

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

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<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

July 2021

President's Report

Ready or not, Summer is here! And, as we welcome the warmer temperatures, we also welcome several new training class graduates into our Chapter!

Eleven trainees have finished the spring training and three of those trainees have earned a double certification! We have six more trainees that will be working to finish soon.

After all that hard work, I hope you will join us to celebrate these trainees at the July Meeting. We will be **meeting IN PERSON at MSU in Bolin Science Hall, Room 209 at 7:00 pm on July 6**. Trainees will receive their certificates and we will recognize members who have recertified and achieved milestones this past year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who made this training class interesting and enjoyable. The instructors were great and Training Class Chair, Terry McKee and her committee of Debra Halter, Lynn Seman and Alex Nelson did a great job working through multiple challenges this year. We have learned a lot! If you would be interested in serving on the Training Class for next year, please let us know. Planning meetings will start up in August for the 2022 Spring Training class.

For those who are interested, the TMN License Plates are now available to order. Links for the plates can be found on the State website. Information about the State Meeting will also be available soon and we will forward that information as soon as we get it.



July is Moth Month so to celebrate, Gabe King from River Bend Nature Center will present a program on Moths at the July meeting. And, since moths are so marvelous, we will continue the celebration at our July Monthly Hike and Campfire Conversa-

July is Moth Month! Celebrate with a Rustic Sphinx Moth (Manduca rustica). Ink & watercolor in Moleskine Watercolor Journal.

LOCALS

JULY 6: Rolling Plains Chapter Meeting - 7:00pm at MSU's Bolin Science Hall, room 209. Hope to see you all there!

The program: Gabe King, entomologist with River Bend Nature Center, will be giving a presentation on moths. He's presentation will include an overview of the major moth families with a focus on the moths found in our area.

July 9 - 7:00pm - Bat Tour Caprock Canyons State Park & Trailway Join us on a guided vehicle tour to historic Clarity Tunnel for the bat emergence flight. Reservations are required. Please call the park at (806)455-1492 for reservations.

July 10 - 8:00am - Bird Outing with Penny Miller at Lake Arrowhead State Park - meet at dump station.

July 17 - 7:30am - Birding with Ranger Mark! Palo Duro Canyon State Park Summer is a great time to experience the birds who are returning to Palo Duro Canyon. Join

tion. We are planning to do a night “hike” at Lake Arrowhead State Park where we will set up the Moth Light and see who comes to visit. While we are there, we hope to gather ‘round the campfire to toast marshmallows and have some s’mores! We will send out an email with all the final details soon. Feel free to bring your family as we celebrate moths and the end of Spring Training.

I look forward to seeing everyone in person again! Watch for a link to the meeting in your email soon! – *Laura*

park staff and volunteers on this fun walk as we search for some of the flying residents of the park.

July 24 - 8:30pm - Owl Prowl
Lake Mineral Wells State Park & Trailway Did you ever hear or see an owl at night? . . . Here is a good opportunity!

City Nature Challenge 2021 Results

by Lynn Seman

Globally, over 52,000 citizen scientists participated in making over 1.2 million observations for this year’s City Nature Challenge held April 30 to May 3, 2021. Our region, including the 10 county Roll-

who made 4,216 observations. If you do the math, you will see that we averaged about 13.3 species per person, while Waco averaged about 7.9 species per person. Sounds like a partial win for Wichita Falls!

location which can teach us so much about what is taking place around us. For example, Laura Gillis found a plant that is seldom documented in our area, the



Photo of Palmer’s Spectaclepod by Laura Gillis

ing Plains region around Wichita Falls, had 54 observers collecting 2,785 observations during this BioBlitz. Not too bad for our first attempt! We were able to document 717 species of living organisms during the special event. In the spirit of competition, we challenged Waco, the Heart of Texas, who ended up documenting 1,227 species, but they had 156 observers

But who really won overall? Biodiversity documentation won - which benefits all of us! With events such as these, species are historically documented to give us a big pic-



Photo of American Bumblebee by Marilyn Meador

ture of what we are blessed with on this beautiful blue planet. Without records, species can come and go without any record of their existence and/or contribution to this planet. With tools such as iNaturalist, we can keep track of species, their presence, movements, and



Photo of baby Yellow Mud Turtle by Bryan Box

Palmer’s Spectaclepod plant, with only about 200 documentations in the state of Texas. The excitement of finding something new is contagious! (See photo) Another exciting find includes the American Bumblebee considered “vulnerable” that was photographed by Marilyn Meador. (See photo) One of the favorite observations made during the event was taken by Bryan Box – a baby Yellow Mud Turtle. Bryan did an awesome job contributing to our event with 271 of the species added to our total. (See photo) It amazes me what can be discovered when you take the time to get a closer look at nature!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all of you who contributed to this effort to document biodiversity of our beautiful Rolling Plains region! For me, it was a fantastic long weekend of exploring, travelling the area, spending time in nature, joining up with “like-minded” friends, and most of all, documenting the species that share this special blue planet with us.

**THE WAIT
IS OVER**

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The black witch moth is one of the largest moths in the United States. With a wingspan up to 7 inches, this moth is often confused with a bat at first glance. The black witch moth is dark brown in color with iridescent pink and purple. The females usually have a distinct white bar across their wings.

Is it a natural lollipop? Is it a flower designed by Dr. Suess? All great guesses! This is actually a wool sower gall! These are created when a wool sower wasp lays its eggs in a white oak. When the eggs hatch in spring, chemicals on the grubs stimulate the plant to produce this gall, which provides food and protection for the growing wasps.



The weirdest thing about the lightning whelk is how much this invertebrate has contributed to history. Native Americans considered the shells to be sacred objects due to their unusual counterclockwise spiral markings. Later, lightning whelk shells were named the official Texas State Shell.

Third Annual Play Clean Go Awareness Week June 5-12

The PlayCleanGo Stop Invasive Species in Your Tracks campaign works tirelessly to stop the detrimental impact of invasive species to North America's lands and waters. Through partnerships with other environmental and recreational organizations, clear messaging, and community-based social outreach, awareness is being raised as to how and why thousands of invasive species are spread every year. To stop the spread, PlayCleanGo provides easy, actionable information to help individuals enjoy our beautiful natural resources responsibly.



More information and resources at PlayCleanGo.org

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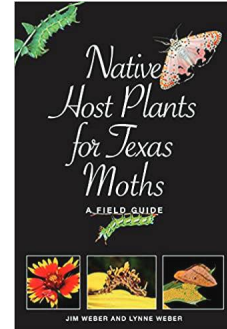
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RESOURCE CORNER

Native Host Plants for Texas Moths: A Field Guide
by Lynne M. Weber and Jim Weber
Paperback: 308 pages
Release date: February 6, 2022



While day-flying butterflies have long captured the attention of nature enthusiasts, moth species outnumber butterfly species by about fifteen to one, with many being overlooked due to their mostly nocturnal habits. Although they are far less noticeable to us, moths are essential to many other species, including the plants they pollinate and the animals they nourish. In their caterpillar or larval form they provide a primary source of sustenance for birds, and as adults they feed everything from tiny bats to large mammals.

Native plants are of utmost importance for moths, as they evolved alongside them, and they are the principal factor for dictating moth species range and distribution. Like butterflies, moths require native plant species they recognize in order to lay their eggs. This user-friendly, heavily illustrated follow-up to Lynne and Jim Weber's highly successful Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies describes over 100 native, larval host plants for moths in Texas. More than 150 moth species are illustrated in the book, both larval and adult phases, with one to two species for each of the larval host plants.

Today there are about 4,700 species of moths recognized in Texas, with new species and their host plant associations still being discovered. Native Host Plants for Texas Moths will prove to be an informative introduction to this less widely known world of moths and their host plants, providing a better understanding of how to discover, support, and protect these important insects.