

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 11, No. 11

<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

November 2019

President Report

First off, let me remind everyone that has monarch tags to please return them to the November meeting.

It's hard to believe the holiday season is already upon us. *Our December 3 meeting is our annual Christmas Party.* We will meet at the Letter Carrier Hall, 5310 Southwest Parkway at 6 pm. Our meal will be provided by Luigi's. Cost for the meal will be \$5 a head and can be given to Larry Snyder. Members are encouraged to bring a dessert to share. The highlight of the evening will be the Bad Santa gift exchange.

It is time to elect new officers for 2020. Nominations will be made at the November meeting for president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. If you would like to serve in any of these positions, please contact Terry at dgm59@aol.com before Tuesday night. Now is the time for you to step up and serve your chapter.

Lastly, the McKee family would like to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers as June McKee continues her rehab at Texoms Christian Care Center after her month stay at Dallas Presbyterian Hospital. I would like to personally commend your officers Kay, Lynn and Larry for filling in while I was out. Their help was greatly appreciated.

—Terry

For Your Information

I plan on purchasing Home & Garden Show tickets on Monday. I will have them available at the meeting on Tuesday. The cost to you is \$6.00 each. I'm going to purchase 75 initially but I can always get more. This is the only fund raiser we ask you to participate in. They make great gifts. Please consider getting a few. Our chapter makes \$4.50 off each ticket you buy.

I know it's early, but not too early for me to begin to collect dues for 2020. Dues are \$ 15.00 annually for a single member and \$ 25.00 for a couple membership. Yes. I will hound you from now until the end of February about dues. So, it'd help me immensely if you'd tell me now that you have no interest in continuing your membership. Bring your check or EXACT cash to the meeting or mail to me at 1020 Pawhuska Ln, Burkburnett TX 76354-2815

LOCALS

NOVEMBER 5: Rolling Plains Chapter training meets *in Bolin Science Hall room 209 at Mid-western State University Time: 7:00 PM. The program:* Blair Ramon, MSU biologist will discuss her study about native bees.

NOVEMBER 9: Feeder Watch begins - go to this website for more information on this: <https://feeder-watch.org/>

NOVEMBER 9: Bird Walk at LASP - 8:00am - meet at dump site in park.

NOVEMBER 30: Cross Timbers Bird Walk at Lake Mineral Wells State Park & Trailway, 10:00am to 12:00pm. Reservations are required. Call 940-328-1171 ext 222.

DECEMBER 5: Chapter Christmas Party at Letter Carrier Hall, 5310 Southwest Parkway at 6 pm. Cost for the meal will be \$5 a head. There will be the Bad Santa gift exchange.

JANUARY 1, 2020: First Day Hike at Lake Arrowhead State Park. Dragonfly Trail, .5 mi at 2PM. Onion Creek Trail "Half Loop". Meet at The Horn Tunnel. 1.5 miles at 4PM. *This is a volunteer opportunity.*

Finally, I will add a category in VMS for direct outreach at River Bend. It'll be called DO: River Bend Nature Center. Remember, there's also a category called PO: River Bend Nature Center. Please be careful about where you enter your hours for River Bend. Think about the difference between direct and indirect events ... direct generally can't walk off ... indirect can walk off if they wish.

—Thanks, Larry

Thousands of Tarantulas Set Off on Their Annual Migration in Colorado

By Mindy Weisberger - Senior Writer - LiveScience

Southeastern Colorado will soon be experiencing the pitter-patter of little feet — tens of thousands of them — as thousands of male tarantulas begin their annual migration to the prairies to find a mate.

Beginning in late August, Oklahoma brown tarantulas (*Aphonopelma hentzi*, also known as *Texas brown tarantulas*) will begin their trek through the La Junta, Colorado, area, a journey to undisturbed grasslands that typically lasts through early October, according to a report by The Gazette, a newspaper that serves Colorado Springs.

Female tarantulas hunker down in their prairie burrows for most of their lives, but the males walk for up to 1 mile (2 kilometers) to find a mate, according to CNN. However, this epic migration will look more like a steady trickle of spiders than a dense carpet of hairy brown bodies, as the tarantulas aren't social and usually travel alone, Mario Padilla, head entomologist at the Butterfly Pavilion, a nonprofit invertebrate zoo in Westminster, Colorado, told CNN.

Oklahoma brown tarantulas are fuzzy, brownish spiders; females' bodies measure 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) long and weigh about 0.7 ounces (20 grams), while males are somewhat smaller,



according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

The spiders produce venom to subdue their prey, though the toxins are not harmful to people. However, tarantulas' sharp fangs can pierce human skin, and bites can lead to bacterial infection. Tarantulas also defend themselves by brushing off stinging hairs on their abdomen, which can irritate a person's skin, eyes and respiratory tract, FWS says.

Males typically embark on a female-finding trek when they reach sexual maturity at around 10 years old, CNN reported. And the spiders' first migration is also their last; while males may remain active through the fall, nearly all of them will be dead by November, according to a fact sheet posted on Colorado State University's Western Colorado Entomology (WCI) website.

The spiders are most active at dusk in the hour before sunset, and tarantula enthusiasts hoping for a glimpse of the leggy travelers will find plenty of amorous arachnids on Highway 109 on the Comanche National Grassland, according to a recommendation by a La Junta tourism site.



Invasive Spotlight: Giant Hogweed

Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is originally from Eurasia. It is an aggressive competitor. Because of its size and rapid growth, it out-competes native plant species, reducing the amount of suitable habitat available for wildlife. It prefers moist, disturbed soils but can be found in a variety of habitats. Giant hogweed dies back during the winter months, leaving bare ground that can lead to an increase in soil erosion.

Giant hogweed is a biennial or perennial herb in the carrot family (Apiaceae), growing 15 to 20 feet in height with stout dark reddish-purple stems and spotted leaf stalks. Hollow stalks and stems produce sturdy bristles. The compound leaves with three leaflets may expand to five feet in breadth. It resembles cowparsnip (*Heracleum maximum*) (which can also cause rashes) but its leaves are more dissected and pointier than those of cowparsnip. (Cowparsnip isn't found in Texas, however.)

It is not found in Texas -- YET! We would like to keep it that way. Please report it using the **Report It!** website if you think you have found some.



WARNING! Giant hogweed contains a substance within its sap that makes the skin sensitive to ultraviolet light. This can result in severe burns to the affected areas, producing swelling and severe, painful blistering. If you plan to eradicate it, be sure to wear gloves, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt.

When the mostly underwater Bogoslof volcano in the Aleutian Islands erupts, it produces giant bubbles that can reach up to 1,444 feet across, according to a new study. These bubbles are filled with volcanic gas, so when they burst they create volcanic clouds tens of thousands of feet in the sky.



The largest fish to walk on land, the voracious northern snakehead, will flee water that is too acidic, salty or high

in carbon dioxide. Snakeheads eat native species of fish, frogs and crayfish, destroying the food web in some habitats. They can survive on land for up to 20 hours if conditions are moist.

The bee's brain is oval in shape and about the size of a sesame seed, yet it has a remarkable capacity to learn and remember things. For example, it is able to make complex calculations on distance travelled and foraging efficiency.



Volunteers Wanted for Survey of Aquarium Stores in Texas

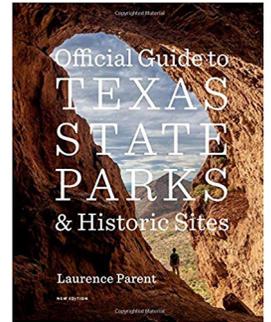
Some aquatic invasive fish in Texas, such as the pleco (*Hypostomus plecostomus*), originated from the aquarium trade. Pet owners, for a variety of reasons including their fish getting too big or having to move, sometimes are no longer able to keep their aquarium fish. Because they of course care for the well-being of their fish, they release the fish into our natural waters rather than dispose of them. To help counter this problem, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) created an outreach campaign to educate the public about alternatives to releasing fish and other aquarium organisms, called "Never Dump Your Tank".

Another way to approach the problem is to get a better understanding of the availability of current or potential invasive fish being sold at aquarium stores in Texas. TPWD and TexasInvasives.org are collaborating on just such a study. The study relies on volunteers visiting stores to determine whether they are selling these species.

Volunteers are needed! Please help by participating. Contact Dr. Landel at invaders@texasinvasives.org if you would like to help.

RESOURCE CORNER

Official Guide to Texas State Parks and Historical Sites
by Laurence Parent
Paperback: 240 pages
ISBN- 978-1477315408
Price: \$19.39 on Amazon



Since it was first published in 1996, *Official Guide to Texas State Parks and Historic Sites* has become Texans' one-stop source for information on great places to camp, fish, hike, backpack, swim, ride horseback, go rock climbing, view scenic landscapes, tour historical sites, and enjoy almost any other outdoor recreation.

Freshly redesigned, this revised edition includes eight new state parks and historical sites, completely updated information for every park, and beautiful new photographs for most of the parks. The book is organized by geographical regions to help you plan your trips around the state. For every park, Laurence Parent provides all of the essential information:

The natural or historical attractions of the park:

- Types of recreation offered
- Camping and lodging facilities
- Addresses and phone numbers
- Magnificent color photographs

So if you want to watch the sun set over Enchanted Rock, fish in the surf on the beach at Galveston, or listen for a ghostly bugle among the ruins of Fort Lancaster, let this book be your complete guide. Don't take a trip in Texas without it.

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