

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 8, No. 3

<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

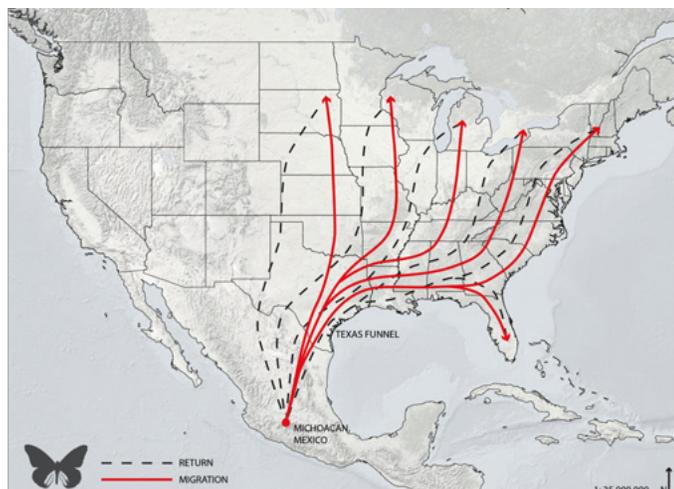
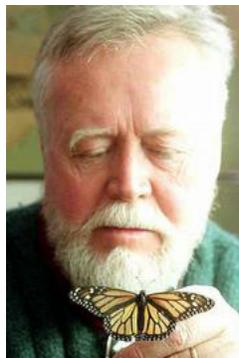
March 2016

Monarchs, Pollinators and Natives Report

by Maryruth Prose

I recently attended Oklahoma Native Plant Society's Indoor Outing, "Monarchs, Pollinators and Natives" and wish to share some of what I gleaned from this outstanding event. Many of you will be familiar with this information, but hopefully some of the new and exciting programs in monarch recovery will be of interest.

The keynote speaker was Chip Taylor of the University of Kansas and the founder of monarchwatch.org. There was a great deal to learn from him. He reviewed the steady decline of monarch since 2003. In the last two years 70% of the over-wintering population has died due to winter storms. The intensification of agriculture is a primary cause of the rapid decline, particular the increased use of Roundup-ready corn and soy has had a tremendous impact. In the last 5 years 24 million acres of habitat has been converted into renewal fuel crops (ethanol). 77% of this conversion has taken place in the middle of the monarch migration corridor and breeding area. Other factors are conversion of ranch and grasslands to crop lands, development of 1.24 million acres of habitat each year, intensive agriculture which reduces margins areas, land management practices (spray and mow), insecticides and mosquito control (especially neonics). All of these and others are causes for unfavorable conditions during the Monarch breeding



season which takes places primary in the corn belt reason. 50% of monarchs

Above: Chip Taylor, founder of monarch watch. **Left:** Map showing the migration route in red and the return route as a dotted line. Monarch Waystations would be set up along I 35, in the Texas-Oklahoma migration Corridor.

E LOCALS

MARCH 1: Rolling Plains Chapter monthly meeting is at River Bend Nature Center. **Location:** 2200 3rd Street, Wichita Falls, Texas. **Time:** 7:00 PM. **Program:** Ricky Linex will be our speaker. "Plant Identification: From Books to the Internet". He will bring some copies of his book: *Range Plants of North Central Texas*. It is \$20.00 cash or check only. It is a fabulous book with color photos.

MARCH 5: Plum Lake Kid Fishing Rodeo and Plum Lake Clean-up **Location:** Plum Lake **Time:** 10:00 AM to Noon. Clean-up starts at NOON.

MARCH 8: 2016 Master Naturalist Training Classes Begins **Location:** MSU Bolin Room 213 **Time:** 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Terry McKee will lead the Orientation.

MARCH 12: Penitentiary Hollow Wild Walk **Location:** Lake Mineral Wells State Park & Trailway **Time:** 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM Explore beautiful sandstone formations in remote areas only accessible on this guided hike. This is a strenuous walk involving some crawling through tight spaces in rock cracks, crevices and short caves. Expect to get dirty! Reservations are required. Call 940-328-1171 ext 222.

come from the corn belt and upper Midwest.

Dr. Taylor emphasized the urgency in establishing new habitats establishing milkweed and native nectars. A new project just getting under way spearheaded by Monarch Watch is establishing Monarch Waystations along I 35, making a “Monarch Highway” within the Texas-Oklahoma migration Corridor. The plan is to establish 1 or 2 waystations per mile on the 1,400-mile Interstate. One issue is getting enough seed for this project, as well as developing leadership and fundraising. Rolling Plains Chapter of Master Naturalist might consider establishing a Monarch Waystation, perhaps at Lake Arrowhead.



Above Right: Monarch feeding on milkweed. **Above:** Neosho Parthena Brown who's heirs in 2013 founded the Euchee Butterfly farm.

Janes Breckinridge presented, “Natives Raising Natives: A Seven Tribe Regional Pollinator Restoration Program” which is a fascinating new project. The Euchee butterfly Farm was established in 2013 by the heirs of Neosho Parthena Brown, a Native American woman of Euchee and Creek descent on the original 160-acre allotment deeded to her in 1899 by the United States Government. It is one of the last intact allotments in Oklahoma. Butterfly farming is the commercial production of live butterflies to be used for display purposes at zoos and butterfly houses, as butterfly releases for special events. It offers the perfect opportunity to generate economic self-sufficiency for Muscogee (Creek) citizens and other Native people. It is also one of the fastest growing industries in agriculture today.

It provides Native employment in primarily rural areas, hands on science programs and conservation of butterflies and the ecosystem. Seven tribes are currently participating. www.nativebutterflies.org

Grace Barnett, Monarch Outreach Specialist from the National Wildlife Federation reviewed another new program, “Mayors For Monarch”. So far 68 cities in the Monarch Migration Corridor have taken the Mayors’ Monarch Pledge to create and/or restore habitat and educate citizens about how they can do the same. The first to do so was St. Louis in 2014 where they initially created 250 monarch gardens in the city. In addition to new gardens at homes. The 2015 expansion resulted in 30 monarch schoolyard gardens with associated monarch curriculum, training and support for teachers. Mayors For Monarchs can also involve counties and utility districts. This program efficiency brings various agencies into collaboration with the goal of establishing a monarch recovery plan. www.nwf.org/mayorsmonarchpledge



Mayor Ivy Taylor reads a proclamation to butterfly conservationists led by National Wildlife Federation Monarch Outreach Specialist Grace Barnett (center).

Volunteer Workday at Wild Bird Rescue

Rolling Plains Chapter members Debra Halter, Kay Murphy and James Masuoka spruce up the grounds at Wild Bird Rescue during a volunteer workday February 20.



Great Backyard Bird Count

Members met behind Wild Bird Rescue at Lake Wichita for the Great Backyard Bird Count held February 14.



Above: Tami Davis, James Masuoka and Penny Miller **Below:** Terry McKee and Debra Halter

Penny Miller, group leader, reported 36 species: Canada Goose, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Redhead, Bufflehead, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, American Coot, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Ring-billed Gull, Eurasian Collared Dove, White-winged Dove, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, Crow, Robin, Mockingbird, Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, Song Sparrow, Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, Great-tailed



Grackle, House Finch, American Goldfinch and House Sparrow.

FACTS FUN



In California's Sierra Nevada Mountains and the alpine regions of Colorado, pink snow is occasionally

spotted. It's caused by a microscopic reddish-colored algae, *chlamydomonas nivalis*, that lives only in cold climates. While the locals call it "watermelon snow" it is not edible. The algae can be slightly toxic and can give you an upset stomach if you eat it.

Cacti are pollinated by insects and hummingbirds. Some red cactus flowers spread a stenchy rotten meat scent, attracting insects.



The mudskipper is a fish that spends most of its time out of water and can "walk" on its fins. It carries a portable water supply in its gill chambers when it leaves the water. It can also

breathe through the pores of its wet skin.

TEXAS POLLINATOR POWWOW LUBBOCK/TAHOKA - APRIL 22-24, 2016

We are very pleased to announce that we are now taking registrations for our



upcoming Texas Pollinator PowWow at the Museum of Texas Tech University in Lubbock, and at nearby Tahoka Lake Pasture. We're really pleased to be in the Panhandle for this conference, and it's been deeply gratifying to learn of the growing groundswell of interest in pollinators and agricultural practices supporting conservation in this area.

<http://www.texaspollinator-powwow.org/lubbocktahoka->

april-22-24-2016.

html Space is limited to 250. **PRE-REGISTRATION**

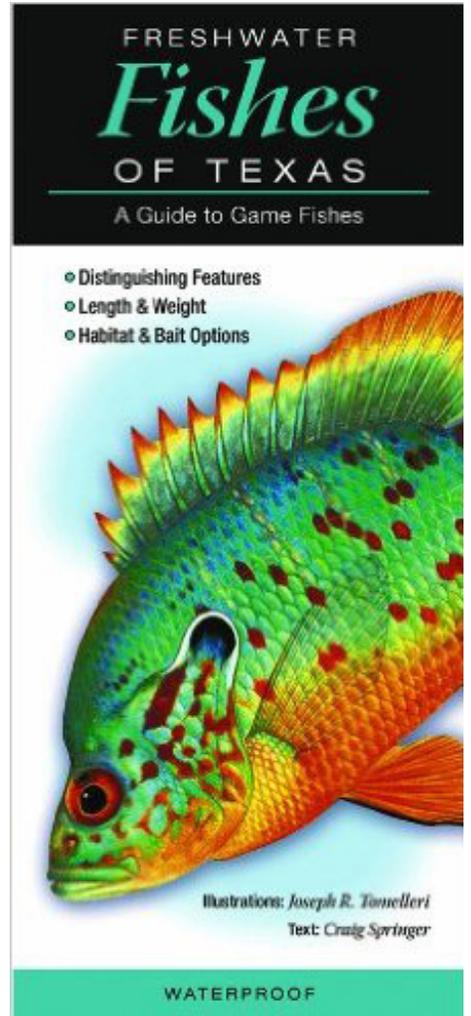
DEADLINE IS APRIL 12. If we are not sold out by that date, you may register at the door, but your lunch will NOT be included.

The Lubbock/Tahoka PowWow has two dozen speakers and field trip leaders, two Native Bee ID workshops, two Milkweed Propagation workshops, and two dozen exhibitors. And one very awesome field trip! The Lubbock/Tahoka pollinator conference focus will be on native bees.

RESOURCE

CORNER

Freshwater Fishes of Texas
by Craig Springer, Joseph R. Tomelleri (Illustrator)
Pamphlet: 12 pages
ISBN-10: 0982551681
Price:\$7.95



Anglers and naturalists alike will want to use this handy field guide to identify any freshwater fish in Texas likely to be caught on hook-and-line. The noted diagnostic characters and beautiful color illustrations will prove an indispensable aid for identification. Included are notes on preferred habitat, geographical distribution and favorite baits for landing each species.

The guide's six double-sided panels fold up into a packet narrow enough to fit in a back pocket yet sturdy enough to stand up under repeated use. Lamination has also made the guide waterproof.

Chapter Contacts:

Terry McKee, President 766-4097, dgm59@aol.com; Kay Murphy, Vice President 704-0406, kay_vince@sb-cglobal.net; Judy Snyder, Secretary 569-4534, judithksnyder@gmail.com; Larry Snyder, Treasurer 569-4534, lastime64@gmail.com

Committees Chairperson:

Paula Savage, Newsletter Editor and Designer 691-0231, pasavage@sbcglobal.net; Tami Davis, Website Manager 224-013, tamieducator@gmail.com; Dian Hoehne, Communication Chair 692-7234

Advisor: Robert Mauk, TPWD Advisor 766-2383, Robert.Mauk@tpwd.Texas.gov