



# Highland Lakes Steward

Winter 2017

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## MISSION

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a natural resource-based volunteer training and development program sponsored statewide by Texas A&M 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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## MESSAGE FROM CATHY

by Cathy Hill

### The Baby Tree

I just had to share this lovely snowy vista and the closeup of the “baby” Christmas tree. As you can no doubt surmise it was not taken in Central Texas! This was at a Christmas tree farm in Pleasant Valley, Wisconsin just a short drive from where our son and family live in Altoona, Wisconsin. They thought I would enjoy the scenery. I especially enjoyed all the little trees that would require several more years of growth before they would be true Christmas trees. The one in the picture was only about knee high. I thought they were cute, though not as cute as our grandson of course! Unlike a crop that is planted and harvested within one calendar year, these Balsam firs take at least take at least seven to ten years or longer depending on how tall a tree is desired, to grow from seedling to harvest and being adorned with lights, tinsel, and ornaments. During those years they will be nurtured and pruned to achieve that perfect shape. I have never participated in cutting down our own Christmas tree even though I know such places do exist in Texas. I'm glad our son and family can do so in such beautiful surroundings.

by definition don't have a long lifespan, normally when we plant a tree it is with the expectation that it will live a long time, and hopefully outlive us. It is our gift to the environment and future generations. Using that same tree metaphor, when we as Master Naturalist share our love and knowledge of nature, especially with children, we hope we are “planting a seed of interest” that will grow and flourish if given nurturing through the years.



Although these future Christmas trees

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# Weird-Bird

By Shel Silverstein

Birds are flyin' south for winter.

Here's the Weird-Bird headin' north,  
Wings a-flappin', beak a-chatterin',  
Cold head bobbin' back 'n' forth.

He says, "It's not that I like ice  
Or freezin' winds and snowy ground.

It's just sometimes it's kind of nice  
To be the only bird in town.



Please submit pictures, articles, reports, stories, announcements, etc. to

[becky\\_breazeale@yahoo.com](mailto:becky_breazeale@yahoo.com)

Photos should have captions and appropriate credits. The deadline for submissions for each quarter's issue are located on the HLMN event calendar. Or contact Becky and Martelle.

**Thank y'all for all your hard work and contributions!!**

Just this week as I write this, our local Picayune newspaper had an excellent article with the headline “Happy New Leaf.” Wow, there's that tree reference again! It encouraged readers to make getting outside and enjoying nature one of their New Year's resolutions. Hurray! The article went on to include many of the health benefits, both physical and mental, of doing so. But of course WE already knew that! So as 2018 begins I wish for another great year for HLMN. I hope we as a group or individually will plant many seeds of interest and continue to enhance and preserve our natural environment through word and deed.



# Invasive Plants – Some Basics

Article by Fredi Franki

The next few months are a great time for controlling invasive plants. What is an invasive plant, how do you know, and what can you do? *Invasive in this context has a two part definition, 1) it is not native to the area of consideration AND 2) it causes or could cause harm to either the environment, economy, or to human health. Invasives tend to grow quickly and crowd out native and other desirable plants. There is a glossary of terms at the end of this article clarifying native, non-native, invasive and related terminology.*

The first steps in controlling invasive plants are observation and identification. When I moved to Highland Haven I observed a small, unfamiliar plant on my vacant lot. I was curious and decided to let it grow. A few months later it was mature, flowering, and developed ugly stickers. I still had not identified it but was unconcerned. I mowed it and the now numerous siblings. The following year I had many, many more plants. At a HLMN class I found out it was MaltaStar Thistle. I've been battling it ever since. I am winning!

After identifying an invasive, what's next? You can ignore the problem but that is a slippery slope. At the bottom of that slope is a big field of mean, ugly plants and no beautiful wildflowers or native grasses. It's very difficult to eradicate invasives especially after they are established but you should try at least to get control and reduce their numbers.

Methods of control include prevention, mechanical, manual, competition, and chemical. I may have prevented the Malta Star infestation if I had identified it and started pulling plants that first year. Mechanical in this example would be keeping it mowed before it makes a seed head. Manual (my favorite) is pulling the plant, best done when it is young. Competition refers to having a thick, healthy stand of native grasses/forbs that naturally deter growth of less desirable plants. Roundup is a chemical method of



Tree of Heaven



Giant Reed



Paper Mulberry

control, very effective at killing the undesirable and *everything else too*. *Be cautious with chemicals, read the label. Pre-emergent granules are another chemical method and February is the time to use these products. Again, understand the effects of the product. Pre-emergent products deter seed germination (both the good and bad seeds) plus have other detrimental results. Ideally your plan of attack includes two or three non-chemical methods.*



Johnson Grass

Remember step one is observe and identify. As Master Naturalists we have great resources within our chapter. Take some good photos or pull some of the plants and bring to a meeting. Once you have the plant name, there is a wealth of information on the internet. When doing an internet search, start by using *Texas or Central Texas as part of your search criteria. What is happening in Ohio or Oregon may or may not help. Here is a list of our worst invasives, Tree of Heaven, Giant Reed, KR Bluestem grass, Paper Mulberry, Malta Star Thistle, Elephant Ears, Bermuda Grass, Japanese Holly Fern, Common Water Hyacinth, Chinese Parasol Tree, Hydrilla, Ligustrum (glossy privet), Japanese Honey-suckle, Trumpet Vine, Chinaberry Tree, Nandina (heavenly bamboo), Golden Bamboo, Chinese Pistache, Kudzu Vine, Scarlet Firethorn (pyracantha), Bastard Cabbage, Johnson Grass, Salt Cedar, and Chinese Tallow. We can all think of others!*



Malta Star Thistle

#### Glossary - USDA

**Native Plant**-A plant that is a part of the balance of nature that has developed over hundreds or thousands of years in a particular region or ecosystem. Note: The word native should always be used with a geographic qualifier (that is, native to New England [for example]). Only plants found in this country before European settlement are considered to be native to the United States.

**Invasive Plant**-A plant that is both non-native and able to establish on many sites, grow quickly, and spread to the point of disrupting plant communities or ecosystems. Note: From the Presidential Executive Order 13112 (February 1999): 'An invasive species is defined as a species that is 1) non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and 2) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmen-

tal harm or harm to human health.'

**Non-Native Plant**-A plant introduced with human help (intentionally or accidentally) to a new place or new type of habitat where it was not previously found. Note: Not all non-native plants are invasive. In fact, when many non-native plants are introduced to new places, they cannot reproduce or spread readily without continued human help (for example, many ornamental plants).

**Naturalized Plant**-A non-native plant that does not need human help to reproduce and maintain itself over time in an area where it is not native. Notes: Even though their offspring reproduce and spread naturally (without human help), naturalized plants do not, over time, become native members of the local plant community. Many naturalized plants are found primarily near human-dominated areas; and, sometimes, naturalized is used (confusingly) to refer specifically to naturally reproducing, non-native plants that do not invade areas dominated by native vegetation. However, since invasive plants also reproduce and spread without human help, they also are naturalized ♦ invasives are a small, but troublesome, sub-category of naturalized plants.

**Translocated Plant**-A plant not native to the portion of the continent where it is now found. (California Poppies in New England are an example of a translocated species.)

**Opportunistic Native Plant**-A native plant that is able to take advantage of disturbance to the soil or existing vegetation to spread quickly and out-compete the other plants on the disturbed site. References: [www.texasinvasives.org](http://www.texasinvasives.org)

**A Word from Jerry** Yesterday, December 28th, on a short hike near the house, Linda and I came across something quite unexpected at 40 degrees. A coiled, feisty, cottonmouth. Surprised to see it out in the cold weather. (Editor's note: YIKES!!)



## In the garden....



Bill Luedecke (Dad) and  
Martelle Luedecke (Daughter)

### Learn from our mistakes

In the beginning our gardens grew a little more than planned. Our raised beds were too close, causing difficulty in maintaining the grass and weed growth between beds. Next, one of us, planted fruit trees to provide shade while harvesting vegetables. What was he thinking? Now that the fruit trees are grown and mature the shade is excellent for the harvester but none of the planned vegetables grow in the shade. Obviously, you can tell that these massive mistakes were committed before we became a Master Gardener and Master Naturalist. Unfortunately, we still make mistakes but y'all can learn from our mistakes. Gentle reminder: we try out everything on our own land before we suggest to y'all.

Now, the raised beds were moved to allow sunlight to reach the vegetables and the fruit trees separately. The raised beds are also located much closer to the house to do what we write about: visit the garden daily to monitor conditions. Moving the raised beds presents an opportunity to apply a different and better mix of soils and amendments than originally used. It also allows a change in planting, not only what is to be but also what was to be. It further allows the planning for long-term growth of trees and shrubs and planning for better drip irrigation.

### From the beginning

We each have a plot of land that we are applying the beginning stages of creating a new garden. Join us on this adventure to create a new garden yourself. Fortunately, each of our sections is already fenced to provide protection from deer. Begin by mowing and weed eating the dead plants (advantage to beginning after a hard freeze). As Gardening.org states, "... vigorous weed growth usually indicates soil drainage and nutrient levels that will support healthy garden plants."

Remove rocks from your site. This will avoid puncturing of the plastic that we are about to lay down and level the ground. Cover the ground with a 2-4 mm thick clear plastic (dark plastic will reflect the sun; we want the sunlight to penetrate.) Extend the clear plastic 6-8 inches past the edges of your garden plot. If you need to use more than one piece, make sure to overlap the seams. Smooth the plastic with your hands to remove air pockets. You want the plastic to press against the soil as close as possible. Place heavy objects on top of the clear plastic to secure, weight it down. We don't want the wind blowing away your hard work. Leave the plastic covering down 4-6 weeks. If you have stubborn weeds in this area, leave the covering down for 6-8

weeks.

As the sun penetrates the clear plastic it will kill the weeds and viable unwanted seeds. Further instruction in a month.

### **Composting 101**

Start a composting pile with all those leaves in your yard. Here is how you can do it. Keep in mind there are several books out there written about this subject. We especially recommend those by Malcolm Beck or by J. Howard Garrett.

The composting can be done in either a fixed bin made of wood or stone, piled up in a part of the yard or garden, or in one of those elevated metal bins that rotate either by motor or manually. Regardless of the vehicle you choose, there are a few fundamentals to keep in mind.

There must be three ingredients in the process of creating this most wonderful plant food ever. First, there must be Air. Composting microbes are aerobic, which means they need air to do their work efficiently. Second, there needs to be Water. Ideally, the pile of material should be as moist as the proverbial wrung-out sponge. Third, there needs to be food for the microbes. The food is made up of two major sources: what we call Browns (carbons) and Greens (nitrogens). Browns are materials such as dry and dead plant material (straw, leaves, wood chips, etc.) Greens are: all manures, fresh or dried, and all green plant life, such as grass, coffee grounds, hair trimmings, uncooked fruit and vegetable waste, and egg shells (rinsed and crushed).

The manures are rated as to their nitrogen levels. Poultry manure (turkey and chicken) is the highest; next is the sheep, goat, steer, and horse manures, which are all about the same and work equally as well. If you have friends who own turkeys or chickens, ask if you can clean out their poultry houses for the manure. The same applies with friends who own any livestock. Ask to clean out the barns. They'll probably try not to laugh as they say yes.

Now we need to place all these ingredients together and place in action the act of composting. The piles need to be turned every so often in order to keep the air in the pile (Depending on the size of the pile, monthly or more often depending on the weather). The fancy elevated bins, which will make compost in a matter of days, suggest that they be turned daily with five complete rotations each time.

While you are waiting for your first batch to be ready, begin making your list of places to apply this new product that you have created.

A few suggestions for applications: for any trees that are "in need of a shot in the arm" (apply compost one inch thick around the tree out to the drip line), in your flower beds, garden areas in need of help, or in preparation for your spring planting in the garden.

Keep your souls and soles in your garden!

Remember the True Master Gardener: Jesus said, "I am the vine; my Father is the Gardener." John 15:1

Have questions or comments? Contact Bill at The Luedecke Group Realtors (512) 577-1463 or email [bill@texasland.net](mailto:bill@texasland.net). Or contact Martelle Luedecke (512) 769-3179 at [luedeckephoto@luedeckephoto.com](mailto:luedeckephoto@luedeckephoto.com)

## P.S. In the Garden...

### Unusual Tools and Recycling

When planting those new trees, place a perforated PVC pipe alongside and at the same depth of the root ball. This will insure the water gets to the point of need for the new trees.

If you still use hand toothbrushes instead of the fancy electric ones, use the handles for the used toothbrushes as a dibble when planting seeds. You can mark the depth you prefer right on the toothbrush so there is no guesswork. Now you have saved yourself somewhere around \$10.

If your hand pruner did not come with a carrying case, use an old eyeglasses carrying case. It works really well, and it will save your clothes from being cut or having holes poked through.

## Meet Our Members: by Sheryl Smith Rodgers



**Susan Montgomery, Vice President and Board Member  
Class of 2017**

#### Where were you raised?

I grew up in Roselle Park, NJ until I was 16. My father transferred to Houston, and I finished high school in Cypress, Texas, where I met my husband, Mike. We will be married 40 years in July. Not bad for a couple of high school sweethearts!

#### What is your professional background?

I worked with autistic children as a Behavioral Therapist, and as a Registered Massage Therapist. I was active in many volunteer activities as well as work, until spending 12 years caring for my mother who had Type 1 Diabetes and Early Onset Alzheimer's in our home.

#### Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.

Although I primarily grew up in an urban environment, I always loved being out in nature. One of my older brothers started taking me backpacking into primitive areas when I was a teenager. I was hooked. My then boyfriend, later - husband and I got into SCUBA diving. The world undersea fascinated me. I wanted to learn all I could about the natural world. Taking care of the environment was instilled in me by my mother, who recycled before most people had heard of it. I was a Boy Scout Leader with my sons, which further propelled me into nature. Fortunately, my husband shares my enthusiasm for nature.



**Lori Greco, Secretary and Board Member  
Class of 2013**

#### Where were you raised?

"Lori raised in Houston Area and Waco

#### What is your professional background?

Active Duty Professional Soldier of the Army Veterinary Command for 27 years. Retired in 2011. I am also active in the Daughters of the American Revolution chapter in Burnet County.



**Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.**

Mostly started with competing on horses for 50 to 100 miles endurance rides and enjoyed nature and then birds with the Birding Society in 2011 when I moved here. I was the VP and President for HLBWS 2014-2016. I volunteer weekly at HARTH(Healing and Recovery thru Horses) and VETRIDES with veterans who need help returning all of the way home from combat.



**Kim and Stennis Shotts Co-Treasurers  
Class of 2017**

**Where were you raised?**

Kim is originally from Houston, Texas. Stennis is originally from Mississippi.

**What is your professional background?** Kim taught elementary school for over 30 years in Louisiana, North Carolina, Texas and for the last 20 years in Georgia. Stennis worked for The Coca-Cola Company for 30 years. We have one daughter who turned 33 years old on Christmas day.



**Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.**

We retired 2 years ago and plan on spending the remainder of our lives involved in organizations that provide service to others. Being a master naturalist allows us to meet that goal, spend time in nature and make new friends.



**Lyn Davis  
2009, Lakeway**

**Where were you raised?**

Ok, I am a little different! I was born "Down Under" with the kangaroos and koalas right outside of Sydney, Australia, in the Blue Mountains. At six, I moved to Houston, where I grew up in River Oaks (like the name of Phil's street) and on to get my degree at SMU in Dallas.

**What is your professional background?**

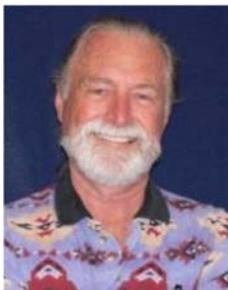
After college, I went to work on the institutional desk at Goldman-Sachs. I loved that high-energy job! So, if you know me, I blame my personality on that job and certainly not my heritage! After several tragic happenings in my life, I met Helen Smith in church and was gravitated to her frankness and honesty, which is right up my alley! I had to do something "out of the box" because I felt that if I sat down, I would not get up. Sooooo I filled the last spot in the class of 2009! Thank you, Ray Buchanan! Believe it or not, the first thing I did was go with Helen #1 (Helen #2 is Helen Dillon!) to Longhorn Caverns to see Doris and "her birds." I was fascinated! And the rest is HISTORY!

**Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.**

I read every owl book I could get my hands on and even ordered "out of circulation" books on owls. Because I was able to attract several of



them to my house right outside of Marble Falls, I fell in love with those little screech owls. Although I have held many positions at the hatchery and HLMN, and did HOP for years on fish morphology and GOP, taking over Ecology for Ben Kowing, my most favorite thing to do is to talk with and educate both children and adults about the screech owl! So really, now that I hang out with y'all, I'm not that weird, am I? Some of my best friends are Master Naturalists, and "the family" has been a very real blessing and support in my life. I am dedicated and will continue to be dedicated to this group's endeavors and take those fun trips every year as long as I am able.



**Billy Hutson  
2008, Bertram**

**Where were you raised?**

I was born and raised in Pennsylvania, where all our family vacations and available weekends were spent in the outdoors camping or fishing. On my own, I trapped, canoed and explored the local woods. Most land in Pennsylvania was public so there was plenty of opportunity. I came to Texas in the '70s and just couldn't leave. I've lived on my ranch since the '80s.

**What is your professional background?**

I went to Penn State University after high school in 1960 and got a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1964. I spent some years on the west coast designing controls for missiles, airplanes and the manned orbital laboratory. Then my last 20 years were in the energy conservation industry in the eastern United States.

**Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.**

My favorite natural science is Entomology because the incredible diversity in the insect world has fascinated me since childhood.



**Mike Kersey  
2004, Marble Falls**

**Where were you raised?**

I was born in Austin, Texas, and my parents moved to San Antonio when I was 3 years old. I attended school there through high school and then moved to Austin to attend the University of Texas.

**What is your professional background?**

AT UT, I earned a degree in Electrical Engineering and moved to the west coast. Most of my career was in different phases of the microelectronics industry. I retired in 2000 and moved back to Texas and built a house on Lake LBJ.

**Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.**

I became a certified Texas Master Naturalist in 2004 and served on the board



**Sue Kersey**  
**2004 Marble Falls**

**Where were you raised?**

I was born in Los Angeles, California, and my father went to war and my mother took me back to live with her mother and four sisters in Missouri. Missouri was my home through high school, and I have wonderful memories of family, friends and the love of the Midwest.

**What is your professional background?**

Mike and I have been married for almost 51 years now, and I got my college education as a young wife and mother in Saratoga, California, with an associate of science degree in Interior Design. With art becoming my passion, I have worked in many media, including oil painting, fabric collage, fabric painting, sewing, jewelry and photography. My love of fabric art and quilting is now how I spend creative time in my studio.

**Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.**

All of my life, I have spent time enjoying and learning about nature, flora and fauna. Bird watching has become a daily love since we moved to our lakefront home here on Lake LBJ. The Texas Hill Country has such a wonderful variety of birds, both living here and passing through on their migration routes. Gardening here in the hill country is a wonderful way to encourage wildlife to our home.

I became a Texas Certified Master Naturalist in 2004 and immediately started serving on the board of directors. I was the first woman president of our Highland Lakes chapter. I also have been a Master Gardener since 2002, serving on the board of directors, president of The Native Plant Society, president of Marble Falls Quilt Club and a member of many other local organizations. I have enjoyed being a volunteer in the areas we have lived for more than 40 years. Living here in the Texas Hill Country surrounded by nature, fantastic wildlife and wonderful friends is just the very best!

## **Our winter visitor**

By Sue Kersey

Many years ago, we had a speaker at the Highland Lakes Birding & Wildflower meeting on screech owls. Clifford E. Shackelford was full of good information and had Owl boxes for sale so I decided that was just what I needed for our large oak tree in the front yard. I purchased the house and it stayed in my garage for over a year until Jerry Stacy came over to mount in on our tree for me. It was painted black and until it weathered to match the tree we did not have any owls interested. Finally, a few years ago I was delighted to see a



wonderful little Eastern Screech Owl sitting in the opening one early morning as I was out to get our newspaper. I thought he looked so regal and immediately named him **Sir Owlton!**

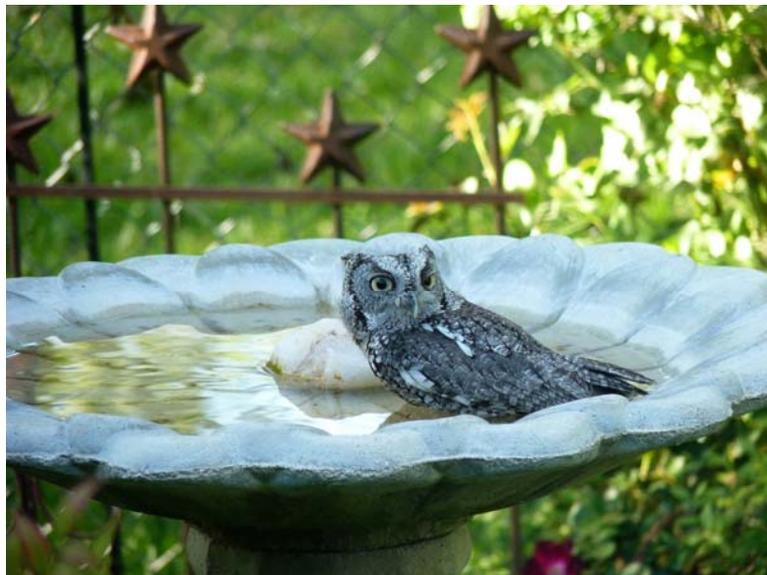
From that morning on and every evening after sunset in the evenings he would sit in his box to my delight. The opening resembles a hollow or cavity in a tree and I have water in two birdbaths out in the front yard which he used to drink and

bathe. You do not need to provide food as they eat large insects like moths, roaches and of course small rodents like mice. But you can provide mealworms for an added treat.

I talk to Sir Owlton daily and he rewards me by tilting his head from side to side while looking directly at me and sometimes he makes a series of quavering whistles, descending in pitch that sounds like a horse whiney.

I have feeders everywhere and our regular yard birds often make sure Sir Owlton is in his box and out of sight. He usually arrives to start using his owl shack in December and stays until the weather warms and mating season is over. He has called a lady into his box but so far, we have not been lucky enough to see little babies. Sondra Fox got her owl shack the same time as we did and mentioned to me what a delight her Owlfred is and we totally agree the it is funny how a little owl can make your days seem just perfect!

If you want to learn more about my owl shack go to [owlshack.com](http://owlshack.com)



# Native Plants and Native Birds

By Pat Campbell



The next meeting of the Highland Lakes Native Plant Society will be at the Marble Falls Library on January 20, 2018, at 1:00 pm. Patsy and Tom Inglet will be presenting “Native Plants and Native Birds: a Relationship Worth Nurturing.” Nurturing this relationship will reward you with beautiful landscapes appropriate to the area and will attract and sustain wonderful birds. Even small habitats can make a difference. The link between native plants and birds of central Texas is important to the long-term survival of the ecosystem. Patsy and Tom hope that you will be informed, delighted, and inspired by their program.

Tom and Patsy are native Texans from Houston, who retired to the San Antonio area in 1999. They consider themselves “professional volunteers” as docents at the San Antonio Zoo and Alamo Chapter Texas Master Naturalists. Birding has become a passion and a focus of their educational and conservation efforts, activities and travels. They are classroom instructors and Citizen Scientists at Cibolo Nature Center and Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, among other teaching and volunteer activities. They have both received the National President’s Volunteer Service Award for giving 5,000+ hours of volunteer work to the community. This program has been approved for both MN and MG. It is open to the public, so please bring your friends and neighbors!



## Tip:

My husband found this caterpillar on our back porch. We thought it was unusual because it was huge. I took a picture of it and loaded it to [inaturalists.org](http://inaturalists.org). I had previously set up an account with [iNaturalist.com](http://iNaturalist.com) and designated by home as my default location (that is part of the sign up process). Within 24 hours after uploading the photo, I was connected with experts who identified our moth and notified me by e mail that it was an Imperial Moth. I was also given the opportunity to accept their identification or refute it.

Inaturalist.org is valuable to naturalists in that it builds our knowledge and we are able to talk to other naturalists (comparing identifications). Data is collected from inquiries like mine and it helps scientists and resource managers understand when and where organisms occur. A great thing about Inaturalist, if you see that same caterpillar next year and you can't remember what it is, you can go to your account and find the information from the previous year.

<https://www.inaturalist.org/>



## November Images In and Around Kingsland

By Phil Wyde

This is the time of the year that nature photographers must work harder to find colorful subjects to photograph. Bright flowers are minimal; birds do not have their courting plumage; it is darker longer and often it is too cold to sit patiently for something to appear. However, with some effort rewarding images can be captured. Here are a few that I managed to get during a two week span in late November.



*Figure 1 Anole*

*(In this case, the cold weather was beneficial. It slowed this lizard down.)*



*Figure 2  
Tallow Trees at  
Inks Lake*

*(I know that these  
trees are “hated”  
invasives, but look  
at the color!)*

**Figure 3**

**Long Horn**

*(UT should use  
this beast as its  
logo instead of  
the turgid animal  
they currently  
use. This guy  
oozes power, de-  
termination and  
stature. Yes, I  
know that he is  
not orange &  
white, but they  
could photoshop  
him for the logo.)*





*Figure 4*

*White Winged Dove*

*(Although not a Central Texas native and a tremendous pest at bird feeders, he does have charm.)*

*Figure 5*

*Domesticated Cat  
(Fiercely hated by some naturalists for their killing of birds, domesticated cats also can reduce destructive rodent populations – and provide affection and hours of amusement. Just for your information, this one loves water and often follows me around our property.)*





Figure 6

*Old World Sparrow*

*(Clearly an illegal immigrant. However, I find the frantic activity and daily life of these birds fascinating.)*



*Figure 7 House Finch (Although not as flamboyant as some birds, I think that house finches are sublimely pretty, and rate high on my list of birds that I really like to see.)*



*Figure 8 Garden Spider (I think that this lady is in the genus, Agriope. Note that I am very much afraid of spiders. However, I am equally fascinated by them. This one has been around for weeks and is making a very good living. What patience!)*



Figure 9

*Giant White Egret*

*(Stately, graceful and one of my favorite birds.)*



Figure 10

*White Tail Deer (Very common, but I love watching them, especially when they leap fences, gambol, accompany fawns or there is a buck pursuing a doe.)*

## Migration, Migration, Migration

By Becky Breazeale

According to Jim Stevenson, author, photographer and publisher, there are three groups of Fall Migration. Before the Fall Equinox the first group, circum-Gulf, travel both ways along the Gulf shoreline to the Tropics. After the Equinox in October, the second group, trans-Gulf, migrate across the Gulf to Central and South America.

The third step is when huge numbers of waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, sparrows and other small bird groups come to us from the Northern United States, Alaska, and Canada.

Jim Stevenson says we get so many birds in Texas because of our position at the southern end of the Continent and that waterfowl comprise the largest share of wintering birds here. To mention a few, Common Loon, Eared Grebe, Cormorant, White Pelican, American Bittern, Killdeer, American Coot, and Sandhill Crane are wintering waterbirds.

The amount of birds we have in Texas is amplified by our National Wildlife Refuges where they can rest and revitalize. Many of the birds we see in the winter are just visiting, but they make "Life Better Outdoors".



Eared Grebe

**Double Crested  
Cormorant**





**White Pelican**

**Sandhill Crane**

Photos courtesy of

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Stevenson, Jim, [Birdlife of Galveston](#),  
Goshawk Press, 2013.



**Texas Master Naturalists**

By Texas Master Naturalists website

**Providing Skilled Volunteers to Improve and Steward Texas Natural Resources and Natural Areas**

Since 1997, the Texas Master Naturalist™ program has grown to include 46 chapters and more than 10,800 volunteers serving Texas communities throughout 76 percent of the state's counties. The mission of the program is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to

An individual gains the designation of Texas Master Naturalist after participating in an approved chapter training program with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction, obtaining 8 hours of approved advanced training, and completing 40 hours of volunteer service. Following the initial training program, trainees have one year in which to complete their 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training. To retain the Texas Master Naturalist title during each subsequent year, volunteers must complete 8 additional hours of advanced training and provide an additional 40 hours of volunteer service coordinated through their local chapter. Though that seems like a lot for a volunteer program, so many volunteers do even more; 52 volunteers have given over 5,000 service hours, and 9 volunteers have given over 10,000 service hours!

The program currently has trained 10,800 Texas Master Naturalist volunteers in 46 local chapters across the state. The program continually expands so if there is not a chapter near you contact the [Texas Master Naturalist Coordinator](#) or your local TPWD biologist or Texas A&M AgriLife county agent.

Whether it's designing nature trails, conserving habitat, setting up birding stations, or planting wildflowers, TMN volunteers are creating a better environment for their fellow Texans. Since its establishment in 1997, Texas Master Naturalist volunteer efforts have provided over 3.690 million hours of service valued at more than \$84.88 million. This service has resulted in developing and maintaining more than 2,120.68 miles of trail; enhancing 226,200 plus acres of wildlife and native plant habitats; reaching more than 4.3 million youth, adults and private landowners. One member discovered a new plant species. The program has gained international, state, and local recognition with the Wildlife Management Institute's Presidents' 2000 Award, the National Audubon Society's 2001 Habitat Hero's Award, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission's 2001 Environmental Excellence Award, Texas A&M University's 2001 Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence in Partnership and in 2005 the U. S. Department of Interior's "Take Pride in America" award.

Funding for the Texas Master Naturalist program is provided by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

In Texas, this partnership among the [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension](#), [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#), and over 400 local partners has resulted in a unique master volunteer organization. At the state level, the organization is directed by an advisory committee providing training guidelines, program marketing and promotion, curriculum resources, and advanced training opportunities; and a volunteer representatives committee responsible for representing the varied interests of the chapters and providing a communication link to state committees and program leaders.



*Thank you  
to **ALL**  
who  
contributed!!*

### **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.