



Naturalist News

Volume 19, Issue 4

April 2018

Red-bellied Woodpecker at North Lakes
Park from Jonathan Reynolds



On the web: www.txmn.org/elmfork

On Facebook: www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistElmFork/

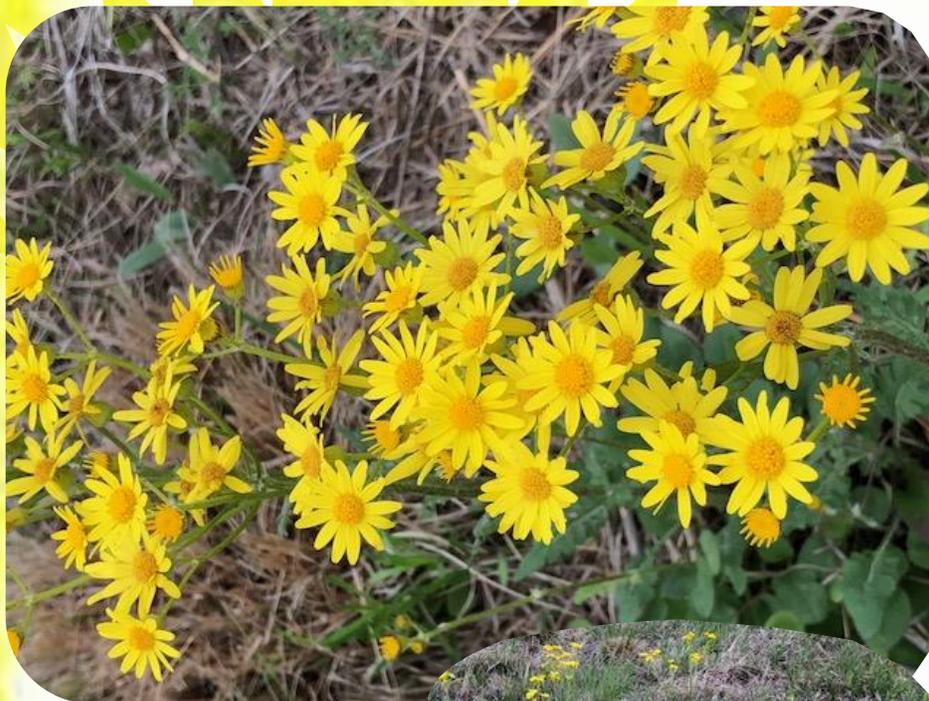


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Texas Squaw-weed/Texas Groundsel (*Senecio ampullaceus*)
—from Dorothy Thetford



Special points of interest:

- Meeting place for April and May is changed
- Interesting facts about “hummers”
- Chimney swift tower sign installed
- Check out “Of Interest” pages
- Don’t forget to thank our contributors!

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Change in Location for April and May Chapter meetings.

The Chapter meetings on April 19th and May 17th will be at the Carroll Courts Building, [401 W. Hickory, Denton](#). The SW Courthouse in Flower Mound is needed for elections on those dates.

Highlights from March Meeting

AWARDS:

Initial Certification - Class of 2017 Jean Mason, Karen Peden, Elise Spain, Kathy Webb, Francine Witte, Susan Yost

Re-Certification Mindy Anderson (Class of 2015), Shannon Bushong (Class of 2017), Mary Cissell (Class of 2015), Linda Cox (Class of 2005), Hilton Dickerson (Class of 2009), Don Fikes (Class of 2013), Sarah Goodrich (Class of 2016), Scott Kiester (Class of 2003), Rita Lokie (Class of 2013), Robert McLaughlin (Class of 2017), Vin Merrill (Class of 2011), Tom Mills (Class of 2014), Mary Morrow (Class of 2014), Martha Peet (Class of 2012), Jim Terry (Class of 2017), Carolyn Trivette (Class of 2017), Susan Yost (Class of 2017)

Milestones - 250 Hours Sarah Goodrich (Class of 2016), Clay Thurmond (Class of 2016) **Milestones** - 1000 Hours Val Beardsley (Class of 2011) **Milestones** - 2000 Hours Susan Myers (Class of 2012) **Milestones** - 2500 Hours Mary Morrow (Class of 2014)



Coming Up

From Rita Lokie

Regular Chapter Meeting on April 19, 2018, presentation is by Suzanne Tuttle speaking on **Forest Systems of North Central Texas**.

Description: North Central Texas hosts a complex mosaic of vegetation communities. Although grassland ecosystems dominate the landscape our area is also home to several different communities of woody tree and shrub cover. This program will provide attendees with information about these local forests and where they can be found.

SUZANNE TUTTLE is a plant ecologist who retired as Manager in 2016 of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge after a 23 year career at the park. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology from UT Arlington and an Associate of Applied Science degree in Horticulture from Tarrant County Junior College (now TCC). She has taught training classes for various chapters of the Texas Master Naturalist program since 1999 and is currently serving on the Boards of Directors for the Native Plant Society of Texas, the Fort Worth Chapter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas and the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute located in Fort Davis, TX.



Suzanne Tuttle—Big Ben Bluebonnets in bloom



Projects and Into the Community



You're Invited!
Texas Native Plant Art Exhibition 2017
Appreciation Reception

Wednesday, April 25 – 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

DISD Professional Development Center
1212 Bolivar Street, Denton, Texas

Please join us to honor the fourth grade students and their art teachers that participated in the art exhibition and to thank the display site hosts. Stop by at your convenience to join the fun. The artwork will be displayed and refreshments will be served.

Thank, you,

Marilyn Blanton, Project Manager



New project sign installed on Chimney Swift Tower at the DCAC complex—Van Elliott



Projects and Into the Community



A Blooming Fun Project!

By Jennifer Wilson, FoFC

Richard Johnson's project, **P160908:NPA:Furneaux Creek**, has been gathering the efforts of Master Naturalists, scouts, friends, families and neighbors to beautify the greenbelt that runs along Furneaux Creek. Hundreds of native trees, bushes, grasses and flowering plants have been added to the Nature Trail, which now continues further south in the new "Phase 2."



Blue Bird eggs on FoFC Nature Trail, 2018

The transformation of the area is inviting wildlife and insects back into a natural environment. Placement of multiple blue bird houses and owl boxes has proved viable with recent nesting and hatchings.

And now the group is adding an official Monarch Waystation.

With funds from a small grant, FoFC has been creating a budget and list of wildflowers to use for this waystation. The grant can only purchase so many plants and does not sufficiently fill the area FoFC designated for the Monarch Waystation. We are hoping that other native plant and butterfly enthusiasts may be willing to donate bloomers from their own gardens.



Monarch on the FoFC Nature Trail - Spring Migration, 2017.

Are you willing to share some of the following plants? (to meet grant requirements, please be certain the latin name of the donation matches the names listed below):

Green Milkweed - *Asclepias viridis*
Butterfly Weed - *Asclepias tuberosa*
Texas Lantana - *Lantana urticoides*
Autumn Sage - *Salvia greggi*

Antelope Horn - *Asclepias asperula*
Englemann's Daisy - *Engelmannia peristenia*
Salvia - *Salvia longispicata x farinacea*

FoFC will provide service hours for volunteers who dig and pot these items. Volunteer opportunities are also available for planting at the waystation on the trail.



Please contact **Richard Johnson** at 469-877-0695, or rljgj@hotmail.com, if you are interested in donating plants or would like to earn service hours.

Find out more about FoFC and schedule of events, see the website pages at FCNatureTrail.org and Facebook @furneauxcreeknaturetrail.



Into the Reading Nook—share your treasures

Coprinus atramentarius (edible caution) “Mushroom ID provided by local mushroom expert, Bob Killam.” **Photos by Dorothy Thetford**

“Atramentarius means ‘inky,’ describing the mushroom’s tendency to digest its gills into a black, inklike fluid.” This mushroom grows in dense clusters and is often found on buried decaying wood. It has gray caps that darken to almost black as it ages. Information from: *Texas Mushrooms* by Susan and Van Metzler—UT Press

Back in print with a new cover and preface, *Texas Mushrooms*, which has sold 10000 copies, is still the only field guide to the state's more than 200 species, complete with color photographs and a selection of recipes for delicious mushroom dishes. January 2013, active, \$34.95
<https://utpress.utexas.edu/node/3911>



From Betty Zajac: *Legends & Lore of Texas Wildflowers* by Elizabeth Silverthorne

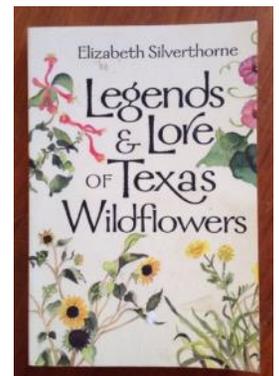
“In *Legends and Lore of Texas Wildflowers*, Elizabeth Silverthorne offers a delightful selection of these botanical treasures explaining the significance and origin of the name, identifying where the flower and its family members are located, and colorfully describing each one's legends and uses. Complemented by eighteen delicate drawings, legends and facts about forty-four of Texas' most interesting flowers, such as the water lily, Queen Anne's Lace, poinsettia, dogwood, and morning glory, are delightfully detailed.

Violets have been used to cure cancer. Sunflowers were planted by nineteenth-century pioneers to protect families from malaria. Indian Blankets were used to increase fertility. Buttercups were used, in ancient time, to treat leprosy, plague, and insanity and, more recently, to remove warts or raise blisters.

Silverthorne's text offers folklore enthusiasts, gardeners, and Texas history buffs an enchanting reading experience and an invitation to discover the legends growing in their own backyard.

Elizabeth Silverthorne is the author of three award-winning books, Ashbel Smith of Texas, Plantation Life in Texas, and Christmas in Texas, published by Texas A&M University Press, as well as a number of other books on Texas history. A free-lance writer, she lives in Salado, Texas.”

Information from: www.tamupress.com/product/Legends-and-Lore-of-Texas-Wildflowers





Features

Leaping Lizards I have Known

By Bob James



Lizard Petroglyph at Hovenweep

Almost all of my family have been associated with Texas Christian University in some sort for years. Three cousins and my sister graduated from TCU. The University mascot is the Horned Frog and since I was an outlier, I attended Texas Tech and became a Red Raider. I always called my cousins 'Texas Christian Lizards' until I took graduate courses at TCU and became a Horned Frog. Of course, Horned Frog is wrong. The mascot is, indeed, a Texas Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) a beautiful creature and the Texas State Reptile.

As a child we would catch these horned lizards and place them in a cigar box with a jelly glass lid of water and a leaf of lettuce. The poor things would have died since their diet is primarily insects but after a day or so my father would gather them up at night and liberate them in the field across the street from our house. We don't see many horned lizards any more. The loss of habitat, pesticides and the fire ant have almost made them extinct. This was my first exposure to lizards in general.

Several years later my mother's cat would bring dead lizards to my mother. I hated her cat so I really became attached to the cat's prey. I had friends that had lizards as pets. In fact, you can buy lizards on the internet today. You can support horned lizards by joining the Texas Horned Lizard Conservation Society in Austin, Texas.

Surprisingly, there are 96 different lizards in the Southwestern United States and 51 reside in the State of Texas. The majority of the species, 33 in number, are found west of the Pecos River. Lizards have been on the earth for over 200 million years as associates of the dinosaurs. How they evaded the Cretaceous-Paleogene Extinction (66 mya) is a puzzle. There are pictographs and petroglyphs of lizards in the 1200 year old cave dwellings at Hovenweep in Southeastern Utah (see above photo).

Lizards are Ectothermos in nature – that is εκτος (ektos – outside) θερμοσ (thermos – hot) and they regulate their blood temperature by staying in their lair or lying in the sun. They are not 'Cold Blooded' as most believe. They do not possess genitalia or the means to urinate. As a result they eliminate urea during a bowel movement. This is seen as a white crystal associated with their scat (photo attached). This is the way we can differentiate lizard scat from rat and mouse scat.



Lizard scat



Features

Lizards are quite mobile and some can leap unusual distances. A number of years ago I attended a rifle match in Brady, Texas with several friends. One friend, Harlan Goodner from Grand Junction, Colorado, thought himself a Mountain Man and had grown a long black beard. At the match I saw a large lizard basking in the morning sun on a rock wall. I called Harlan over and he leaned down to get a better look at the lizard when it leaped onto his beard. Needless to say there was a lot of shouting, slapping and dancing around by Harlan. He finally threw the lizard off on one of his pirouettes. He really didn't appreciate the fact that I was rolling on the ground with laughter.

There are many lizards in Arizona where I lived for nine years. A Native American, a Hopi from Second Mesa, told me about the unusual Stick Lizard. This creature carries a stick in its mouth and when the desert sand gets too hot for its feet, it would jab the stick in the hot sand and crawl up on the stick. I cannot testify as to the truth of this tale.

I have had a number of lizards on my back porch this spring. A small Tree Lizard (*Urosaurus ornatus*) ran along my fence and leaped to the Crepe Myrtle tree. It must have been six feet or so. Not long after this I saw a beautiful Texas Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus olivaceus*) climbing the brick wall on my back porch (photo attached). He has been around now for several weeks. Lizards are really wonderful creatures and are fun to watch. Just don't get too close especially if you have a beard.



Texas Spiny Lizard

Horned Lizard

He rears out of the desert fluff grass
 And skitters across my shoe,
 He pauses like a petrified triceratops.
 I squat and wiggle his spiked tail
 With a mesquite stick,
 Watch as he pricks his spines,
 And dares me to touch his turf again.
 - Sheryl L. Nelms

A good guide to Texas lizards: <http://www.herpssoftexas.org/view/lizards>





Features—shades of blue



TEXAS BLUEBONNET

(*Lupinus texensis*)



Bluebonnets—Photos by Dorothy Thetford



How many states of the US can claim to have six state flowers? We all know that the Texas Bluebonnet is our state flower, but are you aware that there are five other bluebonnets in the state that wear the same crown but with a slightly different title?

A few of the common names offer a clue to their primary locations, i.e., Big Bend Bluebonnet (*L. havardii*), Dune Bluebonnet (*L. plattensis*), and Sandyland Bluebonnet (*L. subcarnosus*), but the last three, i.e., Texas Bluebonnet (*L. texensis*), Sundial Bluebonnet (*L. perennis*) and Annual Lupine (*L. concinnus*) give no geographic clue. Lucky for us in the North Central Texas area, we get to claim the Texas Bluebonnet (*L. texensis*) title as our personal ownership!

Geyata Ajilvsgi explains that the genus name for the bluebonnets is from the Latin word 'lupus', meaning "wolf." In early times it was thought that these plants robbed the soil of its nutrients. It is now known that legumes actually enrich the soil through the symbiotic bacteria in the root nodules, which fix atmospheric nitrogen into organic compounds used later by other plants.

Our Texas Bluebonnet is an annual, and is easily grown in our area. Plant one plant, allow it to flower and produce seeds, and it will disperse its seeds for your next year's colony. No hassle!!! Add a wolf to your flowerbed.

Dorothy Thetford, class 2001



Features

Happiness is a Hummingbird by Sue YOST class of 2017

How can such a teeny tiny bird create so much happiness in a backyard habitat?

- We get 2 species of hummers. The Ruby-throated and the Black-chinned Hummingbird.
- A Ruby-throated Hummingbird weighs about 3 grams, about the weight of a penny.
- The hummingbird's nest is about the size of a golf ball and the eggs are coffee bean size.
- A hummingbird consumes half its weight in sugar each day. [That would mean a man would have to eat upwards of 285 pounds of hamburger everyday to maintain his weight]
- They feed 5-8 times each hour for 30-60 seconds each time.
- A male Ruby-throated Hummingbird can beat its wings 78 times a second! Their heart beats 1,260 times a minute.
- They are the only bird that can fly forward, backward, and upside down.
- Ruby -throats fly 500 miles nonstop across the Gulf of Mexico on their migration.
- They also consume a large amount of tiny insects and sap from sapsucker holes in trees.
- Hummingbirds use spider webbing, plant down and lichens for nesting material which helps the nest expand as the nestling grow.
- Their predators are Praying Mantis [which will sit and wait on a feeder], Road Runners [that can jump up and grab one] and of course cats. Hummingbirds can get trapped in spiders web.
- To conserve energy at night they go into torpor. The breathing slows, heart beats drop to 50 per minute, and the body temperature drops.
- Only the males have brilliant gorgets. Those neck feathers are flat so they reflect light in just one direction. In order to see the Ruby's red or the Black-chin's purple, the sun must be striking the feathers in just the right way.
- The female does all the work, nest building, laying eggs [2], incubating [16 days]. They fledge anywhere from 14 -30 days depending on varying weather conditions and food availability.
- They are attracted to food by eyesight. Plant specific Texas natives to attract hummers to your habitat. Hanging baskets, containers, or beds of nectar bearing flowers.
- Their favorite color is red but Mother Nature doesn't grow just red flowers so they will look for any blooming colors from late March thru October.
- Hummingbirds will come to nectar feeders. **DO NOT USE RED NECTAR!** 4 cups hot water to 1 cup table sugar. [Do not use sugar substitutes, honey, etc.] Change the nectar every 4 days early in the season but change it every other day once our weather turns hot.



It's time to invite these fascinating little birds to your yard! **TODAY!** They have arrived!

One last thought....Why do hummingbirds hum instead of sing? Because they don't know the words! HA HA!



Hold That Pose



**Deer at Lake Ray Roberts
from Jonathan Reynolds**



Of Special Interest

Theresa Page is seeking volunteers for a Cub Scout event on Saturday, April 21, 2018 at Sycamore Bend Park [1301-1311 Sycamore Bend Road, Hickory Creek, TX 75065](https://www.texasstateparks.com/locations/sycamore-bend-park). Volunteers are needed to lead hikes, and related activities, see topics below.

Scouts are organized into small groups (6-8 scouts) and each group rotates through activities at time intervals as follows:

9-10:30 fishing (volunteers not needed)

10:30-12, Rotation 2

12-1 lunch

1-2:30, Rotation 3

2:30-4, Rotation 4

4-5:30, Rotation 5

10 minute break after each Rotation.

INTO THE WOODS: (2-3 volunteers per Rotation; but please sign up for multiple slots if you have time available)

SWAT bins: Gas gobblers; or oxygen factory; or paper pots; or plant parts rap; and crafts

Requested Concepts to explore:

- Identify two different groups of trees and the parts of a tree—plus other interesting facts about trees.
- Identify four trees common to the area where you live. Are they native to Texas? How does wildlife use them?
- Explain how the growth rings of a tree tell its life story. Describe different types of tree bark and explain what the bark does for the tree.
- Identify other plants in your area. Are they native? How do they help animals? Structure and Function of a plant.
- Use a magnifying glass to examine plants more closely. Describe what you saw through the magnifying glass that you could not see without it.
- Learn about composting and how vegetable waste can be turned into fertilizer for plants.
- Learn how to plant a vegetable garden.

FUR and FEATHERS: (2-3 volunteers per Rotation; but please sign up for multiple slots if you have time available)

SWAT bins: Food chain gang; or amphibians/turtles/snakes; or birds; and crafts

Requested Concepts to explore:

- While hiking, identify six signs that animals or plants are living near the place where you have chosen to hike. Include: mammals, birds, insects, reptiles. (Animal tracks, bedding sites, burrows, or scat are good signs to observe.)
- Name one or more animals that have become extinct in the last 100 years, and what caused their extinction. Name one or more animals that are currently endangered. Explain what has caused their decline.
- Learn about the bird flyways closest to your home. Find out which birds use these flyways.
- Observe wildlife from a distance. Describe what you observe.

Contact Theresa Page
Tawpage3@gmail.com
[940-300-3284](tel:940-300-3284)



Of Special Interest



Trail Guide Training Workshop Agenda Saturday, April 28, 9 am - 3 pm

Bring a refillable water bottle, a lunch, sunscreen, insect repellent, and a hat. We advise long pants and closed-toe shoes for protection from the sun and biting insects.

- 9:00—9:20 am: Introduction to LLELA
- 9:20—11:00 am: Introduction to nature interpretation and theme writing
- 11:00 am—12:00 pm: Cicada Trail interpretative hike (demonstration)
- 12:00—12:30 pm: Lunch (bring a sack lunch and drink)
- 12:30—2:30 pm: Blackjack Trail interpretative hike (demonstration)
- 2:30—3:00 pm: Trail Guide Handbook, volunteer paperwork

This workshop is for volunteers who are planning to lead hikes and educational programs at LLELA. For Texas Master Naturalists, this counts as 5 hours of advanced training.

Fee: \$10/person
(Payable by cash or check;
exact change please).
Includes your admission to
LLELA and a copy of the Trail
Guide Handbook).

Please contact Lisa Cole
at 469-635-5481 or
licole@cityoflewisville.com
with questions.



The **DISD School Days at Clear Creek** project is about to hit the trail! What began as a project of the TMN Class of 2017 is now bigger than that. Fifteen Master Naturalists and SWAt Team members who were not in the class have come on board to help and to lead. There is now a great collaboration for this project between new and veteran TMNs, between MN and SWAt, and between DISD and the City of Denton and Clear Creek. And Clear Creek is looking great this spring!

Volunteers are welcome almost any weekday in April, but are especially needed at Clear Creek from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on April 5, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, and also on May 3. For full volunteer details, email Carolyn Trivette at carolyntrvtt@gmail.com.

From Elise Spain



Of Special Interest

Lecture Series - Frogs, They Are Calling Are You Listening?

Saturday, April 21st, 10:00am - 12:00pm

Hosted by the Friends of Coppell Nature Park. Frogs are all over the metroplex, but you are more likely to hear them before you see them! Join Jessie Crowley, Lead Naturalist Educator for the Perot Museum and frog lover, for a few tips and tricks to ID local frogs and toads by sight and sound. Free.



17 Class Project of assisting with **DISD Days at Clear Creek** began on Monday. Thanks to 23 wonderful volunteers, we assist 440 students and 94 chaperones with 24 teachers from 5 schools to have a lot of educational outdoor fun the first week! We will continue next week (Monday through Thursday only - April 9, 10, 11, 12) for our second week of adventure.

We could use an extra volunteer each day next week, so come out if you can. Then, we definitely still need volunteers for April 17, 18, 19, and 20, so please think seriously about joining us on those days. Earn service hours (9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.) and make a big difference for second graders and their teachers! For full volunteer details, email Carolyn Trivette at carolyntrvtt@gmail.com.



Need a smile? Look for the Cardinal. Jonathan Reynolds clicked this one at North Lakes Park



FIELD NOTES IN FOCUS



**Mexican Plum in Bloom from the Gallery of
Jonathan Reynolds**



FIELD NOTES REFOCUSED



**Egret Chicks from the Gallery of
Denise Remfert**



This Month's Contributors



Wanda odum NN editor class 2005



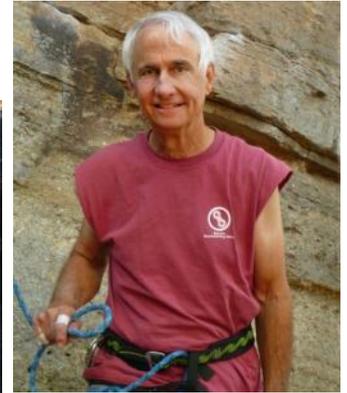
Judi Elliott class 2009



Elise Spain class 2017



Sue Yost class 2017



Jonathan Reynolds class 2014



Betty Zajac class 2003



Van Elliott class 2009



Rita Lokie class 2013



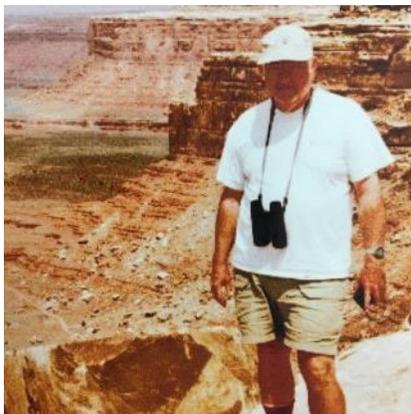
Marilyn Blanton class 1999



Dorothy Thetford class 2001



Theresa Page class 2005



Bob James class 2017



Denise Remfert class 2015



Very Last Word

Dragonflies can Maneuver Their Wings Independently

One of the most distinguishing features of dragonflies is the way their wings work. Their four wings operate independently of each other, allowing it to maneuver in mid-air like a helicopter—they can hover, fly forwards, backwards, and sideways, and instantly change direction whenever they need to. Dragonflies can even fly upside down if they need to. With the exception of damselflies (which belong to the same order), dragonflies are the only insects with this

amount of control

over their wings. Delicate yet powerful, each wing is connected to the thorax with a separate muscle group.



Blue Dasher, *Pachydiplax Longipenni*—Bing



Bing

<https://listverse.com/2013/04/18/10-surprisingly-brutal-facts-about-dragonflies/>

Cyrano darner *Naisiaeschna pentacantha* male (TMN logo)



© 2006
Jim Bangma

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



Red dragonfly—Bing



To all contributors this month to Naturalist News—you are appreciated! I have received so many beautiful photos that I couldn't resist using as many as possible this month; thus, we have two, "Field Notes in Focus" and "Field Notes Refocused". Once again, "thank you all".



Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension
Joseph A. Carroll Building
401 W. Hickory Street
Denton, TX 76201—9026
940-349-2883

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"*

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."*

Cedar Waxwing from Johnathan Reynolds at North Lakes



We're on the Web!
example.com
www.txmn.org/elmfork

Board of Directors

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 - Janet Laminack, Extension Agent
 - TPWD—Ricardo Torres

Regular Monthly Chapter Meetings
Regularly, 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 is April 19, 2018, Suzanne Tuttle speaking on Forest Systems of North Central Texas
The Chapter meetings on April 19th and May 17th will be at the Carroll Courts Building, [401 W. Hickory, Denton.](http://www.txmn.org/elmfork)

Board Meetings
The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met April 12, 2018. Next monthly Board meeting is May 10, 2018.
Monthly Board meetings are open to members.

Catching the first "blues" at one of Dorothy Thetford's bluebird boxes.

