

# Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

## NEWSLETTER

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<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

September 2020

### President's Report

If you have considered adding native plants to your home landscape, now is the time to begin! The birds, butterflies, bees, and other pollinators will love you for it! In July I “attended” a two day online workshop Gardening for Monarchs & Other Wildlife with Native Plants-in Texas! hosted by National Wildlife Federation, Native Plant Society of Texas, Texas Master Naturalist Program, and Texas Parks and Wildlife among others. I was reminded that around five years ago I began my journey in learning about native plants. Here it is 2020, and I will never stop learning.



Visit the National Wildlife Federation website and read about Gardening for Wildlife. Then check out how to certify your landscape as a wildlife habitat. What I love about this program is that it focuses on the important things you need to have to make a habitat that is good for wildlife. You don't need to read a lot of books and attend workshops like I did!!! These are the factors that are essential for wildlife in your landscape:

- #1 **Food:** Native plants. There is a Native Plant Finder for our region that will help you get started. You can use supplemental feeders also.
- #2 **Water:** Many suggestions such as bird baths, rain collection, water garden or pond, and butterfly muddling are listed. From my experience, when you water your landscape with collected rainwater—magic happens!!!
- #3 **Cover:** Wildlife needs places to hide from predators or protection from weather. Woods, dense shrubs, ground cover, water garden or pond, rock piles are some of the examples cited.
- #4 **Places to raise young:** Host plants for caterpillars, water garden or pond, mature trees, dense shrubs, and a nesting box are some of the choices.
- #5 **Sustainable Practices:** You are advised to reduce lawn areas, plant native plants, collect rainwater, use mulch to reduce water evaporation, use compost, and eliminate chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

So, when selecting native plants, shrubs, and trees, you need to keep these five essential elements in mind. Another native plant finder can be found on Lady Bird Johnson wildflower.org organized by ecoregions. There is another one also on BRIT (Botanical Research Institute of Texas).

If you want to help monarchs on their journey south to Mexico, you need to select plants that will be blooming in September and October. Mentioned in my workshop were Giant Blue Sage, Mealy Blue Sage, Maximil-

### E LOCALS

**SEPTEMBER 1:** Rolling Plains Chapter Meeting - 7:00pm on Zoom - log in a little early so we can start the program at 7:00pm. A Zoom link will be sent out one hour before the meeting. Hope to see you all there!

**The program:** Ricky Linex, a wildlife biologist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service will be speaking about Cochineal which is found on prickly pear.



**SEPTEMBER 2:** All Day Event - 9:00am to 4:00pm - Texas Master Naturalist Virtual Volunteer Fair - Online Event <https://txmn.tamu.edu/virtual-volunteer-fair-september-2nd-2020/>

**SEPTEMBER 4:** 8:00am - Horned Lizard Survey at Lake Wichita Chat

lian Sunflower, Mistflower, Fall Aster, Gayfeather, and Cowpen Daisy among many others. In my experience, the monarchs love to feed on my zinnias, mistflower, and lantana during the fall migration. They have even roosted on my Abelia shrub as well! Visit monarchwatch.org to see the requirements to certify a habitat as an official Monarch Waystation.

My favorite sources for seeds and native plants are Wildseed Farms, Native American Seed, Botanical Interests, and Wichita Valley Landscape right here in Wichita Falls! Just pick a small spot to get started, and you will be amazed how many pollinators you will have!

See you outside! Kay

## From Disappointment Comes New Adventure

by Lynn Seman

The Horned Lizard Conservation Society had a conference scheduled to take place on June 6, 2020 at the Phoenix Zoo, but just like everything



else, it was postponed until next year because of COVID-19. After the disappointment sunk in, we decided to “make the most of it” and instead of the “face to face” conference, we would record videos of some of our speakers to share with the public. This opened up an interesting and rewarding opportunity for me.

First, I set up a Zoom meeting with Dr. Wade Sherbrooke. If you have a book on horned lizards, you may have heard of him; he wrote it! Dr. Sherbrooke even has a horned lizard species named after him and has spent his life doing research on these adorable little critters. It was a delight to visit with him and record his video on why horned lizards squirt blood out of their eyes.

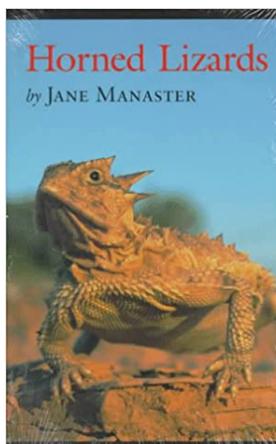
Next, came a video with Nathan Rains. Nathan is the guy that I send our data to from our horned lizard surveys! He has also just agreed to be the HLCS Texas regional contact for the Horned Lizard Conservation Society. He is a wildlife diversity biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife. In the video, he answers some common questions about horned lizards.

Third in the series was a video with who I call “the dog guy”, Paul Bunker. Paul is a dog trainer who retired from service in the British army and now is assisting in the program to reintroduce horned lizards to certain areas

of Texas. He works closely with San Antonio Zoo to search areas for horned lizards before the re-introduction process. He encourages

the use of rescue dogs in his program. If you find some horned lizard scat, you might want to mail it to him to help with dog training. What an amazing concept and person!

Fourth in the series is a fascinating author and super sweet lady named Jane Manaster. She also wrote a book on horned lizards which tells about some of the culture and history along with our connection to horned lizards. I absolutely love her humor and her fascination with the people/lizard relationship. Seeing a Texas Horned Lizard brings joy to my soul! I definitely bought a copy of her book.



The next two videos in the series are going to be amazing! The Horned Lizard Conservation Society is not a state organization, but an international one. I had the opportunity to talk and record video with Cecilia Aguilar Morales from Sonora, Mexico. She was one of our grant recipients from the past for HLCS. What an amazing young lady! She explains about the species, threats, and challenges of horned lizards in her country while

Trail and then to Wichita Valley Rail Trail afterwards at around 9:00am

**SEPTEMBER 5:** Quail Queens Roadside count

**SEPTEMBER 11:** 8:00am - (tentative) Horned Lizard Survey at Lake Arrowhead State Park (If the weather is good, afterwards, I plan on kayaking for the Miles for Monarchs at the Park) Of course, all depends on the weather.

**SEPTEMBER 19:** Nature Journaling Workshop at Comanche Springs (4 spots open) \$75 fee

**SEPTEMBER 21:** (tentative) Horned Lizard Survey at Copper Breaks State Park - leave at 7:00am

## FYI: This & That

- **2020 Recertifications:** Congratulations to Judy Snyder, Sandy Underwood, Ray Hyde, Joy Parsons, Sharon Hyde, Laura Gillis and Lisa Taylor.
- **Special request from TMN “Headquarters.”:** Next time you log in please review your personal information, especially your phone number and email address to make sure they are correct. If you aren’t regularly logging in, please log in soon and do the same.
- **Sikes Lake Clean-up:** We are not having the Sikes Lake (organized) Clean-Up this year, however, if you want to go out and pick-up trash on your own time, you will be able to count your time. Please wear your TMN nametag and follow the guidelines for safety.



- **Rolling Plains Chapter YouTube Channel:** We have created a Rolling Plains Chapter TMN email so that we can organize our videos,

documents, etc. for the chapter. By doing this, our chapter will now have a YouTube Channel in which we will upload videos of various chapter related items. You will be able to go to YouTube and subscribe to Rolling Plains Chapter TMN to get access to these videos easily.

she conducts her research. She also agreed to make two videos – one in English and one in Spanish, which was a challenge for me to edit, but so much fun. She was very patient with me to help get this accomplished. Check out her videos when they are posted!

Keeping up the international theme, the next video I am working on is with Nick Cairns, PhD (recently finished up this degree!) from Saskatchewan, Canada. Can you believe there are horned lizards in Canada? These little reptiles have some of the most extreme conditions to live in on Earth! Nick explains about the challenges they face and talks about the new research he would like to conduct in the future. He has that “passion” for studying horned lizards and talks about what inspired him to do his work.

And this is not all! There will be more to come. From the disappointment of cancellations, comes opportunity for learning. Even though the video quality and sound may not be the same as being there in person, the outreach of

education continues. If you want to check out this video series, go subscribe to Horned Lizard Conservation Society on YouTube.

If you want to become a member of

the Horned Lizard Conservation Society, you can join online at <http://www.hornedlizards.org/how-to-join.html>. Your dues will help further research for horned lizard conservation.

**NATURE JOURNALING  
AND SEED COLLECTING  
WORKSHOP**

**September 19, 2020**

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With **June Musick**, Artist and  
**Christena Stephens**, 3RF Biologist

**AT**

**COMANCHE SPRINGS ASTRONOMY CAMPUS**

8:30 am - 9 pm  
Space limited to 20 participants  
\$75.00  
(includes lunch, dinner, and materials).

To reserve your spot or more information  
email: [christenas@3rf.org](mailto:christenas@3rf.org)

*Sponsored by 3 Rivers Foundation*





## Great Texas Birding Classic Moves to Fall for First Time Ever

AUSTIN— Drop that remote and grab those binoculars, the 24th Annual Great Texas Birding Classic (GTBC) is kicking off fall with its annual bird watching competition. For the first time ever, this spring event has moved to the fall due to the public health crisis. Coinciding with the fall migration, the GTBC is perfect for novice birders and nature lovers who want to get outside and take part in the competition. **The deadline to enter is Sept. 14.**

Teams can enter one or several categories lasting from a morning of birding to 24 hours of competition during this year’s Birding Classic being held Oct. 1-31. Last year, more than 130 teams consisting of 850 participants throughout Texas recorded 411 bird species during a host of regional and statewide tournaments.

“Last year’s participation was the highest in the past decade,” said GTBC director Shelly Plante, Nature Tourism Manager for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. “The Classic is a perfect fit for naturalists, birders, communities, nature centers, bird clubs and school groups. There is something for everyone, regardless of bird watching experience, age, ability or location. We postponed our traditional spring event due to the begin-

ning of the Covid-19 pandemic, but that gave us a chance to create a really special once-in-a-lifetime Fall Birding Classic!”

This year, participants can choose to compete in two new categories the “Dispersed Flock” team and the “Intact Flock.” “Dispersed Flock” teams consist of team members located anywhere in Texas. Families and friends can also team up to compete from wherever they are quarantining through the “Intact Flock” category.

Participating teams can choose from a variety of tournament categories for this special Fall event, including:

- **The Expanded Big Sit!:** This category is great for teams that have one or two “ringer” birders or if you have lots of people wanting to be on one team together. Due to the pandemic, the size of the Big Sit! circle has increased to a 50-foot diameter to give everyone plenty of space to social distance.
- **The State Park Tournament or Sunrise-to-Noon Tournament** – “Intact Flock”: Ideal for a team seeking a more laid-back day without too much traveling. The “Intact Flock” category is ideal for friends or families who are quarantining and

interacting together. These are mixed age teams, so kids, teens and adults can be on a team together.

- **Regional and Statewide Big Day Tournaments** – “Dispersed Flock”: Perfect for team members who are unable to participate together due to the pandemic. Participants may put together a team of birders with each team member located anywhere in Texas or in their selected region. Perfect for those who want to bird for most or all of a 24-hour period in their local “patch” (window views, yards, neighborhoods, or outdoor public spaces such as parks if permitted by local/statewide ordinances) within 50 miles of their homes. Categories are separated by age groups.
- **Human-Powered Tournament** – “Dispersed Flock”: Participants can bird by bike, on foot, in a kayak or other non-motorized form of transport to take place in this tournament. Teams can be made up of members from any area of the state.

To register online and learn the rules and tournament details, visit: [www.BirdingClassic.org](http://www.BirdingClassic.org). Registration fees and sponsorship dollars go toward conservation grants benefiting birding, nature tourism, and habitat restoration and enhancement projects throughout Texas.

# FACTS FUN

Certain meat-eating birds, such as owls, hawks and eagles, have hooked beaks, allowing them to tear up their meals. But they aren't the only ones with this special feature—vireos use their hooked beaks to help them hunt for caterpillars.



Such waves can be created by differences in surface heating.

Ambush predators often attack prey while camouflaged. Several types of insect hunt this way. Camouflage protects the insects from predators as well. Some assassin bugs are masters of disguise—they carry ant carcasses on their back to confuse prey and predators, who end up with a mouth full of dead ants while the assassin bug escapes.



## Green Anole (*Anolis carolinensis*) AKA: Chameleon



The green anole is a common lizard, slender in build, with a narrow head and a long, slender tail that can be twice as long as the rest of the animal. Color can vary from gray-brown, to brown, to bright green. Each animal can change its color to blend with surroundings. Males can have a noticeable dewlap that is pink when displayed. It is commonly referred to as a “chameleon” due to its ability to

change color, but not a true chameleon.

Anoles require greenery, occasional shade, and a moist environment. They prefer to be in trees or shrubs, but can also be found on walls and fences.

The green anole lizard is found in the eastern third of Texas, and is common in the southeastern U.S.

# RESOURCE CORNER

*The Nature of Nature: Why We Need the Wild*  
by Enric Sala  
Paperback: 256 pages  
ISBN-978-1426221019  
Price: \$20.88 on Amazon

*In this inspiring manifesto, an internationally renowned ecologist makes a clear case for why protecting nature is our best health insurance, and why it makes economic sense.*



Enric Sala wants to change the world--and in this compelling book, he shows us how. Once we appreciate how nature works, he asserts, we will understand why conservation is economically wise and essential to our survival.

Here Sala, director of National Geographic's Pristine Seas project (which has succeeded in protecting more than 5 million sq km of ocean), tells the story of his scientific awakening and his transition from academia to activism--as he puts it, he was tired of writing the obituary of the ocean. His revelations are surprising, sometimes counterintuitive: More sharks signal a healthier ocean; crop diversity, not intensive monoculture farming, is the key to feeding the planet.

Using fascinating examples from his expeditions and those of other scientists, Sala shows the economic wisdom of making room for nature, even as the population becomes more urbanized. In a sober epilogue, he shows how saving nature can save us all, by reversing conditions that led to the coronavirus pandemic and preventing other global catastrophes. With a foreword from Prince Charles and an introduction from E. O. Wilson, this powerful book will change the way you think about our world--and our future.

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