

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS

NEWSLETTER

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<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

August 2015

Identifying Local Spiders

Written by Paula Savage with thanks to RiverBend handout

Most people's first reaction to seeing a spider, any spider, is to kill it or better yet, get someone else to kill it for them. What most of us don't know is that all spiders are beneficial. It's just that some are cranky. And its the cranky ones that you want to stay away from. So here is how to ID four of our local spiders. Two are harmless and two are dangerous.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A BROWN RECLUSE aka fiddleback spider, brown fiddler, or violin spider.



Brown recluse spiders are typically light to medium brown, they range in color from cream-colored to dark brown or blackish gray.

Brown recluse spiders build asymmetrical (irregular) webs that frequently include a shelter consisting of disorderly thread. They build their webs places that are dry and undisturbed. When dwelling in human residences they seem to favor cardboard, possibly because it mimics the rotting tree bark which they inhabit naturally. They have also been encountered in shoes, inside dressers, in bed sheets of infrequently used beds, in clothes stacked or piled or left lying on the floor, inside work gloves, behind baseboards and pictures, in toilets, and near sources of warmth when ambient temperatures are lower than usual. Human-recluse contact often occurs when such isolated spaces are disturbed and the spider feels threatened.

THE LOCALS

AUGUST 4: Rolling Plains Chapter monthly meeting is at River Bend Nature Center. **Location:** 2200 3rd Street, Wichita Falls, Texas. **Time:** 7:00 PM. **Program:** Debra Halter will be giving a presentation on dragonflies.

AUGUST 1: Deer Fest **Location:** MPEC **Time:** TBA We will have a booth that will need volunteers to man.

AUGUST 7: Plant ID **Location:** Quail Study Site **Time:** 7:30 AM Meet up with David and J.F. at the four-way stop service station in Electra at 7:30 AM or at the ALON on 287/369 in Wichita Falls at 7:00 AM to carpool to the site.

SEPTEMBER 19-20: Texas Pollinator Pow-Wow 2015 **Location:** Ker-ville, TX See page 3 for information on how to register and book accommodations.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER: Bugling Elk Tours **Location:** Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge **Time:** TBA Reservations required (580) 429-2197.

OCTOBER 23-25: Texas Master Naturalist 16th Annual Meeting **Location:** Horseshoe Bay Resort in Marble Falls, TX. Registration information will be available before the end of the summer – watch your emails!

Unlike most web weavers, they leave these lairs at night to hunt. Males move around more when hunting than do females, which tend to remain nearer to their webs. The spider will hunt for firebrats, crickets, cockroaches, and other soft-bodied insects

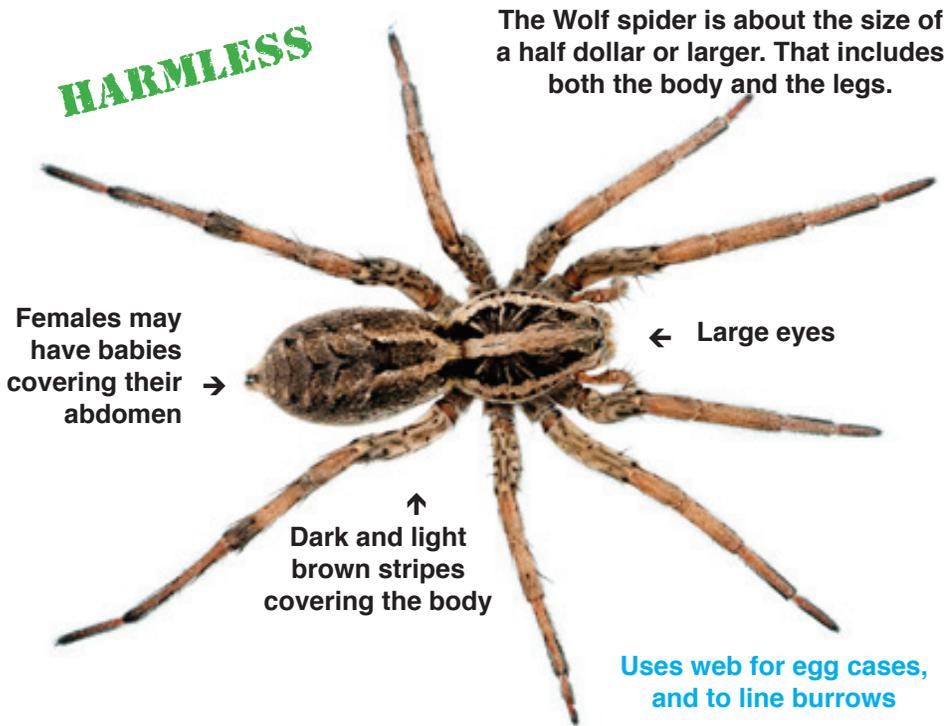
The brown recluse spider is rarely aggressive, and bites from the species are uncommon. The spider usually bites only when pressed against the skin, such as when tangled within clothes, towels, bedding, inside work gloves, etc. The fangs of the brown recluse are so tiny they are unable to penetrate most fabric.

The bite frequently is not felt initially and may not be immediately painful, but it can be serious. The brown recluse bears a potentially deadly hemotoxic venom.

While the majority of brown recluse spider bites do not result in any symptoms, cutaneous symptoms occur more frequently than systemic symptoms. In such instances, the bite forms a ulcer that destroys soft tissue and may take months to heal, leaving deep scars. These bites usually become painful and itchy within 2 to 8 hours. Pain and other local effects worsen 12 to 36 hours after the bite, and the necrosis develops over the next few days. Over time, the wound may grow to as large as 10 inches. The damaged tissue becomes gangrenous and eventually sloughs away.



HOW TO IDENTIFY A WOLF SPIDER



The name “wolf spider” encompasses a large family of spiders, most of which are large, dark-colored and athletic. Unlike most spiders that catch their prey in webs, wolf spiders violently hunt it down using their strong bodies and sharp eyesight. These spiders also exhibit unique parenting habits that are of great interest to scientists.

Wolf spiders live almost everywhere in the world. They are especially common in grasslands and meadows, but also live in mountains, deserts, rainforests and

wetlands — anywhere they can find insects to eat.

Wolf spiders are usually brown, grey, black or tan, with dark markings — most commonly stripes. Their coloring is effective camouflage, helping them catch their prey and keep safe from predators. They range from a quarter of an inch to over an inch long, with males typically smaller than females.

The Wolf spider have a distinctive eye arrangement, where the front or anterior row is composed of four

small eyes of roughly the same size arranged in almost a straight row. The back or posterior row is arranged in a V-pattern with the apex next to the anterior row.” Wolf spiders have excellent night vision, and primarily hunt in the dark. They are also quite easily detected at night due to their eyeshine.

Wolf spiders will bite when threatened but their venom is not very harmful to humans. Human victims may exhibit some redness or swelling but no serious medical problems have ever been reported.

Wolf spiders are solitary creatures that roam alone in the night, stalking prey. They are mostly nocturnal and often mistaken for tarantulas. They typically live on the ground, though some are known to climb partly up trees to catch their prey. Some species hide in vegetation or leaf litter, while others dig tunnels or use other animals’ tunnels. Some wolf spiders hunt in a set territory and return to a specific place to feed, while others wander nomadically with no territory or home.

Wolf spiders eat mostly ground-dwelling insects and other spiders. Especially large females may eat small vertebrates. Some species chase down and grab their prey, while others wait for it to walk by and ambush it. Wolf spiders often jump on their prey, hold it between their legs and roll over on their backs, trapping their prey with their limbs before biting it.

Wolf spiders use their keen eyesight, camouflage coloring, speedy movements and high sensitivity to vibrations to be aware of and keep safe from predators. They will bite when threatened. Wolf spiders are also an important food sources for lizards, birds, and some rodents.

Wolf spiders, use their eyes more than many other types of spiders, use visual cues in mating. The males signal their interest to females by waving their pedipalps (short, sensory appendages near their mouths) in special patterns or banging them together. After mating, female wolf spiders lay several dozen or more eggs and

wrap them in silk, creating an egg sac. Female wolf spiders carry their egg sacs attached to her spinnerets. If the female is separated from the egg sac, she will search furiously for it. Mothers are known to exhibit

aggressive behavior when carrying their egg sacs.

This maternal behavior doesn't stop after the eggs hatch. After hatching, the spiderlings climb on their

mother's back and she carries them around for several days.

Male wolf spiders typically live for one year or less, while females can live for several years.

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HOW TO IDENTIFY A BLACK WIDOW SPIDER

The Black widow spider is about the size of a Quarter or smaller. That includes both the body and the legs.

Constructs messy cob webs



Black Widow Spiders are extremely poisonous. Their venom is 15 times as poisonous as the venom of the prairie rattlesnake. These venomous spiders are found in warm and temperate climates all around the world. They live in dark places, in drain pipes, under logs and rocks, etc. in North America from Florida and California to southern Canada. Their bite rarely kills humans.

The female will sometimes eat the smaller male after mating. She will lay 300-400 eggs. The spiderlings (baby spiders) are not poisonous but they are cannibals, eating each other.

Black Widows eat flies, moths, crickets, small reptiles and other small animals. Their fangs inject venom and digestive juices into the prey. This kills the prey and also liquifies its flesh, letting the spider eat it easily.

Females (about 1 1/2 inches across) have a black body with a distinctive red hourglass shape on the underside of the abdomen. Males are smaller (about 3/4 inch across) with longer legs and red and yellow markings. The females are much more poisonous than the males. Black Widows have a two-part body, strong jaws, poisonous fangs, and a hard exoskeleton.

Black Widow Spiders use silk to make tangled-looking webs, usually near the ground in dark places. The tips of the spider's legs are oily; this oil keeps them from getting trapped in their own webs.

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HOW TO IDENTIFY A JUMPING SPIDER

The daring jumping spider, also known as the bold jumping spider, has a distinctive black or dark-gray hairy abdomen. Most members of this species have three white spots on their abdomen, but in some species the spots may be red or orange. The adult female is about 3/8 to 3/4 inch long, and the adult

male is about 1/4 to 1/2 inch long. Tufts of hair over the male spider's eyes give them the appearance of having "eyebrows". Daring jumping spiders have eight legs with bands of white spaced up and down the legs, eight eyes (the center two are very large and prominent) and mouthparts that are iridescent blue

Texas Pollinator Pow-Wow 2015

September 19-20
Kerrville, Texas

Written by Carrie McLaughlin

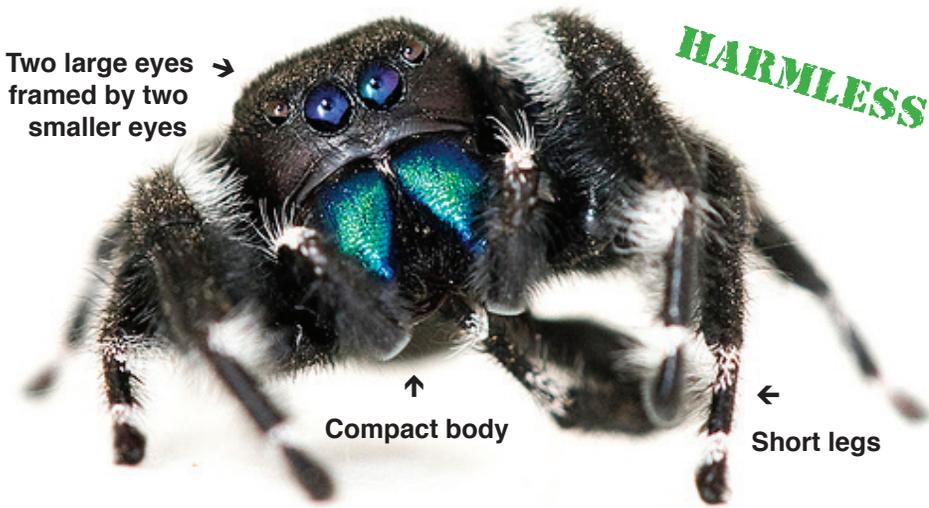
The TEXAS POLLINATOR POWWOW 2015 will be held on Saturday and Sunday, September 19-20th in the Schreiner University Ballroom, Kerrville, Texas. That will put us in the beautiful Hill Country on the clear, cool Guadalupe River just in time for the first monarchs to be wafting through on their way to their winter forests in Mexico.

We have reserved a large block of rooms at the uniquely western YO Ranch Hotel for an incredibly attractive government rate available to EVERYONE. There are also other enticing places to stay which may fit your interests and budget—such as the newly renovated Inn of the Hills on the Guadalupe riverbank just down the road from the university, charming bed and breakfasts in town or in the surrounding hills, or tent and RV camping at any number of picturesque natural areas nearby. If you need help with this, please let us know, or please contact our new best friends, Leslie or Marie, at the Kerrville Convention & Visitor's Bureau (services@kerrvilletexascvb.com; 830-792-3535)

The second day of the conference will be "Monarch-Centric" and will end with a Q&A panel of monarch conservationists taking questions from the floor. The first day of the conference will be everything OTHER than monarchs, and will also end in a Q&A panel of landowner conservationists who have been restoring or conserving pollinator habitat. Please look at the meeting agenda attached to this email for a list of our TWENTY

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The Jumping spider body and legs is about the size of a nickel or smaller.



Lives in small webbed crevices

or green in color.

The daring jumping spider eats a range of insects and other spiders, and these spiders are known prey for dragonflies, birds and lizards. Like most species of the jumping spider group, daring jumping spiders are solitary hunters who are active during the day. Jumping spi-

ders have extremely good vision, a characteristic useful for observing both prey and predators. The daring jumping spiders are very diverse and are frequently seen in urban, suburban and agricultural habitats. Their natural habitats include grasslands, prairies old fields backyards, gardens and open woodlands. This species will enter

homes and outdoor structures, but isn't as likely to be seen in a home as it is in barns, storage sheds, on tree trunks and under limbs or ground litter. These spiders do not build webs to catch prey, but they do build protective webs.

Daring jumping spiders reach maturation in the springtime, and mating begins around late spring or early summer. Reproductive females will produce as many as eight eggs sacs per year with each egg sac containing from 30-170 eggs. The spiders living in the warmer portions of their distribution range usually live longer and produce more offspring.

Daring jumping spiders may bite humans in self-defense. Their daytime hunting habits help reduce the number of human bite cases. If bitten, symptoms usually involve slight pain, itching and local reactions such as red bumps that last from 1-2 days.

Continued from page 3

gifted and knowledgeable speakers and their topics.

Our new website includes short bios of the speakers, registration information, resources, links to our past events, and a page of participating institutions who enthusiastically support our community outreach and education efforts. Please take the time to click on our supporters' logos to learn more about them, their work and their areas of concern.

We have a brand new Facebook page! Be sure to check it out, and LIKE US! You won't find us frivolous, though. We'll continue to try to provide you with the "news you can use". :-)

At least three dozen exhibitors will be with us this time, sharing and answering questions and providing resources. Please note that there is NO CHARGE to visit with the exhibitors. That may be helpful to some of you who are traveling with your friends or family. Please encourage them to stop by and check out the bees, butterflies and bats while YOU relax on comfortably padded chairs at skirted tables with like-minded conservationists as you enjoy the excellent presentations.

Near the exhibitors' area is a very large, sofa'ed, and laid-back lounge room, with pool tables, ping pong, TV, a jukebox and the Lion's Den Cafe (featuring Starbucks, Blue Bell, wraps and subs, soups, breads, burgers and more). A good place to take a break with your buddies, or succor your loved ones for a few

hours. Just outside the front doors to the conference center is a largely shaded, bricked courtyard featuring native plantings and a perpetual breeze, and a safe place for little ones to stretch their legs.

We have made every attempt to make you and yours comfortable for your lengthy stay with us on this historic occasion in this historic city. We are excited about the outstanding opportunities for you here, and the resulting pollinator conservation possibilities for our natural resources. We cannot thank you enough for caring as you do, and we do hope you will find a way to be with us in September.

Carrie McLaughlin
TEXAS POLLINATOR POWWOW 2015, Coordinator
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<http://www.texaspollinatorpowwow.org/>
682-459-1684 (c)

Summer Sale of TMN items at the AgriLife Bookstore going on now!

If you haven't heard yet, our Texas Master Naturalist Bookstore is holding a SUMMER FLASH SALE. Select Items are 15% off through the end of the summer. There are limited stock and limited sizes available. Get your gear now by visiting the TMN AgriLife Bookstore website: <http://www.agrilifebookstore.org/category-s/1841.htm>



Hagfishes are jawless fish that are also known as slime eels. They use the slim as a defense

against predators. The average hagfish can produce enough gooey mucus to fill a 14-pint bucket. They get rid of their own mucus by tying a knot in their bodies and then sliding it forward.

The world's biggest fungus—and, possibly, biggest living organism—is a specimen of honey fungus known as the “humongous fungus.” It grows beneath a forest in Oregon, covering an area of 3.5 sq miles, and may weigh up to 600 tons.



Water dripping into a cave pool deposits calcite on sand grains. As the layers of calcite build up they form pearl-like spheres called cave pearls.

RESOURCE CORNER

Spiders of Texas: A Guide to Common and Notable Species Pamphlet
 by Valerie G. Bugh
 Price: \$7.15



From Tarantulas to Meshweb Weavers, the spiders of Texas are varied and fascinating! Learn to recognize many of them with this durable laminated twelve-panel guide that folds up conveniently to fit in a pocket or pack. Perfect for the casual observer, gardener, homeowner or curious naturalist, it serves as both a general introduction and a useful reference. Colorful photographs illustrate 100 spider species, including several of both male and female, in side-by-side comparisons with descriptive text highlighting size, habitat, and web type. Representative webs are also shown, together with information about silk, venom and hunting techniques. A small section features other arachnids, such as the Vinegaroon, Scorpion, Harvestman and Tick.

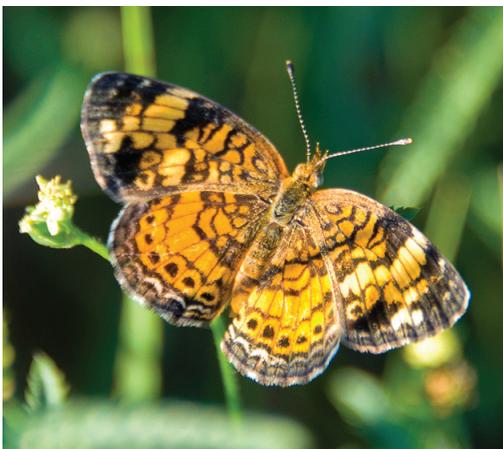
July 8th Lake Arrowhead Butterfly Count

Report by Terry McKee

The following master naturalist members took part:

James Masuoka, Mike Cavett, Jane McGough, Lynn Seman, Judy Snyder, Paula Savage, Debra Halter and Terry McKee.

Species seen were:



Queen, *Pearl Crescent* (photo), Question Mark, Spring Azure, Phaeon Crescent, Gulf Fritillary, Hackberry Emperor, Dainty Sulphur and Reakirt's Blue. Lowest # of species we've ever seen at Lake Arrowhead, mainly because our main count area is still closed because of water, and the wind kicked up. Still, it was a nice couple hours to be out in nature.

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