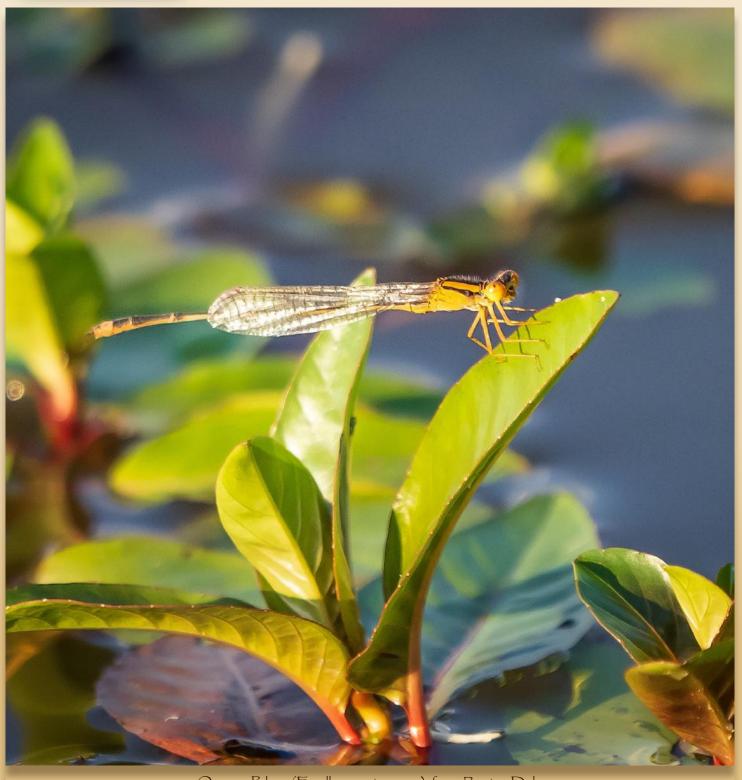


# Naturalist News

October 2023 Volume 23, Issue 10



Orange Bluet (Enallagma signatum), from Regina Dale



# Naturalist News



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South Mickory Creek, from Jonathan Reynolds

# What Happens Next

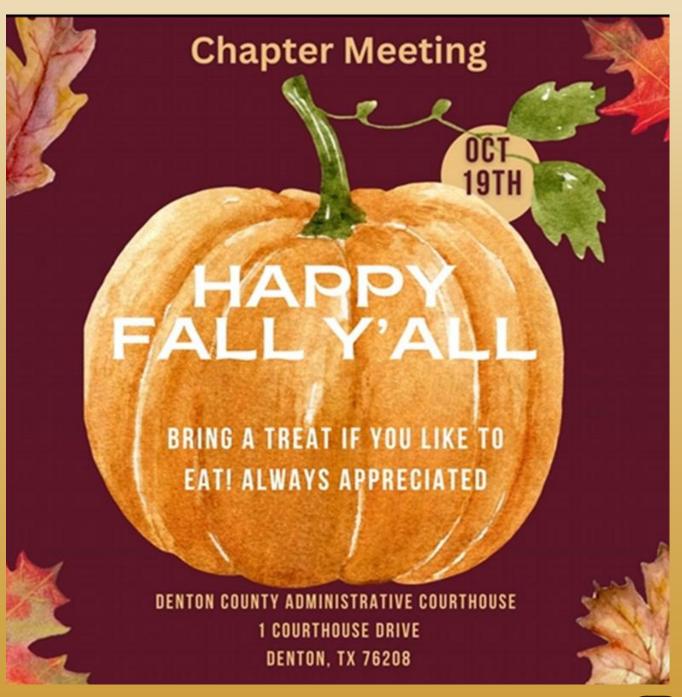
### Chapter Meeting and Presentation

Thursday, October 19th, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Denton County Administrative Courthouse, Third Floor, Room 2020

1 Courthouse Drive, Denton, TX 76208







## This Month's Meeting Presentation



#### Living in Harmony with America's Song Dog

By Karin and Roberto Saucedo

Coyotes are highly resilient creatures able to adapt to threats and acclimate themselves in almost every environment, including cities and suburbs. As a keystone carnivore, coyotes play a critical role helping to maintain healthy ecosystems and species diversity. This presentation will look at the current challenges coyotes face in a rapidly evolving human-centric landscape. We'll examine the coyotes' seasonal behaviors that often influence increased sightings and dispel some of the most common myths. In conclusion, we'll discuss proactive methods we can use to help avoid negative encounters with coyotes.





Karin Saucedo is a wildlife conservation photographer based in the Dallas area and she's always been especially passionate about felines and canids. She spends a lot of her time studying their behavior through observation and remotely through camera traps. Karin's images have been used to educate about coexisting with urban wildlife, to document wild canid field research and to create awareness about exotic animal ownership, breeding and exploitation. Most recently she's been published in the book to accompany the film, Deep in the Heart: A Texas Wildlife Story, by Ben Masters and also Wild DFW: Explore the Amazing Nature Around Dallas Fort Worth, by Amy Martin. Karin works with The Canid Project as their Texas Outreach Representative, The Gulf Coast Canine Project as a field research photographer, and she's been volunteering at In-Sync Exotics Wildlife Rescue for a little over 12 years. Karin serves on the Advisory Committee for Texas Native Cats, and is also a Partner Photographer for Panthera. Instagram: @karinsaucedo. Learn more at karinsaucedo.com

Roberto Saucedo has a background in creative marketing and has used that ability to hone skills in his passion for telling stories though wildlife and conservation photography. For the last seven years, he has documented coyote behavior throughout north Texas through observation, photography and camera traps. Together with his wife, Karin, Roberto serves on the Advisory Committee for Texas Native Cats. He also volunteers at In-Sync Exotics Wildlife Rescue.

Instagram: @rbtsaucedo. Learn more at robertosaucedo.com.

Karin & Roberto are both Texas Master Naturalists with the Blackland Prairie Chapter.

# What Happens Next

### Do you Remember??

Opening maple seeds and putting them on your nose?

Cracking open catalpa tree seed pods to use the seeds for money?

Breaking branches from Alley trees, using your hand to run down the stem, stripping the leaves to make whippers?

Finding cool stones to build, piling grass to create and stacking sticks for whatever?

Do you remember being outdoors and having fun???

This spring we will have hundreds of second graders visiting Clear Creek.

We would like to get the children outside and let them experience outdoor fun in nature.

We can do this by having a kids' plastic wading pool filled with "nature stuff". This would be pinecones, sweet gum balls, acorns, red yucca seed pods, etc. The kids would move the "stuff" into a pizza box for hands-on exploring and creating.



Example: Nature stuff in a wading pool



Filling the pizza box

So, we need LOTS of this "nature stuff", enough to put in six 4-foot wading pools. We also need cool rocks or stones, 2 inches or smaller. If anyone has an old 4-foot wading pool, we could use that even if it has holes and leaks.

So, the acorns are falling now. Please gather anything that we could use. Bring your findings to the next Master Naturalist Monthly Meeting, Thursday October 19 at 9:00 at the Denton County Administrative Courthouse.

Claire Kamego will be at a back table to take in your findings. Thank you.

# What Happens Next





# Elm Fork Chapter **25**<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration



Last chance to contribute to the 25th Anniversary Celebration Newsletters

We are extending the deadline for survey responses to **October 31, 2023**.

In case you have misplaced the previous two notices,

here is the link to the **Google form** 

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at <a href="mailto:Team25@efctmn.org">Team25@efctmn.org</a>

#### Team 25

Regina Dale, Jean McMeans, Marty Newman, Kere Post

## Awards and Recognition September 2023

## Recertifications

Class of 2009 Jane Duke Class of 2020 Edsel Harrell Marian Kester Class of 2007 Ray Kreutzfeld Class of 2014 Clarissa Molina Class of 2020 Renee Province Class of 2008 Patricia Reyes Class of 2021 Jon Reynolds Class of 2014 Clay Thurmond Class of 2016



## 250 Hour Milestone

Dan Lemons Class of 2022
Bev Walton Class of 2019



## 1500 Hour Milestone

Gale Bacon Class of 2018
Allen York Class of 2017



## 2500 Hour Milestone



## 3500 Hour Milestone

Marian Kester Class of 2007



## Field Notes in Focus



Eastern Bluebird (Sialia sialis), by Brian Lewis

## Inside Outside News

Volunteers Needed

### Volunteers are Still Needed for DISD School Days at Clear Creek!

Once again, we have an opportunity to impact the future of a 4th Grader!

Please join us all day!

Or

Lead a hike in the morning (9:45-11:45)
Help with the learning stations in the afternoon (11:45-1:45)

For more information and to view the calendar or sign up, click this link:

SIGN UP HERE

### **DFW Wildlife Coalition**

Looking for Volunteers

Volunteer for a 2 or 3 hour shift Once a week from your home

6 hours of Online Training

If interested or for more information Projects@efctmn.org

Cecily Pegues Betty Zajac





## Inside Outside News

Volunteers Needed



## The Volunteer Opportunities are endless!

So be sure to see Plan Your Week,
or go to our <u>Elm Fork Chapter Website</u>,
and click on the Calendar for more
Volunteer Service Projects!



# Inside Outside News Approved AT



#### **!SIGN UP TODAY!**

OCTOBER 19TH, 2:00 PM-5:00 PM OCTOBER 20TH, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

NPA: 200206 Lewisville Extending the Green - Roots for Wings

Demonstration Garden in Lewisville is finally happening. The 2500 sq ft pollinator garden will be located at the Lewisville Animal Shelter at 995 E Valley Ridge Rd, off Business 121.

There are two shifts on Friday, lunch will be provided, courtesy of LAS.

Parking will be across the street at the Railroad Park Parking Lot.

Volunteers on Thursday bring wheelbarrows, watering cans, gloves and shovels. Volunteers on Friday bring more wheelbarrows, more watering cans, more shovels, trowels, gloves, kneeling pad, garden shears. Large items can be kept behind a locked fence overnight - make sure your name is on all personal items.

Plus - take home a free new furry friend for every 10 plants you put in! Just kidding (kinda). Contact Mary Morrow through projects@efctmn.org.

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090D45AAAC2FA6F58-45082711-roots#/

# Inside Outside News Approved AT



October 6th-22ND EFC Mini Bioblitz		
THRIVE NATURE CENTER - WORKDAY AND MINI BLITZ	THURSDAY, OCT 12TH 9 AM-11 AM	
LAKE RAY ROBERTS -	SATURDAY, OCT 21ST, 1:30PM JOHNSON BRANCH	
LANTANA MONARCH GARDEN- WORKDAY AND MINI BLITZ	WEDNESDAY, OCT 18TH 9 AM-NOON	
GREEN ACRES	FRIDAY, OCT 20TH 10 AM-NOON	
CROSS TIMBERS TRAILHEAD	SATURDAY, OCT 21ST 10 AM-NOON	

AS MORE INFORMATION COMES IN, THE CALENDAR WILL BE UPDATED. PLEASE CHECK BEFORE HEADING OUT. FOR QUESTIONS, CONTACT MARY MORROW THROUGH THE MEMBERS AREA DIRECTORY OR AT <a href="mailto:projects@efctmn.org">projects@efctmn.org</a>.

# Inside Outside News Approved AT

**Texas Talks Presents:** 

The Expected and Unexpected
Archaeology of North Central Texas
By Dr. Alan Skinner

Wednesday, October 25th at 6:00 PM

Denton County Courthouse-on-the-Square Museum 110 West Hickory Street Denton, TX 76201

Join the Denton County Office of History and Culture for the Texas Talks Speaker Series!

The flat prairie and associated savannah forests of North Central Texas are dissected by a variety of rivers and creeks which prehistoric and historic settlers were drawn to and where they left behind buried and exposed evidence of their presence over more than ten thousand years. Of particular importance is the Aubrey Clovis site located near Lake Ray Roberts and excavated by Dr. Reid Ferring of UNT. Equally significant, but barely more than 125 years old, is the Redwine House site that was recorded during investigation of a water pipeline route on the north side of Farmersville. These two archaeological sites span the recorded history of the region and will be discussed along with numerous other historic and prehistoric sites that have been recorded or remain to be discovered in the prairies, maybe your backyard, anywhere in North Central Texas.

#### About the Speaker:

Dr. Alan Skinner has been doing archaeology in Texas and other parts of the Southwest for more than four decades, and is the owner of AR Consultants, Inc., an environmental consulting firm specializing in cultural resource management. He graduated from the University of New Mexico and received his PhD from Southern Methodist University. He has worked on prehistoric and historic sites throughout Texas, with a particular interest in prehistoric settlement patterns and lithic technology. He has directed five field schools for the Texas Archeological Society. He developed the archaeology merit badge for the Boy Scouts of America. He is currently working with private and public agencies, including numerous engineering companies, on wind farms, two lakes, water, sewer, and petroleum pipelines, roads, transmission lines, and landfills. He continues to publish in local, regional, and national journals.

#### Website:

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/texas-talks-dr-alan-skinner-north-texas-archaeology-tickets-722766753817

# Inside Outside News Approved AT

American Bird Conservancy presents a free webinar on

Rare Bird Alert: Conserving Habitat for Displaced Water Birds

October 25th at 3:00 PM

Register at:

https://act.abcbirds.org/a/webinar-displacedbirds? fbclid=lwAR2L6qT48tK3mhwyJObwun9wlSw8zVeulF7Dm9H76g664U 7VNVKFDpY9uBc

American Bird Conservancy Website: <a href="https://abcbirds.org">https://abcbirds.org</a>

Wild Ones presents a free webinar on

#### The Gardener's Guide to Prairie Plants

November 11th at 6:00 PM

Join us for an enlightening webinar featuring authors, Neil Diboll and Hilary Cox, as they present their latest book, "The Gardener's Guide to Prairie Plants." This comprehensive compendium is a treasure trove of knowledge for gardeners looking to incorporate native prairie plants into their landscapes. Neil and Hilary will delve into the making and application of this essential guide, sharing rich historical and ecological insights about prairie ecosystems, all while showcasing stunning images of prairie flora. Submit your questions! Because webinar host Doug Tallamy will be leading a Q&A at the end.

#### Register at:

https://wildones.org/webinar-diboll-cox-nov-2023/#DibollCox2023

# Inside Outside News Approved AT

Landowner Workshop & Prairie Tour October 27, 2023 9 am – 4 pm Dixon Water Foundation Josey Pavilion Decatur, TX



## **Workshop Topics**



Landowner Assistance Programs
Grassland Restoration
Conservation Easements
Holistic Grazing
Tour of Dixon Water Foundation's Leo Ranch





Registration is \$35 & includes lunch

https://texasprairie.org/landowner-workshop-prairie-tour/

## Inside Outside News

New <u>Advanced Training</u> opportunities being offered almost daily, too many to list in this newsletter! So be sure to check **Plan Your Week** and the <u>Elm Fork Chapter Website</u> and Calendar for MORE!



# Quick Tips From Our Webmaster



Gale Bacon

Do You Want to Share
What You Know and
What You Do?

### Speakers Bureau – sign up to **Be A Speaker!**

We routinely receive requests for **guest speakers** to **educate the public** about our natural world and the beneficial use of our natural resources.

Share your expertise!

If you're passionate about a specific subject and interested in educating the public, visit the Members Area of the website at <a href="https://txmn.org/elmfork/">https://txmn.org/elmfork/</a> members-area/be-a-speaker/ to sign-up.



#### Speaker topics include, but are not limited to:

- Backyard Wildlife Habitats
- · Bees, Butterflies
- · Birds/Birding
- · Ecology of North Central Texas
- Entomology
- Native Plants
- Trees
- Water Conservation
- And many more...

# Projects in the Community

#### Cornell Lab of Ornithology Project Feeder Watch 2023-2024 Starts Soon!



Project Feeder Watch is a citizen science project where participants count birds that visit your bird feeders or bird attracting plantings or water features in your yard or a location that you can visit and count birds at two consecutive days each week. Join now for the 2023-24 FeederWatch season! This year the Cornell Lab 2023-2024 Project FeederWatch season begins on Wednesday, November 1, 2023 and runs through April 30, 2024. Cornell Lab is shipping research kits to new participants soon. Participation in this project is approved for service hours by our Chapter. Project Number P-080214.

New this year, you can enter data on Mammals that visit your site! The Mammal List can be used to report all mammals that

you observed in your count site during your count. Here you will be able to tally domesticated mammals like cats and dogs, small-size mammals like squirrels and chipmunks, medium -sized mammals like opossums and raccoons, and large mammals such as bears or deer. If you observe something not on the list, just write it in the last option of "other."

#### All you need to do to participate is:

SIGN UP ONLINE at <a href="https://feederwatch.org">https://feederwatch.org</a>. CLICK JOIN and then click for new participants or to renew. Renewing? Your FeederWatch I.D. number remains the same number each year.

OR CALL 1-(800)-843-BIRD (2473), Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm ET for more information or join by phone. They do accept credit cards. There is a participation fee of \$18 for non-members (\$15 if you are a Cornell Lab member) you pay at the time you join Project Feeder Watch. Online be sure you sign up for USA (not Canada).

New participants are sent a Research Kit with complete instructions for participating, as well as a bird identification poster, calendar, and more. You provide the bird attracting location or feeder(s) and seed. Each fall participants receive a year-end report, *Winter Bird Highlights*. Participants also receive access to the digital version of *Living Bird*, the Cornell Lab's award-winning, quarterly magazine. You can do all data entry paperless, but the starter kit is very helpful. THIS YEAR you can also **Download** the **Project Feeder Watch App** and enter data <a href="https://feederwatch.org/about/feederwatch-app/">https://feederwatch.org/about/feederwatch-app/</a> Paper forms are also available on the website at <a href="https://feederwatch.org">https://feederwatch.org</a>.

Continued on next page



## Project Feeder Watch (Cont.)



When you register with Cornell Lab, you can choose to enter your hours and observations by paper or go paperless. Going paperless, be sure to sign up for the electronic newsletter. You will receive a Project Feeder Watch number that you will use to set up your location and submit data. If you participated last year, you use the same Project Feeder Watch number to register and enter data this year. If your feeder locations have changed be sure to update your count location (s). You will also need to keep track of your count & data logging time separately and submit it for your service hours on this project on VMS.

This is a great project for anyone interested in birds. Lots of links and helpful information online.

If you have temporary health or mobility issues, this is a great project to participate in to get your service hours and retain active member status.

## REMEMBER, PROJECT FEEDER WATCH BEGINS NOVEMBER 1ST, SO THE TIME TO SIGN UP IS NOW!

QUESTIONS? Visit <a href="http://feederwatch.org">http://feederwatch.org</a> or contact me for additional information.

You can contact me by email through the Members Only Directory or through projects@efctmn.org

Karen Mangum, Project Manager,
EFCMN Cornell Lab Project Feeder Watch Project Number P-080214







## Nature's Story

By Marilyn Blanton

Curiosity and imagination lead to fascinating destinations

Observation and learning are worthy of celebration

Discovery shows us what things are and meant to be Opening our minds and warming our hearts to what we see

Wonder at the beauty of a butterfly Study the shapes of clouds in the sky

Marvel at the potential of a plant's seeds Ponder why some plants are called weeds

Enjoy the song the small bird sings

Admire the pattern in the dragonfly's wings

Listen to the buzz of little bees

Be ever grateful for sheltering trees

Watch the squirrels leap from branch to branch
Feel the breeze that makes the tree's leaves dance

Look for mushrooms after a rain shower

Explore a path
through a woods for hours

Experience the surprise of finding a hidden bird's nest Sit on an old stump to watch, listen, think and rest











Appreciate how lovely a subtle moth can be Touch the furrowed, rough bark of a tree

Study the genius of a feather Be in awe of stormy weather

Delight in the wildflowers you discover Smile at a lizard scurrying for cover

Follow the trail of ants going about their day Watch a caterpillar on a leaf munching away

Learn from the patience of a spider Loose your cares and make your heart lighter

Embrace the changing of every season Knowing that everything happens for a reason

Be inspired by the sunset's glory Learn and share nature's story



All photographs by Marilyn Blanton



## Features

## As the Crow Flies By Wanda Odum

Researchers have concluded that while all the lead crows could shout "cah" not a single one could shout "truck"!



Notwithstanding this conclusion, I ran across an article the other day entitled "Crows Are Smarter than We Thought." I am sure you as a Master Naturalist already know that crows are very intelligent. Many studies depict them performing unbelievable feats. There's a familiar one that shows a crow faced with the task of retrieving a morsel suspended in a small amount of water in a narrow-necked glass. After several failed attempts, the clever crow solved its dilemma by dropping stones into the glass making the water level rise until the piece floated to the top and was snatched up by the crow.

Since this is Halloween month, I thought an article about crows would be apropos. It seems like many centuries ago, before I started school, that we lived on a farm in sandy, bare west Texas. One of my earliest memories of my mother is her "flying" out the door with apron flapping shouting "shoooo" to scare the crows out of her precious garden. It was so natural to my brother and I when she did this, we didn't blink an eye. However, before long we would see that very flock perched upon the scarecrow my dad had built for her garden. Taunting her maybe?

(Sidenote: My brother and I always helped to dress the scarecrow so it was big decision time from the "ragbag" that produced plenty of giggles. We were country kids after all, so it took very little to entertain us!)

Crows are of the corvid family which includes crows, ravens, jays and magpies, so I presume they all possess a degree of the type of intelligence exhibited by crows. In 2020 a paper was published by Andreas Neider of the University of Germany. He led a team of scientists who found evidence that suggests crows not only are among the most intelligent of animals but are also self-aware and may even be conscious of what they are doing. They have been observed using tools and seemingly "sizing up" the situation like dropping nuts on the road so that passing cars would crack them. Dr. Neider stated that one time he was at a train station and watched a pair of crows team up at a water fountain. One would push the button with its beak while the other drank. They would then reverse positions.

Crows are omnivorous and eat whatever is available—insects, spiders, snails, fish, snakes, eggs, cultivated fruits, nuts, and vegetables. They have been known to steal eggs and chicks from other bird nests. One big concern here is the impact on the populations of song birds. They may also steal shiny objects such as jewelry from people. Further, crows are nature's pest control and garbage collectors as they scavenge for dead animals and garbage.

Outside of the breeding season, they may travel as far as 40 miles each day from evening roost sites to daytime feeding areas. They usually post "sentries" to alert the feeding birds of danger.

Crows prefer to build nests in tall trees but when those are unavailable, they may build in hedgerows or shrubbery. In urban areas it may be on window ledges or even sides of a building. Hawks and crows reuse nests, and sometimes animals such as raccoons and tree squirrels use them for a summer napping platform - better than lying on the beach?

### As the Crow Flies (cont.)

Both crow sexes build the nest between mid-March and as late as mid-July where the female incubates four or five eggs for 18 days. The chicks are out of the nest at around four weeks after hatching but continue to be fed by the adults for another 30 days. Mortality in the first year is about 50 percent but adults live six to ten years.

To the farmer they are the scourge of the earth because they certainly can strip the fields of crops (not to mention they brazenly tormented the poor scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz)!

They are sometimes referred to as "trash birds" because of their loud noises and other troublesome, annoying behaviors although the American Crow is not a scavenger specialist, and carrion is only a very small part of its diet. As obnoxious as they can be, we cannot dismiss them outright -- they do have their place among nature.

With such intelligence, why are crows so maligned? I think their intelligence works both for and against them. Folklore has a long history of portraying crows as deceitful, devious, thieves, harbingers of death and just plain bad luck. "Never more quoth the raven" in Edgar Allen Poe's well-known poem "The Raven".

What does "as the crow flies" mean? Although a crow doesn't always fly in a straight line, they do take the most direct route to food! Pretty smart, huh?

#### Sources:

The cottonwoodpost.net

https://wdfw.wa.gov

Bing.com

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/air-space-magazine/crows-are-even-smarter-we-thought-180976970/
And, Wanda's memory bank to which there is no hyperlink; therefore, no fact checking.



## Features

#### Rain Lilies

#### From Becky Bertoni

These rain lilies come up in the spring and/or fall after rain at Green Acres, in the lower, wetter spots. We had rain on Tuesday, September 19th in the evening, and by Friday, September 22nd, the stalks were up out of the ground, and then on Sunday, September 24th, many rain lilies were blooming.





Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center call this perennial plant Cooperia.drummondii:

https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\_plant=codr2

There is some ID discussion on iNaturalist between Brazos, which for years I have thought these are at Green Acres, and Drummond's:

https://www.inaturalist.org/posts/60955-notes-on-identifying -white-rain-lilies-in-texas

From joshea\_tx on iNaturalist, commenting on arnanthescout's photos and posts:

"To clarify for other users, Z. drummondii is the flower on the right in the first two photos and on the top in the third photo. Z. drummondii has a shorter floral tube with the anthers held inside the floral tube, broader glaucous leaves held less erect, and primarily blooms in Spring, while Z. chlorosolen has a longer floral tube with with anthers protruding outside the floral tube, greener narrower leaves held more erect, and primarily blooms in Fall." joshua\_tx:

Zephyranthes chlorosolen Drummond's Rain Lily https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/149740100

Zephyranthes drummondii Brazos Rain-Lily <a href="https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/90107872">https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/90107872</a>

Photos by Becky Bertoni: Rain Lily (top right), Brazos Rain-Lily Field (top left), Brazos Rain-Lily (left)

## **Features**



### What are YOU Watching?

#### By Sue Yost class of 2017

Tv viewing has changed dramatically. Way back when we had only 3 channels. If you were lucky maybe 4-5 channels. We are now offered 100's of channels. How many times do you channel surf and can find nothing to watch? We also have choices of multiple pay streaming services. But again, nothing to watch particularly programming for us "nature lovers". Very limited for sure!

One channel I love for their nature-oriented programming is our local PBS station KERA. Check out this list! I have my TIVO programmed to record a number of these!

- · America Outdoors with Baratunde Thurston
- · Conscious Living
- Family Plot, Gardening in the Mid-South
- ·Native America
- · Nature
- · Spy in the Wild
- ·Ken Burns American Buffalo
- . This American Land

- · America's Heartland
- · Evolution Earth
- · Garden Smart
- ·P· Allen Smith Garden Home
- · Spy in the Ocean
- · Texas Parks and Wildlife
- · The Green Planet
- · Central Texas Gardener

And if there is a show you missed airing live, you can usually watch it online "Nature" is my most watched/recorded show! The season starts soon!

#### https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/

And if you are into organic, healthy eating there are programs for that too!



BUT...don't forget the children's programming! Many kids I meet at LLELA mention nature programs on PBS. Check out some of these fun ones!

- · Elinor Wonders Why? · Wild Kratts
- ·Molly Denali
- ·Nature Cat
- •Dora & Diego
  - · Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood

Next time you say, "there's nothing on TV" check your local PBS programming. And yes, PBS has a streaming service for those of you living in the 21st century. Me? Not so much. I am totally old school!!

Saturday mornings on local channels also have some nature-oriented programming to discover. Keep watching!

## Tweet of the Month

By Sue Yost, class of 2017

# Ruby-Crowned Kinglet (Regulus calendula)

What was that? There it goes again. Hold still! I see it! Where did it go? There is it is again! I'm getting dizzy! Flit, hop, flight, twitch, constantly on the move. Who is this busy bird?

That teeny tiny bird measuring only 4 ½ inches is the Ruby-Crowned Kinglet. It is a champion at gleaning insects from leaves, branches, and various foliage.

It nests in the spruce-fir forests of Alaska and Canada and along mountainous regions of the United States and Canada. They build a nest in a well-concealed area with a hanging cup nest suspended from a conifer branch and may lay as many as twelve eggs. It has the largest clutch of any North American passerine for its size.

It has gray-green upperparts and olivebuff underparts. It has two white wing bars and a broken white eye ring. The wing bar on the greater secondary coverts (closer to the wingtip) is wider and is next to a dark band. The kinglet has a relatively plain face and head, although the male has a scarlet-red crown patch, which is usually concealed by the surrounding feathers. The crown patch is visible when the bird is agitated, or its head feathers are wet. Females are identical to males (except for the crown). Immature birds are like adult females, since young males lack a crown patch.

Because they are insect eaters, Ruby-Crowned Kinglets must move to the food sources available in Texas in the winter. They are arriving from the north as you read this. The Texas Audubon Christmas Bird counts tally 100's of them.

Continued on next page





## Ruby-Crowned Kinglets (Cont.)



To help attract them to your habitat do not use pesticides [As MN you should already be practicing this!] Provide a nice fresh water feature. They are not normally seed eaters as they are not equipped with the correct bill to crack open a seed hull, but they can manipulate a hulled seed like sunflower chips. Another good winter food source is suet or bark butter which they can easily hang from with no landing perches being the little acrobats they are!

Another closely related kinglet you might also see this winter is the Golden-Crowned Kinglet. It is another tiny bird that gleans insects from foliage. Its bright golden crown is always visible.

Carefully watch for these tiny bundles of nervous energy bouncing through the trees and flicking their wings repeatedly [diagnostic trait] as they chatter loudly in a scolding voice, jo-dit ji-dit ji-dit!

There it is! Hold still! I see it! Nope, it's gone. There is it is again! Flit. Hop. Twitch. Twitter! GOT IT!

# From Fieldnotes

#### IN UNLOOKED FOR SPACES

By Missy Adair

I picked up a snake once at Mineral Wells State Park. In a small bog in Florida, I stroked carnivorous plants. At a large pond near in a park I saw migrating ducks every year. All these places were out of the way or small or both. But they enriched me in the colored feathers, the curling deadliness, the smooth scales of my experiences.

Sometimes I wonder if we forget that the familiar park, the roadside ditch, the unknown state park have wonderful things to offer? We like to think of mountains, expanses of prairie, deserts, heck, the Serengeti as places of wonder, science, nature. If you are my age you think of Marlin Perkins of Wild Kingdom as the guy who knew where to go to find wildlife and wild places. Nowadays there is the National Geographic Channel.

Yet you know perfectly well where to find wildlife and wild places. Any barn is a wild place. There are wasps paralyzing spiders, birds building nests, skunks sleeping in odd corners of hay. Many a garden is a place wild with flowers, butterflies, and if there is standing water, a frog or toad.

"These are familiar!" I hear the moans. Really? So familiar you know the sound of that frog, the type of each butterfly, the feel of each petal type? Have you explored thoroughly with not just your eyes but your senses of touch and hearing? With your heart?

If you have: good for you! Now drive to the nearest ditch and search it for turtles, native plants, tracks of animals. And later, yourself for ticks!

If you feel you can only enjoy nature when you are far away from people, much of your life will be frustrating. Those pesky humans are everywhere! Luxuriate in the human-free places as much as you can. But for everyday, why not check out the nearest pond in the park?

## This Month's Contributors



Missy Adair



Gale Bacon



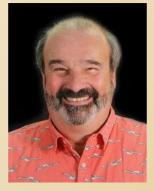
Becky Bertoni



Marilyn Blanton



Regina Dale



**Dave Jones** 



Claire Kamego



**Brian Lewis** 



Karen Mangum



Mary Morrow



Wanda Odum



Jonathan Reynolds



Susan Warren



Sue Yost



Betty Zajac



Tammie Walters, Editor

## Thank you all!

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

Please send submissions to: <a href="mailto:newsletter@efctmn.org">newsletter@efctmn.org</a>

Please send submissions to: <a href="mailto:newsletter@efctmn.org">newsletter@efctmn.org</a>

Deadline for the November 2023 submissions is Wednesday, November 8th.

## Almost the Last Word

## Naturalist News Needs Your Input!



Please share your projects!

We would all love to read about and see what you are working on! All it takes is one small paragraph and a few photos!

Send them to <a href="mailto:newsletter@efctmn.org">newsletter@efctmn.org</a>.

We all want to know what you have done!

Thank you! Tammie Walters, Editor

#### Funny Finds from Sue Yost!







Texas Master Naturalist—Elm Fork Chapter <a href="https://txmn.org/elmfork/">https://txmn.org/elmfork/</a>

#### **OFFICERS**

President - Kathy Webb

Acting Vice President - Bryan Lewis

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 – Zach Davis

Texas Parks and Wildlife – Mindy Shumate





#### 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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