



Naturalist Notes



Left to right - Spring Class Field Trip to Sheldon Lake, Gytaku (Japanese Fish Printing) at Cub Scout Twilight Camp, Gulf Coast Member Kjell Lindgren on board the ISS

TEXAS WILDLIFE REHABILITATION COALITION PHOTO CONTEST

Submissions from all levels of photographers are open through September 26th. For more information, visit their website at

<https://www.twrcwildlifecenter.org/event/2022-wild-insight-photo-contest/>

CHAPTER MEETINGS WILL BE EITHER IN- PERSON OR ONLINE

Through December 2022, monthly chapter meetings will be held in person at the Arboretum if the speaker attends in person. If the speaker is remote, the meeting will be virtual only. Look for a message from our president with information on the format of the monthly meeting.

Note: August meeting will be in person.

JUNE WAS THE HOTTEST ON RECORD FOR HOUSTON

June 2022 was the hottest June in Houston, breaking the record set in 2011 by 0.5 F. Fortunately, according to meteorologist Eric Berger, a record hot June does not mean a record July and August.

Galveston Island broke its own record by more than one degree, showing the Gulf of Mexico's rising temperature.

Class Field Trip - Sheldon Lake

On Saturday, April 30, the Class of Spring 2022 attended our final field trip to Sheldon Lake State Park & Environmental Learning Center. We were greeted by our facilitator, TMN Gulf Coast member John Egan, who took attendance and introduced our first speaker: Christie Taylor.

Christie is an AgriLife Extension Program Specialist at Texas Community Watershed Partners, where she works on stormwater wetland projects. Her diverse background and numerous qualifications were evident as her informative presentation on wetlands ecology provided the class with examples of success stories within the park and surrounding projects that she is involved with. She mentioned numerous volunteer opportunities available and highly recommended, and we agree, that a future class trip be taken to Exploration Green, a defunct golf course that is an innovative stormwater detention center and green space that serves as a nature preserve and recreation area.

After Christie's presentation, John herded the cats up for a class picture (a good-looking group if I do say so myself). We were then introduced to Matt Moore, a Natural Resource Ranger with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Matt, along with John and Christie, led the class on a tour of the surrounding area to include the former fish hatchery ponds and prairie trail and wetland loop. Matt discussed the maintenance of the prairie area and brought to light an actual positive that has come out of the COVID-19 shutdown: Controlled burns, something that seems to be difficult to schedule and achieve, were conducted on a more regular basis due to the restriction of personnel allowed to enter the park. This resulted in a more manageable effort to control invasive plant species.

Upon completion of the scheduled time planned for the trip, John remained behind and offered an hour of advanced training and a tour of the nursery and the John Jacob Observation Tower. The majority of the class remained behind and took advantage of his extensive knowledge of the park and its continued efforts to maintain and restore its natural prairie.

Despite a brief rainstorm while in the tower, this fieldtrip was another example of the dedication and passion of those who have led, instructed, and organized our field trips during our class sessions. They have truly prepared us for becoming a Texas Master Naturalist.

Rob Beaton



Spring Class of 2022



“The naturalist looks for the wonder of nature - she listens to the voice of nature and learns from nature as she tries to understand it. As a naturalist, you need to have empathy and intuition - and love.” Dr. Jane Goodall

ORGANISM OF THE MONTH

DWARF PALMETTO (SABAL MINOR)

When you see fan shaped palm fronds emerging seemingly from the ground, you are almost certainly looking at the native dwarf palmetto. Found most often in forest areas that remain wet throughout the year, this palm usually has an underground trunk. When grown in standing water, the trunk may extend above ground. The leaf blades are longer than the leaf stalks.

White flowers appear on a long stalk in the summer, followed by clusters of black fruit. In the city, raccoons, American robin, and cedar waxwings eat the fruit and disperse the seed. In larger forests, white-tailed deer and black bear also contribute to seed dispersal.

The Seminole, Houma, Choctaw and other indigenous tribes used the leaves to thatch their homes. Other parts of the plant, such as roots and berries, were used as food or medicine.

Sources: USDA Plant Guide, wildflower.org



Picture by Drew Avery - flickr

DROUGHT: STAGE ONE

**WATER
WISELY**

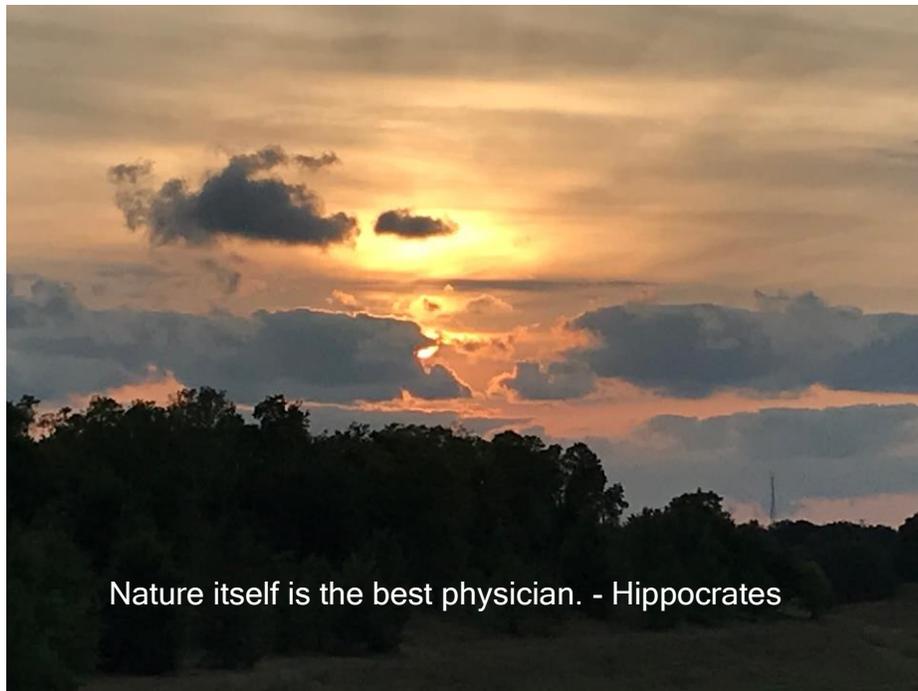
**WHEN TO WATER:
LAST NUMBER OF
HOME ADDRESS**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
✓ EVEN			✓ ODD	✓ EVEN		✓ ODD



VOLUNTARY RESTRICTIONS IN EFFECT

**HOUSTON
PUBLIC WORKS**



Nature itself is the best physician. - Hippocrates

World Snake Day July 16th - Snakes Changing Color

Birds do it, octopus do it, snakes do it? Animals may change color as they mature or during breeding season (birds). Other animals change to blend in with their background, or to express their emotions (octopus). It turns out that some snake species also change colors.

Some snakes look markedly different as juveniles than as adults. This permanent color change is called ontogenetic. Corn snakes bred for the pet trade may be more strongly patterned as adults than as juveniles. Native corn snakes change more subtly, gaining color under the neck as they mature.

Reversible color change over short periods of time is much rarer in snakes. Physiological color change has been observed in Arizona Black Rattlesnakes. The snake can change from almost black to the more familiar light tan/brown pattern. The reason for the color changes is unclear. In other snake species color change helps with camouflage.

Snakes are a vital part of the ecosystem, removing rodents and other pests around homes. Although World Snake Day has passed, it's always a good time to appreciate snakes.

A Master Naturalist in Space

Kjell Lindgren arrived on the International Space Station April 22nd, 2022 as part of Expedition 67. In June, he offered us a firsthand view of the space station and answered questions from Master Naturalists as part of TMN Tuesday. You can see the recording at

<https://txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays/#june2022>

