

Naturalist News

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 5

MAY 2015

Publication from Texas Master Naturalist, Elm Fork Chapter



Bing.com

Spread the News—

We're on the web: <http://txmn.org/elmfork/>

- * See upcoming events
- * Check resources
- * Read articles
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We're on YouTube

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No vacancy



From Jan Hodson

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *How does bird migration occur?*
- *Clear Creek project stays busy*
- *How do you find a black-bellied whistling duck?*
- *Check out announcements section*
- *See who helped with NN this month*
- *How to tell a niche from a nutch*

What Naturalist News is offering this month . . .

Learning More from:
 *Speakers for upcoming chapter meetings
 *Bird migration workshop recap

keep learning.

Being Involved
 *Annual Back to Nature and Arbor Day Celebration



Project highlight—*Work Day at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center



Gleaning knowledge
 *Black-bellied whistling duck
 *Every species has its niche
 *Crossword puzzles made me do it



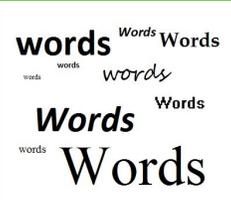
Announcements



Naturalist News Contributors
 Joanne Fellows, Scott Kiestler, Bob Ross, Jan Hodson, Dorothy Thetford, Jon Reynolds, Susan Pohlen



Last Word



Who are we?



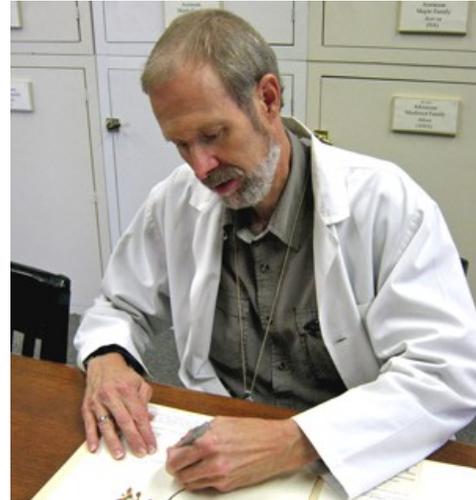
She's quite lovely when you get to know her. :)

See you later gator!



May 21, 2015 Speaker - Health Implications of the Modern World: What Biology Has To Do With It

George M. Diggs, Jr., Ph.D.
BRIT Research Associate



<http://www.brit.org/StaffDirectory/Diggs>

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Botany, University of Wisconsin-Madison
M.A. in Biology, College of William and Mary
B.S. in Biology, College of William and Mary

BACKGROUND

George has been trained as an Evolutionary Biologist/Systematic Botanist. Early in his career, he focused his research efforts, including field work and general systematics research, on the genus *Comarostaphylis* in the Ericaceae (blueberry family) that occurs from southern California through Mexico to Panama. For the past 20 years, he has been doing floristic research, including coauthoring (with BRIT colleagues) several books on the Texas flora. Another research interest is evolutionary medicine/ancestral health, in which George has just completed a project coauthoring a book on that topic.

George has been a professor in the Biology Department at Austin College for more than thirty years and has taken students on international travel and research trips 17 times. In his personal life he has a long-term partner, Dr. Kerry Brock (she's a mathematician and the smart one in the family), and his interests lie in gardening, traveling, woodworking, and photography.

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Next meeting June 18, 2015 — Cathy Bowles, DFW Wildlife Administrator

Bird Migration

From Bob
Ross

On Saturday, April 18th, Flower Mound Library scheduled an indoor presentation followed by an outdoor bird walk in the city's Heritage Park. Our own chapter member, Scott Kister, was the presenter at the library with "Just Passing Through: Bird Migration" and then he was the leader of the walk at Heritage Park. The timing was perfect because it was an absolutely gorgeous day to be outside in between our much-needed rains we have been receiving. EFC members in attendance at the library were Van and Judi Elliott, Rita Lokie, Wanda Odum and Bob Ross.

"...migratory birds use a four step process of migration: 1) urge to fly, 2) timing, 3) orientation, and 4) road map."

Scott began his presentation by informing the 40+ audience members at the library that the U.S.A. and Canada have 650 species of birds, of which 550 are migratory birds. He explained that migration is basically where birds, and other animals, have seasonal movements at the same time each year to seasonal abundances of resources, such as more food to eat. Migratory birds use one of the four North American flyways: Atlantic Flyway, Mississippi Flyway, Central Flyway, and Pacific Flyway.

He continued by explaining that migratory birds use a four step process of migration: 1) urge to fly, 2) timing, 3) orientation, and 4) road map. Also, all migratory birds are not the same. There are complete migrants, such as Greater Yellowlegs, that arrive in Texas in August-September, stay through the winter, and return to the Arctic in April-May. There are partial migrants, such as the Golden Crowned Kinglet or Ruby Crowned Kinglet, that arrive in Texas in October-November, stay through the winter, and return to the boreal forest in February-March. Scott continued by mentioning an irruptive migrant, such as the Pine Siskin, that migrates in December-January every 3-5 years to find a new source of food. There are altitudinal migrants, such as Clark's Nutcracker, that will leave the high areas of the Rocky Mountains to migrate to lower areas looking for food. Everyone was informed of long migrants, such as Swainson's Hawks that passes twice a year through Texas in September-October and again in April-May. He gave as a last example of a different type of migratory bird the Chipping Sparrow calling it a molt migrant. It will migrate south, molt, and then return north.



Scott at Flower Mound Library

The library presentation was concluded by Scott detailing the specifications for a good set of binoculars or spotting scopes and the different types of electronic field guides and bird checklists.



Birders checking their field guides

A great portion of the library audience traveled to Heritage Park to partake in the bird walk. Even though it was middle/late afternoon during the bird walk, and not necessarily a good time to see and hear various birds, the birders saw and heard quite a few different species. Scott was also pointing out various other things along the walk, such as butterflies, dragonflies, various wild flowers, and animal tracks. The walkers consisted of elementary aged children to senior citizens and everyone had a wonderful experience.