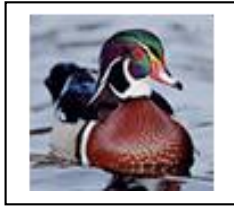


# Wood Duck Whistler



East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists

October 2020 Volume 20, Issue 10



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The Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting this year was fun. We learned about bats, native plants, and so much more. Hopefully you got in to it. Then you can take some time to go back over any presentations that seem like a blur, especially the ones you missed because, hey, you can't clone yourself (if you had

more than one computer to make it worthwhile anyway).

Fall is here. Somehow sneaked up while the Annual Meeting glued me to the computer all week. In all the plummeting temperatures, your face should be warmer than ever with those masks on. Remember that when

you go to the state parks and out.

Computers are getting more useful. Best to balance it with outdoor time to minimize eye strain. Though if you ask me, I'll probably watch Doug Tallamy again and catch up on the other annual meeting presentations I missed.



## Nature is Full of Webs, Not to Fear by Tamara Kratzer

Chances are, though we are all Master Naturalists, some of us have a fear of any number of creatures that are a part of life out there. After all, we might like the outdoors and animals, but some likely creep us out. Even if we don't harbor any ill will for them.

Common phobias such as arachnophobia, the

fear of spiders, everyone likely knows. Heck, I know a lot of critters would be afraid of them—insects in particular that get eaten regularly. Perhaps you know the name of another common phobia, with snakes: ophidiophobia. They don't have it easy either. Rattlesnakes have gotten a bad rap and been terrorized by people. Sure they're

dangerous. They get hungry and the venom comes in handy. At least they warn you. Given a chance, that wily roadrunner will eat it anyway.

I crossed someone once with an unusual phobia. Lepidopterophobia is, guess, a fear of butterflies and moths. For something beautiful, that's a shame. Maybe he (continued on page 2)

### Texas Pollinator Bioblitz 2020- it's over-by Wanda Rauscher

For the Texas Fall Pollinator Bioblitz this year there were more than 49,000 observations of more than 3,000 species by 5,000 observers. Members of our East Texas Chapter contributed 491 observations of 325 species! What a wonderful excuse to be out observing nature! I selected a few of our observations to highlight.

brushy fields, edges of woods, gardens, and other disturbed open habitats.



Jason's Yellowjacket Hoverfly, *Milesia virginiensis*



Cosmic Cat's Long-tailed Skipper, *Urbanus proteus*

If you have never seen one of these flies before you will need to do a doubletake to realize that it is a fly and not a bee/wasp (note short antenna, big eyes, and only 2 wings). It makes a buzzing sound as it swoops by to complete its masquerade!

I have only seen this butterfly once before even though it is not rare. Butterflies and Moths of North America (<https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Urbanus-proteus>) notes that it is commonly found in



### Nature is Full of Webs (continued) by Tamara Kratzer

grew up in the city. People who don't grow up in the outdoors can get anything from mysophobia, a fear of dirt or germs, to agoraphobia, the fear of open spaces, to downright biophobia,

a fear of all living creatures and an aversion to nature. Of course that's where we come in.

Unfortunately we can't keep living critters from being afraid of us. People are still scary things

for them, but we are out there helping people understand how great the wild is and how much we can't go without it. Though I still get the creeps around spiders. I do have a soft spot for daddy long legs.

## The President's Message

Got COVID fatigue? Well, it is easy to get in this world under pandemic protocols, face masks, social distancing, limited gatherings, and a disruption to our previous way of life. But one thing that is little changed is the world of nature. I hope that we can all enjoy the fall in East Texas.

Several of the speakers at the Texas Master Naturalist annual

meeting emphasized the roles that master naturalists can play in educating the public. Dr. Doug Tallamy, a professor of entomology and wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware, spoke of master naturalists as being "nature's best hope". He talked about his personal experience of creating biodiversity in his 10-acre homeplace by thoughtful planting of native species and

subsequently being able to count over 1,000 species of caterpillars and 50 species of birds in his parklike space. He pointed out that we err if we: assume nature is important but not essential; assume humans and nature cannot coexist; and leave responsibility for earth stewardship in the hands of a few people.

Another speaker, Rachel Richter who is



by Paul Wick [phwick@yahoo.com](mailto:phwick@yahoo.com)

a TPWD urban biologist, also spoke on the need for biodiversity in our urban ecosystems. She gave selling points or "what's in it for me" messages that may be used. This included recreation, health benefits, and stress reduction of our parks and recreation areas. Green spaces and tree canopies can reduce temperatures in urban heat islands and improve air quality. Trees and green spaces increase property

values. Nature areas increase tourism and much more. Teaching the value of nature will influence young people who will be future leaders.

There have been questions about COVID19 policies. It is well to note that TMN is under TAMU/AgriLife health and safety guidelines which are always more cautious as these are designed to best protect students. The updated guidelines are: group meetings of 50%

capacity of space or fewer people only if social distancing can be practiced with a limited capacity of 50 people. Face coverings are required at all events. (<https://txmn.tamu.edu/welcome/covid-19-response/>)

I hope that you can take advantage of the many volunteer and advanced training activities that our chapter.

Stay safe.



## Book Review by Lance Homeniuk

*Trammel's Trace: The First Road to Texas from The North.* By Gary L. Pinkerton, Texas A&M University press, College Station, 2016. My copy is the second edition (2018), Red River Books, sponsored by Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

This is not an overly long book, 281 pages including notes and index, but it took a long time to read. It is part biography of Nicholas Trammel, part history of the eponymous trail he blazed. And it is as exhaustively researched as you could wish for. I now know more about the man than I thought possible as the author traces his life from Nashville, Tennessee in 1780 to Gonzales County, Texas in 1856 with every move, court record, and known relative. I thought Trammel would have crossed paths with famous folks of the era like Crockett, Houston, Bowie, and Austin but they travelled his trace without having any noteworthy

interaction with him. And he did not seem to have taken part in any of the historic events of the formation of Republic or state. He did have an unsavory reputation with everyone who did encounter him whether Native American, settler, government official, or military officer. When I visualize the man, my mind's eye brings up Strother Martin in any of his roles as supporting scoundrel in TV shows or western movies of my youth.

But it is the first two chapters that I really enjoyed for the subject therein is The Trace itself. From the author's first inkling that the rut through his father's pasture was of historical significance, to his search for traces of the Trace on the ground, in archived maps and from aerial photos the reader gets a taste of being a "rut nut" as Pinkerton calls himself. A fold out, unattached map came with my copy, as does an

autograph. I bought it at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site during Camino Real day in 2018 at the Historical Society table that was set up near our chapter's table. Since then I have walked a bit of the Trace in Martin Creek State Park and driven over the old path without recognizing it. I may have paid \$20 for the book and it's the maps and travelogue that make it worth the price.

*Live Or Die? Survival Challenge*, by Pat Shand, published by Quarto Publishing Group USA in 2017, Minneapolis, MN. *Printed in Shenzhen, China, distributed by Scholastic Inc.*

This is a small booklet, of the kind often found at school book fairs. It originally came with a paracord wristband. You know, to help you survive, and because it was so cool. At 97 pages, thick card cover and garishly colored glossy paper it is like a little Cliff's Notes for (continued next page)

## The Monarchs are Migrating and Many Meandered through My Yard by Mike Price

This year we planted a lot of butterfly and hummingbird attracting shrubs in our yard. Butterfly bushes, lantana, butterfly weed, milkweed, trumpet creeper, and Turk's cap. Some of these we already had and with the good rains this year everything grew very well.

This is the third year for our butterfly bushes and they are 7 feet tall and covered with fragrant pink blooms right now. When the wind is out of the north, my wife and I smell them as we sit on our back deck in the shade of crepe myrtle, water

oak, cedar, maple and burr oak trees.

This past week I walked between the 2 butterfly bushes and about 10 to 15 monarchs were feeding in them and I was surrounded by monarchs flittering about. It was something I enjoyed and will always remember.



## Book Review (continued from last page) by Lance Homeniuk

kids who will almost never find themselves in quicksand or attacked by a shark rather than never reading the assigned passage in literature class.

The format is simple, each "topic" introduced with factoids and photos, followed on the facing page with "Live or Die?" options and on the flip side with the outcomes: Success!, Caution!, and

Danger! And tips for avoiding the scenario in the first place. I bought it for \$3.99 at half priced Books to use in my mini survival camp this summer and the seven- to ten-year-olds enjoyed looking through it to find alarming pictures.

96 pages, about six by eight inches, card-backed; it was \$9.99 from Scholastic but \$3.99 at

Half-Priced Books (that is less than half priced!)

Texas Pollinator Bioblitz 2020- it's over-  
by Wanda Rauscher

(continued from page 2)



Lindsey Smith's Southern Plains Bumble Bee, *Bombus fraternus*

Lindsey Smith has the ONLY observation of the Southern Plains Bumble Bee in the Bioblitz.

Learn more about bumble bees in Texas by visiting [https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife\\_diversity/nongame/native-pollinators/bumblebees.phtml](https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/nongame/native-pollinators/bumblebees.phtml)

Xerces Society states that we should be concerned about the future of this bee: [https://www.xerces.org/endangered-species/](https://www.xerces.org/endangered-species/species-)

profiles/at-risk-bumble-bees/southern-plains-bumble-bee .



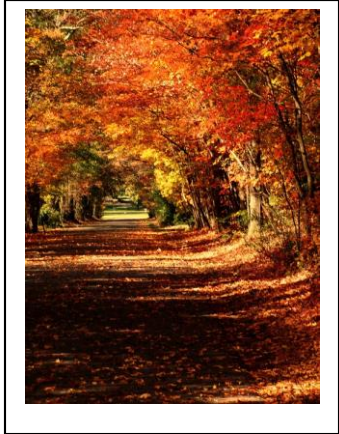
Kari-TX's Little Yellow, *Pyrisitia lisa*

What a beautiful photo! These butterflies have to be in the right mood to pose. Did you know some plants in the bean family have nectaries in places other than their flowers? For partridge pea the place with the nectar is a little cup at the base of a leaf. Not sure about plant ID in this photo.



wrauscher's Cellophane Bee, (genus *Colletes*)

I am still working hard to learn bee ID. Carol Clark gave a wonderful presentation on our native bees at the annual conference that can still be viewed by registrants for a few more weeks. Do you know how the Cellophane bee got its name? The female lines her brood cells with a plastic-like material which is in fact a natural polyester. Identification tips for this genus include angled eyes that give a heart-shaped face, gray/black body color, hairy body and legs, and medium-size for a bee with slightly flattened appearance. They also have a particular wing venation and a tongue that splits into two parts at the bottom like a snake tongue. (I know, GOOD LUCK getting that tongue photo for a live bee.)

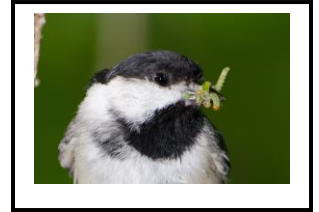


## Keynote at Annual Meeting: Nature's Best Hope by Wanda Rauscher

THE most important presentation was the one presented by Dr. Doug Tallamy, entomologist & wildlife ecologist, entitled "Nature's Best Hope" (and he has a book with that title). Dr. Tallamy offers an alternate plan to Dr. Edward O. Wilson's half-earth concept or maybe a tremendously important addition. Instead of native spaces where people aren't, imagine creating native places where people live. Studies have shown that our bird species in decline are the ones that need caterpillars for their young. Dr. Tallamy's students collected data showing that for bluebirds, caterpillars occupied the highest volume of invertebrates fed to baby birds and that, of invertebrate prey, caterpillars offer the highest source of carotenoids. Just like us birds need carotenoids for their best health and must obtain them from their diets.

Another of Dr. Tallamy's students found that in order to raise a clutch, chickadees need at least 6,000 caterpillars. So, we need more caterpillars for our birds. How do we make that happen? Grow the caterpillar host plants in our yards. Dr. Tallamy noted that if we replace half the U.S. land now covered by "lawn" with native plants we would create 20 million acres of home-grown park. He gave examples of species diversity before and after replanting at his own 10-acre home, at a suburban home, and a small city lot home. He also noted that some plant species support a greater diversity of life than others and recommended that we use National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder to identify keystone species for our area.

He also reminded us that light pollution is a problem for moths and suggested switching to LED bulbs and having motion sensors on outside lights. Dr. Tallamy says that the conservation movement made three early missteps that we need to correct: 1) Assuming that nature is important but not essential 2) Assuming that nature and humans cannot coexist 3) Leaving earth stewardship to a few specialists instead of realizing it is a duty and responsibility for each of us. I just ordered his book and highly recommend that you listen to Dr. Tallamy speak if you have the opportunity.



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## 2020 Officers & Committee Chairs

Paul Wick –President  
Wanda Rauscher – Vice President  
Bob Lumpkins – Secretary  
Phil Guthrie – Treasurer  
Lance Homeniuk – Immediate Past President

Mike Price – Volunteer Service Projects Director  
Beverly Guthrie – Advanced Training Director

Vickie Hoppis – Membership  
Beverly Guthrie – Training Director  
Carl Strange –Volunteer Management System

Jan Barth – Historian/Archivist  
Vacant – Librarian  
Karen Rueb-Hall – Hospitality  
Quita Russell – Hospitality  
Terry Smitherman – Hospitality

Lindsey Smith – Communications Dir  
Kathy Riffe – Public Relations  
R. Dale Wade – Website  
Greg Marshall – Social Media  
Tamara Kratzer - Newsletter Editor

Kevin Herriman - TPWD Advisor  
Clint Perkins – Agrilife Extension Agent-Smith County Advisor

## Monthly Programs

We meet the **Fourth Thursday** at 308 N Broadway in Tyler. Bring a friend, invite a guest.  
at the Discovery Join us at **6:30 PM** Everyone is  
Science Place Annex for socializing before welcomed.  
Bldg our meeting.

## Directions and Dues

East Texas Chapter  
Master Naturalists  
Meeting Facility:  
**Discovery Science  
Place Annex Bldg  
308 N Broadway Ave  
Tyler, Texas 75702**

Directions:  
On Broadway Ave on the left from the south or right from the north in downtown Tyler. Turn onto Locust and make a right into the parking lot.

Please send \$20.00 individual (\$35.00 couple)  
**Annual Chapter dues**  
to:  
ETCMN Attn: Treasurer  
Box 131184  
Tyler, TX 75713-1184

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*Your news, stories, comments, photos, and ideas are needed. Tell us about where you volunteer and what you're doing,*

***Deadline is 15th of every month!***

*Please send items to Tamara Kratzer.*

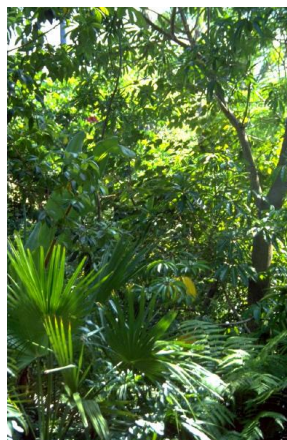
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