



# Rolling Plains Chapter NEWSLETTER

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<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

March 2023

*The Rolling Plains Chapter partners with River Bend Nature Center and Wild Bird Rescue, Inc. in Wichita Falls; Lake Arrowhead State Park in Clay County; Copper Breaks State Park in Hardeman Count., Whiteside Museum of Natural History in Seymour; and Comanche Springs Astronomy Campus in Crowell. Our Chapter covers Archer, Baylor, Clay, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young Counties.*

**MARCH 7: Rolling Plains Chapter Meeting** - 7:00pm at MSU's Bolin Science Hall, room 209. If you would prefer to attend via Zoom, watch for the link to the meeting in your email. Either way, I hope you will join us.

**AT The program:** Alex Nelson will have a presentation on native grasses.

**AT MARCH 7: Texas Water Resource Data: 6:00-7:30pm** A Texas Waters Specialist webinar. Attendees of this webinar will learn how to navigate various federal and state water databases.

**AT MARCH 10: Structures for Wildlife Webinar 6:00-7:00pm** Learn how landowners can modify practices on their property.



What happened to February? It flew by in a flash!

Thanks to everyone who tended a booth or helped out at the Home & Garden Festival in Wichita Falls or at Permian Fest in Seymour. You all did a great job promoting and representing the Chapter and our program.

Members from our Chapter also participated in the Red River Regional Science & Engineering Fair this month and we were proud to present awards to Anika Sharmila and Mohammed Sharar from Hirschi IB High School and to Myles Haggard in the Junior category. Many thanks to the members who took time to talk to the students and learn about their projects. Who knows, maybe these students will be future Master Naturalists!

The March calendar is filling up fast and our 2023 Training Class is set to begin on March 2nd. If the class makes, we are excited to have 5 new presenters or classes that chapter members can use for Advanced Training opportunities. There seems to be a lot of interest out there so we hope to have another big group of trainees. I know you will all make them welcome.

Volunteer opportunities are also plentiful for March. River Bend, Comanche Springs, Lake Arrowhead State Park and Copper Breaks State Park are all looking for volunteers for their special events. As always, please check the calendar on our website for all the opportunities.... I know there are many that I am missing here!

Our next meeting will be March 7th at 7:00 PM. We will be in person at Bolin Science Hall, Room 209 at Midwestern State University and also on Zoom at the same time. (Watch for a link in your email.) This month, DeAnna Bullock will talk about the new project at the Graham Library, Kevin Scanlin has some entertaining bird observations to share and, Alex Nelson will have a program on native grasses.

I hope to see you somewhere soon! —Laura



Anika Sharmila and Mohammed Sharar from Hirschi IB High School received the Rolling Plains Chapter Texas Master Naturalist Award and qualified for the Texas State Science and Engineering Fair as 2nd overall project. Congratulations!

**VT MARCH 11:**

**Monthly Bird Outing**  
8:00-10am Join Penny Miller, other members and guests at Lake Arrowhead State Park for a bird outing. Look for and identify birds found at the park. This is a leisurely hike on level ground (handicap accessible). Binoculars helpful, but not required.

**AT MARCH 14: TMN Tuesday 12:00-1:00pm**  
"Texas Waters: Become an ambassador of our waterways"

**AT MARCH 20: Pollinator Gardening & Conservation Webinar 6:00-7:00pm** Learn about the conservation of Missouri's bees and how your garden can support birds and bees.

**AT MARCH 29: Plant Party: Everything Pollinators Webinar 10:00-11:30am** These quarterly webinars are meant to promote advanced training on all things plants and to get people excited about the flora of our state.

# African Clawed Frog

*A Threat to Native Amphibians and Fish in Texas*

The African clawed frog (*Xenopus laevis*) is the largest species of frog found in this unique genus, reaching up to 5 inches in length, *Xenopus*, and are the only frogs within the genus with clawed toes. They are greenish grey with brown or black mottling, and are fully aquatic. These frogs, as well as all frogs in the family Pipidae, lack teeth and tongues. They rely on their powerful legs and claws to tear food into pieces, which they then shovel into their mouths and down their throat with the assistance of a hyobranchial pump. The African clawed frog lacks true ears. The can sense movements and vibrations in the water through lateral lines that run down the length of the body and underside. They spend almost their entire life cycle in the water. The adult life span is typically 5 to 15 years, but African clawed frogs have been recorded to live up to 25 years. Their diet consists of a wide range of animals including fish, crustaceans, insects, and other frogs. They will also scavenge on



dead frogs, fish, birds, and small mammals. In the case of a drought, they will burrow into drying mud where they can survive for up to a year without food.

African clawed frogs are a threat to native amphibians and fish since they prey upon tadpoles and fish fry (juvenile fish). The impact of these frogs is not fully understood, but so far they have become an unwelcome animal in the ecosystems where they are present. In California, these frogs have been associated with

the population decline of the western toad (*Bufo boreas*). In rare instances, African clawed frogs have been observed eating the endangered tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*) and the endangered three spine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*). These invasive frogs also carry a diverse parasite load and an amphibian fungus called *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. It is still unclear what kind of threat variables they may pose to nonindigenous ecosystems.

The African clawed frog has been reported in Texas, as well as AZ, CA, CO, FL, KY, MS, NC, VA, and WI. They can be found in natural and artificial ponds or slow-moving creeks. These frogs do not like fast-moving bodies of water.

For more information about the African clawed frog, **visit the TISI species info page.** To report an African clawed frog, please email a picture and location to [invasives@shsu.edu](mailto:invasives@shsu.edu).

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