

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

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<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

January 2017

President Report

by Terry McKee

2017 is upon us with a flurry of activity.

We start out the year with Lake Arrowhead State Park First Day Hike at the Dragonfly Trail at 2 p.m. What better way to bring in the new year than by being out in nature.

Our January 3rd meeting will feature Keith Gauthier, LASP superintendent, who will fill us in on happenings at the local state park.

Home and Garden Show tickets will be available at the meeting. Home and Garden Show will be at MPEC February 25 and 26. Jane McGough is in charge of our booth this year and we have an exciting activity we will be doing for the kids. But I will let Jane explain that at the meeting.

2017 Training class is fast approaching as well. Classes will begin in early March, so start encouraging everyone you know to make plans to attend. Cost will be \$100, and is well worth the price for the knowledge you acquire. Dian Hoehne has organized our television appearances for the training class. More to come about that.

February 17 through the 20th is the Great Backyard Bird Count. We will have a chapter sponsored GBBC at Wild Bird Rescue, Sunday, February 19.

I'd like to thank your officers for their support and wisdom during the past year, Judy Snyder, Kay Murphy and Larry Snyder. And welcome to Lynn Seman, who joins the slate of officers as our secretary. Lynn, Kay, Larry and myself are your officers for 2017 and we look forward to serving the Rolling Plains Chapter. But we need your help as well. The officers rely on input from our members. Have an idea for a chapter project- let us know. Have a complaint or a suggestion on what we can do to make the chapter more exciting or interesting- let us know. Look on the bottom of the newsletter to find the numbers to contact us, or stop us at the meeting.

And speaking of newsletter, many thanks to Paula Savage for the work she does preparing our newsletter. It is excellent! The only way to make it better, would be for every chapter member to submit at least one article

E LOCALS

JANUARY 3: Rolling Plains Chapter monthly meeting is at River Bend Nature Center. **Location:** 2200 3rd Street, Wichita Falls, Texas. **Time:** 7:00 PM. **Program:** Keith Gauthier, LASP superintendent, who will fill us in on happenings at the local state park.

JANUARY 14: Penitentiary Hollow Wild Walk **Location:** Lake Mineral Wells State Park & Trailway **Time:** 2:00p to 4:00p

Join Park Ranger David Owens on a wild walk, crawl and scoot through some of the most remote areas of beautiful Penitentiary Hollow. 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. Held at Lake Mineral Wells State Park, 100 Park Road 71, Mineral Wells, TX, 76067. The program is free with paid park entrance fee or a State Park Pass.

JANUARY 14: Bird Walk with Penny Miller **Location:** Lake Arrowhead State Park **Time:** 8 a.m.

Congratulations!

Congratulations Norman Mason for achieving your recertification for 2016.

or interesting item or photo this year to Paula.

Be sure you continue to check our webpage. Tami Davis keeps everything up to date, so if you have a question about the calendar of events, that is the place to check.

The chapter also has a Facebook page maintained by Larry Snyder, where you can see what is going on in the Rolling Plains.

And many thanks to Kim Mason, our editor for the TMN articles for the Times Record News, and to the wonderful people that share their thoughts and observations with the reading public.

I am lucky to be surrounded by so many dedicated members willing to give of their time and talents for the betterment not just of our chapter, but for the advancement of and appreciation of the outdoors and the encouragement of others to enjoy the natural world.

Here's to a great year outdoors!

Invasive Spotlight

Guinea Grass (*Urochloa maxima*)

Guinea grass originates from tropical Africa. It forms dense stands in open pastures and disturbed areas. Guinea grass can suppress or displace local plants on fertile soils in pastures. Its resistance to drought also means it builds up a dangerous mass of plant material so that when fires occur, the blaze is fiercer and native plants, which have not built up fire-tolerance, are wiped out. As guinea grass can survive fires, it can dominate the ground after a fire.

Guinea grass is a tufted perennial, often with a short creeping rhizome, 60-200 cm high, and with leaf blades 10 to 100 cm long and up to 35 mm wide and tapering to a fine point. The sheath is shorter than the internode, and the collar is densely pubescent. It produces open panicles that are 20-65 cm long with whorled lower branches. The spikelets are 3-3.5 mm long. The upper floret (seed) has distinctly transversely wrinkled lemma and palea.



Pyrrhuloxia Spotted at Lake Arrowhead State Park



June McKee and Debra Halter found this Pyrrhuloxia at Lake Arrowhead State Park the morning of December 23, 2016. This is a first county record for Clay County and first for Lake Arrowhead.

To get to the area it was spotted, drive down the main road until it ends. Then turn left. It was stayed mostly on the left road edge but did perch in the trees roadside.

Home and Garden Tickets and Chapter Dues

by Larry Snyder

I have purchased 75 tickets again this year. We had little problem getting rid of the 75 last year but in the past we've struggled to sell the 100. I usually ended up purchasing the remaining tickets and handing them out at the show. The point is, if you want to reserve some tickets, let me know. Maybe we can sell 100. Remember, this is the only fund raising activity we ask our members to participate in. They make great stocking stuffers!

2017 dues are now being accepted. Dues are \$15 for a single and \$25 for a double.

You can send your dues check to me.

Make it out to: Rolling Plains Chapter, TMN

Send to: Larry Snyder at 1020 Pawhuska Ln, Burkburnett, TX 76354.

If you're not going to write a check, PLEASE have correct change ... we don't have a change/petty cash fund.

Or you can pay your dues at the January meeting.

Either way, if you wish to remain a member in good standing, please pay sooner rather than later so I don't have to keep bugging you. Or, if you already know you are not going to remain a member just tell me, there's no shame in that for sure; and it saves me a lot of headaches.

IF your dues aren't paid by March 1st you will be dropped from our membership roles.

The American White Pelican



American White Pelican in flight over Lake Wichita. Photo by Paula Savage

The American white pelican about four feet tall and has a wingspan of about nine feet. It is entirely white except for its black-edged wings that are visible when the American white pelican is in flight. It has a long neck, a long orange bill with an expandable pouch and short orange legs with big webbed feet. In breeding season, it has a light yellowish crest on the back of its head and a nuptial tubercle or fibrous plate on the upper part of its bill. The nuptial tubercle will fall off when mating season is over and the crest will turn gray. Young American white pelicans have grayish markings on their heads and backs.

The American white pelican breeds in isolated areas from Manitoba, Canada and Minnesota west to northern California. The American white pelican migrates to its winter grounds in early fall. It winters in California, Mexico, Central America, along the Gulf Coast and in Florida.

The American white pelican lives on inland shallow freshwater lakes, wet prairies and marshes in the summer and on coastal lagoons in the winter.

The American white pelican doesn't dive into the water for its food like the brown pelican. It floats on the water and scoops

up fish and water in its pouch. It holds its heads up and drains out the water and then swallows the fish. The American white pelican only carries food in its pouch when it is taking food to its chick. American white pelicans often hunt for food in groups. They will form a line and start swimming towards shore while flapping their wings and herding their prey towards the shore. Sometimes, one group of pelicans will even drive the prey towards another group of pelicans! The

American white pelican eats up to three pounds of fish per day. It also eats salamanders and crayfish.

The American white pelican nests in colonies. Male and female American white pelicans show off their bright orange bills during courtship. They strut around, bow, and take short flights in an attempt to attract a mate. The female lays 1-3 eggs in a depression on the ground or on a mound of vegetation and dirt. Both parents incubate the eggs with their large webbed feet! The eggs hatch in about a month. If the female lays more than one egg, usually only the strongest one will survive. The other chicks die of starvation because they can't compete for food with their stronger sibling.

White Pelican Chicks are naked at birth. By the time they are 10 days old they are covered with white down. Both parents care for the young. The chicks dig

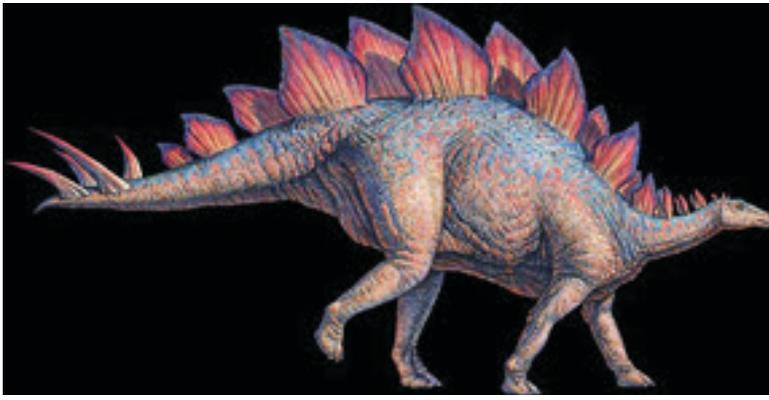


A large pod of American White Pelicans at Lake Wichita. Photo by Paula Savage

regurgitated food out of their parents pouches. Chicks leave the nest and join the a pod or a creche of young pelicans when they are 17-28 days old. Chicks fledge when they are about 10 weeks old.

The American white pelican is clumsy on land, but it is a good swimmer and very graceful in flight. American white pelicans fly in flocks in a long line, with their necks bent back over their bodies.

Although the Stegosaurus dinosaur was over 9 metres long, its brain was only the size of a walnut.



Carnivorous, bog-dwelling plants called bladderworts can snap their traps shut in less than a millisecond, 100 times faster than a Venus flytrap. The bladderworts received this name because of tiny bladder-like structures on their branched underwater leaves.



Seahorses don't have stomachs, just intestines for the absorption of nutrients from food. Food passes through their digestive system rapidly, so they eat plankton and small crustaceans almost constantly.

TPW Television Series

Bat Noses, Involved Angler and Wildlife Watchdogs

January 1-7, 2017

Researchers track white nose syndrome in bats as it gets closer to Texas. Randi Wayland has spent a lifetime promoting fishing and water safety to young people in Texas. Follow along as the Kills & Spills Team works to save wildlife after unnatural disasters.

Moving Bees, Razing Cane and Wildlife Winds

January 8-14, 2017

Watch a bee specialist relocate a hive of European honey bees, giving them a safe new home where they can keep on buzzing. Invasive

giant reed is a threat to Texas rivers. Watch as biologists work to control this towering cane. See how wind energy production impacts wildlife.

Bee Searcher, Coastal Winds and Turkey Work

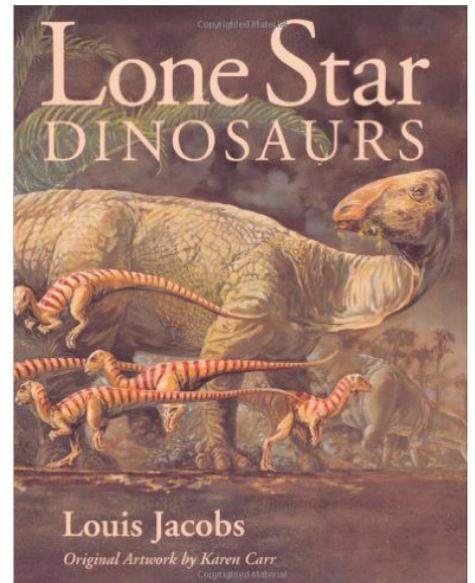
January 15-21, 2017

Meet a researcher who's investigating the health of native pollinators. Learn how wind farms use radar to protect migrating birds near wind turbines. Find out where the turkeys lurk when biologist trap and tag Rio Grande gobblers.

RESOURCE CORNER

Lone Star Dinosaurs

by Louis Jacobs (Author),
Karen Carr (Illustrator)
Paperback: 176 pages
ISBN-13: 978-0890966747
Price:\$14.95 on Amazon



The story of dinosaurs in what is now Texas is being reconstructed, footprint by footprint, bone by bone. *Lone Star Dinosaurs* tells that story. Dinosaurs are a Texas legacy from worlds long past. Pleurocoelus, Alamosaurus, Acrocanthosaurus, Chasmosaurus, Tyrannosaurus, and Tenontosaurus are among the representatives Texas boasts of every basic group of dinosaurs--a remarkable diversity that samples nearly the entire range of dinosaurian development over an immense expanse of time. In fact, the three dinosaur-bearing areas within the state--the Panhandle, Central Texas, and Big Bend--yield treasures of vastly different ages, from the beginning of the Mesozoic Era more than 200 million years ago to the time of the big extinction some 66 million years ago. These dinosaurs lived in such different arrangements of the continents and oceans that they may as well have lived in different worlds. Their stories offer a compelling picture of the history of life on our planet.

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