



APRIL 2018

right here at home -- in the Hill Country

CHAPTER NEWS

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A Big Month for Education Projects – A
spotlight on Project 809 - Wimberley Outdoor
Educators and highlights of 3 education
events in March. See Page 4

CHAPTER MEETINGS

April 26, 2018
Dr. Steven Howard
“Finding Nature in Archaeology”
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
101 West Spoke Hill Road in Wimberley
Dinner @6:30 Presentation @7:00

MN BOARD MEETING

When: Thu, April 12, 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Where: Agri-Life Extension office
200 Stillwater Drive Wimberley, TX 78676.

NEWSLETTER: Check out Betsy’s latest
feature article: *Of Hawks and Hummingbirds-A
Natural Ecology, See Page 2*

Advanced Training Calendar – Click the
link below for more opportunities
<http://haysmn.org/calendar-at.html>

Projects Calendar – Click the link below.
<http://www.haysmn.org/calendar-projects.html>



Ladderback Woodpecker - Betsy Cross



Of Hawks and Hummingbirds – A Natural Ecology

Article & Photos by Betsy Cross

I should begin by saying I am not a bird expert. Rather, I can say without hesitation, I am a bird lover! My deepest gratitude goes to all of you who constantly enrich my understanding of birds and bird behavior with your photos and postings. Recently, Meagan posted this article to the Forum: <http://www.audubon.org/news/why-hawk-hummingbirds-best-friend>, and it inspired me to share my personal experience of hawk and hummingbird ecology.

When I drove up to my home for the first time three years ago, my attention was immediately drawn to the call of a hawk in an oak tree above the house. It was a stunning welcome to the new neighborhood. I was pleased. I knew I had chosen well! Then in March of the following year, I noticed a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks tending a large nest about 30 feet up in an oak tree beside my house. On several occasions I observed one youngster in the nest.

My last sighting of this curious hawk fledgling was on June 4, 2016.

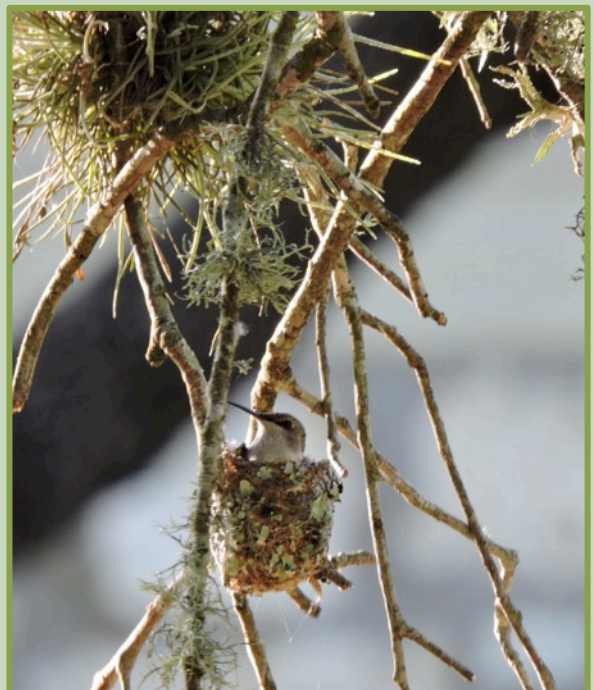


The hawks did not return to the tree in my yard in 2017, though I often heard them soaring overhead. Instead, in early April, I watched as a hummingbird probed ball moss on a tree adjacent to the hawk nest.

Several days later, I was ecstatic to see the little gray hummer sitting in a tiny, lichen-covered nest attached to a brittle twig. I

had never seen a hummingbird nest, and at first glance, the nest and the ball moss were almost indistinguishable.

Since I do not keep hummingbird feeders, I was quite surprised at this development. I searched the websites and soon found an article that piqued my interest. Researchers Greeney and Wethington noted that Black-chinned Hummingbird





populations cluster around raptor nests. Because hummingbirds are small and difficult to catch, the raptors hunt larger prey and at the same time drive hummingbird predators away.

The hawks become natural guardians for the little hummers! So, I deduced that the Black-chinned female in my yard had intentionally placed her nest close to the hawk nest. She successfully fledged two babies, the last one leaving the nest on Mother's Day 2017. On May 18th, a second nest in another part of my yard produced two more hummers.



I have not seen the hummingbirds yet this spring, though I have heard them. Soon they will be seeking a safe nesting site, and I will be watching intently for another chance to witness their amazingly beautiful life cycle.

But at this writing I hear the Red-shouldered Hawks nearby. Their murmuring differs from the more familiar call of a soaring raptor. I pause from my typing, and for the first time, I see them perched in a tree. Somehow, I contain my excitement long enough to take a few photographs.

They are building a new nest just outside my home office door!





A MESSAGE FROM YOUR NEWSLETTER TEAM



BETSY & TOM

Thanks to Eva Frost for the photo



A BIG MONTH FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROJECTS

Introduction by Tom Jones

March was a great month to highlight HCMN supported outdoor education activities. Lets start with Project 809 – Wimberley Outdoor Educators (WOE). For a decade, WOE has supported local schools and students with education events. Jackie Mattice, who leads WOE, provided the following history and overview of her project. On March 20th, WOE hosted over 160 Jacob’s Well Elementary 3rd grade students for a field trip to the Patsy Glenn Refuge. Two days later on March 22, Jacob’s Well Natural Area staff, supported by HCMNs, invited 170 Kyle Elementary School 4th grade students to a field trip to learn about geology, water resources and Jacob’s Well spring. Earlier in March, HCMNs attended a 6-hour aquaticWILD workshop to sharpen their outdoor education skills, receiving Advanced Training credit. The Newsletter Team applauds and highlights all of the education activities.

ARTICLE BY JACKIE MATTICE

Project 809- Wimberley Outdoor Educators

“Expose every child in the WISD to naturalist concepts and practices at the natural outdoor locations in the Wimberley area.” ❖40 Active Members ❖

My interest in Outdoor Education began in the 70’s when I spent a year in Palo Alto, California and participated in an outdoor education volunteer program. I knew it was something I wanted to do during retirement. Hays County Master Naturalists program provided the knowledge of the local environment and appropriate support framework.

HISTORY

- 2006 - the Wimberley Birding Society took 3rd graders to the Patsy Glenn bird refuge behind the community center for the first time. This continues to be a Wimberley Outdoor Educator annual program, usually held in March.
- 2008 - the Biology students at the high school took the first field trip along the Cypress Creek Trail. This continues to be an annual field trip, usually scheduled for February.
- The students at Danforth Middle School visit Blue Hole every year the week before Thanksgiving.
- 2011 - we started a 2nd grade plants field trip at the Jacob’s Well Elementary Outdoor Education Facility. This event is scheduled in October.
- 2016 - the first year 5th graders had a January water fair at their school. 2016 was also the first year we had a field trip for the high school Environmental Science class which is comprised of Juniors and Seniors.



Jackie Mattice-2018
sharing information at the
Patsy Glen Refuge

OUR PROGRAM - During the field trips, students circulate through science-oriented activities to enhance their understanding of the environment. We align the material in the stations with the science Texas Essential Knowledge and skills (TEKS) for the grade involved in the field trip.

Who can join the Wimberley Outdoor Educators? Any adult may join. We have even had a high school student guide. The main requirement is an interest in Outdoor Education, a willingness to learn the material for your station, the commitment to come to the rehearsal (for the individual field trip) and the stamina to be outdoors all day with the students on the field trip day. We will train you and initially you will help the leaders guide the students. In 2016 we had two fall field trips and four in the spring.

HOW DO I SIGN UP? Contact Jackie Mattice, Project Coordinator. texasmaticc@gmail.com

AFFILIATIONS: Hays County Master Naturalists, Keep Wimberley Beautiful, Texas Stream Team



WIMBERLEY OUTDOOR EDUCATORS JACOB'S WELL ELEMENTARY 3rd GRADE FIELD TRIP PATSY GLENN REFUGE

Article & Photos by Tom Jones



On March 20th, the Wimberley Outdoor Educator Team participated in the Jacob's Well Elementary School 3rd Grade field trip to the Patsy Glenn Refuge. The refuge is located on what was considered 1.8 acres of surplus property behind the Wimberley Community Center and has become a haven for wildlife and native plants. The MN team led by Jackie Mattice hosted over 160 students throughout the day using a rotation of four education stations. This was a fun day for students, teachers and Master Naturalists.



Presentation on bird nests



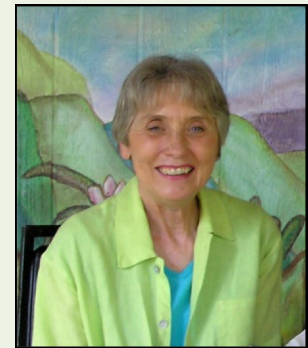
PATSY GLENN REFUGE

Wimberley, Texas

Patsy Glenn's vision to create a nature refuge and bird sanctuary in the heart of Wimberley became a reality near the end of her life. The Patsy Glenn Refuge is a place where children and adults alike can enjoy the natural beauty of the area and learn to respect and love birds, flowers, and other native wonders. The Wimberley Birding Society named Patsy Glenn the first recipient of the Golden Eagle Award in 2002. The project once named "The Refuge" was renamed "The Patsy Glenn Refuge" in honor of her commitment and dedication.



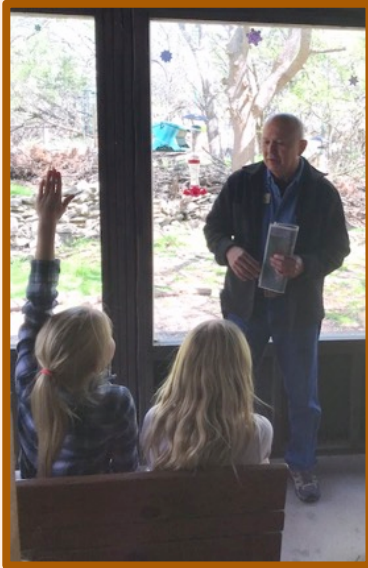
Explaining the Chimney Swift Tower at the Kiosk



Patsy Sue Glenn



IDENTIFY BIRDS IN THE BIRD BLIND



Bird Blind Ahead

- Please approach quietly.
- Upon entering, be seated and watch the feeders and water feature for birds.
- Upon leaving please date and sign the guest book. Share your bird sightings.



SPOT BIRDS USING BINOCULARS



BIRD HABITATS & ADAPTATIONS



FACILITATORS

- Beth Barham
- Dick Barham
- Christine Byrne
- Connie Boltz
- Irene Bonde
- Deb Bradshaw
- Gracebelle Broussard
- Keith Collignon
- Becky Denton
- Susan Evans
- Paula Grover
- Tom Jones
- Linda Lang
- Jackie Mattice
- Hiram Perez
- Lynne Schaffer
- Mel Seib
- Laura Steffy



JACOB'S WELL NATURAL AREA- KYLE ELEMENTARY FIELD

On March 22, 170 students from Kyle Elementary 4th Grade took a field trip to Jacob's Well Natural Area. Hays County staff teamed up with Hays County and Capital Area Master Naturalists, Guadalupe Blanco River Authority, and other volunteers to educate the students using four learning stations located within the Natural Area. The students learned about the natural world by hunting for fossils, hiking on nature trails, participating in a science game, and viewing Jacob's Well. Their field trip ended with a picnic lunch and burning some energy on the new tree swings.



Grace Belle Broussard, Hiram Perez, and Suzanne Davis preparing students for a nature hike.



Irene Bonde and Katherine Sturdivant teach the students about geology.



Lynne Edelson leading students on geology hunt.



Students hunting for fossils in dry Cypress Creek bed.



Aquatic WILD EDUCATOR TRAINING WORKSHOP March 16, 2018 –Jacob’s Well Natural Area-Wimberley, TX

Project Wild Facilitator: Melinda Seib, HCMN
Co-Facilitators: Liz McDaniel, Heart of Texas MN, Michael Jones, Water Resource Specialist - The Meadows Center

The Educator training workshop was attended by 21 participants, including teams from area MN Chapters and staff from Jacob’s Well, Blue Hole, the Meadows Center and Wimberley Valley Watershed Assoc. The workshop was designed to challenge your ecological knowledge of the natural world around you while having fun participating in training activities. The primary goal was to learn how to educate youth about wildlife using symbiotic relationships between organisms, habitat, carrying capacity, limiting factors, predator-prey relationships, biodiversity and water conservation. All of this within a watershed. It was a WILD day of training!

Aquatic WILD

Water in all its forms is one of the most dramatic of today's arenas in which informed, responsible, and constructive actions are needed. Aquatic WILD uses the simple, successful format of Project WILD activities and professional training workshops but with an emphasis on aquatic wildlife and aquatic ecology.



Migration Headache Outdoor Exercise



Watershed tour by Michael Jones

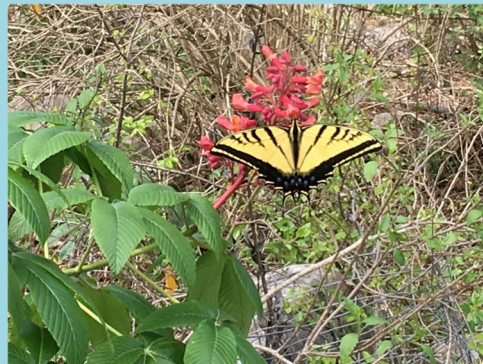
Group photo of Participants learning about the Cypress Creek watershed at Jacobs Well



Classroom training



SPRING FLOWERS *Member Photos*



The top two are Scarlet Buckeye. Butterflies and hummers love their flowers. This bush is always the first of all the Scarlet Buckeyes I have. Some do not even have their leaves open yet. You can see Scarlet Buckeye at Spring Lake Natural area in San Marcos and the yellow variation of the Scarlet Buckeye can be found at Panther Canyon Nature Trail at Landa Park in New Braunfels. The butterfly in the second photo is large and I saw one in the top of a cedar at Spring Lake Natural area yesterday morning while it was still cool. I think it was warming in the sun. It is an Eastern Tiger swallowtail (thanks also to Carol G for identifying!) and apparently this is a female. - *Donna Browning* -



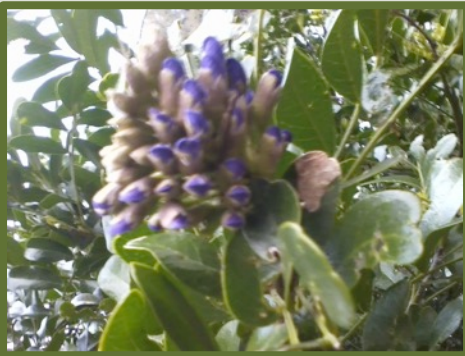
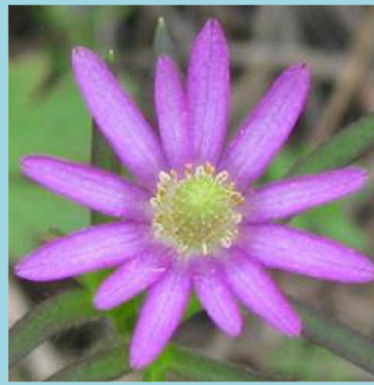
The photo is the first of my Rusty Blackhaw Viburnum that is just starting to bloom. It will look lovely in the fall when those flowers become dark blue-purple berries and around Thanksgiving or a bit later the leaves turn brilliant red. You can find these along fence rows, including along the San Marcos end of Fulton Ranch Rd. - *Donna Browning*



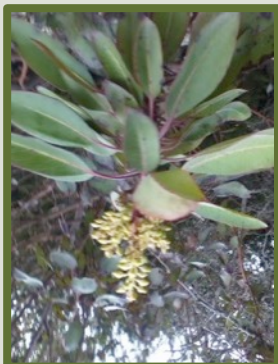
Pipevine Swallowtail
Betsy Cross



Below are photos of one of our earliest, native spring bloomers, the iconic Windflower (also Tenpetal Thimbleflower). It has been blooming now for about 2 weeks depending on location. It is a low growing species, from ca. 4 to 12 inches tall. The flowers are ca. 1.5 – 2 inches in diameter with numerous petals that vary in color from white to purple to blue. The compound leaves are mostly confined to the base of the stem (basal rosette) with one whorl of highly dissected leaves near mid-stem. The seeds are covered by cottony hairs providing buoyancy for dispersal by wind. It is a member of the Buttercup Family, Ranunculaceae, and its scientific name is *Anemone berlandieri* (formerly *A. heterophylla*). The plants are short-lived perennials and can be grown easily from seeds. – Thomas Watson



Mountain Laurel-Anne Child



Madrone-Anne Child

Agarita

Agarita and its close cousin Texas Barberry are under appreciated “pollinator plants” that bloom and set nutritious fruit in early spring before many other plants have awakened from their winter slumber. Many insects visit them for their nectar: bees, butterflies, etc.. Even early migrating humming birds sometimes take a sip from their tiny flowers. Birds and mammals enjoy their tasty fruit.

Agarita and Barberry along with Texas Persimmon typically grow under the canopy of larger trees providing flight shelter for birds, mammals, etc. This understory also benefits the larger tree by shading the root systems and providing mulch for enriching the soil. And of course the wildlife that use the shelter of these understory shrubs leave their deposits too. The little red berries are tart-sweet; delicious! And the stems and roots contain a water-soluble, yellow pigment that can be used for a dye.



Credits: Talon Dancer, Thomas Watson



2018 Great Backyard Bird Count Results

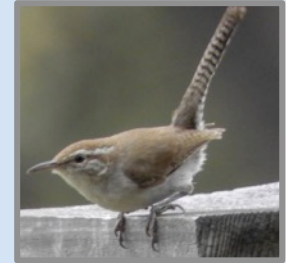
By Marshall Iliff, Pat Leonard, and Kerrie Wilcox

GBBC Link: <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/all-summaries/2018-gbbc-summary/>

Another edition of the Great Backyard Bird Count is in the books, with a great showing for the birds and the bird watchers who joined in from around the world.

- Checklist and species totals for the 2018 GBBC have set two new records:
- Species: **6,310** (2017 species total: 5,940)
- Complete Checklists: **176,905** (2017 checklists: 173,826)
- Estimated Participants: **192,456** (2017 participant estimate: 214,018)

Bewick's Wren-Betsy Cross



"I didn't make Top 10??"

Top 10 most frequently reported species (Data Totals as of 3/14/18)		Top 10 most numerous species (Data Totals as of 3/5/18)	
Species	Number of Checklists reporting this Species	Species	Number of Individuals
Northern Cardinal	48,956	Snow Goose	4,957,116
Dark-eyed Junco	43,742	Canada Goose	1,626,585
Mourning Dove	43,412	Common Murre	1,365,546
American Crow	40,959	Red-winged Blackbird	778,311
Blue Jay	37,549	Ring-billed Gull	743,932
Downy Woodpecker	36,495	Mallard	742,408
House Finch	34,766	European Starling	701,381
Black-capped Chickadee	31,942	American Coot	461,082
House Sparrow	31,884	Common Grackle	382,268
European Starling	28,683	Herring Gull	333,047

Photo by Betsy Cross

Top 10 states by checklists submitted (Data Totals as of 3/14/18)		
State	Number of Species	Number of Checklists
California	373	8,530
Texas	361	6,785
New York	171	6,520
Pennsylvania	145	5,953
Florida	290	5,612
Virginia	182	5,073
Michigan	131	3,890
Washington	221	3,866
North Carolina	215	3,862
Ohio	133	3,786



I'M #1!



DRIPPING SPRINGS BIRDING CLUB PRESENTS

Our very FIRST birding hike! Join local avian biologists as they explore beautiful Charro Ranch Park. Spring is the perfect time to enjoy both resident and migrant birds!

*April 16th, 8am

*All levels of birders are welcome

*Bring binoculars (we will have some to share)

*Limited to 30 people

*Weather permitting

****RSVP to Dripping Springs Birding Club FaceBook events page or wbudstx@gmail.com****

**CHARRO RANCH PARK
22690 WEST FM 150
DSTX, 78620**

In partnership with





CYPRESS CREEK WATERSHED WALK JACOBS WELL NATURAL AREA

WATERSHED WALK SCHEDULE

SAT. APRIL 28 & SAT MAY 19

Contact Tom Jones to Sign Up

<mailto:wimberleytom@gmail.com>

AT Approved



LINK TO WESTCAVE

<https://westcave.org/>

LINK TO EVENTS & BIRD WALKS

<https://westcave.org/events>

VOLUNTEER AT WESTCAVE PRESERVE

<https://westcave.org/get-involved/volunteer>

NATIVE PLANT SALE

NOW WITH...



MILKWEED



VEGGIES



HERBS

Where: San Marcos Discovery Center

When: April 7th, 9 am - 4 pm

What: Talk with knowledgeable staff about what will work well for you and find the perfect plant for your central Texas landscape! They will have trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses, milkweed, veggies, and herbs.

Call [512.393.8400](tel:512.393.8400) for more information.



NATIVE PLANT SALE

Where: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas

When: April 14th, 9 am - 5 pm

What: Featuring hundreds of species of Texas native plants, as well as seeds.

Link for more info. <https://txstate.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1a75c397ce97f21a4a4d5da50&id=aca4ba1f87&e=7d8c64b917>



33RD GREAT TEXAS RIVER CLEAN-UP

by Lance Jones

We had a good turn-out at the 33rd Great Texas River Clean-up with Dick McBride, Stephen Ramirez, Ken Dees, JoEllen Korthals, Cindy Hobson, and Lance Jones among the 270 volunteers at one property along the San Marcos River. An estimated 2,000 people participated at 11 different watersheds.



Stephen Ramirez (l) and Kenneth Dees (r) – Photo by Lance Jones



Luna Moth-Hope Shimek



Great Blue Heron-Betsy Cross at JW Road near Cypress Creek



Pileated Woodpecker – Betsy Cross



Scott's Oriole-Eva Frost



Spiny Lizzard-Hope Shimek



Blue Eyed Grass...one of my favorite wildflowers-Hope Shimek



Tree Reflection in Westcave Plunge Pool – Meagan Whitehouse.





HAYS MN ON FACEBOOK

Find us, like us, share with us! Click icon for HaysMN Facebook page.



NEWSLETTER

Do you have some awesome photos or want to share a volunteer experience? Let us know! We are looking for interesting items for the newsletter. Contact Tom Jones wimberleytom@gmail.com or Betsy Cross betsy.cross@sbcglobal.net

HAYS MN FORUM

Join the Forum! It's a great way to connect with fellow naturalists, ask questions, and learn from each other. Click the Forum link.

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/haysmn>

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Watch your e-mails for upcoming volunteer opportunities! Check out the Projects Calendar for more information.

<http://www.haysmn.org/calendar-projects.html>

HAVE YOUR PROJECT ADDED TO THE CALENDAR

Send requests to calendar@haysmn.org

LINKS to Chapter Partners, Program Sponsors, Central Texas Master Naturalist Chapters and Other Sites of Interest

Link: <http://www.haysmn.org/links.html>

