

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

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<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

July 2018

Presidents Report

by Terry McKee

Summer is here! Just a reminder, as if you haven't noticed the hot temperatures by now.

There's no better way to spend your summer than hanging out with a group of eager youngsters enthusiastic about the great outdoors. It gets your blood to pumping and the teacher hidden inside of you comes to the forefront as you discover the world through a child's eye.

The Taylor family made our pollinator class on June 23, an exciting learning experience for kids and grown ups alike. Russel and Donna's boys Preston (10), Russell (8) and Todd (5) were dynamos as they found and captured pollinators for us to examine. Only Elliott (7 months)



showed no interest in our outing, he was content to nap. Kudos to Donna and Russel for raising such gung-ho junior naturalists. Some of the critters we caught included several varieties of butterfly and moths, dragonflies, bees and wasps and a velvet ant. It was a good outing for all.

Do your part and take a kid or group on an outing and introduce them to nature.

A heads up for our August 7 meeting. It will be a plant show and tell. These have been very interesting in the past, as members have brought a plant or photo and told a little something about it. You may pick an invasive or native plant to discuss.

E LOCALS

JULY 3: Rolling Plains Chapter monthly meeting is *in Bolin Science Hall room 209 at Midwestern State University Time: 7:00 PM.*

The program will be presented by Amanda Gobeli, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, about the Texas Quail Index project that our group is involved with. Many of you know Amanda - she is the person we report to when we collect data for the quail project. Please come and hear her presentation! For the quail project folks, Amanda will be going out the quail site for a habitat evaluation review also on July 3 from 3:30pm to 5:30pm. If interested, please contact Lynn Seaman - rlynnseman@gmail.com.

JULY 7: Whiteside Museum of Natural History in Seymour, TX will be hosting a special event. At 11:00am, the museum will reveal the World's Largest Dimetrodon Statue and display in the parking lot of the museum. They will have free admission to the museum from 10:00am to 4:00pm on this day with free pizza served at 11:00am. Bring the whole family for a great event!

JULY 14: Bird Walk at Lake Arrowhead State Park - 8:00am

JULY 20 & 22: Horned Lizard Surveys

Top 5 Heat Hacks to Stay Safe at Texas State Parks This Summer

AUSTIN— With temperatures soaring into the triple-digits, it's important to make sure you have the essentials before hitting the trails at a Texas State Park.

Experts from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are sharing their top five heat hacks for staying safe on the trails during the summer months.

Here are the top five hacks recommended for park visitors:

Hydrate- It's important to drink at least 16 ounces of water every hour in the heat to replenish your body and prevent dehydration. Don't forget your four-legged family members and make sure to bring enough water for them.

Dress Smart- Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing, a hat, correct shoes, sunscreen and wet bandanas to keep you cool while in the sun.

Stay Salty- Food helps keep up energy and replace salt lost from sweating. Snacks such as jerky, granola, trail mix, tuna and dried fruit are a fantastic way to nourish your body while on the trails.

Buddy System- Two brains are better than one. It's beneficial to have someone with you in hot conditions so you can look after each other on the trail. With high temperatures hitting Texas, heat-related illnesses are common and having a friend around to help recognize the early symptoms can save you from getting sick.

Plan Ahead- Study the map and have it with you. Average hikers move at 2 miles per hour, allow yourself plenty of time to avoid hiking in the heat of the day. Make sure to rest in cool or shaded area to recover from the heat if necessary. It is also a good idea to let someone know your plan before you hit the trails and what time you should be back. That way, if you become lost, people know where to look.

Parks are a great place to explore during the summer and there are things happening weekly at the more than 90 Texas State Parks. For a full calendar of state park events, visit the Texas State Parks calendar page on the TPWD website.

Volunteer Opportunities

The new Park Interpreter, Kate Juenger, at Copper Breaks State Park is looking for volunteers (especially on July 24) from our group to help with a Copper Breaks Kids Camp Event.

Copper Breaks Kids Camp (about 20 kids)

July 24 – Camp/Survival Skills

July 25 – Water Day – Kayaking, dip netting (would like to have our help with looking for invertebrates in the water for testing water quality)

July 26 – hiking, nature journals, junior ranger program

If you are interested, you can contact Kate Juenger directly or let Lynn Seman know.

Here is her contact information:

Kate Juenger

Interpreter

Copper Breaks State Park

940-839-4331

Ranger Clepper at Lake Arrowhead State Park has events scheduled for this upcoming week. *If you would like to assist with a night hike*, she has one scheduled for Friday - July 6 - Meet at Equestrian Campsite at 9:00pm - contact Laura Clepper to assist. Also on Saturday - July 7 - Night Hike and Scavenger Hunt - meet at Horn at 9:00pm. Come join in these great experiences led by Ranger Clepper!

Chapter Members Share Photographic Discoveries



Moth in the process of laying eggs. But I haven't identified the moth.
—Kim Mason

I found this on my porch yesterday. Rhinoceros beetle I think. So huge!!! Native but rare to see.

—Kim Mason



Recently I was able to photograph a swallowtail butterfly puddling. This was along the chat trail at Lake Wichita Park, where some recent rains had left muddy spots. I like the picture because it clearly shows the butterfly's proboscis extended into the mud, as it slurps up moisture containing mineral salts.

—Marilyn Meador

The recently discovered bone-house wasp stuffs the walls of its nest with dead ants. The dead ants were always found in an outer vestibular cell, a chamber built by a female wasp to close the nest after she lays eggs. Scents on the ants' bodies, even in death, might offer camouflage or protection from predators.



Owls don't have eyeballs. They have eye tubes. The eyeballs are elongated and held in place by "sclerotic rings," a bony structure in the skull. Because of this, owls can't really move or roll their eyes. The back of an owl's eyes can be seen through its ear.

If a honeybee keeps waggle dancing in favor of an unpopular nesting site, other workers head butt her to help the colony reach a consensus.



Turtle Releases Are Back

Each year, endangered sea turtle eggs are collected to protect them from predators. Once hatched, the



baby turtles are released, and it's a sight to see. Padre Island offers public access to their hatchling releases June through August. Pro tip: go during a time when a lot of nest numbers are listed for release.

First public release is estimated to be between June 14-18. Note that not all clutches are released during the public releases, and public releases do not occur daily. Hatchlings are released when they become active. When this occurs

unexpectedly or in the middle of the night, the public cannot be invited to the release. Due to these factors, it

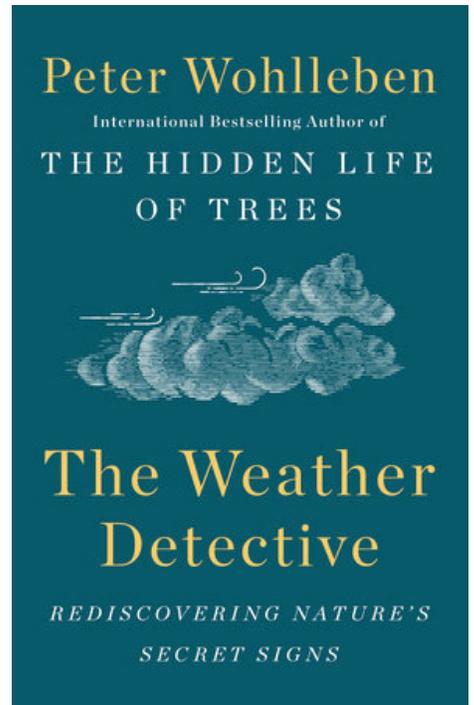
is much more likely that a public release will be held on a day when several clutches are due to hatch and be released at the same time.

If you can, plan to visit over a period of several days when multiple nests are due to hatch. *Once those dates are near, call our Hatchling Hotline (361-949-7163) or check our Sea Turtle Program Facebook Page or Park Facebook Page to find out the latest information about the next scheduled public release.*

RESOURCE CORNER

The Weather Detective

by Peter Wohlleben
 Hardback: 208 pages
 ISBN- 978-1524743741
 Price: \$15.69 on Amazon



In this first-ever English translation of *The Weather Detective*, Peter Wohlleben uses his long experience and deep love of nature to help decipher the weather and our local environments in a completely new and compelling way. Analyzing the explanations for everyday questions and mysteries surrounding weather and natural phenomena, he delves into a new and intriguing world of scientific investigation.

At what temperature do bees stay home? Why do southerly winds in winter often bring storms? How can bird song or flower scents help you tell the time? These are among the many questions Wohlleben poses in his newly translated book. Full of the very latest discoveries, combined with ancient now-forgotten lore, *The Weather Detective* helps you read nature's secret signs and discover a rich new layer of meaning in the world around you.

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