

Wood Duck Whistler April 2022

President's Message by Wanda Rauscher



April is National Volunteer Recognition Month. I want to thank each of you for your contributions to the Texas Master Naturalist program. In addition to the direct value of your service, when you record your hours in the VMS you allow Texas Parks & Wildlife to "claim" those hours. Federal grants use a 50/50 match with the monetary value assigned to our service as part of that equation. The grants have been used at state level to support Texas Nature Trackers, Texas Wildscapes, Urban Wildlife Program, Wildlife Interpretive Program, and our own Texas Master Naturalist Program.

Earth Day is April 22 and the chapter will be participating in the Tyler event on April 23 to be held at Camp Tyler. Check the eblast for Lance Homeniuk's contact information and contact him if you would like to help work the booth.

April 28 is the date for our quarterly Board Meeting. Meeting will start at 5:30 and run about an hour. **All members are welcome to attend.** Any items of new business must be submitted to Wanda Rauscher for consideration by April 15 (see contact infor-

T E X A S



mation in the eblast). The agenda will be as follows:

1. Approval of minutes from January meeting (minutes are posted on our website).
2. President's remarks and report
3. Reports of Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs and Project Leaders

Vice President and Program Chair: Ray Rottman

Treasurer: Phil Guthrie

Secretary and Historian: Bob Lumpkins

Advanced Training and New Class Training: Beverly Guthrie

Community Education, Outreach and Volunteer Service Projects: Lance Homeniuk

Speakers Bureau: Greg Marshall

Diversity and Inclusion: Holly Boyd

Acting Membership: Wanda Rauscher

Volunteer Management System: Carl Strange

Communications Support: Terri Gerber

- eBlast: Beverly Guthrie
- Newsletter: Ann Reynolds
- Public Relations: Carol Lanthrum
- Social Media: Greg Marshall
- Website: Dale Wade

2022 Class Representatives: Denise Gary and Michelle Seaton

Camera Trapping Project: Mark Edmund

City Nature Challenge: Bob Lumpkins

4. Old Business

5. New Business

Please plan to participate in the City Nature Challenge Project starting on April 29!

Looking ahead State plans to offer a Virtual Volunteer Fair on May 4-5. Watch the eBlast for more information.

PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE

Master Naturalists, it is almost time for City Nature Challenge!! By now I hope most if not all of you have established iNaturalist accounts either on your smart phone or for those who prefer capturing images via Canon, Nikon or another brand of camera, on your computer. We will have 4 glorious spring days starting on April 29 to capture observations (and another 6 days to work on identifications for those able to do so). And here is my personal challenge to you:

1. Find at least one native wildflower and submit to iNaturalist April 29-May 2:



Carolina Crane's bill, *Geranium carolinianum*

2. Find a lizard sunning and submit to iNaturalist



Common Five-lined Skink, *Plestiodon fasciatus*

3. Find a nesting bird and take photos of nest and bird (trying not to disturb) and submit to iNaturalist

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*



4. Find a plant with a berry and submit photo to iNaturalist.



Southern Dewberry, *Rubus trivialis*

5. Find a bee or wasp and submit photo to iNaturalist

Potter/Mason Wasp, *Parancistrocerus fulvipes*



6. Find a dragonfly and submit photo to iNaturalist



Blue Corporal, *Ladona deplanata*

7. Find a butterfly or moth and submit Photo to iNaturalist

Least Skipper, *Ancyloxypha numitor*



All of these example photos were taken in the time period of the City Nature Challenge (in a prior year). I look forward to seeing your observations



Planning Committee:

- Vickie Hoppis
- Carol Lanthrum
- Bob Lumpkins, Organizer
- Crystal Mann
- Jason Pike
- Ann Reynolds
- Karen Rueb-Hall
- Shanna Willbanks

If you have any questions, please contact Bob Lumpkins.

iNaturalist Walk at Faulkner Park

Vickie Hoppis



Our fellow Master Naturalist, Hue Adams, often says “aren’t we blessed to be able to enjoy such a great day and such a great place.” That is exactly the sentiment shared by the eight ETCMN members who gathered Saturday, March 19th to practice using the iNaturalist app in preparation for the upcoming City Nature Challenge. While walking through several areas in Faulkner Park that our “Wild Bunch” regularly maintains, we worked on our observation and picture taking skills. It was such fun to walk with like-minded individuals with each adding a different perspective. Together with eight sets of eyes exploring the environment, more was seen. With each person sharing their experiences and expertise more was learned.



Even though the spring bloom is just beginning there were many things to observe



Tiny Bluet – Photo Ann Reynolds

and record. The small blue flowers of the Tiny Bluet, the Red Dead Nettle and the American



American Field Pansy – Photo
Vickie Hoppis

Field Pansy; the yellow of the Texas Ragwort and Butter Weed; and the white of the Southern Dewberry and Chickweed were all making their appearance. With the absence of leaves we really could

appreciate the rich rustic bark of the River Birch, the armored bark

of the Hercules Club and the unique brittle branches of the Winged Elm. With more focus a Green Tree Frog sitting perfectly



Green Tree Frog – Photo – Vickie Hoppis

camouflaged on a green limb was seen. The wet areas were teeming with tadpoles. Of course, taking a picture of a tadpole can be challenging! Several varieties of birds were seen and heard by the birders in our group.

In two hours, our group became more accomplished with iNaturalist and we each probably learned something new about a plant or animal. More importantly, we got to know each other better!

If you have not had the opportunity to join one of these iNaturalist Walks, you are in luck as more are scheduled. Just check the e-blasts and the newsletter for dates, times, and locations.

Book Donation to Lillie Russell Memorial Library in Lindale

Bob Lumpkins, Chapter member, made a book donation to Shannon Reid, Director of the Lillie Russell Memorial Library located in downtown Lindale in early March. This donation was on behalf of the East Texas Chapter and specifically, the upcoming City Nature Challenge. Explore the Life Journey of One of the Winged Wonders: Monarch Butterflies was written by Ann Hobbie and illustrated by Olga Baumert. The author describes her book as a “real flight of fancy” for children and adults alike. “Through text and illustrations, the book brings the life cycle of monarch butterflies to ‘life’ and reminds us why we should help to feed and protect these amazing creatures”.



Into the Nest, written by birding experts, Laura Erickson and Marie Read, showcases the intimate lives of the species they observe. “The authors present close-up photographs and text that capture each dramatic stage of the family lives of birds, from courtship through mating, nest construction, egg-laying, parenting on the nest, nestling, feeding time, and finally, the first flight of the fledgling.

Walking in the Footprints of the Caddo

Denise Gary

All photos courtesy of Denise Gary unless otherwise noted. Standing atop the wide, grassy plateau at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, my mind swirled with imagery as I contemplated the bygone village of the Caddo people who once lived along the edge of this highland. The tribe constructed three mounds which served as ceremonial and burial structures here. Mingled throughout the mounds were large grass houses, small open-sided summer huts, and productive agricultural fields. Towering switchgrass was plentiful during the time of Caddo habitation, and a refreshing spring kept the tribe supplied with clean, fresh water. Gardens grew precious nourishment in the form of the Three Sisters—maize, beans and squash—as well as pumpkins, grains, and sunflowers. The nearby Neches River and surrounding woodlands provided a wealth of game animals and edible plants to enrich the Caddo diet. I could feel the sacredness still moving over this nurturing land.

This stirring appreciation was the result of a field trip taken by the ETMN Class of 2022. To set the stage, Master Naturalist Neal Stilley provided an enlightening presentation on the types of implements the Caddo would have used to build their homes and hunt for animals, including an enthralling fire-starting demonstration. He was vastly knowledgeable on the subject matter and had crafted all of the sample tools himself, which made his program all the more impressive.

Afterward, Site Manager Anthony Souther led an enlightening walking tour through what was once the Caddo village, painting an effective portrait of a thriving community. Sadly, the tornado of April 13, 2019 destroyed the authentic grass house recreation on the property, as well as the visitor center. Both structures are in the process of being rebuilt, and there will be volunteer opportunities to



Photo courtesy Lindsey Smith

help rebuild the grass house this summer. I highly recommend watching an enjoyable 30-minute video on the construction of the former house, "Koo Hoot Kiwat—Caddo Grass House," on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/PIHLqZCqzMY>. It helped me to appreciate the fine craftsmanship that goes into building the beehive-shaped dwellings.

The walking tour continued past a demonstration plot known as Snake Woman's Garden, the remnants of the mounds the historical site was formed to protect, and the barrow pit used to collect the earth to build the mounds. The pit is now a wetland supporting waterfowl and other creatures. Much of the high temple mound was excavated and never reconstructed, but a section can still be seen, along with a diorama depicting its original form. The low platform mound and burial mound are more intact. I was surprised to learn that the oldest burials were near the top of the burial mound, with later burials extending progressively downward. I would have expected the opposite.

As Mr. Souther was expounding on the Caddo culture, a flock of Sandhill Cranes flew behind our group. Their unmistakable rattling calls proved irresistible, and though no one wanted to be disrespectful to our host, each head reticently turned, one at a time, to admire the passing flock, as we all fell prey to the wild. Mr. Souther, smiling and unperturbed, immediately asked us to identify the birds.

On our way back, we were fortunate to have a go at hunting with an atlatl, an indigenous spear-throwing device. It was great fun! The on-site store is not to be missed.



Naturalists and history buffs alike will revel in the fascinating books the park offers, and many of us indeed left with a load. I look forward to returning to peruse more of the book selections and walk the sections of El Camino Real (The Royal Road) within the park.

In the afternoon, we traveled down the road for lunch at Mission Tejas State Park. Our fellowship was followed by a wonderfully informative Tree ID hike by Interpretive Guide Jared Shamburger. I had been pining to participate in a local tree identification class,



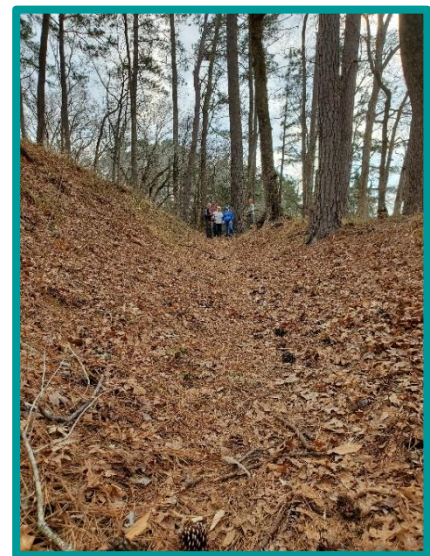
so I was really happy to experience Ranger Shamburger's program. Since the trees were still winter-bare, the search for clues was twice the fun. We all had a great time feeling the spongy bark of Rusty Blackhaw, assessing the size differences of Shortleaf and Loblolly pine cones, and smelling Sassafras bark and Southern Wax Myrtle leaves along the Tejas

Timber Trail. I am keen on walking the trail again in the future—paper handout in hand—to challenge myself to pick out the trees in a different season.

As if this wasn't already a great enough day, there was even more pleasure in store for us. Park Manager Gary Coker provided a highly entertaining presentation on the history of the Caddo, Nabedache (Tejas), French, Spanish, and Civilian Conservation Corp in the area, including the establishment and demise of Mission San Francisco de los Tejas and El



Camino Real. After his program, Mr. Coker took us on a walk to see a section of El Camino Real, which had extended from Mexico into Louisiana. It was exciting to see the swale created by so many passersby of yore. I could not resist taking a moment to walk in the footprints of the Caddo and the many others who traversed this ancient highway. The late afternoon light set the orange and yellow

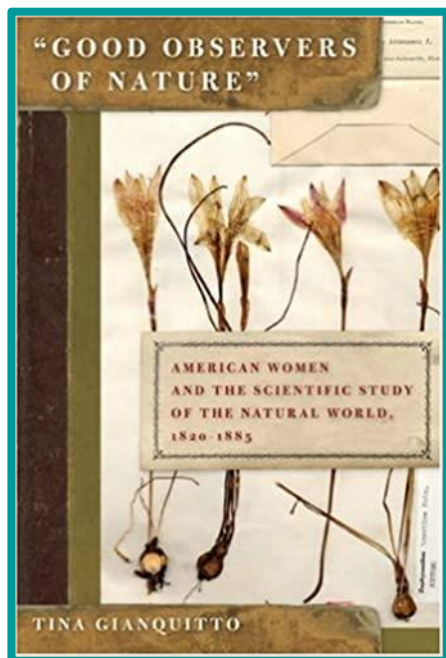


native grasses aglow, and highlighted the tan leaves of the Southern Sugar Maples, brittle and lifeless, yet still clinging to the trees. Even in late winter, this heavily forested park was stunning. I knew that the native peoples, explorers, and settlers would have seen the same beauty I was now gazing upon. Nature, as always, made me feel connected to the Earth and its endlessly fascinating history.

Book Reviews for March

Lance Homeniuk

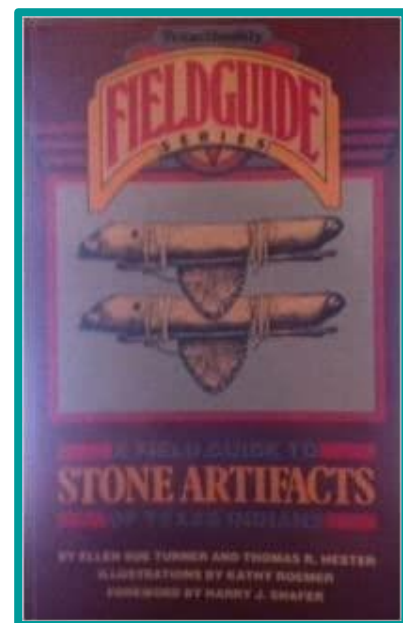
Good Observers of Nature: American Women and the Scientific Study of the Natural World 1820-1885. By Tina Gianquitto. Published 2007 by The University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA. Softcover, 216 pages. 15 cm X 23 cm X 1.5 cm. \$26.95.



Spoiler alert – this is one of the sixty or so books featured in Barney Lipscomb's presentation "What is a Naturalist", but only the cover is shown, so here are the details. This book reads like a doctoral dissertation in literature that was then published. But the author's literary bent, academic tone, and prolific use of third-party quotes and footnotes should not deter an avid reader. After the introduction I steered my will to continue and by the end of the

book was very happy I did so. Four women authors of the nineteenth century are chosen to exemplify different movements in writing about nature: Almira Phelps-enlightenment science, Margaret Fuller-romantic science, Susan Fenimore Cooper-natural science, and Mary Treat-evolutionary science. As female naturalists their styles, and themes range from the popular sentimental flower books, through the picturesque travelogues and transcendentalism (all 3 obviously with a feminine, domestic, moral slant) to the scientist/science writer, and correspondent of Asa Gray and Charles Darwin, no less. I probably underlined, margin-noted and highlighted more in this book than any since my college texts, or was it my master naturalist text? Not because I expect an exam, but I want to find those great lines to quote and those references to look up. My one regret is that my favorite, Treat, did not publish a book herself, so I'll have to search the periodicals she submitted to (dangling participle?). A tough job, but somebody has to do it ... yes I do!

A Field Guide to Stone Artifacts of Texas Indians. 2nd Edition by Ellen Sue Turner and Thomas Hester. Published 1993 by Gulf Publishing Co, Houston, TX. Soft cover, 395 pages, 14 cm X 22 cm X 2.2 cm. \$17.95.



This is one in a series of field guides sponsored by Texas Monthly in the 1990's; it has been superseded by a third edition. Over 200 dart and arrow projectile points, stone tools and a few curious unclassified artifacts are listed. Each entry includes illustrations, locations and ages. As I have never found one, and do not possess any all of that detail is way past me. But the first several chapters I did find interesting. Descriptions of how to make various stone tools step-by-step, determining their function, their context and chronology were all informative. And if I ever get to study an authentic artifact, now I have a resource to help guide me. As I read through it I often wondered what Neal would make of this statement or that. I guess I can ask him at the new class meeting at Caddo Mounds...

Insect of the Month Challenge (Tent Caterpillars - *Malacosoma* sp.)

Jason Pike

As the weather begins to warm and the leaves begin to bloom, it is once again time for the tent caterpillars to hatch and build their namesake nests. These voracious critters have a generally bad reputation that is not totally undeserved. The large tent nests are unsightly and the ravenous caterpillars can nearly strip a tree bare in a few weeks. However, if you can set your preconceived judgements aside for just a moment the *Malacosoma* caterpillars are not without some merit. The hatching of these caterpillars coincides with Spring migration and provides nutrients for many birds as they journey back North. Furthermore, while a defoliated tree may appear unsightly, a healthy tree will quickly rebound from the caterpillars' feeding, and the trees that are not strong enough to survive will still go on to serve as woodpecker roosts and beetle logs.

Eastern Tent Caterpillar (*M. americanum*)



Host: prefer apple, plum and cherry

Caterpillar: a hairy medium-sized caterpillar with eye-spots on the dorsal surface with yellow lines on either side.

Nest: A large tent where caterpillars congregate when not feeding.

Adult: A hairy, heavy-bodied moth, generally a cool brown color with white lines across the wings.



Forest Tent Caterpillar (*M. disstria*)



Host: prefer oak, maple and sweetgum

Caterpillar: a hairy medium-sized caterpillar with *white spots* on the dorsal surface with *light blue lines* on either side.

Nest: The only Malacosoma sp. that builds a large silken pad instead of a tent.

Adult: A hairy, heavy-bodied moth, generally a *warm brown color* with *dark lines* across the wings.

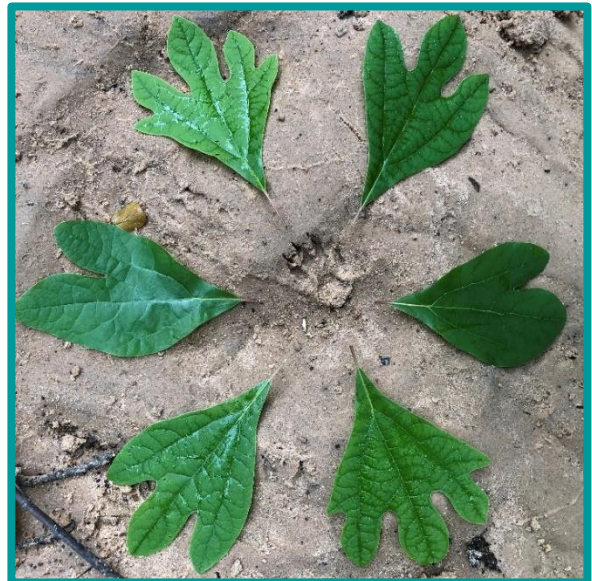
Male moths will swarm the cocoon of a female moth and be waiting to mate as soon as she emerges. The female will die soon after laying her eggs. The males will live up to two weeks longer than the females.

Mitts and Paws

Bonnie Edwards

Heidi Bailey, Texas Parks and Wildlife, recently taught the East Texas Chapter Master Naturalist Class of 2022 how to identify animal tracks.

Here's a paw print in a creek bed, surrounded by the varied leaves ("mittens and gloves"), of a Sassafras tree. I call this "Mitts and Paws", contrasting the animal and plant "hands." Care to take a guess as to what mammal made the track?



WANT TO LEARN?

WANT TO HAVE FUN?

WANT TO PROTECT NATURE?

JOIN:



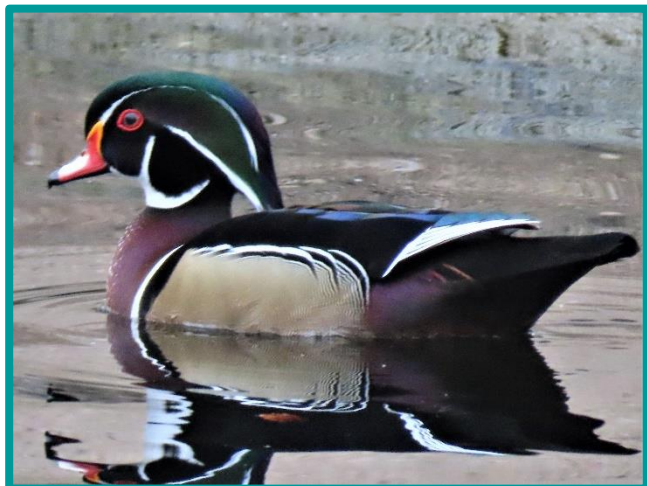


Photo courtesy Ann Reynolds

New Volunteer Projects

Camera Trapping

If you are interested in this volunteer project, please contact Mark Edmund

Adopt-A-Paddling-Trail

This is similar to the Adopt a Loop program except that you paddle a trail instead of driving a road and then enter information about it. Contact Kim Zimmer

Ongoing Volunteer Projects

Check out the most current Eblast for ongoing volunteer opportunities.

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.

Upcoming Events

April 9 – Introduction to iNaturalist, meet at the parking lot of Creekside Trail on Dudley Road (Kilgore) at **9am**

April 12 – TMN Tuesday - noon

April 15 to May 15, 2022 – Great Texas Birding Classic

April 20 – newsletter articles due to Ann Reynolds

April 28 – Introduction to iNaturalist – Tyler Nature Center at 5:30 pm

April 28 – Chapter Board meeting – Tyler Nature Center at 5:30 pm

April 28 – Chapter Meeting - Danielle Bradley - Introduction to Interpretive Walks Tyler Nature Center at 7:00 pm

April 29-May 2 – City Nature Challenge

In the Community

Tyler Audubon Society

April 12 – Bruce Biermann – retired from TPWD – TPWD bird related television stories and experiences from the field, 6:30 pm, Pollard United Methodist Church, Tyler

April 16 Field trip to the Mineola Nature Preserve; meet at the pavilion at 8:00 am

April 28 – NE TX Chapter Native Plant Society, 2:30 Longview Arboretum & Nature Center



WHERE YOU CAN FIND US



Chapter dues of \$20 per individual or \$35 per couple are due. 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:** Ray Rottman

Hospitality Co-Chairs: Karen Rueb-Hall, Caryn Vorsas and Joe Vorsas

****Secretary:** Bob Lumpkins

Historian/Archivist: Bob Lumpkins

****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 - Lance Homeniuk with Dawn Bahr and Greg Marshall

Community Education/Outreach: Lance Homeniuk

Speakers Bureau: Greg Marshall

Diversity and Inclusion: Holly Boyd

Training Class: Beverly Guthrie

Acting Membership: Wanda Rauscher

Volunteer Management System Director: Carl Strange

Communications Support: Terri Gerber

E-Blast: Beverly Guthrie

Newsletter: Ann Reynolds

Photography: Lindsey Smith

Public Relations: Carol Lanthrum

Social Media: Greg Marshall

Website: Dale Wade

State Representative: Wanda Rauscher or appointed alternative

2021 Class Representatives: Kirsten McBride and Mark Edmund

Chapter Advisors:

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

Kevin Herriman – TPWD Advisor

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

All ETCMN members listed are voting Board members.

Newly Revised 2/14/22