

T E X A S

Master  
Naturalist™



GOOD WATER MASTER NATURALIST  
WILLIAMSON COUNTY

# RIPPLES

Volume 3 Number 4  
July/August 2014

## UPCOMING EVENTS

7/10/14 NPSOT Meeting  
7/19/14 NPSOT State Meeting  
7/24/14 GWMN Meeting  
7/29/14 NPAT 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting  
7/31/14 GWMN Book Club  
8/11/14 WAG Meeting  
8/14/14 NPSOT Meeting  
8/28/14 GWMN Meeting

Check the website for the many opportunities coming up---way too numerous to even think about posting here!

## NOW YOU KNOW

Falling air pressure causes pain in bird's ears, so if birds are flying low to the ground it almost always means thunderstorm is coming.

Feral hogs may chose one yard over another if there is a specialty food item such as acorns or bulbs.

## Native Prairies Association of Texas by Mary Ann



The Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) was formed in 1986 by Texas concerned about the disappearance of the prairies as well as the historical heritage connected with them. It is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the conservation, restoration and appreciation of native prairies, savannas, and other grasslands in Texas as well as other parts of the United States. NPAT protects 2,780.97 acres of native Texas prairie including over 100 acres of endangered and threatened tallgrass prairie.

NPAT is forming a Williamson County Chapter with the first meeting July 29, 2014, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Williamson County AgriLife Extension Meeting Room at 3151 SE Inner Loop in Georgetown. There will be a short presentation on various prairie remnants as well as replication and restoration prairie sites found in 6 nearby counties.

The area below the Granger Lake Dam has a prairie that was replanted with prairie vegetation some years ago. NPAT has had an agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers to use the site to replicate Blackland Prairie plants. Interested volunteers attended a workshop in the spring and are working on a plan to reactivate this restoration and create a Blackland Prairie gene bank.

## White Grubs by Wizzie Brown



White grubs are creamy-white, C-shaped larvae with six legs and a brownish-orange head capsule (Fig 1). The larvae become May and June beetles (and other closely related species). Grubs feed on the roots of turf grass, causing it to lose vigor and turn brown. These insects can cause turf to have brown patchy areas. When there are heavy populations of white grubs, turf can often be rolled up like carpeting because the grubs eat all the roots leaving no attachment to the soil.

To inspect for white grubs, cut several 6-inch square blocks of turf in various areas of the landscape. Make sure to include areas of suspected white grub damage. Examine grass plugs in the root zone for grubs. Treatment is justified

when there are more than 5-8 white grubs per square foot. It is possible that some lawns can withstand higher numbers of grubs without noticeable damage.

White grub treatments should be applied approximately 6 weeks after the heaviest flights of May and June beetles. Due to rainfall this time period can vary from year to year, but typically in Central Texas treatment falls mid-July to early August.

Beneficial nematodes are available for managing white grubs, but need moisture to move through soil. Nematodes are small worms that attack grubs and other soil-dwelling insects. If you choose to use nematodes to control white grubs, make sure that the soil is irrigated on a regular basis to allow enough moisture so the nematodes can move through the soil to locate a host.

Insecticidal treatments may also be used to manage white grubs. You can spot treat infested areas instead of treating your entire lawn. If soil is very dry, water about ½ inch the day before treatment to encourage grubs to move closer to the soil surface. Liquid or granular formulations are available for white grub management with active ingredients such as bifenthrin, carbaryl, imidacloprid, clothianidin or halofenozide. Do not apply pesticide treatments if rainfall is expected and sweep up any spilled material from driveways, sidewalks or streets. Always read and follow all label instructions and application rates.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

## Murphy Park Rookery



Several hundred Cattle Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets, and Little Blue Herons congregate and nest on a small island at the lake at Murphy Park in Taylor. There is active nesting, adults are feeding chicks, juveniles roam the edges of the water, and adults roost for the evening. The juvenile little blue herons are still white and can be identified easily by their green legs. The snowy egrets are recognized by their yellow feet. Arrive around 7:00 p.m. with a picnic supper and enjoy watching the birds come in for the evening.

## New Master Naturalist Assistant Program Coordinator

COLLEGE STATION - The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service recently hired Mary Pearl Meuth as an assistant program coordinator to work directly with the agency's Texas Master Naturalist program, said Meuth's supervisor.

"Mary Pearl has been with us for several weeks now and has really hit the ground running," said Dr. Jim Cathey, AgriLife Extension wildlife and fisheries associate department head and AgriLife Extension program leader at College Station. "She is charged with helping to coordinate this fast-growing volunteer program, so that it may continue its phenomenal growth as a viable and useful tool for the citizens of Texas."



"The Texas Master Naturalist program's charge is to develop a corp of well-informed volunteers across the state who are equipped to provide education, outreach and service on the proper management of natural resources and natural areas within their respective communities," Cathey said. The program currently boasts more than 8,000 volunteers in 44 chapters across 70 counties.

AgriLife Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department serve as the program sponsors.

"To become a certified Texas Master Naturalist, volunteers must complete 40 hours of extensive training and commit to another 40 hours of subsequent volunteer work," Cathey said. "People involved with the program are serious about proper management of our state's abundant natural resources and they deserve a coordinator with the passion and drive to continue the positive work of this very worthwhile volunteer effort. We feel we have found that person in Mary Pearl."

Meuth holds a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife and fisheries science from Texas A&M University at College Station. She also holds a composite science teaching certificate for grades 8-12 from McLennan Community College at Waco.

Prior to accepting her new position, Meuth was an education program contractor with the Texas Wildlife Association, where she worked as the lead educator within a nine-county region around Houston.

Her employment history also includes service as an AgriLife Extension administrative assistant in Bell County, office assistant with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute at St. Petersburg, Florida and lab technician with the Colorado Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Fort Collins, Colorado.

## Fall Training Class



Registration has opened for the first Fall Training Class for the Good Water Master Naturalist Chapter. There will be 17 classes meeting primarily on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. There will be a few Saturday field trip classes. Cost is \$150.00 per person with a \$30.00 discount when a couple shares a manual. Online registration is

available: <http://txmn.org/goodwater/2014-training-class-online-application/>

Becoming a Master Naturalist is a certification process, so class attendance is very important. Missed classes must be made up, so one should plan to be there for all the classes.

Please pass along the information about registration to your friends so we can fill our Fall Class.

## Highland Mall Purple Martins



A trip to Austin's Highland Mall will bring you a different birding treat – July is the month that the area's purple martins congregate prior to migrating south. They have left their nesting boxes and both this year's young and adults fly in glorious rapid circular patterns. The air is filled with hundreds of thousands of birds and the sounds of their wings. When they perch, the wings hit the nearby branches creating a beautiful sound. This year, they have changed their

roost from the north end near the Wells Fargo bank to trees closer to the Jack in the Box at Airport and Highland Mall Blvd. Travis Audubon Society hosts Purple Martin Parties beginning on July 5<sup>th</sup> on Friday and Saturday evenings. Members of the society are there to answer your questions about these amazing birds. The roost site may change, but it will be easy to find the groups of people in their lawn chairs watching as the birds fly in.

For information about the Good Water Chapter  
<http://txmn.org/goodwater> or [goodwatermn2@gmail.com](mailto:goodwatermn2@gmail.com)