

Good Water Ripples



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Viewing Butterflies at Berry Springs Park and Preserve

Story and Photos By Jack Cochran

I'd been coming to Texas for 35 years to look for its beautiful birds, but about three years ago they became much more accessible because I moved here. Even better, I found a gem of a place to look for them, almost in my own backyard: Berry Springs Park and Preserve, which has an impressive species list of 249 species. Birds are typically more active during the morning and evening hours, but I like to be out in the field all day, so how do I occupy my midday time? Butterflies! They are as colorful and varied as birds.

It's an easy transition from birding to butterflying if you already have binoculars, especially those that close-focus, as butterflies are more easily approached than birds. Binoculars allow close-up views of a butterfly's wing details, which provide the clues necessary to identify it.

But don't worry if you don't have binoculars; just quietly approach, look, and

enjoy. Identification is fun, and facilitated by a good field guide. I'm currently using *A Swift Guide to Butterflies of North America* (Second Edition), by Jeffrey Glassberg, which has excellent photographs and range maps. Or, if you're taking pictures of butterflies you can submit them to iNaturalist for identification help.

Hopefully you've been to Berry Springs

Park and Preserve to see the beautiful wildflowers, especially in the spring. Those flowers are a prime place to look for butterflies as they

feed on nectar.

Park staff and volunteers also maintain excellent gardens around the cemetery (near the Tonka-

wa Pavilion). Bloom-

ing trees provide butterfly sustenance, too. But not all butterflies use flowers.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail



Common Buckeye



Soapberry Hairstreak

Some feed on tree sap (e.g., the Question Mark) and other organic material, so keep an eye out even where there are no flowers.

My butterfly list for Berry Springs Park and Preserve numbers almost 75 species (<https://www.inaturalist.org/lists/3210661-Butterflies-of-Berry-Springs-Park-and-Preserve>).

Butterflies-

of-Berry-Springs-Park-and-Preserve). Interestingly, more than a few of these can be seen outside of peak wildflower season, so if you're hiking the park, even in fall or winter, keep your eyes open for these colorful insects.

What's the next "new" butterfly for the park? Hopefully you will tell me with your own observations! 🦋



Great Purple Hairstreak

June Speaker Talks Rainwater Harvesting

By Mary-Gail Hamilton

Small rainwater systems or rain barrels are prevalent in the mass media, and for the general public represent the extent of their knowledge about rainwater harvesting. June's presentation is on the design and implementation of rainwater harvesting SYSTEMS which will make an impact in reducing your municipal water consumption while providing a better water source for your landscaping. We will discuss state-of-the-art rainwater harvesting system components along with do's and don'ts of rainwater harvesting.

Chris Maxwell-Gaines, P.E. was born and raised in Cameron, Texas. He received a B.S. in Civil Engineering specializing in water and wastewater from Texas A&M University in College Station.

After college, Chris and his wife, Lindsey, joined the U.S. Peace Corps and accepted a post in Suriname, South America. They were assigned to the remote village of Godo Olo which is located in the Amazon rainforest. One of their largest projects was a village water well and delivery system. The village wanted a more consistent water source and quality year-round. They helped the village design the system, secure funding for the project, and implement the system.

After returning to Austin, Chris worked on civil engineering projects ranging from TMDL computer modeling projects for impaired streams in Texas, to subdivision design, to water and wastewater treatment plant design. He became a licensed

engineer in 2007.

In 2004, Chris started Innovative Water Solutions LLC (IWS). IWS is a design/build water conservation company that focuses on the nexus of stormwater management and water conservation. IWS designs and installs rainwater/stormwater collection systems, stormwater management systems, graywater reuse systems, efficient irrigation systems and water conservative landscaping for residential/commercial projects. To date, IWS has installed over eight million gallons of rainwater storage capacity across the state of Texas.

Stay tuned for additional information on the June 25 Zoom Chapter presentation. 🌱

Wilson's Snipe: A Long Billed Winter Visitor in Central Texas

By Mary Ann Melton

Most of us have heard the joke about going on a snipe hunt at night. However, the Wilson's Snipe is a real bird that visits Central Texas every winter. It is a distinctive shorebird because the long, needle-like bill seems way too big for the bird's size. Three other shorebirds share that oversized bill - the Long Billed Dowitcher, the Short Billed Dowitcher, and the American Woodcock. All of these long billed birds may be found in Central Texas, but the most common is the Wilson's Snipe.

One of the distinctive differences to identify the Wilson's Snipe is the prominent buff and brown stripes and white wing bars and the dark stripes on the head. Legs and feet are yellow-green. There is no difference in plumage be-

tween males, females, or juveniles nor are there plumage changes for breeding. The body is rounded and plump with a short tail. Snipes have extra-large pectoral muscles giving the breast area a stocky look.



These muscles make up nearly a quarter of the bird's weight. These flight muscles allow the snipe to fly at speeds estimated at 60 miles per hour.

Wilson's Snipes can be seen along the water's edges probing for food. The motion is much like a sewing machine. They eat insect larvae of crane flies, horse flies and dragonflies, as well as spiders, worms, leeches, crustaceans and other invertebrates. They sometimes eat lizards, frogs, and fish. They have sensory receptors at the tip of their bill that helps them locate food. The bill has a flexible tip that

can open to grasp the food while the base of the bill remains closed. They can slurp their prey from mud without removing their bill. Their eyes are far back on the head allowing it to see almost as well behind as it can to the front and sides. This makes it difficult for predators to sneak up on it.

In the 1770's British soldiers hunted snipe as game birds. The origin of the word sniper comes from the ability to shoot a snipe. Hunting snipe became "sniping." The snipe's camouflage and fast zigzag flight style makes them difficult targets. Shooting them in flight required great skill from the hunter.

I have seen Wilson's Snipes at my own backyard pond and the Riverwalk Pond in Hutto, at Lake Pflugerville, at Hornsby Bend in Austin, at a pond north of Lake Granger, and at the low water crossing on the San Gabriel River at Mankin's Crossing on US HWY 29. 🌱

Spotlight on Master Naturalist Members

By Susan Blackledge



Scott Quigley, a Man of Many Talents

Scott has been an invaluable volunteer to Berry Springs Park and Preserve. He says he loves solving problems. He is a retired engineer and when the park crew is scratching their heads, Scott already has everything figured out.

Scott began volunteering at the park as a one-man landscaping crew doing a phenomenal job sprucing up the cemetery beds. He has been working with Charles Newsom, our invasive removal leader, who has been making it his mission to make Berry Springs a native preserve as much as possible. Together they have removed and or reduced an abundance of varieties of invasive plants and trees. It's an endless and not-so-easy task.

Scott did a remarkable job of designing and rebuilding the porch steps of the home office to make them last. He's worked with park staff to assemble and install the campground drinking fountains. He is currently helping us to assemble and install a long-awaited aeration system for the pond. We are hoping the system will help control invasive aquatic vegetation.

Berry Springs is a better place because of his hard work and dedication. We are extremely appreciative of his contributions!



Gene Brown, Invasive Control Park Police

2020 Master Naturalist Class may be on hold due to the Covid virus, but that hasn't stopped Master Naturalist trainee Gene Brown from getting his volunteer hours and learning about nature.

I met Gene at the class Project Fair. He asked what he could do for the park. He said he loved working outdoors and wasn't afraid of hard work. Say no more! He began by picking up limbs in the pecan grove and did a meticulous job of hours of grooming the park grounds. His attention and devotion are impressive.

Being springtime, the invasive bastard cabbage reared its ugly head. I asked Gene if he wanted to tackle the project of invasive removal of bastard cabbage. He said he wanted to get rid of it all. I laughed to myself, only because I had once thought I could do that too. But, Gene lived up to his words. He removed all visible and some not visible hard-to-get-at bastard cabbage. Not only that, he then began to remove Malta Star and Italian Thistle when found. He is currently removing beggars lice - another endless job. He has put in 85 hours of service so far pulling up invasives at Berry Springs Park and Preserve!

Gene has removed enough invasive plants single handedly to fill a ten yard

dumpster and he's not done! Berry Springs owes this man a debt of gratitude. Words can't express how appreciative park staff are. He admits he's learned a lot about invasive and native plants while taking on this task. Way to go Gene!

There are plenty of volunteer opportunities @ BSPP. Contact Susan Blackledge @ susieblackledge@gmail.com or call 512-930-0040 for more information. 🌱



Other happenings at Berry Springs: A group of volunteers helped with pond cleaning. Thanks to their efforts, a lot of vegetation was removed. (Top, Center) The Indian Blanket put on a spectacular show! (Bottom)

Highlights of City Nature Challenge 2020

By Lori Franz, with help from Mike Farley

The 2020 City Nature Challenge was unique this year. Advertised as a non-competition due to Covid-19, one would think the world-wide numbers wouldn't be very impressive, but I found them pretty ambitious. The Austin Metro area clicked away with their cameras and came up with 18,504



In search of ...

observations and 2,533 recorded species, resulting in 8th place worldwide. Dallas and Houston out do our numbers, but the Austin group always steps up to the challenge. And who gets credit for the top position? For the second year in a row, Cape Town, South Africa. Kudos to Dallas for placing second again this year!

Worldwide, there were 42,009 observers posting on iNaturalist CNC Project, 817,183 observations and 33,020 species. Wow!

Closer to home, our chapter did well representing the Austin Metro with Mike Farley achieving first place in recorded species (506) and second for observations (743). Mary

Ann Melton was busy too, hitting fourth position with her 469 observations; 226 species. Bob Waring did not sit still

either with number ten (338 observations; 207 species). And Larry Swift was close behind in thirteenth position (298 observations; 186 species). Rounding out the Top 20 include April Rohlich and Marcia Wutke. Way to go, gang!

Hats off to seven of our more recent graduates.

And, of course our newest observer, Jack Cochran coming in eleventh with his 301 observations and 120 species. Jack is in the Spring 2020 Master Naturalist class. He wastes no time!

Here are a few comments from a few of our chapter's 21 observers:



Scarlet Pimpernel by April Rohlich

was Bee Balm flowering in her yard that probably came from planted seed balls, created at a GWMN-led library youth

activity.

Bob Waring stayed along a stretch near his place along Berry Creek and “found plants that I had never noticed before, some good, some invasive.” He was indeed looking closely at nature.

Mike Farley, a fifth time observer, visited 24 locations and covered 456 miles! His favorite moment was coming face-to-face with a live Beaver on day two (see photo). He probably wins for the Worst Moment: “My car died in the middle of

nowhere the morning of the first day, resulting in a loss of an hour and a half plus the cost of a new battery.” I hate it when that happens, Mike.



Red-legged Buprestis Beetle by Mike Farley

Todd MCann also traveled far: six places and over 80 miles. His Best Mo-

ment was finding a “new, weird-looking bug, called a Wheel Bug” (see photo). His advice? “Everyone should take a shot at it. Even if you only get one photo it is worth the time.” One suggestion he has for the newcomer is “be familiar with your camera, phone or recording device before you hit the trail.”

Ann Martin is relatively new to CNC but says her best backyard experience was “seeing diversity and natives”; worst was “discovering poison ivy.”

Favorite species was Bee Balm flowering in her yard that probably came from planted seed balls, created at a GWMN-led library youth

Elizabeth Sartain explored nature in her backyard and said her favorite species she saw was a Milkweed Assassin Bug (on Carolina Buckthorn, not milkweed)! She also says, “I found a Pea/Bean Weevil, which may explain why my green beans aren't thriving this year.”

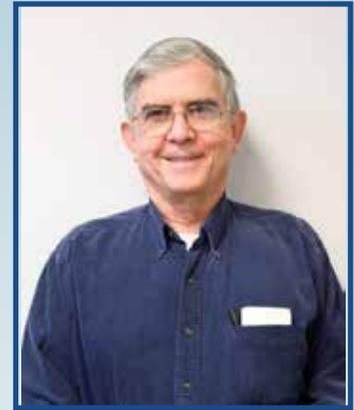
Amy Flinn always has Bell County

pretty well represented and also spent her time at Berry Spring Park, which she says is “always wonderful to hike.” Favorite species? She is partial to turtles. This competition led her to a “lifer” bird, a Blue Grosbeak. Amy always has her eyes wide open.

And finally, April Rohlich hit the road with five sites and 30 miles in her search. Be sure to look at her Pearl Milkweed plant, Halloween Pennant dragonfly, and Scarlet Pimpernel (pretty flower!). April says, “It is tempting to maximize species with a plan starting at midnight on day one as some others do.” Nothing in the dark does captures a lot and a good idea April, et al but really just let me sleep! See everyone again in 2021!🍀



More pictures captured during the City Nature Challenge include from Top Clockwise: Red-Eared Slider by Amy Flinn; Co-manche Skimmer by April Rohlich; Beaver by Mike Farley; and Wheel Bug by James Todd McCann.



In Memoriam

Dave McAdoo, a long-time member of the Good Water Chapter passed away in April. In his career, he was a Neuroscience and Cell Botany Professor Emeritus at UTMB in Galveston.

Originally, he was a member of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter. He and his wife, Gail, moved to Georgetown after Hurricane Ike. After they moved they continued to volunteer as Master Naturalists.

Dave was on the Good Water Chapter Steering Committee and was the first treasurer for our chapter.

He volunteered on the Rivery Project, Stream Team Monitoring, and the Berry Springs Park pond clean-up. He was also a member of the book club.

We will always remember him for his cheerfulness, enthusiasm, and wisdom.🍀

Eastern Bluebirds at Berry Springs Park and Preserve

By Christie Gardner, Bluebird Nestwatch Project Leader

One of the projects the Goodwater Chapter participates in is the Bluebird Nestwatch at Berry Springs Park and Preserve in Georgetown. This Citizen Science Project, in conjunction with The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, began at Berry Springs about 10 years ago.



This is such a fun project for so many reasons. 1) Volunteers walk the Bluebird Trail of 15 nest boxes in one of the most beautiful parks in the state!

2) The Eastern Bluebirds we monitor are gorgeous and usually quite friendly as well as easy to spot. The pecan orchards at Berry Springs are the perfect habitat for these birds, because of the mowed grass and tall trees. These birds live here year-round but breed February to August.



3) The Nestwatch information we collect twice a week during breeding season helps keep track of Eastern Bluebirds across the nation.

The population of Eastern, Western and Mountain Bluebirds were found to be dwindling across the nation in the 60's and 70's because the trees with cavities they nested in were being cut down. Since we started providing Bluebird houses, we have seen more and more bluebirds. In fact, most years, Texas records more Eastern Bluebirds on Cornell

Nestwatch than any other state.

4) Bluebirds are just cool to observe! To watch them build a six-inch high nest, lay eggs, watch those nests fill with lovely light blue eggs, get lucky and see birds hatching, then watch those baby birds transform from ungainly pink blobs to fully feathered fledglings who then fly into your face when you open the nest box is beyond

amazing! After a couple of weeks of taking care of their newly fledged young ones, they start all over again! Some of our birds have had as many as four to five clutches of babies in four to five months!

It is really fun is to walk through the orchard, look up into the pecan trees, and see a little family of bluebirds sitting on a branch with Mom and Dad teaching the babies how to hunt for insects.

5) Seeing volunteers look into a nest box for the first time and get a glimpse of a clutch of five gorgeous blue eggs, produces smiles and ahhhhhs all around. The bluebirds have you hooked like I have been for the past seven years. I look forward to opening up our Bluebird Nestwatch to volunteers again on Sign-Up Genius because the BEST part of this project is sharing the wonder and joy of watching this amazing process and knowing that you are helping wildlife.🌱



I Would Rather Have a Pellet

By Todd McCann

Friday, I began to see very large white droppings on my car. I thought maybe it was a Pterodactyl or some other large flying thing I could not see.

My car was clean Saturday when I came home, spotless I might say. Later when I started to get in my car the spot had returned. All of a sudden, a new spot appeared. It only missed me by inches.

Like any other curious person, I looked up to guess what happened..... I saw the culprit.

About a week later the owl decided to decorate my car in a different way. Bird innards were stuck to my window. I wish the owl would leave me a pellet. I have asked for one several times but no luck. My car still gets decorated.🌱

DIY Backyard Bird Drip/Bath

By Joel Chamberlain

Migrating warblers and other birds stop by for a drink. My screech owls love to bathe in it. I think I finally figured out how to provide water for my feathered friends while avoiding the daily “maintenance” I associate with a typical bird bath.

My drip is located in the backyard on a natural hillside, tucked under a canopy of live oaks. I wanted it to blend in and feel natural to the birds. Birds can drink from the drip directly, or from one of the small pools it flows into.



This is how my water drip works and how I made it for around \$100.

Water supply: Water is supplied via a 50-gallon rain barrel. Water exits the barrel by gravity via ¼” irrigation line. I placed a small shut off valve in the irrigation line so I can fine tune the water flow/drip. I drilled a hole in a small live oak log and fed the irrigation line through it. Water drips out of the log onto a big piece of native limestone that has shallow basins. I tilted the limestone rock so that the water eventually runs into a shallow basin I created.

Basin: I made the basin using a water heater drip pan for foundation, a bag of standard masonry mortar and a bunch of chert pieces I found in my yard. Initially I



built up about an inch of mortar base in the bottom of the pan and reinforced it with some chicken wire. The second layer of mortar included adding chert pieces around the sides and chert flakes on the bottom to keep it somewhat smooth. The goal was to create a shallow basin of 1/2” depth of water.

I typically fill up the rain barrel about once a week and keep an eye on the drip rate to adjust it to the rate of bird consumption and evaporation. Very little water overflows the basin. It is located on a shady, rocky hillside so I don’t worry too much about making a muddy mess.

I am off to a great start this year for visitors including Swainson’s Thrush, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Black Throated Green Warbler and Wilson’s Warbler!

I can’t wait to see all the new visitors in the coming months! 🌱

Nature Tracking at Berry Springs Park and Preserve

By Dale MacLean

One volunteer option presented in our Fall 2019 training involved setting, moving, and swapping out SD cards from remote cameras placed around Berry Springs. This project appealed to me as it combines walking and learning about the mammals living in a Riparian zone.

The project met once per week with four to 14 people led by Mike Farley. Mike combines a laid-back quiet enthusiasm with a large amount of equanimity. He ensures that all participants are equally included, answering questions, obtaining feedback on the potential location of the cameras, and instructing us in how to swap out the cards.

The activity involves heading off the well-groomed paths into the surrounding

habitat. This provides a different perspective of the park than you get sticking to the trails. The experience is enhanced by Mike and Kathy McCormack’s extensive knowledge on all things flora and fauna.

One highlight for me is being able to look at the captured images from the remote cameras during the previous week. You can always tell when an image of something other than the requisite Raccoon or Armadillo has been snapped by the oos, and aahs. Before I participated in this activity, I had no idea the area around Berry Springs is home to Bobcat, River Otters, Beaver, the occasional Coyote and even Southern Flying Squirrel.

Recently Mike and Kathy have also been setting cameras in Rivery Park.

This has enabled us to capture images of Swamp Rabbit, Ringtail and Gray Fox.

Once we swap out the cards from the cameras, they are divided up and we upload the images to iNaturalist. This provides an additional bonus and learning opportunity. Before I joined the Master Naturalists, I did not know about iNaturalist and did not have a portfolio of observations and species that I now have.

The Berry Springs project has wrapped up and borrowed cameras have been returned. However, the chapter has recently purchased some cameras of its own so I am looking forward to the next installment of Nature Tracking and the adventures and learnings that accompany it. 🌱

Meet Dale MacLean



I have always loved nature - especially trees, birds and water. Growing up in New Zealand we often spent time hiking (called tramping) in the temperate rain forests, up into

the volcanic mountains, and spent time swimming in lakes and rivers. In terms of birds, New Zealand has what we call the dawn chorus; a symphony of bird song at dawn. My favorite, which I still occasionally miss, is the magpie.

In my twenties I moved to England and again did a lot of hiking (called rambling). England and Scotland have public walkways all over the country and have the additional advantage of B&B's usually within range of walkways so we often would take multi-day hikes but not have

to carry heavy packs and camping gear.

When I moved to the U.S., I was initially in Vermont but spent most of my time in Wisconsin and Minnesota. I have always supported organizations like the Nature Conservancy, Audubon etc., but one of my favorite organizations is Operation Migration (OM) who breeds whooping cranes and raises them (with people dressed up as cranes to ensure the birds stay wild) in Necedah, Wisconsin. The young birds are taught to fly behind Microlights and then the OM folks lead them on the migration from Wisconsin to Texas and Florida. Once the birds are guided on the route, they can make their way back to WI in the spring unaided. I have been to Necedah many times but have yet to visit the other end of their migration path at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. It is on my list!

Three and a half years ago I moved to Texas for work and honestly had no idea what to expect (except that I knew it was

a lot warmer than the Midwest, which was a definite bonus). I absolutely love it here and have tried to see as much of the state as I can. So far I have been to Big Bend, Amarillo and the New Mexico border, East Texas, and of course the local environs.

My travels, love of nature, and the wish to support the environment led me to my interest in the Master Naturalists. It seemed like a perfect way to learn more about Texas, become connected to like-minded people, and give back via volunteering. So I signed up for the 2019 Fall Class and have to say that in addition to exceeding all the goals I had, I have been blown away with the organization, effort and enthusiasm put into our training and everything that the Good Water chapter undertakes. My thanks and appreciation goes out to everyone who tirelessly and cheerfully makes this chapter amazing. Thank You! 🌱

Certifications

Volunteer Name	Initial Certification	Recertification	Class
Buhl, Erin	5/23/2019	5/11/2020	2019 (Spring)
Byhower, Martin	12/4/2015	3/19/2020	2015
Ebner, Ross	2/22/2020		2019 (Fall)
Gage, Dave	10/27/2015	3/3/2020	2015
Gardner, Christie	3/1/2013	3/27/2020	2013
Hailey, Jim	7/2/2005	4/17/2020	2009
Hailey, Deb	6/3/2016	4/16/2020	2016 (Spring)
Hamilton, Mary-Gail	8/4/2018	3/9/2020	2018 (Spring)
Hester, Lynne	12/31/2010	4/1/2020	2010 (Spring)
Hickman, Susan	9/28/2017	3/12/2020	2017 (Spring)
James, Brad	12/31/2013	2/27/2020	2013
Knight, Kate	2/19/2018	3/4/2020	2017 (Fall)
Maynard, Tekina-eiru	4/19/2020		2019 (Spring)
McCann, Todd	3/1/2017	3/31/2020	2016 (Fall)
Niebla-Wright, Ebelyna	5/9/2020		2019 (Fall)
Phillips, Nancy	3/1/2011	3/10/2020	2007
Rhoden, Wayne	3/1/2011	4/17/2020	2000
Rohlich, April	5/15/2017	3/18/2020	2017 (Spring)
Waring, Bob	7/25/2017	4/16/2020	2017 (Spring)
Wieland, Jim	12/17/2019	4/2/2020	2019 (Fall)
Wright, Robert	4/18/2020		2019 (Fall)

Milestones

Volunteer Name	250 Hours	500 Hours	1,000 Hours	Class
Frazier, Cheryl	3/1/2020			2016 (Fall)
McCann, Todd	10/8/2017	6/13/2018	5/7/2020	2016 (Fall)
Spiller, Jennifer	4/1/2020			2015
Spurlock, Randy	11/5/2017	12/10/2018	4/4/2020	2016 (Fall)
Wutke, Marcia	2/28/2020			2017 (Spring)
Yarbrough, Hunter	5/9/2020			2016 (Fall)



For more information about the Good Water Chapter contact us at:
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