

Volume 22 Issue 4
April 2022

NATURALIST NEWS
TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST, ELM FORK CHAPTER



Spiderwort (Tradescantia ohioensis) — from Dorothy Thetford farmette

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TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST, ELM FORK CHAPTER

Scrub-Jay—from Jonathan Reynolds



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- Bluebirds here, there and everywhere
- Mini-BioBlitz coming soon info p. 14
- Did you hear a "tweet" in the air? p. 6



What Happens Next?

From Mary Morrow

YOU'RE INVITED
FREE EVENT
 Texas Master Naturalist
 Elm Fork Chapter
 Serving Denton, Wise and Cooke Counties

OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, April 21, 2022
 9:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

DCAC Courthouse
 1 Courthouse Drive
 3rd Floor, Room 2020
 Denton

Come meet local Master Naturalists!
 Find out how we serve your Community through



CONSERVATION RESTORATION PRESERVATION



Texas Master Naturalist
 Elm Fork Chapter

TMN Mission: To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities

EFC Vision: In our community, Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program will be recognized as a primary source of information, education and service to support natural resources and natural areas today and in the future

Website: txmn.org/elfork **Facebook:** Elm Fork Chapter Texas Master Naturalist
Email: contact@efctmn.org

To check updates for this event please refer to our Website, Facebook or contact us through our Email.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Court of Texas Cooperating. We will seek to provide reasonable accommodation for all persons with disabilities for this program. We ask that you notify the Denton County AgriLife Extension Office of the auxiliary aid or service that will be required.

CORRECTION: this photo from Jonathan Reynolds in March NN is a scissor-tailed fly catcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) not a mockingbird. Mislabeled by editor.



What Happens Next?

From Mary Morrow

2022 EFC OPEN HOUSE SET-UP

Wednesday, 2:00 P.M. - 4:30 P.M. (Doors are locked at 5:00 P.M. sharp)

Thursday, 8:00 A.M. - 9:30 A.M. (Please have project displays ready promptly at 9:30 when our guests will begin arriving.)

Preferred entry for those bringing in displays will be at the side service entrance. The door is a keypad entry, we will have someone manning the door to let members in.

All others may use the front lobby and elevators to help set-up Wednesday, Thursday morning or if you are bringing refreshments.



Those bringing displays will proceed to the left, if facing the building, or the northwest side of the courthouse.



Loading dock - only 2 spaces allotted, must be moved after unloading vehicle at service door before proceeding upstairs.



From the service entry the service elevator is on the right.



Exiting the service elevator, go to the right to the lobby of Room 200, on the right past the restrooms.



Lobby of Room 200, sign-up will be located here Thursday morning.

This and That

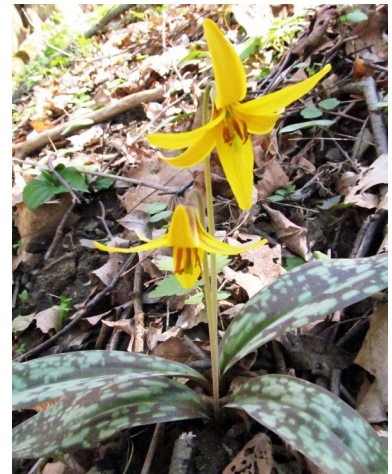


Image from Bing.com/pinterest



This Juvenile Yellow Crown Night Heron (thank you Scott Kiester for the Identification) was injured and blown out of the sky in our recent night storm. He or she has been delivered to the North Texas Wildlife Center in Plano for recovery. Big thank you to Mela for taking in his beauty!

Mindy Anderson



NORTH TEXAS WILDLIFE CENTER
rescue ♦ rehabilitate ♦ release

469.901.9453

info@ntxwildlife.org
www.ntxwildlife.org
facebook.com/ntxwildlife



Eastern bluebird taking in the scenery photo by Dorothy Thetford: And so begins the journey—cont'd



TWEET OF THE MONTH

Sue Yost class of 2017

Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri*

What's that fast-moving creature buzzing around your garden? It's moving from flower to flower, but it looks too big to be a bee. And it has a long beak, but it looks way too tiny to be a bird. This flower-loving creature is none other than the black-chinned hummingbird.



Now pull out a credit card. That is how big a Black-chinned Hummingbird is! Now pull out a nickel and put it in the palm of your hand. That's about how much a Black-chinned Hummingbird weighs!

The Black-chinned Hummer breeds in Dallas and areas to the west. It is one of the first hummers migrating back to their breeding grounds that visit our area. [The other regular visitor is the Ruby-throated Hummingbird] The male has a glistening green back, whitish below and a gorgeous purple gorget. Black-chins are one of the more vocal hummers with a high pitched song that sounds like a person whistling through his teeth.

After quite an aerial courting display from the male, the females build the nest alone. The nest is about the size of a walnut and made of plant down, small leaves or flowers and spider webs. It is built 4-30' high on a horizontal branch usually with another branch hanging above it. Females nesting in urban areas may take advantage of wires, light fixtures, wind chimes or hanging plants under the shelter of a porch or overhang. Once her young no longer need constant attention she may start building another nest and start the process all over all within sight of the still active first nest.

She lays two pure white tiny eggs about the size of peas and incubates for about 16 days. The female regurgitates nectar, insects, tree sap and spiders. It's amazing to see her plunge her long, needle-like beak deep into the gullets of her nestlings. Talk about side show circus sword swallows! The nestlings are born naked, with no downy feathers that other birds are born with so they totally rely on mom for warmth. After a few days they start to develop pin feathers and their bills slowly begin to lengthen. As they grow over the next 20 days the nest stretches to accommodate them. After two weeks they start exercising their tiny wings and practice the moves that will make them wondrous flying machines. All of this is done with no help from the male.

How can you get these tiny flying dynamos in your habitat? They will come to nectar feeders filled with sugar water. 4 cups hot water to 1 cup table sugar. No red dyes. And of course, they love native flowers whether in pots, hanging baskets or landscape beds.

So why do hummingbirds hum? They don't know the words! Nuk nuk nuk!

Features

Notes from LeeAnn Weaver's tour and presentation around the 8 Bluebird boxes at Green Acres Memorial Park in Flower Mound

EASTERN BLUEBIRD FACT SHEET

INTRODUCTION

GREEN ACRES MEMORIAL PARK:

- We have just over 13 acres of habitat and currently have 8 Bluebird boxes.
- Green Acres has been documenting bluebird nesting since 2017.
- I've been reporting activity to Cornell Ornithology/Nest watch since 2017. This valuable information allows for tracking of population trends. (www.nestwatch.org)
- We use 5" peat pots in each box, which allows for checking of nests with least disturbance. It also provides protection from the elements and makes for easier cleaning of box.

Photography by LeeAnn Weaver



BB History and Description

- There are 3 types of bluebirds in the US: Mountain, Western and Eastern.
- The majority of what we have in Texas are Eastern Bluebirds. They are a native species, which means you cannot legally remove them once they start nesting. It also means they are more likely to live well off the areas resources.
- They belong to Family Turdidae and Species Sialia Sialis
- They are a fairly common bird but their population seriously declined by 90% in 20th century due to severe weather and loss of forest lands. However, bb boxes have really helped. Still, their population is threatened due to competition of other birds-especially non-natives and severe snowstorms in South that kill them in great numbers. Discuss Hagerman.
- Bright blue color
- Average Life span: 6-8 years old. The oldest known is 10 years 5 months
- Average Size: 6-8" or 7-7.75 depending on source and Weigh 1.1 oz.
- Wingspan is 11.5-13"
- Flight pattern- sallies to catch insects, slow direct flight
- Song is: chur churlee churlee or males: true-a-ly true-a-ly

Behavior

- Bluebirds are very social birds. In fact, they are quite gregarious in winter— forming large flocks and roost communally at night for warmth but are territorial during the Spring/Summer nesting season which lasts from Feb-Aug at least here.
- They need *fresh* water, open space, shelter for nesting, and food. In Spring/Summer they primarily eat insects, earthworms, spiders but will also take snails, lizards, frogs. In fall and winter months, they will eat berries and seeds and mealworms
- Primary threats are destruction of habitat, pesticides, cars, predators including house sparrow, fire ants, snakes, blowfly, wasps, mud daubers, mice, raccoons & cats.

Features

Breeding/Nesting

- BBs are monogamous breeders
- They are secondary cavity nesters (natural cavities, holes in tree, *appropriate* boxes).
- Males find the nest spot and attract females by bringing materials (grass). Females approve of spot. Once paired, females build very neat nests days out of grass in 4-5 days
- They are very neat and will often remove droppings, unviable eggs and deceased young.



Photography by LeeAnn Weaver

- Bluebirds will build a nest on top of old nest, or the nest can be removed but should be packaged up and carried away so as not to attract predators.
- They will not roost within 150-200' of another nest (1 per every 2-3 acres).
- Nesting spots include specific bluebird boxes or cavities in trees, etc.
- Lay average of 4-5 eggs per brood and have 2-3 broods between Feb and August. Both incubation and fledging time can be impacted by weather, health of mom and
 - Eggs are blue, although depth of color can vary with mama, feed, etc.
 - The female will lay 1 dime sized egg per day and incubation begins after last egg is laid.
 - She will shed feathers on belly called a brood patch so heat of her body will incubate the eggs because feathers do not conduct heat.
- She will continually rearrange eggs so temp is even and remove eggshells or eat them for calcium.
- Mom will sit on nest all night but, if it is warm enough outside, she will go out in day.
- Dads will defend the home with singing, attacks and also provide food.
- Incubation starts after the last egg is laid and is normally 12-14 days, though this impacted by temperature and brood number. (14 1st, 13 2nd, 12 for 3rd as its hotter)
- Lower temps than 95* will delay incubation with 107* max safe temp.
- Babies have an eye tooth which they use to with neck muscles to crack the egg. This takes several hours and then they loose the eyetooth.
- Once hatched after incubation, it takes apx. 16-18 days until babies fledge. # of eggs can decrease and # days of incubation/fledging change with each brood due to temperature.
- From beginning of nest to last fledge, it takes apx. 32-38 days.
- Young will stay in the area for one year and parents will continue to feed them.
- According to North American Bluebird Society (NABS), 83% of eggs hatch, 75-90% fledge, and 40-50% live for a year (numbers decrease 40-50% each following year).

Attracting BB's to Your Home:

Shelter

- It is very important to use the appropriate kind of bird box-made with 1.25" hole to reduce risk of predator attack. There are several kinds such as the Peterson like ours, Troyer slot box, Gilbertson (made of PVC). Boxes should be made of hardwood, preferably cedar, and the outside can be stained or painted in natural colors, you just don't want to bring more attention by predators. Do not paint or stain the inside. No perch. Hash marks or wire inside box 1" under hole so fledglings can climb out.

Features

- They must have proper ventilation so it doesn't over heat and kill the birds or eggs. The boxes should be mounted at a height of 5-10'. They should not be mounted on a fence post, building or tree, but preferably on a slick galvanized pole. Tanglefoot can also be added under the baffle which will catch fire ants which can certainly kill babies. You should attach a baffle about 4' or so above the ground to deter predators. There are several styles of baffles. We use what is called a stovepipe. It has been proven that using a baffle will increase nest survival by 5% or greater. And lastly, it should face east/southeast and towards habitat. You want to place it in a sunny, open area - not in shade or by structure and you want to keep the grass cut low.
- Clean the old nest out and throw it far away or put in a bag and get rid of it to avoid attracting predators. This is also so you will get rid of any parasites.
- **Food**
- If you are going to provide seed, use black sunflower, safflower, nyger seed or peanuts. You can also make a PB/cornmeal mix or provide mealworms. Avoid using cheap feed like cracked corn or millet because it attracts sparrows



Photography by LeeAnn Weaver

Fresh, Moving water

Protection/Conservation

- European Starlings, House sparrows and swallows are huge predators. Since they are not native, you may remove their nest if you find them taking over the box. They will go in and kill eggs or babies. You can keep swallows out by mounting a second box within 10'
- Once a bluebird nest is made - and especially if eggs are laid- bluebirds are not easily dissuaded from their nest. They do not mind people or movement but sparrows do. We experienced an attack on box 7 where I witnessed the two birds fighting. When I checked the box, they had broken the eggs. I created a "halo" with shiny streamers and buttons and there have been no more incidents.



This is a cocoon for the Calletta Silkworm found in South Texas. I took this photo on the grounds of The Cave with no name in Boerne, TX.

This moth is very pretty and vary large.

Dale Meyer

To see an image go to:

<https://images.app.goo.gl/CNGiyKKwrR6EGiCb9>



Eastern bluebird eggs photo by Dorothy Thetford: It's a journey—cont'd

Features

Winters' Hidden Treasures The moth that doesn't eat.

Sue Yost class of 2017

After winter had set in, I noticed a paper like cocoon attached to a branch of one of my leafless shrubs. I put it in my memory bank to check back on it in the spring. Last week, after spring had sprung in my yard, I decided it



was time to cut back the dead stuff to ready it for fresh spring growth. I cut off the wintering branch that securely held the cocoon and put it carefully in my bug box, put it on the patio table and forgot about it. I checked the bug box the next afternoon, lo and behold it hatched! There in the bug box was a beautiful, huge moth with big “eyes” on its wings! After research [on Duck, Duck Go to keep within the nature realm] I easily identified it as a Polyphemus Moth.

The sturdy cocoon of the Polyphemus moth is composed of a woven combination of leaves and silk. Thick but paperlike with a nearly perfect circular exit hole, the cocoon is large (at least 3” long) and well-constructed. The caterpillar uses silk to wrap up a leaf tightly so the finished product has a woven appearance. Even with their thick layers, the large cocoons are vulnerable to woodpeckers, squirrels, and parasitic insects. Fortunately, this one survived.

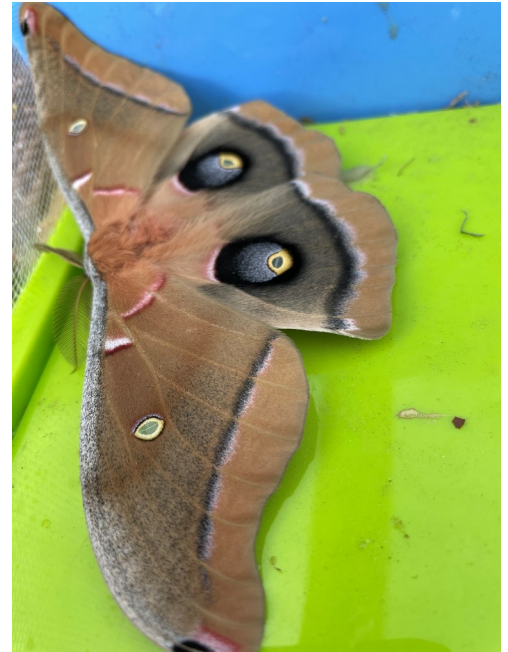
The larvae of the polyphemus moth feeds on the leaves of hardwood trees, with a preference for birch, maple, and oaks. While caterpillars feed on the trees, they rarely cause enough damage to permanently injure their host tree. Polyphemus moths are widespread throughout the United States, having been identified in every state except Nevada and Arizona. Polyphemus moths can be abundant in and near forests and also in parks in suburban areas, orchards, and wetlands. Adults are frequently attracted to lights at night. Populations of this and other giant silk moths are harmed by parasitic flies and wasps that were intentionally introduced into North America to prey on the invasive gypsy moth.

The polyphemus is named after the giant one-eyed monster (cyclops) of Homer’s *Odyssey*, for the big eyespot on each hindwing. These are a defense mechanism, tricking would-be predators into thinking they are seeing the eyes of a much larger animal, thus allowing a quick getaway!

Features

Polyphemus moths do not eat or bite. Their mouths are vestigial and useless. Their caterpillars, however, are voracious and can eat 86,000 times their own weight from the time they hatch out of their egg to the time they pupate. My winter treasure is a male. It's easy to tell the sexes apart with these moths. The males have feathery antennae which assist in mating, for they pick up the pheromones released by the females. The antennae of the females are more slender and less bushy. Females are also fatter than males due to their cargo of eggs, and if mating doesn't occur, she'll simply release

them even if they're not fertilized. The sad ending to this story is they only live less than a week. I do hope a female returns next year to my garden especially now that I know what to look for in my barren winter landscape.



**Eastern bluebird babies photo by Dorothy Thetford: It's a journey—
cont'd**



Features

Spring Surprise!

Photography
By Sue Yost

Sue Yost class of 2017

As all we naturalists know, one never “cleans” up fall and winter foliage until well into spring. Put that back-breaking job off for as long as you can! Last week the day finally came to start. Rake a pile here, rake a pile there. The flat recycled boards bordering my back bed had gotten cattywampus over the fall and winter. As I raked, I started to realign them. These are the very same boards that always must be investigated by my 7 year-old grandson who says, “Let’s go look for the NAKES [snakes] Gamma!” We have counted as many as a dozen Brown Rough Earth Snakes under these boards. This time, amongst the snakes, snails and slugs was a tiny baby Box Turtle! No bigger than a half dollar!! My neighbors probably thought I struck oil or something! I quickly looked all over the bed for siblings. Even checked the debris piles; none. I retrieved my bug box that had earlier in the week held the Polyphemus Moth. A scoop of moist dirt, a few leaves and in went baby box. I sent a text to Scott Kiester to see if my baby box could live at LLELA. “Yeah, just get in touch with Hugh”. I shot off an email to Hugh Franks, you know, our turtle guy and he quickly re-

sponded YES! He gave me instructions which I followed to the letter and soon I handed my baby box off to Hugh. He aged it at about 4-5 months. He said it will eventually inhabit the turtle hotel over at LISDOLA where 100’s and 100’s of school kids will get to learn from it. Now I know the Three-toed Box Turtle that sporadically frequents my yard is a female. She wanders an area about the size of a football field.



She lays anywhere from 3 to 5 eggs. My spring surprise reassures me I *am* doing something right by providing a good habitat for all things wild!



10-day old Eastern bluebirds photo by Dorothy Thetford: It’s a journey—cont’d

Inside Outside News

SUGGESTIONS



Have an idea, a complaint, a question? Then take advantage of the Chapter Suggestion Box.

Member suggestions are welcomed by the Board and may be made on the Chapter's website in the Members area under Suggestion Box or by contacting Harriet Powell directly by email at Suggestions@efctmn.org



You're Invited!
Texas Native Plant Art Exhibition 2021
Appreciation Reception

Wednesday, April 20 – 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

DISD Professional Development Center
1212 Bolivar Street, Denton, Texas

Please join us to honor the fourth grade students and their art teachers that participated in the art exhibition and to thank the display site hosts. Stop by at your convenience to join the fun. The artwork will be displayed and refreshments will be served.

Thank you,

Marilyn Blanton, Project Manager

From Mary Morrow

Inside Outside News**iNaturalist****2022 CITY NATURE CHALLENGE Mini-BioBlitz**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>April 29</u> <u>Friday</u>	<u>April 30</u> <u>Saturday</u>	<u>May 1</u> <u>Sunday</u>	<u>May 2</u> <u>Monday</u>
Project/ Contact	<i>The Flower Mound/Diane Wetherbee</i>		<i>Clear Creek/Clay Thurmond</i>	<i>Trophy Club/Sara Goodrich</i>
Time	8:30 A.M.		9:00 A.M. Subject to change	9:00 A.M.
Project/ Contact		<i>Lantana/ Diane Wetherbee</i>	<i>Green Acres/ Diane Wetherbee</i>	<i>Cross Timbers/ Diane Wetherbee</i>
Time		1:00 P.M.	2:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.

Mini-BioBlitzs are for TMNEFC members, guests/non-MN volunteers are welcome. We can invite other chapters to join us, especially where other TMN chapters volunteer at your Project Location. Cross Timbers Trailhead is open to the public.

Check the calendar/PYW for updates and locations to meet.

Project Leaders do not have to be present during the Mini-BioBlitz. It would be nice to have one member of your project present to answer questions. I will attend at least one day at each project to answer iNaturalist questions. If you have any questions, please contact me, hawkilittle@aol.com.

Inside Outside News

Timberlake Trails HOA

From Denise Thompson

Ray Roberts State Park - Isle Du Bois Unit – April 20, 2022

8:45 am – 2:45 pm

Mindy has a field trip on April 20th, a Wednesday, and could use a few volunteers to help her. She needs at least 3 individuals, but the more the merrier. She would like someone who is comfortable leading Skins and Skulls, Webbing activity, and a hike to the lake. Below is the field trip details.

Please contact Mindy or me if you have questions or want to volunteer for this event. It is the last school group for this school year. Contact Denise Thompson at mdt8613@yahoo.com or 214-448-7198 to volunteer at this event or you may contact Mindy directly at Mindy.Shumate@tpwd.texas.gov

Field Trip Schedule

Volunteers/Staff Set Up: 8:45AM-9:45AM
Arrive/Adult Brief/Divide group: 10AM-10:15AM
Rotation 1: 10:15AM-10:45AM
Switch/Potty Break: 10:45AM-11AM
Rotation 2: 11AM-11:30AM
Lunch: 11:30AM-12PM
Switch/Potty Break: 12PM-12:15PM
Rotation 3: 12:15PM-12:45PM
Switch/Potty Break: 12:45PM – 1PM
Rotation 4: 1PM – 1:30 PM
Bus Arrive/Depart: 1:30PM/1:45PM
Volunteer/Staff Break Down: 1:45PM-2:45PM

Activities:

We will rotate between Pond Dipping, Skins and Skulls, Webbing activity, and a hike to the lake.

of students:

90

of adults:

20

Grade level:

4th

Inside Outside News

From Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Weekly Digest Bulletin

It's that time of year when our world-famous wildflowers start flooding the landscape. Enjoy their natural beauty by planning a park visit in April. Watch for pools of color along the road as you drive to parks and multi-colored splashes within the parks. Insider tip: Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center tells us to expect the most blooms this year in the Central and Southeastern parts of the state.

For a sample of the experience, watch our short video LBJ State Park Flowers. Find out more about wildflowers in the *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine article Parks in Bloom.

DISD School Days at Clear Creek has started! If you would like to sign up, the link is below. We really need help on Tuesdays!

DISD School Days at Clear Creek/Spring 2022 (signupgenius.com)

For more information or questions, contact Sharon Betty sharon.betty56@yahoo.com



Elm Fork Chapter is seeking to fill the position of Program Director (Continuing Education)

Should be a Lifelong Learner with a pulse on what's making news in our surrounding world.

If interested and want more information contact Rita Lokie: at@efctmn.org

The Nature Center at Ray Roberts Lake, Isle Du Bois unit and the new Johnson Branch Nature Center needs Master Naturalist volunteers.

Please contact Chuck Thetford if you are not on the Signup Genius list

cthetfordathome@gmail.com

940-765-1418

If you are not already a volunteer at the lake, we welcome you! If you are interested but have not attended orientations and training for the Nature Centers, we will be glad to provide it with the State Park Interpretive Rangers, Izzy Mabry and Mindy Shumate.

Inside Outside News

From Becky Bertoni

Flower Mound adds Certified Wildlife Habitat program

From their website: Create your own Certified Wildlife Habitat®
Rapid and large-scale changes to our lands and waters mean wildlife are losing the habitats they once knew. Every habitat garden is a step toward replenishing resources for wildlife such as bees, butterflies, birds, and amphibians-both locally and along migratory corridors.

Certified Wildlife Habitat® applicants are asked to confirm they've provided the required number of elements for each of the following: food, water, cover, places to raise young, sustainable practices. Before applying review the requirements at nwf.org/certify
Once you've completed certification, email EnvironmentalServices@Flower-Mound.com so we can count your habitat toward the Town-wide effort.

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p82d52u>

Sun May 1, 2022 2-3 pm

Become a Citizen Scientist at Green Acres

Learn how to use the iNaturalist app, then help document the plants, birds, insects, and animals that call Green Acres home. Bring your cell phone to take pictures, and if you download the iNaturalist app (<https://www.inaturalist.org/>) and create an account ahead of time, we can start observing sooner!

Age: 14-Adult

Location: Green Acres Park, 4400 Hide-A-Way, Flower Mound

Instructor: Diane Wetherbee, Texas Master Naturalist

Sat May 7, 2022 10-11 am

Spring at Green Acres: Spring Blooms and Caterpillars

Learn about plants at the monarch station that you could use in your yard to attract butterflies, caterpillars, and other pollinators. Walk up to the prairie restoration and down to the riparian area to see spring wildflowers.

Age: 14-Adult

Location: Green Acres Park, 4400 Hide-A-Way, Flower Mound

Instructor: Becky Bertoni, Texas Master Naturalist

Inside Outside News

REMINDER!!! PROJECT NESTWATCH

By Sharon Clark

Starting Date: Anytime
Project # 171207

It is that time of the year again when our feathered friends start nesting!

WHAT IS NESTWATCH?

NestWatch is a nationwide monitoring program (**Cornell Lab or Ornithology project**) designed to **track status and trends** in the **reproductive biology of birds**, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. Nest boxes are considered nests.

Enrolling **has no cost** to participants.

Nestwatch is a field research and observation volunteer project.

Please note that construction of, placement of, and maintenance of nest boxes **does not count** as EFCMN volunteer time for this project.

There **is no specific start or stop date** for this project due to the fact that in some states some birds (like owls in January) can be nesting year-round.

The Cornell database is used **to study the current condition of breeding bird populations** and how they may be changing over time as a result of **climate change, habitat degradation and loss, expansion of urban areas, and the introduction of non-native plants and animals.**

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

Participating in NestWatch is easy and just about anyone can do it.

Simply follow the directions on the website (www.nestwatch.org) to become a **certified NestWatcher**, then **find** a bird nest (in a bush/tree, in a nest box, in riparian area, etc.) using the helpful tips offered on the web site, **visit** the nest every 3-4 days and **record** what you see, and then **report** this information on the NestWatch website.

You can also download the **NestWatch Mobile App** for iOS and Android and record what you see at the nest in real time. Direct email for Nestwatch is : nest-watch@cornell.edu.

Your observations will be added to those of thousands of other NestWatchers in a **continually growing database used by researchers** to understand and study birds. Simply put, without your help it would be impossible to gather enough information to accurately monitor nesting birds across the country. And while you are contributing extremely valuable information to science, you will learn firsthand about birds and create a lifelong bond with the natural world.



Eastern Bluebird hatchlings

Photo courtesy of EFCM Member Sharon Clark

Inside Outside News

Clear Creek Workdays

Monday and Thursday
9:00 am - 11:00 am

Trail maintenance, garden/greenhouse and prairie work. Usual workdays are Mondays and Thursdays 9-11, unless there is a Thursday Chapter meeting. For solo work, show up anytime!

Contact: Clay Thurmond – rcthurmond@gmail.com

Taken from:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Weekly Digest Bulletin

Choose the Design You'd Like to See on the Roadrunner Conservation License Plate!

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department asks for your help in choosing a design for the new Greater Roadrunner Conservation License Plate, which launches in summer 2022.

Three designs of this charismatic bird have made the final cut. **Please take a few minutes and vote for your favorite plate!**
Survey closes April 21.

Once launched, Roadrunner plate sales will help support wildlife viewing and nature tourism opportunities throughout the state, including the Great Texas Birding Classic, Great Texas Wildlife Trails and Texas Paddling Trails programs.

Thank you for sharing your input on the next license plate.

TO VOTE, SUBSCRIBE BELOW:



[Subscribe now](#) -- it's free!



Image from clipart

Family portrait Eastern Bluebirds-markings emerging—
photo by Dorothy Thetford: It's
a journey cont'd



Inside Outside News

As the weather warms, the urge to get outside increases. And, so do our spring events. The Outreach Committee has a busy spring calendar and needs volunteers to help get the word out about being a Texas Master Naturalist. No experience is required, other than a desire to tell your story about being a Master Naturalist and visit with the public about what the public can do to enjoy and help take care of that place we love...NATURE.

Help us spread the word about our wonderful chapter and planet. To volunteer for any of these upcoming events, contact Fran Witte at outreach@efctmn.org.

Upcoming events in April and May. All are on Saturdays -



- April 9 Native Plant Society of Texas Spring plant sale
- April 23 Denton County Master Gardeners Spring plant sale
- April 23 Redbud Festival in Denton
- April 30 Lantana Earth Day Celebration
- May 7 Denton County Master Gardeners Garden Tour
- May 14 Denton Community Market



Markings more evident Eastern blue-bird photo by Dorothy Thetford: It's a journey—cont'd

Contributors This Month



**Jonathan Reynolds
class 2014**



**Judy Elliott class
2009**



**wanda odum class
2005—editor**



**LeeAnn Weaver
class 2004**



**Mary Morrow
class 2014**



**Sharon Clark
class 2014**

**Dorothy Thetford
class 2001**



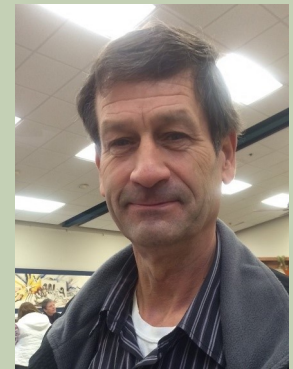
**Mindy Anderson
class 2015**



**Becky Bertoni
class 2015**



**Harriett Powell
class 2015**



**Check Thetford
class 2011**



**Susan Yost class
2017**



**Denise Thomp-
son class 2015**



**Dale & Debra
Meyer classes
2011, 2012**

FIELD NOTES IN FOCUS



Snow Geese at Cibolo Creek Boerne TX—from the gallery of Dale Meyer

**If you would like to be featured on either front page or in Field Notes in Focus—
send photos to wanda.odum@gmail.com**



Almost the Last Word

HELP WANTED!
(Every month!!)

Naturalist News is looking for articles (flora and fauna), plus photos and news from your projects. I know there are many experts out in our chapter who know our flora and fauna so please share that expertise (at any level) thru our newsletter. Time spent in researching and writing is countable volunteer hours.

Also, your nature photos are needed. Time spent in creating these are volunteer hours as well.

Be a part of our story. The chapter thanks you; nature thanks you; and your editor thanks you!

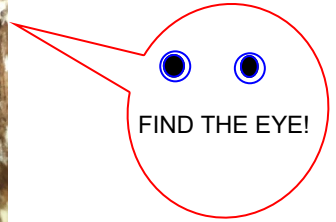
Deadline for the next newsletter is Wednesday, May 11. Contact wanda.odum@gmail.com or send to announcements@efctmn.org



Prominent markings now Eastern bluebirds photos by Dorothy Thetford: It's a journey—cont'd



Eastern bluebird photo by Dorothy Thetford: It's a journey so continuing



Who We Are



Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension
Joseph A. Carroll Building
401 W. Hickory Street
Denton, TX 76201940-349-2883

Our mission . . . "to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our community"

Our vision . . . "in our community, Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program will be recognized as a primary source of information, education and service to support natural resources and natural areas today and in the future."

We're on the web
<https://txmn.org/elmfork>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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CLASS 2021 REPRESENTATIVE— Karen DeVinney 2021

ADVISORS:

Janet Laminack, Extension Agent
TPWD—Daniel Rios

Regular Monthly Chapter Meetings

Meetings on the third Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m. Exception: this month is Open House 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Chapter meetings are open to the public. Next meeting April 21, 2022

Board Meetings

The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met April 14, 2022. Next monthly Board meeting May 12, 2022

Monthly Board meetings are open to members.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.



Eastern bluebirds close to fledging—nervous parents—photo by Dorothy Thetford: It's been a journey. *Bon voyage* little ones!