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**MISSION**

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a natural resource-based volunteer training and development program sponsored statewide by Texas AgriLife Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The mission of the program is 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 their communities for the state of Texas

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**MID-YEAR AWARDS CEREMONY** by Ray Buchanan, Photos by Jerry Ston

Almost one-half of the total membership of the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists Chapter (52 out of 121) received an award during the Mid-Year Awards Ceremony at the last Chapter meeting on Wednesday, June 1st.

Fourteen earned recognition for having achieved their Initial Certification, which included receiving a Certificate, a Dragonfly Pin, and the Official Name Badge.



From the Class of 2010 (l to r) Phillip Maxwell, Romelia Favrot, Harris Greenwood, Cindy Sterling, Duke Dillon, Jarred Maxwell(np) and Earlene Thorne(np) received congratulations upon earning their Initial Certification. Also pictured: 1st two from left- Ray Buchanan - 2010 Training Class Coordinator and Billy Hutson - President



From the Class of 2011 seven members earned their Initial Certification pin in conjunction with their Graduation from the Training Class program: (l to r) Beth Wesley, Marcy Westcott, Cathy Hill, Betty Cruikshank, Joanne Fischer, Elaine Barnhill(np) and Jeff Stokes (np). Also pictured: Billy Hutson - President and Sammye Childers - 2011 HLMN Training Class Coordinator.

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

by Billy Hutson

Well, the dog days of summer are here and many of us escape to cooler climates when possible. Hence the reason for no monthly meeting in July. Why we have one in August is probably because we don't want to lose the momentum for too long. You'll have to ask the old dogs!

There are still many opportunities to volunteer outdoors if you can take the heat or you can help with some of the indoor activities such as helping Janet in the Ag office or Cindy at the hatchery office or sorting seeds at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center or etc!

The effect of global warming (although relative) has even come to my mountain cabin at 9200 ft on the west slope of the Rockies. In 17 years of summers here, the highest recorded temp has been 75 on the hottest day of August. This year, even though it gets

into the 30's every night, it has already reached the mid 70's during the day. I know, I said it was relative.

For some reason this summer, my cell phone and computer have developed sometimers and therefore if you need to contact me , be patient as I may not get reception for a few days.

Just thought of something that we could use help on. If anyone knows of an old grain bin that's not being used that a rancher would donate or sell inexpensively, we could use a few for an office and display buildings for our proposed nature center. Please let me know if anyone knows the whereabouts of one or more. We would move it and reconstruct it.

Well, enough rambling, see ya'll in the fall.

**THANKS TO JANET!**

Billy Hutson



Janet Bohanan from the Texas A&M Agrilife extension office in Burnet, Texas received a special thank you gift from Billy Hutson, President of the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists at the May 17h board meeting because of her continuing excellent support during the year. Janet is responsible for so many programs but still finds the time to support the HLMN when requested.

**NO JULY MEETING!**

Fredi Franki

The next meeting is Wednesday, August 3rd.



Thirty-six members of the Chapter completed their 40 hours of Volunteer Service and 8 hours of Advanced Training to qualify for Recertification during the 2011 year. Listed alphabetically they are: Kim Bacon(np), Connie Barron(np), Sherry Bixler, Judy Bloomquist, Marvin Bloomquist, Ray Buchanan, Margy Butler, Cynthia Castleberry, Mike Childers, Sammye Childers, Ann Cook, Jennifer Daniels, Lyn Davis, Marjorie Dearthmont, Sharon Drake, Sondra Fox, Fredi Franki, Arlene Garey, Billy Gunther, Billy Hutson, Mike Kersey, Sue Kersey, Ben Kowing(np), Carol Kowing(np), Bill Luedecke, Joan Mukherjee, Hollis Neier, Judy Parker, Helen Smith, Jerry Stacy, Janice Warren, Terri Whaley, Shirley Winslow, Phillip Wyde, Earline Thorne(np), and Ray Zender. We all received the 2011 Recertification Pin, which is a very attractively depicted "Horned Toad".



Eight members of the Chapter received a bronze Dragonfly pin for having accumulated 250 hours of Volunteer Service during their membership in the Chapter: l to r: Judy Parker, Jennifer Daniels, Margy Butler, Lyn Davis, Sharon Drake, Linda Fleming, Billy Gunther, and Carol Kowing(np). Also pictured: Billy Hutson - President

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A silver Dragonfly pin was earned by four members who have accumulated 500 hours of Volunteer Service: (l to r) Sammye Childers, Mike Childers, Joan Mukherjee, and Penny Nichols(np). Also pictured: Billy Hutson - President.

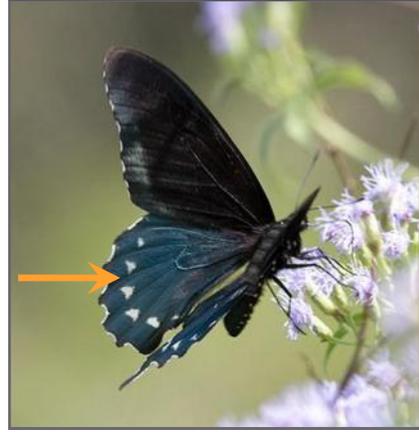


And a burnished gold Dragonfly pin in recognition of having accumulated 1000 hours of Volunteer Service went to Billy Hutson(l) and Jerry Stone(r). Also pictured: Sue Kersey - Awards Chairperson.

Congratulations to all these recipients! We are proud of your dedication and commitment to the world of nature. The Chapter has earned 4807 hours of Volunteer Service up through the end of May 2011, which gives us an accumulated figure of 37,079.5 since the founding of the organization in 2003. We are following the legacy of Aldo Leopold in appreciating our environment and in honoring that which is "natural, wild, and free".

**SIX PACK #2: THREE BUTTERFLIES TO RECOGNIZE**

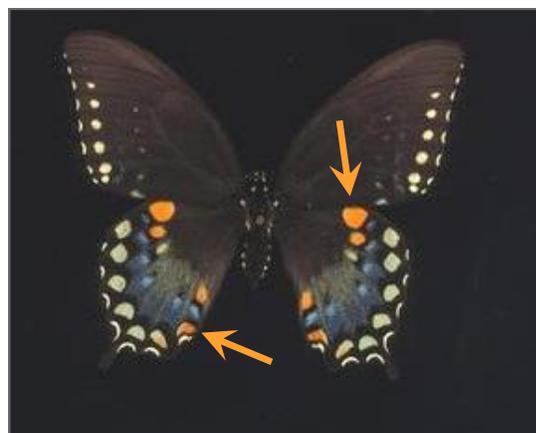
Kim Bacon



Pipevine Swallowtail (*Battus philenor*) The male is a nice metallic blue/green and he has only light spots on the top of the hind wing. Females are mostly black. No big orange spot like in the Spicebush Swallowtail. Apparently, Pipevine Swallowtails taste bad. The other two butterflies below mimic the Pipevine.



Black Swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*) See the orange circle with a black spot that does not touch the margin of the hind wing



Spicebush Swallowtail (*Papilio troilus*) See the big orange spot at top of hind wing and notice how the lower margin does not have that orange circle with a black spot like you see in the Black Swallowtail above.

## LMAP PROGRAM - FIREWISE EVALUATION EXERCISE

by Maggie Booth and Mike Childers

Terry Whaley and Marjorie Dearmont, with help from Wade Hibler, presented an informative Firewise overview to six area ranch and land owners near Round Mountain. The presentation was followed by a cursory evaluation of three properties in order to illustrate and discuss the various issues highlighted by the Firewise evaluation form. The presentation was at the Three Points Ranch, owner Sally Thomas, and was followed by visits to Rusty Booth's T-P Ranch and Maggie Booth's Red-Tail Ranch. Principal attendees were Diann and Ralph Ebeling and daughter Carla, from the EE Ranch; John Thomas from the Living Springs Ranch; Mike and Jane Hunter from Crystal Mountain; Billy & Peggy Chastain, also from the T-P Ranch.; Maggie Booth from the Red-Tail Ranch; and Rusty Booth and wife Carolyn from the T-P Ranch.



Left to rt. Wade Hibler, Terri Whaley, Sammye Childers, Marjorie Dearmont, Mike Childers, Billy Hutson  
Photo by Maggie Booth

## 2011 GRADUATES RECEIVE THEIR CERTIFICATES

Mike Childers

Beth Wesley(l) and Charles Bierle(ctr) received their 2011 Graduation Certificates from 2011 Training Class Coordinator Sammye Childers(r) at the June Meeting. Congratulations to Beth and Charles!



Photo by Jerry Stone

### A Little Nature Trivia

John & Rosalie Taylor, submitted by Lyn Davis

Beetles can be clever. Weaker beetles have been seen to sneak in and mate with a female while two stronger beetles battle each other for possession of her.

One of the world's most extraordinary feats of hearing is carried on by the toci beetles. They can hear each other's vibrations up to five miles away.

## MARTY THE BABY HAWK

By Fredi Franki, Photos by Sue Kersey

In early April, I noticed a large nest, high in neighbor's sycamore tree. After several visits to the tree, I spotted a hawk, but what kind?? Sue Kersey and I began watching the tree along with other neighbors but it became harder to see as the tree leafed out. We could see the adult on the nest but could not get a clear view (pic 1).

Finally! On June 4 we saw the new baby hawk, perched like a prince, or princess, in the nest. Sue got a great picture (pic2) that also shows the proud parent. We decided it was a red-shouldered hawk.

Then on Saturday, June 11, Sue was visiting the tree and learned the baby hawk we had now named Marty was found on the ground two days earlier and taken in by a neighbor who wanted to care for it. That Saturday and Sunday I began trying to get in touch with that neighbor to give them names of certified wildlife rescuers and be sure they knew the proper steps to take with a baby hawk.

This story ends well. I was not able to talk to the neighbor who had Marty until Monday because they were out of town. They had taken little Marty to Last Chance Forever in San Antonio, a fabulous organization that adopts, rehabilitates, and releases birds of prey. The staff at Last Chance Forever said that Marty is 3 weeks old, in good health, and should be successfully returned to his natural habitat when he matures. And yes, Marty is a red-shouldered hawk. The staff at Last Chance Forever said they are getting

a greater number of young birds this year, probably due to drought, heat, and high winds.

For more information on handling injured birds of prey go to [lastchanceforever.org](http://lastchanceforever.org). Some local contacts are Arlene Pearce, 512-756-4350 or Sally Delahoussaye, 512-444-9845, or Ed Sones, 512-259-5689. A local veterinarian can sometimes help or make a referral. The main point is to get professional help. By federal law, only trained individuals holding a federal permit, can handle birds of prey in a situation like Marty's. Perhaps we will see Marty again, flying near Lake LBJ.



Pic 1



Pic 2

## ARMADILLOS

by Phil Wyde



I have known about armadillos most of my life, but only recently have I given them serious thought. The latter started about two years ago when I had a large armadillo take up residence in my yard and reek havoc all around the property. I asked Maggie Booth if she knew how to get rid of it. She told me - with a straight face - that armadillos have poor eyesight and that I should creep up on it, catch it by the tail and throw it off of our land. REALLY! I KNOW THAT I AM FROM NEW YORK, BUT DID SHE REALLY THINK THAT I WOULD FALL FOR HER LINE! However it did make me think a lot more about these prehistoric looking creatures.

However my armadillo thoughts were kept mostly in the background of my mind until last week when they were reawakened while I was kayak fishing at Cottonwood Shores. As I was paddling to a new spot I saw something swimming across the water that I could not make out. Indeed, it was only until I was almost upon it that I realized that it was an armadillo. He was a steadfast animal. Even when I was astride of it he did not deviate from his course. He just kept paddling on an unwavering course. The only thing that changed was that his eye closest to me looked up and stared at me. I have to confess. I had no idea that armadillos could swim. I would have bet that to get to the other side of a stream they would walk underwater across the riverbed. (Now tell the truth, how

many of you Texans and Master Naturalists knew that armadillos could swim?) This armadillo was swimming at least a quarter of a mile to get to the other side of the water.

This incident made me want to know more about these creatures. So I went online to the following three sites: <https://www.msu.edu/~nixonjos/armadillo/problems.html>, <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/armadillo/>, and <http://bss.sfsu.edu/geog/bholzman/courses/fall99projects/armadillo.htm>, and found out the following, which I would like to share with you.

1. There are over 20 varieties of armadillo. All live in Latin America (as far south as northern Argentina). However, one, the nine-banded armadillo, also lives in the United States.
2. Armadillos are mammals. (How many of you knew that?) They are the only living mammal that is armored with bony plates (including their back, legs, head and tail). Indeed the word armadillo is Spanish and means "little armored one." Armadillos are closely related to anteaters and sloths.
3. Armadillos live in temperate and warm habitats, including rain forests, grasslands, and semi-deserts. They have a low metabolic rate and lack of fat stores. Thus, they do not tolerate cold well. Indeed, whole populations of armadillos can be eliminated by prolonged cold spells. This sensitivity to cold helps explain why armadillos are limited to the southern United States (Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida and Georgia) and points south.
4. Armadillos generally spend most of their day sleeping (up to 16 hours per day) and forage mostly in the early morning and evening. They have very poor eyesight, but have a keen sense of smell. They eat mostly insects, but their diet can also include small vertebrates, plants, some fruit and occasionally carrion. As those of us who have had armadillos visit our yards know, they have strong legs and huge front claws that make them efficient diggers. They also have long, sticky tongues for catching insects. Although they are generally considered to be pests, they do help aer-

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- ate the soil and control insect pests.
5. Populations of nearly all armadillo species are threatened by habitat loss and over-hunting. (Many Latin American cultures consume armadillo flesh. I know that you are expecting me to say that they taste like chicken, but apparently they taste more like pork. Maybe Billy can confirm this.) Currently, only the nine-band armadillo population is expanding.
  6. The armadillo is classified in the Kingdom: *Animalia*, Phylum: *Chordata*, Class: *Mammalia*, Family: *Dasypodidae*, Genus: *Dasyopus*, and Species: *Dasyopus novemcinctus*.
  7. The carapace (protective shell) of the armadillo is divided into three sections – a scapular shield, a pelvic shield, and a series of bands around the mid-section.
  8. Even though it is called a nine-banded armadillo, some members of this variety have between 7 and 11 bands.
  9. The first nine-banded armadillo (*Dasyopus novemcinctus*) to be seen in the United States was in 1849 (Taulman, James F. and Lynn W. Robbins. 1996. "Recent range and expansion and distributional limits of the nine-banded armadillo (*Dasyopus novemcinctus*) in the United States." *Journal of Biogeography*. Vol. 23, No. 5: 635-648.) However the nine-banded armadillos that remain today are thought to be descendents of a pair that escaped from a small zoo about sixty years ago in Cocoa, Florida. However, it is possible that some populations of U.S. armadillos are not derived from this pair since there is an event recorded of a nine-banded armadillo being introduced to Florida prior to the two that had escaped. (Storrs, Eleanor E. 1982. "The Astonishing Armadillo." *National Geographic*. Vol. 161 No. 6: 820-830).
  10. The nine-banded armadillo usually mates between July and December and gives birth during the months of March and April. They always give birth to quadruplets (never more or less), all derived from the same embryo. The babies are born with their eyes open and begin to move around within a few hours (Smith, L.L. and Robin W.D. 1984. *The Amazing Armadillo: Geography of a Folk Critter*. University of Texas Press, Austin Texas). The young armadillos tend to stay with their mother until the fall. Their life span can range from four to seven years, but in captivity they have known to live up to ten years.
  11. It turns out that nine-banded armadillos can get across bodies of water by two methods. The first method involves the animal gulping air into their stomachs and intestines and "floating" across the water. (My armadillo was SWIMMING! [dog paddling].) They can also hold their breath for up to 5 minutes and walk across the bottom under the water (I would have won my bet), if the body of water is shallow enough (Watson, Jim. 1989. "Rising Star." *Natural Wildlife*. Vol. 27, No. 6: 46-49).
  12. The nine-banded armadillo is used in the research of leprosy (also called Hansen's disease). This is important since there are no other good animal models for this disease. It is thought that *Mycobacterium leprae*, the causative agent of leprosy, is able to infect armadillos because of their low body temperature (92-95 degrees Fahrenheit; Storrs, E.E. 1982. "The Astonishing Armadillo." *National Geographic*. Vol. 161 No. 6: 820-830). Originally there was little concern that humans could become infected from armadillos. However, in the mid-1980's it was found that people in Texas and in Louisiana were becoming infected with the disease due to the extensive handling of nine-banded armadillos, i.e., from RACING armadillos, extracting meat, and making souvenirs from their shells (Wilson, Suzanne J. 1997 March 3. "Armadillos." [Yahoo]. [Http://www.conservation.state.mo.us/conmag/1997/03/3.html](http://www.conservation.state.mo.us/conmag/1997/03/3.html) [November 18, 1999]).
- So can you prevent an armadillo from taking up residence in your yard? And if one does decide to share your property with you, can you get rid of it without grabbing it by the tail and hauling it off? According to Michigan State University (<https://www.msu.edu/~nixonjos/armadillo/problems.html>), where there are no armadillos, the best solution for keeping armadillos out of your yard is to build a stout fence. However, you cannot build just any fence. Besides being strong it needs to be extended a foot or more below the ground, or they can burrow under the fence. You can also try ultrasonic pest deterrent devices, but these are expensive, may

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not work well and will probably greatly annoy your cat or dog. A far more practical and less expensive method would be to make the areas that the armadillos dig in smell bad. According to the Michigan State WEB site, armadillos have sensitive noses and their olfactory bulbs—the part of the brain that detects odor – is about one third the size of their cerebrum, the part of the brain used for thought, memory and learning. Thus things with a strong, noxious

odor could cause an armadillo to leave its den. The author also suggests that some armadillos do not like the smell of pine needles or pine mulch and avoid foraging in areas covered with these materials. The simplest way to remove an armadillo from your yard is to trap it. You need to make sure that the trap is large and strong enough. Worms put in a nylon stocking is suggested as the best bait.

## JUNE MEETING

By Mike Childers Photos by Jerry Stone

Our June meeting presentation was BY Dr. Robert Linder, President Texas Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf). Information on Turkey habits and habitat was provided as well as Turkey calling information and demonstrations. Dr. Linder's talk was often humorous and always interesting.



Above - Fredi Franki presents a cactus container garden to Dr Linder as a token of our appreciation.

Top Right - Demonstrating a friction type turkey call

Right - Demonstrating a turkey call using a diaphragm type caller (entirely in the mouth).



### A Little Nature Trivia

John & Rosalie Taylor, submitted by Lyn Davis

Lichens can stay in a dormant state for decades waiting for rain - the observed record is 87 years.

Lichen is comprised of fungi that has domesticated algae for its own use. There are 15,000 species of lichen. This has been going on, quietly, for 350 million years.

## THE NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*MIMUS POLYGLOTTUS*) AND VOCAL MIMICRY

Sherry Bixler

Almost everyone can identify the Northern Mockingbird. He stands unrivaled in the songbird world and can be found year-round and nearly statewide in Texas. He is the state bird of Texas and cheerfully co-exists with humans, preferring open shrubby habitat like that found in most residential areas. He also inhabits desert scrub where cacti furnish nesting spots.

The Northern Mockingbird is so named because there are several species of mockingbirds found in Central and South America. Two other mockingbirds are occasionally spotted in the United States: the Blue Mockingbird can stray from his Mexican home into Arizona and Texas and the Bahama Mockingbird is seen rarely in Florida when it wanders north from the Caribbean.

Many birds seen in Texas migrate through the state or move north for the summer months but the Mockingbird toughs out the heat. Slender, long-tailed and over ten inches long, his white wing patches and white outer tail feathers stand out against his gray plumage. But it is his repertoire that usually identifies him first. He can imitate other birds, whistles, the sound of motors or the barking of dogs. He changes his song after two or three repetitions and sometimes continues singing for very long periods of time. Unpaired males will sing in the middle of the night and females will also sing in the fall.



Northern Mockingbirds usually raise at least two broods of four or five each season and the male often feeds the young while the female builds a new nest. Young are fed mostly insects but adults will eat berries and occasionally small vertebrates and crayfish along with the usual sowbugs, snails, grasshoppers and beetles.

Mockingbirds are feisty but are still occasional cowbird hosts with both Bronzed and Brown-headed Cowbirds depositing eggs. Since mockingbirds vigilantly defend their territory against other species, they fend off most cowbird attempts.

Northern Mockingbirds are found across the southern half of the United States and further north along both coasts but are extending their territory each year. They have also become established in Hawaii. Occasional birds may be all-white or show additional white feathers as albinism is common in these species.

Many birds learn to copy the sounds of their parents or other adults of the same species but a few species learn other sounds or learn to copy other sounds. The European Starling can duplicate sounds but never as well as the Mockingbirds. Mynas, parrots, parakeets and other birds from different countries can imitate sounds and even voices very well, but in our area the Mockingbird is king of the songsters.



# PHOTO GALLERY



Blue Headed Vireo, Trails of Horseshoe Bay, May 1.  
Photo by Jerry Stone



Painted Bunting at the Trails of Horseshoe Bay,  
Photo by Jerry Stone



Ladderback Hummingbird?

Photo by Jerry Stone



Great Blue Heron - Trails of Horseshoe Bay  
Photo by Jerry Stone

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND AT/EVENTS CALENDAR

Mike Childers

<b>JUNE EVENTS &amp; VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES</b>	
HLMN Field Trip - Jacob's Well Wimberley, TX	17th 10am-4pm
Jerry Stacy at the Amphitheater Inks Lake State Park	18th 8-9pm
Father's Day Fun Day Sunday Inks Lake State Park	19th 9:30-11:30am
Fishing with Dad Inks Lake State Park	19th 9:30-11:30am
Angler Ed Kingsland Library	20th 10:30am-noon
<b>FUTURE EVENTS &amp; VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES</b>	
August Refuge Talk Instead of Walk w/Diane Sherrill Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge	Aug 14 8:30am
Native Plant Society of Texas Symposium Houston, TX	Oct 14-16
Native Plant Garden Tour Burnet County	Oct 15
Texas Master Naturalist State Conference Mo Ranch, Hunt TX	Oct 21-23
Big Bend State Park Field Trip Big Bend State Park	Oct 30-Nov 4
Fall Outing at the Lilly's Ed and Sue Lilly's Ranch, Lampasas	Oct 27 or 30

Many more volunteer opportunities and events are scheduled at Inks Lake State Park, Blanco State Park, and Balcones Canyonlands. Check these websites for information:

[http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/inks-lake-state-park/park\\_events/](http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/inks-lake-state-park/park_events/)

[http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/blanco-state-park/park\\_events/](http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/blanco-state-park/park_events/)

<http://friendsofbalcones.org/>

### Stewardship

An ethic that embodies cooperative planning and management of environmental resources with organizations, communities and others to actively engage in the prevention of loss of habitat and facilitate its recovery in the interest of long-term sustainability

Please submit pictures, articles, reports, stories, calendar and event entries, etc. to [chili865@gmail.com](mailto:chili865@gmail.com). Photos should have captions and appropriate credits. The deadline for submissions to each month's newsletter is the 10th of the month and publication will be by the 15th.