

# Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 8, No. 7

<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

July 2016

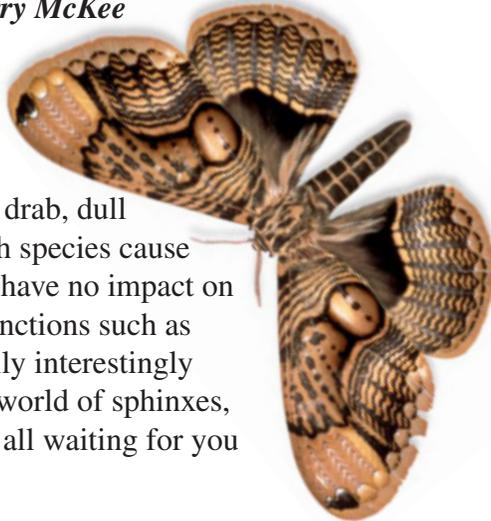
### Presidents Report

by Terry McKee

Everyone loves butterflies!

But, what about the lowly moth?

Moths have the reputation of being drab, dull pests. An extreme minority of moth species cause trouble to humans, but most moths have no impact on our lives or may serve important functions such as pollinators. Many moths are actually interestingly patterned or colorful. Moths are a world of sphinxes, hawks, owls, tigers and scary eyes, all waiting for you outside your door.



The last full week in July has been designated National Moth Week and to celebrate, the Rolling Plains Chapter is holding a Moth Count, July 30 in the parking lot at Wild Bird Rescue, 4611 Lake Shore Drive starting at 8:30 p.m. Bring your flashlights and nets and we will try to identify what we find or you can submit photos of what you see to i-naturalist.

This is a project you can do on your own with kids and is as simple as standing outside with your porch light on and recording what you see.

This time of year, the best activities are held after dark, so join the chapter- kids and guest are invited as well and we will see what scary critters are out after dark!

### Rolling Plains Members Win Birding Classic Tournament

by Sue King

The Great Texas Birding Classic tournament of 2016 celebrated its 20th year and included its first participants, and winners, from Wichita Falls. Shelley Platt, of the GTBC staff expressed, "I love seeing teams venturing further and further inland and a Wichita Falls team is a great new area!"

This is a competitive event that aides in tracking the distribution of birds on their spring migration and uses the tournament entry fees for Texas

### E LOCALS

**JULY 5:** Rolling Plains Chapter monthly meeting is at River Bend Nature Center. **Location:** 2200 3rd Street, Wichita Falls, Texas. **Time:** 7:00 PM. **Program:** Our speaker will be MSU grad student, Sarah McBride. She will be speaking on moths. Sarah has a degree in organismal biology and a masters in general biology.

**JULY 9, 16, 23:** Under Cover of Darkness **Location:** Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge **Time:** 8:00 p.m. Participants will have an opportunity to learn about night-time activities of wildlife. Tour participants should meet at the Environmental Education Center, located at Quanah Parker Lake. The tour will begin in the Environmental Education Classroom promptly at 8 p.m. Reservations taken July 4, 2016.

**JULY 30:** Moth Count **Location:** Parking lot at Wild Bird Rescue, 4611 Lake Shore Drive **Time:** 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. This is a TMN volunteer activity to celebrate National Moth Week July 24-31.

### Congratulations!

The following members of the Rolling Plains Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist have received their recertification award:  
Debra Halter, Sue King, Warren King, Jane McGough, Maryruth Prose and Judy Snyder with 250 service hours.

Parks and Wildlife Conservation grants. Organized by Texas Parks and Wildlife, the GTBC website claims it is “the biggest, longest and wildest



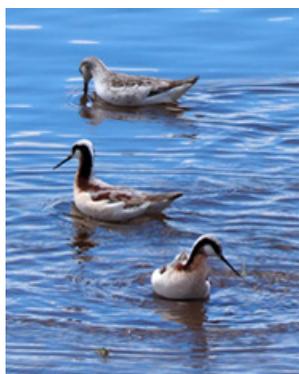
birdwatching tournament in the U.S.!”

Local birders Warren King, Sue King, Penny Miller and Chuck Thueson teamed up to enter the contest as

The Wichita Wingmen. On May 2 The Wichita Wingmen traveled around Archer, Clay, Wichita, and Wilbarger counties in search of as many species of birds as they could find in 24 hours. Travelling over 150 miles and walking more than 5 miles they netted a satisfying count of 89 species at the end of the day. Good birding hot spots included Lake Arrowhead State Park, Stonewall Jackson Park, portions of the Wichita Falls bike trail, the edges of a golf course, Lucy Park, Lake Wichita Spillway and many Farm to Market roads.

At the June 4th Awards Ceremonies in San Antonio and Houston, it was announced that The Wichita Wingmen’s 89 species made them the winners of the Prairies and Pineywoods Regional Big Day category of the GTBC tournament! This region covers more than 40 counties, including Wilbarger, east to Grayson, and south to Fayette.

While scouting prior to the Big Day, the team located many potential good birding sights. However, when returning to these sites on the Big Day, they were greeted with lawn mowers, blowers, chain saws, truck



activity, and even a helicopter. Offsetting the adverse noise pollution were cool temperatures, just a few clouds, winds that remained light all day, and a little bit of good luck. Several unexpected species were sighted and a few that some of the team members had never sighted before, also known as “lifers”. A few common birds remained elusive, holding them back from their goal of 100 species, but below are the 89 species they spotted living among us that day.

Next year’s tournament is scheduled to run from April 15 to May 15 and The Wichita Wingmen are hoping they will enjoy competition from additional local groups. For more information on how to enter the tournament, search for The Great Texas Birding Classic on the web. To practice your birding skills, plan to join Penny Miller at Lake Arrowhead State Park on the second Saturday of each month to walk and bird for about an hour.

**Species seen were:**

- |                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| American Coot             | Blue-winged Teal     |
| American Crow             | Brown Thrasher       |
| American Kestrel          | Brown-headed Cowbird |
| American Robin            | Bullock’s Oriole     |
| Baird’s Sandpiper         | Canada Goose         |
| Barn Swallow              | Carolina Chickadee   |
| Bewick’s Wren             | Carolina Wren        |
| Black-and-white Warbler   | Cattle Egret         |
| Black-crowned Night-Heron | Cedar Waxwing        |
| Black-necked Stilt        | Chimney Swift        |
| Blue Grosbeak             | Cliff Swallow        |
| Blue Jay                  | Common Grackle       |

## June 4th Mark Howell Memorial Kid Fishing Rodeo at Lake Arrowhead

*Photos by Debra Halter*



**Top:** Terry signs in a young fisherman.  
**Above:** Judy looks on as a young man shows off his catch.

## June 25th Butterfly Count at Lake Arrowhead

We had a good turnout for the butterfly count, June 25 at Lake Arrowhead State Park. Those in attendance included Pete Peterson, Joy Parsons, Larry Snyder, Judy Snyder, Debra Halter, Dian Hoehne, Penny Miller, Mary Ruth Prose, Tami Davis, James Masuoka and Terry McKee. State Park Ranger Joe Hendrix led the way along the Onion Creek Trail. The wildflowers were plentiful, the butterflies not so much. We were all surprised at the low number of butterflies seen, considering the abundance of wildflower species



covering the area. We did not get into the trees where we usually see the butterfly numbers because that area is still under water.

**Species seen were:** Dainty Sulphur, Reakirt’s Blue, Common Buckeye, Queen, Grey Hairstreak and Clouded Skipper.

Common Nighthawk  
 Dickcissel  
 Double-crested Cormorant  
 Eared Grebe  
 Eastern Bluebird  
 Eastern Kingbird  
 Eastern Phoebe  
 Eurasian Collared-Dove  
 European Starling  
 Forster's Tern  
 Great Blue Heron  
 Great Crested Flycatcher  
 Great Egret  
 Greater Scaup  
 Great-tailed Grackle  
 Green Heron  
 Harris's Sparrow  
 Hermit Thrush  
 House Finch  
 House Sparrow  
 Killdeer  
 Lark Sparrow  
 Lesser Yellowlegs  
 Loggerhead Shrike  
 Long-billed Dowitcher  
 Mallard  
 Mississippi Kite  
 Mourning Dove  
 Northern Bobwhite  
 Northern Cardinal  
 Northern Harrier  
 Northern Mockingbird  
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
 Northern Shoveler  
 Orchard Oriole  
 Pectoral Sandpiper  
 Pied-billed Grebe  
 Purple Martin  
 Red-bellied Woodpecker  
 Red-tailed Hawk  
 Red-winged Blackbird  
 Ring-billed Gull  
 Rock Pigeon  
 Ruddy Duck  
 Rufous-crowned Sparrow  
 Savannah Sparrow  
 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher  
 Semipalmated Sandpiper  
 Snowy Egret  
 Song Sparrow  
 Spotted Sandpiper  
 Tufted Titmouse  
 Turkey Vulture  
 Upland Sandpiper  
 Western Kingbird  
 Western Meadowlark  
 White-crowned Sparrow



White-winged Dove  
 Wild Turkey  
 Wilson's Phalarope  
 Yellow Warbler  
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
 Yellow-crowned Night-  
 Heron  
 Yellow-headed Black-  
 bird  
 Yellow-rumped War-  
 bler

# Invasive Spotlight

## Japanese Climbing Fern (Lissachatina fulica)



Japanese climbing fern is an invasive climbing fern that is changing the landscape of East Texas. An ornamental that is native to Asia and tropical Australia and was introduced from Japan in 1930s, it has escaped and is now rapidly spreading across the forested areas of Eastern Texas, smothering native trees and shrubs. Not only does it impact native vegetation directly, but it is also a significant fire hazard: the dead fern fronds serve as a fire ladder to carry fire to the crown of trees. It occurs in at least 25 East Texas counties.

Japanese climbing fern is a perennial viney fern, climbing and twining, to 90 feet (30 m) long, with lacy, finely divided leaves along green to orange to black wiry vines. It can form mats of shrub- and tree-covering infestations. Tan-brown fronds persist in winter, while others remain green if warm enough. Its vines arise from underground, widely creeping rhizomes that are slender, black, and wiry. As a fern, this invasive plant reproduces via spores. The spores can be carried miles by the wind, easily spreading the fern. It occurs along highway rights-of-way, especially under and around bridges, and invades open forests, forest road edges, and stream and swamp margins.

Because of its negative impacts, Japanese climbing fern is a Report It! species as part of the Sentinel Pest Network, a component of Texasinvasives.org. Please report any infestations of Japanese climbing fern you observe.



## TPW Television Series Airing Soon on PBS Stations

### Birds of Smell, Helicopter Training and Remembering D-Day July 3-9, 2016

Travel to a birding hotspot that might be considered a marginal nature haven. Get in the water with some Texas game wardens as they learn how to get out of a sinking helicopter. Remember D-Day with some veterans who served on the Battleship Texas.

### Gator Hunt, Neches Refuge and the Eco-tainer July 10-16, 2016

Travel to southeast Texas to hunt alligators at the J.D. Murphree

Wildlife Management Area. The Neches Refuge in East Texas is a haven for a lot of wildlife species. Spend some time with a singer who takes an environmental message to city schools.

### El Paso Trails, Saving Some Bison and Shifting Sands July 17-23, 2016

Meet the El Paso trail builder who is still working away at age seventy-nine. Almost twenty years ago the last of the Southern Plains Bison herd was moved from the J.A. Ranch to Caprock Canyons State Park. See the shifting sands of Monahans.

# Orphaned Wildlife?

## Helping “orphaned” Wildlife Often Means Doing Nothing

It's springtime. And that means bluebonnets, warm days, and baby animals. Spring is when most animals produce offspring. It's also time when Wildlife Rehabilitators spring into high gear. It seems everyone wants to help an orphaned baby bird, or fawn or cottontail when they find it and most people think they are doing a good thing when they "rescue" one. Unfortunately, the fact is, most of these "orphans" aren't really orphans at all. Animal parents rarely abandon their young and only occasionally meet with untimely ends themselves during this season. Animal parents are never far from their young, however, they are very good at staying invisible.

Sometimes "rescuing" wildlife is the worst thing a person can do. It may be hard to not do something to help, yet that may be the very best thing you can do. Permitted Wildlife Rehabbers are trained to care for truly sick, wounded and orphaned wildlife and bringing them "kidnapped" wildlife, makes their jobs a lot harder and risks the welfare of the animals too. Their chances are much better in the wild, where they belong. Here are some tips about what to look for if you run across what appears to be orphaned or injured wildlife.

### Assessing the Situation

The following specific situations are those you are most likely to encounter:

**Offspring calling from nest:** Parent not present: Many animals deliberately avoid areas where their offspring are present. Such "hiding" behaviors reduce the chance of calling a predator's attention to the



young. While you may not be able to sense the presence of the parent, it is likely close by and in visual or auditory contact with its offspring. Patiently observe the nest to see if the parent returns. If, after observation, you still believe the nest is abandoned, carefully, without touching the nest, place small sticks around it. If after a day the sticks have been disturbed and the offspring still appear to be healthy, the nest has probably been visited by a parent.

**Blown-down nest:** If the nest is relatively undamaged and the young birds or eggs are unharmed, replace the nest into the tree from which it fell or in a nearby tree. The parents should continue to tend the nest. A badly damaged nest may be placed into a strawberry basket or other appropriately sized basket before placement in



a tree. You may need to secure the nest to the branch with twine. Note: It is a common fallacy that birds reject their young if they have acquired a human scent. In

fact very few bird species possess a developed sense of smell. Excessive handling should be avoided nonetheless, as mammalian predators may be attracted to human scents in their search for food.

**Grounded baby birds:** Frequently, birds seen hopping



on the ground begging for food do not require your assistance. It is common for birds to fledge from the nest before they are fully feathered or flight-ready. They will be fed

on the ground for a day or two until they are able to fly, and then may fly with a parent until able to forage on their own. Usually, if the grounded bird is a healthy fledgling, you will see a parent attending it or foraging nearby. Careful observation should help you make a correct determination. If the bird is in a street, place it under a nearby bush. If there are dogs or cats present, try to keep them away from the area for a few hours. Never unnecessarily handle or move the fledgling from the area where it was found. Baby blue jays are slow to mature, so the fledgling stage will generally take longer for them.

**"Abandoned" deer fawns:** In Texas, it is very common for people to encounter seemingly orphaned or abandoned deer. Mother deer typically leave their fawns bedded down while they are away foraging. If the fawn is not crying, is not covered with fire ants, the eyes are not swollen and



there are no visible wounds, do not handle or disturb it. Your presence will only cause unnecessary stress for the fawn.

# FUN FACTOIDS

Flamingos can only eat with their heads upside down. They hold their bills upside down while feeding for several hours a day. They may seem to nibble or scoop at the surface of the water as they strain out small bits of algae, insects, brine shrimp and other food material.

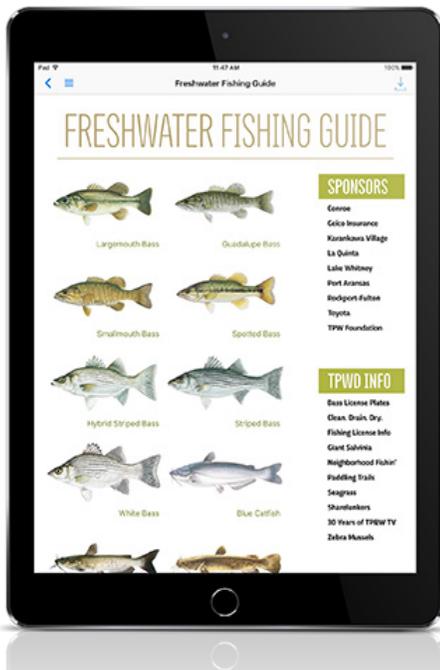


A compound isolated from the bark of the willow tree, called "salicin" is used in the production of very popular and widely used drug: aspirin. This is just one of numerous beneficial compounds that can be found in the willow.

The ostrich has the largest eye of any land animal, measuring almost 5 cm across, allowing predators such as lions to be seen at long distances. It's eye is also bigger than its brain.



## Free Mobile Guide to Texas Fishing



Get to know your favorite freshwater fish species. Experts have provided a special look into Texas' most popular fish including species descriptions (with quality color illustrations), where to fish and how to catch them in this exclusive feature in the Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine app! For a unique interactive experience, download the free app. Apple iOS or Android



# RESOURCE CORNER

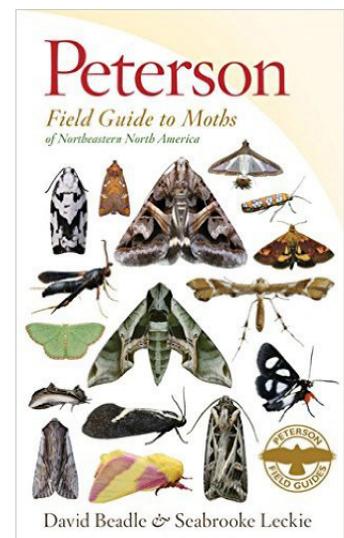
## *Peterson Field Guide to Moths of Northeastern North America*

by David Beadle  
Paperback: 624 pages  
ISBN-10: 0547238487  
Price: \$31.34 on Amazon

There are thousands of moth species in the northeast of North America, and while it might seem that they are all drab grays and browns, there is actually a startling variety. They come in a rainbow of colors, from brilliant oranges and pinks to soft greens and violets. There are moths with colorful leopard like spots, and ones that look more like B-movie aliens; some that are as large as your hand, and others the size of a grain of rice.

With helpful tips on how to attract and identify moths, range maps and season graphs showing at a glance when and where to find each species, and clear photographs that use the unique Peterson arrow system for easy identification, this guide provides everything an amateur or experienced moth-watcher needs.

Sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation and the Roger Tory Peterson Institute



### Chapter Contacts:

Terry McKee, President 766-4097, dgm59@aol.com; Kay Murphy, Vice President 704-0406, kay\_vince@sbcglobal.net; Judy Snyder, Secretary 569-4534, judithksnyder@gmail.com; Larry Snyder, Treasurer 569-4534, lasttime64@gmail.com

### Committees Chairperson:

Paula Savage, Newsletter Editor and Designer 691-0231, pasavage@sbcglobal.net; Tami Davis, Website Manager 224-013, tamieducator@gmail.com; Dian Hoehne, Communication Chair 692-7234

**Advisor:** Robert Mauk, TPWD Advisor 766-2383, Robert.Mauk@tpwd.Texas.gov