

August 2022
Volume 22 Issue 8

Naturalist News



Texas Master Naturalist-Elm Fork Chapter



Swallowtail on thistle—Susan Yost

We're on the Web www.txmn.org/elmfork

On Facebook: www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistElmFork/

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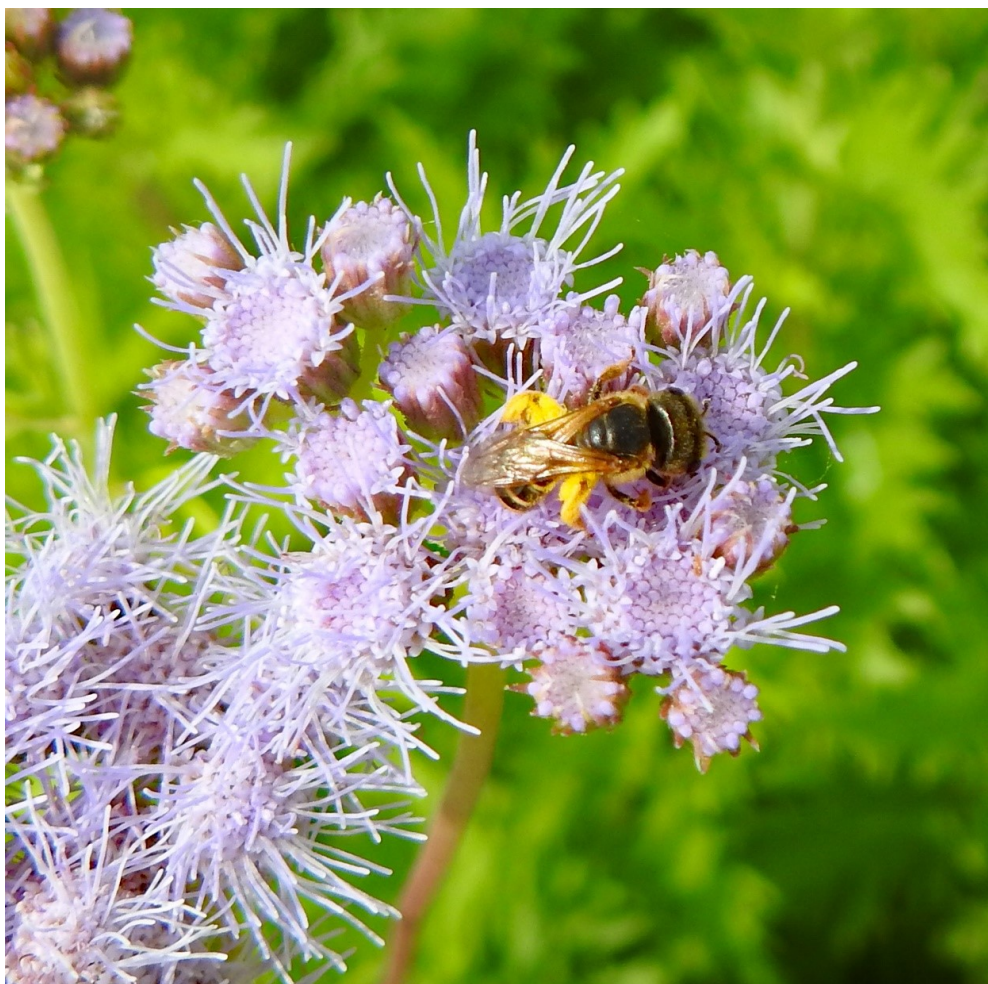
Texas Master Naturalist-Elm Fork Chapter

Special points of interest:

- Don't miss Green Acres article from Marilyn Blanton
- Suggestion box is open
- Fascinating Tweet of the Month

Inside this issue:

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Ligated Furrow Bee on Gregg's mistflower
from Diane Wetherbee

From Jan Deatherage

August 18 chapter meeting location

Lewisville Municipal Annex , Glenmore Savage Community Room, 1197 W. Main Street. Lewisville, TX 75067 on August 18 from 9 am to 12:30 pm.

So, we've been moved again. This has been tricky but it looks like we are good for the rest of the year.(famous last words)

August -Lewisville
September - Elections
Oct - no meeting
November - 2020 Room
December - 2020 Room

Submitted by David Jones

Speaker for August 18 chapter meeting will be Sam Kieschnick, Urban Wildlife Biologist, DFW

He is an urban wildlife biologist with TPWD serving the east side of the DFW metroplex. He previously worked as a nature educator with the City of Mansfield at Oliver Nature Park, as a naturalist at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge, as a science interpreter with the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, as a botanist with BRIT, and as an instructor at Weatherford College. He has a master's degree from Tarleton State University studying the genetics of pocket gophers. As an urban wildlife biologist, Sam's focus will be on three a's: awareness, appreciation, and action.

Presentation Title: Wonderful Wasps

Presentation Abstract: Why do people hate wasps? Lots of critters bite or sting, but wasps rank among the top of 'least liked insects.' Fear of wasps may be linked to a lack of information about these really amazing and interesting insects. In this presentation, we'll learn all about wasps from the social nest forming hornets to the solitary and secretive wasps. They can parasitize garden pests, pollinate some of our plants, and provide a tremendous ecological service for so many organisms. Let's learn to appreciate wasps... at least, maybe from a distance.

Permission to record has been given by presenter and will be posted on our website for anyone to watch.

Field Notes in Focus



IOWA SQUIRREL OBSERVING THE SURROUNDINGS—FROM GALLERY OF JONATHAN REYNOLDS

Submit your flora and/or fauna photos to Naturalist 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

Volunteers are really needed for The beautiful Nature Center at Johnson Branch Texas State Park for **Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm** (hours were recently changed). The center has been closed several times due to lack of volunteers. If you don't tolerate the heat and need an easily accessible site to volunteer this is the place for you! You will enjoy great air conditioning and a spacious atmosphere as you interact with our visitors. If you need training or want more information contact Pat Bragg at (nativebragg55@gmail.com)

Beulah Acres Agroforest Workday

Join Us for Volunteer Work days, every Wednesday.9am – 12pm

Copy this Link to sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4CA5AE29A3F9C07-volunteer>

Organizer: Daniel Arenas, agroforest@beulahacres.org

Green Acres Tuesday Workdays

Green Acres (located at 4400 Hide-A-Way Lane, Flower Mound, 75022)

Join us at our monarch station, prairie restoration, and riparian area

Contact Becky Bertoni becky.bertoni@gmail.com or 972 878 4058 to volunteer or for more details.

Starting Aug 2 we are back to Tuesdays, 8-11 am--and we have opportunities to help with watering on other days through the week!

Need 1 or 2 volunteers to lead a night hike at LLELA on Saturday August 27th from 8PM-10PM.

The following will be used to advertise to the general public:

“Join our trail guides as they lead a moonlit stroll through the woods and across the prairie.

We may hear some bumps in the night, but have no fear...it’s probably just an armadillo. Howling coyotes, hooting owls, and other nocturnal sounds will provide an out-of-the-ordinary hiking experience.”

Someone familiar with LLELA would be helpful. The hike will be limited to 10 participants and a roster will be provided. Participants will be meet at the gate.

For more information email Nick Makarenko at: nmakarenko@cityoflewsville.com

Information from Susan Pohlen

“Extinct” Oak Tree Is Rediscovered”

Copy and past the link below to read the full article.

https://www.technologynetworks.com/genomics/news/extinct-oak-tree-is-rediscovered-363542?utm_campaign=NEWSLETTER_TN_Breaking%20Science%20News&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=219200226&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-KekwtY5Bvljf_OHHAdzHwkRLwQG_12iKffb-uQILMXGc1SbhAY1pxgcbdnildUBDVo-WXETZS3L_LtnHsevcUVQ6_w&utm_content=219200226&utm_source=hs_email

Projects In and Around the Community

From Becky Bertoni—halberd-leaf hibiscus *Hibiscus laevis*. iNaturalist calls it Halberdleaf Rosemallow. The photo is from the riparian area at Green Acres—which is pretty dry right now!

Projects In and Around the Community

Gone to Seed

Becky Bertoni and I went to Cross Timbers Trailhead on August 8 to survey the plants there. It was hot and dry and very little was blooming. We expected that but it was still a bit discouraging to see the brown grasses, struggling plants and drooping trees. It took a slight attitude adjustment to see the beauty that was there.

The Basket Flowers, Yarrows, Barbara's Buttons, Foxgloves, Indian Blankets, Texas Stars and Lemon Balms and more that had bloomed in the spring and early summer were totally brown. We missed the lovely flowers and all the colors. However, we found it interesting to see the flowers that had gone to seed. The seed heads still offered their beauty and held the promise of next year's flowers in their seeds. It was a reminder of the old saying, "the seeds of today are the flowers of tomorrow."

Marilyn Blanton

Here's some of the flowers we saw in their final beauty along with a photo of the flowers in bloom.



Indian Blanket Gaillardia pulchella



Texas Star Lindheimeria texana



Lemon Beebalm Monarda citriodora



Indian Blanket seed head



Texas Star seed head



Lemon Beebalm seed head

Projects In and Around the Community



Basket flower *Centaurea americana*



Yarrow. *Achillea millefolium*



Barbara's Buttons *Marshallia caespitosa*



Basket Flower seed head



Yarrow seed head



Barbara's Buttons seed head

Foxglove *Penstemon cobaea*



Foxglove seed head

Tweet of the Month

By Sue Yost class of 2017

Great Blue Heron *Ardea Herodias*

Four feet tall. Six-foot wingspan. The Great Blue Heron [in the birding world known as GBH] is one of the largest birds of the North American heron and egret family. Despite their impressive size, Great Blue Herons weigh only 5 to 6 pounds thanks in part to their hollow bones—a feature all birds share. Males will be slightly larger than females.

Their territory is widespread across the United States. In Texas, it is usually found along the coast but is also found beside streams, ponds and lakes and our ever-present retaining ponds and ditches. The birds from the north will migrate south in the cold winter months but can remain through those cold northern winters, so long as fish-bearing waters remain unfrozen. The Great Blue Heron was one of the many species originally described by Carl Linnaeus in his 18th-century work, *Systema Naturae*

It's amazing to watch a GBH hunt for food. Standing quietly and tall it slowly turns its head to focus on the water. It slows its pace to a careful stalk. Then, in a motion almost too fast to catch, it drives its head beneath the surface and comes up with its prey impaled on its thin long beak. Was it a fish? [their main diet] A snake? A crawfish? A frog? A young turtle? Could be any of those. On land they also will prey on nestlings and small rodents. Depending on the prey and the size of the prey it may stab it a few times before swallowing it whole, usually headfirst! A big lump in his long thin neck can be seen! I have witnessed the catching of HUGE fish thinking there is *NO WAY* that GHB is going to be able to have *that* for lunch, but GULP! down it goes! BURP! Do birds burp?! LOL!

Great Blue Herons can be easily identified in flight by the shape of their bodies. Its long neck is drawn back in a graceful S-curve and the long legs trail from behind. The wide wings beat only twice each second. Beautiful various shades of blue-grey color the body feathers, crisp white feathers surround the head and a black feathered crown trail off the back of the head. During the breeding season the males have ornate long wispy plumes of feathers that decorate their head, neck and back. Great Blue Herons have specialized feathers on their chest that continually grow and fray. The herons comb this “powder down” with a fringed claw on their middle toes, using the down like a washcloth to remove fish slime and other oils from their feathers as they preen. Applying the powder to their underparts protects their feathers against the slime and oils of swamps.

Although nests are often reused for many years and herons are socially monogamous within a single breeding season, individuals usually choose new mates each year. Males arrive at colonies first and settle on nests, where they court females; most males choose a different nest each year. The mated pair will both construct the nest. The nest is made up of crude interwoven sticks usually high in a tree. It's lined with twigs and leaves. Nest building can take from 3 days up to 2 weeks; the finished nest can range from a simple platform measuring 20 inches across to more elaborate structures used over multiple years, reaching 4 feet across and nearly 3.5 feet deep. They are colony nesters so you will find large groups of herons nesting together in the same area. This is known as a heronry. Colonies can consist of 500 or more individual nests, with multiple nests per tree built 100 or more feet off the ground. On occasion they join with egrets and this nesting area is then known as a rookery. [GBH will nest higher up than the others]. The sites are usually over or near water supposedly to ward off mammalian predators. Alligators in the water below act as “security guards” for likely predators but they also readily snatch up

any nestlings that fall [or get pushed] out of the nest. Herons are one of many species of birds that are known for the extreme form of sibling rivalry at a nest that may lead to siblicide. Siblicide occurs when a nestling's behavior leads to the death of one or more of its siblings through starvation, physical injury, or eviction from the nest. Siblicide in birds often occurs as soon as a larger or more aggressive nestling gains the size, strength, and weaponry (such as a sharp beak) to cause significant harm to its younger and smaller nest mate(s)

The female Great Blue Heron will lay 3-5 light bluish-green eggs. Both the female and male will incubate the eggs for about 28 days. They are born semialtricial meaning they are born with downy feathers, are not helpless, but are not big enough to leave the nest in a few days as if they were precocial. It will be about 60 days before they leave the nest after a steady diet of fish regurgitated by both parents. Remember the rule of thumb...the bigger the bird the longer it takes to fledge. The heat and drought we are experiencing this summer has taken a toll on nesting herons and egrets. Nestlings are leaving the nests before they are ready. If they are not rescued by humans, they will die from starvation and heat. Such a rescue took place in a neighborhood in McKinney last month. Local rehabbers [with the help of local TXMN] rescued 100's and 100's of them.

Great Blue Herons aren't likely to visit a typical backyard. However, they are sometimes unwelcome visitors to yards that include fishponds. Herons, like most of our birds, are legally protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The oldest recorded Great Blue Heron was found in Texas when it was at least 24 years, 6 months old. Now that is what I call "one tough old bird"!

Great Blue Heron numbers are stable and increased in the U.S. between 1966 and 2019, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. [Partners in Flight](#) estimates a global breeding population of 700,000 and rates the species 8 out of 20 on the Continental Concern Score, indicating a species of low conservation concern. Great Blue Herons can be found throughout the year all over North America. Because Great Blue Herons depend on wetlands for feeding and on relatively undisturbed sites for breeding, they are vulnerable to habitat loss and human impacts such as traffic, logging, motorboats, and other intrusions that can disrupt nesting colonies. Other threats include chemical pollutants or other causes of reduced water quality. Although contaminant levels have declined in many areas, pollutants such as PCBs and DDT and newer types of industrial chemicals continue to affect heron habitats and can contribute to factors such as reduced nest site attendance.

"Nature taking care of a dead tree stump" - Naematoloma fasciculare (Sulfur Tuft) - confirmed by Bob Killam, UNT retd



At LLELA

From Nick Makarenko

Doe hiding out along Blackjack Trail Bird Blind and Dung Beetles on Blackjack Trail!



Features

My retirement community in Frisco, Texas has invited me to lead a photographic discussion in a course this fall called “Local Wildlife & Habitats.” This collage almost doesn't need an accompanying slide defining “Predation.”

This Eastern Cottontail, in the gardens at Global Spheres, was a good sport by posing nearly motionless as I raised my camera, focused and got the shot before it disappeared into the Texas Lantana. I understand through many observations, and as confirmed by an interpretive card at DISD School Days at Clear Creek, that rabbits commonly behave in this manner - freezing for a few seconds after being spotted before scampering for cover. I think they prefer to sit warily in the open because that is where the tender grass is.

I was visiting on a neighbor's back porch when in the corner of our view flashed the Bobcat pictured as it snared and took away a different rabbit. We had no idea that the stalking was going on, and, taking it all in, we also didn't know until then that rabbits can shriek. Doing what I do, I ran to get my camera while wondering how the bobcat with its prey would navigate the habitat fragmentation of our suburban neighborhood, and if I would even be able to find it.

It is special when a photograph shows an animal looking at the photographer as is the case with the now locally famous “Neighborhood Bobcat,” which had settled into a neighbor's front yard garden. As it made the rounds, a couple of neighbors wondered if I took the photograph with a smartphone. Well, no, for safety and respect for the creature I needed the working distance of about twenty yards that a 300mm lens provided.

I've read that the “flash” markings on the backside of a Bobcat's raised ears may look like large eyes to scare predators sneaking up from behind. I've also read that the horn-shaped position of the ears of this particular Bobcat indicates it may be holding prey and that I can't have it. That makes sense.

Bryan Lewis
Class of 2020

↓
✓ *Eastern Cottontail*
(*Sylvilagus floridanus*)



Bobcat
(*Lynx rufus*) ↑

Features



Heron and the Hummingbird submitted by Sue Yost, class of 2017

A Native American Myth (Hitchiti Tribe) retold by S. E. Schlosser

Heron and Hummingbird were very good friends, even though one was tall and gangly and awkward, and one was small and sleek and fast. They both loved to eat fish. The Hummingbird preferred small fish like minnows and Heron liked the large ones.

One day, Hummingbird said to his friend: "I am not sure there are enough fish in the world for both of our kind to eat. Why don't we have a race to see which of us should own the fish?"

Heron thought that was a very good idea. They decided that they would race for four days. The finish line was an old dead tree next to a far-away river. Whichever of them sat on top of the tree first on the fourth day of the race would own all the fish in the world.

They started out the next morning. The Hummingbird zipped along, flying around and around the Heron, who was moving steadily forward, flapping his giant wings. Then Hummingbird would be distracted by the pretty flowers along the way. He would flit from one to the other, tasting the nectar. When Hummingbird noticed that Heron was ahead of him, he hurried to catch up with him, zooming ahead as fast as he could, and leaving Heron far behind. Heron just kept flying steadily forward, flapping his giant wings.

Hummingbird was tired from all his flitting. When it got dark, he decided to rest. He found a nice spot to perch and slept all night long. But Heron just kept flying steadily forward all night long, flapping his giant wings.

When Hummingbird woke in the morning, Heron was far ahead. Hummingbird had to fly as fast as he could to catch up. He zoomed past the big, awkward Heron and kept going until Heron had disappeared behind him. Then Hummingbird noticed some pretty flowers nearby. He zip-zipped over to them and tasted their nectar. He was enjoying the pretty scenery and didn't notice Heron flap-flapping passed him with his great wings.

Hummingbird finally remembered that he was racing with Heron and flew as fast as he could to catch up with the big, awkward bird. Then he zipped along, flying around and around the Heron, who kept moving steadily forward, flapping his giant wings.

For two more days, the Hummingbird and the Heron raced toward the far-distant riverbank with the dead tree that was the finish line. Hummingbird had a marvelous time sipping nectar and flitting among the flowers and resting himself at night. Heron stoically kept up a steady flap-flap-flapping of his giant wings, propelling himself forward through the air all day and all night.

Hummingbird woke from his sleep the morning of the fourth day, refreshed and invigorated. He flew zip-zip toward the riverbank with its dead tree. When it came into view, he saw Heron perched at the top of the tree! Heron had won the race by flying straight and steady through the night while Hummingbird slept.

So, from that day forward, the Heron has owned all the fish in the rivers and lakes, and the Hummingbird has sipped from the nectar of the many flowers which he enjoyed so much during the race.

Contributors this Month



w odum, editor
class 2005

Nick Makarenko—photos
from LLELA—no photo



Dorothy Thetford class



Becky Bertoni class 2015



Mary Morrow class 2014



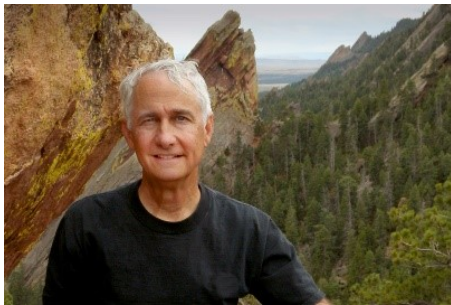
Bryan Lewis class 2020



Judi Elliott class 2009



Jan Deatherage class 2011



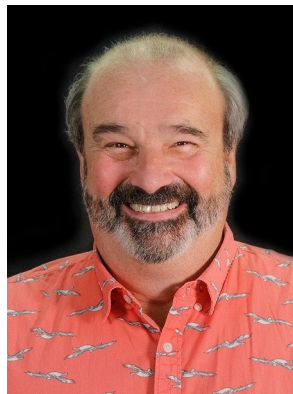
Jonathan Reynolds class 2014



Sue Yost 2017



Harriett Powell class 2015

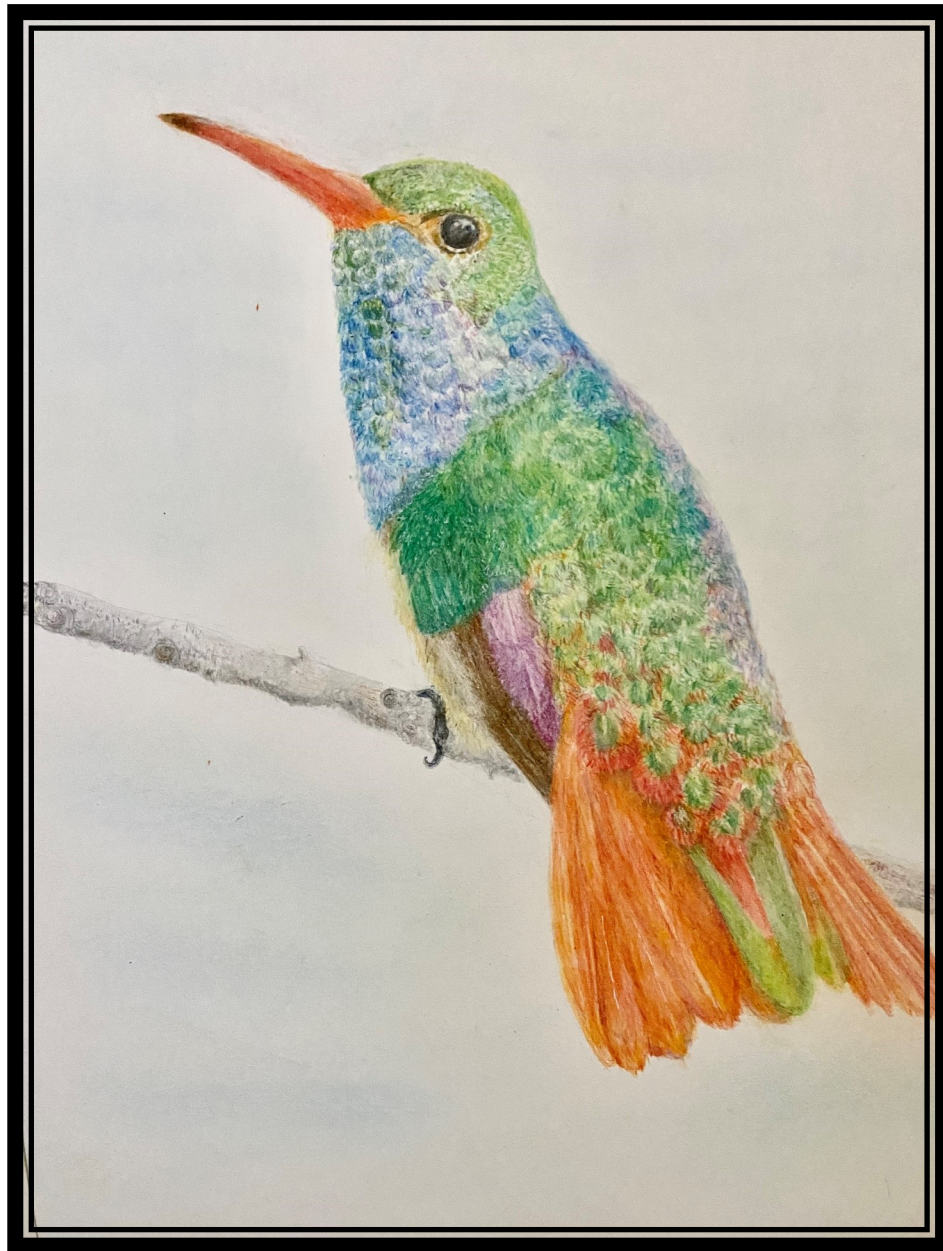


David Jones class 2019



Diane Wetherbee
class 2000

Last Word



Buff-bellied hummingbird (w odum)

Have a last word? Send to Newsletter

Texas Master Naturalist-Elm
Fork Chapter

Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension

Joseph A. Carroll Building

401 W. Hickory Street

Denton, TX 76201 940-349-2883

<https://txmn.org/elmfork>

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 pro-gram will be recognized as a primary source of information, education and service to support natural resources and natural areas to-day and in the future.”



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 are on the third Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m. Chapter meetings are open to the public. Next meeting August 18, 2022 . Speaker is Sam Kieschnick “ Wonderful Wasps”

Board Meetings

The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met August 11, 2022. Next monthly Board meeting September 8, 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.