

# LOST PINES CHAPTER

Texas Master Naturalist



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## Survival Instinct by Larry Gfeller

These days the woods are a pretty quiet place—unless you're a rabbit. Rabbits are preferred fare for many meat eating predators. But first you've got to catch one. Instinctual defenses include lightning-fast escapes and near perfect camouflage. Deciding between these two can be a life or death decision for the rabbit, though. Running away is pretty straight forward and it often wins the day. Camouflage is different. The cottontail will just freeze in his tracks if he thinks you can't see him. If the rabbit gets it wrong there's usually still time to bolt and pull out an escape—*unless it's a bobcat*. Thinking you are invisible when you're not doesn't work with bobcats! Not only are they wicked fast but they can leap 10 feet in a single bound. And they love rabbits—oh, they do love them so! Here's some more bad news if you're a rabbit: Bobcats are the most abundant wildcat in the U.S. and have the greatest range of all native North American cats.



Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)

Even though many bobcats prefer cottontail rabbits, they're willing to dine on just about anything that's warm and moves. While most of their take is small (birds, mice, squirrels) they have been known to even eat insects or kill animals as large as deer when other food is not easily available. They are survivors: Bobcats can go long periods without food, but when it's plentiful, they eat heavily and use their own version of a doggie bag—burying meat to return later and finish the meal.

As night hunters these cats are unequalled. With keen senses, strong muscles, impeccable camouflage, leaping and running ability, retractable claws and strong jaws these *uber-felines* thrive. In fact, their numbers continue to be strong and stable in the face of disappearing and increasingly fragmented habitat. The proper word is *adaptable*. Bobcats comfortably make their home in forests, swamps, deserts and even suburban areas. They seem to be everywhere, from southern Canada, throughout the U.S., and on into northern Mexico. The population in North America is believed to be quite large, perhaps as many as a million cats in the U.S. alone.

So, if there's so many of them, why are sightings so rare? You seldom see bobcats in the wild—they are solitary and secretive—but wildlife photographers have chronicled that the animal is striking. We start with a distinctive face, made wider by tufts of hair on and beneath the ears. They have scintillating yellow eyes—yellow from fifteen feet away—and round black pupils

### IN THIS ISSUE

Survival Instinct .....	1
What's Blooming? .....	4
Brooks on Books .....	5
Meet Frank May .....	6
A Message from Julia Akin .....	11
Snippets .....	13

(Continued on page 2)

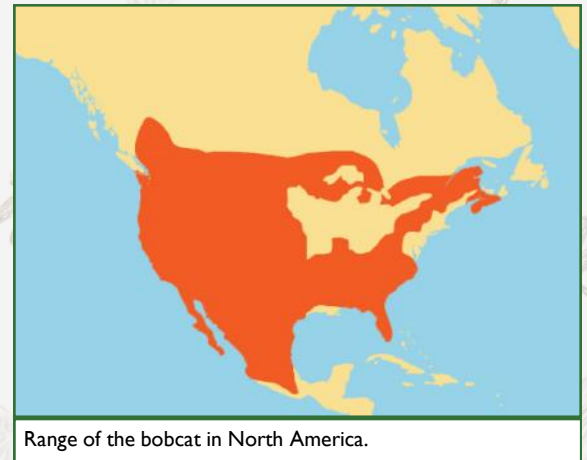


## Survival Instinct, cont.

(Continued from page 1)

that belie the wildness within. Locking eyes with one reveals the romantic jungle feline soul inside—*Chat Sauvage*. Next, we see a jackrabbit-like body with hind legs longer than the front, prominent black bars marking the front legs and, for sure, a stubby black “bobbed” tail—the trait from which they get their name. From a distance, they are easily mistaken for an overly large alley cat. Bobcats seldom weigh more than 30 lbs. and only live about 6-8 years in the wild, some making it to the ripe old age of 10. The cat is larger in northern ranges and in open habitats. Still, this is no neighborhood tomcat . . . *this* is no kitty to be trifled with.

Domesticated cats are ubiquitous in the world, but bobcats have a unique lineage in North America. They are believed to have evolved from the Eurasian Lynx, which crossed into North America during the Pleistocene (2.5 mya to 10,000 ya), hence, the scientific name *Lynx rufus*. The first wave moved into the southern portion of North America, which was soon cut off from the north by glaciers. This population evolved into bobcats around 20,000 years ago. A second population is believed to have arrived from Asia (by way of the Bering Land Bridge) and settled in the north, developing into the modern Canada Lynx. Hybridization between the two species sometimes occurs. There are 12 recognized sub-species (ours is *L.r. texensis*). The elusive predator figures heavily in Native American mythology and the folklore of European settlers.



Range of the bobcat in North America.

Should you feel threatened if you come upon a bobcat in the wild? No, you should feel privileged you snatched a quick glimpse! Bobcats know man is their worst enemy and go out of their way to avoid people. These elusive hunters embody all the sleuth skills of any self-respecting cat: They are accomplished



climbers (but only when they have to be) and although they don't really like the water, they are good swimmers, too. Catching a bobcat takes an experienced hunter, or overwhelming odds, usually with the help of dogs. They keep hours that most humans don't: The cat is normally on the move from 3 hours before sunset to midnight, and then again from before dawn until 3 hours after sunrise. They rest during the day, often on rocky ledges protected by thickets and blend nicely into their background. This varies in the fall and winter when prey becomes more active during the daylight hours. Oh, and like most cats, they don't care much for dogs either—unless they're about the size of a rabbit.

Aside from their primal wildness, these felines practice many of the same habits as ordinary house cats. To keep their hardware sharp and effective, bobcats need scratching posts. Just about any good sized tree will do; the difference being the scratch marks start three or four feet above the ground. Like their domesticated brethren, bobcats mark their territory with urine and feces. There's nothing like the acrid smell of urine in the hot August sun to say, “This be mine.” Even though they would never stoop to the level of using a kitty litter box, fastidiousness is in their genes—it is not uncommon to find scat buried or under a thin layer of dirt. And, yes, most contented kitties purr—including bobcats. They like to lounge in the warm sunshine

(Continued on page 10)



# What's Blooming?

by Liz Pullman

What is *not* blooming is a better title this issue. Traveling back east for an extended “Git out of Dodge City and away from this heat” vacation was mostly a trip along interstate highways all the way from Houston to North Carolina and Virginia. On US 290 out of Bastrop, we (Judy Turner hitched a ride with me to Virginia) saw the usual Texas wildflowers blooming all along the medians and ROWs. We had frostweed (*Verbesina virginica*), snow-on-the-prairie (*Euphorbia bicolor*), antelope horns (*Asclepias asperula*), rattle bush (*Sesbania drummondii*), common sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*), cowpen daisies (*Verbesina encelioides*), Texas vervain (*Verbena halei*), silver-leaf nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*) and sneezeweed (*Helenium amarum*); these are the ones identifiable at 70 mph.

On we drove through Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South and North Carolina and Virginia, but the flowers were few and far between and were usually Queen Anne’s lace (*Daucus carota*) and sneezeweed (*Helenium amarum*)—much shorter than normal because these had re-bloomed after being mowed down, possibly several times. Occasionally a wet area or ditch would sport a clump of hibiscus or a tangle of morning glories (the mowers couldn’t get to them for fear of bogging down).

In the Carolinas the interchanges had various geometrically shaped beds of cultivated flowers, zinnias and cosmos being common choices for planting. The exception to this pattern was in Alabama. We found an oasis with many blooming plants in the heart of Mobile in and around the botanical garden—many native as well as non-natives. The highlight here was a picnic in a longleaf pine forest (*Pinus palustris*) complete with various yellow and purple blooming forbs, one old friend being elephant’s foot (*Elephantopus tomentosus*).

Our analysis? These non-Texas interstate roadsides have ALWAYS been kept in this golf course condition from the date of highway construction. No wildflowers had a chance to sprout and certainly no chance to actually bloom and produce seed before the mowers returned. The state Department of Transportation rulebooks apparently specify regular mowing (scalping in some cases) to keep those bloomin’ weeds at bay.



The Blue Ridge Parkway overlook

Where did we find really great roadsides? The Blue Ridge Parkway. Mowing had occurred, but only along pavement edges, near lookouts and picnic spots. We found, identified and photographed some great flowers. There were three species of wingstem (*Verbesina*)—two of them bright yellow—*V. alternifolia* and *V. occidentalis*, plus the white *V. virginica* - the same frostweed as we have here, abundant and tall. Goldenrods (*Solidago*) were all over the place and we thought at least 6 or 7 species. Jewelweeds (*Impatiens capensis* and *pallida*) were in many roadside ditches. One area near a millpond had several very tall purple lobelias (*Lobelia siphilitica*) and, ah yes, leaves were turning so the dogwoods (*Cornus florida*) all had maroon

leaves. A tall and robust milkweed was apparent and found to be common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*). They were past bloom but with magnificent seedpods. The plentiful and distinctive leaves of agrimony (*Agrimonia parviflora*) caught our eye and some showed a few late blooms. This is a plant from the Rose family, whose westward range stops abruptly in eastern Texas. For me, nice, since long time no see!



Cowpen daisies (*Verbesina encelioides*)

(Continued on page 4)



# Blooming, cont.

(Continued from page 3)

The way back included interstates 81, 40, 75, 59 and 20 with many orange “Mowers Ahead” signs but few flowers. Fed up with interstate driving, we headed southwest, down Hwy 43 from Marshall and picked up US 79 until Jacksonville, where the blue highways called us so we took off for Rusk, Alto, Crockett, Madisonville, Bryan, Caldwell, Paige and Bastrop, more or less following El Camino Real de los Tejas with an incredible number of Historic Markers. A spring LPMN Road Trip anyone?

## Latin 101.5 by Judy Turner

Once again there are plant genera or species that are named for people. Two of which, by this time, everyone should recognize - *Asclepius* and *drummondii*, the milkweed and the rattle bush. Others include *Euphorbia bicolor* which is named for Euphorbus, the Greek physician to Juba II, the King of Mauritania. Anybody know where that is? *Lobelia siphilitica* is named for Mathias de L’obel, a 16th century Belgian botanist. The species name for this plant with wonderful blue flowers refers to the Iroquois use of the plant for treating syphilis. One theory has it that this disease predates European settlement in the U.S. *Verbesina encelioides*, the now blooming cowpen daisy, is the latinized name (*Encelium*) for Christopher Entzelt, a 16th century Lutheran clergyman. The last plant, *Verbena halei*, is named for a modern day Louisiana physician who later became a botanist.



Great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)



Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*)

One of the plants we saw on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Queen Ann’s lace or *Daucus carota*, actually translates to carrot/carrot. Well, it is in the carrot family but geez... Then there’s *Asclepius syriaca*, which is called “the common milkweed” in other states. *Syriaca* translates to “of Syria,” but it is actually native to the U.S. and Canada. *Impatiens capensis* has an interesting translation. Impatiens refers to the seed pod’s habit of bursting open and capensis means “of the Cape” (as in Good Hope). And lastly, the translation for *Elephantopus* is elephant’s foot covered with fine matted hairs. The common names include elephant’s foot or devil’s grandmother.



Snow on the prairie (*Euphorbia bicolor*)

REALLY, I am not making this up! It just goes to show that if you discover a new species, you can call it whatever you want!



# Meet Frank May

## by Larry Gfeller

As the evening sun blends the warm and windless western horizon into a glory of reds and oranges, a tall lanky man approaches two men on the banks of the Colorado River.

"Time to be moving along, gentlemen, the park closes at 8:00," the man said in a quiet matter-of-fact voice.

Shooting a furtive glance between them, one partner responds, "You got a badge?"

"Nope, don't have to," said the visitor, "because the man standing behind you does!"

The two men turned around as if poked with a fork. There in the twilight stood a uniformed game warden. With embarrassment, the two men quickly and awkwardly gathered their belongings and scurried for their truck.

If you hang around the Lost Pines Nature Trails during the evening hours, you're liable to run into this same purposeful man. Who is he? Most of us know him as the original "River Rat." This quiet man emerges almost unnoticed, like morning mist on the river. His demeanor is not ostentatious. But today he makes his own weather—almost everyone knows who he is. As a member of the class of 2012, Frank May never was much for high profile public service projects, nor for working with kids. He's not a birder or hike leader. In fact, he couldn't tell you the first thing about native plants! But he knows the Lost Pines Nature Trails (LPNT) and the Colorado River Refuge (CRR) like nobody else.

After graduation, Frank hung out with the Bridge Maniacs. In those early days he was characteristically silent, standing back and assessing the dynamics of his surroundings. It was with the Maniacs that Frank met and fell in love with the LPNT. At some auspicious moment—April 2013 to be precise—Frank stepped forward as the committed defender of this stretch of riverfront property. In 2015 he adopted the CRR when the Pines & Prairies Land Trust trial steward position opened up. He had found his niche. He now serves on two boards of directors and regularly rubs shoulders with county politicians, law enforcement officials and local community leaders. Why such a transformation? How does a man who typically suffers in the company of others and scorns the limelight become the center of a high stakes movement to transform a forfeited recreation area into a legitimate public park? Come along and we'll find out.

Born in Mt. Pleasant, Texas, Frank spent his early years in Corpus Christi, where his father worked for Mobile Oil Company. Frank's father labored his entire life, never having finished high school. His mother was a church secretary for a number of years, who—through sheer determination—gained a nursing degree in her 40s. There are three boys in the May clan, and Frank is the oldest. The entire family worked hard and these early work experiences only highlighted for Frank the transformative power of education. His life would be different.

Frank's first job was sweeping floors in a cabinet shop. From age 14 on, he held a job of one kind or another. As a youth he worked for hard-tack cowboys, struggling farmers and red neck oil field workers—larger than life characters not accustomed to quitting. From these earthy mentors, he had picked up that most valuable of character traits—a formidable determination to succeed! Frank graduated from Premont High School in 1964 in the middle of a class of 54. With memories of his time in the sweltering heat of the South Texas sun, Frank headed off to college.



Frank May, aka "River Rat"

(Continued on page 6)



# Frank, cont.

[\(Continued from page 5\)](#)

First stop: Texas A & I, Kingsville to study business. This would prove to be the first of many educational experiences throughout his life, adjusted significantly by the U.S. Air Force. It was 1965. At age 19 Frank decided to visit a military recruiter, looking for a little excitement. He found it. That summer, in boot camp, Frank was unceremoniously pulled out of basic training and sent to a highly classified training program at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi. What had he done? He scored among the top ½ of one percent of recruits on his battery of enlistment exams. From that point forward, Frank's life would be filled with arcane and unusual experiences. He had been unwittingly recruited into the Cold War Space Race . . . his first assignment: Peshawar, Pakistan; his first uniform: Levis, cowboy boots, cowboy hat and a short-sleeve shirt; his career path: Signal Intelligence (electronic eavesdropping—a “spook,” in the vernacular!). This tour was eventually followed by another in Japan . . . same game, different playing field.

After discharge from the U.S. Air Force in 1969, it was the University of Houston's work/study program (electronics) that opened the door for eventual employment with the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center and on to a job with Texaco Corporation as an electronics technician. This foundation in electronics would be, with only a few diversions along the way, True North on Frank's life compass, launching a succession of information technology-based occupations. 1981 was another turning point when, employed by Questar Corporation, Frank jumped from skilled computer technician into the more complex arena of IT management. Even after a 17-month “retirement” in 1999 to care for aging parents in Texas, Frank found his IT skills still in demand. He joined the Texas Workforce Commission in 2001. He spent some time with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and then moved on to six years with the Texas Department of Public Safety. Frank retired (this time permanently) as the Information Security Officer for DPS in 2011.

Frank married Cat (another story, another time) after first meeting her at a dance in Garner State Park. Only thing is, it took another 8 years to happen, as their lives were then moving in separate directions. In 1970, after coming to NASA, Frank had to compete with another fellow who was then engaged to Cat. Back down? Not at all. As mentioned, Frank ain't from quittin' stock! Frank and Cat have been happily married for 45 years and now live outside Bastrop with their rescued family: a yellow lab (Sugarfoot) and a Heinz 57 cat (Pepper). Not many of us would spend thousands of dollars to ensure the survival of a sickly dog or adopt a shelter-raised feline who enjoys the sport of “shred the hand that feeds you.” These animals are now part of the Mays' DNA. Buddies. Lifelong pals. The Mays moved here after the heart-wrenching loss of their first retirement home in Crystal Beach, Texas—completely obliterated by Hurricane Ike. Despite inevitable setbacks, their lives together have been a series of rich and surreal adventures, ranging from living among the hoo-dos of Utah, the beaches of Texas, skydiving, motorcycle racing and downhill skiing, to becoming trained crewmembers sailing the 1877 Tall Ship Elissa around the Gulf of Mexico. What did you do on your summer vacation?

So there were the biographics—now for some psychographics. Frank can work effectively with anyone . . . Baptist, Mennonite, Mormon, Pathan, Mexican, Red Neck, Catholic, Buddhist, Agnostic . . . it doesn't

[\(Continued on page 11\)](#)



Contemplation



# Brooks on Books

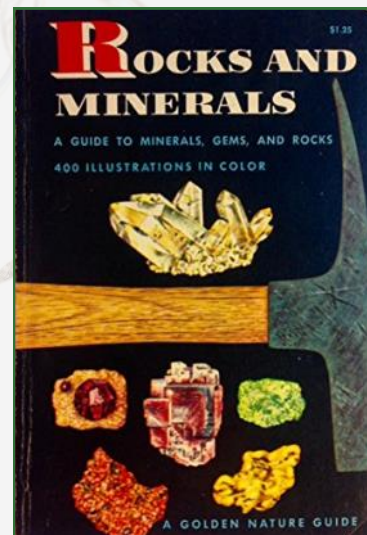
## by Bill Brooks

Long ago, I became a Zimophile. I have spoken to many others with this same affliction. The first field guide I ever owned was a Herbert S. Zim Golden Nature Guide and several of these guides still sit in an honored place on my bookcase.

These little (4" X 6"), well-illustrated and simply written guides were the gospels of my childhood. I believe the first volume in my collection was "Rocks and Minerals, A Guide to Minerals, Gems, and Rocks" with 400 illustrations in color. Its black cover with crystals and a rock hammer (also called a "geologist's pick" as I learned) was forever etched in my brain. I soon filled my first field bag, a small musty old GI surplus pack with my rock hammer, notepad and pencil, a magnifying glass (loupe), gloves, and newspaper for wrapping my specimens in the field. When I got my rocks home I diligently dotted them with white paint and numbered them. I then printed their collection data on their respective specimen cards, all in India ink, of course.

I wish I had dated when I purchased this book that cost a whole dollar back then. The guide is copyrighted 1957. No doubt I was in grade school when I got it because I was still signing my name Billy Brooks.

Guides to Reptiles and Amphibians, Sea Shells, Insects, Fishes, and Fossils followed soon afterward.



Herbert S. Zim (1909-1994)

So who was this author who molded and instructed my young mind? Wikipedia says Herbert Spenser Zim was born on July 12, 1909, in New York City but spent his youth in Southern California. At the age of 14 he moved back east and later got his B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. at Columbia University. For 35 years he taught public school. From 1950 to 1957 he taught at the University of Illinois.

Starting in 1942 he became a prolific author of children's science books. His original works often dealt with mechanical science. He started with "Mice, Men, and Elephants," followed by "Air Navigation," "Parachutes," and "Submarines." Dr. Zim also edited an 18-volume children's encyclopedia called "Our Wonderful World, An Encyclopedic Anthology for the Entire Family" by Grolier Publishing in 1957.

Although Dr. Zim wrote over 100 books and papers, he was best known for being the 1945 founder of the Golden Guides. He held the editor and chief position for Simon & Schuster's Golden Nature Guides for over 25 years. These small books were well known for the clarity and accuracy in explaining complex information and their attractive detailed illustrations. Millions were sold and Zim became so successful that in later years he hired other experts to do most of the writing.

Dr. Zim "retired" to Florida in the 1960s although he continued to work out of the study in his guesthouse. In 1971, his first wife, writer and anthropologist Sonia (Sonnie) Bleeker passed away.

Herbert Zim died on Dec. 5, 1994, on Plantation Key, Florida from Alzheimer's disease at the age of 85. He was survived by his second wife, Grace Showe Zim, two sons, Roger Zim of California and Milton Zim of Arizona, and two grandsons.

It appears that the man who affected youth in the 50s, 60s, and 70s had a rich full life. St. Martin's Press has recently reprinted his Golden Nature Guides with new covers.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## Brooks, cont.

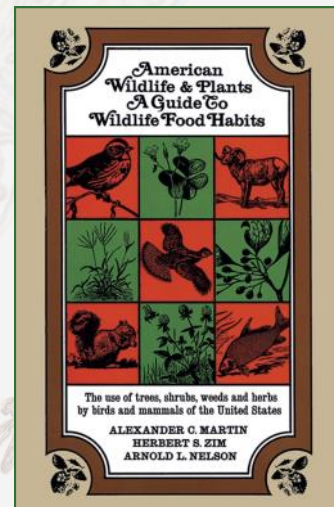
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My current collection of Golden Nature Guides consists of 17 volumes. I do have a couple of Zim books that are not part of the Golden Nature Guides series. "American Wildlife & Plants A Guide to Wildlife Food Plants" is an often-used reference guide. Herbert Zim, Alexander Martin, and Arnold Nelson put this book together for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This useful volume was published by Dover Books, a company that specializes in quality soft cover books.

I also have an abridged edition of "Codes and Secret Writing" published by the Scholastic Book Services. I was one of those kids who always bought 10 or 12 books when it was time to order Scholastic Books at my grade school. It helped to have the support of my mom who was an 8th grade English teacher. In my library I still have a dozen or so Scholastic books that I ordered in grade school.

[Click here for a good list of Zim Books.](#)

Read on and enjoy!



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The Texas Master Naturalist program is sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

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# A Message from Julia Akin, LPMN President

The sun is out, the temperature is currently 75 degrees, and I'm a happy Naturalist. It seemed cooler weather and RAIN would *never* arrive... But finally, we've gotten some relief on both fronts.

There is a lot happening within the chapter, as usual. One of the chapter initiatives I'm most excited about is our new Junior Master Naturalist program, which is set to be up and running in the Bastrop Independent School District in January. The JMN Committee has been working since early summer to develop this program from scratch, which has included everything from finding participants, securing a meeting facility, and writing a curriculum. It's come together with a lot of hard work and tenacity on the part of Kelly Alecci, Kim Iberg, Kathryn Hedges and Benjamin Kanten. Thank you all for making this a reality for our chapter!



The LPMN Board of Directors met in September at a two-day retreat for the purpose of doing strategic planning for the chapter. We came away with a list of goals to be accomplished over the next year, including: 1) increase members' and the public's awareness of chapter events and activities; 2) achieve recognition of LPMN's mission and goals by local governments and other potential partner organizations; 3) secure sufficient financial resources to support our mission and activities; 4) provide a larger variety of volunteer opportunities that will accommodate the diverse skill sets of our membership; and 5) develop a chapter culture that inspires our members to remain active in LPMN. Each of these goals will have strategies, objectives and action items defined that will facilitate their implementation and ultimate success. Michal Hubbard organized and facilitated the retreat with the help of Bruce Siebert. We are very grateful – thank you!

Audrey Ambrose is leading the committee working on our new Volunteer Management System (timekeeping), which will be “live” and mandatory by January 1, 2016. Please plan to attend one of 3 training sessions on the new system scheduled November 16, 18 and 21 (additional information is available on Meetup). The new system will allow you to enter your volunteer and advanced training hours online as you complete them. No more monthly reports to send in. It will be quite a change for some of us, but plenty of help will be available to make this a smooth transition.



Our chapter was very well represented at the recent TMN 16th Annual Meeting in Marble Falls. Fourteen of our chapter members attended the event held at Horseshoe Bay Resort. A couple of star attendees were Marsha Elrod and Kathryn Hedges. Marsha led a round table discussion on the role of chapter State Representatives, a topic she has championed. Kathryn developed and taught a course on attracting teachers to Master Naturalist training programs by applying for CPE credit through the Texas Education Agency, approval of which she initiated and secured for LPMN.

[\(Continued on page 11\)](#)



## Survival Instinct, cont.

(Continued from page 2)

and, in keeping with the International Board of Standards for Willfully Provocative Feline Behavior, they project that intractable mien of superiority and entitlement!

Bobcats enjoy a raucous and rambunctious sex life. How many of us have been awakened at night by screaming and caterwauling alley cats looking for love? Bobcats are just as noisy, if not more unnerving ([Take a listen](#)). The ordinarily silent bobcat may let out loud hisses, screams or other sounds during courtship. Bobcats remain sexually active throughout their lives. A male will travel with a female and mate with her several times a year, generally in February and March. Kitty foreplay includes bumping, chasing and ambushing. Bobcats are not practitioners of the prudish Victorian construct of monogamy. Despite this lusty lifestyle, not all players score. Research has shown that establishing a home range is important to breeding; in Texas studied animals with no set range had no identified offspring . . . a flaw that results in exclusion and evolutionary failure.



Usually two to four kittens are born in April or May; sometimes a second litter is born as late as September. Momma bobcat usually has a birthing den separate from other dens in her range. Kittens are born fully furred, open their eyes within 9-10 days, begin exploring their surroundings at four weeks and are weaned at two months. They sport cute little spots when young but grow up fast. They'll be hunting by themselves come fall of their first year and are usually fully launched into the world shortly thereafter. Kittens often fall prey to everything from foxes to owls; adult cats are more resilient: Primary threats are coyotes, mountain lions and, of course, humans who hunt them for both fur and sport.

Bobcat sightings or tracks have been registered at all three state parks in Bastrop and Caldwell counties, as well as McKinney Roughs. After a good rain, you can distinguish their tracks in the soft earth: print size about two inches wide, four toes on all four feet, no claw prints (remember, retractable claws?) and hind paws that track near perfectly on fore prints. They often patrol wildlife trails in their territory looking for rabbits and other prey. Bobcats are all about finesse. They prefer stalking and ambush to straight-on brawls—one of the reasons they avoid dogs and coyotes. Since we don't have any wolves and few mountain lions left in Texas, bobcats still have a certain "box office appeal" for pavement-bound urbanites. Once on a hike at McKinney Roughs, I caught the undivided attention of the small children by stopping on the trail and pulling a bobcat pelt and skull from my hike bag . . . they had to fight through all the adults present to get a look! It was useful to me, and interesting for them. I don't ask more from any day.

## Newsletter Deadline

Submission deadline for the next issue is December 18, 2015. We welcome relevant contributions, photos, announcements, or other material relating to the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program, particularly those pertaining to our local area. Submissions may be edited for clarity, grammar, spelling, and space requirements. Please send information to the editor at [Roxanne.M.Hernandez@gmail.com](mailto:Roxanne.M.Hernandez@gmail.com).



## Frank, cont.

*(Continued from page 7)*

matter. His favorite book is “Art of Living: The Classical Manual on Virtue, Happiness and Effectiveness.” His epiphany came in Pakistan. He relates, “It was raw, it was beautiful, it was dangerous, it was exciting, it was disturbing. The shock of going from the coastal plains of South Texas to the mountains of the Hindu Kush was a coming of age event that lives with me still.” Maintaining respect for different ways of seeing things comes naturally for Frank—in fact, it’s at the center of his being, it’s what makes him so effective at coalitions. At LPNT/CRR—from a community that didn’t seem to care about a strip of overgrown riverbank—we now have an active neighborhood watch program, an organized gate closing detail, coordinated community organizational goals for the park and a local governmental alliance of agencies that spans the



political spectrum, including committed law enforcement. Duck soup! Many others have worked to advance the cause, that’s for sure. But the truth is, before Frank there was no real buy-in. There’s almost as many community citizens regularly involved in looking after the park today as Master Naturalists!

Some question why LPMN is there at all, picking up trash; they don’t see the point. Frank’s dream is: “The LPNT/CRR becomes one park—The El Camino Real de los Bastrop Riparian Refuge—the first of many city/county/citizen-coalition ecology parks in Texas, led and backed by the Texas Master Naturalist organization. Pollyanna? Perhaps, but Frank can visualize other versions of this dream, provided the basic theme remains: protection, preservation, education, recreation. In his own words: “A family-friendly place where tiny Texans can come in future generations and appreciate the plants and wildlife that live there.” Well, that’s it; that’s the point. If you spend any personal time with Frank at all, it’s clearly about a helleva lot more than picking up trash! It’s a need with roots in his core. It is from such powerful dreams that the future is made.



## A Message from Julia, cont.

*(Continued from page 9)*

Finally, a big thank you to Christa Chagra for her excellent work on Lost Pines Master Naturalist’s new Facebook page. Christa started from a blank slate and created what is there now, which includes links to various educational sites and beautiful color photographs. We’d like to include your ideas for additional helpful links and material, so please contact Christa directly ([christachagra@utexas.edu](mailto:christachagra@utexas.edu)).

Thank you to everyone who is making a difference for Lost Pines Master Naturalist!

~Julia





# Snippets . . . the Bill Brooks edition

## CUTE OCTOPUS COULD BE OFFICIALLY NAMED ADORABLE

Characteristic of this sweet cephalopod is the webbing between its tentacles. The webbing gives the octopus a balloon-like bounce, allowing it to optimally glide through currents while using its fins to control its direction.

"As someone that's describing the species you get to pick what the specific name is," Stephanie Bush, a postdoctoral fellow at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, told Science Friday. "One of the thoughts I had was making it *Opisthoteuthis adorabilis*—because they're really cute."

But the possible *Opisthoteuthis adorabilis* is not the first to be given an unscientifically strange species name. In 2011, a horse fly was named *Scaptia beyonceae* after the singer and actress Beyonce because of its golden booty. The jellyfish *Phialella zappai* was scientifically named after rock singer Frank Zappa in the scientist's sneaky bid to meet the musician. And quite impressively, the dinosaur *Tianchisaurus nedegoapeferima* was formed from the surnames of the main stars of the 1993 film "Jurassic Park" – Sam Neill, Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum, Richard Attenborough, Bob Peck, Martin Ferrero, Ariana Richards, and Joseph Mazzello ([iflscience.com](http://iflscience.com)).



The jellyfish named after Frank Zappa

## RHINOCEROS BEETLES

Also called Hercules beetles and Ox beetles, the adults are ferocious looking but harmless. Collectors prize the adults, fishermen prize the larvae. Often found in the compost pile, where they are totally beneficial. In Japan, they are kept as pets and sold in stores. Perfect specimens are sold for as much as \$3,000. Kept in cages and fed a special diet, they will live up to two years. Ounce for ounce, these giant beetles are among the world's strongest animals. One bug scientist glued weights on a rhinoceros beetle's back and found it could carry up to one hundred times its own weight, although it did get tired. This is comparable to a fifty-year-old man walking a mile with a Cadillac on his back ([The Dirt Doctor newsletter](#)).



## TEXAS LAKES

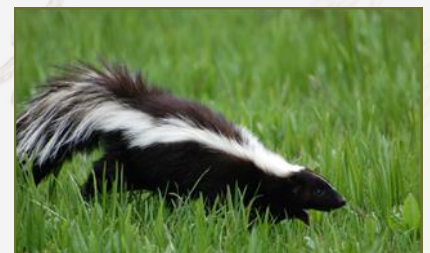
If you were born before 1950, you are older than three-fourths of the lakes in Texas, although most of the "lakes" in Texas are reservoirs. Texas has only two large natural lakes. One—Caddo Lake is shared with Louisiana. The largest natural lake entirely in the state is Green Lake, south of Victoria ([Texas Highways magazine](#)).

## PINOCCHIO

The Mexican name for the Snout Butterfly is Pinocho, which is the Spanish word for Pinocchio (American Butterflies magazine, Spring/Summer 2015, p. 3).

## SKUNKED?

We know that tomato juice as a "cure" for skunk spray is an old wife's tale. Here's a chemist's (William Wood) recipe on changing skunk thiols (the stinky stuff in their spray) into compounds with little or no odor. Bathe the animal in a mixture of 1 quart 3% hydrogen peroxide, ¼ cup baking soda, and 1 tsp. liquid detergent. Rinse with water after 15 minutes. Repeat if necessary ([Post Oak & Prairie Journal](#)).



(Continued on page 13)



# Snippets, cont.

(Continued from page 13)

## MINERALS & PLANETS

In 1789 Uranium was named after the newly discovered planet Uranus.

## MEOW

Adult cats don't meow to other cats. They only meow to people. Kittens meow to let their mother know they're cold or hungry, but once they get a bit older, cats no longer meow to other cats. But they continue to meow to people throughout their lives, probably because meowing gets people to do what they want. Cats also yowl—a sound similar to the meow but more drawn out and melodic. Unlike meowing, adult cats do yowl at one another, specifically during breeding season ([aspca.org](http://aspca.org)).



## FIRST WARM BODIED FISH FOUND

The opah (*Lampris guttatus*), or moonfish, a large colorful fish living across the world's oceans, has been found to have a warm heart and maintain a high body temperature, according to a report in the journal Science. It's a zoological curiosity and a remarkable evolutionary development for fish. In the cold darkness of the deep sea there is a clear advantage to being warm-blooded and able to move faster than all the other creatures in order to hunt them down or to avoid being eaten. A team from the NOAA SouthWest Fisheries Science Center in California, led by Nicholas Wegner, discovered the fish has a special insulated network of blood vessels between the heart and the gills. These vessels act as a heat exchanger in which warm blood from the heart reheats oxygenated blood leaving the gills before it goes to the body. In this way heat is retained and not dissipated into the ocean ([cnn.com](http://cnn.com)).



## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Enjoying the outdoors is the third largest sector in the U.S. economy, behind Financial Services and Outpatient Healthcare. Outdoor activities, including hiking and biking, wildlife watching, nature photography and adventure tours contribute almost \$40 billion in state and local tax revenue to Texas (American Butterflies magazine, Spring/Summer 2015, p. 33).

## CARNIVOROUS SUNDEW

The largest carnivorous sundew was found after pictures of it were posted on a Brazilian Facebook page. The team decided upon the species name *Drosera magnifica* because of the plant's "magnificent appearance." It's the largest sundew in the New World, and until its description was published July 24, 2015, in the scientific journal Phytotaxa, it was completely unknown to science. This magnificent plant is the first new species of plant discovered on Facebook, following on the heels of a new species of lacewing that was described after a photo of it was posted to the picture sharing site Flickr ([Discover magazine](http://Discovermagazine)).



Many of us have discovered the diminutive flowering Frog Fruit. The official common name in the USDA database is Turkey Tangle Fogfruit. That's right, "Fogfruit". This plant is found in 27 states and is in the Verbena family.

(Continued on page 14)



# Snippets, cont.

[\(Continued from page 13\)](#)

## FOUND A RACCOON OR OPPOSUM SKULL?

To tell the difference between the skulls of male and female raccoons look at the sagittal crest (the ridge on the top of the skull). Males have them, females don't. To tell the difference between the skulls of male and female opossums you need to measure the canine teeth. Male canines are from 13.7-20.5 mm and females are 9.4-12.8 mm (Nicholas Cowey and "Animal Skulls" by Mark Elbroch, pgs. 197 and 414).

## WATERMELONS



To taste a watermelon is to know "what the angels eat," Mark Twain proclaimed. Scientists agree that the watermelon's progenitor—the ur-watermelon, if you will—was cultivated in Africa before spreading north into Mediterranean countries and, later, to other parts of Europe. There is evidence that the Egyptians began growing watermelon crops around 4,000 years ago ([National Geographic](#)).

## TEXAS TIDBIT

The Washington Post reported that Texas is the state where people are most likely to be killed by an animal.

## OAKS & OLIVES

There seems to be a symbiotic relationship between olive trees and live oaks trees. Sandy Winokur, owner of Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard, noticed that a clump of olive trees around a live oak grew more vigorously than other oak trees ([Texas Monthly magazine](#)).

## ANTARCTIC PENGUINS

Only two of the 18 penguin species live solely in Antarctica—but the Galapagos Penguin does have the distinction of being the only penguin in the world that breeds in the northern hemisphere ([Audubon.org](#)).

## REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Recycling one aluminum can saves the same amount of energy you use watching TV for 3 hours. (Real Green TV program, Aug. 29, 2015).

## AMATEUR PALEONTOLOGIST DISCOVERY

A rare fossil of a long-snouted fish that lived about 220 million years ago was unearthed by an amateur paleontologist during a citizens dig at the Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona. The fossil is about the same size of a pinky fingernail. It was unearthed from the site of what was a lake or pond in the Late Triassic period, when the fish were thought to be extinct in North America. Scientists knew closely related fish were present in the world in the Early Triassic period, about 10 million years earlier, but the fossils were found only in China in the Late Triassic ([foxnews.com](#)).



[\(Continued on page 15\)](#)



# Snippets, cont.

(Continued from page 14)

## RABIES & OPPOSUMS

Less than 10 rabid opossums have been found in the last 150 years. Any mammal can get rabies. However, the chance of rabies in an opossum is *extremely rare*. This may have something to do with the opossum's low body temperature (94-97° F) making it difficult for the virus to survive in an opossum's body. Do you know that there is an Opossum Society of the United States? Get your "Give Opossums a Break" bumper sticker [here](#) (\$3.00).



## HUMMING GIRAFFES

University of Vienna researchers report that giraffes make a humming sound at night, marking the first time giraffes have been documented making noise. The researchers listened to more than 1,000 hours of recordings at three zoos' giraffe enclosures. It's not clear whether the sounds are passive, the way snoring is, or a form of communication ([redorbit.com](http://redorbit.com)).

## NATIONAL BUTTERFLY CENTER




Do like butterflies? Perhaps a trip to the National Butterfly Center in South Texas is in order. Three hundred and twenty-five types of butterflies have been seen there. That's an astounding 72% of all butterfly species seen in Texas and more than half of those known in the United States. By the way, the [Texas Butterfly Festival](#) is Oct. 31 through Nov. 3, 2015 ([Texas Highways magazine](#)).

## PIGPEN WASN'T FAR OFF

People can be identified by microbes they leave behind. Each person has his or her own unique cloud of bacteria that can be used to identify them in as little as four hours, according to a study published in PeerJ. Volunteers were placed in sanitized rooms for a period of time, then the room was tested for microbes the subjects left behind. While many of the microbes were common to humans, the ratios were unique to most of the individuals, researchers said. The study is a small one—just 11 subjects participated—but it adds to a growing body of evidence that our multitudes of microbes are singular enough to serve as forensic evidence ([The Washington Post](#)).



## BID ON A MOTH?

You can get almost anything on [Ebay](#). On this day the naming rights to a new moth is up for bid. The inch long moth was discovered eight years ago at White Sands National Monument in New Mexico by Eric H. Metzler. As of Oct. 25, the current bid is \$12,600. 

## Stay connected!

The Lost Pines Master Naturalists use Meetup.com to stay current on volunteer and advanced training activities. So, take a few minutes to sign up and set your notifications to receive alerts (under Account, then Email and Notifications).

Visit <http://www.meetup.com/>, sign up, and you'll be on your way to knowing all that the Lost Pines Chapter has to offer.