Experianz (cont'd)

Experianz (cont'd)

Who: Joan Mukherjee

Where: Minnesota and western Ontarion

When: August

In August I trekked to Minnesota to visit relatives and spend time with my sister at our family cabin on an island in Saganaga Lake in western Ontario. I took with me a newly published book, "Guide to the Plants of the Canoe Country" that I co-authored with my brother, Fred Weinmann.

The lake was beautiful, the fresh caught fish delicious, the loons and ducks were successfully raising chicks, the weather just right for a visit. On the downside we were plagued with smoke from fires in Canada and the area badly needed rain (just like home!). On the upside, a late-bearing species of blueberry yielded big bunches of juicy fruit that we feasted on for the entire week.

Last year I made a date with a fellow birder to find the Connecticut warbler, an elusive, skulking bird, who nests in the area. One day we set out to search lowland swampy areas where they like to nest. We found lots of birds and warblers, but not him. We did get a close cousin, another difficult to see bird, the mourning warbler. He gave us some excellent close views so we were partially successful.

The big event of the week was the book signing party hosted by my sister for visitors from other cabins on the lake. The blueberry tarts she made for the event were the hit of the party.

Sun coming through the smoke.

Experianz (cont'd)

Who: Kay and Erik Herring
Where: All the Western States except Utah
What: High School Reunion in Seattle

It was a great month-long, 6,300 mile driving trip up to Seattle, for my husband Erik's 60th high school reunion. He was class president, and evidently "President for Life." Drove through all the Western states except Utah ... it's about our fifth time to make this trip, which is absolutely beautiful. Also drove to salmon fishing mecca: Tofino, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Saw lots of friends from our living in Seattle and Anchorage. Fires/smoke kept us from going to the Bay Area. Surprisingly, warm weather in Seattle, but in the 90's, not 105 as it was here!

Blue, blue skies in Seattle area. The water you see is Puget Sound.

Kay and Erik and friends at the Seattle Yacht Club for lunch. Again, beautiful, cool weather

Photos courtesy of Kay Herring

Experianz (cont'd)

Who: Lori and Mike Greco
Where: South Padre Island and Port Isabell
When: September 28-29, 2018

Bay Fishing, swimming in the Gulf and visiting the World Birding Center

I bodysurfed for an hour alone, as NO ONE else was in the ocean swimming. Let me tell you, I prayed for NO sharks the entire time! It was awesome, but unfortunately the beach was quite littered with little trashy stuff and the beach tractor just turned it over in the sand.....so sad to see it had gotten so icky. Little things like bread ties, plastic bottle tops, hair bands. People just don't pick those little things up. The Railroad vine is so vibrantly pink. But, after we built a sand castle and I swam (Mike would not swim), we headed to the World Birding Center and I learned that the water used in the Center came from the Water Treatment Plant next door! I had traveled there with a birding group 4 years ago and didn't remember, but how cool is that? We saw several Needle fish, Sand trout and Whiting in the canals and Mike looked for the Alligator the entire 2 hours but never saw one. I, on the other hand, was scanning for Roseate Spoonbills, Black Bellied Whistling ducks and Reddish Egrets, Common Moorhens, Tri-Colored Herons and Plovers and I hit the jackpot. This place is nothing new for many folks in our chapter but always such a nice treat when you visit, no matter how many times.

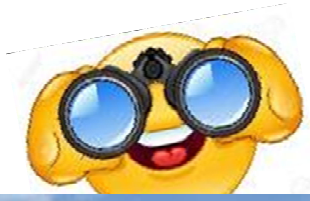
Mike and Sandcastle

Tri Colored Heron

Experianz (cont'd)

Water Treatment Info

Fishing with whiting and sand trout caught.



Two View from the Birding Center Look-out to the canals and bay.

Experianz (cont'd)

Who: Sheryl Smith-Rodgers and daughter Lindsey
When: August 2018
Where: Hummingbird Haven, Sabinal River, Utopia
What: We booked three nights in this two-bedroom, one-bath cabin a short walk away from the river. Alas, we didn't get in the water because the river wasn't flowing well due to the drought. But I enjoyed just sitting on a deck by the river, watching the birds and enjoying the peace. Utopia's still untouched by development so you'll find NO big-boxers whatsoever. We had lunch at the Lost Maples Cafe and bought a few groceries at the small store. I introduced Lindsey to geocaching, and she found her first cache. We had no luck at finding three others. RR 337 is VERY scenic between Leakey and Vanderpool—it's worth a drive.

Photos courtesy of Sheryl Smith Rodgers

Lindsey Rodgers looking for a geocache

Experianz (cont'd)

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

Lebanon Cedar

Who: Mike Riley
When: May
Where: Scotland
What: 270 year old tree

We were in Scotland for some Outlander TV series tours in May. We were in Inverness up north and were impressed with this Lebanon Cedar , especially since there was a plaque stating it was planted before the 1746 Battle of Culloden (a battle depicted in the Outlander series).
A bit if history; The Lebanon Cedar in a native of Lebanon and the Middle East. It is thought to have first arrived in Scotland in the 1600s where it thrived. It he's on the flag of Lebanon and a symbol of purity and virtue.
It is mentioned in both the old and the New Testament

Pollinator Garden Project

City of Horseshoe Bay Mayor Steve Jordan issued a "Mayor's Monarch Pledge" (https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/About/National-Initiatives/Mayors-Monarch-Pledge) to increase awareness about the decline of the monarch and the species habitat needs in the community. With this pledge, an idea came about to start a project to help broaden the City and surrounding community's support for protecting and providing habitat for Monarchs and other pollinators. The Highland Lakes Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program and The Church at Horseshoe Bay are working jointly on a project to create a Pollinator Garden and Certified Monarch Waystation at The Church of Horseshoe Bay, which will compliment the Mayor's commitment. The Highland Lakes Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program will assess the Church grounds and its existing garden, establish a plan, and begin planting in the fall. The Church has a circulating pond and some pollinator plants and trees and a large natural craggy area which will provide water and shelter.

Natural Craggy Area

Existing Circulating Pond and Lake LBJ in the background

Pollinator Garden (cont'd)

Vicki Adcock, the project lead said that the volunteer group will increase milkweed and native plants, as well as, early and late blooming nectar plant. Volunteers will also educate the staff as to eliminating pesticides which kill all bugs indiscriminately and keeping some of the grounds "a little messy" by leaving leaf litter for pollinators as a cover.

As a long term goal, volunteers want to engage youth groups from the area to have a nature work experience to develop an understanding the importance of pollinators and their environment. Also, the Master Naturalists want to connect with other entities that can provide advice and collaboration, such as Highland Lakes Master Gardeners and Highland Lakes Native Plant Society. Working as a team, the Church at Horseshoe Bay, Highland Lakes Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists, City of Horseshoe Bay and other volunteer organizations will make our part of the world a better place for pollinators and humans alike. If you are interested in volunteering for this ambitious project, contact Vicki Adcock at txrunner55@att.net.

Above: Natural area bordering pathway

Left: Back of The Church at Horseshoe Bay

Photos courtesy of Vicki Adcock

The Texas Master Naturalist Program Logo

Did you know that the insect on the Texas Master Naturalist Logo is a dragonfly named Cyrano Darner *(Nasiaeschna pentacantha)?* The Cyrano Darner was chosen because of its structure, beauty, and arrangement of veins in its wings. When choosing a logo, the committee was looking for something that might have come from a 19th Century naturalist's field notebook. The committee wanted a symbol that was an actual species and would not be confused with other nature organizations. The Texas Master Naturalist™ logo is a registered trademark. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department have registered this mark to protect the integrity and quality of the program and the service that Texas Master Naturalist volunteers provide. The official program name, Texas Master Naturalist, with the drawing of the Cyrano darner dragonfly is the trademarked logo..

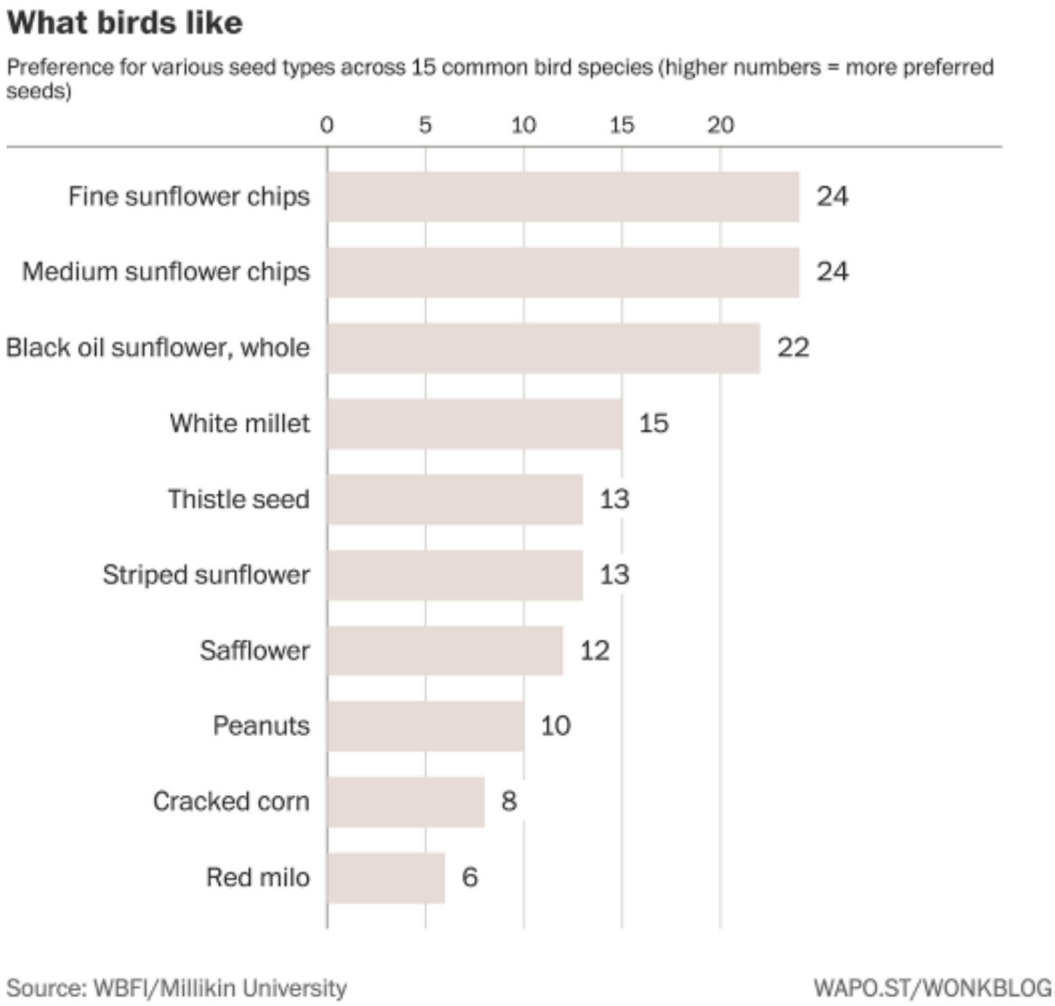
Photo courtesy of Odesforbeginners.com

The Darners are large, strong flyers and have a unique pattern of greens and blues. Most Darners can be found around ponds, lakes and marshes. The Cyrano Darner however, stays in close to forests and rarely goes out in the open. Because of its long forehead and nose, this dragonfly is named after the literary character Cyrano de Bergerac. Measuring a little less than 3 inches, the male can easily be spotted by its blue eyes, dark brown thorax with green stripes, and narrow abdomen with blue-green stripes and blueish green forehead.

When the Texas Master Naturalist program was implemented in 1988, the Cyrano Darner was selected along with other species drawings. One of those drawings is the Kingfisher, which is our chapter logo. To learn more about the Texas Master Naturalist ™ Logo and Cyrano Darner, go to: https://txmn.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2014/11/TMN-Logo-History.pdf

Bird Seed Update

I was redirected from the Project Feeder Watch site to an article in The Washington Post Why Many Birdseed Mixes are Filled with Things Birds Won't Eat, by Christopher Ingraham. Mr. Ingraham discusses the use of milo in bird seed mixes. Milo is a red grain that comes from the sorghum plant. He noticed that birds were leaving the red grain behind at his feeders. After taking samples from six different bird seed mixes and sorted them by grain, he found that most of the brands had milo and the economy seed mixes had up to 49% milo. Most birds don't like milo. So what do birds like? The Wild Bird Feeding Industry (WBFI), a trade group for bird seed manufacturers, teamed up with Milliken University and came up with these results



Mr. Ingraham's advice is to see what your birds are eating and what they are leaving behind. Don't purchase your bird seed mix based on price, but on the preference of your birds.

For more information about this subject go to Why Many Birdseed Mixes are Filled with Things Birds Won't Eat

I Did Not Go to Africa or Colorado
By P.R. Wyde

Jerry and Linda went to Africa to see big cats, elephants, giraffes and all kinds of exotic birds and animals. Billy went to Colorado to see soaring eagles, elk, moose, antelope and other wild game. I had to stay home! However, I decided not to sulk, brood and let envy cast even a small blight on my life. Instead, I took my big guns (a Nikon P900 and a Nikon D610) and stalked the savannahs of Burnet and Llano County and the slippery slopes of Oak Bend (my home) to observe some of the life that exist here. I would like to share some of the fauna that I found – and SHOT! Note that all the images shown were taken between August 1st and August 31st, 2018 and all were within 15 miles of my home.

You may not think that a spiny lizard is exotic, but if you look at him he does resemble an African crocodile, he is a voracious predator and I have no doubt that he must strike fear in those that he stalks (Figure 1). Moreover, he looks prehistoric. For your information, he is not easy to stalk and shoot.

Figure 1 Spiny Lizard

Talk about prehistoric and ferocious predators. The dragon fly certainly looks prehistoric and is undoubtably is one of the most ferocious and successful predators. I am ecstatically happy they are not big. (Actually, I am also glad that the spiny lizard and Agriope spider are not larger.)

Talk about fear. How would you like to walk into a web of an Agriope spider unaware? I fear that more than meeting a lion! Like the spiny lizards, Agriope spiders are efficient predators. Happily they are easier to stalk and shoot.

Figure 2 Agriope Spider

Figure 3 Dragon Fly, Possibly Roseate Skimmer

I am sure that Jerry and Linda, and even Billy, saw some exotic raptors. Well I did also (e.g., Figure 4). Actually, I saw many. However, the one that stood out was a black vulture that perched regally in a tree at Inks Lake State Park, refusing to be "ruffled" by an amazingly bold mocking bird that single handedly and repeatedly mobbed the vulture. It was sight that I will not forget.

Figure 4 Black Vulture Being Mobbed by a Mocking Bird

I know that cotton tail rabbits are not very exotic. But the pair shown in Figure 5 were courting just outside the Wildlife Viewing Center at Inks Lake State Park. They were running, hopping and jumping over each other, absolutely oblivious to me. Again, it is something I am not going to forget for a while. (I really felt like a voyeur.)

Figure 5 Courting Cotton Tail Rabbits

Figure 6 Tortoise

I also saw a tortoise (Figure 6). I am not sure that he should count in my survey since he almost certainly is not a native species. (He was in the zoo area at Camp Long Horn where my grand daughter went to camp this summer. I saw him when we visited her there.) However, he is exotic, certainly is not common and there are many other non-native animals found in this area; e.g., zebra, alpacas, ostrich. Moreover, while I was observing him, I did not think about not being in Africa, Colorado or other distant lands.

know that butterflies are not rare and that there are undoubtably exquisite butterflies in Africa, Colorado and elsewhere. But I have them all over my yard and I a never tire of looking them. The Tiger Swallowtail butterfly shown in Figure 7 is but one example. He was 10 feet from my front door.

Figure 7 Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly

I also know that grass hoppers are common. But they look like locusts, are the subjects of great legends (Utah and biblical plagues for example) and as the one shown in Figure 8, they can be very colorful, exotic and worth looking at (and shooting).

Figure 8 Colorful Grasshopper

Figure 9 Wood Pecker Eating Pears

Figure 9 shows a Gold Fronted Woodpecker about to eat (peck) my pears. I had observed him on that pear tree for several days in a row and thought that he was a harbinger that my pear tree was sick and going to die. However, as I watched over several days I realized that he was pecking the pears and not the tree. I was delighted since those darn pears are so hard I couldn't – and I did not think that anything could – eat them. Apparently, the pears are not harder than wood. So again, although seeing a woodpecker is not rare, seeing one eating pears gives me another

My last image in this article is of the common, house sparrow. I know that these sparrows are a reviled, common and invasive species.

They certainly are common around my house, always trying to move into my martin houses, and always first or second (to the white winged doves) in getting to my bird feeders. However, when I observe them carefully, they are always industrious, often comical and even comely, as the one shown in Figure 10. Watching them this past month helped me assuage my envy of Jerry, Linda and Billy. I must admit that despite all the fun and adventures that I had this month I still have some envy of Jerry, Linda and Billy – and I am sure that I will have more when I see their pictures and hear their stories. However, I also must admit that I had a lot of fun on my Hill Country safaris. I got to see the Texas Hill Country in a different light (e.g., spiny lizards and common grasshopper) and really did see wondrous things that I had never seen before (e.g., the cotton tail rabbits courting, the woodpecker eating my pears and the mocking birds mobbing a vulture many, many times its size). I am not likely to ever forget some of these things and I can get to tell my grandchildren about them; of course they will be skeptical and accuse me of having a big imagination. However, I have the "shots" to shore up the veracity of my claims.

Luedeckes'

By Bill (Dad) and Martelle (Daughter)

Typically, the last two weeks of October we are blessed to experience, see and hear the migration of the Monarchs and many other species of butterflies as they travel through the Texas Funnel aka our backyards. According to Monarch butterfly scientist Chip Taylor, founder of Monarch Watch,
the Monarch migration could be the strongest since 2008 (a 5-hectare year), meaning LOTS of butterflies. If you would like to open your own butterfly diner for a couple of weeks, butterflies love very ripe fruit such as oranges, grapefruits, strawberries, peaches, nectarines, apples and bananas. Simply slice the fruit, set on a plate and put on your porch, a top a stump, in your garden… We would suggest however, that at night either dispose of the feast or wrap and put in the frig. Night critters also enjoy feasting on rotting fruit.

With this glorious rain we have been receiving the grass is growing. Remember that when you are cutting your lawn you only want to cut, maximum, 1/3 of the grass blade. So, you might have to cut a few extra times this month. But what a small price for green, healthy grass.

George from Marble Falls asks," What's the difference between frost-susceptible and frost-tolerant?"
George, that's a great question and very apropos for right now while we are concluding planting our fall vegetable transplants. A frost-susceptible vegetable/fruit/crop will be killed or injured by temperatures below 32°F according to Texas A&M. Examples of frost-susceptible plants are: bush bean, summer squash, cucumber, sweet corn, lima bean, okra, pepper, cherry tomato, cantaloupe, eggplant, Irish potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, tomato, watermelon, winter squash. Frost-tolerant vegetable/fruit/crop can withstand temperatures below 32°F (note that most frost tolerant plants will likely survive light to moderate frosts, but could be damaged or killed by exposure to frost and temperatures below 25 °F) Some familiar frost tolerants are: beet, leaf lettuce, mustard, radish, spinach, turnip, turnip green, broccoli, carrots, Chinese cabbage, green onion, kohlrabi, parsley, brussels sprouts, bulb onion, cabbage, cauliflower, garlic.

As Halloween approaches, the pumpkin patches grow. Lots of joy to be had with family, friends and vegetables!

Events, Volunteer and Advanced Training Opportunities

Chapter Meeting Nov. 7th	Lakeside Pavilion
Trail Work Nov. 10th, Dec. 8th	Balcones Canyonlands Ntl. Wildlife Refuge
NSPOT Fall Symposium Oct. 19, 20 & 21st	NSPOT San Antonio, TX
First Catch Center October 20th	Inks Dam Ntl. Fish Hatchery
Candlelight Ranch October 20th & 21st	HOPE & Family Day
20th Anniversary TMN Meet October 26-28	Georgetown Sheraton
Military Family Day/HOPE Nov. 10th	Candlelight Ranch
Fall Color Hike Nov. 11th	Bamberger Ranch
Awards Banquet and Chpt. Meeting Dec.5th?	Lakeside Pavilion
Family Day Dec. 9th	Candlelight Ranch

Please submit pictures, articles, reports, stories, announcements, etc. to

becky_breazeale@yahoo.com

Photos should have captions and appropriate credits. The deadline for submissions for each quarter's issue are located on the HLMN event calendar. Or contact Becky and Martelle.

Thank y'all for all your hard work and contributions!!

MISSION

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a natural resource-based volunteer training and development program sponsored statewide by Texas A&M 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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November's speaker will be:

Richard Heilbrun on the topic of "Laws and Ethics for Master Naturalists"

January's speaker will be:

Brian Loflin on the topic of Native Grasses.

Gentle Reminders:

Bucks, have a tendency to move around during cool weather. Bucks with hardened antlers are ready to breed and are looking for a willing doe. More movement means more opportunity to encounter a receptive doe. During rutting season, bucks and does are not wary of traffic on county roads. Please be aware of your surroundings, drive more carefully.

With all this rain we will have a bounty of wildflowers come this Spring. You still have time to sow, scatter throw some seeds or seed bombs out!!