

# Texas Master Naturalist, Elm Fork Chapter

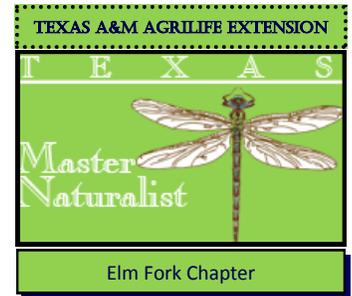
March 2013

Volume 14 Issue 3



## Newsletter

*Our vision. . .in our community, Elm fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program will be recognized as a primary source of information, education and service to support natural resources and natural areas today and in the future.*



### Special points of interest:

- \* Field trip—Thomsen Nature Preserve
- \* Look for signup sheets
- \* Name the newsletter
- \* Rename Roundup
- \* All you need to know about bluebirds
- \* Focus on the fields
- \* Conference schedule

### Inside this issue:

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*"A small key opens  
big doors."*

*Turkish Proverb*

*"blue door" —  
Alex Lieban's  
door series*

**Each Master Naturalist is that key. Those who open the door are in a unique position to strengthen and motivate communities to become, and continue to be, aligned with the Master Naturalist vision and mission.**



Photo—D. Thetford



**P**atience is a virtue, and one I struggle with this time every year. I've become keenly aware of the increase in bird calls and activity lately. My resident Bluebirds have laid six beautiful blue eggs in their new nest. The Phoebe's are shoring up last year's nest near my front door. The wrens, chickadees and titmice haven't made up their minds which boxes to use this year, and unfortunately the red wasps are trying to stake the same potential territory. I've seen at least half a dozen species of butterflies already this year, most notably the Mourning Cloak, but there's no food for them in my yard yet.

**B**ut while I wait impatiently for spring to burst forth, I am grateful for all that many others simply do not even notice. How lucky are we to live in an area that is filled with so much diversity? I looked out the window the other day just in time to see a Bald Eagle flying out of the neighborhood. Moments later I went outside in time to see and hear Cedar Waxwings looking for berries in a nearby Juniper. And on the drive into town I spotted a Roadrunner, perhaps looking for food or something to build a nest.

**A**nd I am grateful also to belong to this group of master naturalists because I know you all share similar beliefs about the importance of these things we love and admire. As you get busy this spring please take time to share your experiences with friends, neighbors, and maybe even a stranger standing in line somewhere. You just never know when you may sow a seed or ignite a spark, so go observe, explore, and share – happy spring!





## NOTICES AND REMINDERS

### Texas Nature Trackers: Upcoming Workshops

**April 5-6, 2013**

**Texas Amphibian and Mussel Watch Train the Trainer Workshops**  
**John Bunker Sands Wetland Center**  
**655 Martin Lane**  
**Seagoville, TX**

**Registration Required. Fee \$10 for materials per workshop.** Learn how to identify amphibian and freshwater mussel species and participate in scientific research as members of an important Texas Nature Tracker Partnership. Sponsored by the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center. Texas Amphibian Watch will be held on April 5, 5:00-10:00 p.m. and Texas Mussel Watch will be held on April 6, 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Texas Master Naturalist Approved Advanced Training. CPE and TEEAC credit available for educators. Contact Teresa Moss at [tmoss@wetlandcenter.com](mailto:tmoss@wetlandcenter.com) for information and registration.

**April 26-27, 2013**

**Texas Amphibian and Mussel Watch Train the Trainer Workshops**  
**Rockdale General Store**  
**1201 W Hwy 79**  
**Rockdale, TX**

**Free: Registration Required. Fee \$10 for materials per workshop.** Learn how to identify amphibian and freshwater mussel species and participate in scientific research as members of an important Texas Nature Tracker Partnership. Sponsored by the El Camino Real Master Naturalist Chapter. Texas Amphibian Watch will be held on April 26, 4:00-10:00 p.m. and Texas Mussel Watch will be held on April 27, 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Texas Master Naturalist Approved Advanced Training. CPE and TEEAC credit available for educators. Contact Katherine Bedrich at 254-697-2836 or [kamber51@att.net](mailto:kamber51@att.net) for information and registration.



1) I am adding a new email address but will continue to monitor both as I wouldn't want to miss "not even one" newsletter item!

2) If you see something in the newsletter that you believe needs correction, please call it to the attention of the person whose name appears there to extend the courtesy to that person the chance to either concur or refute. If it isn't possible to contact that person, then feel free to send your observation to me.

[wodum10043@reagan.com](mailto:wodum10043@reagan.com) or  
[wodum10043@aol.com](mailto:wodum10043@aol.com)

Wanda Odum





### Bylaws and Chapter Operating Handbook Review

In accordance with our chapter operating handbook, the board of directors will conduct a review of both the operating handbook and the chapter Bylaws this year. I would like to encourage each of you to review them as well. Please submit your comments or suggestions to me or any member of the Board of Directors **no later than April 1st** for consideration in this year's review. Thank you! Susan

Still time to register

## Prairies, Lakes & Timbers



**Save the date:** Prairies, Lakes, and Timbers Regional Conference of Texas Master Naturalists

**M**aster Naturalists throughout North Texas are invited to the Prairies, Lakes and Timbers Conference April 12 through 14, 2013 for advanced training. Members of the Blackland Prairie, Elm Fork, Cross Timbers, North Texas, Indian Trail, Bois d'arc, and Bluestem Chapters are planning a weekend of fellowship and educational opportunities at the Collin County YMCA Adventure Camp in Anna, about an hour's drive north of Dallas. Many hikes and workshops will focus on topics local to the North Texas area, and will take advantage of the many trails and outdoor facilities at this beautiful camp. Spring wildflowers, milkweeds and wild onions, Hexalectris orchids, birding, recent trends in mammal and herp populations, prescribed burns, bison as a land management tool, mussels, snakes, and alligators...these are just a sampling of the advanced training opportunities planned, as well as astronomy, night hikes, and campfire in the evening. There will also be special sessions on chapter management and leadership, and a keynote address by John Davis, Wildlife Diversity Director at Texas Parks & Wildlife.

**A**pril weekends are a busy time for Master Naturalists, so save the date and don't miss this opportunity to commune with members of neighboring chapters. The cost is \$125 per person and includes meals and housing from Friday evening through Sunday noon. Online registration is available. Watch our Facebook page for updates: <http://www.facebook.com/PrairiesLakesTimbersConference>

Michelle M. Haggerty  
Texas Master Naturalist Program Coordinator  
309 Sidney Baker South  
Kerrville, TX 78028  
Ph: 830-896-2504



Conference Schedule

Day	Session	Time	Location	Class Name	Instructor	Notes	
Friday	Special	2:00 - 5:15	A- Painted Bunting Room	Planning & Goal Setting	For Chapter Presidents & Board Members		
	1	2:00 - 3:30	C-Roadrunner Room	Prescribed Burns	R. Dankhaus		
			D-Coyote Room	Trends, NC TX Bird populations	J. Giocomo		
			E-Armadillo Room	Zebra Mussels	B. Hysmith		
	2	3:45 - 5:15	C-Roadrunner Room	Alligator Study	J. Lewis		
			D-Coyote Room	Trends, NC TX Insect Populations	M. Warriner		
		Outside	Tree Identification	C. Ebling	Meet at the front entrance.		
<b>Dinner - 5:30 - 7:00</b>							
3	7:30 - 9:00	Ampitheater	Story Telling				
		Astronomy field	Star Watch				
Saturday	<b>Breakfast - 7:30 - 8:30</b>						
	1	9:00 - 10:00	B-Scissortail Room	Keynote Address	John Davis		
	2	10:15 - 11:30	A- Painted Bunting Room	TBD	TBD		
			C-Roadrunner Room	Connemara Conservancy	R.J. Taylor		
			D-Coyote Room	Water Ecology	T. LaPoint		
			E-Armadillo Room	Snake Hormones	K. Pettingill		
			Outside	Forest Walk	J. Flood	Meet at the front entrance.	
	<b>Lunch - 12:00 - 1:00</b>						
	3	1:15 - 2:45	A- Painted Bunting Room	Predicting Mussel Populations	N. Ford		
			C-Roadrunner Room	Trends, NC TX Mammal Populations	B. Johnson		
			D-Coyote Room	Soil Ecology	R. Johnson		
			E-Armadillo Room	TX Conservation Action Plan	W. Connally		
			Outside	Water Lab	YMCA Staff	Meet at the front entrance.	
	4	3:00 - 4:30	A- Painted Bunting Room	Geology: Reading the Land	D. Brownlee		
			C-Roadrunner Room	Trends, NC TX Herp Populations	C. Franklin		
			D-Coyote Room	Distribution & Variation in Hexalectris	M. Marsden & S. Scofield	Texas Orchids!	
			E-Armadillo Room	Bison as a Land Mgmt Tool	R. Dankhaus		
			Outside	Forest Adventure	YMCA Staff	Meet at the front entrance.	
<b>Dinner - 5:30 - 7:00</b>							
4	7:30 - 9:00	Ampitheater	Story Telling				
		Astronomy field	Star Watch				
Sunday	<b>Breakfast - 7:30 - 8:30</b>						
	Special	8:45-11:45	C-Roadrunner Room	Trail Building Seminar	B. Bristow		
			D-Coyote Room	Alphabet Soup	D. Weatherbee	Easy Ways to Teach Nature to Kids	
	1	9:00-10:15	A- Painted Bunting Room	Onions of the DFW Area	C. Clark		
			E-Armadillo Room	Birder Panel discussion			
			Outside	Wildflower Walk	J. Varnum	Meet at the front entrance.	
2	10:30-11:45	A- Painted Bunting Room	Milkweeds of N. Central Texas	C. Clark			
<b>Sack Lunch &amp; Goodby - 12:00 - 1:00</b>							



In case you missed it—date changes for December meetings: Board Meeting—December 5; Regular Meeting—December 12



**While** you're marking your calendars, don't forget to:



**Pay** your dues and sign "Hold Harmless" form—\$30;

**Post** your hours regularly;

**Send** contact information changes to: 1) **Monica Chaffin** [chaffincasa@gmail.com](mailto:chaffincasa@gmail.com); 2) **Susan Pohlen** [pohlensusan@gmail.com](mailto:pohlensusan@gmail.com); 3) **Rob Roy** [robt\\_t\\_roy@msn.com](mailto:robt_t_roy@msn.com); and 4) **Donna Wolfe** [donna.wolfe@dentoncounty.com](mailto:donna.wolfe@dentoncounty.com)



Editor's confusion about **which way to position the photos** merits a correction and apology to **Karen Schoeve** whose photos in February newsletter should have been **vertical**, not horizontal!

From Karen:

"I have never held myself out as a bird expert but have recently taken a keener interest in learning about birds. I was surprised to see how many species are around my house. I would welcome comment as to the type of woodpecker happily pecking outside my window!"



Respond to Karen at her chapter email address or to newsletter — [wodum10043@reagan.com](mailto:wodum10043@reagan.com)



I want to extend a very special "thank you" to the newsletter's proofreader, **Judi Elliott**. Each month her consistent willingness to take the time from her other busy activities to proofread and offer suggestions is not only appreciated but oftentimes face saving!



w. odum



**From Rob Roy**  
**Hours Reporting and New Pins**

**P**lease turn in your signed and dated sheet for the month just completed by the meeting date of the following month if at all possible. For example, turn in your February hours before or at the 3/21/13 general meeting. If you can't get to the meeting, you can drop off your sheet or sheets at the Extension office, fax it to Donna Wolfe, 940-349-2881, or mail it to her at the following address:

**Ms. Donna Wolfe**  
**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
**401 W. Hickory, Suite 115**  
**Denton, TX 76201-9026**

The 2013 re-certification pin is in the shape of a monarch butterfly. When you reach 40.0 hours of volunteer service and 8.0 hours of advanced training for 2013 and have turned in your signed and dated sheets you will be recognized at a general meeting and awarded the pin. For example, if you reached the goal in February and reported your hours by the 3/21/13 meeting you will be recognized at the April meeting.

The same process applies to major milestones. The state recognizes major milestones at 250, 500, 1000, 2500, 5000, and 10,000 volunteer service hours. This year we are introducing new chapter pins for reaching 1500, 2000, 3000, 3500, 4000 & 4500 volunteer service hours. Jan Deatherage found a source for the pins which are in the shape of two connected elm leaves with one leaf having a distinctive color or shade and the other having the actual milestone hours shown. They are striking in appearance. We will award the first new pin at the March meeting to a member who reached the milestone in January.

Lastly, we hope you are using the new 2013 Excel spreadsheet to report your hours. But if not, you can continue to use the old form for handwritten entries. The Excel form makes it easier to keep track of hours and to enter hours into the master file. If you have any questions about the Excel form, reporting hours, etc., please email Rob Roy at [robt t roy@msn.com](mailto:robt_t_roy@msn.com) or call him at 214-668-3233.



### **Pollinator Pocket Garden**

work day has been rescheduled from Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> to **Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup>** from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. We will be working in the nursery repotting plants and starting cuttings.

—Rose—





**Notes from Susan Poklen**

**Don't forget** to look for the silent auction sign-up sheet at the March general business meeting. This sign-up sheet is for members wishing to assist with the silent auction at New Braunfels this fall. Thank you Marian for signing up to be the team leader! **Marian Kester:** [asmvkester@verizon.net](mailto:asmvkester@verizon.net) or 940 387-7147

**The Board of Directors** would like to know what criteria you believe to be important when selecting our outstanding projects each year. Send your suggestions to any board member, or write them on the chart paper at our March general business meeting.



**Please join** the new Technology Team. This team will serve in an advisory and technical support capacity for the current Board of Directors as we try to improve our ability to communicate through programs like Skype, and research the options of distance learning. Look for the sign-up sheet again at the March general meeting. Thank you Deborah Estes and Shelby Kilpatrick for signing up for the Technology Team!!



**You can help** us meet our new goal, "ecological practices at all meetings/training." Look for this sign-up sheet at our business meetings. We could use a team leader to help ensure an efficient operation.

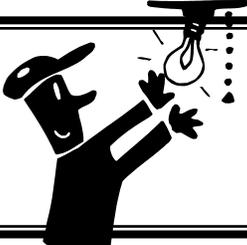


**"What's in a name"?**



**Let's find out.** Send your suggestion for the Newsletter name to Wanda Odum at: [wodum10043@reagan.com](mailto:wodum10043@reagan.com) or [wodum10043@aol.com](mailto:wodum10043@aol.com)

The person who submits the name chosen will be rewarded! If you would like to be on the selection committee, please let me know.



**Changes in the air — At the February meeting, it was agreed to replace the annual membership drive title "ROUNDUP" with a more appropriately descriptive appellation. At the March meeting, look for the special sheet where you may write your suggestions.**



**Peg La Point, Program  
Coordinator**



### March 21 Program — The Trinity River Lower Chain of Wetlands with speaker **Dr. Gary O. Dick**

Included as a major part of the Dallas Floodway Extension Project, the Lower Chain of Wetlands is a series of wetland ponds built to reduce flooding and provide ecosystem restoration. When both the Upper and Lower Chain of Wetlands are complete, the two wetland areas will work together to provide heightened flood protection for Dallas and will encompass a four mile area from Cedar Creek in the north to Loop 12.

The Lower Chain of Wetlands is a functioning system of seven wetland cells. Some of the ponds are interconnected, with water levels maintained by flowthrough with discharge (or treated water) from the Central Wastewater Treatment Plant (CWWTP). The Lewisville Aquatic Ecosystem Research Facility is working with the Corps to plant native aquatic vegetation in the area.

Dr. Gary O. Dick is a research ecologist at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Lewisville Aquatic Ecosystem Research Facility. At our March meeting, Dr. Dick will present a program on the design and management of the Lower Chain of Wetlands. He will outline how the plant selection, hydraulics and day-to-day management maximize this new habitat's attractiveness to water fowl.

Dr. Dick works as an Ecology team member under the Aquatic Plant Control Research Program and is stationed at the ERDC Lewisville Aquatic Ecosystem Research Facility. His association with ERDC began in 1989 as an IPA and is currently a full-time research ecologist with the Corps. His areas of focus include ecology of native and invasive aquatic plants and operational restoration of native species. He received a B.S. in biology and an M.S. in Zoology from Southeastern Louisiana University and a Ph.D. in aquatic biology from the University of Mississippi.



### TOUR OF THOMSEN NATURE PRESERVE

April 24, beginning at 9:30 a.m.



*Lisa Bellows—TNP*

The **Thomsen Nature Preserve** was established in 1982 by Mr. and Mrs. C.J. Thomsen of Dallas, Texas. Their passion for wildflowers, native plants, and the preservation of natural habitat led the Thomsens to the picturesque terrain of the Cross Timbers Region of Texas. They purchased 600 acres of property near Forestburg, in Montague County, and dedicated the land to research and education of native flora and fauna of the region. With specific connection to education, pertaining to children's appreciated and understanding of wildflowers. The foundation provides the native habitat to conduct many programs for school age children, teachers, and others interested in nature.

Much of this property was once overgrazed and abused. The delicate soils have been exposed, leaving them susceptible to weathering, erosion, and invasive species. Under the caring stewardship of the Thomsens, wildflowers, native grasses, and soil conditions now resemble North Central Texas as the region once looked prior to the introduction of barbed wire and the steel plow.

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**Peg La Point—Program Coordinator**

Our guide will be **Dr. Lisa Bellows**, Director of Thomsen Nature Preserve. Like the plants that she researches, Dr. Bellows is a native to North Texas. Her passion for environmental and land stewardship was deeply rooted as she grew up on a farm near Saint Jo, Texas, just a few miles from the Thomsen Nature Preserve's outdoor learning center.

Dr. Bellows is Science Department Chair at North Central Texas College, where she teaches General Biology, Zoology, Botany, and Environmental Science. She is engaged in a special project of cataloging natural specimens on the preserve property.

#### **Driving Directions:**

The street address is 1859 Parker Dairy Road, Forestburg, TX. Drive west from Denton on Hwy 380 (University). In Decatur, drive north on FM 730 (Trinity Street). Turn left onto County Road 2650 (Cates). Turn left onto County Road 2650 (Freeman). Turn left onto Wise Road. Turn left onto Parker Dairy Road.

#### **CARPPOOLING**

Members are encouraged to car pool. We will meet at the Albertsons located at West University and Bonnie Brae. **Please be there by 8:30.** We will meet at the far north-west corner of the parking lot.

Check it out: <http://teachnature.org/Site/About.html>



All photos from  
Owen Richards

## A look back — Chapter Meeting February 21, 2013



Susan Pohlen,  
President

### Announcements and service recognition

Van Elliott, Vice-  
President



Dale Meyer up-  
dating on projects



Jan Hodson  
announcing Jr.  
MN training

Chapter members keep stacking up  
those service hours!



### The program



While **Dr. Christopher Churchill's** information on the zebra mussel and the possible deleterious effect on our waterways was a bit unsettling, the old adage "forewarned is forearmed" is certainly applicable. Hopefully, it will make people aware of the threat and encourage support for the ongoing research necessary to combat this invasive species.



## FIELD TRIP FANTASTIC

All photos—  
Owen Richards

On March 12 a number of Master Naturalists participated in a field trip to the **Upper Trinity Regional Water District Headquarters**. You may remember the below description of the gardens from Peg La Point in last month's newsletter.



“As a demonstration project for customer entities, Upper Trinity maintains a **Water Conservation Garden** to showcase the beauty and practicality of water-conserving landscape. Located adjacent to Upper Trinity's administrative headquarters, the garden uses earth-friendly techniques to create a beautiful outdoor landscape that is in harmony with our north Texas environment.”

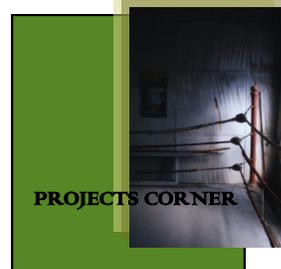


## WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE PROJECTS?

*Dale Meyer, Projects Coordinator*

# H

ere is an update since the February Chapter meeting.



Norma Wilkerson has graciously agreed to take on the role of Project Manager for the BRIT Project. We have changed the name of the project from “Plant Cataloging” to “BRIT” in order to accommodate a wider range of activities for potential volunteers. If you would like more information about the opportunities at BRIT, please contact Norma.

We also have five new projects. Jeanne Erickson made a request for these projects in late November, but due to the holidays, the need for additional information, year-end requirements, and a “changing of the guard”, they were delayed.

The new projects are all TPWD and TAMU sponsor-related. They are:

**P-130214 - Byro-Texana**

**P-130215 – Amphibian Watch**

**P-130216 – Bumblebee Watch**

**P-130217 – Texas Hummingbird Roundup**

**P-130218 – Texas Whooper Watch**

**Hummingbird –**

<http://members.fortunecity.com/ozzie1/birds3.html>



**Byro**—moss “*Muscinae*” from Ernst Haeckel's *Kunstformen der Natur*, 1904



**Amphibian** — Clockwise from top right: *Seymouria*, Mexican burrowing caecilian, eastern newt and leaf green tree frog



**Whooping Crane**



**Bumblebee** *Bombus terrestris*

Info/photos are public domain—Wikipedia except as noted

Please visit the Approved Project list on our website and check out the “Project Descriptions” for more Information or contact Jeanne. Thank you, Jeanne, for your patience and willingness to handle these projects.

The following Projects are without Project Managers:

**Clear Creek Heritage Center**

**Cornell Lab of Ornithology Project Feeder Watch**

**Old Alton Bridge Upkeep**

**Ray Roberts State Park IC**



*Building kiosk at Clear Creek are Fritz Poppe & former Master Naturalist Rusty Gaddy*

*Photo—Jan Thompson*



Ray Roberts State Park Interpretive Center is a recent addition.



*Ray Roberts Lake—  
Interpretive Center*

The Project Manager, Doug Chadwick, relinquished his post because of personal commitments, and his leadership will be missed.

*Old Alton Bridge*



*Denton RC (by permission)*

Also, we are looking for any members who may be working on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Project Feeder Watch Project. It is believed that LaNae Colchin was the only person working on this project and if that is the case, we may have to close it.

**Anyone interested in assuming the role of Project Manager for any of these Projects, please contact Dale Meyer, Project Coordinator.**



**Budgerigar — aka parakeet or affectionately known as a “budgie”**



*Fort Worth Zoo  
(public domain  
photo)*

Kingdom:	<i>Animalia</i>
Phylum:	<i>Chordata</i>
Class:	<i>Aves</i>
Order:	<i>Psittaciformes</i>
Superfamily:	<i>Psittacoidea</i>
Family:	<i>Psittaculidae</i>
Subfamily:	<i>Loriinae</i>
Tribe:	<i>Melopsittacini</i>
Genus:	<i>Melopsittacus</i>
Species:	<i>M. undulatus</i>



## BLUEBIRDS 101: HATCH DATE, FLEDGE DATE AND MORE

**K**nowing when your bluebirds are due to hatch and fledge will enhance your enjoyment of these beautiful and charming birds. Don't hesitate to open the door and look inside (always stand to one side when opening the box in case the female comes flying out). After the chicks hatch and are about three days old, it's quite safe to take one from the nest, look it over carefully and replace it. Guard its eyes from bright sunlight, however. And do not disturb the box when the chicks are within a few days of fledging.

In my area (the LBJ Grasslands), the first nests are usually seen by February 23rd and the first eggs by February 29th. This means the female can be brooding her eggs with snow on the ground outside, and do so successfully. These very early bluebirds will be the experienced pairs nesting in the same successful boxes from the season before. It will be a few more weeks before the bluebird nesting season gets into full swing, but by mid-March there's lots of activity.

*hatchling*



Mature bluebirds will generally produce three broods in our

area, the first in March through mid-April, the second late April to early June, the third mid-June to July. Here's an actual example from a very productive pair: (1) female began brooding 3/23, eggs hatched 4/6, chicks fledged 4/23; (2) female brood-

ing again 5/9; eggs hatched 5/23, chicks fledged 6/10; (3) female brooding again 6/16, eggs hatched 6/30, chicks fledged 7/16. This pair produced 15 chicks, 5 eggs per brood, every egg hatched and every chick fledged. However, this is unusual. Second broods are often smaller and not all eggs hatch, third broods smaller still. This record is from 2010. Early heat in 2011 and 2012 destroyed almost all the third-brood eggs. In a mild summer, if such exists in North Central Texas, bluebirds may continue to nest until September.

As you will see from the above examples, eggs are incubated for 14 days and the chicks fledge after 17 days. But how do you tell when eggs will hatch without checking the box every day?



*fledging*

If you will check the nestbox at least once a week, you can usually determine the exact hatch date. After the nest has been completed, the female will lay one egg every morning until the brood is complete (3-5 eggs). She'll begin brooding the same day she lays the last egg. So if the nest was empty, for example, on March 1 and has 5 eggs on March 6, the hatch date will be March 20 (6 plus 14). If you see three eggs on March 1 and a week later see five eggs, you'll know the fifth egg was laid on March 3, so your hatch date will be March 17 (3 plus 14). You don't have to see the female brooding, you just have to know she begins brooding when the last egg is laid. I usually pencil in the hatch date in my record book and try to check the box on or very near that date.

Knowing the exact hatch date allows you to determine the fledge date. If eggs hatch on April 2, the chicks will fledge on April 19 (2 plus 17). There's a little more leeway in the days to fledging, say 16 to 19, but 17 is the usual. What if you don't know the hatch date? Chicks grow incredibly quickly and if you are used to how they appear on each day after birth you can figure out the likely fledge date. The Bluebird Monitor's Guide by Keith Kridler has a series of photos showing each day of development. It's important to NOT open the box after day 13, as the chicks are big enough to fly from the box in response to a predator (you in this case) but are still immature and may not survive.

Eggs will be destroyed by the heat at around 106-107 degrees, though chicks can usually survive these temperatures. Inside the box may be hotter than the air temperature by one to nine degrees. A light-colored box will reflect the heat, a dark one will absorb it, so if your box is dark (it will darken with age), paint it a white, cream, or other light color.



Bluebird box — <http://birdsforever.com/bluepds.html>



**Dear March, come in!**

How glad I am!  
I looked for you before.  
Put down your hat –  
You must have walked –  
How out of breath you are!  
Dear March, how are you?  
And the rest?

Did you leave Nature well?  
Oh, March, come right upstairs with me.  
I have so much to tell!  
I got your letter, and the bird's;  
The maples never knew  
That you were coming, — I declare,  
How red their faces grew!  
But, March, forgive me –

And all those hills  
You left for me to hue;  
There was no purple suitable,  
You took it all with you.  
Who knocks? That April!  
Lock the door!  
I will not be pursued!  
He stayed away a year, to call  
When I am occupied.  
But trifles look so trivial  
As soon as you have come,  
That blame is just as dear as praise  
And praise as mere as blame.

Emily Dickinson (1830–86)



## Dragonfly

Dragonflies are most often found near water and usually remain within a few miles of the place where the egg was hatched. A larva may eat tadpoles or small fish while the adult eats other small insects, mostly mosquitoes. Dragonflies are carnivorous in both larval and adult stages and are considered useful for controlling the mosquito populations.

Dragonflies can be any color and range in size by species from one to five inches and have very short antennae.

### Blue-eyed darter—*Aeshna multicolor*



AgriLife.org/dragonfly

The dragonfly goes through three stages of development: egg, naiad (larval) and adult. An egg is laid in water and typically hatches in two to three weeks. A naiad can live in the water for two to three years using internal gills to breathe. When ready for the adult stage, it crawls out of the water and sheds its skin. The adult can live for over a year if it migrates away from the cold.

There are 3,600 species of dragonflies in the world. The largest dragonfly lived over 250 million years ago (before the dinosaurs) and had a wingspan of over three feet!\* A dragonfly needs warmth to fly, so they will often land when the sun goes behind a cloud.

Source: <http://www.bugfacts.net/>



Watch video: <http://agrilife.org/dragonfly>

\*video states "12 in."

## Cyano darter



Photo—Lee Ruth of Springfield Plateau Chapter Master Naturalist (Missouri)

### Cyano darter - *Nasiaeschna pentacantha*

Familiar symbol  
of Texas Master  
Naturalist

is also known as the Harlequin Darter. They tend to fly slow patrols over lazy streams and ponds in late morning, chasing off other dragonflies. Their peak flying time is June and July when they may be found feeding along woodland edges and streams.

<http://springfieldmn.blogspot.com/2010/08/dragonflies.html>

The name comes from its long, protruding, greenish forehead, reminiscent of the long nose of literary character Cyrano de Bergerac.

<http://museum.unl.edu/research/entomology/Odonata/nape.html>





## A TURTLE STORY FROM THE HOTLINE

Karen Schoeve

A call came in on the **Wildlife Hotline** from a man who wanted to surrender his "alligator snapping turtle." We knew that "alligator snapping turtles" were not common in this area and felt it would be a common snapping turtle. Caller Bob had picked up this turtle as a baby crossing the road in Bryan/College Station. He thought it would be great to bring it to Denton and put it in an aquarium and watch it grow!!! How exciting for him (and not so exciting for the baby snapping turtle)!

So little snapper grew accordingly and continued to grow in his 70-gallon aquarium. Caller Bob said that he had a 100 gallon aquarium but when I arrived, I knew that he did not. Baby snapper had been in the aquarium for over 6 years. He could not turn inside the long, narrow rectangular aquarium. However, if he went to the top and did a little twist, he could get by. As you can see from the pictures, his shell is grossly deformed from the cramped quarters of an aquarium. It should not be fluted at the tail and there should not be a gap above the neck.

I rescued the snapping turtle and took him to Crosstimbers Wildlife Ranch in Terrell where Val had a turtle habitat already built and was waiting for the right inhabitant! As you can see, it appears that our lovely snapper was smiling and saying **THANK YOU FOR RESCUING ME!!!!**



As I have been working on the Hotline since 2009, I have had many surrender calls. I have taken surrenders that include: finches, a ferret, sugar gliders, a degu, a tarantula, scorpions, domesticated raccoons, and a couple cute fawns! What I learned was that by the time I tried to find a place for them to go, we would then lose the opportunity to rescue the animal. So I made it a point to take all surrendered animals right away, although I'm kinda glad that I didn't have to take the Burmese python!

We do spend a considerable amount of time educating the public about wildlife and especially those that keep wildlife as pets. As you can see, this snapping turtle was "loved to death" by his owners who did the best they could with dried turtle food, an occasional goldfish and a very cramped aquarium in their small house. Caller Bob did feel a little guilty as I talked to him about the normal roaming radius of a male turtle and why the turtle crosses roads (not to get to the other side, but to seek a new water feature and look for a mate!)

I really do love working on the Hotline. It has increased my awareness of animals and habitat needs. Oh, if only the children would not be the Last Child in the Woods, we will have a chance to let nature prevail!



Joanne Fellows



## Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

*Tyrannus forficatus*

A striking bird of the central United States, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher is nearly unmistakable with its long forked tail and salmon-pink belly. The state bird of Oklahoma, it is commonly found in only a handful of other states. I found this one outside Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area, LLELA.

### Cool Facts:

The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher forms large premigratory roosts in late summer, with up to 1,000 birds in one flock. They often roost near towns, perhaps taking advantage of the large trees as roosting sites.

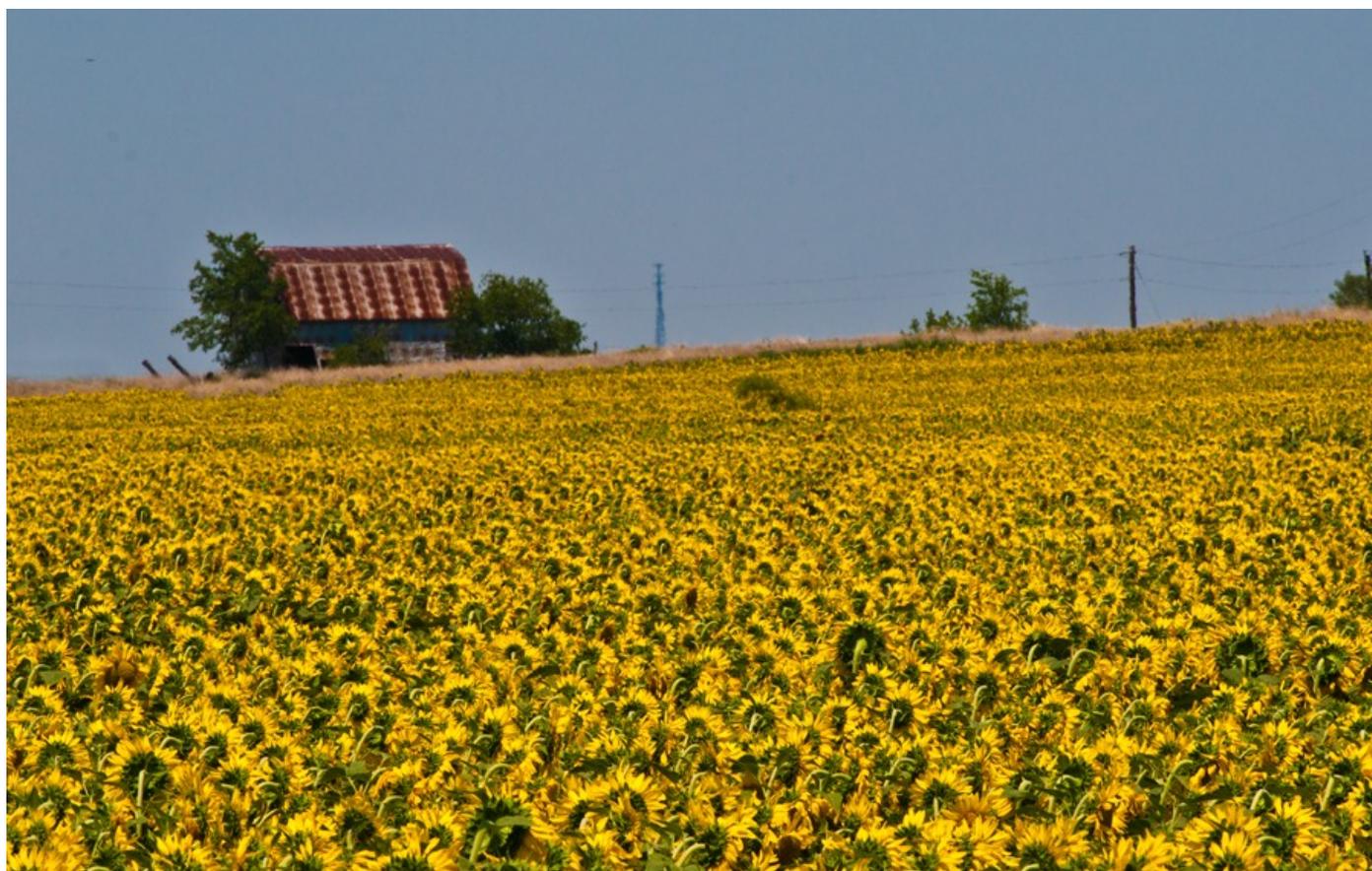
The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher uses many human products in its nest, such as string, cloth, paper, carpet fuzz, and cigarette filters. One study of nests in an urban area in Texas found that artificial materials accounted for 30% of the weight of nests.

Inclement weather can be an important factor in causing nest failure of open country birds. High winds and thunderstorms can destroy large numbers of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher nests in some years, accounting for nearly half of all nest failures.

Attribution: [http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Scissor-tailed\\_Flycatcher/lifehistory](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Scissor-tailed_Flycatcher/lifehistory)



**“FIELD NOTES IN FOCUS”**



**Sunflowers – From the gallery  
of Owen Richards**

*Featuring Master Naturalist photographers—flora  
and fauna as you see them*



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## OUR MISSION . . .

*"to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our community"*



*Green Swallowtails at Lake Ray Roberts —  
Paula McCormick*

## Members of the Board 2013

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### Monthly Chapter Meetings

**9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month.**

**Chapter meetings are open to the public.**

**Next meeting March 21—Gary Owen Dick, Lower Chain of Wetlands on Trinity River**

**Meeting April 18 2013—Tanya Homayoun, Sr. Manager at Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center, discussing Bird-Friendly Communities for Texas Migrants**

**Location: Joseph A. Carroll Bldg., 401 W. Hickory Street, Denton, TX 76201-9026**

### Board Meetings

**The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met March 14, 2013. Next meeting April 11, 2013.**

**Board meetings are open to members.**

