

Wood Duck Whistler April 2024

President's Message by Wanda Rauscher



April is an incredibly busy month for Master Naturalists! We have lots of outreach events around Earth Day (week before, week after, etc.). It is not too late to volunteer to help. Refer to the eBlast for coordinator contact information (or if you can't do that, reach out to tmneastxpres@yahoo.com). April is National Volunteer Recognition Month and so allow me to say thank you for all the outreach, trail maintenance, cabana painting, wildlife rescue, phone calls, species observations, wildscape work, and all of the myriads of detail work that go into keeping our chapter functioning as intended (Hospitality Committee; AT Committee; VSH Committee; VSM Director; Newsletter; Social Media; Webmaster; Treasurer; New Class Training Committee, and all of our Project Leaders)! Let me also give a big thank you to a role we haven't named as yet- making the AV technology function. Ray Rottman is a physicist and miracle worker getting an amplification system and the computer/projector functioning so that we can hear our speakers and see what they are sharing with us (whether the in-house equipment is functioning or not). Thank you also to our advisors Boyd Sanders, TPWD and Clint Perkins, AgriLife Extension.

We had a great March meeting with Don Hervig talking about falconry. The stars of the show were of course his birds: a young Red-tailed hawk, a Harris's hawk, and an Aplomado falcon. Donna Smith, Membership Director, announced that Lance Homeniuk, Bobbie Williams, Ann Reynolds, and I have recertified earning the 2024 rattlesnake pin. I'm sure that there will be lots more recertifications as the year continues!

It is almost time for City Nature Challenge!!!! First observations can be entered just after midnight, before sunrise on April 26. How about an owl call or the buzz of an insect? The easiest way I have found to enter sound observations to iNaturalist is by using the phone app Merlin and a computer. You can record frog sounds and insect sounds as well as birds with the app. Then open the observation in Merlin and look for the box with an arrow coming out the top under the sonagram. Click it and send the observation to your email. Next open your email and find your .wav sound file and move it to where you can find it on your computer desktop. Then you upload to iNaturalist the same way you would upload a photo. I understand that mp3 files also work if you are recording another way. If you want to be fancy and edit your sound recording see the instructions at:

<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48001064341/>

SO, I need all our master naturalists making iNaturalist observations of flora and fauna in our chapter catchment April 26-April 29. Then I need those of you who can to help with identifications in iNaturalist April 30-May 5. Don't try to get all the way to genus and species if you do not have the background! Just adding the family can help the experts find the observation more easily!



The following members have recertified:

Lance Homeniuk
Wanda Rauscher
Ann Reynolds
Bobbie Williams

Member Spotlight

Ann Reynolds

Lets welcome Vickie Hoppis to the spotlight this month!



Where were you born/raised? I was born and raised on a rural property in east central Oklahoma. I roamed the woods, fished in the pond, and listened to coyotes howl at night.

Where do you live now? Our home is south of Tyler near the Gresham crossroads.

Would you care to share with us about your family? This coming year my husband Danny and I will celebrate our 40th anniversary. We have two wonderful daughters. Bekah is quite

the “outdoor adventurer”. Katie is married to Dan, an Air Force captain currently stationed in San Antonio. They have two children, Ella, and Luke. They love to explore museums, zoos, arboretums and of course parks. Ella actually took a toddler class lead by MN volunteers. She learned about “pricklies and pokies”.

What is/was your career? Education? I earned a BS degree in biology from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas situated in the middle of the Chihuahuan Desert. Almost every science class consisted of a small group taught by a PhD conducting some type of research. I had numerous adventures collecting, trapping, observing, and preparing. Loading into an old Travelall van and taking off down a dusty road was the norm. It was a veritable feast of outdoor hands-on learning! My brother, Dr. James Houston, who was head of the chemistry department helped local landowners determine the possibility of quality wine production in the Davis Mountains. This was in the 70’s before local vineyards became common in Texas.

What are some of your hobbies? I love watching classic movies on TCM, I will attempt any outdoor activity— hiking, rafting, kayaking, fly fishing, etc. As my husband says, “we like to go and do”. I also cheer loudly for my favorite sports teams.

What do you attribute to your love of nature? One of my professors at Sul Ross was Dr. Barton Warnock. Ever hear of the Barton Warnock Environmental Education Visitor Center at Big Bend State Park—one and the same. He was a master naturalist in the truest sense. He knew the plants, the animals, the land, the history, and the people. Trying to keep up with him as he led summer field classes throughout the Big Bend region was an exhausting treat. He came from this place. He knew this place. He loved this place.

What was it that interested you in the Texas Master Naturalist program? Shortly after moving to Tyler my daughter and I were hiking

at Tyler State Park. A MN class announcement was posted in the park office. Bekah observed "Mom this is right up your alley"!

What class were you in? The 2018 class

What has been your favorite nature experience? My most unique awe-inspiring experience was to gently hold a monarch butterfly with its wings between my fingers while TPWD biologist Sam Kieschnick tagged the wing. Then I gently released it.

Favorite nature activity? I really enjoy being a part of the "Wild Bunch" a trail maintenance group. Our current focus is helping bring the Tyler Nature Center trails back to life. Every workday, I get to burn some calories in a park setting while swapping stories or having an iNaturalist discussion with a great "Bunch" of fellow nature lovers.

Describe what would be your perfect bucket-list natural science encounter or experience. I am on a quest to visit every US national park. So far, I have experienced the wild beauty of 28.

Advice for new master naturalists? Get to know your fellow Master Naturalists. They are the most diverse, interesting, and knowledgeable group of individuals. Every member I have met has a story to tell and knowledge to share. Don't miss out!

Earth Day

There are four Earth Day events coming up. Please contact Lance Homeniuk, if you are interested.

homeniuk@yahoo.com, cell 903-987-3410

4/17 All Saints Episcopal Church, Tyler, 11-1
4/20 Martin Creek Lake State Park, TBA
4/22 TVCC, Athens, 10-2
4/27 City of Tyler, Bergfeld Park, 10-6

What a Cool Visitor!

Meleena Byram

I was working outside a little over a week ago when I walked past some daffodils and spotted (pun intended?) this guy! Had to get his picture...



According to iNaturalist, The Eight-Spotted Forester (*Alypia octomaculata*) is a moth of the Noctuidae family. It is found in the Eastern part of the United States, Texas and Florida. It is also present in parts of Canada. According to Wikipedia, it was first described by Johan Christian Fabricius in 1775. While it is native to Canada, it can be found throughout North America.

My visitor is a male, as it has 8 spots, while the female has only 6. Host plants for the caterpillar are grape vine leaves and Virginia Creeper leaves.

I don't know how rare these visually striking moths are, but I've never seen one before. I consider myself lucky to have encountered him.

Tyler Nature Center Update

Kay Jenkins

There will not be a workday in April as some adventurous Master Naturalists are going to the SFA plant sale in Nacogdoches April 6-7. If you are interested here is where you can find a list of the available plants:

<https://www.sfasu.edu/academics/colleges/forestry-agriculture/research-outreach/sfa-gardens>

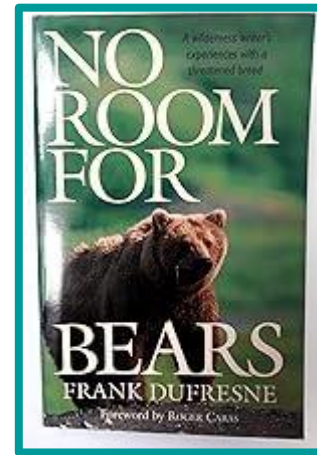
On March 30, Kay Jenkins led the group (Nancy Faber, Meleena Byram, Pat Howarth, Ann Reynolds and Wanda Rauscher) in a quick cleanup of the Wildscape bed under the Possum Haw. . .you know, where the Cotton Mouth used to live. 😊 Here are a few photos.



Book Reviews

Lance Homeniuk

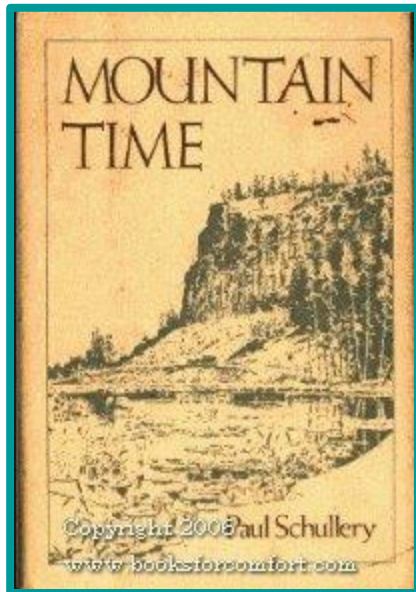
No Room for Bears: A wilderness writer's experiences with a threatened breed. By Frank Dufresne, 1991 by Alaska Northwest Books,



This edition is a reprint of the original publication from 1965 which includes a half century worth of stories. The author was a guide, director of the Alaska Game Commission, associate editor of *Field and Stream* and contributor to other outdoor periodicals. In 26 short chapters, including a preface and epilogue he describes the history, lives and uncertain (in 1965) future of North America's top predators. Obviously, people in positions of power and influence got the message because those creatures are still with us and most seem to be holding their own. He focuses on the grizzlies of admiralty Island but all species are viewed: polar bears, black bears, and the many types of brown bear. The latter had been alternatively lumped as one species or as 64 separate species of variable morphology.

I found this a compelling book, an informative adventure yarn cum ecological warning. I have been as close in the flesh as I could ever wish to both a young grizzly bear and a little ol' black bear. Dufresne brings me closer, near enough to feel the hot fishy breath and dripping saliva on my cheek.

Mountain Time: Man Meets Wilderness in Yellowstone. By Paul Schullery. 1984 A Fireside Book published by Simon and Schuster, New York, NY. Paperback, 221 pages.



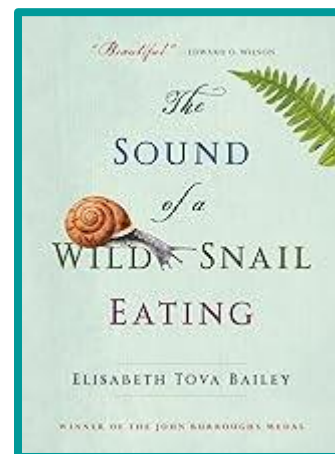
Have you had the experience of ordering the first thing you see, perhaps the daily special chalked on a board just inside the entry of a newly-discovered eatery, finding the food delicious, then seeing the whole menu and realizing you could eat here every day for over a month and not repeat a meal? No? I haven't had that exact experience (the place had far fewer than 48 entrees). But looking up Schullery's book list (oeuvre?) after completing this one work has me feeling that way. I enjoy his stories, his way with words, his reasoned and balanced viewpoint. I am glad there are so many more to look forward to and that he seems to still be alive and writing.

"Memory's vision transforms and enhances the original like a hand-tinted postcard so that I know my own memories are not accurate and I rely instead on less changeable memories, especially of feelings: the breath-catch of an unexpected wonder that may confront you when you are open for it."

Oh! And I see dessert – Royal Coachman: The Lore and Legend of Fly Fishing 1999 – my father's favorite fly! Now to find it....



The Sound of A Wild Snail Eating by Elisabeth Tova Bailey. 2016 Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC. Paperback, 190 pages.



A beautiful little book narrating the author's year-long observations of a woodland snail. She kept it by her sickbed during on period of a prolonged interest, a time of enforced stillness. Her meditations and later researches into the literature on gastropods, historic and scientific, add depth and richness. So do the epigraphs. Many of them are haiku of classic masters (who knew so many wrote of snails?). The final quotation, that of chapter 22 is by naturalist emeritus Edward O. Wilson and encapsulates the soul of the book:

“Humanity is exalted not because we are so far above other living creatures, but because knowing them well elevates the very concept of life.” Biophilia, 1984.

I am inspired to study malacology myself.

Texas Outdoors-Woman Network

Caryn Vorsas

You know about Texas Parks and Wildlife Master Naturalist Program, and the Texas AgriLife Master Gardener Program, but did you know about the Texas Outdoors- Woman Network?

This program is for women to get together and share their interests in outdoor recreation, The East Texas group meets once a month in Longview to discuss future adventures. Some of our latest adventures include camping and hiking at Big Bend, kayaking at Lake Hawkins



and Caddo Lake, and hiking, biking and kayaking at Martin Creek State Park,

Recently, we helped Lance Homeniuk's project out by picking up garbage around the shoreline and painting a shelter at Martin Creek.



We have ventured out to Palo Duro Canyon, and up into Arkansas,

If you'd like to be part of this group, please contact Anne Grimes, our President at 903-806-6737 or email her at:

grimesae@yahoo.com, Check out the website at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/bow/town>

Lots to Learn- Cavity Nesting Bees

Wanda Rauscher

I've been working on a hands-on activity: mason bee homes. There's the usual challenge of how to have a plan that isn't too expensive that school-aged kids will be able to complete in a short time period. And as usual with a new project my learning curve has been steep. I have been working to understand what species might nest in the tubes in our area. I'm sharing a few highlights.

So did you know that female bees choose the sex of their offspring?! In fact, mother mason bees (and all other mom bees and wasps) determine the sex of their offspring by deciding whether to use sperm stored in the spermatheca to fertilize the egg or not. Using sperm yields a female egg. Osmia mother bees put their female eggs to the back of a nest tube. Females are larger in size and take a little longer to mature than the males deposited closer to the end of the tube. Not all bees follow this pattern. For Osmia the length of the nest tube in an artificial nest needs to be at least 6 inches long so that the ratio of female to male is “normal”.

Other species even in the same Megachilidae family use other strategies. For Texas, *Osmia* species are on the wing March to August. *Osmia* moms use either mud or masticated leaf matter according to species as partitions between nest cells. For *Osmia* the eggs hatch, become grubs (larvae) and eat, pupate in a cocoon, and transform to the adult form in the summer but do not leave the cocoon until the next spring.

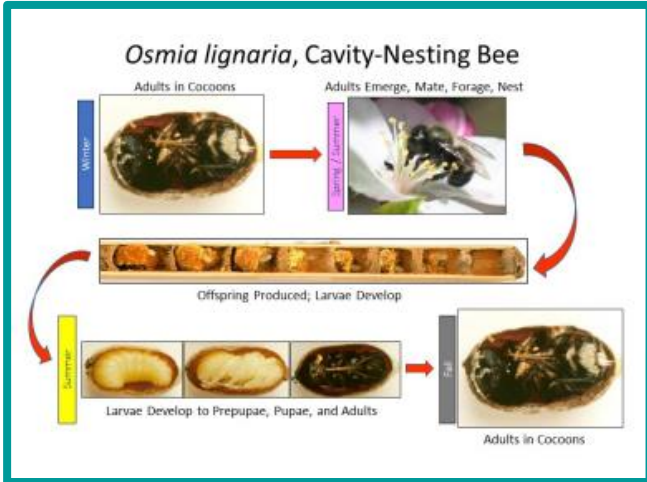


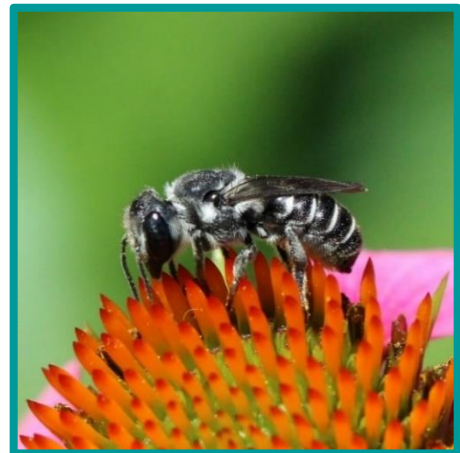
Photo from Utah State University Extension and Utah Plant Pest Diagnostic Laboratory



Osmia ribifloris on Texas persimmon. This species uses masticated leaf matter between nest cells.

You know how some plants have seeds that don't germinate the next year but rather the year after? Well, some bee species do analogous behavior. A species from the Northeast, *Heriades philadelphi*, had some nest cells emerging the first spring after egg was deposited but other nest cells did not emerge until the following year's spring. Apparently, when it comes to one brood or two broods per year it's all about location. The species *Heriades carinata* (which does occur in Texas) is univoltine (1 generation per year) in Michigan and Oregon but multivoltine in Missouri. I have not found data specifically for Texas, yet, but I'm expecting multivoltine.

You probably know that most solitary bees put one egg and one pollen mass per cell. Well cavity nester *Megachile polycaris* (which does occur in Texas) puts several eggs in a single brood cell with a large amount of pollen and the larva *don't* eat each other. Most *Megachile* stick with the one cell one egg plan. Many *Megachile* species have two generations per year. The last eggs laid overwinter as diapausing larvae.



Megachile subgenus *Chelostomoides* (uses resin between cells, not chewed up leaves). Photographed at Daingerfield State Park

From my references I am expecting that tube nests put out in late spring will attract *Osmia* species first and then a few weeks later through the end of summer *Megachile* species. We can



North Texas Chapter – April Meeting

Ann Reynolds

I thought this might be interesting and you can attend via Zoom.

How Spending Time in Nature Can Boost Mental Health and Save the Planet:



Explore the profound mental health benefits of immersing oneself in nature. Research has shown that spending time in natural environments can have a positive impact on overall well-being and significantly improve mental health. The presentation highlights the "Wellness in Nature" program, offered by the Elm Fork Chapter, which specifically caters to individuals with memory loss and their caregivers in the community. Through a combination of guided nature activities and therapeutic interventions, the program aims to enhance the quality of life, reduce stress, and foster a sense of connection and respite for those facing memory-related challenges.

Attendees will gain insights into the therapeutic value of nature-based interventions and the transformative power of engaging with the natural world for individuals and their caregivers dealing with memory loss.

Zoom Registration Link:
https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5zXg6WrQS5aV28U2-SfoVQ

Schedule:
6:30 Camera Roll and Socializing
7:00 Introduction and Announcements
7:20 Featured Presentation
8:45 Adjournment

also expect some solitary wasps. I am still working to figure out which species of wasp we should expect in our area.

Of course, there is a food chain and there will be Cuckoo wasps such as Chrysis and Leucospids -parasites of solitary bees and wasps as well as Bee flies such as Anthrax irroratus. There may even be a Coelioxys the cuckoo bee that is a cleptoparastic species for Megachilidae.



Coelioxys octodentatus Martin Creek Lake State Park.



Bee Fly- Anthrax species- Martin Creek Lake State Park.

One of my references stated that "bee hotels" can be as exciting as bird feeders. I am looking forward to finding out if I agree!

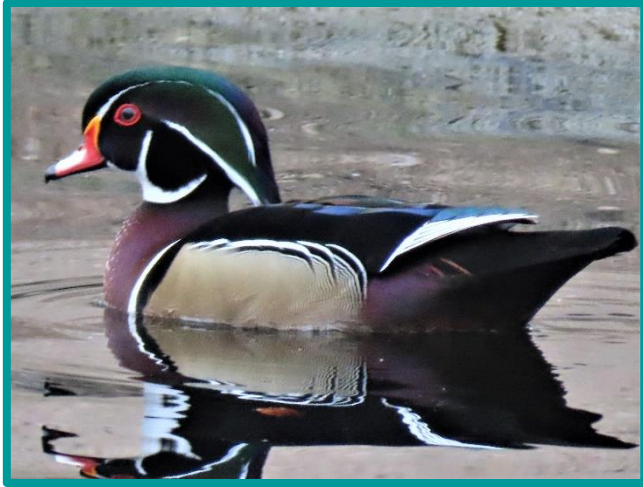


Photo courtesy Ann Reynolds

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. You can also access the Board meeting minutes on the chapter website under Members Only section, select Board of Directors and enter the current password.

The Wood Duck Whistler is a monthly publication of East Texas Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. News, essays, comments, and ideas are welcome. Please email them to Ann Reynolds at ann@etex.net.

Photos for Book Reviews are courtesy of Amazon. Unless otherwise noted, all other photos belong to the author of the article.

Upcoming Events

April 9, TMN Tuesday, 10:00 am – 1:15 pm,
Virtual Volunteer Fair

April 20, articles for the chapter newsletter due to Ann Reynolds at:
Reynolds.ann1@gmail.com

City Nature Challenge - April 25 prior to chapter meeting, 5 p.m.-ish, Nature Walk with Vickie Hoppis

April 25, 6:30 pm Chapter meeting, TNC

City Nature Challenge APRIL 26- APRIL 29 for iNaturalist observations

City Nature Challenge April 30-May 5- work on identifications

Now until April 30 – Project Feeder Watch
<https://feederwatch.org/about/detailed-instructions>

IN THE COMMUNITY

NETFO – 1st Wednesday 6:30 pm, Alethea SS Classroom at Greggton UMC 1101 Pine Tree Road in Longview.

Tyler Audubon Society, 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm, St. Francis Episcopal Church, Education Room, 3232 Jan Avenue.

NPSOT-Tyler – 2nd Monday, 2:00 pm, TNC (no meeting in April. See us at Earth Day!)

NPSOT – Wood County – 1st Wednesday, 2:00 pm Sorrelle Farm, Mineola

NPSOT – Longview – 4th Thursday 2:00 pm, Longview Arboretum



WHERE YOU CAN FIND US

You can find East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists here:

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

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

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



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

Texas Master Naturalist – East Texas Chapter Monthly Chapter meetings are held the **fourth Thursday of the month at the Tyler Nature Center, 11942 FM 848, Tyler, TX 75707**. Meet and greet 6:45 pm; meeting at 7:00 pm.

Everyone is welcome.

Safety Guidelines from TMN: Safety is our guiding principle. Follow all federal, state and county guidelines for TMN activities. Virtual platforms are useful and should remain an important consideration for planning meetings and events. Masks and social distancing considerations are encouraged. (July 2021)

ETCMN CHAPTER ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

****President: 2024-2025** Wanda Rauscher

****Vice President: 2023-2024** Cindy Smith

Hospitality Co-Chairs: 2023 Caryn Vorsas, Joe Vorsas; Bonnie Edwards

****Secretary: 2023-2024** Carol Lanthrum

Historian/Archivist: TBD

- ****Treasurer: 2024** Robert Lumpkins

Immediate Past President: 2022-2023 Paul Wick

DIRECTORS:

Advanced Training (AT): Lead – TBD, with Amy Cumbie and Cindy Smith

Volunteer Service Projects (VSH): Lead – Dawn Bahr with Lance Homeniuk and Greg Marshall

Community Education/Outreach: Lance Homeniuk

Speakers Bureau: Greg Marshall

Diversity and Inclusion: TBD

Training Class 2024: Kay Jenkins

Membership: Donna Smith

Volunteer Management System Director: Lindsey Smith

Communications Support:

E-Blast: Wanda Rauscher

Newsletter: Ann Reynolds

Photography: Lindsey Smith

Public Relations: TBD

Social Media: Lead - Greg Marshall, Dawn Bahr and Julie Davis

Website: Dale Wade

State Representative: Wanda Rauscher or appointed alternative

2023 Class Representatives: Natalie Curley

Chapter Advisors:

Clint Perkins – A&M Agrilife Extension Agent-Smith County

Boyd Sanders – TPWD Advisor

**** = Officers & Executive Board Members**

Revised 3/24/24