

T E X A S



GOOD WATER MASTER NATURALIST
WILLIAMSON COUNTY

RIPPLES

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UPCOMING EVENTS

9/11/14 NPSOT Meeting
9/24/14 GWMN Meeting
7/29/14 NPAT 1st Meeting
9/23/14 GWMN Book Club
10/9/14 NPSOT Meeting
10/23/14 GWMN Meeting
10/24/14-10/26/24
Texas Master Naturalist State
Meeting – Mo Ranch

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

NOW YOU KNOW

Wild turkeys can fly for short distances at up to 55 miles per hour. Wild turkeys are also fast on the ground, running at speeds of up to 25 miles per hour.

Dragonflies are one of the fastest insects, flying 50 to 60 mph.

Infant beavers are called kittens.

No two spider webs are the same.

Mourning Doves

By Derrick Wolter



Mourning doves are found in a variety of habitats and have adapted well to human encroachment, including everything from agricultural operations to urbanization. Preferred areas for these birds include open to semi-wooded areas close to agricultural grain crops such as milo, corn and wheat. Mourning doves tend to avoid heavily forested habitats most likely because the vast majority of their diet consists of seeds, specifically "weed" seeds. It seems one animal's "trash" plant is a mourning doves treasure! Mourners relish just about any area where the ground has been recently disturbed since these are the areas where weeds, more appropriately termed forbs, tend to thrive. Doves enjoy consuming seeds from annual forbs such as sunflower, croton (doveweed), western ragweed, white prickly poppy, and many other seed producing grasses and forbs.

Mourning doves form strong pair bonds and breeding normally occurs during spring and throughout the summer. Most nests are located in trees or shrubs 6-10 feet high, although mourning doves will nest on the ground as well. If you spot a dove nest, you'll conclude that they do not waste a lot of time building them. Dove nests are simple structures that appear quite flimsy, usually no more than a handful of twigs.

Mourning doves typically have 2 eggs per clutch, but can produce as many as 6 broods per year! Incubation lasts 2 weeks, both sexes tend to the young before and after hatching and fledging occurs in about 2 weeks. High reproduction rates are a must for the species due to high annual mortality (65%). Nationally, hunters harvest about 5 percent of the mourning dove population each year. The biggest predators of this bird are other avian species, namely the Cooper's hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Peregrine Falcons.

Pillbugs by Wizzie Brown



Pillbugs, or roly-polys, are crustaceans, closely related to crayfish and shrimp. While terrestrial, these creatures must live in moist environments to be able to survive. They may sometimes invade homes in large numbers, but they are a nuisance pest and do not bite, sting, transmit diseases or cause physical damage to the home or its contents.

Pillbugs are ¼- ½” with dark grey coloring. Their oval bodies are convex above and either flat or concave underneath. Pillbugs have seven pairs of legs and two pairs of antennae and roll up into a ball when disturbed.

Pillbugs are scavengers, feeding mainly on decaying organic matter. They may occasionally feed on young, tender plants, but damage is typically not significant. They can be found under mulch, flowerpots, compost, stones or other items resting on the ground.

They often invade crawl spaces and homes at ground level with common points of entry being door thresholds and expansion joints. When these pests are seen indoors, there is usually a large population breeding on the outside of the home near the foundation. Since pillbugs require moisture, they do not survive indoors for more than a few days unless there are very moist or damp conditions.

To manage infestations inside the home, rely on sanitation and exclusion techniques. Repair or replace door thresholds and seal expansion joints where pillbugs may be entering the structure. Pesticides are not usually needed indoors to manage these occasional invaders. They soon die on their own from lack of moisture and can be swept up using a broom and dustpan or a vacuum and disposed of.

Outdoors, move any piles of debris away from the foundation of the home. If there are high numbers in and around landscape beds, turn the mulch to allow it dry out to make the area uninhabitable. Any leaky faucets or irrigation lines as well as leaking air conditioning units should be repaired to eliminate moisture buildup. You may choose a pesticide to treat mulched areas or other areas that are harboring large pillbug populations. Look for products labeled for pillbugs, sowbugs or isopods.

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

Texas Master Naturalists Annual Meeting

Mo Ranch - Hunt, Texas

October 24-26, 2014



Master Naturalists from all over the state will gather at Mo Ranch for Advanced Training and opportunities to meet other Master Naturalists. The meeting is open to everyone affiliated with the program including Certified members, In Training Members, Advisors, and special guests. Mo Ranch is located in the beautiful hill country along the Guadalupe River near Hunt Texas. The ranch provides many lodging opportunities from Super Saver Bunkhouse Lodging to Deluxe and Single Registration Lodging. The rooms range from modern hotel rooms to spacious historic mansions to rustic cabins.

The Advanced Training Opportunities are unique each year. Here is a partial list of classes:

Regaining your sense of place: A personal journey to discovering your place in your bioregion.

Texas Stream Team Paddlers Water Quality Monitoring Training

Hill Country vs. Coastal Prairie Archeology

Into the Prairie: A Celebration of Native Prairie Grasses

Whooping Crane Mysteries Unveiled

Texas Outdoor Family: Growing the Next Generation of Naturalists

Big Bend Ranch State Park: Geology at the Crossroads

Invasive Species Citizen Science Workshop

Water, Water . . . Where is the Water?

Identifying Native Plants Walking Tour

Tools of the Trade: Monitoring Dove Populations in Texas

Native Pollinators: Who's doing what in your flowers?

To get a complete list of all sessions as well as to register: <http://tinyurl.com/lq7aqa6>

Our chapter will be entering the Project Fair again this year with the Pollinator Garden Project. There will be Photo and Art Contests. Last year Patty Ozga won grand prize with her beautiful dragonfly quilt.

In Memoriam



Sterlin Barton became a Master Naturalist in the Good Water Chapter's first class in 2010. He served on the board from 2010 as an At-Large Member and then as the Volunteer Service Projects Committee Chair. He received his 1000-hour award pin this year. He loved fishing and was active in Texas Parks and Wildlife's Anger Education Program teaching kids to fish. Sterlin volunteered with the training classes and was a big encouragement to our new members. Sterlin Barton died August 11, 2014 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His strong sense of humor and wisdom will be missed.

The Liberty Garden by Pat Shirk



About a year ago MN members Bonnie Sladek, Betty Jackson and Pat Shirk were asked by Keep Taylor Beautiful to add plants to the Liberty garden in Taylor's Murphy Park to attract butterflies. The Liberty garden was constructed about 10 years ago as a memorial to US veterans. Several months ago the design was implemented with the addition of Texas native butterfly friendly plants. A

water feature was added to provide moisture for the butterflies. In addition to the MN members, Taylor citizens and youth groups participated in the project. Since then the plants have been growing and blooming. A garden maintenance day was held on August 1st. Bonnie Sladek, Sterlin and Merrilyn Barton, and Dave and Gail McAdoo helped with weeding and pruning. Regular maintenance of the garden will be an ongoing project. Next spring many of the plants will reseed providing an abundance of natural food and water for the butterflies.

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