

# ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER



# NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1, No. 4

<http://grovesite.com/tmn/rpc>

April 2009

## Fort Richardson State Park Adventure

by Terry McKee

Master Naturalist members joined the North Texas Bird Club on an outing to Fort Richardson State Park located just outside Jacksboro, Texas. The morning was cool but on average it was a great day for a nature hike.

As we pulled in to the park headquarters we were greeted by ducks on the Quarry Lake: Shoveler, Red-head, American Wigeon, and Pied-billed Grebe.



Entrance to Fort Richardson State Park just south of Jacksboro, Texas. The fort played a key role in the post-Civil War Texas Indian campaigns.



Kicking Bird also known as Tene-angop'te, "The Kicking Bird," or "Eagle Striking," and as Watoh-konk, "Black Eagle," was a chief of the Kiowa Native American tribe.

A tour around the park's new "Kicking Bird Trail"-named after a Kiowa Indian chief of that area, yielded several White-tailed Deer and Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, Harris' Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, a singing Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Northern Flicker, Cardinals and Mockingbirds in abundance, and Cedar Waxwing. Other birds seen were Black and Turkey Vulture, Eurasian Collared Dove, Barn Swallow, Purple Martin, Bobwhite and Eastern Bluebird.

Lila, JJ and Karen spent (*continued on page 2*)

The group checking field guides for help with identification of birds.



## LOCALS

**APRIL 7:** Due to the Spring Training class, we will not have a monthly meeting for April. However you are always encouraged to attend the Spring Training class to offer support. **Remember, any class session you attend will count for 1 volunteer hour per class.**

**APRIL:** TMN Spring Training continues at MSU.

**APRIL 13:** River Bend Adult Education Series: "What on Earth?"  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at River Bend Nature Center

**This is an Advance Training Opportunity for our Chapter!!!**

Bring your curiosity and have fun learning about "What On Earth? How rocks and minerals built our world." Presenter P.J. "Phyllis" Green, president of the North Texas Gem and Mineral Society, promises a "hands-on" approach to exploring rocks and minerals and how they shape the ground beneath our feet. River Bend's Adult Education Series is free for River Bend members, \$3 for non-members.

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the night at the park and observed a Roadrunner and Great Horned Owl.

Don Whited and Glenn Barnett of Fort Richardson led our group on an informative nature walk, the highlight of which was a pair of eggs on the ground under an overhanging rock ledge. They are believed to be Black Vulture eggs. Some study on Black



Terry McKee talks with Glenn Barnett and Don Whited.



Above: An American Black Vulture. Right: A pair of Black Vulture eggs found at Fort Richardson State Park.

Vultures yielded a few observations that might be of interest. Vulture eggs are laid directly on bare ground, at the bottom of a stump or in a hollow log. Sometimes one but usually 2 eggs are laid. The eggs are about 3 inches. Both parents incubate for around 30 days. Young fledge between 70 and 90



days. If the eggs are destroyed the Black Vulture will lay another batch, unlike the Turkey Vultures which do not.

APRIL 18, 2009 — Palo Duro Canyon SP — Night Hike — What can you see on a trail at night? Only one way to find out and that is to hike the Juniper Riverside Trail with park staff. Bring a flashlight and plan for the unexpected. Park in the parking area on Alternate Road 5 and walk into Juniper Picnic Area to begin hike. 9-10 p.m. (806) 488-2227.

MAY 2009 — Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway — Canyon Walks and Talks — Most Saturdays. Guided hikes and discussions include natural and cultural interpretation and focus on the history, geology and the flora and fauna of the park. 9-11 a.m.; call to confirm program and for more information (806) 455-1492.

MAY 2, 23, 2009 — Palo Duro Canyon SP — Bird Walks and Talks — Interested in birds? Want to know more? Meet with an area birder at the Lone Star Interpretive Theater for information and then tour the area to discover what species are present. 8:30-10:30 a.m. (806) 488-2227.

For more information on up coming events visit TPWD web site at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/)



## Don't Forget!

Turn your hours in to Laura Gillis, the new Chapter secretary. A form for keeping up with your hours is available on the web site. Hours needed for recertification are: 40 hours of public service and 8 hours of advanced training. Advanced training MUST be approved in advance. Fill out the form and submit along with any other information about the class to the Executive Committee at least one week before the event.

## Update on the Death of Arizona Jaguar

Investigators Say Jaguar Death Was Unnecessary

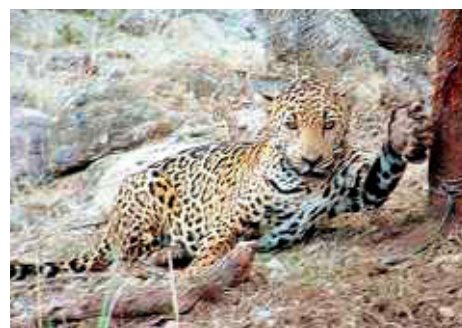
The last known American jaguar has died. Not in the wild. Not by mistake. He was euthanized on a stainless-steel table in Phoenix.

The first of the independent investigations is complete, but state and federal wildlife agencies won't release it. The Arizona Daily Star, however, talked to the investigators and reported the following:

- Tissue samples show no sign of kidney failure.
- The euthanization was rushed and unnecessary. Macho B was likely suffering from severe dehydration, probably brought on by his snaring, anesthetizing, and collaring. Macho B should have been given intravenous fluids for 24 to 48 hours.
- Macho B was injured, possibly fatally, during capture. Though the wildlife agencies publicly denied Macho B's death was caused by "capture myopathy" (i.e. stress and injury), internal memos stated: "Department personnel suspected capture myopathy/renal failure." Only after the Star's investigation was

it revealed that Macho B's paw was severely swollen.

- The necropsy was botched. Investigations into the cause of death have been hampered by a decision to do a "cosmetic" rather than a full necropsy so that Macho B's pelt could be stuffed for "educational" presentations.



The only good news to report is that the Center for Biological Diversity's lawsuit to establish a federal recovery plan and protected critical habitat for the jaguar is going well.

Establishment of a federal recovery plan would likely have prevented the death of Macho B, and it certainly would have prevented what one pathologist called a "lack of total transparency" in how the post-capture handling has been conducted.

Macho B photo courtesy Arizona Game & Fish Department.

# NOT SO FUN FACTOIDS

The Texas Blind Salamander is a fascinating creature that is only found in water-filled caves near San Marcos. About 5 inches long, they have adapted to their life underground. The salamanders have no eyes, just two black dots under the skin. They have very little skin pigment, so you can almost see right through them. They walk around the bottom on tooth pick-like legs, moving their heads from side to side to sense vibrations from snails and shrimp. They are an endangered species because of the pollution and overuse of the Edwards aquifer. *Photo by Robert and Linda Mitchell.*



At one time, ocelots ranged from South Texas through East Texas and into Louisiana. Ocelot pelts are unique—on two are alike. These beautiful cats are about 2 feet long and probably weigh twice as much as your pet cat. Ocelots eat birds and small animals. Ocelots are endangered because their native habitat has been replaced by farmland and houses. Ocelots were also over hunted for the fur trade. There are now fewer than 100 in the southern tip of Texas.

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Texas horned lizards were once plentiful in Texas, but now they are a rare sight. When threatened by a predator, the horned lizard puffs up, so it's not easy to swallow. The amazing creature can squirt blood from its eyelid, another defense mechanism. It's our state reptile! It is endangered because of over-collection as pets, threatened by fire ants, loss of habitat and pollution.

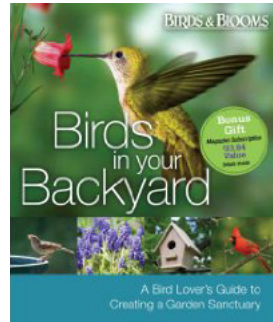


*Reprinted from the January 2009 issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine.*

# RESOURCE CORNER

Turn your backyard into a blissful bird sanctuary—create an appealing habitat to attract birds and watch them thrive.

This indispensable guide for bird enthusiasts is a comprehensive and richly illustrated volume—with



over 600 full-color photos. Together with a little careful planning and planting you can turn your yard into a

bird and butterfly oasis. It's several books in one:

- An A-to-Z landscaping guide to identify over 75 flowers and plants
- A field guide includes over 170 varieties of birds and butterflies with key information on: how to identify them by their markings, how they behave, and which feeder foods they like the best
- A bird-watching guide to understand the basics of bird-watching and what equipment might be needed to observe or photograph birds

Plus, a how-to guide filled with step-by-step instructions for easy-to-build projects. Learn how-to:

- Plant your garden with bird-friendly trees, plants, hedges, ground cover, seed-producing flowers, and fruit-bearing shrubs and vines
- Build and mount your own birdhouses, boxes, perches, and shelters
- Identify the best plants for creating nesting sites; grow bird seed; and add a birdbath or pond

## Chapter Contacts:

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