Texas Master Naturalist
El Camino Real Chapter
The Nature of Milam County
Mammal Group

September 13, 2016 / Milam County Historical Museum, Cameron

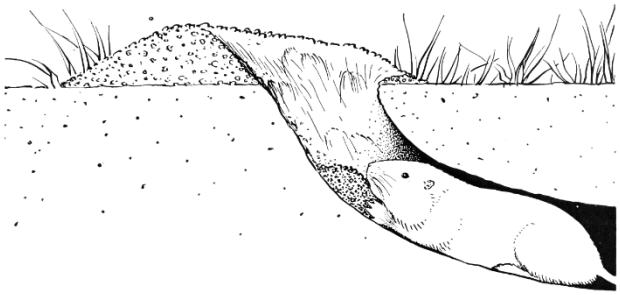
Members Present: Joyce Conner, Ann Collins, Darlene Anglen, Donna Lewis

1. Discussion on second set of tracking cards. Joyce brought sample sets that included the Nine-Banded Armadillo, Stripped Skunk, Feral Hog, Northern River Otter and the Eastern Fox Squirrel. This will make a total of ten on the ring. She asked that members review them for accuracy and Ann Collins immediately found an error. Joyce will remake the erroneous card for the samples and asks that additional feedback be given before more cards are made for the public sets.

2. Report pages are being put together for each member to have the information on the mammals we have researched. Joyce offered to type up pages for any members without computer use. She is waiting for Ann's comments and additions before completing her page on skunks. Donna and Darlene said that they will give her their notes if they would like to have their pages typed up for the group.

3. The group discussed going on a hiatus for an indefinite period of time in order to start/continue documenting trees of Milam County. This meeting would then be the final Mammals Committee Meeting this year.

4. Because Donna was the only member prepared to discuss a researched mammal, the committee discussed and related nature stories about pocket gophers and related rodents. Pocket gophers are "geomys" or earth mice. To discourage gophers in yards, use metal pinwheels in nested metal pipes (can be bought at Harbor Freight in south College Station. Gophers' hair can flatten forward or backward, depending on their chosen direction of movement. Their back teeth are continuously growing so as to chisel through roots. Males are solitary and territorial. Their tunnels are full of different rooms for various uses, even "bathrooms". Females have 2 litters per year, 1-4 young. They are ~6" long, with 2.5" tail. They have a truncated neck. The "disappearing plant" syndrome is when the gopher pulls a plant down into their shallow tunnels to consume its upper parts.



Wikimedia Commons Drawing 1

5. Future reports when the committee reconvenes may be:

Ann – river otter	Joyce – shrews and moles	Pamela – nutria
Cindy – coyote, mink	Darlene – flying squirrel	
Katherine – hispid cotton rat		Barbara – grey fox