

INDIAN TRAIL MARKER

April/May 2016

News, events & calendar of the Indian Trail Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists...Serving Ellis and Navarro Counties

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From the Desk of the **PRESIDENT**

Charlie Grindstaff, President ITMN

Our Bradford Pear tree and Texas Bluebonnets burst into bloom this past week. Equally spectacular, but much less noticeable, the tiny wildflowers of spring have been blooming for the last 45 days or so. Henbit was the first one I noticed, then Feverfew, Persian Speedwell, and Corn Gromwell. Now the Draba, Bluets and Chickweed are bringing me joy.

These diminutive flowers, each about 1/4 to 3/8" inch across are beautiful and miraculous in their tininess. I hope that you have noticed them and that they have brought you joy as well and not the urge to spread "weed and feed."

Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them.



Draba cuneifolia
Draba



Photos © Paul and Charlie Grindstaff

Lamium amplexicaule
Henbit



Parthenium integrifolium
American feverfew



Cerastium arvense
Mouse-ear chickweed



Veronica persica
Persian Speedwell



Stenaria nigricans
Bluets



Buglossoides arvensis
Corn gromwell



Meeting 4th Monday (usually) of each month at 6 p.m., program at 7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie

APRIL | MAY 2016 CALENDAR

APRIL

- 1 Kachina Prairie Workday (9am); LANDS at Panther Island (9:30am)
- 2 BRIT work day (9-12)
- 2 Whooping Crane Workshop, John Bunker Sands Wildlife Center (10am)
- 4 LANDS at Cedar Hill State Park (9:30-1:30)
- 5 LANDS at Cedar Hill State Park (9:30-1:30)
- 6 LANDS at Cedar Hill State Park (9:30-1:30)
- 7 LANDS at Cedar Hill State Park (9:30-1:30)
- 7 Plant Family Study Group (6:30pm)
- 9 Growing Up Wild Workshop with Rebecca Schumacher, Cedar Ridge Preserve (1-4pm)
- 9 Kachina Prairie Workday (9am)
- 12 Second Tuesday Nature Walk with Jim Varnum, Village Creek Historical Area –Arlington (9am)
- 13 LANDS at Panther Island (9:30-1:30)
- 15 Tax Day
- 16 Mockingbird Nature Park Wildflower Walk (9am)
- 16 Ennis Bluebonnet Trails - Kachina Prairie Wildflower Walk (11am)
- 16 Talking with Eagles Walk at John Bunker Sands Wildlife Center (9am)
- 17 Ennis Bluebonnet Trails - Kachina Prairie Wildflower Walk (1pm)
- 18 LANDS at Leo Ranch (9-2)
- 18 ITMN Board Meeting, Ryan's in Waxahachie (6pm)
- 21 Plant Family Study Group (6:30pm)
- 22 Earth Day; LANDS (location TBD)

- 23 Earth Day Walk w/Girl Scouts in DeSoto
- 25 ITMN Monthly Meeting (6pm); Program (7pm)
- 28 LANDS at Panther Island (9:30am)
- 29 Arbor Day
- 30 North Texas Master Naturalist "Native Plants and Prairie Days" (10am-3pm)

MAY

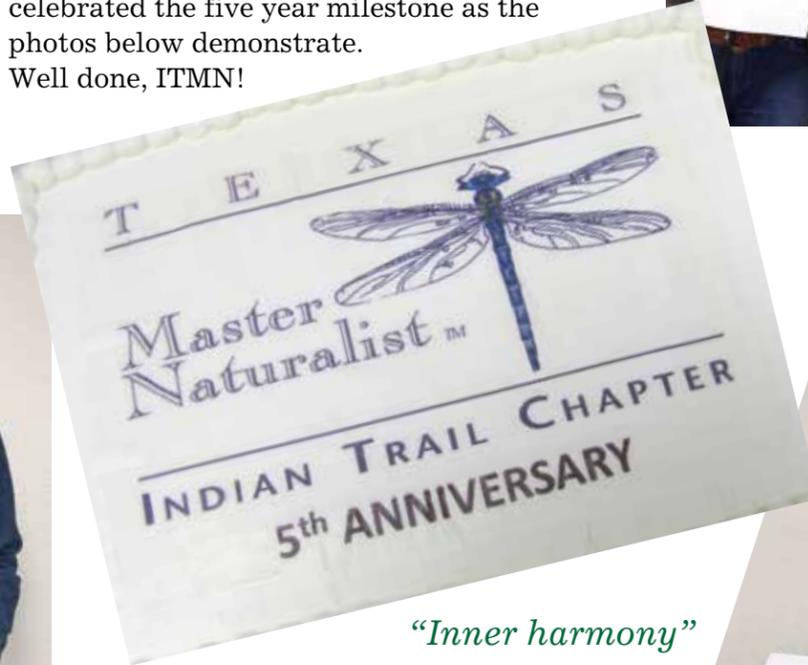
- 5 Cinco de Mayo
- 5 Plant Family Study Group (6:30pm)
- 7 BRIT work day (9am)
- 7 Butterflies of Texas, John Bunker Sands Wildlife Center (9am)
- 8 Mother's Day
- 10 Second Tuesday Nature Walk with Jim Varnum
- 11 LANDS at Panther Island (9:30am)
- 13 LANDS at Panther Island (9:30am)
- 17 LANDS at Panther Island (9:30am)
- 19 LANDS at Panther Island (9:30am)
- 19 Plant Family Study Group (6:30pm)
- 20 LANDS at John Bunker Sands Wildlife Center (9:30am)
- 21 Armed Forces Day
- 21 ITMN Field Trip to Tarrant Regional Water District & River Legacy (10am)
- 21 Kachina Prairie Workday (9am)
- 21 Mockingbird Nature Park Wildflower Walk (9am)
- 23 ITMN Monthly Meeting (6pm); Program (7pm)
- 27 Kachina Prairie Workday (9am)
- 30 Memorial Day



LET THEM EAT CAKE!

The Indian Trail Texas Master Naturalist Chapter recently celebrated their five year anniversary. The chapter received its charter on February 28, 2010, after considerable preliminary work by driving force Mox Moxley and an ad hoc committee of interested volunteers. To date, the chapter has contributed approximately 33,000

hours of volunteer work across a wide spectrum of projects. Intending to avoid the "all work and no play" tag line, the chapter appropriately celebrated the five year milestone as the photos below demonstrate. Well done, ITMN!



"Love being with my tribe -- my family -- investigating the natural wonders of Texas every month together. Always in awe."

Bonsoir mes chers Maitres Naturalistes (Good evening my dear Master Naturalists)!

Oh how I would love to be there with you for this five-year celebration of the Indian Trail Master Naturalist Chapter.

Over six years ago, a small group of Ellis County residents responded to fliers and newspaper announcements seeking persons interested in discussing the formation of a local Master Naturalist chapter. Our interests were as diverse as the all-outdoors -- ranging from bluebirds, wildflowers and native prairie lands to butterfly gardening and saving-the-trees. We represented numerous career fields and disciplines. But, for all of us, nature was our niche! We wanted to learn more, share our knowledge and experiences with others and ultimately enhance the environment for future generations.

For most of us, our interests in nature began when we were children -- perhaps it was watching winter birds at the feeder, catching fireflies, talking back to the bullfrogs, or fishing with a family member. And now, through your Expo events, special projects, walks, talks and formal teaching in the schools, you are planting the seeds for the development of our future naturalists.

Indeed, we began as a small nucleus of good-natured residents and grew to become a thriving, productive chapter that now encompasses both Ellis and Navarro counties.

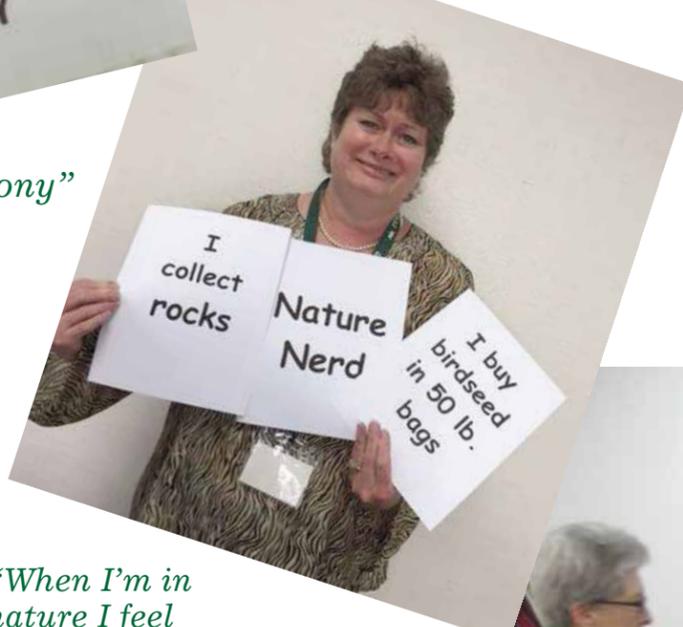
We selected the chapter name Indian Trail, as a tribute to Native Americans who were the first to appreciate and wisely use the natural resources in this part of Texas. The Indian Trail Master Naturalist Chapter continues to blaze new trails. Each of you is lovingly leaving your footprints for many to follow!

I am very, very proud of your accomplishments and miss you all very much. As a cowboy and cowgirl used to sing: "Happy trails to you, until we meet again!"

Mox Moxley
Indian Trail Master Naturalist



"Inner harmony"



"Love the people, nature, and fun."



"When I'm in nature I feel blessed."



"Awesome! Enjoy every minute and learn something new daily."



AWARDS

We're so proud of our chapter and their achievements in volunteer service. In February 2016, the following individuals were recognized:



500 Hour Pins – Chris Cook



Recertification 2016 – Charlie Grindstaff, Paul Grindstaff, Aaron Gritzmaker, Debbie Pierce



500 Hour Pins – Don Mitchell



250 Hour Pins – Don Hellstern

Mayor's Walk *at Mockingbird Nature Park*



It takes a lot of sweat equity to have an event run seamlessly, and that's exactly what our chapter's Master Naturalists did at Mockingbird Nature Park. Led by project coordinators for Mockingbird Nature Park, Aaron and Carolyn Gritzmaker, volunteers spent many days clearing brush, installing and repairing trail markers, picking up trash, trimming up the Butterfly Garden, and making repairs to make the park look its best for the annual Mayor's Walk on February 27, 2016. A new Butterfly ID poster was also installed, helping visitors learn more about the butterflies that would soon be filling the park.

Aaron reported that it was a beautiful day with

many visitors, and Midlothian Mayor Bill Houston appreciated all the work done by Aaron and crew to help make it a special day for the community.

Bluebird Box Update at MNP: While preparing for the Mayor's Walk, Deborah Rayfield reported, "Both bluebird and wren nests exhibited multiple nestings (2 or 3 nests atop each other). No eggs were found, so all nests appeared to have fledged young. It was another successful year for the cavity nesters at Mockingbird. This year marks the sixth season of the bluebird trail at the park."

Photos courtesy of Aaron Gritzmaker, Jean Kastanek, and Deborah Rayfield.

NATURAL

Notes

Trout Lilies

Spring is the best time of the year to brush up on your native plant identification. While it may be easy to identify species of plants when they're leafed out, taking some time to identify plants by their bark, buds and fruit can be exceedingly beneficial.

There can be challenges however, to not only identifying but viewing certain species of plants that bloom for only a short period of time during the spring. These ephemeral species are short-lived and are temporary in their perennial existence. The visual effect of this short lifespan would be more dramatic if Texas was covered in snow, as the initial bud pushes through inches of snow grasping as much sunlight as it can muster and slowly withering back into the soil as the leaves from trees block out most of the available light.

One of the most notable ephemeral species you may have seen a bit earlier this year due to our unseasonably warm temperatures is the Trout Lily

(*Erythronium albidum*). Belonging to the Liliaceae (Lily) family, this attractive plant species will gracefully cover a wooded area. The long, elliptical basal leaves with parallel veining are mottled with a green/maroon coloration, resembling the speckling of a trout, hence the name.

Trout lilies have an interesting life cycle and will multiply fairly quickly, yet it may be six years until one sees the traditional upside down bell shaped flower. Upon closer inspection, you might notice that the native Trout Lily species has the same petal and sepal arrangement as cultivated garden varieties of daylilies and tulips. While the flower can be propagated by wind and pollinators like bees, this herbaceous species relies on ants to spread seeds that are produced at the end of each stalk.

Make sure you get a glimpse of these lovely spring bloomers before their ephemeral life cycle is over for the season! With increased urbanization and invasive species like garlic mustard and privet choking out their habitat, this finicky native species might soon be nothing more than a memory.

The Trout Lily is the first featured native species in our new column, "Natural Notes." If you would like to contribute to this column or suggest flora or fauna species native to our region for future issues, please email kchristman@audubon.org.



PROFILE: Trout Lily

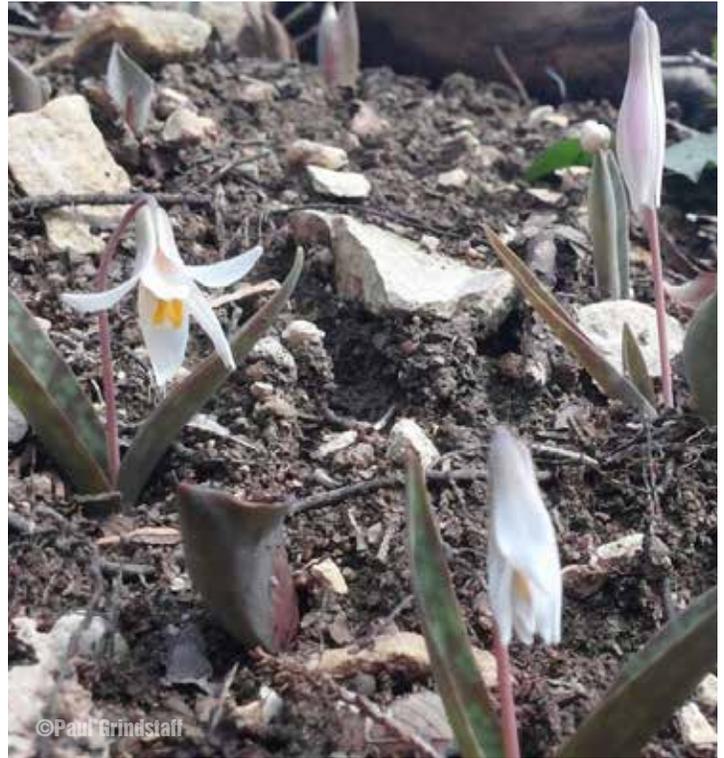
Common Names: White Trout Lily, White Fawnlily, Adder's Tongue

Scientific Name: *Erythronium albidum*

Family: *Liliaceae*

Key Characteristics:

- Elliptical basal leaves with parallel veins, often mottled green and maroon
- Spring blooming, white, solitary, bell-shaped flower on 6-12" stem
- Flower has identical sets of 3 sepals and 3 petals (When sepals and petals are indistinguishable, they are often called "tepals")
- 6 stamens surrounding a stigma that appears to be divided into 3 equal parts



Plant Family Study Group

By Anne Marie Gross

Dear King Philip Came Over For ... Good Soup? Grape Soda? However you might have learned the catchy mnemonic for taxonomic classification (Domain, Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species), our chapter's Plant Family Study Group suggests that you simply stop at "for" and learn to identify plants one "family" at a time. With hundreds of genera and thousands of species literally at our feet, it can be a mind-boggling task to learn (and remember) individual species by their scientific name and common name. However, by looking at our native plants in their family groups, we can begin to recognize similarities within families in stem structure, leaf shape and arrangement, flower parts, seed dispersal, and more.

Meeting twice monthly, the group selects plant families for study based on what is native to the area and what might be blooming at the time. For example in March we studied *Liliaceae*, which includes the spring bloomer Trout Lily. Participants take turns leading the family studies, but all contribute to the learning process by bringing different reference books



"Parts in threes" is just one characteristic of the Liliaceae family studied by the Plant Family Study Group this spring.

and notes, or specimens for closer examination. The best part about this group is its informality.

We'd love to have you join us! **The ITMN Plant Family Study Group (PFSG)** meets the first and third Thursday every month to discuss characteristics of plant families. Meeting locations rotate among Ennis, Waxahachie, and Midlothian. For more information, contact Charlie Grindstaff at pcgrindstaff@sbcglobal.net.

NATURAL reads

Book review by Charlie Grindstaff

Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival

I learned a couple of valuable lessons while reading this intriguing book: 1) I could never spend a winter in Maine (Heinrich mentions -30°C way too often), and 2) I need a cheat sheet to convert $^{\circ}\text{C}$ to $^{\circ}\text{F}$ and grams to ounces (-30°C is -22°F Brrrrr!) Okay, so those are my shortcomings. Winter World has a few shortcomings too (for example, it would be helpful if he could explain super cooling in layman's terms), but if you have ever wondered how non-migrating birds, turtles, flying squirrels, insects, frogs, bears, and honey bees survive freezing winters, you will learn a lot from this book.

Heinrich, a professor of biology at the University of Vermont, observes and documents the forest around his log cabin in Maine. He questions, researches, finds possible answers and then experiments to assess those answers. It is all about energy, what foods produce it, how much energy is required to survive a winter's night or indeed a whole winter, and how to conserve the hard earned energy.

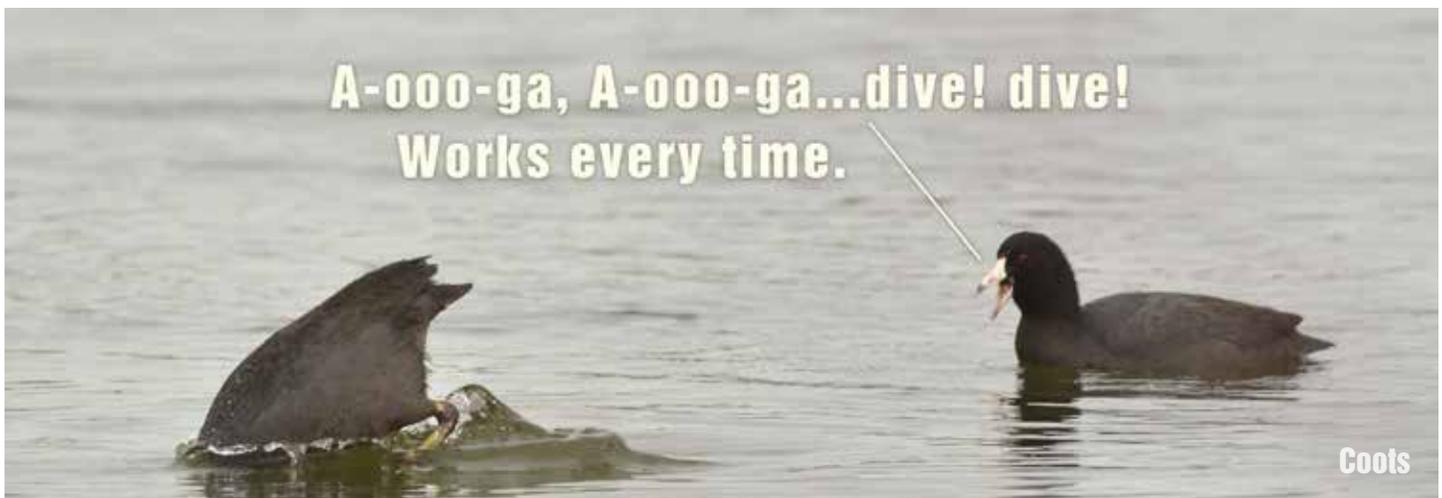
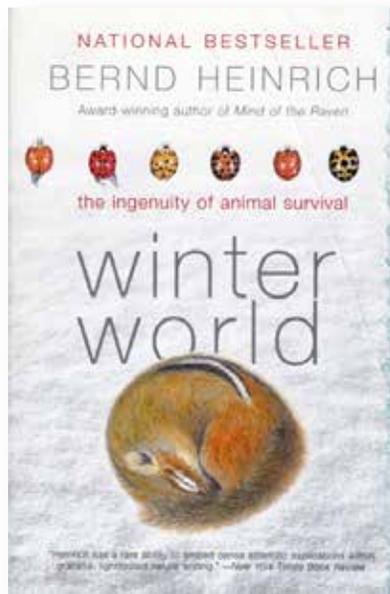
As usual, Mother Nature does not believe in one size fits all. Heinrich explores this huge variety of survival strategies, including turtles that bury themselves in mud and stop breathing through the winter, or bears that hibernate without getting

bedsores or losing bone mass. (There is a lot humans could learn from bears that could help us medically!) Depending on the species, insects can overwinter as eggs, larvae, pupae, or adults. Insects also use dehydration, produce antifreeze to super-cool, use controlled freezing, or shelter to avoid death by ice crystal. Some animals, like chipmunks, stockpile stores of food so they can eat when they wake from periods of torpor throughout the winter to replenish their energy stores without leaving their den. Warm microclimates are created by birds fluffing out their feathers or some mammals fluffing their fur.

Huddling in groups helps some species survive.

Some species have fantastic internal regulators that alert them to shiver, raising their metabolism when the outside temperature becomes dangerously low. Some frogs actually can be frozen for periods of time with no ill effects. The chapter on honeybees was the most interesting to me. Bees may be fooled by sunshiny cold winter afternoons to fly out hoping to find the first blooms and pollen of the season, but very often nosedive into the snow and freeze to death. The reward of finding pollen is obviously worth the risk of death and loss of some bees to the hive as a whole.

I must tell you that Heinrich, while answering some of the questions, could only say he doesn't know how golden-crowned kinglets survive. They are active all winter long, they don't cache food so they have to eat a lot every day and they don't sleep in their nests. He could only rejoice that some of these tiny birds, weighing about the same as two pennies, do survive winter. I also rejoice in their survival.



Flying WILD and Growing Up WILD!

By Jean Kastanek and Anne Marie Gross

Who would spend a few hours on a Sunday afternoon perched on a hard chair in a bird class? Ten Indian Trail Master Naturalists, that's who! "Why?" you might ask. For starters, the Flying WILD bird class was led by Katie Christman, Educator at the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center in Cedar Hill and an Indian Trail Master Naturalist.

The Flying Wild program is one of the ways Katie shares her passion about the bird world with others. Flying Wild, a program of the Council for Environmental Education, introduces middle-school students to bird conservation through classroom activities and school bird festivals. The activities can be adapted to elementary and high-school grade levels as well and include correlations to national science standards.

Katie began by giving each of us a copy of *Flying Wild: An Educator's Guide to Celebrating Birds*. We then "flew" through the guide to familiarize ourselves with its framework. The best, and most fun, part of the program is its hands-on activities, designed to be teacher-led, student-led, or volunteer-led. On this Sunday afternoon, Indian Trail Master Naturalists participated in Jeop-Birdy (a fun "adaptation" of the original game), Migratory Mapping (might need to review your geography before "taking flight"), and Adaptation Artistry (because "A chattering bird builds no nest", we focused like hawks on our project while creating our birds).

This class was no "hen party" and is certainly "something worth crowing about". Many thanks to

Katie Christman and Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center for bringing us this fun training program!

~ ~ ~

There's still time to sign up for the Growing Up WILD workshop on April 9 led by Rebecca Schumacher and held at the Cedar Ridge Preserve. During this three-hour training, participants will sample activities and receive a curriculum and activity guide. Anyone who works with young children, including teachers, home-schoolers, informal educators and early childhood caregivers are welcome.

Flying WILD and Growing Up WILD are two training programs in the Project WILD series for educators that are administered by the Council for Environmental Education. While the Flying WILD program is geared for middle-school students, the Growing Up WILD training is designed for early childhood years.

For information about future Flying WILD training workshops (minimum of 10 participants), contact Katie Christman at kchristman@audubon.org. To sign-up for the Growing Up WILD workshop, contact Rebecca Schumacher at rebecca.schumacher@sbcglobal.net.



Why Birds?

By Katie Christman



Photos©Jim West

“Whoa! Look there’s a bird!”

“My dream came true today. I saw a red bird.”

“Look Miss Katie, it’s a Red Robin!”

I get a good chuckle hearing some of the exclamations from many of the students that participate in our Eco-Investigations at Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center. Roughly 98% of migratory birds travel through the Central Flyway and utilize the diversity of stopover habitat that it provides. Our canyon viewing room is the perfect area to view the migrating birds that fly through Cedar Hill. The three sided room raised above our dry streambed overlooks the predominately oak forest. Our feeding stations, donated by Wild Birds Unlimited, each feature a different food from safflower and sunflower seeds to peanuts, mixed nuts, bark butter, and nectar. As students walk up the stairs to the canyon viewing room, the cries of “ooh, a bird” and “look a squirrel” start in. The bird feeder experiment gives students a chance to act as a scientist, investigating the seed that the birds eat and writing a hypothesis of what feeder they think will be visited most often.

The most exciting part for these students is of course, the counting. Heads bob in unison as they see a bird visit each feeder. Shrieks of joy can be heard as another bird visits a feeder. Once finished, our group discusses which feeder had the most visits and why. (Usually the sunflower seed feeder has the most visits.) These students figure out pretty quickly that the birds prefer specific foods due to the specific adaptations they have. Before leaving, we ask them to think about the different challenges birds face as they migrate and what the students can do to help them. With a little

prompting, they’re coming up with answers like recycling, keeping their cats inside, putting up a bird house and putting out a bird bath.

The bird feeder experiment is one of the rotations that our school groups enjoy the most. Many visitors, including myself enjoy the thrill of watching birds visit our feeders. My question is why? Why birds? What is it about them that grab our attention? Is it simply our curiosity and admiration, or more?

Accessibility – Birds are accessible. Anyone at anytime and anywhere can find a bird. Even when other wildlife is not visible or able to be found, birds can be heard or seen. You don’t have to have a degree or expensive binoculars to enjoy watching a bird. You can simply enjoy the view out your window or sounds that you hear of birds coming into your yard.

Symbolic Inspiration– Birds have served as symbols for governments, sports teams and fighter jets. The Bald Eagle has served as our nation’s symbol since 1782. Major League sports teams have adopted bird species as their mascots (Ravens, Falcons, Blue Jays e.tc.). The Peregrine Falcon’s flight dynamics has served as inspiration for military aircraft like the F-16 Fighting Falcon. The list goes on. Birds are symbolically inspirational.

Beauty – We are eagerly wakened by the songs of birds in the morning and are lulled to sleep by the mysterious hooting of owls. We are awed by the gracefulness of herons, the flashy color of Painted Buntings and mesmerized by the flight capability of a hummingbird. Birds carry the whole package: flight, song and beauty.



Community – Birds are ingrained in our culture, history and science. They’re part of our community both locally and internationally. Birds have inspired artists and musicians. Birds are part of many culture creation stories. Falconers

raptors for many, many centuries. Citizen scientists counting birds at a Christmas bird count join with citizens all over the world in tracking the birds they’re seeing at that moment. They connect us from community to community and generation to generation.

Conservation – Birds are symbolic indicator species. The canary in the coal mine is a phrase that has entered common usage. All puns aside, birds are integrated in the conservation movement. The formation of the National Audubon Society in the 1900s is an example, as is Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring* published in 1962, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 as well as many other events has thrown birds into the limelight. The

Great Backyard Bird Count

Many of our members participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count, a citizen science project sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Two members from our chapter ranked the #2 and #3 spots in most species identified in Ellis and Navarro Counties during the Bird Count: Jim West recorded 55 species and Deborah Rayfield recorded 42. Sandy Ashbrook joined an Audubon birding group in coastal Texas and saw 64 Whooping Cranes.

Deborah has been participating in the GBBC for 7 years. “Over the years, I’ve seen many new birds coming to the feeders, like the pine warbler and orange crowned warbler. They love the homemade peanut butter suet cakes that I put out,” she said. “I would encourage more people to count the birds. Just the act of recording the species will help you to learn how to identify them. If you are not sure about what species is located in your area, the reports submitted for your particular area will lead you in the right direction of what to look for in the bird guides.”

If you missed out on this year’s count, the next one is scheduled for February 17-20, 2017, but you don’t have to wait until then to hone your birdwatching skills. You can report your sightings on eBird.org all year long!

Jack Dunaway captured these photos of a Downy Woodpecker and female Northern Cardinal.



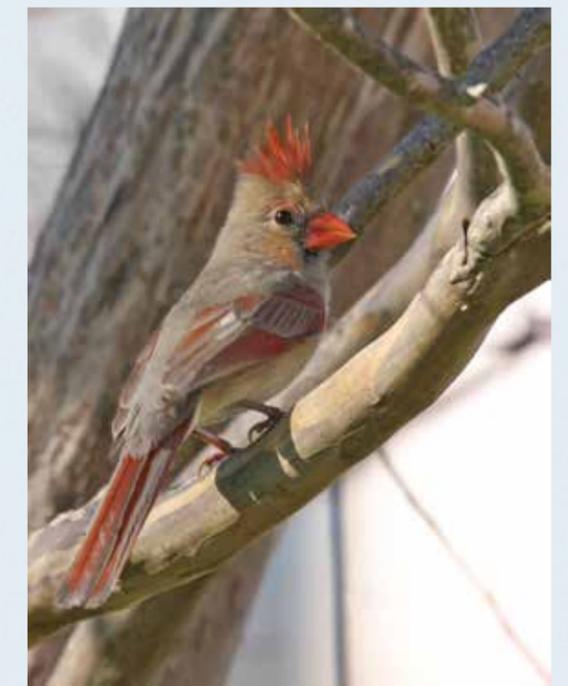
conservation/environmentalism movement has highlighted the essential roles birds play in our ecosystems.

So, why birds? I’m sure we could all think of many more reasons why we love birds, why we teach or should teach about them and why they pique our interest. When eager students press their faces against the glass in our canyon viewing room and their dream comes true because they have seen a “red robin,” that’s why.

Roger Tory Peterson sums it up best by saying, “Birds, it must be admitted, are the most exciting and the most deserving of the vertebrates; they are perhaps the best entrée into the study of natural history, and a very good wedge into conservation awareness.”



Jim West was fortunate enough to witness this mating misstep by the House Finches at his feeder!



Winter Treats for the Birds

On a cold, windy day in February, more than a dozen volunteers set out yummy treats for our feathered friends. Armed with pinecones and orange cups filled with peanut butter/suet mix and studded with nutritious seeds, volunteers decorated trees at Kachina Prairie Preserve, the Ennis Public Library,

Waxahachie's Bullard Heights Neighborhood Park and Sims Library, with a final stop at Mockingbird Nature Park in Midlothian. Celia Yowell, who organized the work day with Chris Cook, reported that in less than 24 hours, all the treats were gone at Kachina Prairie.

This fun event not only made some birds very happy, but it also served to spread the message and mission of the Texas Master Naturalists. At each location, volunteers placed a sign identifying this as an ITMN project and encouraging visitors to learn more. *Photos courtesy of Charlie Grindstaff, Don Hellstern, and Deborah Rayfield*



VIEW FROM MY GARDEN CHAIR

By Chris Cook

The garden yard is greening. And I don't mean grass, although there is some of that, too. Native Americans called it white man's foot meaning the many plants that seemed to follow wherever the European "invaders" went.

Today they are virtually omnipresent globally. Here is a minor list: plantain, goosegrass (cleavers), dandelion, wood sorrel, purslane, wild garlic, mustard, clovers, chickweed, and henbit. These species probably arrived in soil dumped on shore after being used as ballast on ships and then spread by "dirt-y" feet. Many of them are perfectly edible additions to salads or to the currently popular green drinks, as long as you don't think about what else crawled over them in your yard.

Last fall I broadcast wildflower seeds on bare ground reclaimed from galloping monkey grass that I pulled up after a rain. Thinking through rose colored glasses that black-eyed susans had sprouted in profusion as a result of that rash behavior, I was most unhappy to see something else entirely -- a rather succulently hairy-leaved plant burgeoning in that spot, and then in another spot, and then in yet another. You know the rest: the garden mantra of chickweed!

So I went to my weed books (see below). Yep, there are some 30+ different species of chickweed, and I have at least two of those spreading out in mats about every 1 to 2 feet apart. Smooth and starlike is *Stellaria* sp. The other is the hairy *Cerastium* sp. also known as mouse-ear. In cahoots with them are yellow wood sorrel and some kind of cress that I hate on

sight. Supposedly chickweed got its name because way back in medieval times people noted that chickens loved to eat it. I felt somewhat mollified in my guilt for having so many successful weeds when I read that even Thoreau concluded that "apparently it never rests." Chickweed can tolerate cold but not drought which means it will likely be gone soon enough. Even worse, "it harbors some dozen or more plant viruses

and is fed on by caterpillars, aphids, beetles and ants." Definitely not something for my salad, but maybe still in my green drink smoothie where I can't see it. I think I harvested (read yanked out) at least 15 lbs. of chickweed and close friends plus root soil yesterday, and it did not go in the compost pile!

To add insult to injury, I'm out here in my chair with my cat and my coffee, writing this semi-rant, and two greenish, gelatinous blobs plop on the yellow legal pad on which I am writing. Each one had a seed suspended in the middle of it; rather "nasty", as my students would say, like a toddler with a runny nose.

You bet I got up quickly, and

carefully looked up ... "and what to my wandering eyes should appear" but the first cedar waxwings I have seen this year. They were hanging out and chatting on the bare branches at the top of the oak tree under which I was sitting. I decided the appearance of cedar waxwings to be a blessed trade-off for the crop of chickweed. (Note the focused effort to be positive.)

Now my view is from the living room chair in front of the idiot box. If you have read this far, well, I am the idiot and that makes you... something else entirely. Carolyn Ross, may I borrow your chickens for about 5 weeks?

(Referenced books include: *Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants* by Lee Allen Peterson, *Field and Roadside* by John Eastman, *My Weeds* by Sara Stein)



MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM MISSION: To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

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The mission of this newsletter is to inform, educate and entertain Texas Master Naturalists and their circle of friends.



Mockingbird Nature Park WILDFLOWER WALKS

Members of the Indian Trail Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program will be leading Wildflower Walks on the **THIRD SATURDAY** of each month from **APRIL** through **SEPTEMBER**

Our walks start at 9:00 am at the Butterfly Garden. Please join us on this ½ mile stroll along the trails as we identify the wildflowers. Everyone is invited to attend, and there is no charge. Bring drinking water and wear close-toed shoes. Insect repellent is a good idea, also.

Walks will be canceled in the event of rain.

T E X A S



INDIAN TRAIL CHAPTER

Serving Ellis and Navarro Counties Visit: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/> Email: Information@itmnc.com



Monday – April 25, 2016
Bringing Nature to Your Backyard

Location: First United Methodist Church
505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie, TX
Family Life Center - Gathering Room

Indian Trail Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist

- **6:00 PM - Business Meeting**
- **7:00 PM - Program by Xandra Morris – Entomologist and Extension Agent for Hill & McLennan Counties**

Born and raised in Katy, TX, Xandra Morris earned a B.S. and M.S. in Entomology from Oklahoma State University. While there, Xandra served as a Presenter and Husbandry worker



for the OSU Insect Adventure - Oklahoma's Live Bug Traveling Zoo.

Xandra's Master's work was on biocontrol - insecticide effects on ladybug predators of aphids; study on herbicide effects on mosquito population; beneficial termite descriptive report. She is currently working on sugarcane aphid population monitoring studies in sorghum.

Xandra is married to Cade Morris, another Entomologist, and they have 4 "children" - two dogs and two cats!

Indian Trail Chapter is part of the statewide Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer Program of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

The Mission ...to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

This program is part of a series of "no cost" "open to the public" Master Naturalist programs offered the fourth Monday (generally) of each month, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Please bring a friend! For more information, please call the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension at 972-825-5175 or email:

information@itmnc.com



Monday – May 23, 2016

The Importance of Scientific Vouchers in Botanical Research

Location: First United Methodist Church

- 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie, TX
- Family Life Center - Gathering Room

Indian Trail Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist

- 6:00 PM - Business Meeting
- 7:00 PM - Program by Tiana Rehman – Herbarium Collections Manager (BRIT-SMU-VDB) Botanical Research Institute of Texas in Fort Worth

Our Program Presenter - Tiana Rehman (née Franklin) joined the BRIT staff in 2003 and today serves as the Collections Manager of the BRIT herbarium. Tiana has a B.S in Environmental Science and a BA in Cultural Anthropology from Southern Methodist University (2003) and a M.S. in Environmental Science from Texas Christian University (2007). Her M.S. thesis subject was the new world relatives of nutmeg (Myristicaceae) trees and the factors governing their distribution at a biological station in southeastern Peru.

Tiana facilitates the care, usage and growth of the plant collection housed in the BRIT herbarium, as well as its interpretation for the public. A preserved specimen – voucher - that is deposited in a natural history collection, such as a herbarium, may serve as the basis for scientific research for hundreds of years to come. These vouchers represent verifiable documentation of the existence of a species in space and time if they are properly collected and preserved.

Join us to learn about the importance of these vouchers, the principles behind proper collection techniques and how your role in this process represents a significant contribution to our knowledge about plants in the North Central Texas region.

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