

# Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 12, No. 10

<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

October 2020

### President's Report

It's that time of year when some of our projects are winding down. Larry Snyder reports that requirements for the Quail Index Study are complete and Lynn Seman reports the same for her Horned Lizard Surveys.

Our Board is compiling a 2021 slate of officers of which members will vote for online instead of our annual Christmas Party. That is complete except for the position of treasurer. **Laura Gillis** has graciously agreed to President for two years. **Debra Halter** will continue to serve as Vice President and Webmaster. **Sandy Underwood** will take on the job of Secretary and be Co-VMS Director along with **Larry Snyder**. **Robert Mauk** will continue to be our Advisor (representing Texas Parks and Wildlife). We still need someone to step forward and take the Treasurer position. We need new blood in the leadership of our chapter to keep it energized!!!



If you have not completed your VT and/or AT hours requirements, there are many opportunities still to come. Check our emails regularly because they appear daily. Lynn does an amazing job reporting these opportunities for us!

We send our best wishes to Lisa and Mark Taylor. We hope that Mark is on his way back to full strength. Our dear L Clepper was attacked by a dog while riding bikes with Lynn Seman. Our hearts go out to L and hope she heals from this traumatic event.

### E LOCAL S

**OCTOBER 6:** *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:** Dr. James Masuoka on PCR (polymerase chain reaction). Polymerase chain reaction is a technique to make many copies of a specific DNA region in vitro.

**OCTOBER 2-18:** *The Texas Pollinator BioBlitz*. Upload observations to iNaturalist! Lake Arrowhead State Park will be hosting a BioBlitz in conjunction with this on October 10. More details very soon!

**OCTOBER 15:** 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm *Introduction to Mushroom Iden-*



## Letter from Terry

As a member of the Rolling Plains Chapter, I would like to just take a moment to commend the leadership of our chapter this year.

2020 has been a weird year, to put it mildly, and Kay has done an extraordinary job as president, conducting online meetings and attending online seminars to keep our chapter in the loop with state offices. She has definitely earned a gold star!

Thank you Lynn, for keeping the chapter abreast of activities that can still be done safely. I really appreciate the weekly notices of events that you post, as well as the time you spend organizing ways for members to stay active. Also appreciated is the effort to organize our monthly chapter meetings on zoom and zoom programs for advanced training.

Debra has done a great job with the website, and I'm not just saying that because she is my sister. I see the time she has spent at the computer revamping our website to match state regulations. The website looks really nice- be sure to check it out. She is also doing double duty as our vice-president.

Last but not least, thank you Larry, for the time and talents you have shared with the chapter during your many years of service. He has been our treasurer, dealing with payments to reserve our booth during the Home and Garden Show, and payments and collections. He has been the voice of reason, and helped me tremendously when I was president, not just as an officer but as a friend. I won't even mention the time he has spent logging all members hours for VMS, and maintaining our facebook link.

And one other person I would like to personally thank is Paula, for her

excellent job as newsletter editor. I have been lax this year in submitting articles to the newsletter, and I urge others to send in articles about what has been going on in the natural world during the summer into fall. Let's all give Paula some help.

To all chapter members and trainees, I encourage your involvement in the group. Our chapter is going on 20 years, which we could not have accomplished without you- our active members. This is a worthwhile organization and we value your input as to the running of this organization. Should the officers call on you, please volunteer your time to better your chapter. Eventually, we will meet again live and in person, and all I can say is what a thrill it will be to get back into the swing of things, and put 2020 behind us.

Stay safe and stay active!

*Terry McKee*

## Invasive Spotlight: Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

(*Halyomorpha halys*)

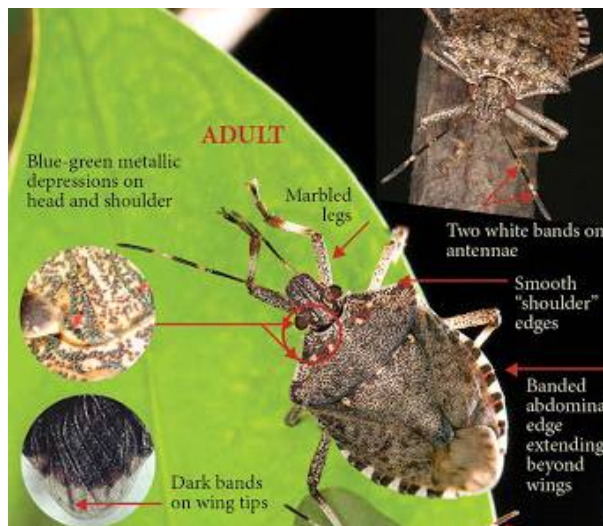
The brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) was accidentally imported from Asia into the United States in the late 1990s and first identified in 2001. It has the same shield shaped body characteristic as all stink bugs. The adults are approximately 15-17 mm long with a mottled brownish-grey color. The brown marmorated stink bug or BMSB has white bands on dark antennae, smooth "shoulders" (or upper thorax), and a distinct black and white banded pattern around the abdominal segments that protrude from beneath the wings. The underside of the body is white, sometimes with grey or black markings, and the legs are brown with faint white banding.

BMSB feeds on *Eucommia elmoides*, a small tree threat-

ing the fruit. Small necrotic spots on the fruit and leaf surfaces often result from feeding damage. Secondary infections and scarring can occur as the fruit matures.

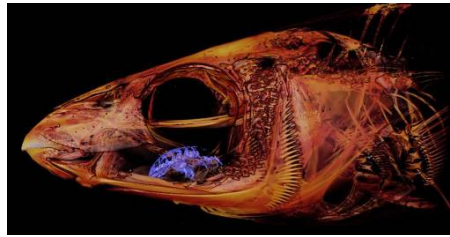
By 2004, the stink bug was widely identified on farms and forests throughout the mid-Atlantic states, with some growers of sweet corn, peppers, tomatoes,

apples, and peach reporting total losses that year. The BMSB is a strong flier and highly mobile, often moving from host to host during the growing season. Over long distances the pest can be disseminated by trade of host plants, but also by the movement of goods or vehicles. Since its introduction, this pest has rapidly spread across the United States. It has been detected in Texas on multiple occasions. Pesticide



# FACTOIDS FUN

When scientists recently X-rayed a fish's head, they found a gruesome stowaway: A "vampire" crustacean had devoured, then replaced, its host's tongue. The buglike isopod, also called a tongue biter or tongue-eating louse, keeps sucking its blood meals from a fish's tongue until the entire structure withers away. Then the true horror begins, as the parasite assumes the organ's place in the still-living fish's mouth.



**N**epenthes rajah is the largest of the pitcher plants, and it's also the largest carnivorous plant in the world, sometimes referred to as the "king of the pitcher plants." It is essentially a trap filled with up to three and half liters of water and two and a half liters of digestive fluid. While insects are by far the main staple, occasionally the large plants catch bigger prey.

**T**arantulas, like all things hairy, sometimes go bald. And for the Brazilian whiteknee tarantula (*Acanthoscurria geniculata*), baldness starts with the butt. The bald butt is the result of a natural tarantula defense mechanism — and proof of the physical stress that illegal animal trafficking incurs.



## Bat Week is Comming!

Bat Week, October 24-31, is an annual, international celebration of the role of bats in nature, designed to raise awareness about the need for bat conservation. I know bats are not invasive species, so why add them to an invasive species newsletter? Because Texas is chock-full of bats. Texas is not only home of the largest number of bats in the country, (32 out of 47 species) but that largest bat colony in the world



(Bracken Cave Preserve near San Antonio) and the largest urban bat colony (Congress Avenue Bridge in Austin).

Batweek.org is celebrating with virtual events for kids, teens and adults, as well as providing the public with an assortment of bat related 'Teach and Learn' printable materials for all ages, such as 'natural history of bats', 'batweek cookbook', 'Bat Brigade comic for kids, and more.

## RESOURCE CORNER

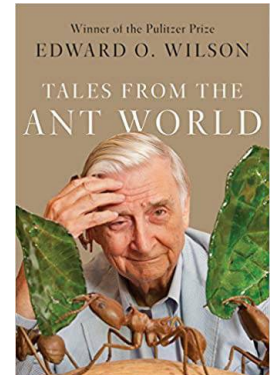
### *Tales from the Ant World*

by E. O. Wilson  
Hardback: 240 pages  
ISBN-978-1631495564  
Price: \$19.99 on Amazon  
Kindle: \$9.32

### In *Tales from the Ant World*,

two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner Wilson takes us on a myrmecological tour to such far-flung destinations as Mozambique

and New Guinea, the Gulf of Mexico's Dauphin Island and even his parent's overgrown backyard, thrillingly relating his nine-decade-long scientific obsession with over 15,000 ant species.



Animating his scientific observations with illuminating personal stories, Wilson hones in on twenty-five ant species to explain how these genetically superior creatures talk, smell, and taste, and more significantly, how they fight to determine who is dominant. Wryly observing that "males are little more than flying sperm missiles" or that ants send their "little old ladies into battle," Wilson eloquently relays his brushes with fire, army, and leafcutter ants, as well as more exotic species. Among them are the very rare Matabele, Africa's fiercest warrior ants, whose female hunters can carry up to fifteen termites in their jaw (and, as Wilson reports from personal experience, have an incredibly painful stinger); Costa Rica's Basiceros, the slowest of all ants; and New Caledonia's Bull Ants, the most endangered of them all, which Wilson discovered in 2011 after over twenty years of presumed extinction.

Richly illustrated throughout with depictions of ant species by Kristen Orr, as well as photos from Wilson's expeditions throughout the world.