

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 6, No. 5

<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

May 2014

Lesser Prairie-Chicken Endangered Species

Lesser prairie-chickens are endearing little grouse that inhabit shinnery oak and sand sagebrush grasslands in the southern Great Plains. Although comparable in morphology, plumage and behavior to greater prairie-chickens (*T. cupido*), lesser prairie-chickens are smaller and have distinctive courtship displays and vocalizations.

Like other western grouse, male lesser prairie-chickens engage in a communal breeding display each spring to attract females. Both males and females congregate at breeding grounds known as “leks,” where the males strut, vocalize (“boom”) and physically confront



other males to defend their territories and court females. The male repertoire includes displaying their bright yellow eye combs, inflating their red air sacs, flutter jumping, cackling and stamping their feet.

Lesser prairie-chicken range has declined by over 90 percent and its population is among the smallest of North American grouse, variously estimated between 10,000 to more than 50,000 birds (although some experts have warned that fewer than 10,000 individuals may remain). Habitat loss and degradation from livestock grazing, agriculture, oil and gas extraction, wind energy production, herbicides, unnatural fire and fire suppression are primary threats to the species. Habitat fragmentation from fences and power lines and disturbance from roads, mining, and other activities also affect the bird. The conversion of habitat to agriculture on private land currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program poses a serious threat to current populations.

Continued on page 2

E LOCALS

MAY 6: Rolling Plains Chapter monthly meeting is at River Bend Nature Center. **Location:** 2200 3rd Street, Wichita Falls, Texas. **Time:** 7:00 p.m. **Program:** We will be talking about native and invasive plants. Pick a plant and discuss it with the chapter. Everyone will get a chance to share info on the plant they choose.

MAY 6, 8, 13, 15: After School Fishing at South Weeks Park. Volunteers can help pass out equipment and bait, cheer on the kids. **Location:** South Weeks Park is on Southwest Parkway **Time:** 4:30 to 6 p.m. **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

MAY 10: Wildflower walk. We are sponsoring this walk starting at the group pavilion to introduce wildflowers to the public. Paul Dowlearn will lead the tour. Afterwards, kids can make Mother’s day cards to take home. **Location:** Lake Arrowhead State Park **Time:** 10 a.m. **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

MAY 16-17: Lake Arrowhead State Park will host Heritage Days. Come learn about life on the early frontier. **Location:** Lake Arrowhead State Park **Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is not a TMN sponsored event.

Continued on page 2

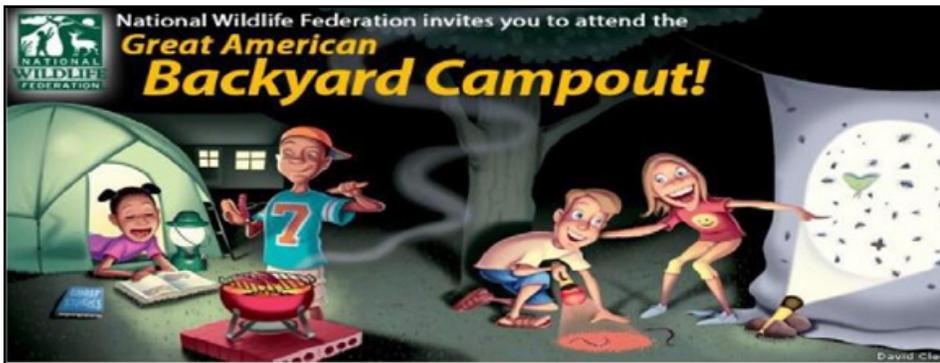
Continued from page 1

Lesser prairie-chickens have been a candidate for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for more than a decade. On March 27, 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced their intention to list the species as threatened. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and other state fish and wildlife agencies included in the Lesser Prairie-Chicken Interstate Working Group developed a range-wide management plan to further conservation of the species.

Prehistoric Fish Returns to Caddo Lake



They've been here for 300-million years, but you can't find them just anywhere. Paddlefish are being stocked in one of the most timeless lakes in Texas – Caddo Lake! Implanted with radio transmitters, Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists will monitor this pre-historic species to see if water flows in the lake are suitable for its reintroduction.



Rolling Plains Chapter Texas Master Naturalists

Invites you to join us for an evening of family fun

Saturday, June 28, 2014

**Lake Arrowhead State Park
(Group Picnic Pavilion)**

7:00 p.m. - dark.



Nature Activities
S'mores
Owl Calling



Come out and enjoy the fun!

(you don't have to camp to participate)

All Lake Arrowhead State Park fees apply.

Directions: Take 281 South, turn east on FM 1954

Continued from page 1

MAY 31: Lunch and Learn, Wichita Mountains. We will leave WF at 8 a.m. for the Wichita Mountains Lost Lake/ Charon Gardens area. Meet at Atwoods at 8 a.m. Bring field guides and we will explore trees, flowers, insects, birds, etc. Park personnel will be our tour guide for a nature hike. The chapter will supply burgers and hot dogs for a lunch following the hike. Chapter members are asked to bring side dishes. Chapter members are welcome to bring their families, also. **Location:** Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge **Time:** Meet at Atwoods at 8 a.m.

JUNE 7: National Trail Day at Lake Arrowhead State Park. We will help with a hike on the Onion Creek Trail. Due to the low water level, the Mark Howell memorial Kid Fishing Day will not take place. **Location:** Lake Arrowhead State Park Wildlife Refuge **Time:** 10 a.m. **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

Upcomming Workshop May 16-17, 2014

Texas Amphibian and Mussel Watch Train the Trainer Workshops
Fort Worth Nature Center
9601 Fossil Ridge Road
Fort Worth, TX 76135

Registration Required. Fee \$10 for materials per workshop.

Learn how to identify amphibian and freshwater mussel species and participate in scientific research as members of an important Texas Nature Tracker Partnership. Sponsored by the Fort Worth Nature Center and the Cross Timbers Texas Master Naturalist Chapter. Texas Amphibian Watch will be held on May 16, 6:00-10:00 p.m. and Texas Mussel Watch will be held on May 17, 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. **Texas Master Naturalist Approved Advanced Training.** CPE and TEEAC credit available for educators.

Contact the Fort Worth Nature Center at 817-392-7410 for information and registration.

Chapter Activities During March and April 2014



Trainee Elizabeth Hawley took this photo of the Burrowing Owl at Hackberry Flat, OK March 8 during the training on Raptor ID. Other species seen that day were: Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Burrowing Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, American Kestrel, Loggerhead Shrike. 5 Sandhill Cranes also put in an appearance.



We had a great turnout for the Raptor ID class in Oklahoma. Chapter members and new trainees turned out in force. Melynda Hickman with Oklahoma Parks and Wildlife thanked the chapter for their involvement in making the class a huge success.



Tom Lang, Inland Fisheries Biologist, shows a crappie to the students, and explains about the feeding habits of a blue catfish.



During the training class field trip to Iowa Park, TPWD Inland Fisheries personnel conducted an electrofishing study.



Texas Quail Index Study. In addition to Master Naturalists, it includes Becky Rudzicka, who conducted the training and David Graf, County Agent.



On April 5, the training class attends a session at River Bend Nature Center with Paul Dowlearn, owner of Wichita Valley Nursery, as they learn about native plants in the Rolling Plains.



May 12, 2014
6:00pm – 8:30pm
Red River Authority
3000 Hammon Rd.
Wichita Falls, TX



Texas Well Owner Network
 Water Well Education Workshop

The Texas Well Owner Network (TWON) in partnership with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Wichita County is offering a workshop on May 12 in Wichita Falls to educate residents about the Seymour aquifer, discuss well construction and protection and explain limitations of using poor quality well water. Other topics to be covered include: defining parameters for water use for plants/livestock, evaluating well water quality, determining what steps can be taken to achieve acceptable water quality levels and alternative water sources.



Quail Appreciation Day
 Wednesday, May 7,
 Jeff Fitts Barn, 290 Spur 510, Henrietta, TX
 RSVP By April 30 to 940/538-5042
 \$10 if pre-registered by April 30 or \$20 at the door
 3 CEUs available for Licensed TX Private Applicators

8:30 am Registration

9:00 am Morning Session

- Appreciating and Getting to Know Your Quail
- FAQ's about Quail
 - Restocking quail
 - Cows & quail
 - Supplemental feeding
 - Predation management
- Research Updates
- Continuing Education Opportunities

Noon Lunch and Travel to Ranch Site

1:15 pm Afternoon Session – Durham Ranch

- Management goals
- Plant ID & evaluating quail habitat
- Grazing Around Bobwhite's Lifecycle
- Texas Quail Index
- Dummy nests & Predator Assessment

4:30 pm Adjourn



Presenters:
 Dr. Dale Rollins, Project Coordinator, Reversing the Quail Decline Initiative
 Dr. Kelly Reyna, Executive Director, UNT Quail
 Becky Ruzicka, Extension Associate, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
 Missy Hodgins, County Extension Agent – Ag/Natural Resources, Clay County
 Brent Durham, Landowner




Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation in order to participate in Extension sponsored events are encouraged to contact the Extension Office at (940) 538-5052 or 538-5052 to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. A member of the Texas A&M University System and its statewide Agriculture Program.

Rolling Plains Chapter
Texas Master Naturalists

Invites you to join us for our

Mother's Day Wildflower Walk

Saturday, May 10, 2014
Lake Arrowhead State Park
(Group Picnic Pavilion)
Time: 10 a. m.

All Lake Arrowhead State Park fees apply.

Directions: Take 281 South, turn East on FM 1954

The Wildflower walk will be lead by the staff of Wichita Valley Nursery & the Rolling Plains Chapter Texas Master Naturalist

FACTS FUN

Don't ever say that butterflies neglect their young-the female

Malayan egg-fly butterfly protects her eggs with her life.

So devoted are they to their task that worn or dead mothers have been found in the "on guard" posture close to developing eggs or recently emerged caterpillars.



Volcanic eruptions can be predicted by analyzing the gases emitted by a volcano. An increase in the amount of sulphur dioxide is usually a sign that magma is coming

closer to the surface, while the detection of gases such as radon and helium may also herald an eruption.

When threatened by coyotes, horned lizards raise the blood pressure around their eyes until they squirt a jet of blood mixed with irritating chemicals. The lizards can fire up



to a third of their total blood volume this way.

Invasive Spotlight: "Feral Hogs"

Feral hogs are an old world species belonging to the family Suidae and include European wild hogs, feral hogs and European-feral crossbreeds. Feral hogs are domesticated hogs that either escaped or were released into the wild.

Feral hogs compete directly with livestock, game and non-game species for food. However, the main damage to livestock is caused indirectly through habitat destruction of the hogs rooting and trampling.



The United States Department of Agriculture is calling for a new national approach to deal with the impacts of feral hogs. The USDA and its partners

are working toward just that. Through adaptive management efforts in many states, the nation is striving to get a grip on this damaging species.

RESOURCE CORNER

The Complete Guide to Edible Wild Plants, Mushrooms, Fruits, and Nuts

by Katie Letcher Lyle

Paperback: 203 pages

ISBN-9781599218878

Price:\$14.95



The Complete Guide to Edible Wild Plants, Mushrooms, Fruits, and Nuts provides everything one needs

to know about the most commonly found wild foods-going beyond a field guide's basic description to provide folklore and mouth-watering recipes for each entry, such as wild asparagus pizza, fiddlehead soup, blackberry mousse, and elderberry pie. This fully illustrated guide is the perfect companion for hikers, campers, and anyone who enjoys eating the good food of the earth. With it in hand, nature lovers will never take another hike without casting their eyes about for the next free meal. Edible wild plants, mushrooms, fruits, and nuts grow along roadsides, amid country fields, and in urban parks. All manner of leafy greens, mushrooms, and herbs that command hefty prices at the market are bountiful outdoors and free for the taking, in fact, they are free. But to enjoy them, one must know when to harvest and how to recognize, prepare, and eat them. Katie Lyle Letcher is an award winning cook and author of almost 20 books. She has been a newspaper food columnist and has her own blog.

Chapter Contacts:

Jim Hensley, President 569-4713; Rebecca Herd, Vice President 232-5607;

Cynthia Archibald, Secretary

704-8474; Larry Snyder, Treasurer 569-4534

Committees Chairperson:

Leslie Fernandez, RiverBend Liaison 767-0843; Paula Savage, Newsletter Editor and Designer 691-0231, pasavage@sbcglobal.net; Tami Davis, Website Manager 224-0131; Activities Chair: Terry McKee 766-4097;

Dian Hoehne, Communication Chair 692-7234

Advisor: Robert Mauk, TPWD Advisor 766-2383