The Texas Star

Newsletter of the Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter

TEXAS Master Naturalist℠ HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

Rare, Endangered, and Threatened in the Four Counties.

Rock quillwort
Isoetes lithophila
Gillespie County

"We are mesmerized." Page 6.

March
2011

Volume 9
No. 3

MARCH MEETING ... RIPARIAN SYSTEMS

Nueces River Authority Resource Protection and Education Director **Sky Jones-Lewey** will present "Riparian Systems: Their Remarkable Roles in Healthy Waterways". She will talk about her work in riparian system education and restoration.

Sky is the managing editor of the outstanding field guide "Your Remarkable Riparian" which includes descriptions and photographs of over ninety of the most common and important riparian plant species of the Nueces Watershed and other central Texas streams.

Join us Monday, March 28 at 7p.m. in the UGRA Lecture Hall. Arrive early to enjoy our social half-hour beginning at 6:30p.m.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ... Phyllis Muska

The Lazy Man's Guide to Spring Cleaning

With daytime temperatures in the 80s, it is only natural to deal with spring fever by planning outdoor projects. But with so much that needs attention at this time of year, there are always a number of items that never even make it to my to-do list.

These chores usually have something to do with a desire to "tidy up" our land, perhaps with the idea of making it look more like a park. But nature doesn't naturally create parks for us, and our land doesn't necessarily benefit from the extra attention. So it makes sense to let some of these chores take care of themselves.

- Do you have a dead tree that you think should come down? Do you see it as an eyesore? Take a closer look – is it hollow? Are there holes where a chickadee or bluebird or even an owl could enter to make a home and build a nest? Of course, if oak wilt has come through and killed a number of live oaks, you probably don't want to live with a whole forest of dead trees. But you might consider leaving one or more of these 'snags' for birds and small mammals to utilize.
- Live oak trees undergo 'leaf exchange' at this time of year. They drop last year's leaves just as new leaves replace them. In most cases, the leaves can be left as mulch. Don't feel like they must be raked up, although they do take longer than most other leaves to break down.
- Any brush piles that you've been wanting to burn but haven't been able to because of our dry conditions? Maybe by now you've gotten used to seeing them around, or better yet, you now appreciate them for the habitat and cover they provide.

continued. page 2.

THIS MONTH WE HONOR

Milestones

2011 Recertification
Horned Lizard

Tom Collins

Kristie Denbow

John Hueckstedt

Lars Nielsen

Special First Year Recertification
Horned Lizard

Eileen Gotke

Robert Howell

First Year Certification
Dragonfly

Steve Clyburn

Michael Foulds

What would the world be, once bereft of wet and wildness?
Let them be left, O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Do you know?

Riparian areas are the critical boundary layer between waterways and adjacent upland. A healthy riparian system relies on diverse plant species (sedges, grasses, forbs, woody plants, and trees) which enhance the stability of stream beds and banks, reduce erosion, improve water quality, and impart important buffering during flood events.

President's Message continued.

You should be able to observe birds flitting in and out around the branches, and cottontails and other small mammals seeking shelter. In the right place, a brush pile can also provide effective erosion control, slowing down the flow when we get our heavy rains.

- Cutting out "undesirable" understory plants like agarita or Texas persimmon can cut down on the number of birds and other critters you see. We need all levels of cover – not just tree canopy.
- Trimming low branches from trees can have the same effect as cutting out understory plants. You may be taking the favorite perch of a flycatcher or phoebe. If you have branches hanging over a creek or river, avoid the temptation to trim them up, as you may be depriving kingfishers of a prime hunting blind.

Rain events (remember rain?) can bring whole trees or large branches into your creek bed or riparian area. Our natural inclination is to cut them up and get them out of sight, but the latest prevailing wisdom suggests we leave the logs in place to slow down the flow when the next rain comes. Meanwhile, the log begins to trap rocks and soil, creating a nursery for sedges, grasses, and aquatic plants such as button bush. And fireflies like rotting wood, so if you enjoy seeing these whimsical creatures on spring and summer nights, you'll want to leave the logs as habitat for them.

Let nature do your work for you and you can enjoy your spring with a clear conscience. It's not really a lazy way to take care of your land – it's a more efficient way of being a good land steward.

ADVANCED TRAINING

AT 11-043 ENCHANTED ROCK INTERPRETIVE TOUR

Tuesday, March 15; Tuesday, April 5; Tuesday, May 3; 9a-12p, Enchanted Rock State Natural Area
Carl Fabre's fabulous summit tours. If you have not joined him for one, you are missing an interesting overview of Enchanted Rock history, archeology, geology, plants, and animals.
Registration: Required. Email m.mial@wildblue.net. Tour is limited to 10.

AT 11-040 INCIDENTAL BIRD COUNT SURVEYS

Tuesday, March 15; Thursday, March 17; Saturday, March 19, 8-10A, CNC
Learn the migrant and resident birds of woodland, prairie, marsh, and cypress-lined Cibolo Creek. Learn how to census the birds in your backyard.
Registration: Required. Contact Janie at JHenry1040@satx.rr.com or 210-690-2267.

AT 11-019 RIPARIAN WORKSHOPS

Friday, March 18, and May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; 9A-4P, free
Riparian Workshops for Landowners and Land Decision-makers by Nueces River Authority Riparian Landowners' Network. Leading experts, Kenneth Mayben, James Smith, and Steve Nelle, teach the hows and whys of rivers and riparian functions.
Registration: Required. Accepted on a first come basis, space is limited. If you register, your participation is expected. Contact Sky Lewey, slewey@nueces-ra.org or call 830-278-6810.

AT 11-023 WATER PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE UGRA

Saturday, March 19, 9A-1P,UGRA Lecture Hall, free
The Kerrville Area League of Women Voters sponsors a forum series on the availability of water now and in the future for our area.

AT 11-041 RAINWATER HARVEST WORKSHOP

Saturday, March 19, 9A-Noon, CNC, Members $25; non-members$35.
John Kight, engineer and rainwater catchment owner gives the latest technological information and the most practical advice.
Registration: Required. Call 830-249-4616. Limited to 20.

AT 11-042 NATURAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN CLASS

Saturday, March 19, 9A-1P, CNC, Members $20; non-members $25.
Judit Green, TPWD urban biologist, will focus on using native and adapted plants in this 3-hour landscaping program. She will offer design, installation, and maintenance tips. Then, a tour of CNC's new and established native landscape.
Registration: Required. Call 830-249-4616. Limited to 30.

AT 11-036 WILDLIFE FOR LUNCH WEBINAR SERIES

Thursday, March 24, Noon to 1P, Your Computer, free
Waterfowl Management with Dr. Jim Cathey

AT 11-011 WILDSCAPES: THE PLANT-BUG-BIRD DINER

Saturday, March 26, 10A-2P, RNC, Adults $35, Members $28, Lunch included
Learn how your garden/property can provide food, water, and shelter for a variety of wildlife, particularly songbirds. Presenters include Susan Sander, founder of RNC, and local Master Naturalists.
Registration: Required. Call RNC 830-257-4837.

AT 11-034 SOUTH TEXAS FARM & RANGE FORUM

Friday, Saturday, April 1-2, Uvalde Activity Center, Uvalde
"Conserving Our Rural Heritage" The Farm & Range Forum provides an ongoing dialog between rural landowners and urban conservationists.
Details and Registration Form: greensatx.org/upcoming-events/upcoming-events-2?event_id=13

ADVANCED TRAINING

AT 11-024 WATER QUALITY STUDY RESULTS AND WHAT INDIVIDUALS CAN DO

Saturday, April 9, 9A-1P, UGRA Lecture Hall, free

The Kerrville Area League of Women Voters sponsors a forum series on the availability of water now and in the future for our area.

AT 11-028 MONARCH MONITOR TRAINING

Wednesday, April 13,1-5P / Thursday, April 14, 9A-4P / Friday, April 15, 9A-noon; CNC auditorium, $30 per person

The three-day workshop will train volunteers to mark migrating monarch butterflies and examine milkweed for monarch larvae.

Registration: Required. Call CNC 830-249-4616.

AT 11-035 KENDALL COUNTY CONSERVATION EXPO

Saturday, April 16, 8A-4P, Boerne Convention and Community Center, free

Presentations on Oak Wilt, Native Grasses, Feral Hogs, Landscaping for Wildlife, Pond/Brush Management, Tax Valuation Options, Wildfire Prevention, Kendall County Natural History, Small Acreage Grazing Management. texasconservation.org

Registration: Required. Free, first 225 RSVPs get a free BBQ lunch.

Deadline to R.S.V.P. is April 11 Contact Mark Duff, Staff Forester, Texas Forest Service, 210-494-1742 or mduff@tfs.tamu.edu.

AT 11-029 WINGS OVER THE HILLS LECTURES AND TOURS ATTENDED

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, April 29-May 1, Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park, Fredericksburg This new festival is co-sponsored by the Fredericksburg Rotary Club and Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center, and feature lectures, demonstrations, and tours highlighting birds, butterflies, and dragonflies. wingsoverthehills.org for details and updates. Schedules: wingsoverthehills.org/wings_schedule.pdf

AT 11-044 LLANO UPLIFT ARCHEOLOGY

Friday, June 10, 10:30-11:30A, ERSNA

An overview of Llano Uplift archeology with Texas Historical Commission archeologist, Dan Potter.

Registration: Required. Email m.mial@wildblue.net.

Our Hill Country Chapter is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Your tax-deductible contributions help the chapter achieve its mission.

Contact Treasurer Cathy Downs to make a donation.

mzdowns@hctc.net.

Thank you.

Check with your Human Resources department about contributing matching funds to the chapter.

Bobcat Paul E. Stafford

To become a Certified Texas Master Naturalist and earn the Dragonfly Pin for Initial Certification, candidates must COMPLETE and REPORT:

1. All training classes. Missed classes must be completed by attending a make-up class approved by the class director.
2. 8 hours of Advanced Training.
3. 40 hours of Volunteer Service.
4. All Advanced Training hours and Volunteer Service hours by the fifth of each month following the month the activities occurred.

To be recertified as a Texas Master Naturalist and earn the current year's pin, members must COMPLETE and REPORT:

1. 8 hours of Advanced Training.
2. 40 hours of Volunteer Service.
3. All Advanced Training hours and Volunteer Service hours by the fifth of each month following the month the activities occurred.

We thank Anne Cassidy for a very generous donation to the chapter.

Anne is a Bandera County member.

Initialisms to Know

TMN = Texas Master Naturalist
MN = Master Naturalist
AT = Advanced Training
RNC = Riverside Nature Center
CNC = Cibolo Nature Center
UGRA = Upper Guadalupe River Authority
TPWD = Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Website Tip

How to access Advanced Training information

There are two routes to get to the calendar which provides detail on AT and other events. On the chapter's home page:

1. Click *Advanced Training*, then click the "Events Calendar" link in the second paragraph.

2. Click *Calendar*.

Move the pointer to the desired date and click the event name to bring up a detailed description of the event.

Questions or comments about our chapter's website? Email Webmaster Dean Schmelling, **schmelling_d@indian-creek.net**.

HILL COUNTRY Happiness

BY SHARON MCLAUGHLIN

As an amateur photographer living in Alaska I was used to shooting grizzly bear, moose, caribou, Dall's sheep, beaver, and an occasional great horned owl, bald eagle, or golden eagle. When Mike and I moved to the Hill Country in 1995 **I longed to have "real wildlife" to photograph at our place in Comfort, but all I saw was birds, white-tailed deer, and more birds.** That was too tame for me, so I spent a year taking pictures of my grandchildren in every pose I could imagine.

After more than 30 rolls of film of my "kids," my son suggested I take pictures of birds, of all things... tiny, little, birds. Then, Mike and I saw our first hummingbirds. And thus began our bird watching experiences. Thanks to the Master Naturalist classes we enjoy bird watching even more now that we know names of birds we see.

We grew from two to four to six feeders, and Mike hung four of them under the eaves of the house at each of four windows. Our first male black-chinned hummingbird comes to check out his territory in March.

Yes, we are more than hooked. We are mesmerized. We can have six birds on one feeder, and the feeder just five feet away is equally full – to our delight and the delight of visitors sharing a cup of coffee or a meal with us.

My father was an authority on feeding wild birds in Indiana, especially the Canada geese wintering at his place on the Tippecanoe River. The geese watched his picture window for activity and stood, not so patiently, waiting for him to step out into the snow and spread corn for them. They returned with their young every summer so the amount of corn he had to purchase multiplied. But, like us, that activity was ***his entertainment*** and well worth the cost. Later, my father moved in with us. He made feeders out of pot lids and we fill them with sunflower seeds and scratch. We have many feeders outside our dining room windows and really enjoy seeing what all pays a visit.

Mike made seven or eight cedar log feeders that we fill with a peanut butter mixture similar to the suet recipes featured in the January newsletter. We make up **big** batches of suet and store in coffee cans, saving my wrists from getting worn out mixing. Mike is a great help with this. We use a 64-ounce jar of peanut butter, two

continued.

Happiness continued.

ten pound bags of corn meal, and lots of scratch, oatmeal, black oil sunflower seeds, and other fillers. This usually fills three large coffee cans and lasts for three fillings of Mike's feeder logs. The birds *watch* for us to walk out and even land on the logs before we can walk away.

Sharon McLaughlin

Mike made shelves that he attached to trees where we put ears of corn for the squirrels. When the squirrels are finished, I roll the bare cobs in peanut butter and scratch and use them one more time. Mike also made thistle feeders for the lesser goldfinches. They are abundant during summer and some even overwinter at our place. We have two pairs golden-fronted woodpeckers, two pairs ladder-backed woodpeckers, and one pair of downy woodpeckers. Mike built two special suet cage feeders and the woodpeckers **do** let us know when the feeders are empty. There are the usual chipping sparrows, house finches, titmice, Carolina chickadees, Northern cardinals, Bewick's wrens, a pair of hermit thrushes, a pair of black phoebes, white-winged doves, and little Inca doves, too.

Sharon McLaughlin

Sharon McLaughlin

Almost ALL of these birds can be seen daily, honest!

We placed heaters in a large oval galvanized water pan and birdbath. The phoebes come in to drink, along with the hermit thrush and summer tanagers. (Both deer and birds come in for the water. Squirrels and armadillos, too.) Oh, I forgot to mention the red-tailed hawk, who nests on the property next door, and has been seen swooping through what must be considered "The Buffet". Naw, we don't spoil our birds... much.

We had several birds fly into the glass windows, but never really been hurt. However, a white-winged dove was feeding on fallen scratch inside our fenced yard and was spooked by something causing her to fly into the air conditioner with a bang. Recognizing it was not the typical thud, Mike went outside found the stunned bird, carried her into our utility room, and placed her in a large bird cage with a bowl of water and some scratch to have if she recovered. Recover she did, and before Mike let her fly away I snapped a quick picture.

Sharon McLaughlin

Mike McLaughlin (standing on a ladder) with the suet feeder he built and covered with a protective roof. He's so neat!

continued.

Happiness continued.

While standing at the kitchen sink two days later, I heard another loud thud, so did my cat who looked up at the window. I thought I had best check what hit the window and leaned down on the window sill to scan the ground. Nothing! Looking up and directly across from me on the yard fence, I looked into the most beautiful big yellow and black eyes that were staring right back at me. They were surrounded by a large circle of orange-red feathers; the bird seemed to be about seven inches tall and had a white and brown speckled breast.

We continued to stare at each other - me not moving a muscle. I guess it was a good five or six seconds before the bird lifted off into the tree top at which time I yelled out loud, "It's an OWL!"

I believe it was a young screech owl in the red phase. My heart was up in my throat at my great luck. I quickly checked the bird book to make sure I had actually had such a visitor. Later that day I set out my little recorder and played the screech owl call over and over, but to no avail. Mike believes the young owl may have been blown off course with high winds.

Some readers may have a longer bird list than ours, but we never fear being bored while living out here. I am so thankful the good Lord brought us to Texas to live out the rest of our lives.

Hill Country Chapter Meeting Dates

March 28
April 25
May 23
June - Chapter Picnic
July 25
August 22 - New Class Reception at KACC
September 26
October 24
November 28
December - Holiday Party

Chapter Meetings for Advanced Training

AT codes will now be assigned to chapter meetings before the meeting occurs.

Meetings consisting of internal business, chapter picnics, receptions, or parties do not qualify for AT.

Board of Directors Meeting Dates

March 23
April 20
May 18
June 22
July 20
August 17
September 21
October 19
November 14
December 14 - Outgoing/Incoming board

Members are welcome to attend board meetings.

l-r: Ward Miller received his 250 hour pin and is joined by members earning certification: Cynthia Johnson, Thomas Hynes, Dean Schmelling, and Jim Burgin.

Wow! *We're wild about Wild Cats! What a great February meeting. Thank you, Bob McKinley, for choosing such an interesting topic.* ***105*** *in attendance. 73 members, 32 visitors. Photo by Koy Coffer. That's Koy's vacant chair up front.*

iphone apps for naturalists

Sibley

The Photographer's Ephemeris

Public Toilets

What's your favorite app?
Share it with us at denbow@gvtc.com.

HEY, WHAT IS THAT ?

Be first to identify the image below and you will find yourself with the psychedelic dragonfly next month. Images of this object may be found elsewhere in the newsletter.
ENTER TO WIN!

the resourceful naturalist

everyday tips

If your wood stove got a workout like mine, here is a tip on how to easily clean soot deposits from the glass.

Dip a damp paper towel in cold gray ash.

Rub the inside of the glass in a circular motion.

Works like magic!

When the deposits are removed, I clean the glass with water and lint-free rags, or you can apply a commercial stove glass cleaner.

Like removes like.

* Don't make me give away all my secrets. Send your tips for living the naturalist life to denbow@gvtc.com.

This Eastern Screech-owl was stuck in a golden-fronted woodpecker's hole and had trouble getting out. He wiggled and wiggled, and "eeked", "eeked", and finally popped out! Another screech-owl nests in a nearby black-jack oak. We usually have three owlets and always have fun watching them emerge.

from Cynthia Burgin

Bill's Suet is a big hit with the birds!

Thought I would send a few photographs of the birds dining on Bill's suet. I had to make a batch each day during the cold weather. Sometimes we had 50 birds on the deck at one time. They liked the rock feeder, but were also happy with the suet log from the chapter Christmas party. We have had orange-crowned warblers, yellow-rumped warblers, titmice, mockingbirds, and scrub jays. The house finches and chipping sparrows ate more than their share, but that's OK. We had a gold finch that stayed with the chipping sparrows, all the others finches that were here in the fall have gone.

Riverside Nature Center
Weekly Fauna Census 3/4/2011

We added a new bird species.
#140 Grasshopper Sparrow.
Unusual location for this species, may be migrating.

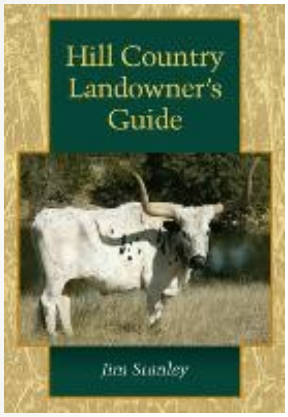
Cynthia Johnson, Stephanie Perry, Joshua Perry, Oliver Perry, Ann Rich, Susan Sander, Tom Collins

A furtive bird of open grasslands, the Grasshopper Sparrow takes its name not only from its diet, but also from its insect like song. It nests and feeds mostly on the ground.

allaboutbirds.org/guide/Grasshopper_Sparrow/id

NATURE OF READING

BOOKS FOR NATURALISTS



Hill Country Landowner's Guide

Jim Stanley

2009

The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.
Dr. Seuss

from John Hueckesteadt

Chapter Members Cage Trees at Enchanted Rock

Eleven young cedar elms at **Enchanted Rock State Natural Area** are now safely and happily protected from browse pressure by deer, thanks to a combination of efforts among Friends of Enchanted Rock (**FOER**), the Fredericksburg nursery "**Friendly Natives**," and volunteers from the Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter.

John Hueckesteadt

Melissa Mial, FOER board member, coordinated the effort and communication among the state natural area, the nursery, and the Hill Country Chapter. Matt Kolodzie, owner of "Friendly Natives," donated (and planted!) five beautiful new **cedar elms**. Six cedar elms were already in the ground but were inadequately caged and quite unhappy from browsing and rubbing. All eleven trees are sporting new five-foot diameter skirts of sixty-inch 2x4 steel fencing, each cage supported by three five-foot lengths of 5/8" rebar.

Master Naturalists Linda Ross and John Hueckesteadt, as well as Melissa and Jackie Hueckesteadt, provided the volunteer muscle. Supervision was unexcelled in the "person" of Pip, Melissa's beautiful Texas **Blue Lacy** dog. Both Pip and the cedar elms voiced their loud approval of the team's work.

from Mike Quinn

Monarchs Moving North

As temperatures increased in February at monarch overwintering sites in Mexico, monarchs began mating. Although some mating may occur earlier, the onset of mating is usually ascribed to February 14 - an appropriate date. A week to ten days after mating begins (February 21-24) monarchs can be seen leaving the area of the colonies, weather permitting.

The numbers leaving at first are small but pick up in the next two weeks. Some monarchs linger in Mexico until the first of April. The first of the overwintering monarchs usually reach Texas at the end of the first week of March. MonarchWatch.org.

and

Native Plant Sale

April 16 8am - 3pm

Riverside Nature Center

native plants | birding | learn | butterfly tent | rainwater harvesting | family activities | it's free!

The Hill Country's most popular Spring Festival.

Enjoy the special Live Butterfly Tent with live larva. Experienced Plant Docents will be available to help find native plants that will thrive in your growing conditions. Learn from educational displays by Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas, Master Naturalists, Upper Guadalupe River Authority, Headwaters Groundwater Conservation District, Hill Country Master Gardeners, and Kerr County Cactus and Succulent Society.

Urban wild turkeys at RNC on March 8.

from John Hueckstead

Jane Crone and Tom Hynes show off the new DOGIPOT pet station.

OUR CHAPTER FUNDS AT WORK

The chapter presented a gift to the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center (FFNC) to purchase and install a doggie-bag dispenser. With the increased number of visitors to the nature center, pet waste has begun to present a health risk and become a nuisance. Chapter members Jane Crone, Tom Hynes, and John Hueckstead installed the dispenser along the Vista Trail at the point where most visitors begin hikes. Dog owners walking pets along the trails can now pick up Fido's waste and dispose of it properly. FFNC expressed its gratitude for the gift and for the volunteers' time and effort to install the dispenser.

In 2010 the monarch was added to the World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) 10 Most Threatened Species List due to loss of habitat necessary for survival of the monarch migration.

Migrating monarchs pass through Texas, over-winter in the mountains of Mexico, and return to Texas in the spring looking for milkweed (*Asclepius* species).

Milkweed is the only host plant that monarchs utilize for their life cycle. Abundance of milkweed in Texas is crucial for the development of the first generation of monarchs.

WWF stated, "Every year millions of delicate monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus)* migrate from North America to their winter habitat in Mexico. A well conserved and protected high-altitude pine and fir forest in Mexico is essential for the survival of the overwintering of monarchs, which has been recognized as an endangered biological phenomenon. The protection of its reproductive habitats in the United States and Canada is also crucial to saving this species migration, one of the most remarkable natural phenomena on the planet."

The monarch is best known for its amazing migration of up to 2,600 miles, navigating by unknown means to a place where none of the individual butterflies have ever been.

How do they know where to go? How do they navigate? Scientists are working on it, but, as yet, there is no definite answer. It is truly one of the most amazing migrations of any creature on earth!

In fall, the remarkable monarch, which weighs about a half of a gram, migrates through Texas to overwintering sites in the transvolcanic mountains of the state of Michoacán in central Mexico, about 100 miles west of Mexico City.

Monarchs do not tolerate freezing weather so they must migrate to a warmer climate to survive.

At an altitude of 10,000 to 12,000 feet, the monarchs cluster in oyamel fir trees for warmth.

They have fat stores which they utilize during their four-month dormancy.

Toward the end of February, they become active, looking for water and looking for mates. After mating, they will stream out of the mountains and head north toward Texas looking for milkweed.

There are over 100 species of milkweed in the Americas. The predominant milkweed in the central flyway of Texas is antelope horns (*Asclepius asperula*). Hierba de Zizotes (*A. oenotheroides*) and green milkweed (*A. viridis*) are also found.

Spring migrating monarchs arrive in Texas during the last days of March. The females will lay their eggs only on milkweed. The eggs will hatch and small caterpillars will emerge.

Monarch larvae are "eating machines" and will devour enough milkweed to grow 2,000 times in weight. The monarch caterpillar will leave the milkweed plant to pupate, forming a pupa or chrysalis. It takes about a month from the time the egg is laid to the time the adult butterfly emerges or ecloses from the chrysalis.

Monarchs that are "born" in Texas will live about a month. They will mate and lay eggs as they continue the spring migration northward. It usually takes two generations to reach the upper Midwest and Lower Canada.

WWF Mexico has just reported the status of the overwintering colony. The good news is the colony has grown to 4.02 hectares (9.9 acres) in 2010-11 compared to 1.92 hectares (4.7 acres) in 2009-10.

Since recordkeeping started in 1994-95, 1.92 hectares is the smallest colony ever recorded. The bad news is 4.02 hectares is the fourth smallest number. Even though the colony size more than doubled in 2010-11, the size of the colony has been below the average for the past seven years.

Dr. Lincoln Brower, an expert on monarch butterflies and distinguished service professor of zoology, University of Florida, stated, "What is ominous is that all of the last seven years have been below average." He points to several possibilities for the decline: climate changes, deforestation, and the existence of genetically modified crops and pesticides, which crowd out the milkweed plants where monarchs lay their eggs. (The Canadian Press, Feb. 14, 2011)

Dr. Orley "Chip" Taylor, Monarch Watch, University of Kansas, stated that threats to monarchs are primarily related to changes in land use or land management practices, including illegal logging, genetically modified herbicide-tolerant crops, and development of rural land.

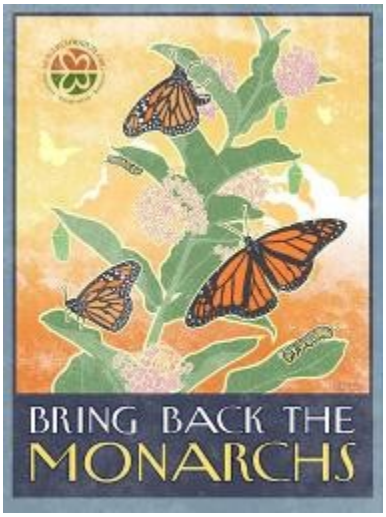
In addition, there are environmental perturbations and potential climate change. Monarch habitat four times the size of the State of Illinois has been lost in the past 18 years in the U.S.

What can we do to help the monarch?

We can create Monarch Waystations using the information found at the Monarch Watch website, monarchwatch.org. "To offset the loss of milkweeds and nectar sources we need to create, conserve, and protect milkweed-monarch habitats. We need you to help us and help monarchs by creating 'Monarch Waystations' (monarch habitats) in home gardens, at schools, businesses, parks, zoos, nature centers, along roadsides, and on other unused plots of land. Without a major effort to restore milkweed to as many locations as possible, the monarch population is certain to decline to extremely low levels."

Simply put; monarchs need milkweed and nectar plants for survival.

Participate in "Bring Back The Monarchs" through Boerne NPSOT's "M4M: Milkweed For Monarchs." npsot.org/wp/boerne/



Kip is a member of our chapter and the Boerne Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. If you want to know about monarchs - ask Kip!

Oak Wilt • Native Grasses • Feral Hogs • Landscaping for Wildlife
Pond & Brush Management • Tax Valuation Options • Wildfire Prevention
Kendall County Natural History • Small Acreage Grazing Management

Kendall County Conservation Expo

www.texasconservation.org

Saturday, April 16, 2011, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Boerne Convention & Community Center
820 Adler Road
Boerne, Texas 78006

*Registration is free and includes a BBQ lunch. CEUs are available for pesticide applicators. The deadline to RSVP is April 11.

Let *us* help *you* manage your own little piece of the Lone Star State.

To RSVP, contact:

Mark Duff, Staff Forester,
Texas Forest Service

Phone: 210-494-1742

Email: mduff@tfs.tamu.edu

Web: www.texasconservation.org

The Kendall County Conservation Expo is sponsored by:

Central Texas Conservation Partnership

Cibolo Nature Center, City of Boerne, Kendall County, Kendall County Soil and Water Conservation District, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Lower Colorado River Authority, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Forest Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Wildlife for Lunch Webinar Series

Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Wildlife Association are co-sponsoring lunch-based webinars third Thursdays of every other month throughout 2011.

It's Easy! Just point your browser to forestry-webinars.net on the day of the webinar and click on "Wildlife for Lunch" in the "Upcoming Webinars" section. The webinar series provides sound, science-based wildlife management options delivered by experts to you in the comfort of your own home or office. No need to travel! Each web-based seminar is fully interactive and allows you to engage the experts, make comments, and ask questions during the course of the presentation.

If you have not participated in an Elluminate webinar then please go to elluminate.com/support for instructions on setting up your computer. You should do this at least 24 hours in advance of a live webinar.

Wildlife for Lunch Webinar Series
Times are Noon to 1P central

March 24
Waterfowl Management, Jim Cathey

April 21
Aquatic Weed Control, Billy Higginbotham

May 19
Dove Management, Dale Rollins

June 16th
Texas Deer Lease, Judon Fambrough

July 21
Riparian Management, Sky Lewey

August 18
Conducting a Deer Study, Jim Gallagher

September 22
Scoring Deer Using Computer Software, Bronson Strickland

October 20
Aging Deer on the Hoof, David Brimager

November 17
Factors Affecting the Efficiency of Intensive Deer Management, Randy DeYoung

December 15
Managing Wildlife & Nature Tourism Enterprise, Miles Phillips

Webinars for AT

Webinars are becoming the classroom of the future. Webinars relevant to Master Naturalists and presented by our partners may be assigned AT codes.

Members may view previously broadcasted webinars for enrichment, however, previous webinars are not approved for AT because they do not allow interaction.

Members who experience technical difficulties attempting to participate in an approved real-time webinar and must review at a later date will receive AT credit.

Look for notice of approved webinar AT from Director of Advanced Training Steve Clyburn, **saclyb@swbell.net**.

MNs Garry Speir, Kristie Denbow, Reidun Hilleman, Ruth McArthur, and Ruth Coffey, and Kendall County Partnership for Parks board member Dan Denbow get the job done! Want to help? kristie@kendallcountyparks.org. Image design by Garry Speir.

TEXAS Master Naturalist℠

Hill Country Chapter

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FIND MORE INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE!

TXMN.ORG/HILLCOUNTRY

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Our chapter meets the fourth Monday of each month (excluding June and December) at 7:00p.m. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville.

We gather at 6:30p.m. for a fun social half-hour.

Please join us.

We welcome anyone interested in our monthly topic or the Texas Master Naturalist program.

Questions about our chapter?

Contact Koy Coffer

Director of Membership

kcoffer@texas-wildlife.org

Texas Master Naturalist mission:

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

Texas Star
Lindheimera texana

The Texas Star is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program.
News, comments, information, and ideas are always welcome.
Please contact Kristie Denbow, denbow@gvtc.com.

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