



# INDIAN TRAIL MARKER

News, events & calendar of the Indian Trail Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists...Serving Ellis and Navarro Counties

*Winter* 2020



## *From the Desk of the* **PRESIDENT**

Elaine "Muffi" Ruby

### **WE'LL SOON EXPERIENCE THE FALL OF 2020.**

The temperatures and humidity will slowly begin to dissipate. We will have the joy of watching the leaves turn color on the trees and possibly enjoy having a fire in the fire pit.

This year has been many things, most not good for the people we know. We have lost some good

ones. Nature never asks for excuses and we accept what is given because we have no control over Nature. Be outside as much as you can. Enjoy all that nature gives us!

We hope and pray that 2021 will be a more positive year for our Texas Master Naturalist Chapter. Remember our Virtual Annual Meeting October 14-18.

Elaine Ruby  
President



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Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Monday (usually) of each month at 6 p.m., program at 7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie. Our office is located in TexasAgrilife at 701 S. I-35E, Suite 3, Waxahachie, TX 75165 | 972-825-5175  
Visit our website at <http://txmn.org/indiantrail>

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## **A PRIMER OF SORTS ON SUBMITTING PHOTOS**

When you want to submit your photos to us for publication, please do not embed the photos within an email or a doc, as we have no way to extract them. I assemble the newsletter in a drawing program which enables me to use lots of different fonts, run type around photos, create graphics, etc. So, next time you send photos, attach them to your email and they can be easily downloaded. The proverbial piece of cake. Any questions, you know how to find me. Thank you, *JW*



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**COVER: Rara Avis** After a night of rain, I was out early the next morning to see what might have come in on the wind. As it turned out, quite a bit in the way of shorebirds. I went down to a favorite spot of mine near a swamp to look around and something bright blue caught my eye. There were lots of Eastern Pondhawk (bright blue) dragonflies there so I was lucky to spot this guy; a blue, Green Tree Frog. I knew it was an anomaly but I didn't realize how much of one it was. Google. Stay tuned.



# Texas Kangaroo Rat

By Tom Hollingsworth

*Dipodomys elator* is the rarest of five (5) species of kangaroo rat found in Texas. Known as the Texas Kangaroo Rat (TKR), *Dipodomys elator* is a small, furry rodent that lives in the rich, red, loamy, clay soil where the Great Plains Prairie meets the Rolling Plains in the Red River region of North Central Texas. This environment supports the short grasses, seeds, and stems TKR's feed on in a sparsely vegetated ecosystem with short mesquite shrubbery.

Although the research is not conclusive about TKR's origins, one theory is that it was isolated to this Red River region eons ago during geologic events that may have separated them from cousin kangaroo rats in Northern Mexico. TKRs are now discoverable in only a handful of Texas counties. Up about 1970, TKRs were found in 11 Texas and 2 Oklahoma counties. Its homeland is shrinking.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services (USFWS) is researching the TKR for possible listing under the Endangered Species Act. Texas Parks and Wildlife declared *Dipodomys elator* threatened a number of years ago.

#### Fact Sheet:

[https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arlingtontexas/pdf/TKR\\_FactSheet\\_20160808.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arlingtontexas/pdf/TKR_FactSheet_20160808.pdf)

In 2010, Denver-based Wild Earth Guardians petitioned for its listing.

A small number of TKRs under the care of biologists reside in protective captivity. A female didn't survive. USFWS hired me to perform taxidermy for preservation, research, and outreach. During the

project, I learned about wildlife I've never observed before. I soon noticed some of the TKR's awe-inspiring traits.

#### What makes TKRs special? Here are a few of their specialized features:

- A disproportionately larger head than the body compared to other rodents
- A bulbous cranium with a flat top that narrows to a long, bony nose
- A length up to 13 ½ inches with a tail over 1 ½ times longer than the body
- A tiny buff colored body with long strands of dark and white tufts of fur
- A rather large eye size of approximately 8 millimeters
- A set of hair-lined cheek pouches for transporting seeds
- A set of four-toed, kangaroo-like hind legs allowing it to jump 6-9 feet
- A pair of thick whiskers that extend outward over 1 ½ inches each side
- An average weight of less than 100 grams, comparable to a human finger

The nocturnal TKR gathers seeds at night and must detect and escape from nighttime prowlers. Huge eyes give them night vision. Sensitive, rounded ears collect sound waves like a satellite dish to hone in on danger. A long nasal cavity takes in large wafts of scent particles. The whiskers serve as path detectors for navigating around grass, rock, and woody stalks in

*continued next page*

*Rats continued*

in foraging grounds and along trails back to the burrow. Cheek pouches allow TKR's to carry seeds safely back to the burrow for safe caching and later consumption. They hop on their rear, kangaroo-like feet and typically don't walk on all fours. Using a long tail for balance, TKR's can dart aptly during normal locomotion, but also can leap great distances, even kicking sand in the faces of predators as an evasive maneuver.

TKR's burrows are also specialized. Often dug under mesquite root, burrows lie on the elevated sides of fencerows, dirt roadsides, and livestock trails that may resemble the raised edges of wide, trampled bison trails. Burrows are built horizontally into sandy soil so TKRs can enter at a run without changing direction downward as other critters do to enter a vertical shaft. Visualize quick getaways.

As a naturalist, I feel deeply connected to the wildlife I encounter. Nature's wildness and mystery calls me to respect the environment and all its creatures. Nicknamed Tikr ("ticker"), the specimen I preserved called proudly from her ancestral heritage seeking proper care. Having a small role in the TKR's conservation effort reminded me to stay engaged. I needed that reminder during this project. It was at times...intimidating. Some mistakes would ruin the project. The delicate tasks required fieldwork, study

and new skills. There are no other documented examples of TKR taxidermy. Naming Tikr instilled a personal drive.

Perhaps you will agree that *Dipodomys elator* is a remarkable species. Now preserved, Tikr will authentically present the TKR's unique anatomy and habitat for others to see. Tikr is now an ambassador for her species. She will invite people to take notice. She may inspire action toward conservation.

The TKR range is diminishing. Will the biologists figure out why? Are there ways to mitigate a likely trend of misfortune for the species? The USFWS will draw final conclusions and decide a listing status hopefully by the end of 2021. May the efforts of like-minded conservationists, such as my fellow Master Naturalists, continue to contribute to an improved future for the plant and animal species that we encounter on our short journeys through the natural lands of this Good Earth. And may the TKR be a rising benefactor of that effort.

For more background see:

USFWS Federal Register:

<https://www.fws.gov/policy/library/2011/2011-5177.pdf>

TPWD Magazine at:

[https://tpwmagazine.com/archive/2015/oct/scout5wildthing\\_kangarooat/](https://tpwmagazine.com/archive/2015/oct/scout5wildthing_kangarooat/)

# NATURAL reads

Book review by Chris Cook

## Buzz Sting Bite

By Anne Sverdrup-Thygeson

If you tend to wig out about bugs, or instead you keep cool-looking dead or dried ones on your dresser (me!), then *Buzz Sting Bite* is a good read for you. The author, Anne Sverdrup-Thygeson, is a professor of conservation biology, a scientific advisor researching the ecological role of insects in trees and forests. She does all this and more in Norway, so we are lucky for translation. (Just a side comment, Norwegians and Swedes are



kinda like Oklahomans and Texans, I'm a Swede).

This book is scientific by nature, but it is not didactic, pedantic (twenty-five cent words...check them out) or data-heavy. Anne S-T delivers some fascinating information about insects with low-key humor and in an almost affectionate manner that

makes for easy reading and is also full of "Did you know?... trivia for your next nerdy party (or Master Naturalist meeting) conversation.

### Sample a few titles

**Beyonce Was Right • Bees, Beans, and Bowels Movements • Swarmageddon • Therapy • When Nature Calls and Insects Answer • Wood Wide Web • Zombies and Soul Suckers • I am Fatherless But I Still Have a Grandfather** (*I loved this section*)

I think you will have a "grand" time reading this book with only minimal wiggling out, but with lots of interrupting your significant others saying "Can I read just this little part to you?"

# Steve Hill was proud to be a Master Naturalist.

He was born in 1946 In Detroit, Michigan to Alfred and Phyllis Hill. His parents moved the family to Fort Wayne, Indiana when he was two years old and lived there until he was fifteen. The family then moved to Greeneville, Tennessee in 1962. He attended Greeneville High School where he met his future wife, Ann.



In 1965 Steve joined the Army Reserve where he served for six years. Steve and Ann married in 1967 and they moved to Fort Wayne where he attended Indiana/Purdue University. He was awarded an Associate Degree in Business. In 1970 Steve decided to continue his education at East Tennessee State College where he studied Industrial Arts. Steve finished his degree in 1973 and found a teaching position in Falls Church, Virginia.

Steve and Ann became the parents of a daughter, Susanne, in 1975. Steve taught Industrial Arts until 1992 when he accepted a position with AAA where he instituted a new Mobile Diagnostics Program. In 1994 he began working for the Chrysler Corporation, during which time he taught Chrysler Mechanics the latest techniques in repairing and maintaining Chrysler automobiles, at that time Steve and Ann relocated to Henrico, Virginia, a suburb of Richmond, Virginia. Steve also would travel to Auburn Hills, Michigan to help write technical manuals from time to time. He retired from Chrysler 23 years later.

In 2010 the joy and pride of his life, his granddaughter Aubrey Ann Ross, was born. Steve and Aubrey spent lots of time together hiking in the woods and visiting the many historical sites found in Virginia. When Aubrey's family moved to Waxahachie, Texas of course Steve and Ann followed to be near their daughter and granddaughter.



*Aubrey Ann Ross is ten years old and attends Ovilla Christian School in Ovilla, Texas where she will be a fifth grader in the fall. She loves to draw and paint and play with her many friends.*



## BACKYARD POLLINATORS

By Rena Sutphin

I am not a writer so when I was reminded that I was responsible for an article in the ITMN Newsletter, I was a bit panicked. I thought for some time about how to fulfill this obligation and decided to share with you one of my favorite activities. I love to wander in my

backyard and watch for butterflies and other pollinators. I am sharing some of my findings. None of these are unique in any way. They can be found in many different places. None of these are spectacular photographs...just my little phone records of things I have seen. I have identified mostly with the help of INaturalist. I hope ID mistakes are minimal at least.

# Mow No Mo'?

By Jim West

AS WE ALL KNOW, OR, AT LEAST WE SHOULD KNOW, the earth is under assault from all quarters. Whether it be climate change, overfishing, slash and burn land clearing, development, agriculture or war, we need to stop and take a look at what each of us can do to help the earth mend itself. We have a lot of options here but, for this little diatribe, I will address mowing.

We hear a lot about the earth's resources as they relate to humans but we seldom hear about what the depletion of those resources does to the earth itself. The earth needs its resources to recover from droughts, storms, floods, earthquakes etc. and, it's very good at recovery, as it has been for millions of years....until we came along.

Some people think that it's a conspiracy, junk science, a plot to destroy democracy etc. The science is there but more overwhelming is the evidence. Just a few days ago, Greenland shed 42.3 square miles of its ice cap. Insect populations have declined dramatically, in some places up to 70% worldwide and, we're on track to make half of all species now on earth extinct by the end of this century. One species of rhino went extinct last year and, giraffes may be next up.

You might be thinking that, what can I do about all of this, I'm just one person? Well, a lot actually but, let's go back to mowing.

A lot of states are looking at reducing or eliminating altogether, the mowing of roadsides and

some already have. It was thought it would reduce the spread of invasive species but, it doesn't. What it does do is waste a lot of time, money and resources that could be better used elsewhere.

Seldom is roadside vegetation a safety hazard, especially on freeways. Visibility being the issue, mow a couple of feet on the edge of the pavement and you're good to go. On side roads and state highways, mowing a couple of feet on the edge of the pavement is all that's needed, with the exception of intersections where you need to see oncoming traffic.

School districts and public spaces are places where less mowing would be a benefit. The school properties in Ferris, where I live are a good example. Let's start with the high school. Most schools have a few acres of useless lawn in front and along the sides of the buildings that have to be maintained, creating an expense to the taxpayers. 99.9% percent of the time, the only people who will ever set foot on that ground are the people who mow it and that's only if they happen to run out of gas while they're cutting it. City hall grounds, library grounds and along railroad track are also candidates. There's a better way forward.

Another thing affected by mowing is the decrease in the numbers of pollinators. The very same ones that pollinate all of our food crops. Crops are seasonal whereas wild vegetation is not. The pollinators need the food so, in effect, this unneeded mowing is shooting ourselves in the foot, as well as the wallet.

One better way might be this. What if instead of mowing all of this land it was seeded with plants and wildflowers native to the region. School properties would have a living science lab right out the front door. Art students would have subject matter at hand and ag students would gain some insights as to how to interact with natural systems in ways more beneficial to all. It would reduce ISD maintenance expenses substantially and, the same applies to municipal land. Wildflowers would be present most of the year. Mow it a couple of times, early spring and late fall and be done with it. If you absolutely must have a clear, uninterrupted green surface, take up billiards.

There are good, sound aesthetic, economical and scientific benefits for adopting this strategy and the best one is that everybody wins.





# GRANNY AND GRANDPA JOE TURTLE STORY

By Pam Mundo

We live near a lake and a stream so in the spring we often see snakes and turtles. This spring we saw two red-eared slider turtles come up the lawn at the back of our house and start digging and laying eggs.



Nest one in April 2020.



Second Turtle nesting in grass



Mud nest after she left- June 26,2020

Joe Mundo's protective screen- to prevent mowers from going over nest.



The red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) is a semi aquatic turtle and a sub species of the pond turtle. This turtle is the most commonly traded turtle in the world, however it is native to Mexico and southern U.S. These turtles have a complete skeletal system with partially webbed feet that help them swim. One turtle may lay between two and 30 eggs and up to five clutches in the same year. Incubation takes between 59 and 112 days. No little turtles yet. We will keep you informed.

# MR. WEST'S NEIGHBORHOOD

*Text and photos by Jim West*



Is blue the new green? Hardly. Rare, yep, some naturalists found one in a reserve near Naples, FL and a local herpetologist told them that they had better odds of hitting the lottery than finding one.

Their normal green is produced by a yellow pigment mixing with gray cells, which appear blue in the blue light from the sky. This one was missing much of its yellow pigment. Here's a link to the Florida article. <https://archive.naplesnews.com/news/environment/rare-blue-tree-frog-found-at-corkscrew-ep-405223862-345740502.html/?gnt-mobile>



# MEMBER P | R | O | F | I | L | E

## Laura Beatie

By Lois Lyon

**W**hat do you do outside of TXM?

**LB:** I am blessed to enjoy the retired life from my first career and am currently working as-needed for a financial company. My girls are both married, one lives in College Station and the other in northern Minnesota. I love to explore. I have visited most of Texas, 43 other states, and 13 foreign countries. (hoping to add 4 more next year) I enjoy gardening, walking, hiking, and spending time with family and friends.

Aside from TXMN, I volunteer at Pioneer Bible Translators and am the membership coordinator for the US Section of an international organization. I

am also a long term breast cancer survivor and fundraise for and participate in the Susan G Komen 3-Day events around the country (I like to walk, a lot)

**How did you become interested in Texas Master Naturalist? What projects do you enjoy the most?**

**LB:** While out with friends I'm always pointing

out plants, critters, cool nature things, etc. One of my friends mentioned a "nature group" I should look into, but she couldn't recall the name. That spring I went to the Mother Earth News Expo in Bell County and talked with the Master Naturalists there. Shortly after that I came across the Indian Trail booth at the Waxahachie Garden Expo and signed up for information about the next class.

**What projects do I enjoy the most:**

**LB:** My favorite projects are ones with community involvement such as Mockingbird walks, Ellis County Heritage Farm, and the Blue Bonnet festival. I also enjoy helping with the butterfly garden at Mockingbird, participating in the Monarch tagging, and making/placing bird treats during Feed the Birds.

**What nature/environmental issues interest you the most or find the most rewarding:**

**LB:** The effect global warming has on plants and animals. The havoc it wreaks on the habitats and migration patterns really hit home to me, especially when Jim West recently pointed out the lack of variety in the insects this year. I find being able to introduce children or adults who weren't raised in the outdoors to nature and the beauty of it very rewarding.



Spider Lilly

# Thinking Local Can Affect the Global

*By Jessica Willis*

I grew up in Southern California, a half hour from the coast and an hour and a half from the mountains. I can still remember when my biggest complaint about the beach was the broken glass in the parking lot and the cigarette butts left in the sand. When I was little, I visited a beach that had a small stream crossing it. There was a small pond just before the water got to the sand. I waded into the pond where tiny minnows would nibble at my feet and legs. Several years later, I happened to go to this same beach and was excited to find the minnows again. Instead, I found a stagnant, rust colored pond. I have often wondered if this was the result of direct runoff from all the streets and urban development, or just drought conditions which were part of California life.

As I got older, I found that I could collect aluminum cans for pocket money. I don't know how many hours I spent riding my bike and looking for cans. I collected so many, that my father brought home a metal pole with a metal square welded to the bottom for smashing cans. Throughout this time, I was also aware of the other trash that I could not salvage. I did not know at the time that the plastic bags I was told to ask for at the grocery store to save the trees would become the eyesore it is today. It wasn't until I attended a beach cleanup on the Texas coast in the late 90's that I realized just how pervasive plastic pollution had become. I also learned that the diamond shaped holes punched in plastic bottles are sea turtles bite marks. It seems sea turtles are unable to regurgi-

tate the plastic so it has to pass through their digestive system. Today I am hearing that other sea creatures are filling their stomachs with plastic and starving to death.

What does plastic in the seas have to do with living in Dallas?

Have you ever been driving and notice a piece of trash go flying out the window of a car in front of you? I have seen this many times and it makes me angry every time. Not only is it disrespectful to everyone else, but the plastic is blown by the wind or washed away into the culverts. A plastic bag lost to the wind can become stuck in a tree or on a barbed wire fence and just looks ugly. A thimble full of water trapped inside plastic can breed thousands of mosquitoes since it cannot evaporate. Mosquitos are not only annoying, but many nasty diseases are carried by mosquitoes. All because someone couldn't wait to dispose of their trash at their destination. We get some impressive storms in the Dallas area. Just think how far plastic can travel when caught in one of those down burst winds. Not to mention the flash flooding that washes countless tons of trash into our rivers. Since the plastic does not break down, it can travel all the way to the sea

I wonder if more people would be responsive to the call to protect our environment if we were talking about planting local, improving plastic recycling/disposal systems, encouraging backyard habitat creation, and taking pride in keeping Texas clean.



Ironweed

# Get out!



Female Red-wing Blackbirds (native) vs. English Sparrow (invasive)

## Feeding The Wild Birds

By Lois Lyon

### GO AHEAD...FEED THE BIRDS...RESPONSIBLY.

Our feathered friends don't get coupons for BOGO at 25 assorted local eateries, with their choice of Asian, American, Mexican, or whatever they desire cuisine. Nor do they get Senior Discounts or Military Discounts. But if they're lucky, they have a devoted admiration society that can provide a smorgasbord of treats they didn't have to forage for, in the comfortable setting of someone's backyard.

Studies show that we feed the wild birds because it gives us an intimate connection with nature, which is good for our mental health. It is also just enjoyable to watch these beautiful, flighted creatures flit to and fro in search of their favorite goodie, showing off their expertise at darting quickly from one feeder to another, or hovering like a helicopter in mid-air, gleaming with the sunlight bouncing off their colorful feathers. It brings us entertainment and joy, and maybe we feel like we are paying nature back for all the damage we humans have done to the environment.

Most "feeders" (and there are over 50 million of us in the U.S.) care deeply about the wildlife and only want to do the right things for them. So only become a bird feeder if you are willing to be totally committed. Whatever the reasons, let's feed the birds generously, but responsibly. Let's review a few basics as we head into the season of putting out our feeders, and remind ourselves that it is an incredible privilege and profound experience to have truly wild animals come visit at your home, so be a conscientious host.

Our world is resilient and life is amazingly adaptable to change. If we can get people to connect with the everyday wonders in their own backyard, maybe the rest will take care of itself.

- Keep feeding and water station meticulously clean to prevent the spread of disease. Wear gloves to disinfect every couple weeks with a 9:1, water to vinegar, solution. Keep the ground cleaned up underneath to avoid attracting rats and other rodents. Avoid wooden platforms as they are difficult to disinfect and birds can mix feed and droppings. Go for feeding stations that are easy to clean and are covered for rain runoff.
- Placement of feeders is important. Try to keep out of severe wind. Make sure ONLY birds can get to them, not cats, squirrels, etc. They should be where birds feel safe – open enough so predators can't sneak up on them, but near enough to shrubs or trees so the birds have a safe place to hide. Placements should be either very near (within 3 ft.) or at least 20 ft. away from windows. Windows should have decals or blinds to avoid window strikes. Place feeders in the shade if possible, especially the nectar/liquid bottles. In warm weather, these may need cleaned/refilled every couple days.
- Increasing the number and variety of feeders reduces the competition amongst the birds. There are nearly as many styles and sizes as there are species of birds. The type and number of feeders you set out will affect the diversity and abundance of birds you attract.

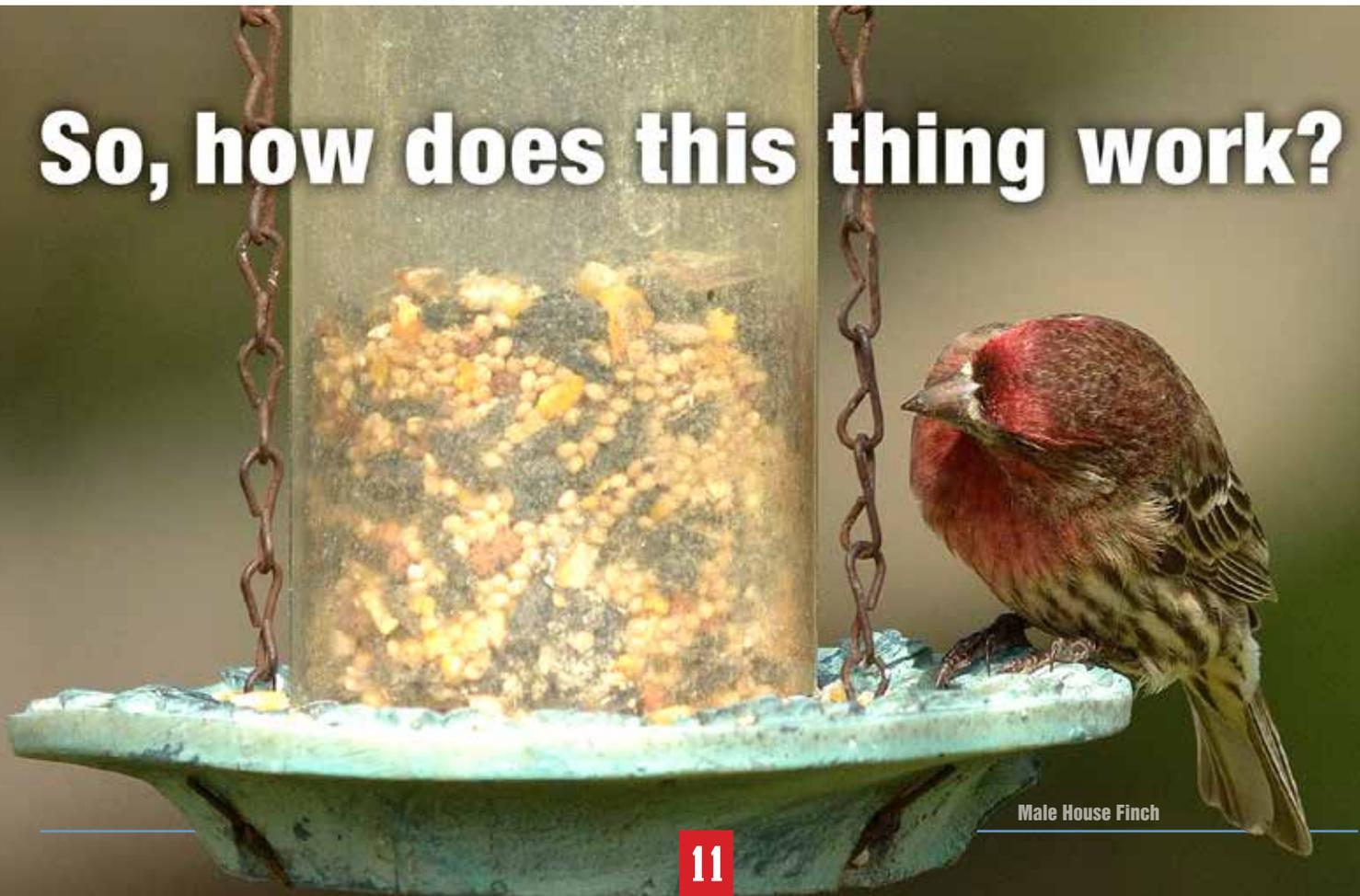
*Birds continued*

- Inexpensive birdseed is often loaded with cheap fillers that appeal to very few species, so it gets tossed to the ground. Choose better quality seeds so it's not going to waste. Don't feed "junk" food: bread, crackers, cookies, cereals, all baked goods...they do not have adequate nutrition for birds.
- The most common favorite of the most species of birds is the black-oil sunflower seed. Hulled seeds make it easier and provide this seed for those birds that can't crack the shells themselves.
- Peanuts – A high energy food, whole in the shell for large birds. Shelled, unsalted, dry roasted for smaller ones. Peanut butter can be used directly on the bark of a tree or on pine cones, with NO trans-fat, and can be mixed with corn meal (1 PB: 5 CM).
- Suet – purchased suet blocks are an easy treat with special "cages" to hang. The cage provides a place for the birds to grab on to. You can also look up recipes and make your own but the life of it will not be as long as purchased blocks.
- Nyjer/thistle seed – tiny seeds for small birds, requires a special feeder, or mesh "sock". Goes bad in wet weather. If birds stop feeding on it, throw the rest away and renew.
- Safflower seeds - High nutrition, thin-shelled seed, use same type of feeder as sunflower.
- Cracked Corn – Appealing to many birds. Whole corn is NOT recommended.
- Mealworms – Not really worms, but larval stage of beetles. Can be given live or freeze-dried. Favorite of bluebirds.

- Cooked Rice – to be given at the Duck Pond...instead of bread!
- Natural Foods – Don't avoid the natural foods for birds – fruit trees, nectar producing flowers; and do avoid killing the insects that birds eat. These are the easiest, most nutritious and economical food sources for feeding birds!
- Hummingbird "Nectar" – Use only the proper recipe for making nectar for hummingbird liquid feeders. 4 Parts water to 1 part white sugar. Boil water, add sugar and stir until dissolved...let cool before filling feeders Do not use honey, brown sugar, artificial sweeteners, or anything other than white sugar. Do NOT add food coloring.
- Fruit – Important dietary item for birds and sometimes hard to find in winter months. You can use grapes, slices of citrus, apple slices, sections of banana, raisins if soaked in warm water to soften. Don't leave any uneaten, spoiled food in your feeder.
- WATER – Don't forget to provide water for birds to drink, but also to clean their feathers.
- NO-NO's – A few items birds should NOT be given: Avocado; fruit with pits/seeds left in them (apple, pear, peach, apricot); uncooked rice; bread (just not beneficial).

Now observe, identify, photograph, enjoy...but please...**FEED THE BIRDS!**

# So, how does this thing work?



Male House Finch

**MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM 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.

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## INDIAN TRAIL CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*The mission of this newsletter is to inform, educate and entertain Texas Master Naturalists and their circle of friends.*

# Dilled Cucumber and Tomato Salad

★★★★★

Prep  
15 MIN

Total  
1 HR 15 MIN

Servings  
8



## Ingredients

- 4 medium tomatoes, each cut into 8 wedges (about 3 cups)
- 2 medium cucumbers, thinly sliced (about 5 cups)
- 1/2 cup finely chopped red onion
- 1/2 cup rice vinegar
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill
- 1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt

## Steps

- 1 In large glass serving bowl, mix tomatoes, cucumbers and onion.
- 2 In small bowl, mix all remaining ingredients until blended. Pour vinegar mixture over vegetables; toss to mix. Cover; refrigerate 1 hour to blend flavors. Toss again just before serving. Serve with slotted spoon.

# Pudding Fruit Salad

★★★★★

Prep	Total	Servings
20 MIN	20 MIN	9



## Ingredients

- 1 container (4 oz) refrigerated vanilla pudding
- 1/2 cup Cool Whip frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 1 cup seedless green grapes, halved
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows
- 1 can (11 oz) mandarin orange segments, drained
- 1 can (8 oz) pineapple tidbits in juice, drained
- 1 cup fresh strawberries, sliced

## Steps

- 1 In medium bowl, mix pudding and whipped topping.
- 2 Gently stir in grapes, marshmallows, oranges and pineapple. Add strawberries; toss gently to coat. Serve immediately or store in refrigerator up to 8 hours.

# Slow-Cooker Butter Chicken



Prep  
30 MIN

Total  
5 HR 30 MIN

Servings  
8

## Ingredients

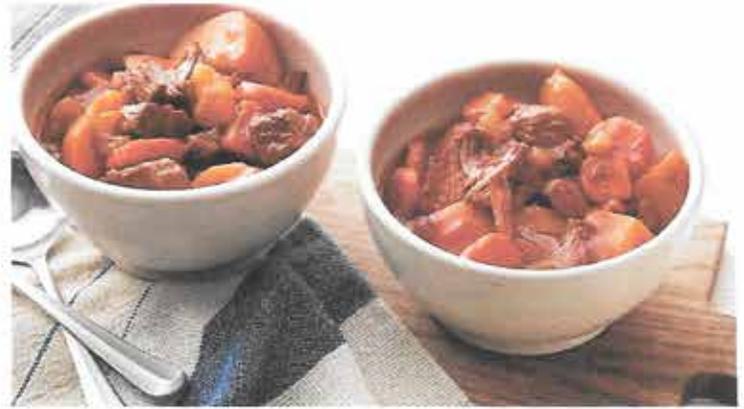
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 3 lb boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped peeled gingerroot
- 2 tablespoons garam masala
- 1/4 cup canned Muir Glen™ organic tomato paste
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup Progresso™ chicken broth (from 32-oz carton)
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves, stems removed

## Steps

- 1 Spray 4-quart slow cooker with cooking spray.
- 2 In 10-inch skillet, heat butter and oil over medium-high heat. Add half of the chicken and cook, turning once, until browned, about 5 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer to slow cooker. Repeat with remaining half of chicken. Reduce heat to medium; add onions to skillet, and cook until softened, about 4 minutes. Add garlic and gingerroot; cook and stir 2 minutes. Add garam masala; cook 30 seconds. Add tomato paste and salt; cook and stir 2 minutes. Add chicken broth, and scrape bottom of skillet with wooden spoon. Transfer to slow cooker. Cover and cook on Low heat setting 5 to 6 hours. At last 30 minutes of cooking, stir in whipping cream.
- 3 Transfer to serving dish, and garnish with cilantro leaves. Serve over rice, if desired.

# Slow-Cooker Old-Fashioned Beef Stew

★★★★★



Prep	Total	Servings
20 MIN	9 HR 20 MIN	6

## Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 lb beef stew meat, cut into bite-size pieces if needed
- 4 medium carrots, cut into 1/2-inch slices (2 cups)
- 3 medium red potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch cubes (3 cups)
- 1 large onion, cut into 1-inch pieces (1 1/2 cups)
- 1 medium stalk celery, cut into 1-inch pieces (1 cup)
- 3 cups vegetable juice
- 3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 tablespoon beef bouillon granules
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

## Steps

- 1 In 12-inch skillet or Dutch oven, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add beef; cook 4 to 6 minutes, stirring frequently, until browned on all sides.
- 2 Spray 4- to 5-quart slow cooker with cooking spray. In cooker, mix browned beef and remaining ingredients.
- 3 Cover; cook on Low heat setting 9 to 10 hours.