 9** at 4:00 PM in the Tyler Nature Center, 11942 FM 848. In addition to the usual committee reports, announcements, and Q&A, Chapter members in attendance will be asked to vote on three measures that will allow us to fulfill Chapter management responsibilities while there are vacancies in two of the four Chapter offices: President and Vice-President.

[NPSOT](#) – Wood County – 1st Wednesday, 2:00 PM Sorrelle Farm, Mineola

[NPSOT](#) – Longview – 4th Thursday 2:00 PM, Longview Arboretum

[NETFO](#) – 1st Wednesday 6:30 PM, Community Connections Building, 501 Pine Tree Road, Longview, TX

November 1, 2025-April 30, 2026 - Project Feeder Watch <https://feederwatch.org/about/detailed-instructions>

More Community Events Starting on p 13



# Brazos Penstemon (*Penstemon tenuis*)

Text and photographs by Ann Reynolds

Soon. Soon, our early blooming, Texas native wildflowers will begin to flower. One of my favorites is Brazos Penstemon (*Penstemon tenuis*), also known as Brazos Beardtongue, Gulf Penstemon, Gulf Beardtongue, Gulf Coast Penstemon, Gulf Coast Beardtongue, Sharp-sepal Penstemon, Sharp-sepal Beardtongue. It is found specifically in the southeastern and East Texas regions, thriving in damp, open areas and riparian environments.



The plant's most striking feature is its flowers—tubular blossoms in shades ranging from soft lavender to rich blue-violet. Arranged along upright stems, the blooms open sequentially from bottom to top, extending the flowering period from March into May. Up close, the flowers reveal the trait that gives beardtongues their common name: a fuzzy, sterile stamen, or “beard,” tucked inside the bloom. This feature is subtle but distinctive, a small detail that rewards careful observation.

True to its Sharpsepal name, the plant's sepals—the leaf-like structures that cradle each flower bud—come to sharp, pointed tips. These angular sepals contrast beautifully with the smooth, flared petals, adding texture and definition to the plant's overall form. Narrow, lance-shaped leaves line the stem, their muted green providing a calm backdrop for the vivid flowers.

Beyond its visual appeal, this plant plays an important ecological role. The tubular flowers are perfectly shaped for native bees, butterflies, and especially hummingbirds, which are drawn to the blooms for their nectar. In early spring, when floral resources can be limited, this plant becomes an important stop on the pollinators' seasonal circuit.



Gardeners and wildflower enthusiasts increasingly appreciate this native for its adaptability. It requires little supplemental water once established and prefers full sun, making it a natural choice for native plant gardens, prairie restorations, wildscapes and low-maintenance landscapes. When planted in groups, it creates a striking sweep of color that feels both intentional and wild—a hallmark of good native design.



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Like many Texas wildflowers, Brazos Penstemon carries a sense of place. It does not demand attention with showy size or overpowering fragrance. Instead, it rewards those who slow down, notice the subtleties of its slender stems and blue-violet blooms. Brazos penstemon (*Penstemon tenuis*) is a versatile and attractive native perennial that bridges the gap between ornamental garden use and ecological function. Its colorful blooms, adaptability to a range of soils and ability to support pollinators make it an excellent choice for gardeners in suitable climates—especially in Texas and the Gulf Coast region.

# Why **Are** Bats Nocturnal?

by Carol Lanthrum



According to Bat Conservation International, there are 1500 species of bats in the world, making up 22% of mammal species. And almost all are strictly nocturnal, except for a very few isolated species that infrequently feed in the daytime!

This is curious because bats vary by diet, habitat, and roosting behavior. Bats are not blind and can hunt and navigate by sight and echolocation. There are

species that live in latitudes where there are 24 hours of daylight half the year. Yet most bats stick to the nighttime feeding schedule, emerging between 10pm and 2am.

Scientists have proposed 3 hypotheses: competition, predation and thermoregulation.

There is more competition from birds in the daytime. Maybe birds are better competitors for insects, which would drive bats to hunt for lower quality resources. By feeding at night, bats avoid direct competition. But scientists do not think the evidence for this is very strong. In areas where swallows and swifts feed at dusk, emerging bats stay at higher altitudes until the birds go to roost. And bats will chase away insect-feeding nighthawks, even though the bats are much smaller. Also, some bats and birds feed on fruit and nectar, which are usually abundant.

So what about avoiding predators? Studies conducted by scientists indicated that some bats may delay their emergence time because of predators; some are not affected. But maybe this is not the issue, as 90% of bats lost to predation is due to owls, who also feed at night.

How about hyperthermia? Bats do not sweat. Scientists have studied models which suggest the heat load on bats is affected by body size, wing shape, flight speed and wing coloration. But bats living at cooler latitudes still maintain their nocturnal feeding pattern.

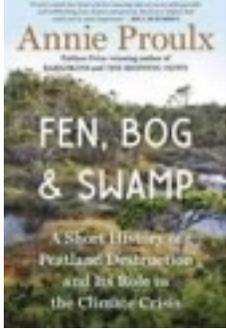
Others suggest it may be due to their evolutionary past. Studies of mid-Eocene bats determined that these bats used echolocation and had similar diets to modern bats. But it is not clear all the environmental factors they may have had to deal with.

Apparently, scientists do not have a definitive answer, but... isn't it curious?

Summarized from BCI; Alyson Brokaw, PhD, Blog: The Bat Pub

# Book Reviews

by Lance Homeniuk

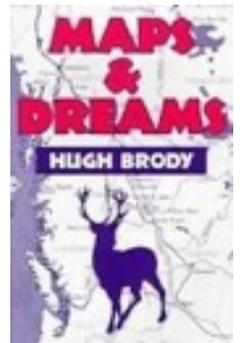


Fen, Bog & Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and its Role in the Climate Crisis. by Annie Proulx. Scribner, NY, NY, 2022. Paperback, 196 pages.

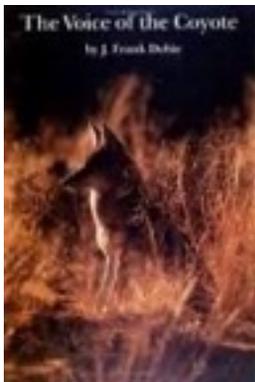
There are so many technical, dialectical, overlapping names of wetlands that just reading this book will increase your vocabulary markedly. It will also inform you of their natural and historic wonders, their important contribution to the worldwide environment and climate, and may even nudge you toward action.

Maps and Dreams by Hugh Brody. 1981, Pantheon Books, 294 pages, hardcover.

From 1978 through 1979 Hugh Brody spent 18 months living with and interviewing groups of Athapaskan Indians in northeastern British Columbia. He was commissioned to map their hunting, trapping and fishing areas, on which their economy of subsistence is based, prior to the construction of the Alaskan natural gas pipeline. His account consists of alternating chapters, the “Maps” being the collected social science data that went to form his official report; the “Dreams” of the people he lived with and from whom he learned.



I was especially interested in the book because it is set in and populated by the inhabitants of a small area I got to know as a teen – bush of the northern Alberta and BC wilderness and the members of the Slavey band of the Fontas and Kantah villages near Ft Nelson. I can still remember the fragrance of Old George’s cabin (redolent of dried apple/ smoked moose meat/ tanned leather/ pipe tobacco). But I also remember the hordes of muskeg mosquitoes and No-See-Ums of summer and minus 40F temps of the winters. So this book was as close to returning as I will get.



Voice of the Coyote by J. Frank Dobie. UNP, Lincoln, NE, 1961. Paperback, 386 pages.

The great Texan folklorist and historian has collected just about every written and oral history mentioning our most controversial native canine. In one volume you won’t find a table of contents but there are chapters of natural history, anecdotes, songs, folktales from native, Anglo, & Hispanic cultures, with roots in the old world, and other animals (e.g. Reynard the fox). It is a sympathetic account of a creature that has elicited ambivalent responses, even among the First Nations peoples. He does not serve up everything equally; he’s frank in expressing skepticism about some of the first- and second-person accounts.

Dobie seems to have been everywhere in America and Mexico, listened to everybody, and read everything concerning his subject available up to 1941. His hefty paperback is a one-volume encyclopedia of coyote lore but way more entertaining than any objective monograph.

# Wildlife in the Upper Amazon

Text and Photos by Dave Shafer



My wife, Debbie, and I recently returned from a cruise on the upper Amazon through Natural Habitat Adventures. This brief article will review some salient features of the Amazon basin and give examples of its remarkable biologic diversity. The most difficult part of preparing this article was winnowing down my images to a reasonable number. I have included examples of birds, mammals, reptiles and butterflies/dragonflies. Most of these species I have included are specific to Central/South America. I have not included hummingbirds, which warrant a separate article, perhaps at a later date.

The Amazon is the world's largest river in terms of volume of water carried, comprising 20% of the total river water volume in the world. It is the world's second longest river, second only to the Nile (although some authorities claim the Amazon is the longest). Its origin is from a glacier on Mt Yanpaja high in the Andes in Peru at an altitude of 21,768 feet. Our trip was centered on the two main tributaries of the Amazon—the Marañon and Ucayali rivers. Their confluence marks the official start of the Amazon west of the town of Iquitos. Iquitos has the distinction of being the largest city in the world accessible only by boat or plane, as there is no road access. This area is only 2 degrees of latitude from the equator.



The Amazon basin is home to 1400 species of mammals, 1500 bird species, 1500 amphibian species, 3000 + fish species, and over 1 million insect species, 40% of which are beetles (*Coleoptera*), which comprises 25% of all known animal species on the planet. Butterflies are particularly plentiful. One 10,000 acre national park in Peru has over 2300 butterfly species in contrast to the 725 species in all of North America.

The major threat to this biodiversity is, of course, deforestation. Although some progress had been made in decreasing illegal burning and cutting of the rain forest, the political leadership in Brazil has relaxed regulations regarding deforestation which has actually increased the rate of loss of rain forest in the past decade. This has implications not only for loss of biologic diversity, but affects the ability of the Amazon basin to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and generate oxygen for the planet. In fact, due to deforestation, much of which is burned, releasing CO<sub>2</sub>, the Amazon region now generates 13% more CO<sub>2</sub> than it absorbs in photosynthesis. (The Economist, 21 May, 2022, "Rapid deforestation outweighs carbon capture by remaining trees".) Twenty percent of the world's oxygen is generated by the rain forest, so deforestation also has implications for life forms that depend on oxygen for their existence.

Now, on to the images! I have included a few images of birds, mammals, reptiles, and butterflies/dragonflies. Most of these images were obtained from a small 10 passenger skiff cruising the Amazon tributaries and thus our ability to examine terrestrial species of plants and animals was limited.

I tried to include only my best (sharpest) images but a few of the birds were too far away for a sharp image after cropping. I have included a few of these less than perfect images for birds that were too stunning to omit (IMHO). I have included the scientific names for those who want to obtain more information about specific species.

There was one bird we saw that ironically caused the most excitement for our expedition leaders/guides but left us gringos rather nonplussed. That bird was the Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*). This is a common bird of the Atlantic coast of North America. Our guides for the most part had never seen one before and thought it a worthy addition to their lifelist. Uniqueness is in the eye of the beholder.



Dave's amazing photographs continue on page 17...

# The Changing of the Gard

by Dr. Greg Grant

*When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect -  
Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac*

Folks, we gardeners now have an image problem, and I'm afraid much of it is deserved. Throughout my life, we have been the "good guys," mostly by way of landscaping beautification, floral design, food production and claiming the number one hobby in the world. But times are different now. As you probably know, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (my employer) is coordinator of the Texas Master Gardener program, a wildly successful volunteer initiative with programs in most of the 254 Texas counties. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service also co-ordinates (together with Texas Parks and Wildlife) the Texas Master Naturalist program, which is also growing in popularity.

Although I know of several people who are members of both, most tend to choose one or the other, with gardeners focused more on aesthetics or food production and with naturalists focused more on wildlife and ecosystems. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: I wish all Master Gardeners were also trained as Master Naturalists because the outdoor realm for both endeavors truly is one world.

Sadly, I hear gardeners more and more these days being branded as the "bad guys," especially for being over-reliant on fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation water, ephemeral landscapes and non-native exotic (including some invasive) plants.

Granted, our horticultural past has valued a hyperfocus on perfect plants and produce for flowers shows, displays and garden parties. Gardening shouldn't be about blue ribbons It should be about bluebirds, bluebonnets and blue skies. With pollinators and birds now suffering major declines in our country, together with an ever-increasing demand for diminishing water, it's high time we had a reset in the gardening world. Therefore, I'd like to propose a new paradigm for gardening.

First of all, we need to rely more on nature as a guide, less on books, magazines public gardens, social media and television. These idealized pinup landscapes are not sustainable or even attainable. They are basically artificial. We need real plants in real landscapes for a real world.

We also need to learn how to choose plants based on local soils and rainfall, not a selection from all over the world. Traditionally, we gardeners have taken pride in creating the exact conditions to grow an exotic plant to look at. That's not a garden; that's a zoo. We need to learn to grow plants that will survive on rainfall in our area or minimal water from what we have collected in cisterns and swales. I have grown weary arguing with folks who insist on irrigating everything to death in their landscape whenever they see a wilted shoot or brown leaf. Their poor plant selections require more water, which in turn leads to increased disease when watering all plants based on the weakest ones. Plants were put on earth to clean and save water, not to waste it. We all need to know where our water comes from, how much we use and where it goes when it leaves our property. We need to take full responsibility for its condition when it leaves our landscapes. The slower the water leaves us and the cleaner it is when it does, the better.

We as gardeners should learn to place equal value on bees, birds, blossoms, broccoli and butterflies. To choose one to the detriment of the others breaks the laws of nature and leads to non-sustainability. If it wasn't for insects, both good and bad, we wouldn't have birds, frogs, lizards, spiders, toads and the rest of the links in the chain. And speaking of nature, we also must learn that death, disease and decay are all perfectly natural. Slinging insecticides and fungicides every time something doesn't look right is down right irresponsible and far too often misguided or too late. to spray water, much less fungicides, herbicides and insecticides.

That brings us to lawns, which generally spend most of their existence sandwiched between agronomy, entomology, horticulture and plant pathology. Most homeowners (Americans in particular) are absolutely obsessed with their lawns. And, as most of you know, lawns require more irrigation water, more pesticides, more time, more money and more labor than most other segments of our landscapes. A good rule of thumb is to have no more than one-third of our landscape in mowed lawns. At least another third belongs in flowering borders or pocket prairies comprised of long-lived Texas-tough perennials.

Other than individual mound treatment for fire ants, we need to pledge to use no fertilizer, insecticides and fungicides on our lawns. I know it can be done because that's how I do it. We need to irrigate no more than once a week (minus rainfall), during June, July and August only. If you can't grow a lawn on that much water, then don't grow a lawn. Also send nothing from your lawn or landscape to the landfill. All grass clippings and leaves need to stay on site.

We also need to plant only native shade trees. Because of their size and lifespan, large trees support a disproportionate number of insects, pollinators and other wildlife. So, it's critical that we use trees that these creatures evolved with. Texas is blessed with all kinds of native trees. There's no good reason for parks and other urban landscapes to rely on non-native ones.

We gardeners have a chance to be good guys because we know how to propagate, plant, prune and provide for all plants. Plus, there are lot of us and we have thousands of years of practice. As Master Gardeners, we can teach others what to do and how to do it. Planet Earth depends on the photosynthesis and respiration of plants. Life can't go on without plants - lots of them. We gardeners hold the key to the future.

*Reprinted with permission of Dr. Greg Grant  
Smith County Horticulturist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension  
Bachelor Degrees - Floriculture, Horticulture  
PhD - Forestry  
Author, Humorist, Historian*

Submitted by Ann Reynolds



# City Nature Challenge 2026

by Wanda Rauscher



*Photo by Wanda Rauscher*

By now most of you are familiar with the Spring Bioblitz that takes place on a global basis organized by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the California Academy of Sciences. It started as a friendly competition as to who could find the most species diversity and get the most people involved in making observations. Now the emphasis is changing to be more cooperative with higher quality observations. Our CNC project territory is our chapter catchment- Smith County and the 9 counties surrounding Smith. Count days will be **April 24-27, 2026** with identifications to be made April 28-May 10. Note that the organizers are giving us much more time to work on identifications!

## Project Goals:

- 1) Involve our neighbors — get non-Master Naturalist folks involved in observing our flora & fauna and posting to iNaturalist. We care about what we know — so let's help our neighbors learn! I would love to have chapter members plan to host bioblitzes/nature walk blitzes at area parks and nature centers both before the count days and during the count period. If this sounds like fun, please reach out to me and let's plan so events can happen!
- 2) Get observations in every county of our catchment. Our members are our best bet to get observations in every county of the catchment during CNC. Want to form small groups and plan to go out together? Want to see if we can get permission to visit salt flats or Carrizo sand areas? Or hey, go together to our Wildlife Management Areas?
- 3) Train more Master Naturalists to become identifiers. Note that we now have a chapter project "iNaturalist Identifications" to allow us to count identification volunteer time outside of bioblitzes, with just a few caveats. View the training that our Texas Nature Tracker biologists put together (with Sam Kieschnick) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJwrHUOVNik>. Maybe we should have an ID party with the field guides and other tools we each like to use and share them with each other & have food. Want to help plan?

I would love to have some members step forward to plan a spectacular CNC for East Texas Chapter.

Drop a note to [tmneasttxpres@yahoo.com](mailto:tmneasttxpres@yahoo.com) to let me know your interests!

# Words from Wadevillage

by R. Dale Wade

OK. So during winter many species by wing or hoof travel south to warmer climes, but what if you do not want to go? Well, there is an app for that. Many engage in brumation, and others drift into a state of hibernation. Whatever their preferred choice of involuntary dormancy, it all amounts to the same physiological characteristics: lower body temperature, lower heart rate, and lower respiratory rate. Plus, food becomes scarce, so why not just sleep through it.

What animal comes to mind first...bears. Actually bears do not hibernate as their body temperature drops only 12 to 15 degrees. Known as super hibernators, they just engage in a long winter's nap (dormancy) with neither food consumption nor waste excretion. However, if disturbed, a bear awakens immediately in a rather grumpy mood. So, try not to interrupt a good nap.

However, many animals are true hibernators. For example, the yellow-bellied marmot (*Marmota flaviventris*) breathes once or twice a minute while its heart beats only five times. Unlike the bear, the marmot's body temperature falls to around 37°F.



The list of true hibernators includes not only rodents, but bats as well. Hibernation for bats ranges from daily torpor to longer periods depending upon the species. They come out of hibernation periodically to eliminate waste and hydrate. Big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) metabolic rate slows to their taking one breath every two hours.



Nor do reptiles and amphibians hibernate, they enter into brumation. The difference being ectotherms, like snakes and frogs, use the environment to lower their body temperature and metabolic rate.

Many frogs submerge into ponds during winter where the ambient temperature does not dip below freezing. The exception is the wood frog (*Rana sylvatic*). This little guy buries itself in leaf litter, waits for a snow covering, and freezes 65% of its body water. During that time it produces a cryoprotectant, glycol, that serves as an anti-freeze.

As an ectotherm the common snapping turtle is incredibly cold-tolerant. When its aquatic habitat freezes over, the lower section does not. So, if the water below is 33°F, the turtle's body temperature matches that. It "breathes" by transferring oxygen from water as it passes over blood vessels in the mouth and throat, aka extrapulmonary respiration.

However, the more efficient method is butt breathing, aka cloacal respiration. Actually, it is not in a sense breathing as much as the transference of oxygen in and carbon dioxide out through the blood vessels of the cloaca.

So, different species have different modes to get through these cold days of winter. As for me, it is a good book in front of the fireplace and, perhaps, a bit of dormancy. How about you?

[View all posts by wadevillage](#)



**Northeast Texas Chapter Native Prairies Association of Texas  
Winter Bird Surveys Bioblitz – February 5th, 6th, 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Schedule:**

5th - Daphne Prairie - Morning - 8AM - 11 AM (Meet at Barn, Daphne Prairie, 4010 FM 1896)

5th - Harvey - Afternoon - 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (Meet at Barn, Daphne Prairie, 4010 FM 1896)

6th - Mattox Prairie - 9 AM to 11 AM (124 West Oak, Yantis, Texas 75497)

6th - Afternoon Ebel Grasslands - 3:00 - 5:30 PM 13152 FM 71E, Sulfur Bluff, TX 75481

7th - Talbot Prairies (Mary Talbot & Talbot Brothers Prairie) (8 AM to 11:30 AM) FM 4101 Gate

7th - Lunch Daphne Prairie

7th - Afternoon Birding Daphne & Local Environs

7th - Owl Prowl - Late Evening 5:30 - 6:30 Daphne

You are invited to join us for all or any part of 3 days of birding and all levels of birding experience are welcome including those new to birding. If you are interested in a more relaxed bit of birding then Saturday afternoon birding for pleasure at Daphne and nearby local sites may appeal. We are in need of recorders and spotters on the official counts so please volunteer! In between bird surveys we will probably meet at a local café (lunch on participant) before going to the next bird survey site or you can bring your own lunch if you are staying for the day. These bird surveys are very important as they can tell us a lot about the health of a prairie and the significance of the prairie sites to our bird populations. This is citizen science that provides valuable information on native prairies and you can be a part of that!

Please RSVP [www.texasprairie.org](http://www.texasprairie.org) or BF Hicks at [bfhicks@peoplescom.net](mailto:bfhicks@peoplescom.net) or [patmerkord@gmail.com](mailto:patmerkord@gmail.com)



# Lakes and Pines Chapter

(Wood & surrounding counties)

Wednesday, February 4th, 2:00-3:30pm

Bob Wells Nursery at Sorelle Farms

975 County Road 2220 in Mineola



Email us: [Lakes-and-Pines-Chapter@npsot.org](mailto:Lakes-and-Pines-Chapter@npsot.org)

Chapter Website: [npsot.org/chapters/lakes-and-pines/](http://npsot.org/chapters/lakes-and-pines/)



## “Vines & Ground Covers”

Texas native plants are great additions to any yard or landscape, but they're not all created equal. Why? Because Texas is a large and diverse state with 10 distinct ecoregions. Plants native to the Blackland Prairies (Dallas to Waco) or the Edwards Plateau (Austin / San Antonio) may not thrive in the Piney Woods of East Texas. To learn which ones will, join us for this clinic to learn about some of the vines and ground covers native to our part of the state.



Tim is a Texas Certified Nursery Professional (TCNP) with almost a decade of industry experience. Before joining the staff at Bob Wells Nursery at Sorelle Farms, he worked at garden centers in Plano and Frisco. A 3rd generation Texan, he's been gardening for over 50 years.

### TIM WARDELL

Texas Certified Nursery Professional  
Bob Wells Nursery at Sorelle Farms

**Join Us!**

**NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS MISSION STATEMENT:** Promote conservation, research and utilization of native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach, and example.



This year is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Great Texas Birding Classic (<https://tpwd.texas.gov/events/great-texas-birding-classic>) a state-wide birding competition to be held from April 15 to May 15, 2026. This is a great time to be out in the field as this is the heart of spring migration when birds are passing through East Texas making their way north from Central/South America to all parts of the United States and Canada. There are many ways to participate in the Birding Classic but I want to highlight two easy ways – the State Park Tournament and the Adult Regional Big Day Tournament with the team birding as an ‘intact flock’. Either way can help you sharpen your birding skills and have fun while earning some VSH.

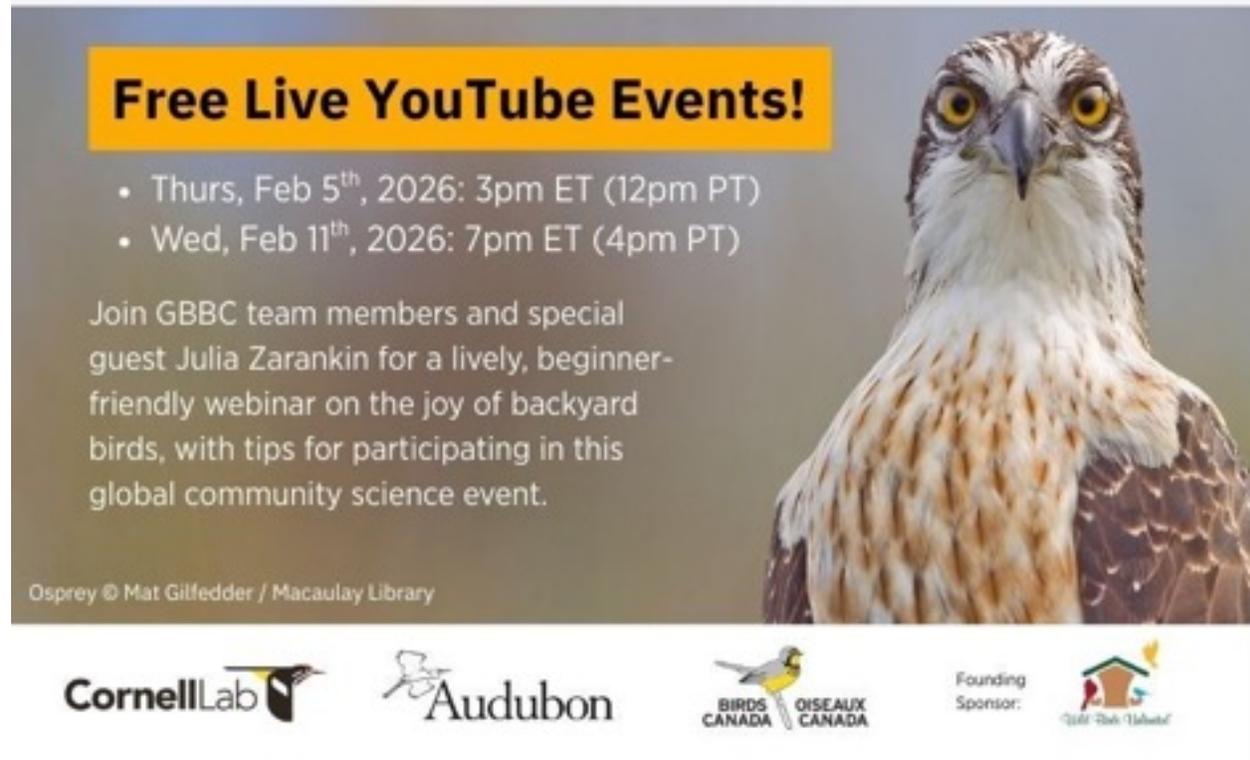
**A State Park Tournament – Intact Flock** competition is just that – your team picks a state park from your area, or anywhere in the state, and you bird there for up to 24 hours (midnight to midnight). The team is made up of 3 to 5 members and team membership is open to birders of all ages (so your kids or grandkids can be on your team!). Competing as an ‘intact flock’ means that the team members are birding and travelling together within the selected state park. At the end of day, the team will compile their checklist and submit to the GTBC using eBird. We have many wonderful state parks in East Texas. These include Atlanta SP, Cooper Lake SP, Lake Bob Sandlin, Daingerfield SP, Lake Tawakoni SP, Caddo Lake SP, Martin Creek SP, Tyler SP, and Purvis Creek SP. They each have a variety of habitat including lakes, grasslands, forest and riparian areas that will add to your birding experience.

**An Adult Regional Big Day Tournament** is conducted in one of nine regions across the state. Our region, Prairies and Pineywoods East, is shown in the map below. This region includes the ten counties of the East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists. A team competing in an Adult Regional Big Day Tournament consists of 3 to 5 members who are 19+ years old (there are special competitions for birders under 19 years of age). A Big Day tournament means that the team birds for up to 24 hours in a single day (midnight to midnight). Competing as an ‘intact flock’ means that the team members are birding and travelling together as they compete. Our region has a diverse collection of birding spots including regional parks and WMAs (Camp Tyler, Mineola Nature Preserve, Old Sabine Bottoms), state parks (Caddo Lake, Daingerfield, Tyler, Rusk, Tawakoni), and lakes (Lake Palestine, Lake Tyler/Tyler East, Lake O’ the Pines, Bob Sandlin, etc..). These sites vary in habitat which also adds to the challenge and diversity of birds to see. Your team can bird at just one or two sites or you can bird multiple sites within a county or even across several counties. At the end of day, the team will compile their checklist and submit to the GTBC using eBird.

Teams competing in the 2026 GTBC must register by April 1. You can pick any day from April 15 through May 15 to bird and you can change your day to adjust for things like weather or team member availability. If you are interested in forming another team for to compete in the Great Texas Birding Classic, contact Mark Edmund ([maedmund321@gmail.com](mailto:maedmund321@gmail.com)). Mark will help your team get organized and plan out your fun day for counting birds

## **AT Opportunity: 1 hour Miscellaneous Meetings and Lectures**

### Webinar: How to Participate in the 2026 Great Backyard Bird Count



**Free Live YouTube Events!**

- Thurs, Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026: 3pm ET (12pm PT)
- Wed, Feb 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026: 7pm ET (4pm PT)

Join GBBC team members and special guest Julia Zarankin for a lively, beginner-friendly webinar on the joy of backyard birds, with tips for participating in this global community science event.

Osprey © Mat Gilfedder / Macaulay Library

**CornellLab**      

#### **Thursday, February 5, 2026**

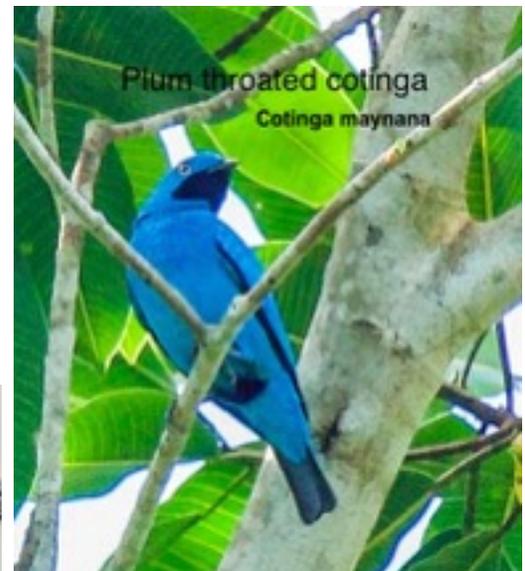
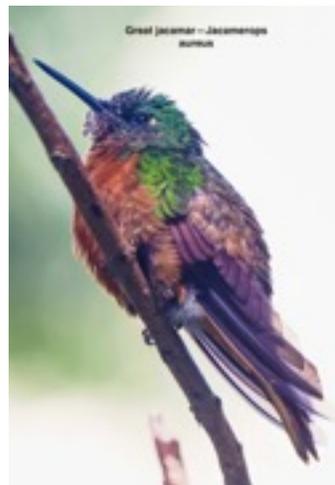
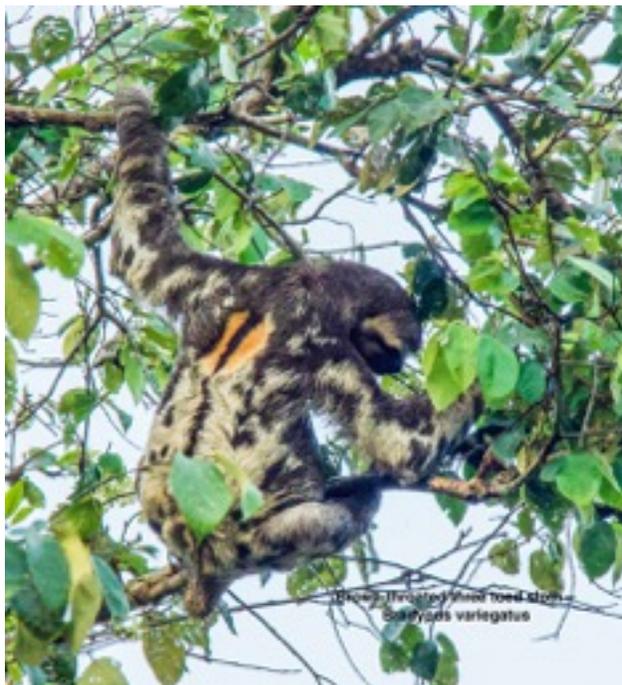
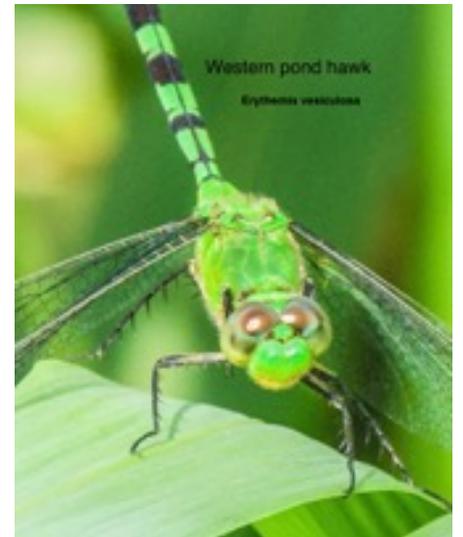
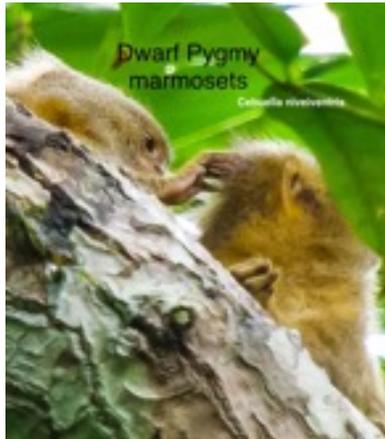
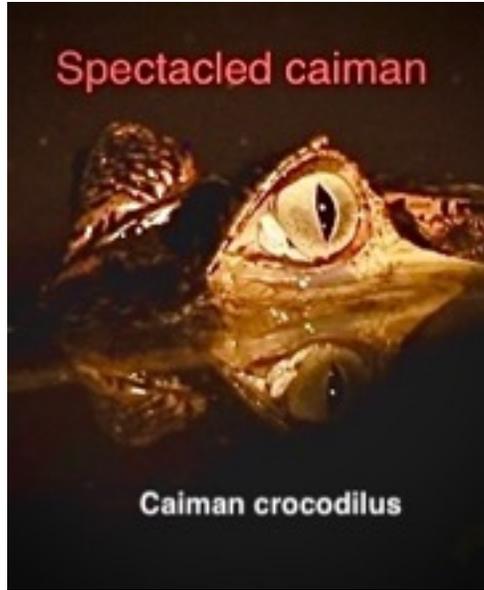
3:00 p.m. ET / 2:00 p.m. CT / 1:00 p.m. MT / 12:00 p.m. PT

#### **Wednesday, February 11, 2026**

7:00 p.m. ET / 6:00 p.m. CT / 5:00 p.m. MT / 4:00 p.m. PT

Embrace the joy of birds by participating in the [Great Backyard Bird Count \(GBBC\)](#) taking place February 13-16, 2026. This lively, beginner-friendly webinar will inspire you to deepen your connection with birds while joining a worldwide count.

Join this one-hour live event to discover tips, tricks, and ideas to prepare for the GBBC, a fun and impactful global community science event! GBBC team members will share how to participate with confidence, while special guest and author [Julia Zarankin](#) explores beginner birding and the love and joy of backyard birds.



# WHERE YOU CAN FIND US

Find East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists at the following locations:

<https://txmn.org/etwd/>

<https://www.facebook.com/EastTexasMasterNaturalist/>

<https://www.instagram.com/easttexasmasternaturalist/>

<https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/>

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/>

## Organization

### Officers

Title	Term	Name	Email
President**	2026-2027	Carol Lanthrum	<a href="mailto:clanthrum@gmail.com">clanthrum@gmail.com</a>
Vice President**	2026	Dawn Bahr	<a href="mailto:dmebahr@yahoo.com">dmebahr@yahoo.com</a>
Secretary**	2025-2026	Ann Reynolds	<a href="mailto:reynolds.ann1@gmail.com">reynolds.ann1@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer**	2026-2027	David Shafer	<a href="mailto:davidrshafer@gmail.com">davidrshafer@gmail.com</a>
Immediate Past President	2026-2027	Wanda Rauscher	<a href="mailto:wwrauscher@gmail.com">wwrauscher@gmail.com</a>

\*\* indicates Officers and Executive Board Members

### Committees 2024

Title	Name	Email
Hospitality	Caryn Vorsas	<a href="mailto:carynvorsas@gmail.com">carynvorsas@gmail.com</a>
	Joe Vorsas	<a href="mailto:jvorsas@utexas.edu">jvorsas@utexas.edu</a>
	Bonnie Edwards	<a href="mailto:edwardsbonnie2020@gmail.com">edwardsbonnie2020@gmail.com</a>
	Open for addition	
Historian / Archivist	TBD	
	Karen Rueb-Hall	<a href="mailto:karenruebhall@gmail.com">karenruebhall@gmail.com</a>

Advanced Training (AT)	Amy Cumbie	<a href="mailto:amycumbie83@gmail.com">amycumbie83@gmail.com</a>
	Kari Steph	<a href="mailto:kabaster@gmail.com">kabaster@gmail.com</a>
Volunteer Service Projects (VSH)	Lance Homeniuk	<a href="mailto:homeniuk@yahoo.com">homeniuk@yahoo.com</a>
	Greg Marshall	<a href="mailto:Marshall7707@gmail.com">Marshall7707@gmail.com</a>
	TBD	
Community Education / Outreach	Lance Homeniuk	<a href="mailto:homeniuk@yahoo.com">homeniuk@yahoo.com</a>
Speakers Bureau	Greg Marshall	<a href="mailto:Marshall7707@gmail.com">Marshall7707@gmail.com</a>
Training Class 2025	Kay Jenkins Wanda Rauscher	<a href="mailto:kay-jenkins@sbcglobal.net">kay-jenkins@sbcglobal.net</a> <a href="mailto:wwrauscher@gmail.com">wwrauscher@gmail.com</a>
Membership	Donna Smith	<a href="mailto:lindseys71@hotmail.com">lindseys71@hotmail.com</a>
VMS Director	Lindsey Smith Assistant Director - Angela Hudson	<a href="mailto:lindseys71@hotmail.com">lindseys71@hotmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:zoemoppett1@yahoo.com">zoemoppett1@yahoo.com</a>
State Representative	Carol Lanthrum	<a href="mailto:clanthrum@gmail.com">clanthrum@gmail.com</a>
2026 Class Representative	TBD	

## Communications 2024

Title	Name	Email
E-Blast	Carol Lanthrum	<a href="mailto:clanthrum@gmail.com">clanthrum@gmail.com</a>
Newsletter	Casey Boggs	<a href="mailto:caseylynnboggs@gmail.com">caseylynnboggs@gmail.com</a>
Photography	Lindsey Smith	<a href="mailto:lindseys71@gmail.com">lindseys71@gmail.com</a>
Social Media	Greg Marshall	<a href="mailto:Marshall7707@gmail.com">Marshall7707@gmail.com</a>
	Dawn Bahr	<a href="mailto:dmebahr@yahoo.com">dmebahr@yahoo.com</a>
	Ann Reynolds	<a href="mailto:reynolds.ann1@gmail.com">reynolds.ann1@gmail.com</a>
Website	Jessica Coleman	<a href="mailto:jcoleman@uttyler.edu">jcoleman@uttyler.edu</a>

## Chapter Advisors

Name	Organization	Email
Clint Perkins	Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Smith County	<a href="mailto:clint.perkins@ag.tamu.edu">clint.perkins@ag.tamu.edu</a>

Boyd Sanders	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	<a href="mailto:boyd.sanders@tpwd.texas.gov">boyd.sanders@tpwd.texas.gov</a> v
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Missing roles:

Historian

Publicity

Outreach

If you have interest in filling one of these roles, please contact [clanthrum@gmail.com](mailto:clanthrum@gmail.com)