

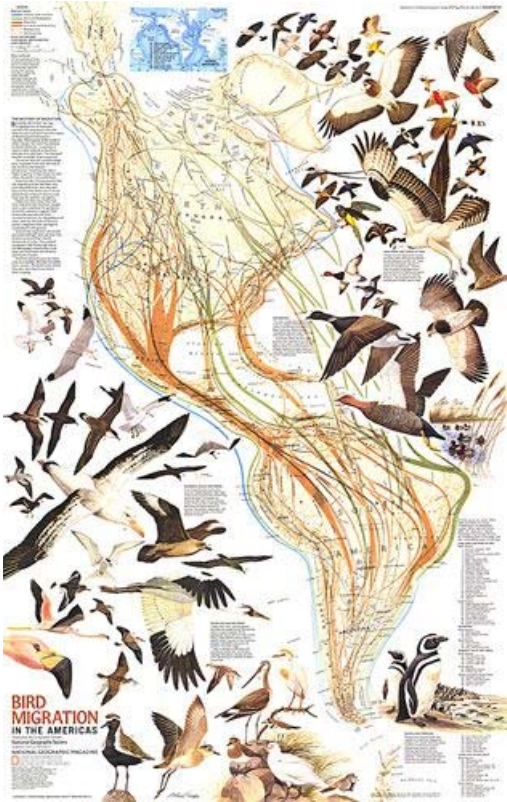
ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 6

JUNE 2018

Johnson Creek • Julia Burgen Linear Park



June Meeting

Billions of Birds Migrate through Texas Every Year

Walter Berk, Master Birder

Wednesday, June 6, 7:00 pm

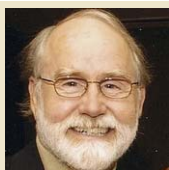
Fielder Museum

1616 W. Abram Street (corner of Fielder and Abram)

Walt Berk has been observing and counting birds since his retirement from the Army 30 years ago, with a focus on birding Texas for the last 20. Walt is a graduate of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology Home Study Course in Bird Biology and is a member of both the Dallas and Fort Worth Audubon societies. Walt took the first 10-month Master Birder class taught semi-annually by the Dallas Audubon Society and has taught senior enrichment classes in birding at Tarrant County College campuses in spring and fall for several years. He is also a popular speaker on bird ecology to civic and environmental groups and often leads bird identification field trips.

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From the President

Dick Schoech

Preparing for the heat

Summer is a naturalist's dream, right? That is true only if you love the Texas heat. For those who have problems with 100-degree days and possibly nights, summers can be miserable. We can suffer from the Texas version of "cabin fever" due to the weather preventing us from being outdoors. There are other Texas summer and heat issues such as chiggers, ticks, poison ivy, dehydration, sunburn, etc. I'm sure you can add others to the list. Most of us work and live in environments that acclimate our bodies to air-conditioned space. This makes us less able to tolerate the extremely hot days that are forecast for DFW due to global warming. We are already breaking records with early 100-degree weather and today, two unhealthy ozone days are forecast for the first week in June https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/monops/forecast_today.html

Poor air quality is especially dangerous for the elderly and those with breathing issues. You may have additional air quality concerns if you live near a gas well site or a gas pumping station where hydrocarbons may add additional pollutants to the air. What can we do to minimize the negative effects of summer? A lot, but it's probably not enough.

One sensible thing is to set your thermostat to around 80 so you don't acclimate your body to cooler conditions. You may change the thermostat several degrees a week so your body barely notices the adjustments. If you're a techie, you can purchase a programmable thermostat that is controlled by your phone. You can then avoid cooling your residence when you are not there, and make sure it cools down before you arrive home.

You can do many little things to prepare for summer. Refresh your memory on the symptoms and handling of heat stroke and similar heat-related problems. Buy cotton clothing. Add more water to your diet and offer your friends water when they visit. Make sure everyone has refillable water bottles so you don't have to buy water or highly promoted energy drinks in throw-away plastic containers. Rearrange your family's schedule for outdoor exercise during cooler parts of the day or institute some indoor exercises to make up for not getting out into nature. Buy new 50 SPF sunscreen if your last year's supply is over 3 years old or past the container's expiration date. Stock up on mosquito and tick spray and use it whenever you are in grassy areas. Non-deet versions score high on product review lists, e.g., Repel and Sawyers. Switch your ceiling fans from blowing up to down resulting in your family feeling

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ACC POST OAK

Our mission: ACC works to protect Arlington's natural environment through education, community service, and advocacy for a sustainable future

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15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Bits & Pieces

Another Win for Tandy Hills

Good news from the latest [Prairie Notes](#): You should regularly expect big news from Friends of Tandy Hills but this news is BIG & HUGE. After a year and a half of dedicated effort, Friends of Tandy Hills has been awarded its largest grant, ever. On May 24, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department announced their Recreational Trail Grants for 2018.

From the press release: "Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area in Tarrant County received \$28,000 towards Tandy Hills Natural Area. Improvements include the rehabilitation of a 1.5 mile natural surface hiking trail and an additional 1.5 mile hiking trail with a raised causeway and bridge."

FOTHNA friend, Suzanne Tuttle, took the lead on the grant application with a little help from Anne Alderfer, Don and Debora Young. The project should start this fall and be completed before year's end.

2018 Park Rankings

This year Plano is again the highest-ranking Texas city in the Trust for Public Land's annual [ParkScore index](#), which measures park access and quality in 100 U.S. cities. Good for Plano, but how did Arlington fare in the 100 Texas cities that were ranked? We're below average at 63. This means only 53 percent of us live within a 10-minute walk of a park. And that means 168,640 Arlington residents don't have a park within a 10-minute walk, and TPL lists a number of physical and mental issues associated with too much distance from parks.

Meanwhile, for the fourth time our Parks & Recreation Department is a national finalist for a [prestigious award](#). How could this fit with our ranking? Looks like, historically we have not voted to properly acquire or support parks while our overworked parks people have excelled on shoestring budgets. Good luck to them – and shame on us.

Sierra Club Award

Congratulations to Arlington's Ranjana Bhandari, who has won a [Special Service Award](#) from the Texas Sierra Club, "which is given to the person or persons, members or non-members, who on one or more occasions have performed a special service to the Sierra Club or to environmental protection.

Ranjana is the leader of Liveable Arlington and the driving force behind the Save Lake Arlington campaign. This campaign was about a proposed injection well on the west side of the lake. Ranjana and Liveable Arlington fight against wells and other gas infrastructure in Arlington and neighboring communities. Many of these fights are in poor and minority communities where the impacts on the local neighborhoods are often discounted as unimportant, with rubber stamp approvals being the norm. Ranjana does not win every fight, but she and Liveable Arlington always put on a good fight and win more often than might be expected."

Visit us on the Web
www.acctexas.org



Reminder

The ACC members email group is only for ACC business such as meeting announcements. The ACC Yahoo group is for general discussion of environmental and sustainable ideas and issues. To join the ACC Yahoo group, go to <http://www.acctexas.org/> and click on "Send/receive messages from our Yahoo group." This will take you to the ACC Yahoo group site (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/arlingtonconservationcouncil/info>) where you can subscribe and unsubscribe under the Group Email Addresses heading.

**Join us and act locally.
Use the handy
application form
on the back page.**

Question Corner John Darling

Is fracking safe?

March 16, 2018, Public News Service: The fifth [Fracking Health Compendium](#) finds that the oil and gas drilling technique poses high risks to food, water and the climate, and cannot be done safely. The report is a compilation of the rapidly growing body of scientific research into the process that injects heavily treated water into deep shale formations to free trapped natural gas and oil. According to Sandra Steingraber, PhD, a biologist, author, environmental activist, and co-founder of Concerned Health Professionals of New York, much of the research into the health and safety concerns of fracking "shows that fracking is not safe and cannot be made safe through any regulatory framework. And the risks that we had concerns about in the early days, now we have evidence for actual harm." Steingraber visited Fort Worth earlier this year as a guest of Livable Arlington and captivated an enthusiastic audience with her from-the-trenches, spirited address on the evils of fracking. More on this remarkable woman at steingraber.com.

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Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve photos by Wes Miller



While my interest in natural history has added very little to my sum of achievement, it has added immeasurably to my sum of enjoyment in life.

Theodore Roosevelt



More Bits

Thanks to our last speaker



Ryan Giesecki with Ann Knudsen

The room was filled last month when beekeeper extraordinaire Ryan Giesecke spoke to us on “World of Bees,” a topic he clearly loves. Ryan maintains several beeyards in the Dallas area and runs Honey Bee Relocation Services, a small company specializing in live bee removal. He is also president of Trinity Valley Beekeepers Association in Dallas, active in the Texas Master Beekeeper Program, and he does a good deal of educational work on bees and beekeeping.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Ryan’s talk was its scope: We heard about everything from honeybee life history to native bees and the pollinator crisis. And lots more, as an engaged audience was inspired to ask many questions.

On a related note, last week Ryan and a trainee removed a large colony of honeybees from *Post Oak* World HQ. We can now state that he doesn’t just talk about bees; he’s the real deal.

From the President *continued from page 3*

cooler due to air circulation around their bodies. Get your plants in locations that have the sun/shade they need and where you can monitor them before they dry out and die. Check weather stripping on doors and windows. Showers cool you down if you use water as cool as you



can tolerate, so take showers at strategic times of the day. Turn off computers and other heat generating appliances when not needed. Make sure west windows have blinds, shades, or awnings. If you have a sprinkler system, watch it run through a test cycle so you can find problems that occurred over the winter. Finally, ask your friends for their solutions. But be prepared to hear the stories from those who grew up in Texas without air conditioning in the good old days.

I BRAKE FOR SQUIRRELS

John Blair

I brake for squirrels, a lot,
Because they seldom brake for me.

Pausing in the street to stare around
They barely register the presence of my car.

I, on the other hand, am quite aware
Of where they are and where they ought to be

And try to tell them through the windshield
When to turn, how fast to run, how soon to stop.

Why is it, when you really need one,
There’s never a squirrel cop?

©2018 John I. Blair, 4/13/2018

Local Author Makes Good

For several years Fort Worth’s Joanne Karges contributed wonderful articles on insects and plants to our local Native Plant Society newsletter. Now this accomplished amateur entomologist has gained a national audience. She has an article on milkweeds in the June issue of *Natural History* magazine. Seek it out as soon as you can. You’re going to like it.

Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Carol Shinsky Marcotte & Marylee Thomason



Carol Shinsky Marcotte at work in the prairie demonstration area

The Molly Hollar Wildscape is designing a prairie demonstration area.

Volunteers have been working extra hard at the sandstone/clay/overgrown section to see it rise again like a phoenix from its roots.

Keeping with the native plant theme, the most dominant plants at the prairie this time of year are little bluestem, indiagrass, pitcher sage, blue wild indigo, rain lilies, silphium, buffalograss, Canada wild rye, creek sedge, prairie parsley, snake herb, lambsquarters, wild onion, prairie bundleflower and many more to come up.

Under the direction of Ann Knudsen and with advice from John Snowden and Suzanne Tuttle, the prairie is taking shape and ready for public

inspection. It's on the north side of the compost area on a gentle slope. A rocky trail runs through it surrounded by post oaks, live oaks and cedar elms.

The pocket prairie has a champion in Carol Shinsky Marcotte, who has taken responsibility for its development.

The wildscape lies at an interesting intersection of the Fort Worth Prairie and Eastern Cross Timbers. It has four ecosystems: riparian, urban with a butterfly garden, woodland and prairie. Plan your visit!

to be continued ...

*To make a prairie it takes a clover
and one bee,
One clover, and a bee.*

And revery.

*The revery alone will do,
If bees are few.*

— Emily Dickinson



Wildscape butterfly garden, beautifully maintained by Josephine Keeney

Wildscape continued from page 8



Sherri McGinnis with her signature pink hat and Marylee Thomason

Looking for a volunteer opportunity?

Volunteers work at the wildscape on Wednesdays from 9 am until noon and on first Saturdays, when there is a mini class.

Welcome, new volunteers Sherri McGinnis and Jack Thornton. Sherri found the wildscape through the kiosk sign at the entrance. She is an Arlington resident and former nurse and who likes to walk in the park. On her first day she provided peanut butter balls for snacks (so yummy one doesn't dare request the recipe).

Jack Thornton, an ACC member for many years, read an article in the newsletter promoting the wildscape as a place to enjoy native plants and good company. Both Sherri and Jack share an interest in gardening and a desire to learn more about Texas natives.

Jim Landers found Jack wandering around the wildscape entrance looking for the boss of the outfit. Jack had so much fun that he asked if he could come on his own in addition to planned work days. Sherri and

Jack are a great addition to the hard-working volunteer team.

Wildscape on the Fishbowl Radio Network



Teresa Day-Fickel with Joe Martinez

Teresa Day-Fickel knows people. This time her connection was to Lezlee Liljenberg, who hosts "Texas Talk Live" on the streaming Fishbowl Radio Network (<http://fishbowlradionetwork.com/about-us.html>).

Teresa happened to be discussing the wildscape with a friend who works at Liljenberg Financial Services.

"You should go on the show and talk about it," suggested the friend. "Why not?" thought Teresa.

So she gave the wildscape a plug. Tune in Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. to hear "Talk Live" with Lezlee Liljenberg.

Who else does Teresa know? That's an interesting question.



In Case You Missed It Grace Darling



Darkest Hour (film), 2017.

A casual observation about Lady Clementine Churchill's fondness for hats in this engrossing movie sent me searching for information on this formidable woman and hatters. A bit of research uncovered the following: The phrase "mad as a hatter" was in use 30 years prior to the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865, and was associated with industrial felt hat workers in 19th-century England. To make felt, hatters separated fur from the skin of small animals in a process called *carroting* that involved mercurious nitrate; mercury poisoning — including symptoms such as tremors, irritability, a lurching gait, personality disorders, and physical and mental imbalance — subsequently became common among hatters.

But how did mercury come to be used in hat-making, you ask? The art of hat-making was introduced to Western Europe by returning Crusaders in the late 12th and 13th centuries. Prior to the use of mercury

to remove fur, hatters used camel urine, which is mostly water but also contains nitrogen waste in the form of urea. During the expansion of hat-making in 19th-century France and England, impecunious hatters frequently replaced camel urine with their own, and some astute businessman noticed that an individual workman treated with mercury chloride for syphilis consistently produced

superior felt. As a result, mercury nitrate came into wide use to obtain the same effects as the workman's mercury-contaminated urine. The United States Public Health Service banned the use of mercury in the felt industry in 1941, not so much for health risks but because mercury fulminate was needed for World War II detonators.

YES! Magazine, 1 June 2018.

Like the fossil fuel cartel, factory farms prioritize profits at the cost of our environment. Thousands of cows, pigs, or birds are raised in confinement in a small area in an industrial model for producing animals for food. Factory farms produce more manure than nearby fields can absorb, leading to runoff into surface waters and contaminants leaching into groundwater. In addition, these manure concentrations release toxins like ammonia and hydrogen sulfide into the air, threatening nearby com-

continued on page 11



In Case continued from page 10

munities and even leading to worker deaths. The nearly half a million dairy cows on factory farms in Tulare County, California, for example, produce 5X as much waste as the New York City metropolitan area. And just like with fossil fuel infrastructure, these toxic facilities are more likely to locate in impoverished places that are least able to resist their development.

Another thing factory farms have in common with fossil fuels: They are a danger to the climate. Livestock production contributes 14.5% of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, mostly as methane from livestock production and partly from manure storage. Additionally, monoculture crops like corn and soy are one of the reasons we can sustain mass quantities of livestock, and raising these crops accounts for nearly half of the point-source emissions. Attempts to regulate factory farms have been half-hearted and ineffective; the EPA does not collect comprehensive data on factory farm size or location, making oversight impossible. And while the Clean Water Act regulates water pollution from industrial facilities, in 2011 the agency

estimated that fewer than half of the facilities required to get discharge permits had actually obtained them.

The Guardian, 1 June 2018.

A year after the U.S. pulled out of the Paris climate accord, thousands of businesses as well as many cities, counties, and states, colleges and universities, cultural institutions and faith organizations have flung themselves into the breach of sustaining sound climate policies that will curb greenhouse gas emissions. Pittsburgh is one of 405 municipalities representing 70 million Americans that are signed on to the Mayors Climate Initiative, and more than 80 cities have committed to 100% renewable energy. A broader group of several thousand businesses and private sector entities—including Amazon, Levi Strauss & Co and Google—cities and states have pledged to follow the Paris goals via the We Are Still In coalition, spearheaded by former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg and the California governor, Jerry Brown, who has said California will launch its own climate-monitoring satellites if the administration hobbles NASA's science programs.

SQUIRRELS CLIMBING

John Blair

I'm amazed
At the sheer skill
Of squirrels
Climbing,

Mounting
The tallest trees
With ease,
One paw at a time,

Leaping from
Bough to bough
With no regard
For gravity.

On the feeder pole
They place one leg here,
One leg there,
Clinging like a squid

While rustling
Breakfast, brunch,
And supper
Effortlessly.

It seems silly
To admire them
Just for being squirrels,
But I did.

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3/14/2018



Southwest Nature Preserve Jan Miller

Friends of SWNP Monthly Meeting

Free and open to the public

Tuesday, June 19, 7:00 pm

The role of pollinators and how we can help protect them



Missy Singleton
Fish & Wildlife Biologist,
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Pollinator Week brings attention to the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations while emphasizing the valuable ecosystem services provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats and beetles.



Missy Singleton joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2015 as a private lands biologist in the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. She graduated from Texas A&M University with a BS in Wildlife Ecology and Management. After working at the Texas A&M vet school for 6 years doing physiology research on bats, she entered the environmental consulting world. During 10 years in the consulting world she worked in several different ecological zones where she managed environmental impacts during the border fence construction.

West Arlington Police Service Center Community Room
2060 W Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington, TX 76013

Parking is available in front of the building via Ron McAndrew Drive

For more information about Southwest Nature Preserve, see www.swnp.org or e-mail info@swnp.org.

NOTE: If you're considering the Beginner Birding walk next Saturday, there's a good chance it could be cancelled due to high temperatures. So right now it's tentative. Be sure to RSVP at info@swnp.org so you'll be notified.

Prairie Restoration



Jim Frisinger and Annabelle Corboy after an afternoon of planting native grasses (marked with white flags)



Eastern Cross Timbers big bluestem grasses, planted, watered, and ready to grow.



Jim Domke and Lynn Healy watering planting

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 12

Last month, Jeremy Priest, City of Arlington Forester, led a tree walk at SW Nature Preserve. This was classic outdoor education, with an enthusiastic expert taking full advantage of each opportunity as we wandered and entertaining every odd question whenever something caught our attention.

And trees are great subjects for this sort of thing: They don't hide, fly off, or submerge themselves as we cluster around.

It was classic too, in that we ended up really seeing things that have been under our noses, perhaps for years. Thanks, Jeremy. Let's do it again, soon.



Capitalism and the Mighty Vegetable — Part 1 Grace Darling

(Excerpted from *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver, HarperCollins, 2007)



Heirloom vegetables are irresistible, not just for the poetry in their names [Moon and Star watermelon, Cajun Jewel okra, Gold of Bacau pole bean, Sweet Chocolate pepper, Georgian Crystal garlic, and many more] but because these titles stand for real stories. Heirlooms are open-pollinated—as opposed to hybrids which are the onetime product of a forced cross between dissimilar varieties of a plant. These whiz-kid hybrid seeds have slowly colonized and then dominated our catalogs and our croplands. Because of their unnatural parentage they offer special vigor, but the next generation from these crosses will be of an unpredictable and often undesirable character. Thus, hybrid seeds have

to be purchased again each year from the companies that create them.

Genetic modification (GM) is a new [ish] process involving direct manipulation of genes in the laboratory. Freed from the limits of natural sex, the gene engineer may combine traits of creatures that aren't on speaking terms in the natural world: animal or bacterial genes spliced into the chromosomes of plants, for example, and vice versa. The ulti-



mate unnatural product of genetic engineering is a “terminator gene” that causes a crop to commit genetic suicide after one generation, just in case some maverick farmer might want to save seed from his expensive, patented crop, instead of purchasing it again from the company that makes it.

By contrast to both GM and hybridization, open-pollinated heirlooms are created the same way natural



selection does it: by saving and reproducing specimens that show the best characteristics of their generation, thus gradually increasing those traits in the population. Once bred to a given quality, these varieties yield the same characteristics again when their seeds are saved and grown, year after year.

Like sunshine, heirloom seeds are of little interest to capitalism if they can't be patented or owned. They have, however, earned a cult following among people who grow or buy and eat them. Seeds are saved down for generations and gardeners collect them like family jewels. Heirlooms are the tangiest or sweetest tomatoes, the most fragrant melons, the eggplants without a trace of bitterness.

continued on page 15



Mighty Vegetable continued from page 14



Most standard vegetable varieties sold in stores have been bred for uniform appearance, mechanized harvest, convenience of packing, and a tolerance for hard travel. None of these qualities can be mistaken, in practice, for actual flavor.

How did supermarket vegetables lose their palatability, with so many people watching? The Case of the Murdered Flavor was a contract killing, as it turns out, and long-distance travel lies at the heart of the plot. . . . Some wealthy folks were charmed by the idea of serving out-of-season (and absurdly expensive) produce items to their dinner guests. It remained little more than an expensive party trick until mid-century, when most fruits and vegetables consumed in North America were still being produced on nearby farms.

Then fashion and marketing got involved. The interstate highway system became a heavily subsidized national priority, long-haul trucks were equipped with refrigeration, and the cost of gasoline was nominal. The state of California aggressively marketed itself as an off-season food producer, and the American middle class opened its

maw. In just a few decades the out-of-season vegetable moved from novelty status to such an ordinary item, most North Americans now don't know what out-of-season means.

[Meanwhile,] agribusiness learned to breed varieties that held up in a box-car, truck, or ship's cargo hold. Vegetable farmers had little choice but to grow what the market demanded. In the latter half of the 20th century they gradually dropped from their repertoire thousands of flavorful varieties traditionally grown for the table, concentrating instead on the handful of new varieties purchased by transporters, restaurant chains, and processed-food manufacturers. Modern U.S. consumers now get to taste less than 1% of the vegetable varieties that were grown here a century ago. Many heirlooms have been lost entirely. An enormous factor in this loss has been the [no longer] new idea of plant varieties as patentable properties. Six companies—Monsanto, Syngenta, DuPont, Mitsui, Aventis, and Dow—now control 98% of the world's seed sales. [To be continued in Part 2]



PLANTING WOOD PHLOX

John Blair

Today I planted wood phlox,
My promise to the future
That spring will come again.

There's a vacant lot along a street
I drive several times a week
Where wood phlox bloom.

They've bloomed each March
Ever since I moved to Texas
Half a hundred years ago

And bloomed no doubt
Before I came,
Will be blooming when I'm gone.

They're not native to this place
So someone must have planted them
On a sunny day like this

In hope of pleasure for themselves
And maybe for their children
In future springtimes.

I wonder if they guessed
That I'd be getting joy
From what they did that day,

That in another century
I'd be planting wood phlox,
Remembering their act of faith.

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3/24/2018

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Memberships are good for one year, renewable each January. Your dues go directly to our public education efforts.

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Arlington Conservation Council
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June Meeting
Wednesday, June 6
Fielder House Museum

Billions of Birds Migrate through Texas every Year
Walter Berk, Master Birder