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Find us on Facebook too!

Rolling Plains Chapter

Field Notes

News, Notes and Events

October 2025

From The President

It's finally Fall. Temperatures are more reasonable for outside activities, and several are underway.

Thank you to the members who came out to prepare for planting at City View pond and again came out to work with students to plant. We had around 175 students work that day. You may also have seen Lynn Seman on TV talking about monarch migration and tagging, which was also part of the information shared with students that day. A special thanks to Lynn Seman and Alex Nelson for taking the lead on this project. We're not done yet, but this is going to be a great outdoor learning lab for City View students.



Monarchs are coming through, so get your net and tags and use them. The migration doesn't last long.



The Pollinator BioBlitz is coming up. Lake Arrowhead SP is hosting a moth watch on 11 October and our chapter is sponsoring a BioBlitz at the park on October 18. Park entry fees apply.

The City took action on the duck pond, which has been a concern of our chapter. They cleaned out a lot of debris and installed a fountain to encourage better oxygenation of the pond. Now, if we can just get people to stop feeding bread to the ducks.

Thank you, Mike Lopez, for agreeing to take on monofilament recycling for the chapter. I'm still looking for others who want to be more involved with the chapter. It takes all of us to make the chapter successful.



MONTHLY MEETING NOTICE

Tuesday, October 7, 2025 • 7:00 PM

MSUTexas: Dillard College of Business, Room 329**

****Note New Room Number!****

Program: Katrina Mitchell, Volunteer Opportunities for TMN

A Zoom meeting link will be emailed before the meeting.

Request a link at rollingplainschaptmtmn@gmail.com

On The Trail Of The Elusive Quail

The quail team finished the 2025 Quail Decline Study this month. We started the season off with quail call counts in May. The Waggoner Ranch is beautiful at sunrise in the spring with the wildflowers in full bloom. We were excited to hear three times as many roosters calling as we did last year. We attributed this to the spring rains. We even ran across a California quail way out of its normal range. In June, we put out game cameras and dummy nests to find out about the predators living in the transect. The dummy nest survey was surprising. At MM4, which had been cleared for a power line the previous year, there were fewer good nesting sites. Yet all of the dummy nests remained intact for the survey. At MM6, which is in a less traveled area, all of the nests were predated. Predators seen on the game cameras included coyotes (the majority), hogs, raccoons, a bobcat, and 2 badgers (another surprise). The team completed habitat evaluations in August. Food abundance and availability were excellent across the entire transect. The weak link was nesting sites, particularly adequate sized bunch grass. Our recommendation was for prescribed burns across the transect except at MM4 which is still recovering from power line construction. We finished the survey with roadside covey counts in September. The team was disappointed we only saw 2 quail over three counts, considering the number of quail we heard throughout the spring and summer. Thanks to all of the members that participated in these surveys. We can't wait to be out on the ranch at sunrise for those spring call counts next year.



Quail study on the Waggoner Ranch. Photos courtesy of Lynn Seman and Sandy Underwood



The Wasp Apologia

By Cedar Sanderson

Not all wasps sting.

With that out of the way, I'd like to make a case for the fascinating world of wasps, which we happen to share with them. Everyone knows and loves bees, but wasps came before them, and where there are merely 20,000 species of bees, there are more than 100,000 species of wasps. Most people respect and admire the industry of the ant, but wasps were here first: ants are wasps which have lost their wings. Some wasps have lost their wings and live as ants, which is just one of the many weird and wonderful pieces of wasp lore.

Some wasps, those in the infraorder Aculeata, can sting. However, even of these, not all will sting readily. And they are the tiny minority of wasps, many of which do not have a stinger at all, or possess a highly-modified stinger no longer capable of stinging, but used instead for boring into things to lay their eggs. The vast majority of wasps are so small you may never notice them in your day-to-day life. They can have an outsize impact, though, because wasps are a vital part of our world.

Wasps play a big role in pest control. While bees handle pollination, and some wasps do join them on that, mostly what wasps do is to take care of other small insects. Some of their insect prey is not so small! Wasps like our gentle friends the Apache Paper Wasp (*Polistes apachus*) here in the Rolling Plains prey on mosquitoes, just to name one of their useful habits. Allowing them to build their nests around the home, in discreet locations, can help reduce the painful and potentially disease-laden bites of the mosquito. Aside from eating their prey, many species of wasps are parasitoids: they lay their eggs on, in, or near their prey, and the hatching



Figure 1 A wasp on pollination duty

larva are sustained until they pupate into adult wasps themselves. You may have observed a hulking Tomato Hornworm in your garden with tiny white capsules attached to it? Those are the eggs of a parasitoid wasp, and they will in time leave the caterpillar a hollow dying shell, unable to continue munching up your plant. Wasps are being studied and implemented in the control of agricultural crops around the world with great success. There is, it is said, a parasitic wasp for almost every species of insect in the world. Now you know why there are so many wasps!

Another really cool thing about wasps is how many sizes, shapes, and configurations there are of them. I highly recommend Serian Summer's book, *Endless Forms*, to explore more about wasps and their lore. I realize that no-one is ever going to love the yellowjacket, but perhaps you might consider this: without wasps, there are no more sweet, juicy, ripe figs. And therefore, no Fig Newtons. More seriously, we can't do without wasps. We have to live in their world, after all, and they outnumber us. So let us look for ways to love them and appreciate all they do for us.

Thank you!

To everyone who supported the
Rolling Plains Chapter Texas Master Naturalists
during the 2025
Texoma Gives Campaign



In The Field



Quail study field work



City View Pollinator Project

Monarch Tagging Data Sheets are due at the November 4th meeting. If you have already used your tags, feel free to turn in your data sheets at the October meeting.

October Events

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Events and opportunities are subject to change at any time.

Due to issues with the website calendar, watch your email for the latest changes and updates.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------|---|
| 10/7 | 10:00 am | Lessons in Life from a Texas Horned Lizard
Presented by Lynn Seman. Life Long Learning Center, # 2 Eureka Circle, inside the Wichita Falls Museum of Art. \$25 for non-members. |
| 10/7 | 7:00 pm | Chapter Meeting *NOTE NEW ROOM NUMBER!
<i>Program: Katrina Mitchell - Volunteer Opportunities for TMN</i>
MSU, Dillard College of Business Building, Room 329 .
Contact rollingplainschaptertmn@gmail.com for the Zoom link. |
| 10/10 – 10/26 | | Texas Pollinator BioBlitz |
| 10/10 | 9:00 am | Texas Stream Team Water Testing
Meet at the boat ramp on Lake Wichita, across from the State Hospital on Kemp Blvd. |
| 10/11 | 8:00 am | Bird Outing with Penny Miller at Lake Arrowhead State Park.
Park fees will apply. |
| 10/11 | 10:00 am | Monthly Hike: Clay County
After the Bird Outing, join us at Lake Arrowhead State Park, Clay County, for October's monthly hike. Meet at the Horn and hike the North Onion Creek Trail on the north part of the Park.
Park fees required. |
| 10/11 | 8:00 pm | Moth Watch: Join Ranger L and Rolling Plains Chapter members for a moth watch by the Administration Building by the fishing piers.
Come for part or the whole event. Park fees required. |
| 10/16 | 6:00 pm | Approved Webinar: "Next Steps for Nature" with Doug Tallamy
See the Events page on our website for a link. |
| 10/17 | 7:00 pm | TMN Tuesday Webinar: October's TMN Tuesday will be the keynote presentation from the annual meeting. PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN DATE AND TIME! See the Events page on our website for a link. |
| 10/18 | 10:00 am | BioBlitz at Lake Arrowhead State Park
Meet Ranger L at the Administration Building by the fishing piers.
Come for part or the whole event. |
| 10/23 | 6:00 pm | Approved Webinar: "Gardening for Monarch Butterflies"
See the Events page on our website for a link. |
| 10/24 | 9:00 am | Texas Stream Team Water Testing at Lake Gordon, Iowa Park
*PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE (This event only) |
| 10/27 | 5:30 pm | Board of Directors Meeting
Wilson Office Supply, 8th and Lamar.
All members are welcome to attend. Not a public event. |
| 11/1 | 10:00 am | November Monthly Hike - Young County
Led by DeAnna Bullock, meet at Fireman's Park in Graham.
More information to come. |

On The Bookshelf

Texas Bucket List Adventure Guide: Explore 100 Offbeat Destinations You Must Visit!

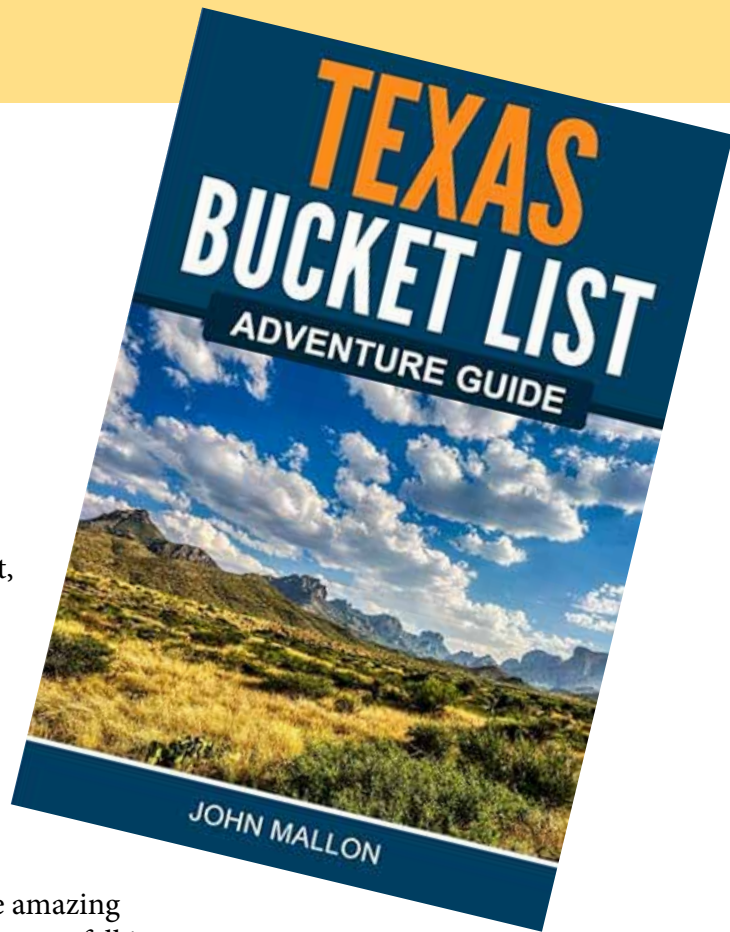
by John Mallon

With Texas Bucket List Adventure Guide, you will be able to enjoy and discover every landscape and magical place in the different regions in Texas without getting lost! Featuring more than 100 must-see destinations in the state alongside the Southern border, you will be well-equipped to start your adventure!

This unique travel guide and journal will help you:

- Get informed about the areas or places you want to visit, how to get there, what to look for, and what you may need to bring along;
- Easily find your way thanks to comprehensive driving instructions and GPS coordinates included for each adventure in this guide;
- Discover the best time to visit certain destinations, weather conditions, average expenses;
- And much more!

Every chapter comes with lesser-known facts about all the amazing 100+ Texas destinations featured in this blueprint that'll make you fall in love with this wonderful state even more.



Both books are available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Editor's Note: While this title might not fall under the "nature book" category, it is authored and illustrated by our own Cedar Sanderson.

This book is available on Amazon but I bet you could save the shipping and get a copy directly from Cedar.... Don't forget to have her sign your copy! And, who knows, she might just inspire you too.

Days of No Ink: A Sketchbook

September 30, 2025

by Cedar Sanderson (Author, Illustrator)

Every year I make art every day during the month of October. This book contains five years of selected art from those months, along with the prompts which guided my hands. Watch me grow, and hear me tell you that you can do this, with any kind of art you choose.

Black and white. No pen. No ink. Five years of artworks to amuse, spark a story, and hopefully inspire you, too, to take the prompt challenge with me. Come along and see what you can do!

