

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST-ELM FORK CHAPTER

Naturalist News

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 5

MAY 2020



ON THE GREENBELT—PHOTO BY JONATHAN REYNOLDS

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www.txmn.org/elmfork

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Naturalist News

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Photo courtesy Dorothy Thetford—Spider lily (*Hymenocallis liriosome*)

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *New features monthly*
- *Picture Gallery—a walk through the prairie*

Important Notices

AgriLife office will be closed until May 15.



When it is hot and muggy and buggy
Or it's chilly, windy and rainy
Whatcha gonna do?
Plan Your Week



Plan Your Week is up for grabs

An opportunity, **Plan Your Week**, for those that have an adverse reaction to the outdoors is available. This opportunity requires little computer skills and not much else - is this what you have been dreaming of? You will have a chance to learn how to use a new app - MailChimp - to create Plan Your Week.

What lots of us have been doing lately, learning new apps while at home.

AT available while you learn Plan Your Week - an hour or two.

Weekly Service Hours apply - an hour or two.

Back-ups available when you need a break or go out of town.



Contact: Donna, dwolfepack@verizon.net or Mary, hawkilittle@aol.com if interested
PLAN YOUR WEEK WILL COME TO AN END ON JUNE 1, 2020 IF WE ARE UNABLE TO FIND A REPLACEMENT FOR DONNA



From: Mary Morrow & Donna Wolfe

From: Fran Witte and Mary Morrow



Help is needed to design Chapter flyers, brochures and more! Are you creative? Do you have experience using Publisher and perhaps Canva? The Communications Committee needs you immediately. Please contact Communications Committee members Mary Morrow at hawkilittle@aol.com or Fran Witte at recycling_emma@yahoo.com and start creating today.

April Awards

From Mary Morrow

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May 2020



The following members accomplished the following as of March 2020

Initial Certifications

Susan Pritchard, Class of 2019

2020 Recertifications

Mindy Anderson, Class of 2015

Gale Bacon, Class of 2018

Ivy Doak, Class of 2013

Donna Wolfe, Class of 1998



2020 Elm Fork Chapter
Awards - April

April Awards

From Mary Morrow

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST—ELM FORK CHAPTER

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May 2020



Naturalist News

The following members accomplished the following as of March 2020

250 Hour Milestone

Kaye Jackson, Class of 2015

Deb Rucker, Class of 2018

500 Hour Milestone

Gale Bacon, Class of 2018

Denver Kramer, Class of 2018

1,500 Hour Milestone

Val Beardsley, Class of 2011



2020 Elm Fork Chapter
Awards - April

What's Next

From Rita Lokie

Dr. Dean Williams will present “**Ecology of horned lizards living in small Texas Towns**” on May 21, 2020 at the monthly meeting.

His lab at Texas Christian University has been studying Texas horned lizards living in two small towns of Kenedy and Karnes City in south Texas, since 2013. The purpose of his project is to gain a better understanding of how Texas horned lizards have persisted in close as-



sociation with people in these towns when they have disappeared from many other areas in Texas. His presentation will cover some of the unique factors they think facilitate the survival of horned lizards in these small towns.



Dr. Dean Williams is a professor in the Department of Biology at Texas Christian University. He has a PH.D. Ecology from Purdue University, M.S. Biology from University of Alabama and a B.A. with honors, Biology from Coe College.

Join the Meeting

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: May 21, 2020 09:30 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/Jclcuylgrz8pGtNHRhbm0XyK3gijTFrucU>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Photo from Sue Yost—Looks like a raccoon passed this way

Projects in and around the community

Plant Rescues for Green Acres, Thrive, and Clear Creek Projects

By Jean Mason



Following all guidelines – social distancing and wearing masks – volunteers have had the opportunity to rescue native plants from Harlington Park. This land is currently owned by LISD, is being acquired by David Weekly Homes, and we have been given approval to dig on the property.

There are large amounts of little bluestem, as well as several other natives, including bushy bluestem, Texas vervain, prickly pear cactus, spiderwort and trailing winecup. The sandy soil made it much easier to dig out the little bluestem– what a bonus! And thank you to Richard Freiheit - your input/guidance is much appreciated!



Monthly Specials

Meet a Master....Harriet Powell

By Sue YOST class of 2017

Where from: Born and raised in Michigan, lived in Ohio, Missouri and Colorado before moving to Wimberley, TX



Marital Status – Widowed – I was married late in life and have a large step family - two children, 7 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and 4 great, great grandchildren with one more due in April.

Schooling – BS in Occupational Therapy from Wayne State University, MA from Western Michigan University and a PhD in Education from Ohio State.

Work history – Worked as a therapist in physical rehabilitation, taught at Western Michigan University and Ohio State University. For obvious reasons I am a Buckeye Fan.

MN Class- 2015

Favorite Pastime – photography specifically alpine flowers and mountains, looking for wild flowers, and reading as I belong to two book clubs.

Favorite Food – that’s hard – ice cream!

Favorite Place to visit – I have travelled aboard and throughout the United States but I still look forward to returning to Colorado each summer as the high mountains feed my soul.

Favorite Animal – The much-maligned wolf - At one time I had a dog that was three quarters German shepherd and one quarter wolf. I became very interested in wolf behavior and read anything that I could find on wolves all of which helped better understand my pet’s behavior. I am a real advocate of wolves.

Favorite Volunteering opportunity – Three years on the Training Committee. Presently my favorites are the MN and Native Plant Society’s wildflower art project with DISD’s 4th graders and the DISD Clear Creek Days.

Story or antidote: I moved in 2014 to an apartment in Denton after I had lived in homes that allowed me to observe nature. I was restless and finally decided that I was “Nature Deprived”. At a meeting, a Master Naturalist mentioned that she was involved in bird banding. When I told her that I was interested in birds, she told me that I would have to become a Master Naturalist and that there was an Open House in two weeks. She would not be there but encouraged me to attend. I knew nothing about Master Naturalists and decided to attend. Rita Lokie was my Ambassador. I was impressed by the program but thought that I might wait a year before applying to the class. Rita wasn’t going to let me get away without applying that day! With her “gentle” persistence I completed an application that day. Thank you, Rita.

Monthly Specials

From James Gerber

Welcome to the inaugural installment of **Citizen Science Corner**. Each month we will highlight a different citizen science opportunity that may be of interest to Master Naturalists. Let's get started!



CoCoRaHS – is the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network. Sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), and operated by the Colorado Climate Center at Colorado State University, CoCoRaHS is a unique, non-profit, community-based network of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow). By using low-cost measurement tools, stressing training and education, and utilizing an interactive website (and mobile app), their aim is to provide the highest quality data for natural resource, education and research applications. They operate in all fifty states.

CoCoRaHS data is used by a wide variety of organizations and individuals. The National Weather Service, other meteorologists, hydrologists, emergency managers, city utilities (water supply, water conservation, storm water), insurance adjusters, USDA, engineers, mosquito control, ranchers and farmers, outdoor & recreation interests, teachers, students, and neighbors in the community are just some examples.

Every observer uses the same rain gauge, a Stratus 4-inch, to ensure accuracy and consistency across the country. Observers are asked to check their gauge at 7:00am (local time).



Where do I go to get started?

Go to <https://www.cocorahs.org/Application.aspx> to sign up. There you will also find training materials and links to purchase the rain gauge.

What does it cost? Nothing to join. The rain gauge is \$35 - \$40.

Can I get service hours?

Stay tuned! A new project is in the works to allow EFCTMN members to log their CoCoRaHS hours.

If you have an idea for a future Citizen Science Corner, please send it to Jim Gerber (jvgerber@gmail.com).



Features

House Sparrows in Eastern Bluebird Nest Boxes

By Sharon Clark

Master Naturalist Class of 2014

In the ongoing and often exasperating effort to protect the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialis sialis*) nests from the aggressive non indigenous House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) on my property, I have stumbled upon a method that seems to be successful for protecting the seven Eastern Bluebird nesting boxes positioned over a 6 acre field.



Photo #1

For two nesting seasons (2015-2017) I used a variety of deterrents. I removed the House Sparrow nest from the box as soon as I noticed the nest being assembled or removed the House Sparrow eggs only or both the eggs and the nest. I tried blocking the entry hole of a box if the male House Sparrow was particularly stubborn about a particular box. But new House Sparrow nests were usually completed in a day or two, more eggs were produced, and/or the nesting pair would only start a new nest in another box (causing more havoc! (See photo # 1).

During a shopping trip in early 2018 to a big box hobby store, I happened upon a selection of inexpensive artificial decorative bird eggs (some sort of plastic composition). One set was similar to

House Sparrow eggs, so I purchased a package with the thought that I would give egg substitution a try. Please see photo # 2.

For both the 2018 and 2019 breeding seasons, I allowed the House Sparrow to occupy a nest box, create a nest, and lay all her eggs. While she was incubating them, I would remove the real eggs and replaced them with the same number of artificial eggs. I would monitor the box daily to determine the reaction of the female. The artificial eggs were not removed by the female and, with rare exception, no additional real eggs were laid (if new real eggs were noted, I would remove them and substitute artificial eggs). Once the nest was abandoned, I would clean out the box.

If I noticed another nest being built (they would always return to the same box), I would again let a new nest be completed and check for a new clutch of eggs. During the incubation period, I would again substitute the artificial eggs. After the female abandoned the nest (sometimes after a prolonged incubation attempt!), I would repeat the clean-out process and await any new nesting activity.

Usually there were three nesting attempts (in the same nest box) before nesting activity was abandoned.

None of the other bluebird boxes (empty or occupied) were disturbed during this process.

In 2018, the House Sparrows occupied two of the seven nest boxes – always the same two boxes. In 2019, only one box was occupied – always the same box. Over the course of the two mating seasons, I discarded around 60 House Sparrow eggs.

Starting in March of this year, three Eastern Bluebird mating pairs have established nests in three boxes resulting in 12 fledglings. No House Sparrows have nested in any of the boxes to date.

I still have my artificial eggs if I need them.



Photo #2

Features

About a Bird

Article and photos by Tim Trosper—
class 2018

Once upon a time, we had a cat. This story really is about a bird, but it has to begin with a cat. Pandora was a cute little creature that my mother acquired a few years before she died. My two sisters had gifted the kitten, thinking it would help the cause. While I was staying with mom for a week while she recuperated from one of her many surgeries, this adorable little pet would stage sneak attacks in the hallway against anyone wondering into the strike zone. Her favorite target was the long flowing nighty mom wore. “Pandy” was a full-on guerilla warrior: strike, climb, and exit. When I saw my mom almost go to ground on several of these attacks, I told my mother and sisters that we might have to find another home for this little devil.

It is an amazing thing, the way we bond with animals. Mom was fragile of body, but fierce in spirit, and she connected with this cat in a visceral way that ended any concerns I had for her safety. So I tried to hold watch and give warnings as best I could. It was an amazing thing to see this animal literally climb the walls of a small apartment in sudden, unpredictable spurts. My mom loved it. It was entertaining, but I worried about broken hips

We inherited Pandy when my mom died, as there was no other apparent place for her. She was four years old when we took her in and she had been raised as an inside/outside cat. Most everyone in the world thinks their kids and their pets are exceptional. It’s just one of those human things that has more to do with emotional bonding than objective reality. But, I have to say this animal was an exceptional exception. Her face was split right down the middle with brown and gray as though someone had painted it with masking tape. Her paws were reversed. And everything about her nature was split in the same way. She was sweet and she was vicious. Just ask two of the veterinarians who shed blood despite my warnings to put on heavy gloves before they approached the strike zone.



So we love our pets, and in the case of Pandy we had to let her roam the neighborhood at will. Some of my friends suggested de-clawing her and turning her into a house cat. It’s one thing to raise a house cat from birth. But you cannot “domesticate” a half-feral animal. I would euthanize her before I would lock her in. Bonding is a powerful thing.

So, we coped. We pleaded with our ten year old son to quit playing rough with her, as some of his teachers surely thought he was cutting himself or otherwise being subjected to home abuse. His arms were often streaked with fine red lines. Otherwise, Pandy was perfectly docile with us and other human visitors. The critters in the neighborhood were another story.

Mice, rats, snakes, large insects, lizards, efts and pretty much any small thing that moved was brought into the house. One year I kept count up to 100 animals and then gave up around Thanksgiving. She was a skilled and prolific hunter. I had just gotten into birding during Pandy’s heyday. I hung a bird feeder just outside our bedroom window so as to get a close look at visitors. One morning I saw Pandy leap at the feeder from a photinia bush and grab a bird mid-air about 7 feet off the ground. She lost the bird when she hit the ground while I stood at the window, slack jawed. I moved the feeder.

But of course this didn’t stop the carnage. Nobody likes having mourning doves served up in the kitchen for breakfast, so we got Pandy a bell. It was a deterrent but not a cure. I shopped pet stores for louder bells, but at a point I had to just learn to accept the way things are. Sumus quod sumus.

So the story about a bird began when Pandy delivered a fascinating specimen. This bird was DOA, but intact with no apparent bodily damage. A beautiful creature that I could not identify. It had a face that was masked across the eyes like Zorro, a brownish color turning to grey down its back with a sharp splash of red on the end of its secondary feathers. But what really got my attention was the tail, which looked like a paint brush barely dipped in the purest hue of yellow.

You may already know the species but I did not. I grabbed my brand new Sibley’s and began the search that all birders know. Only this time, I didn’t have to recall what I thought I saw on the bird walk two hours ago. I had the thing right in front of me. Still, it took a minute, and I finally just started scanning the pages for a bird with a tail that looked like it was dipped in yellow paint. Gotcha!

It is hard to describe the feeling of “getting” a bird to a non-birder, especially a new bird. Actually, it’s impossible. Anyone who has eyes and ears can do this activity. But the difference between a novice birder and expert is thousands of hours outside and not a little research work if you want to get good at targeting a new bird or identifying by song, the last and certainly most difficult method of naming the species. Even with good binoculars, they defy the novice in so many ways. They are back-lit, or behind the branch, or somehow know to bolt just a nanosecond before the knob finds the focus. If you are alone and new to the hobby, you have to get what you can from the moment, remember the points, and then consult your resources, be it a book or app. Smaller than a robin, bigger than a chickadee, dark head, cone beak, and on and on and still, you might not have it for certain. In the parlance, “getting” the bird means certainty.

Features

It is nothing short of a master class to go on a walk with an expert birder. If you haven't been out with Scott Kiester or Sue Yost, you can look forward to a real treat. I was out with Ken Steigman at LLELA recently putting up Owl boxes and he spotted, peripherally, something happening just under a tree about 75 yards from us. I caught just a glimpse of it after he said "Cooper's Hawk." Bewildered, I asked him how he got it with such a quick glance so far away. He said, "50 years."

But I had all the time in the world with the specimen on my kitchen table. A Cedar Waxwing. This was my first up-close-and-personal experience with a bird and I looked at every part of it. The feathers under a magnifying glass were exquisite. The little red tips weren't feathers nor bone. They looked like a diva's painted finger nails. They were indeed actually kind of waxy. Now how would you ever know this unless you had the bird in hand? I did, but only later found out this is why the "waxwing." It's the red tips!

Years later, on a family group walk at a lake house in Oklahoma, eight of us kids and adults were having fun at Thanksgiving sneaking up on armadillos and looking over scat. Kids love scat. But there wasn't much in the way of birds until we spotted a "museum" of waxwings. We were too far away to call it an "ear-full," and these impaired ears of mine wouldn't hear the high pitched song anyway. It was really a highlight of the walk to let everyone get a good look at these handsome birds with binoculars. There were ooohs and ahhs aplenty, which is always my favorite song when I'm out walking with people I love.

A couple of days ago, a group of about a hundred birds gathered in a favorite roosting spot visible from my patio. I immediately thought "waxwings" without thinking. 20 years.



I spent nearly an hour with this particular museum of birds. They cooperated while I took a maximum zoom shot with my iPhone.

I could see no color against the dull cloudy sky, but I could barely make out the crested heads. Wishful thinking? So I fetched my binocs to confirm what I already knew, or very strongly thought. They stayed long enough for me to set up my scope and look over the crests, masks, red tips, and yellow-dipped tails.

It wasn't until I had them in my binoculars that I said to myself "Gotcha."

Certainty is a binary thing, don't you know? 99% certain is an oxymoron. One either is, or one is not. It's odd that so much of our life is powered by machines that run on this very principal: on or off, one or zero. One might think that this black-or-white paradigm would be common in our natural world since we base our technologies it, but the opposite is the rule. The minute we encounter pretty much any aspect of life on earth, there is a vast grey area of complexity that blurs our attempt to focus in on a clear understanding.

But, we keep at it, don't we? I don't know exactly why your wings are tipped with a red carotenoid extension, Mrs. Waxwing, but it is beautiful accent to your stunning outfit, and it tells me who you are. I'm certain of that small fact, and happy to greet you by name.



(Note: this photograph copied from the web)

Features

Charles Swatske
EFCMN 2019

Snake Repellents - A Stinky Scam

There are a number of products on the market that make the claim that they can keep snakes away. While some are chemicals, & others are mechanical or create vibrations, there is one thing they all have in common: snake repellent products do nothing at all to deter snakes from your yard.

There is no correlation between spending money on this stuff & seeing fewer snakes in your yard.

Pest control companies will disagree & of course they have a service to sell. I've heard all too often in the snake business from pest control companies something like "we know it doesn't work, but our customers ask for it". You know the song, "Give the customer what he wants !!".

If you are wasting money on this stuff you should stop immediately, & spend the money on increasing (non-poison) rodent control.

There are regional myths that are passed around as well. The idea that mothballs, rope of any kind, coffee grounds, rubber pellets, the skin of a king snake, cat urine, or any others out there actually keep snakes away is not based on reality.

Some will dispute this, despite plenty of scientific studies disproving repellants, but that's easy to explain. If a person spends hundreds of dollars on a snake repellent, then reports that they see fewer snakes, that person may be left with the idea that snake repellents do indeed keep snakes away. However, it is more than likely that they just haven't seen more snakes, & they are doing other things right as a result of an encounter .

So by plenty of evidence, don't waste your money on any of this junk.

What might work ?

- 1/ Eliminate rodents & other food sources
- 2/ Sometimes your neighbors yard brings in the problem . Talk to your neighbors.
- 3/ Eliminate habitat - one of the greatest contributors is Lantana & other low to the ground flowering plants. But we all love this plants, but rodents will hide in them, and snake will look there for a meal.
- 4/ Design your yard with more native plants . Cactus & others that require less water and provide minimal shade.
- 5/ Remove & replace Lantana & other similar heavy leafy and shaded plants.
- 6/ If you do keep Lantana keep it well maintained & always remove leaf litter



FEATURES

6/ If you do keep Lantana keep it well maintained & always remove leaf litter

7/ Change the watering schedule to be only as much as is needed. If you have native plants that are healthy, consider removing the drip system entirely



8/ As above, keep water sources dry & unavailable. Don't create a snake oasis!

9/ Snakes like to keep cool. Minimize shade opportunities

10/ Rodents & other animals are builders of snake homes.

11/ Keep walkways clear

12/ Keep up on building maintenance...the greatest potential source of shelter for snakes is the house itself. Seal cracks in the foundation. Unsealed cracks between the concrete and base of a home are just what snakes need to consider it a place to live.

13/ Install physical barriers & snake fencing . The best thing you can do to keep potentially dangerous snakes out of your yard is to install physical barriers.

14/ Have a conversation with your Home Owners Association . Some of the biggest issues that I see in neighborhoods are areas between properties, along the edge, the parks, drainages, and areas that are managed by the property managers & HOA's.

15/ Your garage is not a cave
Especially is early Spring and the hottest times of the year, I have been called many times to find snakes in garages. Simple reason : the garage when accessible is just a cave. You can prevent this by preventing access to the garage. Make sure the garage door seal is in good condition and fully seals.

16/ Sometimes there is nothing you can do...even if you all the stuff I've written, snakes still show up. You live in Texas!!!

17/ Learn all you can about our native and local snakes.

18/ Above all snakes aren't out to get you, don't worry too much! Snakes in Texas are a natural and necessary occurrence. People are going to get bit a lot this year so be *Snake Aware*.

Good Luck and be happy in nature.

Best Regards
Chuck Swatske
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Cswatske@yahoo.com

Features

Do you believe? Myths, Superstitions, Folklore. Part 1

Sue YOST Class of 2017

Birds, for centuries have been the basis for many myths and legends. Did you know.....

If you see a Robin singing in the open, good weather is on its way. However if it is seen sheltering among the branches of a tree, that means it will rain soon. If a Robin was heard singing over and over, my Mom would always remark, "that Robin is singing for rain!"

Many cultures believe it is an important sign if a bird flies into your house. Some believe that an important message is on its way. And then some people believe if a bird flies into your home that it is a sign that someone is going to die.

Ravens have long played an important role in many cultures. In Greek mythology they were associated with Apollo who used them as watchmen, messengers and spies. In London, the famous Ravens still protect the Tower of London so the kingdom will not fall. There are even special staff members called "Ravenmasters" who are paid to take care of the Ravens.

Doves have always been significant religious and spiritual symbols. Doves were regarded as the messengers of the Roman goddess of Love Venus and Indians believe killing a dove is unlucky. Doves are believed to be the one bird that the Devil cannot change himself into and the one bird that is immune to his curses. Having a dove flying around or tapping on a window of a sick person's house signifies that they will die shortly. Miners consider seeing a dove near their mineshaft an omen that there will be danger if they descend into the mine.

If a pigeon poops on you it could mean bad luck is coming.
Crows are a bad omen, especially if you see to the left of you.
If you hear a Cuckoo, it foretells good luck.
Kingfishers signify that a big scandal threatens your happiness.
If an owl hoots 3 times be extra careful.

Gulls are said to portray the death of a friend. And you do not want to be touched by one [unless you are on a boat, then seeing one land near you is good luck].

Sailors used to believe if an Albatross flew around their ship in the middle of the voyage that bad weather and windy conditions were coming. It was also considered bad luck to kill an Albatross.

Magpies used to be called the Devil in disguise. If you saw one around your home, the Devil was trying to stir up trouble for you! If you lived in the English county of Somerset, you could carry an onion with you to ward off the trouble. OR you could spit 3X over your right shoulder and chant "Devil, devil I defy thee!" BUT now in Korea, the Magpie has a totally different interpretation, it is the national bird and thought to bring good luck!. Seeing two Magpies means that good luck will appear within three days.

All things black were thought to be bad omens in past cultures. BUT legend has it if you see 2 male Black-birds perched next to each other it means good luck.

Hawks signify that powerful enemies are about to threaten you, especially if seen on your left.

Swallows predict good fortune especially in early spring. If they build a nest under your room it's even better good luck! It's bad luck if you kill one.

Wrens are omens of good luck. However if you ever hurt or frighten one you will likely find yourself in peril!

Features

Owls have played a significant role in legends for many centuries. Good and evil, they usually get a bad rap. They are considered messengers of the spiritual world and because they are nocturnal and fly at night they have also been associated with witches and darkness. If a Welsh pregnant woman heard an owl hoot then it was believed she would have an easy labor. Because the Greek Goddess Athena, the goddess of wisdom, had the owl as her symbol, it became known as a symbol of wisdom. Native Americans tribes have different interpretations of Owls. The Pawnee thought the owl was a symbol of protection while the Ojibwas saw it as an omen of death or evil.

Some people have a total fear of birds. What kinds of superstitions do you have?

Do you believe? Myths, Superstitions, Folklore. Part 2

Sue YOST Class of 2017

Animals for centuries have been the basis for many myths and legends. Did you know.....

Bats are a symbol of bad luck, especially if they cry when flying.

Goats are a sign of good luck.

Squirrels signify that happiness will soon be found.

If a hare crosses your path, it's bad luck.

Pigs are bad omens, especially if you meet one immediately after getting married!

White rats are good omens but black ones are bad omens.

Crickets are very good luck, however if they leave your garden or house then bad luck will follow.

Grasshoppers are a sign of good luck, if you see one, then good news will follow.

If bees are in your house, then they are a sign of good luck.

Wasps foretell a danger caused by jealousy.

Ants nesting near your house is good luck. BUT to be bitten by one means arguments and quarrels will soon come.

Ladybugs are good omens.

Spiders are just bad luck all around. If you see one in the morning, then grief will come. If seen in the afternoon then anxiety will follow. If seen in the evening, then you will have bad luck with money. Never kill one as it is thought to bring bad luck to you. If you witness a spider spinning a web it signifies that people are plotting against you! BUT if it's a spider is found on your body then it's good luck!

A black cat crossing your path is bad luck.

If you see a horse's tail first, then bad luck will befall a friend. A piebald horse is good luck.

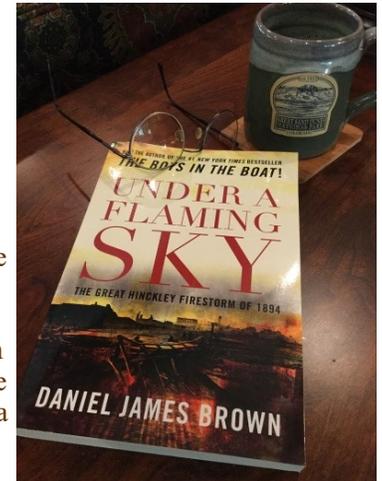
Whether you call it superstitious, fate, God's will or just habit, there are many omens and signs out there that people around the world still believe in...do you?

Let's Read

From Robert McLaughlin

Book Recommendation (Robert's Readings)

Under A Flaming Sky by Daniel James Brown tells the story of the 1894 forest fire that destroyed the logging community of Hinckley, Minnesota. This was not an ordinary summer forest fire; by comparison the infamous 2002 "Biscuit" fire in Oregon scorched 200,000 acres over a week's time. The fire that reduced Hinckley to ashes burned the same land area in just five hours. (After the fire, rescuers found barrels of loose nails that had been melted into solid masses of iron). This book reads much more like a story told around a campfire rather than a history book. Brown offers a description of the forestry practices of the time and how they laid the groundwork for the disaster that unfolded. Anyone who has visited the Northwoods of Minnesota or has an interest in American history should find this an enjoyable read.



Announcements

New Project Announced—**AT Approved**

Pollinator Citizen Science Project – a Board-approved project that members can perform at home, a nearby park or a nature center. The purpose of this project is to use citizen scientists to determine the attractiveness of different commercially available ornamentals to different groups of pollinators. The project involves the review of a two-part training module (Pollinator Training and Contribution Training) followed by the successful completion of a quiz. The project participant may then begin contributing observations using an on-line Contribution Form. *For conformity to TMN guidelines, participating Chapter volunteers are asked to restrict their observations to native plant species.* Detailed project information is available at <https://sixleggedaggie.com/research/pollinator-project/>. Before you begin your participation please contact Mike Hatch (vms@efctmn.org) to obtain VMS posting instructions. If you have any questions about the project, please contact Jody Springer or Kathryn Wells at (projects@efctmn.org).



“...and then, I have nature and art and poetry, and if that is not enough, what is enough?”

Field Notes in Focus



MAY FLY ON MY IRIS BY THE POND –FROM GALLERY OF LISA ROSENBERG

Contributors to this Naturalist News



wanda odum
editor, class 2005

James Gerber class 2019—
no photo available



Tim Troser class 2018



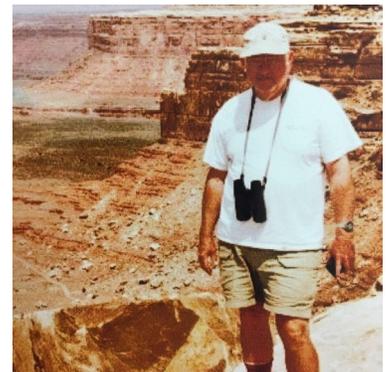
Mary Morrow class 2014



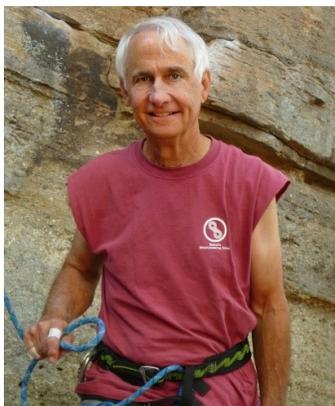
Sue Yost class 2017



Robert McLaughlin class 2017



Bob James class 2003



Jonathan Reynolds class 2014



Dorothy Thetford class 2001

Jean Mason
class 2017



Sharon Clark class 2014



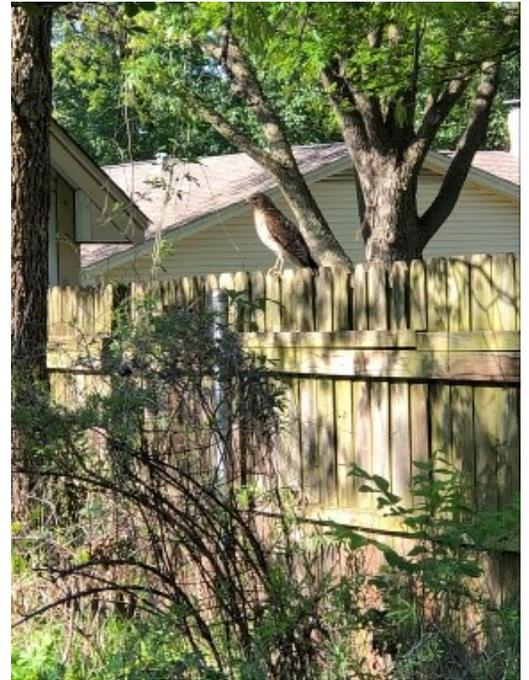
Chuck Swatski class 2018

Picture gallery

A walk across the prairie where it is alive with the sound
wildflowers from Dorothy Thetford



Gulf Coast Penstemon—
Dorothy Thetford



Then in the backyard keeping watch is
a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter Cooperii*)
- Dorothy Thetford

Spiderwort (*Tradescantia
occidentalis*)
Dorothy Thetford



Almost the Last Word

From Bob James



"WILD GEESE"

by Mary Oliver

"Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine..."

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.



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

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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"

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."

Regular 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:

"Ecology of horned lizards living in small Texas Towns"

Virtual meeting on May 21 features Dr. Dean Williams, TCU

Board Meetings

The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met May 14, 2020. Next monthly Board meeting June 11, 2020.

Monthly Board meetings are open to members.

OFFICERS OF THE BOARD:

PRESIDENT—Brenda Wellenreiter

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT—Adelaide Bodner

VICE-PRESIDENT/PROJECTS—Jody Springer

SECRETARY—Kathryn Wells

TREASURER—Jerry Betty

MEMBER-at-LARGE—Harriet Powell

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES— David Jones & Susan Pritchard

ADVISORS:

Janet Laminack, Extension Agent

TPWD—Ricardo Torres



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