

Wood Duck Whistler

February 2023

President's Message by Wanda Rauscher



February! That means the Class of 2023 is well underway with discoveries and wonders waiting to unfold. I want to offer thanks to Beverly Guthrie for once again managing this critically important service to the chapter and the Master Naturalist program! Beverly led my training class several years ago and I hope this new class enjoys the sessions and field trips as much as I did. Thanks also to Beverly, Denise, and the chapter members who have volunteered as mentors to the new class.

As I write this article, the chapter has already participated in its first successful outreach at the Tyler Arbor Day. There will be other opportunities! Do watch the Eblast notifications and the summary of approved Volunteer Service Hour (VSH) projects listed monthly in the attachment to the Eblast. Of course, if you have a new project idea you can find the form to submit for approval on our web page (<https://txmn.org/etwd/> then select Members Area and then Forms). Personally, I look forward to my Project FeederWatch count days. And I do so hope that the little flock of goldfinches out my window will return tomorrow to be officially counted!

Another way to obtain service hours is to submit newsletter articles. Newsletter editor Ann Reynolds will have two new features for 2023: fun nature facts and member spotlights. Please participate if you would like - watch for further communication from Ann. Oh and please research your facts to make sure they are valid (lots of inaccurate "info" on the web)!

Observing Nature with a Beginner's Mind

Dale Wade

How do I feel about Nature (yes, it deserves a capital "N"). First, and foremost, I marvel at the power of its singularity, yet mutuality. Its self-serving reciprocity of which humankind has yet to emulate.

I wanted to start Master Naturalist classes to learn more about nature, you know, birds and insects, and snakes, and stuff. I enjoy learning. It is part of my personal philosophy to be a life-long learner. So, I sent in my application along with the fee, waited for the background check, and finally attended the first class.

They say that "you get what you wish for" in ways unimaginable. That happened when I received the 6.3-pound, 763-page tome called the Texas Master Naturalist "Handbook" (lol). Let's get real. No one is going to haul that hunk around as reference in the wild. However, it is chocked full of more information than my small brain can hold, so I do refer to it on occasion.

After attending about a third of the MN classes, the "learning" hit me. Since learning is defined as "changed behavior", I found myself changed. Changed in how I observe Nature, how I understand Nature, and how I felt a deep ecological compassion for Nature's earth. I see more of the interconnected matrix of Nature's gestalt.

I begin with a beginner's mind, unlearning what I think I know. In the science of it all one's

attention seems easily misplaced, focused on measuring and labeling. Yet Nature involves so much more. I liken it to another of my personal philosophies, “life passes so quickly that one must move very slowly”. Observing Nature’s way calls for a purposeful, methodical moment with all senses open.

So, I offer a few suggestions to the trainees of this 2023 Class. Study with wonder as you will discover wonderful things. Travel slowly through these next few classes with a beginner’s mind regardless of your past learnings. Lastly, take a moment to enjoy Nature as you broaden your depth of knowledge as a Master Naturalist.

Join the Competition and Have Fun on the 27th Great Texas Birding Classic!

Mark Edmund



The Great Texas Birding Classic (<https://tpwd.texas.gov/events/great-texas-birding-classic>)

is a state-wide birding competition to be held from April 15 to May 15, 2023. 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 as they make 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 – Intact Flock and the Adult Regional Big Day Tournament - Intact Flock. Either way you can sharpen your birding skills

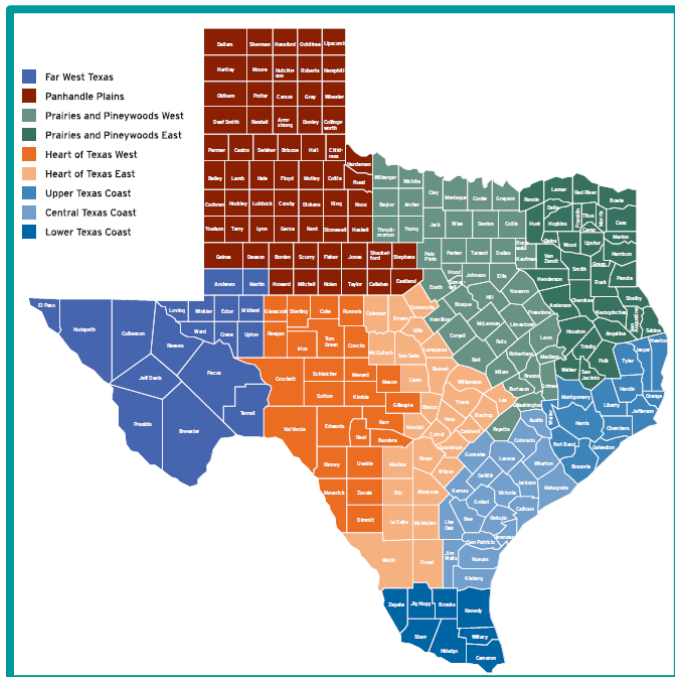
with sights and sounds of the birds and have fun while earning some VSH.

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 bird with you). 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 Purtil 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 (see the map below). The Prairies and Pineywoods East Region includes the ten counties of the ETCMN catchment. 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 within the Prairies and Pineywoods East region. Our region has a diverse collection of birding spots including regional parks and WMAs (Camp Tyler, Mineola Nature Preserve, Old Sabine Bottoms), state parks (see the list above), 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. At the end of day, the

team will compile their checklist and submit to the GTBC using eBird.

Teams competing in the 2023 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. In 2022, our chapter had five teams compete. One team competed in the State Park Tournament and four teams competed in the Prairies and Pineywoods East Region. We hope that in 2023 we can increase the ETCMN participation by at least one team. If you are interested in forming a new team to compete in the Great Texas Birding Classic, contact Mark Edmund (maedmund321@gmail.com). Mark will help your team get organized and plan out your fun day for counting birds.



Weather Musings


Wanda Rauscher

Ever walk along outside when you suddenly notice an earthy smell to the air- a smell that causes you to look around and up at the sky- and wonder if it just rained or if it is going to start raining? That musty damp-earth smell is the chemical geosmin (named in 1965 by the

biochemist and biologist who isolated it and determined its structure, from the Greek meaning earth smell). Turns out human noses are very sensitive to this compound: we can detect it in air at 5 parts per trillion. Know what else we can smell at a really low level? We can detect ethyl mercaptan the odorant commonly added to natural gas (in the United States) at 350 ppt. We can also detect the smell of green bell pepper at 350 ppt levels (a mystery for another day). Why do we smell that musty odor before it rains as well as after? Turns out when the barometric pressure drops soil outgasses releasing the geosmin. Interesting, yes? Well one question leads to another, so my next question is what organisms are making the geosmin and why. Soil microbes such as actinobacteria (you know this one- the antibiotic streptomycin was first isolated from the actinobacteria *Streptomyces griseus*), some myxobacteria, some cyanobacteria and filamentous fungi produce the geosmin. The actinobacteria in the soil are important saprophytes in the ecosystem breaking down organic matter. In 2020 biologist Klas Flörh at Lund University teamed up with chemical ecologist Paul G. Becher from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences to try to answer at least part of the why geosmin is produced. They found that the geosmin attracts springtails! The springtails have hairy bodies (which you need a microscope to see) that collect the bacterial spores. So, the bacteria are using the springtails to spread their spores (sort of like the way flowers attract pollinators)! What a wonderful interconnected web of life we live in!

Adult Springtail, order Collembola, arthropod
Length: 0.04 to 0.1 inches





Close-up adult springtail. Photo by Phil Myers, Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

See also the Texas Master Naturalist textbook pages 415, 420, & 443.

Caddo Indian Legends and the Natural World

Gordon Betts

(Editor's Note – as the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site is one of our volunteer projects, this article adds more intrigue).

Throughout the Americas, Native Americans recorded their history orally. They used stories to explain aspects of their lives: creation, the origin of fire, hunger, and more. These stories involved the animals surrounding them. The coyote. The woodpecker. The turtle.

These stories are unique to the hundreds of different tribes around the Americas. They involve animals local to each tribe. In East Texas, the tribe living here was the Caddo. Let's look at three short legends.

The Hungry Coyote

Coyotes are timid and wary. You rarely see one in the open. If you do see one and he spots or sniffs you, he will turn instantly and flee. Their keen sense of smell and good eyesight make them hard to spot in the wild.

Coyotes are always lean, not fat like our overfed and pampered dogs. They are always hungry and on the hunt for an easy meal. This has led to several stories by the Caddo. Let's look at one.

Coyote was in the woods one day, when he heard what sounded like the sound of children playing. He followed the sound to its source and found a group of young turkeys playing on the hillside.

The young poultts were taking turns getting in a bag and rolling each other down the hill.

Being hungry and having a litter to feed, he approached the young poultts and asked if he could play. So they let him climb in the bag and roll him down the hill. Being clever, he suggested all the young poultts climb in the bag so he could roll them down the hill.

They happily crowded into the bag. Coyote tied the bag shut and slung it over his shoulder and headed home.

His four sons came out to greet him when he arrived, yipping "What did you bring us?" Coyote told them he had some tasty turkeys they could enjoy for dinner.

He needed firewood for a fire, so he told the pups not to open the bag until he returned. One of the pups was too curious and could not resist opening the bag and taking a peek inside.

When he did so, all the turkey poultts escaped and flew away.

Coyote returned to find the poultts had escaped so he beat his son. That night, coyote and his litter went hungry.


Original source: <https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/CoyoteTheHungry-Caddo.html>

Why coyote quit copying his friends

Poor Coyote. Every time he tried to imitate his friends; it ended in disaster.

Coyote went up the hill one day to visit his friend, Raven. Raven asked if he was hungry and Coyote replied that he was.

So, Raven took a bow and launched an arrow straight up into the sky. When the arrow came back down, it had a tender chunk of buffalo meat stuck to its head. Coyote ate greedily and as he was leaving, insisted that Raven come and visit him one day.



Soon, Raven stopped by Coyotes lair. Coyote was unaware that Raven possessed magical powers that had allowed him to capture meat with his arrow. So, he launched an arrow straight up into the sky like Crow. When it came down, it had nothing attached. Instead, it embedded into Coyotes thigh sending him running away in pain.

Another day, Coyote visited his friend Bear. Bear was bumping into a persimmon tree, knocking the fruit free. He invited Coyote to eat all he wanted. Then he packed up a generous amount for Coyote to take home. Coyote insisted that Bear come and visit him soon.

As Coyote knew Bear was to visit, he looked to find persimmons for his guest. Alas, he could find no tree with fruits. So, he chopped down a persimmon tree and stood it up next to his lair. He took the persimmons Bear had given him and tied them securely in the tree.

When Bear arrived, Coyote greeted him warmly. He said to Bear "be seated and I will gather some persimmon for us. He bumped into the tree but no fruit would fall because they were tied too tightly in the tree.

Coyote continued to shake the tree until it came crashing down on his head. He pretended it did not hurt and he shared persimmons with his friend. Bear did not stay long, because he was afraid he would break out laughing at Coyote.

Days later, Coyote was again hunting when he came upon a grass lodge he'd not seen before. He called out "is anyone home?" thinking they would offer him food if they were home. Or he could take food if they were not.

Woodpecker was home and eagerly invited Coyote to step inside. Coyote was surprised to see a fire on Woodpeckers head.

He called out "you are on fire; you'll burn down your house if you don't put it out." Woodpecker replied that he had been given the fire in the beginning and that it would not burn his house.

After sharing a meal, coyote bid farewell, insisting that Woodpecker come and visit. Soon, Woodpecker did so.

When Woodpecker arrived, Coyote asked him to wait a minute before inviting him inside. Woodpecker stepped inside to find Coyote with a mound of burning straw on his head.

Woodpecker warned him he would start a fire or hurt himself. Just as Coyote was about to disagree, the burning straw set his hair alight.

Coyote ran screaming from his home and spent the rest of the day soaking his head in the river trying to make the pain go away.

After that, Coyote quit trying to imitate his friends.

Original source: <https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/WhyCoyoteStoppedImitatingHisFriends-Caddo.html>

Coyote and the origin of death

When the world began, death did not exist. People lived forever. But as time passed, the Earth became more crowded so that there was not room for everyone.

The men gathered together to decide what to do. Many wanted people to die and go away for a little while and then return. Coyote rose and said people should die forever and not return.

The men objected because they did not want to be saddened by the loss of their friends and loved one. So, they decided people would die for a little while and then the Medicine Man could help to bring them back.

A little while after the first man died, the men built a grass house. There the Medicine Man would lead them in song so the dead could enter and return.

After ten days a whirlwind came from the west, the men began to sing. But Coyote thought he was wiser so he shut the door and the wind

passed the grass house so that people could no longer return from the dead.

When Coyote saw the sadness caused by what he had done, he became very afraid. He fled into the woods. After that, no one would feed Coyote so that he has been starving ever since.

Original Source: <https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/CoyoteAndTheOriginOfDeath-Caddo.html>

There are more than 400 tribes of Native Americans living in the United States alone. Indigenous people speak more than one thousand languages. The result is a wealth of folklore and legends describing their relationship with the natural world.

52 Hike Challenge

Dawn Bahr

I recently learned about an activity that you can do all year round to challenge yourself to get out in nature frequently. The 52 Hike Challenge is a program to encourage people to hike one mile per week for 2023. You can sign up for free if you do not want any "swag" or you can pay money for such items. A log is provided to keep track of your hikes. They have additional information on their website and an introductory class to hiking (19.99) if you wish to take advantage of that opportunity.

<https://www.52hikechallenge.com/>



Hope to see you on the trails!

FeederWatch: Why Don't they Come to My Feeder?

Donna Hamill

I'm sitting inside my sunroom, peering through a window, watching a bird feeder hanging from a hook in the backyard. The clear, filled hopper sways in the breeze. Below it dangles a suet feeder: mixed seeds pressed together to form a solid rectangular cake, encased in a wire cage.

I've just joined Project FeederWatch for the first time.

Printed versions of bird identification set at my side. I'm waiting for my first bird to visit. My job is to count the numbers and species of birds visiting my station.



Although the program interested me from the start, I had doubts about whether it was a right fit for me. My passion is heirloom gardening. I save vegetable and flower seeds from one season to sow the next. The suet twirls in its metal prison as the wind teases it around. My



garden lies fifty feet beyond it. I wonder if it's wise to attract seed eaters to this area.

I lean back in my chair, pulling on the yarn wrapped in a ball at my feet and begin knitting while watching, anxious for my first contact on my first day of the project. My new feeder, though, fails to entice any feathered targets.

I tug on the yarn. Knit...tug, knit...tug.
No birds.

Last year, I lived in Tyler with my grown daughter. We shared a rental home in an older established neighborhood. She hung a feeder on the back porch, and it was immediately overtaken with a wide variety of beautiful birds. I walked often across the porch area on my way to the detached laundry room. The bold, brave creatures didn't care if I was near or not. Their bright feathers were like flying rainbows of red, yellow, blue, and so unlike the birds I knew from my native home in Arizona. I had a feeder for a while when I lived near Phoenix, but all the birds were brown and dreary like the dusty, bare desert soil.

Knit...tug, knit...tug.
No birds.

Last year I purchased my own home in White Oak, ten miles from Longview. Because of my vegetable garden in the back yard, I initially avoided attracting seed eaters by hanging only hummingbird feeders to attract nectar lovers. The tiny creatures visited the liquid often during the warm weather, but they've recently migrated, leaving the feeders abandoned.

My half-acre rests alongside an established forest. It's mid-November now, and even from the sunroom inside the house I can hear many types of winter birds chirping as they flit from tree to tree. *Why don't they come to my feeder?*

Knit...tug, knit...tug.
No birds.

All day and part of the next, not a single bird appears. Perhaps they are afraid because the shepherd's hook supporting the feed is too close to the sunroom window. So, I purchase and fill another hopper feeder and hook set, placing it another five feet farther from the first one but still visible from the sunroom.

No birds.
The levels of seed in the feeders do not drop.
Thanksgiving passes.

In December, I attend the Master Naturalist Christmas party in Tyler. Surely, someone there can advise me. I ask everyone attending, and someone suggests replacing mixed feed with black sunflower seed. On the way home, I buy a big bag of the dark jewels along with chopped peanuts. Then I dump the month-old stuff out of the feeders and fill them with generous handfuls of sunflower and other mixed seeds. I replenish the suet cage with a fresh cake.

I wait and watch.
Christmas passes.
New Year passes.

One day, as I prepare my garden for upcoming spring planting, six birds perch atop the back wooden fence, watching me. *Are they taunting me?* I pull out a bunch of dry, dead tomato vines and toss them into a pile. Then I rake the rows clean. Tired, I plop into a chair twenty feet away to rest. The avian onlookers immediately fly into my garden where I had been working. One looks directly at me, making sure I do not move to interfere with his plans. Then he joins the others scratching around searching for bugs and seeds. Being a novice bird watcher, I am unable to identify the species from this distance, but I can spot attitude even from here.

Why don't they visit my feeders?

Shortly after the New Year, it happens. I see my first bird. I'm sitting in the sunroom.

Knit...tug, knit...tug.

A brown blur with a whisp of red catches my peripheral vision. A *House Finch!* ...or is it a *Purple Finch?* I study the single target in great depth, looking closely at his face, neck, and beak. After he flies away, I study identification charts for both species, paying close attention to details. I decide my first bird sighting into the FeederWatch database will be: House Finch. Yes, *that's right, isn't it?*

I've continued to watch my feeders, ongoing. It's now mid-January and there are still only infrequent visitors: a couple of Chipping Sparrows, a Tufted Titmouse, and four Dark-eyed Juncos scratching in the leaves beneath the feeders.

The birds are very skittish, flying off at the slightest movement or sound, such as reaching for binoculars, speaking aloud, or even the movements I make while knitting. I must be completely still and quiet. In fact, I sometimes watch from a nearby bedroom with a small window that has visibility to the feeders. I can still see the birds, but it is more difficult for them to see me. *I wonder if the little guys born in the forest beyond my backyard have ever even seen a bird feeder.*

What's exciting now, though, is that every few days a few species do visit! When a new type of bird first appears, I'm often puzzled and do not count the stranger. I study it carefully, writing down details. After it's gone, I try to identify it. One day, a possible female Northern Mockingbird sits at the feeder. The next time I see her, I will be more familiar.

On another day, five birds sit together, and I cannot identify them. Their markings are like American Goldfinch, but they lack the yellow color. I wonder if their bold hues are muted in winter. This gives me the chance to research and learn. The next time I see these guys, I hope to have that question answered.

One educational tool I use often is the online course offered by The Cornell Lab called Feeder Birds: Identification and Behavior. I study this course repeatedly as my skill level changes or I encounter new species. (See below.)

While posting my first count into the FeederWatch database, I notice a useful reporting option used in situations where a person watches for birds but does not observe any. I plan to use that button going forward, if needed.

My interest in Project FeederWatch has increased dramatically! I plan to continue in future years. It's also a good program for me as I get older. I'm not always going to be able to do a lot of physical activities, but I can always knit and bird watch.

But hopefully, the little guys eventually get used to me knitting in the sunroom.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Project FeederWatch. <https://feederwatch.org>. (November to April)

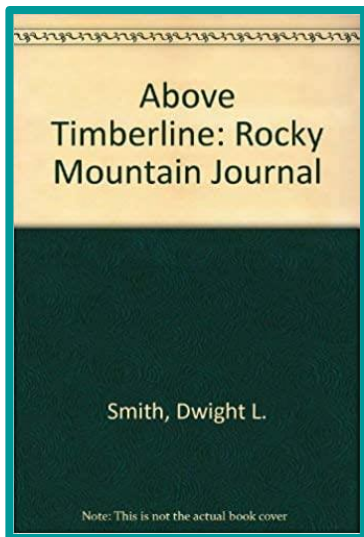
The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Feeder Birds: Identification and Behavior. <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org>. (NOT available for AT hours. 5 hours completion time. Level: Beginner. \$59.99)

January Book Reviews

Lance Homeniuk

Above Timberline: A Rocky Mountain Journal by Dwight Smith. Pruett Publishing Co., Boulder, CO, 1980. Paperback, 246 pages

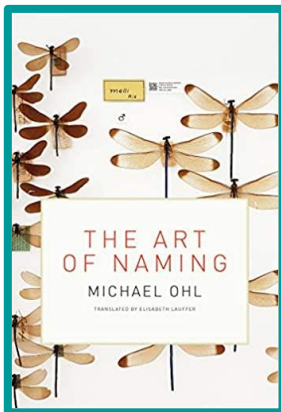
This is the fourth in a series of a natural environment books published in the 80's, the New Explorer series by Alan Landsberg, movie producer. It included photographic, video, and audio recordings, as well as the print format. It seems the author's daily voice recordings were transcribed directly into the book with some editing. While that makes for a



sense of being there in the moment, I could do without knowing the author's gripes, housekeeping chores, and scheduling frustrations. Smith, a wildlife biologist, spent four and a half months along the Colorado continental divide studying the creatures and environment. He sought, with mixed success, to photograph the native denizens (finding the outhouse made an acceptable blind). His base of operations was an 85-year-old miner's cabin, his supplies were packed in on horseback and he begrudged most of the people who imposed on his time.

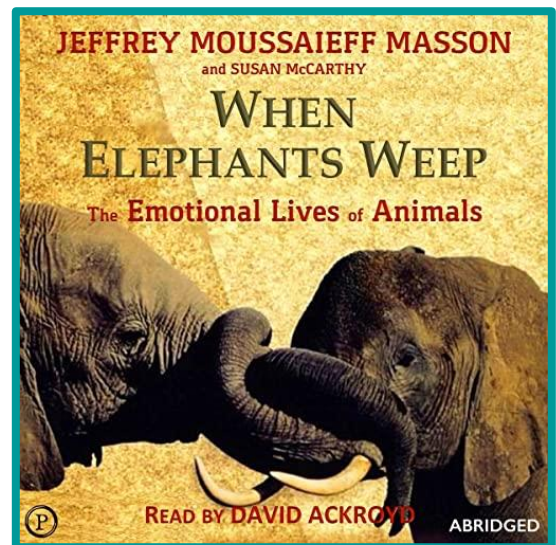
Fortunately, his nature writing saves the day and the book. Maybe I'm not being fair because I saw his online reviewers gave the book 5 stars.

The Art of Naming by Michael Ohl, translated by Elisabeth Lauffer. The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 2018. Paperback, 294 pages.



Translated from German, sparsely sprinkled with black & white pictures, this does not at first glance seem to be an interesting read. *Au contraire!* (Pardon my French). I found this book fascinating. It is a true gem for word lovers, science geeks, bibliophiles, nature nerds, and other awesome types. I found many intriguing tidbits, some wry humor, and historical anecdotes. Most of us first learned dinosaur names, and some of us have added names of plants or animals. All that was missing is my favorite scientific name, that of a tiny subject I spent some time with in my school days. So, I will include it here: *Drosophila melanogaster*, the "honey loving black belly", or common fruit fly. Say it a few times. It just rolls off the tongue, every bit as nice as Tyrannosaurus rex. OBTW, this is one of the books in Barney's bibliography – I had forgotten until last night's 2023 new class!

When Elephants Weep: the Emotional Lives of Animals by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Susan McCarthy. Dell Publishing, NY, NY, 1995. Paperback 291 pages.



A long time ago, before this book was written, I spent not a little time studying lab animals: rats and pigs, for example. The pig heart is nearly identical to that of the human, enough so that it has been transplanted into humans. Likewise, the lungs, eyes, and brain, with all of its lobes,

though the cortex is less developed. The amygdala and limbic system is, again, nearly identical to ours. And ours is the seat of emotion. Ditto for dogs, cats, horses, and all animals familiar to us and with which we interact closely.

So I was not a hard sell to the concept that “higher” animals such as mammals have emotional feelings beyond the 4 basic drives: “fight or flight”, feeding, and mating. But serious scientists have historically and widely condemned the idea that animals emote as (gasp!) anthropomorphization. Nevertheless, the same scientists probably contend that *Homo sapiens* is merely a highly evolved animal. And our own emotional states can only be inferred from the outward expression and behaviors by these objective behaviorists.

I think this is an important book to read because a lot of the careless cruelty and unnecessary abuse our species imposes on the other species in our world is due to ignorance on our part. In the past dominant individuals and groups imposed similar evils on those people they regarded as inferior. Until thinking changed, ethics and empathy overcame apathy and prejudice. I know, respect and mercy and justice is still not a universal situation even in such enlightened societies as ours that claims to believe we are all thinking, feeling, equal human beings with unalienable rights. But neither ought we to await a perfect human society before we extend some merciful regard to whales whose brains may be larger than us or to chimps who share 99% of our genes and the same brain structures that enable us to think and to feel love, hope, joy, and fear.

Disclaimer: I am not a vegan, vegetarian, or eastern mystic. But I do deplore waste, cruelty, ingratitude and disrespect of all life. Except for imported fire ants. And ticks. Most pathogens....

(All photos courtesy Amazon)

Wait, What?

Dale Wade

A turkey vulture circling in the air can smell molecules of decaying flesh in concentrations as tiny as a few parts per billion.

Member Spotlight

Kellie Phea and Ann Reynolds

Meet **Lindsey Smith**, Class of 2016. Lindsey serves as the Volunteer Management System Director and Photography Chair. He retired in 2015 after working as an engineer for over 40 years in the foundry industry. His areas of expertise include photography and Computer Aided Design (CAD). Lindsey's eye for nature and attention to detail are evident in his nature photography!



What has been your favorite volunteer experience? My favorite Master Naturalist volunteer experience has to be taking photos and posting them in iNaturalist.



Favorite Nature Activity? Having many years (decades) of experience in Computer Aided Design (CAD), I love to draw things and then fabricate them myself. From a simple birdhouse, a tractor implement, to a deer stand. I once even drew a small two-man cabin that everyone said was an excellent storm shelter

I never will forget the first Master Naturalist meeting I went to and they announced they had an upcoming CAD Day. I was startled that there were that many engineers in the group and especially trained on computer drawing. Then I found out the initials were the same, but the meaning was different, Chapter Activity Day.

Long-term Texas Master Naturalist project? I am always striving to photograph nature and over the years I have picked up a few pointers from professional photographers and have also analyzed a few things. As I said before, "Slow Down." Watch, compare, and then shoot a photo when possible.

Advice for new Master Naturalists? Slow down! It will amaze you when you walk at a slower pace, how many things you would have not seen at a normal gait. Some things are so small it takes time to focus and see the detail and for that, you usually have to stop.

What prepared you for Master Naturalist service? I have lived most of my life in East Texas, but have also resided in Alabama. I was raised in a solidly grounded Christian home and was very close to my loving parents. My Dad took me fishing and hunting with him all the time. Even though I didn't get to actually have a shotgun until I was 5, I went with him just to hear and see all there was in nature. My Dad was a double degreed graduate from North Texas State University in Biology and Chemistry plus he began doing taxidermy where he was

born and raised in Washington State. He literally knew the "ins and outs" of a lot of animals, which he shared with me at every occasion.

Chapter training interest? Nature photography, I've never taken a photography course and that often limits my ability to take a quality photograph

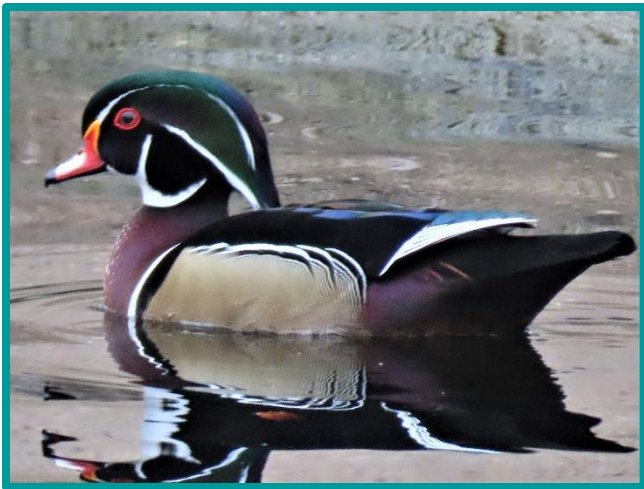
Book recommendations? Every field guide you can afford.

Lindsey's Research Recommendations

- <https://bigthicketcritters.com>
- <https://www.wildflowersearch.org>
- <https://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>
- <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/>
- <https://www.odonatacentral.org/#/>

January Wildscape Workday
Photos courtesy of Gail Bean





The Texas Master Naturalist Program's mission is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.

Unless otherwise noted, all photos belong to the author of the article.

Upcoming Events

February 4 – Wildscape Work Day Tyler Nature Center

February 10 and 11 – ID Fairchild State Forest workday – 9-3

February 14 – TMN Tuesday noon – Seed Collection for Conservation

February 17-20 Great Texas Birding Classic

February 18 – Lake Gladewater Cleanup

February 20 articles for the chapter newsletter due to Ann Reynolds

February 22 – Lunch and Learn PLUMP PLANTS FOR POTS: SUCCULENTS IN EAST TEXAS – Greg Grant, Cotton Belt Building Rm. 116A 1517 W. Front Street, Tyler, registration required

February 23 – Chapter Meeting, 6:45 pm, Tyler Nature Center

February 27 – ID Fairchild State Forest workday – 9-3

IN THE COMMUNITY

January 11 – 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, Tyler.

NPSOT-Longview – 4th Thursday, 2:30 pm, Longview Arboretum

NPSOT – Linden – 4th Tuesday 6:30 pm, Senior Citizen Center, 507 S. Kaufman St., Linden



WHERE YOU CAN FIND US



Chapter dues of \$20 per individual or \$35 per couple are due **NOW**. Please remit to: ETCMN, Attn. Treasurer, P. O. Box 131184, Tyler, TX 75713-1184



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

You can find East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists here:
<https://txmn.org/etwd/>
<https://www.facebook.com/EastTexasMasterNaturalist/>

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:** Wanda Rauscher

****Vice President:** Cindy Smith

Hospitality Co-Chairs: Caryn Vorsas and Joe Vorsas; additional members TBD

****Secretary:** Carol Lanthrum

Historian/Archivist: TBD

****Treasurer:** Phil Guthrie

Immediate Past President: Paul Wick

DIRECTORS:

Advanced Training (AT): Lead - Beverly Guthrie 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: Beverly Guthrie

Membership: Wanda Rauscher

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

2022 Class Representatives: Denise Gary and Michelle Seaton

Chapter Advisors:

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

Boyd Sanders – TPWD Advisor

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

Revised 1/9/23