



# Highland Lakes Steward

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## MISSION

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a natural resource-based volunteer training and development program sponsored statewide by Texas AgriLife Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The mission of the program is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the state of Texas

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## DODDER

By Fredi Franki



What is Dodder? Have you seen it this spring along the roadside? It is another pestilence visited upon our wildflowers along with Bastard Cabbage and Malta Star Thistle. I have seen it on the roadsides near my neighborhood, large patches of strange, orange, cobweb material spread over the top of a patch of bluebonnets. The bluebonnets underneath are alive, but look sickly. It is listed in Enquist's book on Texas Hill Country Wildflowers. I remember seeing it occasionally in previous years, but nothing as prolific as this year. It is a parasite, having neither leaves nor roots; it gets all its nourishment from the host plant. Dodder is a vine-like plant, having "haustoria" which are small appendages penetrating the host plant and sucking out nutrients until the host is dead. It can also infect your flowerbeds or vegetable garden. The worst part is Dodder

reseeds itself and is very difficult to control, impossible to eradicate. It usually flowers and then forms seeds in early summer. Dodder is present throughout the country and there are many different kinds, twenty-four species are found in Texas and many are specific to certain hosts. One article I read said use of clean seed in plantings is very important. Sound familiar?

Dodder should be picked off the host plants right away, before it seeds. If there is a large infestation, consider removing the host plants too. Pre-emergent herbicides can reduce further infestations. I read that Dichlobenil works but, as always, do your research.

[www.weedalert.com](http://www.weedalert.com)

<http://plantdiseasehandbook.tamu.edu>

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**MAY MEETING**

by Linda O'nan

Our May 2 HLMN monthly meeting will be held at Reveille Peak Ranch. Bring your lunch around 12:00 for a picnic with your fellow naturalists. Our program at 1 pm will be presented by HLMN Ed Myatt on vermiculature. If you wish to go on a guided hike after the meeting, bring water, hat, and wear appropriate shoes. Remember, we will NOT meet at the Kingsland Library! Directions to RPR will be sent closer to meeting time. See you then!



Photo by Mike Childers

**APRIL MEETING**

Photos by Jerry Stone

Mike Leggett, popular outdoors columnist for the Austin American Statesman, provided several entertaining stories of his outdoor adventures in Texas.



## Nature Center News

by Billy Hutson

Lots of happenings at Reveille Peak Ranch (RPR) since last month. We now have a sign up at the location for the entrance to the NC and several donation requests in the works for the several separate buildings and bird blinds.

We have an exciting negotiation going on regarding a three way partnership between RPR, the NC and a science oriented children's education program that could give us a large jump start into our first building which we could all share for meetings, classes, seminars and a general nature building until we get the individual theme oriented buildings developed.

I put a plug in for the NC in a live interview with KBEY radio at the Lawn & Garden show and we've had articles in several local newspapers in the last month. We have a web site in the process, a NC phone number (830-265-8829) for messages and a registered email address ([Billy@UHLnaturecenter.org](mailto:Billy@UHLnaturecenter.org)).

Come to our regularly scheduled meetings the second Thursday of every month at RPR and learn more. Even better, join the friends group if you already haven't and be invited to hook up to our yahoo site for ongoing up to date information.

## Got Worms?

by Linda O'Nan

Springtime and lush new growth in Central Texas heralds the arrival of our favorite wildflowers AND those pesky little caterpillars, oak leaf rollers, or loopers, (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae). One of several species of spring caterpillars that feed on the new green leaves, these guys can defoliate our live oaks, hackberries and other trees. They spin a silken web and then drop from branches when disturbed. Walking through these dangling threads and caterpillars can be a nuisance—they fall into your hair and down your shirt, providing endless amusement to folks standing next to you at the HEB. I had to provide guests with umbrellas some years back when hosting a spring luncheon—salad with a little extra protein anyone? The grandkids had a game of “run the gauntlet” one particularly pesky year to see who could make it to the car worm free. They were intrigued, however, with the rustling sound at night of worm poop, or “frass” dropping from the trees.

According to TAMU and Ag-Life Extension, usually the best control for these caterpillars is to do nothing. While a defoliated tree is a stressed tree, it seldom causes serious damage. These pest outbreaks are cyclic in nature and rarely occur year after year. Some natural control occurs with feeding birds (especially mockingbirds) and parasitic wasps. Feeding and watering your tree is important to keep it in prime condition after losing a lot of foliage. By mid April to the first of May, the life cycle



moves on and the oak leaf roller moth emerges and lays eggs to start the process again next year.

Ah, Spring, get a good broad-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, possibly a spring turtleneck, and go forth and experience first hand those oak leaf rollers. Kind of sounds like a country western band.....and remember, Frass Happens.

## A SUMMARY OF THE HLMN PRESENTATION AT THE HILL COUNTRY LAWN AND GARDEN SHOW

By Phil Wyde

Figure 1



The Hill Country Lawn and Garden Show took place on March 31<sup>st</sup> this year, and as our chapter has done for a number of years, we manned a booth at this event. The theme of our presentation was, "Do You Know Our Hill Country Neighbors," and our main goals were to: 1) get individuals and families that stopped by our booth to better appreciate nature by showing them some of the wonderful creatures and plants that they share the Texas Hill Country with (and that they frequently take for granted); and 2) to better acquaint them with the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists.

Our presentation had four parts. The main focus was a large tri-fold board holding 14 8"X10" colored photographs of different native mammals, birds, plants and insects (see Figure 1). Nowhere on the board were the names of the subjects pictured displayed. Instead a number was associated with each picture so that anyone looking at the photographs had to guess what each mammal, bird, plant or insect pictured was.

Part two of the presentation was a recorded tape containing 20 different animal sounds (for example, a bob cat growling, a red tailed hawk calling, a grey squirrel scolding, a rattlesnake rattling). The animals making these sounds were not identified, and again the individuals stopping at the booth had to try and identify what animal was making the sounds played for them.

Part three of the presentation consisted of playing bird calls. The person listening to the sounds were asked to identify the bird making the call.

Lastly we had two clumps of different colored quartz rock sitting on the table around slips of paper that stated, "Quartz is the second most common [mineral](#) in the [Earth's continental crust](#). Feldspar is the most common.

Quartz is composed primarily of silicon (Si) and oxygen (O).

There are many kinds of quartz, some of which are semi-precious [gemstones](#).

Figure 2



For centuries quartz has been used throughout the world to make jewelry and [hardstone carvings](#).

Quartz is very common in this area (Burnet and Llano Counties) since it very often is a constituent of granites and gneisses. In these rocks it is often found in “veins.” Taken from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/quartz> and [http://www.utexas.edu/tmm/npl/mineralogy/texas\\_minerals/index.html](http://www.utexas.edu/tmm/npl/mineralogy/texas_minerals/index.html).”

Our goal was to get the people, especially children, to think about the rocks and to ask questions about them. (I need to mention that this portion of the presentation was primarily the idea of Hollis Neier.)

Everyone that stopped by to talk to us about the presentation was asked to fill out a slip of paper asking them their name, telephone number or email address. The slips were then used as part of a raffle in which the individuals that filled in the forms could win either a portable CD player (donated by Ed and Vicki Myatt) or a small DELUXE bird house (donated by David Payton). We collected 200 filled in slips, which means that we had AT LEAST 200 people stopping at our booth. However, in general, usually only one person in a family filled out a slip. Moreover, many people stopped by, participated in our activities, BUT REFUSED TO FILL OUT A SLIP. Many really got nervous when I said that the raffle was FREE! You could tell that they thought that we had some kind of a scam. Regardless, my bet is that we between 300 to 350 people interacted with our volunteers.

From what I said above you would think that we had stress-filled contests going on. It was actually the opposite. We had people Figure 2 guessing, but gave them the answers almost immediately. And we tried to make the answers more complete than just saying that the grey fox was a grey fox (most people thought it was a red fox). We pointed out that he was 30 feet up a tree and told them stories about a titmouse picking fur from her when she was sleeping, or of the time that a male fox climbed up to visit her. She apparently told him that she had a headache, since he did not stay. As another example, we asked people if they knew why Agriope (garden or banana) spiders always put the zigzag pattern in their webs. Of course no one knew and we had to tell them that the pattern refracts and reflects light that attract the spiders insect prey. By the way, the deer was the only one that virtually everyone got right. The best many people could do was say “fox, spider, bird, cactus, woodpecker or owl.” (They generally did not know the species.) Almost all thought that the pictures were great.

I rate the project as a pretty good success based on: 1) the fun that the participants seemed to have; 2) the fun that the volunteers seemed to have; 3) on the number of people stopping by; 4) the number of people that asked about Master Naturalists or how they could join the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists. That brings me to our biggest mistake. We should have had



information there about Texas Master Naturalists, and information about- and contact information for- the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists.

There was one other disappointment. We did not have that many children stop by – mainly because there were relatively few children at the show (another booth that was just for children only had about 46 children stop by). Apparently there was an Easter Egg event at the Galloway-Hammond Recreation Center just a few miles away. However, I have to say that those that did stop by loved the pictures, animal sounds and the ROCKS. A number proudly took away a rock or two. In contrast when I offered adults some free rocks, they gave me a strange look and almost to a person said that they had enough at home. However, most of them gladly took home free seed packets (donated by Arlene Garey) that we offered while they lasted.

Nancy Bardouche of Kingsland won the birdhouse and Carolyn Cox of Burnet County won the CD Player. Both of them seemed very happy with their prizes.

I would like to now acknowledge a whole bunch of people that helped with this project – and made whatever success it was possible:

Ed Myatt: donor of the CD Player

David Payton: donor of the bird house



Arlene Garey: donor of the seed packets

Sue Kersey: donor of the table covers & especially the floral pattern top cloths

Hollis Neier and Ray for collecting Highland Up lift quartz rocks

Robert West: for bringing and taking back our HLMN banner

Linda Fleming: for helping me set up & running interference with the Master Gardener police.

Jerry Stacy, Marvin Bloomquist, Sue Kersey, David Bryant, Terry Bartoli, and Jerry Stone for giving me pictures for the tri-fold. (I could not use all of the pictures that I was given. If I left someone out, please forgive me.)

Susan Bartoli, Terry Bartoli, Sherry Bixler, Betsy Bouchard, Ray Buchanan, Sharon Drake, Billy Hutson, Sue Kersey, Ben Kowing, Cathy Hill, Cindy Sterling, Phillip Mitchell, Eva Hobbs, Sondra Fox, Claire Harrah, Edwin Bergin, and Joy Ellen Collins for putting in 3 or more hour volunteer stints. Figure 2 shows some of the volunteers that arrived early.) (Again, please forgive me if I left someone out.)

Several of the volunteers were from the new class. They did fine and I hope that they had fun. I have arbitrarily picked Sharon Drake as the best volunteer. She is a “natural” teacher.” I have to pick Cindy Sterling as the most perky ad stalwart volunteer. She was assigned to go around the Community Center with a little sign held up in the air that asked people to stop by our booth. Apparently a number of people (apparently all men) thought that she was one of the Hill Country Neighbors that they wanted to know better.

Your ever faithful reporter,

Phil Wyde

## AREA MONARCH ACTIVITY

by Jerry Stacy

While at the Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery on March 15, I found a Hierba de Zizotes milkweed with two second phase Monarch instars. I placed a flag by the plant with a note saying "Please do not destroy this plant." (Hoping the hatchery wouldn't mow it down) On March 30, as I approached the area from a distance, I thought it had been destroyed, but found that it was just being devoured by nine hungry Monarch caterpillars. (instar phases 3 to 5) There may have been younger ones I didn't notice. It's interesting to note that I found three Antelope horns milkweed within ten yards, but did not see another caterpillar on them.



A few days later, April 2, this is the same plant. Not a sign of a leaf! I did find a phase 2 and a phase 5 instar on one of the near by Antelope horns.



# GALLERY

By Jerry Stone



A Firewheel Study



Claret Cup



Claret Cup

# GALLERY



Huisache Daisy



Fox Glove



Texas Star



Texas Bindweed



White Rock Lettuce



Yellow Flax

# GALLERY



Giant Spiderwort



White Prickly Poppy



Baby Blue Eyes



Photo by Mike Childers

Cut Leaf Primrose



Wine Cup

## HILL COUNTRY HERONS AND THE PLUME TRADE

By Sherry Bixler

Fourteen species of herons, night-herons, egrets and bitterns can be found in the United States but only four are common in the hill country. Great Blue Herons are seen year-round at ponds, lakes, and rivers. Great Egrets occur in smaller numbers while Green Herons and Black-crowned Night-herons are breeding species which head south in winter. Night-herons are more difficult to see since they are usually active after dark. The Tri-colored Heron and Reddish Egret are coastal species while the Little Heron and Western Reef-heron occur in the United States on rare occasions. Very rare in the hill country are the American Bittern, Least Bittern, Little Blue Heron, and Yellow-crowned Night-heron but the Snowy Egret and the Cattle Egret are occasionally reported.

One of every eight species of birds is a colonial nesting species and the heron group are colonial nesters. Some nest in mixed colonies, usually with the larger bird species in the highest nests. This behavior is thought to be primarily a tool to help young birds learn to forage but may also deter predation. While a large number of eggs or nestlings might be tempting to predators, the short period of time when this food source is available cannot sustain a predator population that must eat year-round.

It seems impossible that less than a hundred years ago any bird could be legally killed for the huge plume trade. Herons and egrets were in the highest demand but no bird was safe. Both men's and women's hats were adorned with plumes and even with stuffed whole birds. In 1886, ornithologist Frank Chapman counted the types of birds



Photo by Mike Childers

appearing on women's hats and tallied 40 species. Aside from huge numbers of heron and egret plumes, the highest number of birds were cedar waxwings, followed closely by common terns, northern flickers, northern bobwhites, and snow buntings. There were numbers of orioles, grackles, blue jays, robins, bluebirds, woodpeckers, ruffed grouse, sanderlings, scarlet tanagers, meadowlarks, tree sparrows and various warblers. Eighteen other species were also tallied.

In 1903, plumes cost twice as much, pound for pound, as gold. In London in 1902, 3,000 pounds of plumes were traded, the result of killing almost 200,000 herons and egrets. The birds were killed at the nest; therefore 2 to 3 times that number of eggs or young were left to die. We are incredibly indebted to early crusaders who finally put an end to the plume trade before some of the species were lost forever -some species did indeed fight their way back from the brink of extinction.

Even today some countries permit plume trading and anyone purchasing an item made with feathers should make sure that the feathers are taken from domestic fowl rather than wild birds.

## A REPORT ON OUR SCOUTING TRIP TO CADDO LAKE By Phil Wyde

A few weeks ago Fredi Franki, Sherry Bixler, Linda Fleming, Billy Hutson, Ralph Herter (with his wife, Jeffie) and I (with my wife, Joan) drove to Caddo Lake in northeast Texas on a scouting mission to determine if this area of Texas was suitable for the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists (HLMN) to go to and earn Advanced Training Hours. It was a selfless trip. We did not ask for Volunteer Hours for the time spent on this trip, reimbursement for the costs of the trip, or even recognition of the time spent in surveying the flora and fauna in, around and above the alligator infested waters of Caddo Lake. Although we spent much of time assessing the nature and numbers of fish inhabiting Caddo Lake (to be discussed below), we did not ask for even one Volunteer Hour for this.

But I am getting ahead of myself. Many of you do not know about Caddo Lake.

Caddo Lake is the largest fresh water lake in the south, and the ONLY NATURAL LAKE in Texas. It ranges from 26,800 acres to 35,000 acres depending on rainfall and the time of the year (<http://www.caddolake.com/history.htm>). Half of the lake is in Texas and half is in Louisiana. Four watersheds supply the lake: Little Cypress Bayou, Big Cypress Bayou, Black Cypress Bayou and Jeems Bayou. I do not have time to tell you accounts of how the lake was formed (<http://www.caddolake.com/-history.htm>) or how the town that our cabin was in, Uncertain, Texas, got its name. However, you should look these up, since how the lake was formed and the reason that the town was named, Uncertain, are both related and interesting.

I am certain that you noticed that in the preceding paragraph the word cypress was mentioned a few times. And with good reason! The lake is totally dominated by bald (also called swamp) cypress trees. The reason for the dominance of the bald cypress trees is obvious – these trees grow readily in water and in hot humid conditions. What I did not know, but find very interesting, is that bald cypress swamps are a geological asset; they can act as a buffer and provide essential protection of coastal areas along or near the Gulf of Mexico from the erosion and flooding often associated with hurricane strength storms. (These storms generally diminish in force when they move from the Gulf or ocean across the swamps and bayous inland ([http://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/trees/baldcypress/-deep\\_south/](http://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/trees/baldcypress/-deep_south/))). Bodies of water without dense growth of trees would provide less protection.

Of course one cannot look at the bald cypress

trees of Caddo and many other deep southern lakes without wondering about their “knees” and the Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) that covers virtually all of them. I could not find a definitive statement of what function the knees have. However, it was suggested that they may help in providing oxygen to the tree. More likely they assist in anchoring these trees in the soft, muddy soil that they grow in ([http://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/trees/-baldcypress/deep\\_south/](http://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/trees/-baldcypress/deep_south/)).

Much more is known about the Spanish moss ([http://www.monumentaltrees.com/-en/trees/baldcypress/deep\\_south/](http://www.monumentaltrees.com/-en/trees/baldcypress/deep_south/)). This plant is an epiphyte (i.e., a plant that lives on other plants). It does little harm to the cypress trees since it obtains (absorbs)



nutrients (especially calcium) and water from the air and rainfall – and not from the tree that it grows on. However, if the growth of the moss is dense, it can reduce the amount of light to the leaves of the tree, and this may lower the tree’s growth rate. In addition, heavy growth of Spanish moss can increase the wind resistance of the tree that it grows on and that can

lead to the tree being blown over in high winds. (Spanish moss is also often seen in the branches of live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) which are very common here in the Texas Hill Country.)

Because bald cypress trees covered with Spanish moss only grow well in humid southern areas such as Georgia, Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina, Louisiana, Texas and Alabama, they are often associated with Southern imagery ([http://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/trees/baldcypress/deep\\_south/](http://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/trees/baldcypress/deep_south/)).

Although Caddo Lake was the most striking geographical feature that we saw on this scouting expedition, I need to point out that the whole northeast corner of Texas that we visited is very different from the Texas Hill Country. Indeed, the area around Caddo Lake is part of the area of Texas known as the Piney Woods, "a temperate coniferous forest terrestrial ecoregion ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piney\\_Woods](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piney_Woods))." This ecoregion covers 54,400 square miles of east Texas, southern Arkansas, western Louisiana and southeastern Oklahoma, and has coniferous forests dominated by several species of pine (e.g., longleaf, shortleaf and loblolly pines) and hardwoods (e.g., hickory, bluejack and post oaks). There is much understory growth. We saw yaupon holly, azaleas, magnolias, elm and of course, beautiful blooming redbud and flowering dogwood trees. We also saw much American wisteria that we all thought was invasive as it was very common and often covered significant numbers of large trees. However, it turns out that this vine is a native of the area. Another thing that we saw a lot of was water lilies.

While doing research for this article I found out that purple bladderwort, a small carnivorous plant, commonly grows in the sloughs (shallow standing pools of water) that are common in the area. If I had known this before or during the time that we were in the area, I would have looked hard for this plant. Carnivorous plants are not that common and I have only seen a couple in my lifetime outside of botanical gardens or museum stores.

Interestingly, both yucca and prickly pear cactus grow in the forests and wetlands of the region. I thought that these were desert plants? Keep in mind that where we were gets moderate to heavy rainfall, with some places receiving over 60 inches of rain per year. I guess that I should not be too surprised since I have also seen prickly pear planted in Houston yards and growing wild in Galveston. Both of these places also get a lot of annual precipitation. I guess I have to accept that both yuccas and prickly pear cactus are

remarkably adaptable!

In the south part of the Piney Woods is an area known as "The Big Thicket." Unfortunately the Big Thicket is not as big as it once was due to heavy logging throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Indeed, the World Wide Fund for Nature considers the Piney Woods to be one of the most endangered ecoregions of the United States ("[Piney Woods forests \(NA0523\)](http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/na/na0523_full.html)". WWF Ecoregion Reports. World Wide Fund for Nature; [http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/na/na0523\\_full.html](http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/na/na0523_full.html)).

I have to say, everything east of Tyler was green and lush. I don't think that we saw any brown areas.

It rained heavily during two of the four days we spent at Caddo Lake so we did not see too many birds or animals. We did see cormorants, coots, wood ducks and herons. This is unfortunate because cottontail rabbits, gray squirrels, opossums, armadillos, deer, cougars, gray foxes, bobcats, ring-tail cats, big-eared bats, Seminole bats, water moccasins, prairie kingsnakes, slender glass lizards, squirrel tree frogs, sandhill cranes, red-cockaded woodpeckers and American alligators are all indigenous to this area and represent some of the creatures that we could have seen. Let me hasten to say that I am very glad that we did not see the alligators since we did most of our fish surveying in canoes.

According to what I read, catfish are the most common fish in Caddo Lake. Based on the results of our fish survey we would say that there are NO catfish in Caddo Lake. However, we were rigged for bass which may account for the fact that we did not catch a single catfish. This shows how easy it is to skew a scientific study.

Crawfish are also common along river and creek banks. Wait till I tell you about these.

Before leaving the fauna of the area, I guess that I have to mention that Bigfoot (Sasquatch) sightings have been made in this area. I thought I saw a baby Bigfoot behind the cabin one night. However, it turned out to be Billy stepping out from behind a bush. I am not sure what he was doing. Regardless, it was a scary experience. I imagine if it had been Ralph out there, I would have had a heart attack.

I am now ready to tell you about our fishing survey, which as I have said, was one of things that we really put a lot of effort into. I had high hopes although we only had six participants (Jeffie and Joan did not fish), two of which were Billy and Ralph. I did not have much belief in the latter two, and my expectations were fulfilled. I think that the two of them only caught

4 or 5 fish during the entire study. I have to admit that they tried hard. They fished in the rain; they fished early in the morning; and they fished late into the day. I can only suppose that they lacked technique. How else can you explain that Fredi, Sherry, Linda and I caught more than 50 legal sized fish (yellow bass, white bass and sand bass) and threw back a number of other fish that were not large enough to keep? I should not leave you with the idea that Billy was a total handicap. He did catch the biggest fish of trip. In their defense, Billy and Ralph used only lures and artificial bait (e.g., rubber worms) while Fredi, Sherry, Linda and I used live crawfish as well as lures and artificial bait. But in my heart (and mind), I think the major difference



was both our greater skill and native intelligence.

Now that I think about it, maybe Fredi's, Linda's, Sherry's and my use of crawfish may have been as important as our greater skill and native intelligence. I mean using this NATURAL bait was dynamite! One of my surprises was that the crustaceans that we utilized were very small, only 0.5 to 0.75 inches long. Upon further consideration, it was probably all three factors (crawfish, greater skill and greater native intelligence).

I am now going to tell you about the fishing prowess of Fredi, Sherry and Linda. I mean, you would never guess that beneath their staid, sophisticated and cultured veneers all three are lean and mean fishing machines. Fredi was fearless! Once she started catching fish there was no stopping her. She would cast, bring in a fish! Cast, bring in a fish! Cast, bring in an ANCHOR! Cast, bring in a fish! And every time she caught a big one, Fredi would yell, "Bring the net! Bring the net!" She caught the biggest sand bass.

Sherry was equally impressive, but much less noisy. In fact, Sherry never lost her composure. She just quietly kept bringing in the fish.

Linda also brought in a lot of fish – and only lost her equanimity a few times. Unquestionably, she hooked way more cypress trees than anyone on the trip.

If you have any doubt about the veracity of what I have just written, just look at the image below.

When you talk to Linda about the fishing, don't believe everything that she tells you. For example, she may try to tell you that I caught the smallest fish on the trip. However, as you can see from the fish in the image on the next page, it was she, not I, that caught



the littlest fish. (How could any fish be smaller?)

I think that I have given a pretty complete report. There are only a few things that I have left out. One is that one day when it rained too hard to do much surveying, Billy dragged Linda, Fredi and Sherry off to picturesque Jefferson to the "antique" stores. I mention this for two reasons: 1) I wanted you to know that we also spent time evaluating the culture of east Texas while we were there; and 2) I figured that you were wondering how Billy could go four days without attending a garage sale. A second thing that I did not tell

you is that the Athens Fish Hatchery was not too far from Uncertain, Texas. Billy, Ralph, Jeffie and Sherry stopped there to determine if it was worthwhile for the HLMN to visit there if we took a trip out to Caddo Lake and vicinity next year to obtain Advanced Training Hours. It apparently is quite the place and very much worth visiting.

Now that I am at the end of my report, I would like to summarize by saying that Caddo Lake and east Texas would make a very good trip for the HLMN to go on to obtain Advanced Training Hours. It does take 6.5 hours to get there. However, the ecosystems are very different from those here and there is much for us to see, do and learn. I think that if we went in either the spring or fall we could see many of the inhabitants that I mentioned above. We would also acquire a lot more valuable information if we also went to the Athens (state) Fish Hatchery. Hopefully by then, Billy and Ralph will have improved their fishing techniques and we could get a better survey of the teleost population of that area. My only real worry is that the fish of Caddo Lake will remember master fishing ladies, Fredi Franki, Sherry Bixler and Linda Fleming and FLEE!

Your faithful and most truthful reporter: Phil Wyde



## CHAIN GANG SEEN IN INKS STATE PARK

by Lyn Davis

On Friday, March 23 during Inks Lakes State Park “Clean Sweep” a gang ready to fight the bush was seen entering the “blue” trail around 9:00 am. They carried self defensive tools of saws, loppers, clippers and knives. Members of this gang lead by Jerry Stacy included Betty Cruikshank, Eva Hobbs, Linda Fleming, Lyn Davis, Linda O’Nan, Jean Schar and Ed Bergin.

About a mile in the trail, they started encountering the bee brush or White Brush. This is when the weapons to widen the trail came out. This bush was everywhere making the trail almost impassable at places. Know as a fast grower, measures had to be taken to STOP this enemy – Linda, Linda and Jerry were seen under some of these trees like feral hogs rooting around to find the base of the tree to take it DOWN. Others drug off the large limbs to the “grave yard” nearby which will in turn be a great place for birds to hide out.

Around 12:15 pm they were radioed out by headquarters so about turn and headed back lead by the leader. Everyone fought the battle and walked out with minor injuries of puncture wounds and bleeding scrapes. A few were even attacked by those nasty skin dwellers – chiggers.

The Moral to this story: Do not go into the woods with Jerry Stacy



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND AT/EVENTS CALENDAR

Mike Childers

APRIL - MAY EVENTS & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	
Bridges to Birding Volunteer Opp Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge	Apr 18 9am-1:30pm
Great Outdoor Program Inks Lake State Park	Apr 18-20
HLMN Training Class - Invasives and Entomology Blanco United Methodist Church	Apr 19 10am-3pm
TWA Wildlife for Lunch Webinar Series - Riparian Management Go To <a href="https://texas-wildlife.webex.com">https://texas-wildlife.webex.com</a> the webinar day and click on the webinar title.	Apr 19 Noon-1pm
Bridges to Birding/Going Buggy Programs Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge	Apr 20 9:30am-2pm
Native U - Flora and Fauna of Central Texas Certificate Training Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Saturdays	Apr 21-May 12 9am - 4pm
Spring Wildflowers on the Refuge with Diane Sherrill Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge	Apr 22 9am
Great Outdoor Program Inks Lake State Park	Apr 24-27
HLMN Training Class - Birds and Herps of the Hill Country Perdenales State Park, Johnson City Events Center	Apr 26 10am-3pm
Sierra Club Water Conference UT Campus, AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center	Apr 27 9am-4pm
Songbird Festival Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge	Apr 27-30
Second Annual Kingsland Wildflower Festival - HLMN Booth Kingsland Community Park	Apr 28 9am-5pm
HLMN Day Trip - Guadalupe State Park, Honey Creek Guadalupe State Park, Honey Creek Natural Area, Blanco State Park	Apr 30
Seven Hundred Springs Tour Courthouse, Junction, TX	Apr 28 10am - 2pm
Family Day of the Songbird Festival Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge	Apr 29 Noon-5pm
HLMN Monthly Meeting - Vermiculture by Ed Myatt Reveille Peak Ranch	May 2 1-3pm
HLMN Training Class - Mammals, Rangeland Management Oatmeal Community Center	May 3 10am-3pm
Bridges to Birding Volunteer Opp Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge	May 8-9 9am-1:15pm
Certified Interpretive Guide Training Workshop Austin Nature & Science Center	May 8-11
HLMN Training Class - Wildflowers, Camera as a tool for Master Naturalists Home of Marvin and Judy Bloomquist	May 10 9:30am-2:30pm
Day in the Park Blanco State Park	May 11
TWA Wildlife for Lunch Webinar - Integrating Cattle and Wildlife on Small Acreage Go To <a href="https://texas-wildlife.webex.com">https://texas-wildlife.webex.com</a> the webinar day and click on the webinar title.	May 17 Noon-1pm
Highland Lakes Native Plant Society Meeting Marble Falls Library	May 19 1-3pm
HLMN Training Class - Graduation Celebration and Pizza Party Reveille Peak Ranch	May 27 4pm

### FUTURE EVENTS & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Native Plant Society of Texas Annual Symposium Kerrville, TX	Oct 4-7
Texas Mater Naturalist Conference Camp Allen, Navasota, TX	Oct 26-28

For volunteer opportunities and events scheduled at Inks Lake State Park, Blanco State Park, and Balcones Canyonlands, Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, check these websites for information:

[http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/inks-lake-state-park/park\\_events/](http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/inks-lake-state-park/park_events/)

[http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/blanco-state-park/park\\_events/](http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/blanco-state-park/park_events/)

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/balcones/>

<http://friendsofbalcones.org/>

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/wildland/onlineregistration/ecowebevents.cfm>

Please submit pictures, articles, reports, stories, calendar and event entries, etc. to [chili865@gmail.com](mailto:chili865@gmail.com). Photos should have captions and appropriate credits. The deadline for submissions to each months newsletter is the 10th of the month and publication will be by the 15th.

### Stewardship

An ethic that embodies cooperative planning and management of environmental resources with organizations, communities and others to actively engage in the prevention of loss of habitat and facilitate its recovery in the interest of long-term sustainability