



Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

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<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

August 2021

President's Report

The summer has flown by on a fluttering of wings... both scaled and feathered.

We just wrapped up Moth Month with a fun gathering at Sikes Lake to "call in" some moths. We fired up the campfire (in a little grill) and toasted some marshmallows for s'mores and then waited for the Moth Show to begin and it didn't take long! While we didn't see any big show stopper moths, we did see a lot of smaller moths, mayflies, beetles and bugs. Thanks to Gabe King from River Bend and Lynn Seman for setting up the panels and lights for the Moth Show and thanks to everyone who came out to play.

On a personal note, while on the route doing our quail surveys, we finally got to see a quail (they have been scarce this year) and I got to add another bird to my life list – a Golden-fronted Woodpecker!

Seeing these feathered friends made it a really good day on the quail site. Monarch Tags have been ordered and we will soon end our summer with the Monarch Migration and some tagging sessions at Lake Wichita.

Congratulations to Tiffany Herring for certifying as a Texas Master Naturalist and to James Masouka for re-certifying. If you are having trouble finding things to do to get your hours, you may want to talk to Sandy Underwood (our Secretary) who has reached the 250 hour milestone. She knows how to add up those hours! Congratulations and THANK YOU all for working for nature and for being a part of the Rolling Plains Chapter.

And speaking of volunteering, the Board has been asked to clarify hours spent at Wild Bird Rescue. You may count any work relating to the physical care of native birds. This will include cleaning the cages, doing intake paperwork and yes, laundry. It will NOT include time on call or working in a gift shop setting. If you have any other questions concerning hours, how to record them or what can count, please contact one of the Board members and we will get an answer for you.

I hope to see everyone for the August meeting. We will be meeting in person again at MSU in Bolin Science Hall, Room 209 at 7:00 pm on August 3, 2021. Penny Miller will be presenting a program on the Adopt-

LOCALS

AUGUST 3: Rolling Plains Chapter Meeting - 7:00pm
at MSU's Bolin Science Hall, room 209. Hope to see you all there!

The program: Penny Miller, will provide the program on **Adopt a Loop Project.**

Adopt-a-Loop is a citizen science project by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas Master Naturalists (TMN) to better understand the distribution of Texas' wildlife. The Great Texas Wildlife Trails (GTWT) are used by many to visit sites across the state for birding and other wildlife viewing.

August 13 - Horned Lizard Survey
at Copper Breaks State Park – leave by 7:00am – involves walking a 2 mile trail and then a smaller short trail.

August 14 - 8:00am - Bird Outing
with Penny Miller at Lake Arrowhead State Park - meet at dump station.

August 14 - Horned Lizard Survey
at Lake Arrowhead State Park 10:00am - meet at Dragonfly trail

August 15 - Texas Stream Team
Water Testing - 2:00pm - Lake Wichita Boat Ramp, followed by Lucy Park - Wichita River

THESE CICADA KILLERS ARE TERRIFYING

By Rachael Bale, ANIMALS Executive Editor, National Geographic



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOEL SARTORE, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTO ARK

“Anyone Recognize This Messenger of Death and Nightmares?” read the top post on my Nextdoor feed the other day. It came with a photo of a Very Large Wasp and the comment, “It stared into my soul and tried to kill me...I think.”

Of course, I clicked. What if those messengers of nightmares came to my house too? I stepped on a wasp once as a kid, and my dad had to carry me home. I didn’t want a repeat.

After some speculation in the comments, an entomology-wise neighbor wrote, “Cicada killer?” Yes, yes, others chimed in. It’s a cicada killer.

Thank the stars, the cicada killer wasp (pictured above) is one of those animals with a name and appearance that’s far

scarier than it actually is. They’re big (up to two inches!), but they’re solitary, not aggressive, and pretty much only sting humans if you

pick one up and start messing with it, Nat Geo’s Douglas Main tells me. That’s a relief, because not long after I learned this, I found one in my backyard.

Cicada killers really only care about cicadas, which they paralyze, bring to their underground burrows, and devour. Though they don’t eat periodical cicadas like those in Brood X that emerged en masse earlier this summer, they do come out each summer to dine on your standard annual cicadas.

Normally the wasps don’t cause much of a fuss, but recently, some entomologists have received worried reports from people who think they’ve spotted murder hornets—AKA Asian giant hornets—when they’re instead seeing cicada killers.

“You have to realize that these invasive ‘murder hornets’ only are



Murder hornet—AKA Asian Giant Hornet.

found so far in the far northwest corner of Washington State,” Main says. “This mix-up doesn’t reveal a lack of intelligence—a close friend of mine who has two advanced degrees in virology swore he’d seen them in Connecticut, of all places. But it can be a wake-up call to learn more about the insects around you, which often have fascinating biological habitats and generally pose almost no threat to humans, like cicada killers.”

August

by James Hoggard



Dust spat back at me
as I watered the grapes
and discovered them gone
Their vines, and the luffas’ --
big withering leaves scrambling over fence --
ran north away from the sun

Tomatoes leaned east,
the squash behind them limp
Only the kale gre well,
and the watermelon plant
though its densest runners
also fled the heat
for a fruitless peach tree’s
shade

Rainless hot wind coughed
all over my chapped face
The petrified ground cracked
lika an ols giant’s nape
and the lawn felt like wires
sticking the blisters
burning the soles of my feet

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Indian paintbrushes are hemiparasitic. This means that it relies on other plants to grow. When the roots of the Indian Paintbrush come in contact with the roots of other plants and grasses, they latch on to their neighbor's roots to get additional nutrients. The name of this flower is based on the legend of an Indian who wanted to paint a sunset.



RESOURCE CORNER

*Remarkable Plants of Texas:
Uncommon Accounts of Our
Common Natives*
by Matt Warnock Turner
Paperback: 352 pages
ISBN-13: 978-0292757035
Price on Amazon: \$29.95

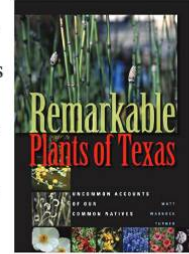


The Paluxysaurus Jonesi is the official dinosaur of Texas! This cousin of the Brachiosaurus is named for the town of Paluxy, Texas, and Jones Ranch, where fossils of this sauropod were discovered.

Pecan is the only tree nut native to the United States. In 1919 the pecan was named the official state tree of Texas. Pecan trees are monoecious, meaning they have both male and female flowers on the same plant. But, they develop these flowers at different times in order to pollinate with nearby trees instead of self-pollination.



With some 6,000 species of plants, Texas has extraordinary botanical wealth and diversity. Learning to identify plants is the first step in understanding their vital role in nature, and many field guides have been published for that purpose. But to fully appreciate how Texas's native plants have sustained people and animals from prehistoric times to the present, you need *Remarkable Plants of Texas*. In this intriguing book, Matt Warnock Turner explores the little-known facts—be they archaeological, historical, material, medicinal, culinary, or cultural—behind our familiar botanical landscape. In sixty-five entries that cover over eighty of our most common native plants from trees, shrubs, and wildflowers to grasses, cacti, vines, and aquatics, he traces our vast array of connections with plants. Turner looks at how people have used plants for food, shelter, medicine, and economic subsistence; how plants have figured in the historical record and in Texas folklore; how plants nourish wildlife; and how some plants have unusual ecological or biological characteristics. Illustrated with over one hundred color photos and organized for easy reference, *Remarkable Plants of Texas* can function as a guide to individual species as well as an enjoyable natural history of our most fascinating native plants.



Adopt a Highway Trash Pick Up



During the week of **August 2 through 7**, you can sign up to Adopt a Highway Trash Pick Up. Pick your day and time during that week and sign up for a section of our roadside. (see attached map) email rlynnseman@gmail.com what section you want to clean up.

Be careful out there! Wear your orange vest! (if you don't have one, let me know) and be sure to take plenty of water!

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