

T E X A S

Master  
Naturalist™  
Elm Fork Chapter



# Naturalist News

May 2023 Volume 23, Issue 5



*Cedar Waxwings at Green Acres, from Win Goddard*

We're on the Web [www.txmn.org/elmfork](http://www.txmn.org/elmfork)

On Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistElmFork/](https://www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistElmFork/)



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# Naturalist News



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Black Swallowtail, from Becky Bertoni

# *What Happens Next*

## *Chapter Meeting and Presentation*

Thursday, May 18th • 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Denton County Administrative Courthouse

3rd floor, 2020 Room

1 Courthouse Drive, Denton, TX

### AT Presentation:

**Name of Speaker:** Maddy Kaleta

**Bio:** Maddy is a second-year master's student studying biology at UNT. She is currently studying American kestrels in Denton County to examine annual survivorship and movement ecology of migrant kestrels to better understand why kestrels may be declining. Her work in endangered avian species, movement ecology and land use, and observational studies of a variety of bird species in positions across the country, provided her with the experience to now work with these incredible falcons! When she's not out trapping kestrels or checking on banded birds, Maddy regularly goes birding with her dog on local trails, explores caves, and enjoys traveling, to see more birds of course!

**Presentation Title:** "Connecting the Dots: Documenting the Full Annual Cycle Movement Patterns of Migrant American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*)"

**Presentation Summary:** This presentation elaborates on the kestrel decline and data gaps we aim to fill with the kestrel project. It includes data from the first year with returned trackers and elaborates on our success and failures with new tracking technology. We tell the story of the two birds that overwinter in North Texas that we successfully recorded movement data on!





# What's Happening Next

*Learn more about this project at the May 18th Chapter meeting...*

## Land Management Awareness

**Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist  
Serving Denton, Wise and Cooke Counties**

**Helping small acreage landowners, with one to twenty acres, assess their property's current wildlife habitat and make recommendations on how to improve the quality of the habitat using sound ecologically-based practices.**



### Types of Guidance Offered

- Water Conservation
- Identifying non-native and exotic vegetation
- How to conduct wildlife/plant census counts
- Riparian Area Improvement
- Erosion Control
- Soil Improvement
- Providing ecoregion Plant and Tree Lists
- How to Convert Turf to Native Habitat
- How to Create a Prairie or Pocket Prairie
- How to create a Wildlife Shelter

### Who We Are

Certified Texas Master Naturalists who volunteer their time and experience to educate landowners on ways to create or improve wildlife habitat. There is no charge for this service.

### Our Process

Landowners, if you are interested in our service, complete the EFC Landowner Information Form or complete the fillable form available on-line: <https://txmn.org/elmfork/efc-forms/efc-land-owner-information-form/>, which you can submit electronically. This will help our team understand what your individual goals are for the property. Members of the team will meet at the property and review with you goals for the project and tour the property. The team will provide a written report (verbal report for smaller properties) recommending ways to improve habitat and a list of helpful resources for you to learn more if you choose.

### Contact Information

For more information or to request habitat guidance, please email [landmgmt@efctmn.org](mailto:landmgmt@efctmn.org)

#### Chapter Information:

Email address: [contact@efctmn.org](mailto:contact@efctmn.org)

Phone: 940.349.2883

Mailing address: Joseph A Carroll Courts Bldg.

401 W Hickory Street

Denton, Tx 76201

#### Find Us Here:

Website: [txmn.org/elmfork](https://txmn.org/elmfork)

Facebook: Elm Fork Chapter Texas Master Naturalist

YouTube: Texas Master Naturalists Elm Fork Chapter



The Texas Master Naturalist program is a partnership between the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife, and other local partners. 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 Courts of Texas Cooperating.



# Awards and Recognition

## April 2023

### Initial Certifications

Karen Kearns	Class of 2022
Katherine Vargas	Class of 2022



### Recertifications

Mindy Anderson	Class of 2015
Barbara Beane	Class of 2018
Toni Benjamin	Class of 2015
Brynnne Bryan	Class of 2022
Amy Crook	Class of 2020
Jeanne Erickson	Class of 1998
Hugh Franks	Class of 2019
Mike Hatch	Class of 2014
Karen Jamieson	Class of 2017
Daniel Lemons	Class of 2022
Angela Lindsey	Class of 2018
Jean McMeans	Class of 2005
Susan Pohlen	Class of 2007
Veronica Ruangskul	Class of 2013
Skip Warren	Class of 2021



Continued  
on next page



# *Awards and Recognition*

## *April 2023*

### *250 Hour Milestone*

*Susan Hamby  
Susan Warren*

*Class of 2022  
Class of 2021*



### *500 Hour Milestone*

*Shaleen Wunrow*

*Class of 2021*



### *1000 Hour Milestone*

*Bill Coleman  
Larry Duncan*

*Class of 2013  
Class of 2018*



### *1500 Hour Milestone*

*Leonard Chochrek  
Claire Kamego  
Veronica Ruangskul*

*Class of 2019  
Class of 2012  
Class of 2013*



### *4000 Hour Milestone*

*Mary Cissell*

*Class of 2015*





# *Field Notes in Focus*



Southern Leopard Frog at CCNHC, from Tammie Walters



# *Inside Outside News*

## Volunteer Opportunities

*Volunteers Needed for the  
City of Denton Honey Run  
Saturday, May 20th  
Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center  
Event Time: 8:00 AM to Noon  
Setup Starts at 7:00 AM*



Toni Benjamin will be the lead on setting up a booth for us. We're keeping it simple, but Toni needs some help. If you are able to come out, please email ASAP.

[projects@efctmn.org](mailto:projects@efctmn.org)

*A Lead and Volunteers are Needed for the  
Denton County Master Gardeners'  
Annual Fruit, Vegetable, Herb and Flower Show  
Saturday, June 17th  
Located inside the West Wing of the North Texas Fairgrounds  
(air conditioned!)  
Event Time: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
Setup will be at 8:00 AM*

If you can help with this one...please let Fran Witte know as soon as possible.

[projects@efctmn.org](mailto:projects@efctmn.org)



# Inside Outside News

*Be sure to see **Plan Your Week** or the **Elm Fork Chapter Calendar** for more volunteer service projects and advanced training opportunities.*

*Click here: <https://txmn.org/elmfork/members-only-calendar/> or click on the Calendar*



<div> <div> <div>TEXAS</div> <div>Master Naturalist</div> </div> <div>Elm Fork Chapter</div> <div> <div>TEXAS A&amp;M AGRILIFE EXTENSION</div> <div>TEXAS PARKS &amp; WILDLIFE</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>Home</div> <div>About</div> <div>Join Our Chapter</div> <div>Photo Gallery</div> <div>Activities</div> <div>Calendar</div> <div>Members Area</div> <div>Donate</div> <div>References</div> <div>Search</div> </div>						
<div> <div>Advanced Training</div> <div>Board Meeting</div> <div>Chapter Meeting</div> <div>Special Events</div> <div>TMN Annual Meeting</div> <div>Volunteers Needed</div> <div>1 More</div> </div>						
<b>14</b> 8:00 am - 2:00 pm LLELA Visitor Center – Volunteers Needed 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Johnson Branch Unit 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Isle Du Bois Unit	<b>15</b> 9:00 am - 11:00 am Clear Creek Workday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm LLELA Monday & Wednesday Workday 9:00 am - 1:30 pm Environmental Discovery and Adventure (EDA)	<b>16</b> 8:30 am - 11:30 am Green Acres Workday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm LLELA Trailhead Tuesday	<b>17</b> 8:00 am - 12:00 pm Beulah Acres Agroforest Workday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm LLELA Monday & Wednesday Workday 9:00 am - 1:30 pm Environmental Discovery and Adventure (EDA) 9:00 am - 11:00 am Lantana Monarch Waystation Workday	<b>18</b> 9:00 am - 12:00 pm Chapter Meeting 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Johnson Branch Unit	<b>19</b> 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Johnson Branch Unit 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Isle Du Bois Unit	<b>20</b> 8:00 am - 2:00 pm LLELA Visitor Center – Volunteers Needed 9:00 am - 11:00 am Furneaux Creek Volunteer Day on the Trail 9:00 am - 12:00 pm Texas Our Heritage (TOH) Native Demonstration Gardens Workday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Isle Du Bois Unit
<b>21</b> 8:00 am - 2:00 pm LLELA Visitor Center – Volunteers Needed 9:00 am - 10:30 am Thrive Nature Walk – AT 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Johnson Branch Unit 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Isle Du Bois Unit	<b>22</b> 9:00 am - 11:00 am Clear Creek Workday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm LLELA Monday & Wednesday Workday	<b>23</b> 8:30 am - 11:30 am Green Acres Workday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm LLELA Trailhead Tuesday	<b>24</b> 8:00 am - 12:00 pm Beulah Acres Agroforest Workday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm LLELA Monday & Wednesday Workday	<b>25</b> 9:00 am - 11:00 am Clear Creek Workday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Johnson Branch Unit 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm Wild at Work: Benefits of Habitat Restoration for Water Security – AT	<b>26</b> 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Johnson Branch Unit 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Isle Du Bois Unit	<b>27</b> 7:30 am Bird Walk at Clear Creek – AT 8:00 am - 2:00 pm LLELA Visitor Center – Volunteers Needed 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Isle Du Bois Unit
<b>28</b> 8:00 am - 2:00 pm LLELA Visitor Center – Volunteers Needed	<b>29</b> 9:00 am - 12:00 pm LLELA Monday & Wednesday Workday	<b>30</b> 8:30 am - 11:30 am Green Acres Workday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm	<b>31</b> 8:00 am - 12:00 pm Beulah Acres Agroforest Workday	<b>1</b> 9:00 am - 11:00 am Clear Creek Workday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm	<b>2</b> 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Ray Roberts Lake State Park – Johnson Branch Unit	<b>3</b> 8:00 am - 2:00 pm LLELA Visitor Center – Volunteers Needed

# Quick Tips From Our Webmaster

Gale Bacon



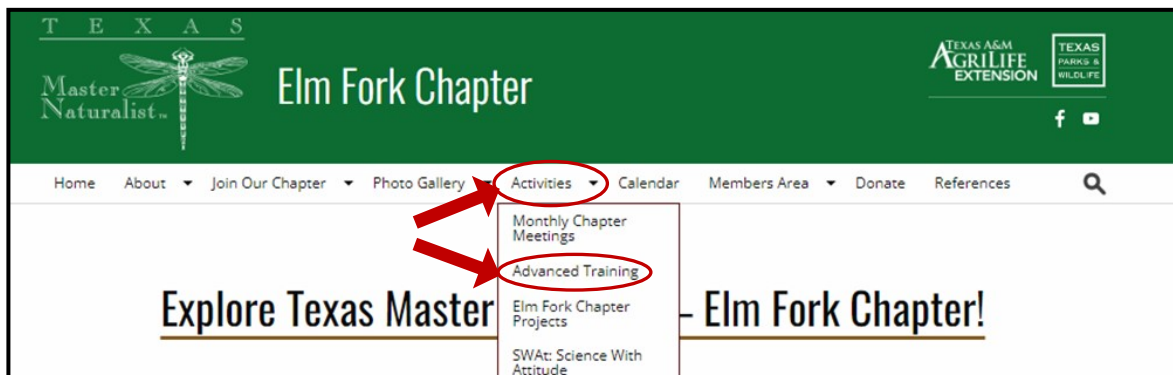
## Our ADVANCED TRAINING Page

From our Advanced training page, you can:

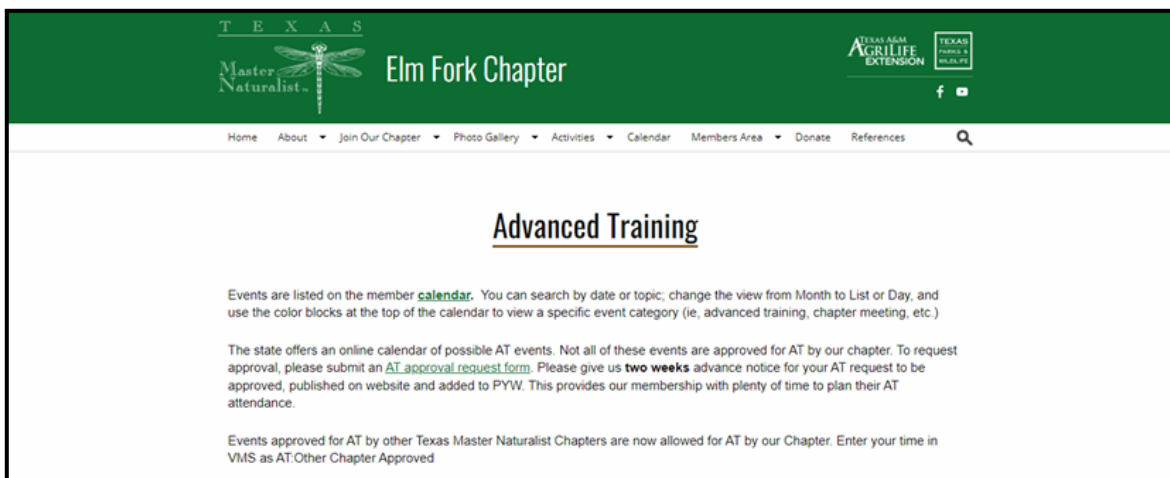
**contact** our AT committee, **submit** a new AT opportunity, quickly view **virtual** AT opportunities, **investigate** additional web links to find additional AT topics.

Both in-person and virtual AT opportunities are on our members only calendar.

- From the main menu, select Activities -> Advanced Training (or bookmark this page: <https://txmn.org/elmfork/staying-connected/advancedtraining/>)



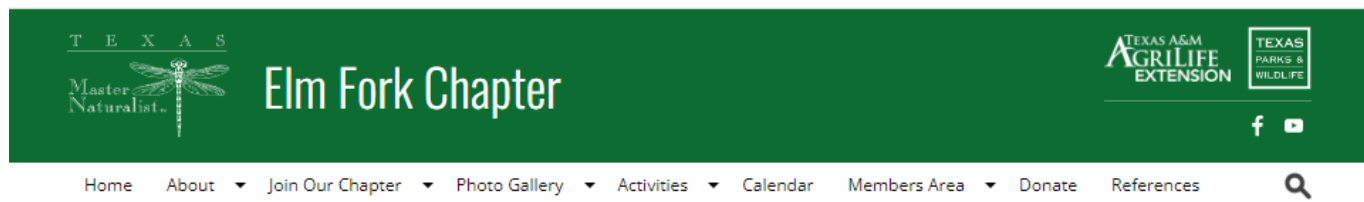
- There are three main sections to the Advanced training page: general info, including VMS codes for some AT, a list of Virtual AT events that link to our calendar (updated frequently), links for on-going AT opportunities, and education resource links.
- The pictures below represent just a snippet of what's on the page. Check it out to view more!





# Quick Tips (Cont.)

- Scroll down on the page to view Virtual AT Events, Ongoing AT Opportunities, and Educational Resources!



## VIRTUAL AT EVENTS (check the calendar for in-person AT)

2023

June 2 – [A Need for Cleaner Air: Impacts of Air Pollution to People and Birds](#)

May 25 – [Wild at Work: Benefits of Habitat Restoration for Water Security](#)

May 10 – [Texas Waters Webinar – Wetland Types and Trends in Texas](#)

## ONGOING AT OPPORTUNITIES

- [Native Prairie Association of Texas \(NPAT\)](#) Hikes
- Texas Nature Trackers (LIVE on Facebook)
- [Monarch Conservation Webinar Series](#)
- [Cornell Lab Bird Academy](#)
- [Raptor Rapture Online Course](#)
- Adult programs by the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center
- Any of the [Native Landscape Certification Program](#) Classes and most of their programs offered by the Native Plant Society of Texas
- The Citizen Forester Class
- Fly fishing class
- Skywarn class
- [Project WILD or Aquatic WILD workshops](#)
- [NOLS Wilderness First Aid classes](#)
- Second Saturday Events at the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge
- LLELA Lecture Series
- SWAt Meetings – 4th Thursday of the month at 9:30am
- Friends of Furneaux Creek Nature Trail Meetings – 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm
- Native Plant Society of Texas Chapter Meetings (check topic to make sure it's TMN related)
- Audubon educational presentations
- Bird and nature walks offered by nature centers, such as LLELA and Clear Creek

## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

[Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge](#), Fort Worth  
 @Fort-Worth-Nature-Center-Refuge  
[River Legacy Science Center](#), Arlington  
 @riverlegacyparks  
[Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary](#), McKinney  
 @ConnectwithNature  
[Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center](#), Cedar Hill  
 @Dogwood.Canyon.Audubon  
[Trinity River Audubon Center](#), Dallas  
 @TrinityRiverAudubonCenter  
[Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Center](#), Lewisville  
 @LLELALewisvilleLake  
[Fort Worth Botanic Gardens](#), Fort Worth  
 @FortWorthBotanicGarden  
[Perot Museum of Nature and Science](#), Dallas

# Projects in the Community

## A QUICK VISIT TO CROSS TIMBERS TRAILHEAD

From Becky Berton



Penstemon cobaea

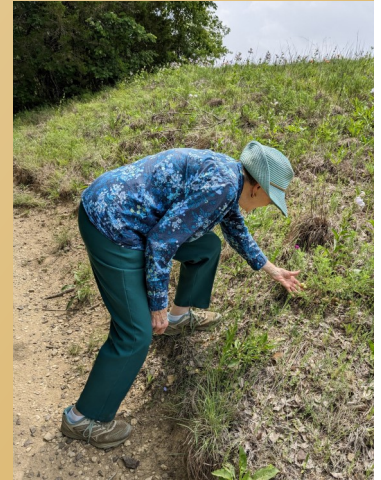
Our chapter meeting on April 20 was at the Southwest Courthouse, very close to Cross Timbers Trailhead, a Flower Mound park. Irene Hanson and I took advantage of that and stopped in for a brief visit there. The wildflowers, a result of the rain we have had earlier this year, were great to see. Right at your feet there were so many different species. Still, they were not equal to the amount in 2019, when we led monthly tours of that trail.



Beaked cornsalad

Cross Timbers Trailhead is truly a great prairie remnant, part limestone rock, and ground plum is an indicator plant for native prairie. It is always included in Bioblitz locations for our chapter. It is worth a visit, especially if you have never seen it. Take the trail from the parking lot and then the right fork up to the fairly gentle up and down rolling trail. Walk until you reach Inspiration Point, with the bench where you can look down on Grapevine Lake. Take photos to add to the Cross Timbers Trailhead iNat project ☺:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/cross-timbers-trailhead>



Irene and ground plums



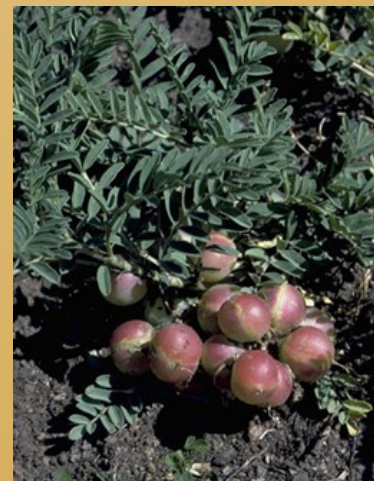
Lewis flax



Texas yellow star



Texas paintbrush



Ground plum, photo from LBJ Wildflower Database



# *Projects in the Community*

## IT WAS A GREAT SPRING FOR DISD FIELD TRIPS AT CLEAR CREEK!



**Sharon Betty and Elise Spain,  
Spring 2023 Project Co-Managers**

In March and April, field trips for second grade classes from 23 Denton ISD elementary schools included 2058 students and 665 adults, a total of 2723 visitors. On average, there were 11 volunteers per day, mostly from the TMN-EFC membership but also from DCMGA members as part of Science with Attitude (the SWAt project) and from the Denton County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Many volunteers were there multiple days, and we especially thank that core group, but we thank ALL the volunteers!

Elm Fork Chapter member Bryan Lewis provided the photos shown here from two field trips when we had permission from the schools and the DISD Communications Department to take pictures of students. Some of his photos were also printed in a Denton Record Chronicle feature story about the field trips for children to Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center.





## Spring DISD Field Trips (cont.)



**So much FUN  
Learning!**





## Spring DISD Field Trips (cont.)



**And a grand time  
was had  
by ALL!**



# Projects in the Community

## Texas Native Plant Art Exhibition

The Texas Native Plant Art Exhibition is ending with the end of the school year but will start again with the new school year in the fall.

The Appreciation Reception was held on April 26 at the DISD Professional Development Center. It was a fun event with lots of smiles, proud parents and happy art teachers and lots of excited fourth grade students. All of the artwork that was submitted (over 800 pieces from 22 elementary schools) was displayed.

The final display was at the Denton Redbud Festival at the Civic Center on April 29. Since then, all the artwork has been returned to the schools.

We have received many positive comments from parents, teachers, display hosts and others. I would like to thank everyone that has participated in the project and look forward to working with everyone in the fall!



*Thank you,  
Marilyn Blanton*

*Photographs by Jerry Hamby*



# Features

## **BOBCATS... IN THE BACKYARD!**

From Sue Hudiburgh



It was exciting watching the bobcats chase the squirrel. There were 4 cats in all in the backyard, 3 youngsters and a larger bobcat (mom?) that mostly watched the others and finally stepped in to end the chase.





# Features



## DOWN HERE... WE SWAT FLIES

by  
Bob James



My father was the regional manager of a freight line here in Texas. It was quite profitable during World War 2, and shortly after the war it was bought by a much larger company from somewhere up North. My dad became anxious about his job and continued when a company executive came down to Texas to access the new addition and its employees. The executive and my dad hit it off quite well and the man from up north invited my dad and family out to dinner. They decided on having dinner at an Italian restaurant (pronounced long "I", space "Talian"). I was dressed in my Sunday-go-to-Meeting clothes and on my best behavior, that is "Be seen and not heard". The meal went well, I loved the bread sticks. As we finished, the executive leaned over toward me and said, "Bobby, have you ever been fly fishing?" Well, this shocked me and I blurted out, "Down here we don't fish for them....we swat flies." This really embarrassed my dad, but the executive laughed at my response. Then my dad and the gentleman explained "fly fishing" to me. Later the executive told my dad, "I want you to buy this young man some fly fishing gear". The next day my dad brought home two books the gentleman had purchased for me, one on fly fishing and the other "The Complete Angler" by Izaak Walton. I devoured them both.

Within a week or so my dad took me to downtown Fort Worth to A.J. Anderson Sporting Goods and bought me some fly fishing gear. We bought a metal extension rod, a cheap reel, some level fly line, leader material for tippets and a box of hooks. He told me I would have to create my own flies and learn how to cast them. That evening I took some feathers from my mother's pillow, dental floss and my sister's nail polish and made about a dozen streamers that looked like the ones in the book.

The following weekend my dad and I went down to a private lake owned by a friend of our family. My dad being a purist set out his tonkin cane poles with line tied to the end, corks, weights, and hooks all baited with minnows. Then he settled back in his camp chair to watch the corks. I took my fly gear and walked a good way around the point to try it out. I started casting and within minutes I caught a nice 2-pound largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*). I continued to cast and continued to catch fish, bass, mostly over a pound.



Photo from Google Images

After about an hour or so I picked up my stringer and walked back to show them to my dad. He was shocked! He had caught nothing and was quite surprised at my catch. We cleaned the fish and took them home to cook and eat. The bass were delicious, especially since I had caught them.

The next day my dad took me back to A.J. Anderson's and bought me a split bamboo nine-foot fly rod, a fine fly reel, double tapered fly line, tippet material and a box of flies. I still have the fly rod and reel; they are prized possessions.





## Down Here... We Swat Flies (cont.)



Photo from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lepomis\\_macrochirus\\_UMFS\\_2014\\_2.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lepomis_macrochirus_UMFS_2014_2.JPG)

Shortly after this we took a fishing trip to Lake Meridian south of Glen Rose, Texas. We rented a cabin and a small boat and spent the week-end fishing. We caught bluegill sunfish (*Lepomis macrochirus*) with almost every cast using a small yellow popper with red eyes and a yellow feather tail. We had so many fish that we returned the small ones to the water and only kept the ones greater than a pound. We cleaned them, cooked them, and ate bluegill for several weeks after this trip.

I have fly fished throughout the southwest, catching largemouth bass in Arkansas and Oklahoma, trout in New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona and, of course, sunfish in Texas. I have spent many hours fishing the Trinity River from the Colonial Golf Course to Benbrook Lake. One evening I was fishing the Trinity above where Hulen Street now crosses the river. I saw something moving through the moss close to the bank, and first thought it was a snake. Getting closer I saw it was a very large carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) swimming slowly through the moss and feeding on the bottom of the river. I quickly removed my fly and tied on a large treble hook. Then I silently approached the fish and cast my line out over the fish and slowly retrieved it. The hook passed over him on the first cast, so I tried again. As the hook passed over the fish the second time, I jerked the line setting the hook in the fish's back just behind the dorsal fin. Well, that creature exploded into the river depths jerking my line out, breaking the tip of my rod, breaking my line and vanishing into the deep.

I don't know why I tried to catch that fish because I had always heard they were inedible. When I told my friend Kenneth about it, he said that he wished I had caught it because he had a good recipe for preparing carp. I asked him about the recipe in case I had the opportunity to catch one. He said, "Get one of those cedar shingle things you cook on and put the carp filets on it. Heat the oven to 350 degrees and place it in the oven for 1 minute, then take it out and pour a cup of vodka over the fish. Put it back in the oven for 1 minute, take it out and pour 1 cup of whiskey over the fish. Put it back in the oven for 1 minute then take it out and pour 1 cup of Port wine over the fish. Put it back in the oven for 1 minute. Then take it out of the oven, throw the carp away and eat the shingle." I did not laugh.

Fly fishing not only produces a great number of different fish, they catch tarpon (*Megalopidae atlanticus*) in Florida on fly fishing gear; it is a beautiful art form. It is delightful to see the line being powered forward in a huge arc to land lightly on the water dropping the fly on the edge of a deep pool. A well done roll cast will almost take your breath away.

The Elm Fork Chapter has a very unique and capable resource for fly fishing instruction. Richard Johnson teaches this great way to catch fish. Check the website or contact Richard from the Members Area Directory for his next class and enroll. You will love it and it will also give you another reason to get out in nature. Buy a cedar shingle in case you catch a Carp.



Photo from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fly\\_Fishing\\_on\\_The\\_River\\_Itchen\\_%2819238200845%29.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fly_Fishing_on_The_River_Itchen_%2819238200845%29.jpg)

# *Tweet of the Month*

By Sue Yost, class of 2017



Those beautiful light gray birds soaring gracefully in the skies above. Sailing effortlessly with pointed wings on the warm thermals, it glides and turns into the wind to catch an insect in mid-air or grab a cicada from a treetop. They are insectivores and will consume on the wing grasshoppers, cicadas, dragonflies, and any other insects in the air. Mississippi Kites use their sharp talons to rip their prey apart as they float on the wing. Talk about carryout meals!! Amazing! Even though the main part of their diet is insects they will also eat lizards, mice, small snakes, frogs, and on rare occasion small birds. Consuming crop-damaging insects makes them economically important. They will fly around cattle and horses to catch insects stirred up from the grass.

The Mississippi Kite was first named and described by the Scottish ornithologist Alexander Wilson in 1811, in the third volume of his *American Ornithology*. Wilson gave the kite the Latin binomial name of *Falco mississippiensis*: *Falco* means "falcon", while *mississippiensis* means from the Mississippi River in the United States. The current genus of *Ictinia* originated with Louis Jean Pierre Vieillot's 1816 *Analyse d'une nouvelle Ornithologie Élémentaire*. The genus name derives from the Greek *iktinos*, for "kite". Wilson also gave the Mississippi Kite its English-language common name. He had first observed the species in the Mississippi Territory, while the bird's long pointed wings and forked tail suggested that it was a type of kite. It is currently classified in the subfamily Buteoninae, tribe Buteonini.

Mississippi Kites nest across the southeastern United States. They usually form loose colonies where they congregate at communal perches and favorite perching sites. Those sites are usually high atop a tree. Both parents incubate the eggs and care for the young. They have one clutch a year. The birds protect their nests by diving at perceived threats, including humans; however, this occurs in less than 20% of nests.

The nests are bulky flat nests built with sticks and lined with leaves. The female lays



*Tweet of the Month (cont.)*

2-3 whitish eggs. Those eggs hatch after being incubated for 31-32 days. It will take another five weeks before they fledge. Only about half of the broods succeed. Clutches fall victim to storms and predators such as raccoons and great horned owls. Because there are fewer predators in urban areas, Mississippi Kites produce more offspring in urban areas than rural. They have an average lifespan of 8 years.



*Photo by Tammie Walters*

Kites of all ages have red eyes and red to yellow legs. Males and females look alike, but the males are slightly paler on the head and neck. Young kites have banded tails and streaked bodies. The bird is 12 to 15 inches beak to tail and has a wingspan averaging 3 feet. Weight is from 7.6-13.7 oz. The call is a high-pitched squeak, sounding like the noise made by a squeaky toy.

This species migrates to southern subtropical South America in the winter, mostly to Argentina and Brazil. Migration normally occurs in groups of 20 to 30 birds. However, there are exceptions; mixed flocks may occur in migration, being recorded with up to 10,000 birds in one instance at Fuerte Esperanza, Argentina.

It makes me sad when I look up to the skies  
and realize they are gone.

# Unexpected

## BEWARE HOLES

By Missy Adair

You are on a hike with some half-grown kids. The sun is sliding off the leaves, the kids are asking smart questions and you are breathing in the scents of the wild.

Suddenly a child asks, "Who lives in this hole?" as he points out an obvious mammal made hole. You merrily stride over to give a knowledgeable opinion. But there are no recent markings, no scat, nothing but vague scratches that could be accidental even. You have no idea who may or may not be using that hole.



Photo from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Burrow\\_off\\_Fairmead\\_Road,\\_High\\_Beach,\\_Essex.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Burrow_off_Fairmead_Road,_High_Beach,_Essex.jpg)

It's time to say the words. Easy yet somehow, given the trusting look on the small face, it sticks a little. You know there is no shame in it. You say, "I don't know".

It's Spring and you are with a group of bird watchers. They are eager people just learning and very observant. You smile with pride in them. The wind whispers through the growing grasses and trembles the leaves on the trees.

"There!" cries one of the birdwatchers, "Who built that nest?" All eyes swivel from the nest to you. But you are frozen. You know a dozen types of bird nests. But not this one. You know that is fine, but you had so wanted to look fully knowledgeable to this group. You look carefully, give a big smile and say, "I don't know! Do you think one of you can find the answer by next time?"

You are herding small children on a fun hike. The pebbly path was pleasant to walk with birdsong and rustling leaves all around. These kids are small, so they notice the ground vividly, picking up rocks and carefully replacing them. Then one child gets very excited. You almost can't understand her. "I found a hole!" she cries happily. "What is this hole?" The kids gather around.

The hole is so tiny you bend to examine it. Your heart sinks. You realize it is some type of very small insect that made the hole and accompanying tufts of earth. But for all you've boned up on, entomology was never in the picture. Now you smile bravely at the excited children and say, "I think it's a kind of insect who made that hole. But I don't know what kind." They gaze at you in disappointment for a moment then run on.

You have not failed any of these people. You have not failed yourself. You have not ruined their curiosity in nature. Sometimes there are holes in your information or knowledge or training. But you can't know every aspect of the natural world. You can say, "I don't know". It's okay.



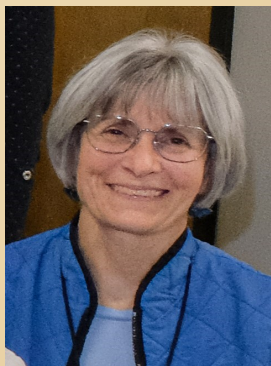
## *This Month's Contributors*



Missy Adair



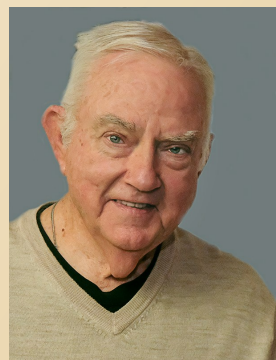
Gale Bacon



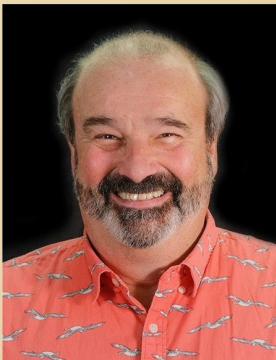
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Marilyn Blanton



Bob James



Dave Jones



Sue Hudiburn



Denver Kramer



Kristina Richter



Elise Spain



Fran Witte



Sue Yost



Tammie Walters, Editor

### *Thank you all!*

Articles and photos for the *Naturalist News*  
are always wanted and welcomed!

Please send submissions to: [newsletter@efctmn.org](mailto:newsletter@efctmn.org)

Deadline for the June 2023 submissions is  
Friday, June 9th.

# *Almost the Last Word*

## **Last Chance to View and Vote at the Green Acres iNaturalist Photography Exhibit**

**Now through May 25, 2023**



Photo by Win Goddard

Flower Mound Library 3030 Broadmoor Ln. Flower Mound, TX 75022  
(Visit <https://www.flower-mound.com/135/Library> for days and hours)



We know that YOU know a thing  
or two about native plants!

Please share your knowledge with our  
chapter by writing a brief article about a  
native plant that might be showing its  
glory at this time, and submitting it to  
[newsletter@efctmn.org](mailto:newsletter@efctmn.org).

Articles can be as short as 200 words or as long  
as 600 words, or more. And please include a  
photo or two of the plant.

Thank you!



# Almost the Last Word



## Naturalist News Needs Your Photos!



Please share your photographs of native plants and flowers, birds, insects, mammals, reptiles... anything that you would like to share & have published in the *Naturalist News*

Please send submissions to [newsletter@efctmn.org](mailto:newsletter@efctmn.org).

*We all want to see what you have seen!*

Thank you! Tammie Walters, Editor

# Who We Are



## Texas Master Naturalist—Elm Fork Chapter

<https://txmn.org/elmfork/>

### OFFICERS

President - Jerry Betty

Vice President - Kathy Webb

Treasurer - Ray Kreutzfeld

Secretary - Missy McCormick

### BOARD POSITIONS

Immediate Past President — Jan Deatherage

Member-at-Large — Janet Gershenfeld

### BOARD DIRECTORS

Membership - Sharon Betty

VMS - Mike Hatch

Initial Training - Elise Spain

Communications - Karen DeVinney

Volunteer Service Projects - Larry Duncan

Advanced Training Programs - David Jones

Outreach/Adult Education - Fran Witte

New Class Representative - Christine Wayles

### CHAPTER ADVISORS

AgriLife — Janet Laminack, Extension Agent

Texas Parks and Wildlife — TBD



### Our 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 for the State of Texas."*

### Our Vision

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

### 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.

### Board Meetings

The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m.

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.*

### Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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