

the paddlefish ***the paddlefish***

Vol. 7 No. 12

Cypress Basin Texas Master Naturalist Chapter Newsletter

December 2015

Mission of the Texas Master Naturalist

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.

2015 OFFICERS

Stella Barrow - President

Betty Morgan - Vice President

Kristi Thomas - Secretary

Karen Williams – Treasurer

Linda Richtsmeier – Membership Chairman

Pat Sawyer - Webmaster

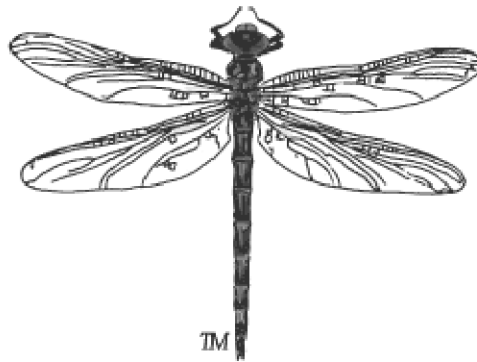
Vanessa Adams Neace - Advisor

Doug Weir -Advisor

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

SEE YOU AT THE NEXT MEETING JANUARY 11, 2016

Snippets from Stella



December 2015

Merry Christmas!!! Happy New Year!!!

Even though we aren't meeting in December there is so much going on! I know you are all busy with whatever it is that you do this time of year. ☺

The officer election is "out there". You should have received an email from Michael Mathews with instructions. Please go vote. Easttexasnaturalists.com/forum

Charles Gillis met the new Refuge manager, Erik Duerkop and reports that Erik is a bit overwhelmed trying to get used to East Texas, but seemed open to the idea of a new walking trail sponsored by our chapter.

Ted and I, Karen Williams, Sandra Hooker, Becky Gullette, Floyd and Ellen Anderson attended the Star Party at the Acton Nature Center on 12/4. IT WAS COLD! But, the stars were out. We have lots to share with you for consideration of a potential Moon Party in February.

The sign-up for a new class to begin in January is slow. Please help recruit. We are an exciting chapter with many exciting projects. I can get brochures to you for distribution at local businesses, parks, organizations. The Jimplecute and the Marshall News Messenger are running articles, but there's nothing like face to face recruiting.

Speaking of projects. I will be compiling a list of the things on our plate and sharing with you. At the January meeting (after awards and officer installation) we should spend some time in prioritizing our list.

So, here's to 2016! Cheers everyone! Be safe!

SB

ELECTION OF 2016 OFFICERS

Voting is currently being conducted online at easttexasNaturalist.com/forum for the election of 2016 officers for the Cypress Basin Master Naturalist Chapter. As of the time of this newsletter only 18 members have voted.

Everyone should take the opportunity to participate in this election. If you didn't save the email from Michael Mathews with the link and instructions for voting please contact Stella.

Officers will begin duties for 2016 on January 1 and they will be recognized at the January 11th meeting.

PLEASE RECORD YOUR VOLUNTEER AND AT HOURS IN THE VMS IMMEDIATELY UPON COMPLETION OF EACH EVENT.

ALL INFORMATION FOR 2015 NEEDS TO BE ENTERED BY THE END OF THE DAY ON DECEMBER 31 SO ALL DATA WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE END-OF-THE-YEAR REPORT DUE TO THE STATE. THANKS.

BIRD BANDING SCHEDULED

The next bird banding at Tom Walker's will be on Saturday, December 19 with set up beginning about 8:30 a.m. weather permitting.

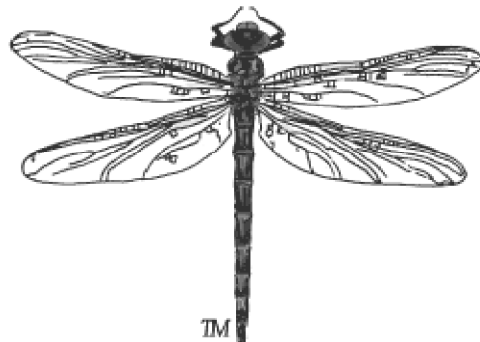
Check the Website for updates:
http://caddobirds.com/bird_banding.htm.

SATURDAY WORK DAY

DECEMBER 19

9:00 a.m.

CADDO LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



MEMBERS ASKED TO RECRUIT TRAINEES FOR 2016 TMN CLASS

Each Cypress Basin Master Naturalist Chapter member is asked to recruit one person to participate in the 2016 Training Class. Information sheets and registration forms are available from Betty by emailing her at bgmorgan46@yahoo.com. Please share the information with someone who would be a good volunteer.

***Living on the Edge...Wild Times Abound in Autumn!**

by Jill Wright

Living on the edge of the woods here in east Texas, I have a hard time deciding which season of the year is my favorite. We do experience four seasons, although winter is mild and fairly brief. Much has transpired in our backyard these past couple months, partly because of the onset of autumn, but also due to a severe drought in September and October. We keep birdbaths of several different sizes filled and cleaned daily, and have marvelled at the vast array of wildlife that frequent our backyard watering holes. Thankfully, the rains returned in late October, burn bans have been lifted, and still the glorious rains come!

The does and fawn have visited daily for months. We have watched the fawn grow, lose her spots, and gain independence. Almost on cue, by October 30, the deer disappeared, hiding out and moving cautiously beyond the woods edge. We are in the thick of deer hunting season, and don't they know it! I do see them sometimes now in early morning. They enjoy the apples and carrots that we leave for them on the ground a short distance into the woods, where they are still visible to the naked eye. Sadly, we are not invited to their night time feeding parties here on our property. Several mornings, I have observed their party leftovers, though - a gorging of potato vine near our mailbox, with just a few severely pruned vine branches left, and rose bush branches nibbled half way to the stem. I can almost hear them chuckling and snickering as they gallop triumphantly back into their hiding places as dawn approaches. We chuckle to ourselves upon the discovery and admit that survivorship should have its rewards.

So, the sun continues its southerly course in the autumn sky, and our shorter days and chillier mornings and evenings change the behaviors of our backyard visitors. Easiest to observe, are the habit changes of the many birds. The juveniles are grown now. We said goodbye to our hummingbird population in October, as they headed south for their winter vacation in the more tropical latitudes. We saw a nice sized number of cardinal and mockingbird fledglings this past summer, and they continue to thrive. Thanks to their numbers, and their seeming satisfaction with our backyard habitat, we have seen some remarkable behaviors. The ever-blooming red azalea bushes just outside our kitchen windows are ablaze in scarlet color ever since the life giving rains began in October. What I originally thought was preening and bathing going on within the azalea leaves, turned out to be something I was not prepared to observe. The cardinals, both male and female, were eating the red azalea blooms. At first, I thought maybe they were just drinking from the flower centers, or perhaps enjoying the nectar, but as I watched from the window, I saw them eating entire blossoms - every last bit!

Sometimes, they would eat the blossoms that had fallen to the ground; sometimes they would eat them right off the bush! As I learned from an ornithologist at Texas A&M University, as well as from published articles on bird behavior, this is a well known behavior of northern cardinals. I wondered if the red azalea blossoms were chosen because they help to give that beautiful red pigment to their feathers. It turns out that northern cardinals do seem to favor red blossoms for that very reason. These flowers offer nutritious food sources for the birds as well.

***Reprinted from East Texas Naturalist Blog by permission of the author**

Closing the Doors on 2015

- Cypress Basin Chapter has been blessed with talented trainees who have become valuable volunteers
- We are proud of our TMM family
- We extend our prayer that God's peace may grace your heart, His joy lift your spirit, His hope brighten your vision, and His love light your path in 2016.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 19: Saturday Work Day at Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge 9 a.m.

December 19: Bird Banding at Tom Walker's (weather permitting) 8:30 a.m.

January 11: Cypress Basin Chapter Monthly Meeting 6:30 p.m.



Cypress Basin members are encouraged to submit articles for the monthly newsletters. Original articles of interest to members are greatly appreciated. Items for Events and Notices are welcomed. Submissions are due on the first Saturday of each month.

Contact Betty by email @ bgmorgan46@yahoo.com or mail to: 100 Lakeview Circle, Jefferson, TX 75657.