

The Steward

Fall 2023 Highland Lakes Master Naturalists Volume 14 Issue 4



At Inks Lake State Park, Lori and Krista gave a binocular and birding 101 class. This was their littlest attendee, but most enthusiastic, enjoying their binoculars.

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

becky_breazeale@yahoo.com

Photos should have captions and appropriate credits. We will announce the deadline for submissions two weeks prior to the deadline. Or contact Becky and Martelle.

Thank y'all for ALL!!



Message from our President

By Roy Appleton

Now that we've made it through that hellacious summer, outdoor life is on a rebound, as are the opportunities for master naturalist volunteers. I believe we can agree that, for members, volunteer service is the heart and soul of the HLMN mission and experience. And communicating the opportunities to get out and help Mother Nature, people young and older, and ourselves is central to it all.

As mentioned in the last Steward and at past chapter meetings, a group of members has been brainstorming communications and other topics. The subject isn't dead, and the questions remain: What is the best, most effective and efficient way to share the words on volunteer opportunities? Is the current approach sufficient, good enough? If not, how might we improve?

Some members no doubt have a volunteering routine for HLMN and other groups. They communicate directly with location or project contacts.

Some of those contacts, such as Patty Harrell (Bamberger) and M.J. Hansen (Pedernales Falls State Park and Gem of the Hills) share opportunity alerts directly to chapter members via groups.io. Excellent.

I've revived a weekly roundup of opportunities sent Chapter Wide on Mondays through groups.io. And Becky Breazeale has been adding many of the roundup entries to the chapter website's volunteer calendar.

Thank you, Becky.

Yes, some members have their routine. But others, particularly newer members, may well want to know what's out there in HLMN volunteer land. Some members might want to explore our four-county world beyond their base and find opportunities worth their time and travel.

Patty, who sends out detailed groups.io blasts for Bamberger, suggests that people generally would rather have information presented to them instead of having to search for it. Makes sense.

An idea floating about would combine direct alerts, the weekly roundup and the website calendar. Give members a heads-up and have the calendar as a base of information for those who missed the first communications or might want to volunteer after a schedule change or out of the blue.

We'll have a brief survey/questionnaire at the November chapter meeting. We encourage your participation and welcome your thoughts and ideas then and whenever.

The goal is simple: What's best for HLMN.

2023
#TMNTuesdays

January 10	May 9	September 12
February 14	June 13	October 3* <small>*first week of month</small>
March 14	July 11	November 14
April 11	August 8	December 12







T E X A S



Master
Naturalist

The Peace of Wild Things

Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

from *Openings: Poems* (1968)

Story Time at Blanco State Park

By Al Lillis

In recognition of the National Read a Book Day, our volunteers hosted a Story time in Blanco SP on Saturday. The theme selected for the young park campers were stories about young bats and chose *Nightsong* and *Stellaluna* to read. Plus, everyone had fun crafting their Bat wings headband.





Left pictured: Gigi Rostomily, Jeanne Kregel, Beth Lillis, Lisa Stripay, Becki Vavrek

Below: Readers were Beth Lillis and Becki Vavrek



From one of our members

I have always loved taking pictures but a series of unfortunate events led me to purchase my first ever “good” camera in 2020. I was now living at my parents’ place in the county with 21 acres of land teeming with wildlife, plants and a hidden world of things unnoticed until this point. Taking walks on the property wasn’t new, in fact it had become almost routine. The camera was a game/life changer.

With the camera, I would spend hours looking for anything to photograph. These hours turned into becoming more curious and interested in learning more about the subjects of my

photographs. What was the flower? Was it native? Was it something seen here before? Waiting for and watching any wildlife to get into the “perfect pose” led to more observing their behavior and tendencies.

My mom (Beth James) went through the Texas Master Naturalist Program in 2019 and joined the Highland Lakes Chapter. Hearing her experiences and love of it led me to go through the program this year. I have found it to be the most perfect way to also incorporate my passion for nature in photography. I love to share my photos on social media and include identifications and share them with as many people as I can. The goal is to help at least one person learn something from my photographs. As a new member of the chapter, I am excited to continue to contribute and help others learn all about our beautiful part of Texas in a different way.

Please enjoy just a small sample of photos I have taken on our property—about 5 miles NW of Lampasas.

~Meghan James

HLMN Class of 2023









Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery Girl Scout Archery and Fishing

By James Reimer

Here are a few pictures of an archery/fishing event hosted by Friends of Inks Lake Fish Hatchery and organized by Karen Stewart for a group of 21 girl scouts on 10-1-2023.





Psiturism

[sith-yuh-riz-uhm]

noun

the sound of wind in the trees and rustling leaves

Cooper Spring Nature Park, Lampasas

Nested in downtown Lampasas, a 23 acre park is free of charge and open 6 to 10 every day. Cooper Spring Nature Park is named after a natural spring on the property and is dedicated to the preservation and encouragement of wildlife. There are a series of trails and an abundance of birds, butterflies and other wildlife to enjoy.

[Cooper Spring Nature Park | Lampasas, TX - Official Website](#)

Here are some photos Meghan James took on her trail walk October 4th.





Galveston Island September Field Trip

Photos by Mark Stracke



Day 1 at Brazos Bend State Park

Below:

Gator Babies at Brazos Bend State Park



Above:

Common Gallinule at Brazos Bend State Park



At the Ferry boat dock, ready to go



Above:
Bolivar Ferry



Right:
Texas A & M Galveston
Vessel



Left:
Battleship Texas Dry
Docked at Galveston
Historic Pier



Above: S. S. Selma, WW I Concrete Vessel off Pelican Island
Below: Selma Close up



Work Day at Galveston Island State Park



Galveston Island State Park Work Day



Galveston Island State Park Work Day

Happy Hour at Galveston Island State Park





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Galveston State Park



Photos by Mark Stracke



Blue Heron at Armand Bayou Nature Center



Bees on an Owl Box at Armand Bayou Nature Center

Friends of Inks Lake State Park

By Lori Greco

Just a short note from the Friends of Inks Lake: The Friends of Inks Lake has had a busy year so far in support of the Park during the TPWD Centennial Celebration. We started off the year with a day of events including trail running, bicycling and paddling throughout the Park, with those participants receiving stickers for completing all 3 events. Inks Lake SP has requested new binoculars and archery equipment during this year's centennial celebration. Help us grant a Centennial wish for Inks Lake State Park today! All donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar by our generous Centennial Champions, doubling the impact of your gift. Use: Inks Lake State Park - Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (convio.net)

Jamie has been presenting a "Snakes Alive" class and Meghan a "Capturing Dragons" camera class that are both very popular with kids and adults. We have needed a Dragonfly ID class for several years and Meghan fit in perfectly. Sherry, Krista, and Lori give binoculars and birding classes along with volunteers roving the trails teaching along the way to all guests encountered. That makes 499 contacts this year (so far) in just roving! Jamie's interpretive contacts this year are over 6,500. That is 2,000 more than in 2022. Volunteer personnel contacts(FOIL and HLMN) are over 2,500 so far this

year. We have been very busy and still have trails to tame, invasive trees to girdle, paddling classes, and guided paddling trips on our now certified Texas Paddling Trail. Several members attended certified CPR/1st aide training to ensure we know what to do in a guest health emergency.

Our Wildlife Viewing Station has received so many guests and accolades for keeping it going strong during this drought, with 100% volunteer involvement. What a shock to come upon one rascal teenager of a raccoon that had got his paw caught in the proverbial cookie jar, but we fixed it, so he doesn't dangle there until help comes. Poor little guy.

FOIL's first big fundraiser was Labor Day weekend, and more than 120 guests attended the program presented by Austin Wildlife Rescue. They brought 7 raptors and spent 2 hours answering every question presented about their birds. FOIL also has collectible stickers specially made with our Park in mind. These stickers are extremely popular every time a FOIL member has them available for purchase.

An early morning lake cleanup produced large, and small amounts of trash but seeing the sun rise over a tranquil lake, with good friends, made it worthwhile. (Especially seeing the waterfowl!).

Inks Lake SP will soon have a new Headquarters where FOIL will hold their monthly meetings. No more woodshop dust, spiders, and paint cans! Woohoo! The relationship between FOIL and Park leadership is as strong as ever with much respect to each other's talents. FOIL has so many opportunities for volunteers to be involved at the ground level. FOIL always provides volunteers with water and snacks and we enjoy volunteering together with our neighbors next door at Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery when we can. I have left out so much, but I better get ready for Fishing 101, or a guided hike or birding, sunset paddling or craftivities with Jamie! Too much fun.

Next, we gear up for the crowds in April 2024 during the solar eclipse. We could use some help and new ideas! It's all good because Life is better Outdoors!





TPWD held an American Canoe Association Kayak Instructor course at Inks Lake with several FOIL members attending. This came at just the right time as Inks Lake now has a certified Texas Paddling Trail in its waters!



Jamie gives a monthly "Snakes Alive" class that is very well attended and teaches kids and adults that snakes are more afraid of you and they are necessary to our environment.





The junior bandit racoon has gotten his hand stuck more than once in the "cookie jar" at the Wildlife Viewing Station and has had to be released by the Park Rangers. Poor little guy. Don't worry, we fixed it so he cannot climb up there anymore.

For Labor Day, FOIL held its first fundraiser event and Lori, Karen Stewart and Ingrid set up the canopies, provided water and snacks and new stickers to the presenters and public. The Raptor Show was presented by Austin Wildlife Rescue and they brought several raptors and took time to answer every question from the crowd of over 120 attendees.

FOIL members were raising money for the Inks Lake Centennial Fund where they are asking for \$7K to purchase new archery equipment and binoculars. Here is a link to donate [Donate to Inks Lake State Park](#)





CAPTURING DRAGONS!!

Join us for a photography class to learn about AND practice taking pictures of dragonflies!

October 28th 3:00-4:00pm

Bring water, your camera (even a phone camera), and your curiosity. Meet at **Day Use**. Valid Day-Use Passes are required. For questions call: 830-637-9327

Meghan James is teaching Park goers how to ID dragonflies and how to "capture them with their camera" This class has been quite popular.



During our private sunup lake cleanups, FOIL members spied this beautiful Great Blue Heron and juvenile White Crowned Night Heron



Lastly, Desiree LaVigne presented a Mississippi Kite, Barn owl, Great Horned Owl, Red Tailed and Red Shouldered Hawks, Swainson's Hawk to over 120 attendees of the FOIL Fundraiser during Labor Day weekend at the Park. They live at the Austin Wildlife Rescue





The last 4 pics are of the Sunrise Lake cleanup and these were the "digs", found in the lake! including the sandwich board....

Granite Shoals Wildlife Viewing Station Update

The City of Granite Shoals and Highland Lakes Chapter of the Master Naturalists Program entered into a partnership to create the Granite Shoals Wildlife Viewing Station, Quarry Park, at 2221 Phillips Ranch Road in 2017. The Highland Lakes Chapter has maintained the Wildlife Viewing station and bird feeders through the years. Last year, the Wildlife Viewing Station was vandalized and the City of Granite Shoals agreed to pay for materials to make repairs. Jerry Stacy and Fredi Frankie worked on and completed repairs this week. Repairs included repairing two doors, replacing glass and restoring the bird display. Recent rains brought the pond to a decent level for visiting wildlife.

Gallery; Bird Survey at Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery - the second Monday of each month

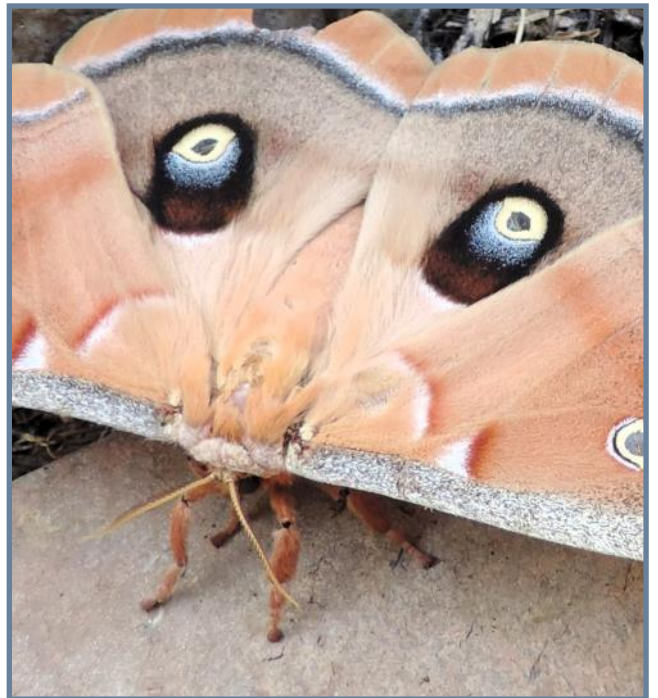
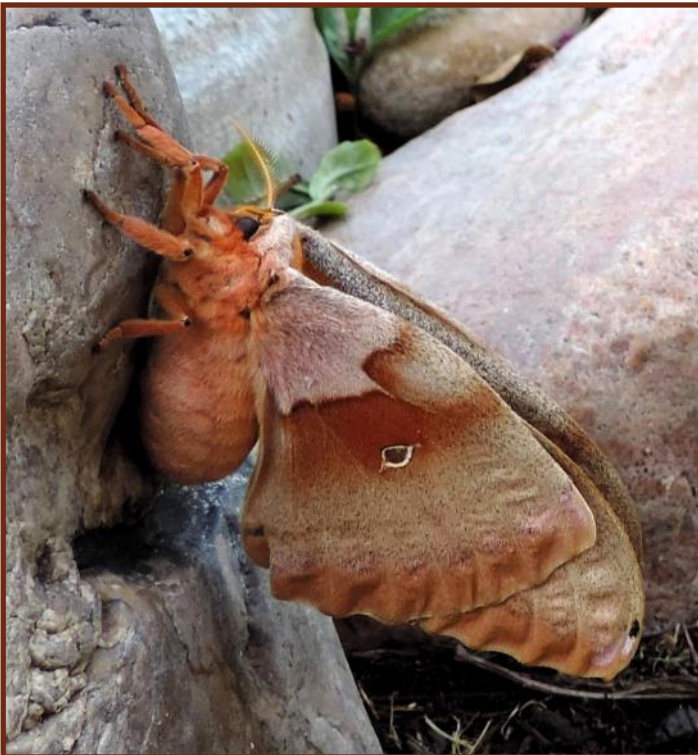


Photos by Wendy Cambridge

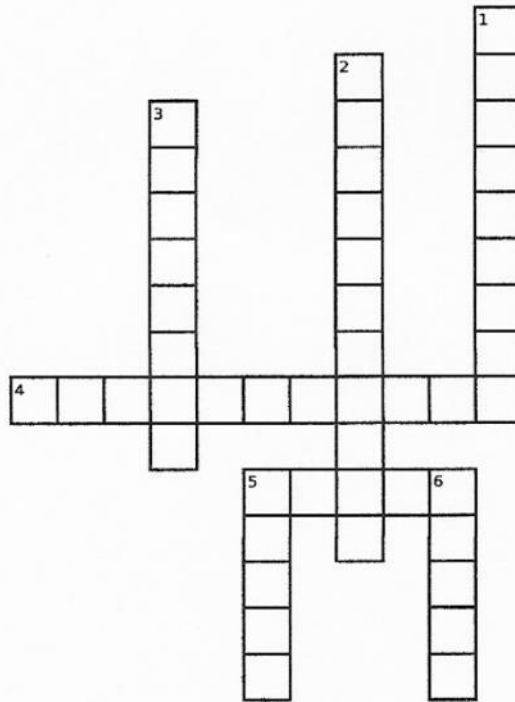
Polyphemus moth - September 11, 2023

I really got lucky today with this wonderful Polyphemus moth I saw in the yard. They are silk moths and only live for about a week. Love the large “purplish eyespots” and very bushy antennae. After the moth sat down in the rocks it flew up into one of my plants and stayed there for quiet a while. Finally flew off towards the big oak tree. Hard to believe they have such a short life. Wish everyone could have seen this one as it was so beautiful. What a delight to see, Sue Kersey

See next page



Classify That Insect



Down:

1. sucking mouthparts, long antennae, large compound eyes and hairy appearance
2. slim-bodies with two pair of wings and large compound eyes
3. stout rigid body with large hind legs
5. two membranous wings for flight with second pair for balance and mouthparts for sucking or piercing
6. long, slender or flattened body usually shaped in the form of vegetation

Across:

4. proboscis mouthpart with wings covered in variety of overlapping scales
5. wingless with bloodsucking mouthparts and powerful legs

HLMN Christmas Banquet

**Wednesday, December 6, 2023,
Noon**



Hill Country Hall

15675 Highway 29, Buchanan Dam

R.S.V.P. SURVEY around November 15th

Pot Luck with HLMN furnishing the meat and drinks. BYOB if
you would like

Bring check or \$\$\$ for annual dues

Bring a separate check of \$\$\$ for silent auction items

T E X A S

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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