ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

# POST OAK

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 7
SEPTEMBER 2023

BLACKLAND PRAIRIE PRESERVE • AUGUST 6, 2023 • GUY RANDOM PHOTO

# August Zoom Meeting

**Read more about this program on page 7**

**Join Zoom Meeting: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84667982712**

**For assistance accessing the meeting, contact Frank Keeney, webmaster@acctexas.org**

**6:30 p.m. social time and equipment check, 7 p.m. presentation**

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# From the President Dick Schoech

## Lessons from the African bush

The Kruger Park walking safari described in the July-August *Post Oak* mentioned the sights, sounds, smells, fears, and other primitive emotions that provided a deeper understanding of our planet's environmental and ecosystem problems. From Kruger, we visited the small tourist town next to Victoria Falls as our base for several jeep and boat tours of national parks. The falls encompass the world's largest sheet of falling water (twice the height of Niagara Falls). The

town was just recovering from years of COVID-19, which devastated the tourist economy. In keeping with our community development through tourism focus, we shared dinner with a local family and ate authentic native cuisine in a restaurant specializing in traditional foods and handicrafts.

*Dinner with a local family*

The remainder of our trip concentrated around Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa. Day tours from Cape Town offered the beautiful views from Table Mountain and the white

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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**

Published 10 times a year by
Arlington Conservation Council
P.O. Box 216
Arlington, TX 76004-0216

John Darling, editor
*1darling@sbcglobal.net*

**Contributors**
Dana Austin, Annabelle Corboy, Grace Darling, John Darling, John Dycus, Jim Frisinger, Marian Hiler, Josephine Keeney, Ann Knudsen, Carol Marcotte, Jan Miller, Donna Piercy, Guy Random, Dick Schoech, Isabella Tree

**Proofreaders**
Marian Hiler, Grace Darling

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of every preceding month. Please send them to *1darling@sbcglobal.net*

# From the President continued from page 3

*Dick Schoech with traditional African foods*

sand beaches around the Cape of Good Hope, which is famous for hidden rocks that wrecked many ships of early explorers.

The Cape Town highlight was the tour of Robben Island where Nelson Mandela and hundreds of anti-apartheid activists were imprisoned for 18+ years. The tour, led by activists who had prison cells next to Mandela, illustrated the struggle South Africa endured to overcome colonial rule. This struggle continues, with peace and democracy forces battling foreign economic forces for control of power and resources, including wildlife.

Africa is in the middle of the worldwide struggle between protecting the environment or exploiting it. Compromises and solutions are difficult, especially in a country experiencing the world's highest birth rate along with 30% unemployment.(1) Numerous points illustrate the struggle.

- Young democracies following foreign rule are fragile due to outside exploitation and corruption of local officials, and this prevents a country's natural resource wealth from helping the large number of poor desperately trying to survive.
- As human populations and inequality both increase, weak governments struggle to manage their wildlife and environmental resources for future generations. However, wildlife and the environment have few protectors powerful and wealthy enough to save them.
- Actions similar to those that annihilated the 30 million-60 million U.S. bison from 1800 to 1883 are decimating some wildlife populations in Africa. Similar struggles are occurring with wolf populations vs cattle grazing in the western U.S.
- Poaching is a big problem, especially for rhinos, whose horns are believed to have medicinal properties in Asia and are more valuable by weight than gold, diamonds, or cocaine.(2) Zambia has moved its rhinos from large national parks to fenced areas where they can be protected to keep them from quickly going extinct.
- Poaching is often the best of bad options for the poor to support themselves and their families.
- Empowering local communities to protect animals for tourism rather than slaughtering them for food and profit sounds nice but requires changing traditional lifestyles and valuing long-term over short-term benefits.
- REDD+ programs (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) provide a way for companies worldwide to pay communities to preserve and protect their forests and wildlife.(3)
- Many professional hunters argue that safari hunting by outsiders promotes conservation because it gives communities a financial interest in protecting animals. But some people living around parks say they do protect the animals, yet see little of the promised revenue.(4)

*continued on page 5*

# From the President continued from page 4

*Above, Primitive rural huts. Below, Makeshift roadside housing.*

- Tourism often brings in non-African companies that bribe corrupt governments to help buy land indigenous people traditionally considered theirs. Foreign trophy hunters often bribe local officials to allow them to take the best rather than the weakest animals as nature intended.
- We saw primitive rural huts with no running water or electricity and miles of makeshift housing along roadways close to luxurious tourist lodges like those Americans see advertised on TV.

*continued on page 6*

# From the President continued from page 5

- Many Africans see wildlife conservation as a last bastion of colonialism, a pursuit dominated by white people using threats or persuasion to keep Africans off land that was traditionally theirs.(4)
- We saw few renewable energy and supporting infrastructure projects. While renewables are less expensive in the long run, the up-front costs seemed prohibitive for individuals and governments.
- Some large cities could not afford to provide enough electricity for their residents so they initiated unscheduled rolling blackouts that included traffic signals on multi-lane roadways. One consequence of no traffic lights or officials guiding traffic was vehicles and walkers chaotically struggling to reach their destinations.
- Theft is a major problem. In cities like Johannesburg, which is roughly the size of DFW, large areas had all homes and small buildings fenced with razor wire and a live electric wire running across the top.
- Wi-Fi, often key to economic development, was often unavailable or unreliable except in hotels.
- Africa is a birders paradise. My two favorite pictures were the African hoopoe and the African darter. Note the pure blue water.

*Resources*


1 https://www.statista.com/statistics/1286939/unemployment-rate-in-africa-by-country/
2 https://www.adoptananimalkits.com/advocate/wild-earth/params/post/1285566/which-is-more-valuable-gold-cocaine-or-rhino-horn
3 https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/workstreams/redd/what-is-redd
4 https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/06/world/africa/zambia-conservation-delia-owens.html?smid=nytcore-android-share

*From left, African hoopoe* Upupa africana, *African darter* Anhinga rufa

# Tyler Hurd, our September Speaker

Tyler Hurd is new to Arlington but not to the solid waste field, having held various management positions in Denton's Solid Waste Residential Waste Collections department and more recently in Irving as waste collections manager. With an M.S. in public administration from the University of North Texas and 15 years experience analyzing, budgeting, and planning for neighboring cities, he is well prepared to modernize and streamline Arlington's waste collection, disposal, and recycling operations. Zoom in Sept. 6 to hear how he intends to do just that.

*Above, Just a small reminder to have a look at the Blackland Prairie on page 30.*

## IVAN QUERIDO'S REAL HERITAGE TREE

*Special field correspondent Ivan Querido continues to prefer his selection of Heritage Trees. Here's his latest report:* ACC people should know that all editorial staff members have fled the inferno and are being soothed by gentle alpine breezes. While I toil to bring you the latest broiling environmental disaster, their biggest concern is the world's most pitiful pinyon pine. Or trying to recall where they left their sweaters. It's a corrupt elite at the top.

Ruellia nudiflora, *still happy at the wildscape despite our recent environmental unkindness.*

# Bits & Pieces

## The Terse Treehugger

Barred owl at Gyde Martin's birdbath.

Dang, that's a lot of bird for that bath.

**Visit ACC's Facebook page and Arlington Conservation Council Discussion Group**

## Cornyn and Cruz?

The Internet reminds us the bill that's so important for wildlife needs more phone calls and emails to our senators. In case you're not in close contact with our two federal environmental heroes, see how to **send them a message** here. We hope you'll be glad you did.

*Hairy sunflower*

## Where Have All the Flowers Gone?

Not to complain, but a squirrel at work lurks until I turn my back, scrambles up the sunflowers, decapitates underage blossoms, squats on the workbench, and tears them apart in a futile search for a meal. So day after day the brute makes a mess, wastes baby seeds, and leaves hungry. Nature's finest?

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

# Question Corner John Darling

Q: Look, we want to save the planet so we're going to buy one of those electric composters that's clean and makes compost really fast. You can spend $400 or even a lot more, so which one do you recommend?

A: This is a setup, right? I've just been trying to remember a fast system that turns out to be completely different from the silly fad you're about to waste money on. Bokashi! That's the quick fermentation method I couldn't remember. And even though I haven't tried bokashi, I'll bet it will be better and lots cheaper than any of those so-called composters. Exhaustive work by the PO Research Team has revealed **misleading statements** and **false claims** by the electric composter people. Those machines just chop and dry your kitchen waste, with heat that kills beneficial microorganisms in the process. You end up with stuff you can then put into an actual compost pile or — like many users — just throw in the trash. Forget it. Next!

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Arlington, TX 76012
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www.wbu.com/arlingtontx
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Arlington TX 76004-0264
Green Arlington.org
214-709-8791

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*Western ironweed*

# We're Doing Something Big

**ACC has established an endowment with UTA to aid future environmentalists. Phase 1 is already helping.***

**Now we're working on Phase 2.**

**But why?**

**An anonymous donor wants us to help even more and has come forward with a second challenge.**

**This donor will match 5 to 1 the next $4,000 of donations from you.**

**If met, the endowment will net $24,000!**

**Help us help more students with your contribution.**

## Donate here and keep it growing.

*The first endowment scholarship has been awarded to UTA sophomore Alexander Andronov. It gave him the opportunity to research Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) technology, a smart-charging technology allowing car batteries to give back to the power grid. Watch his presentation here.

# My Nature Notebook

Flying Saltshakers of Death!

On the news we saw cicadas that are sort of sick and nasty and they do weird stuff that Mom won't talk about. So we went outside and looked and looked but couldn't find any sick ones with the chalky butts.

And then the creepy old guy came up and said hey you kids get off my lawn! And I said do you have any of those sick cicadas? Can we see them? Please? And he said no I haven't seen any and even if I had you should find something better to do. Those poor cicadas have **big problems** and they don't need you. So I said what's wrong with them anyway? Do they hurt a lot? And he said no they feel fine. Why don't you ask your mother for **details**?

# Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte

*Volunteer day, Jul. 17: Volunteers trimmed, deadheaded, and weeded the Triangle Garden. Below from left, Charley Amos, Dick Schoech, Susie Wheeler, Josephine Keeney, and Jane Oosterhuis. Below, recent sights at the park from left, flame acanthus, juvenile yellow-crowned night heron, cowpen daisy. Carol Marcotte photos.*

*continued on page 13*

# Randol Mill Park Bonus **Carol Marcotte**

On Monday August 14 ACC members and RMP neighbors gathered at the park to witness a local rehabilitator release one eastern bluebird and two yellow-crowned night herons. The bluebird was READY to fly to its new home. The shy herons took their time getting to the water.

*Above from left, An anxious juvenile eastern bluebird. Freedom! Below from left, young yellow-crowned night herons just before release, and later already looking much better in their new home.*

# Pink-Striped Oak Moth, *Anisota virginiensis* Dana Austin

To my delight I found out that Josephine Keeney took a few of the pink-striped oak moth larvae and raised them into moths! Here are the photos she took of the larval, pupal, and adult stages. These were collected at the Molly Hollar Wildscape in June 2023 and a larva was shown in the *Post Oak* last month.

# Not the End of the World, but Still John Darling

August 9 in Central Arlington: Some guys cleared a lot. But it was personal this time because it's next door. Since about 1978, I mowed that lot with care, made ugly brush piles, planted some natives, watered at times (yeah, stupid), and marveled at its resident box turtles, eastern cottontails, toads, fence lizards, and migrating birds.

All gone now, except seven post oaks and 11 hackberries. Why? Somebody wants only grass and trees along our street. The worst part: People who make these decisions haven't even heard about all the impending crises that fill me with dark thoughts. Consider the related piece from *The Guardian* on the next page. Didn't fit last month; it works here.

# On Rewilding Isabella Tree

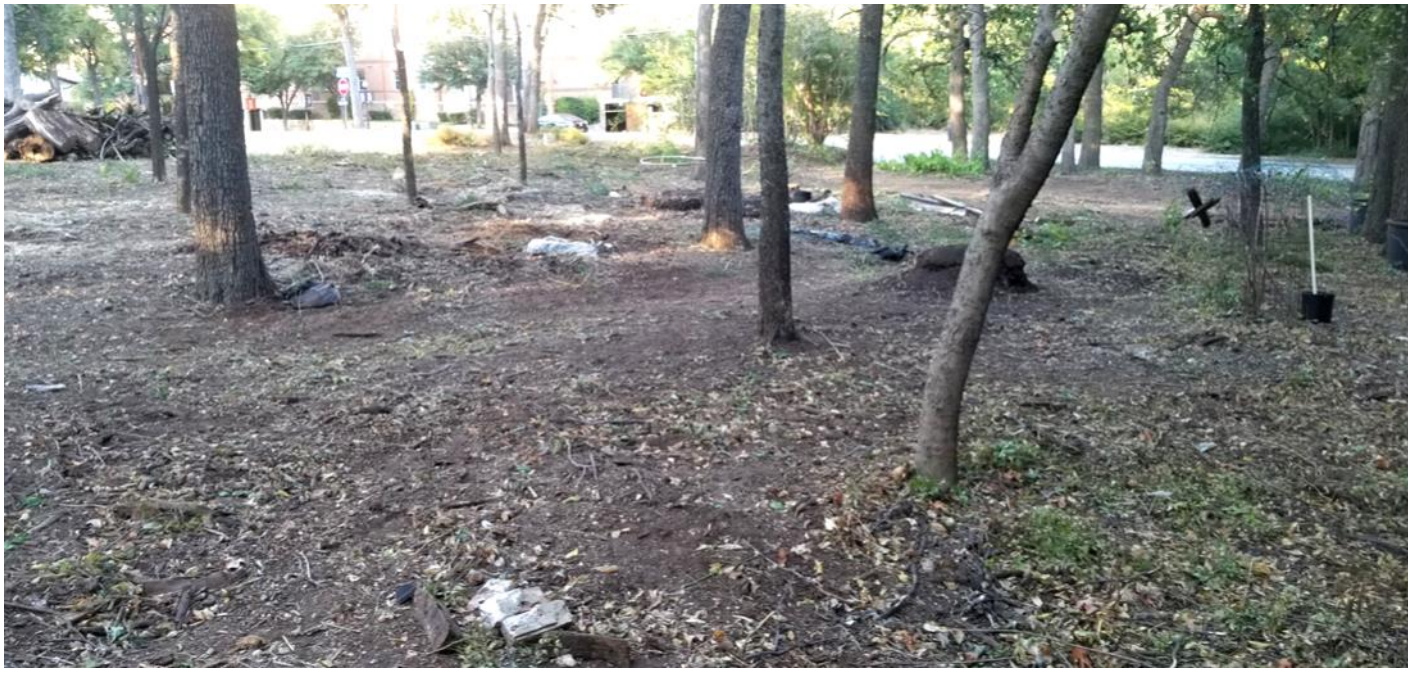
*Excerpted from* The Guardian*, 24 July 2023 by Grace Darling*

The rewilding gardener is not saying, stand back and let it all go. Quite the contrary. It's only at the wilderness end of the rewilding spectrum – in vast areas such as Alaska, with fully functioning ecosystems and apex predators – that human beings can relax and let nature get on with it. Almost all the rest of the land on our planet is already managed, in some way, by humans. In our depleted, fragmented, developed and polluted world, with so many species lost and a million more on the brink of extinction, human beings must intervene, in varying degrees, to restore the natural processes that are the fount of life.

[At a small] scale, . . . where free-roaming animals are not possible or desirable, scythes, spades, bulldozers, hedge trimmers and chainsaws can mimic their disturbance. By randomising and varying the intensity of these interventions, as happens in the wild, the ecosystem of even the smallest rewilding site can become complex and dynamic. [In the garden,] yet more intervention is needed to create the complexity that produces life. So, the rewilding gardener thinks foremost about how nature works, and acts as a keystone species. This affects the whole decision-making and design of a garden.

Perhaps the greatest insult to nature in a garden is the monoculture lawn. . . . Our gardens, now, must help us in the battle against the climate crisis. The planet is on fire. Water is catastrophically scarce. The sprinklers, mowers, leaf-blowers, high-carbon gismos, peat compost and chemical inputs pushed on us by garden centres – the billion-pound horticultural industry . . . — is as bad for the planet as industrial farming.

It's always going to be tricky, challenging the established conventions and aesthetics of something as personal as gardening, . . . but the rewilding approach can be refreshingly liberating: It can relieve a gardener of the burden of perfection and yet still produce a space that is achingly beautiful. . . . Come and see ours: let it speak for itself.



*The lot next door (page 15). In the distance are seven post oaks. Closer, some of the hackberries that survived the cut.*

**Be sure to visit**

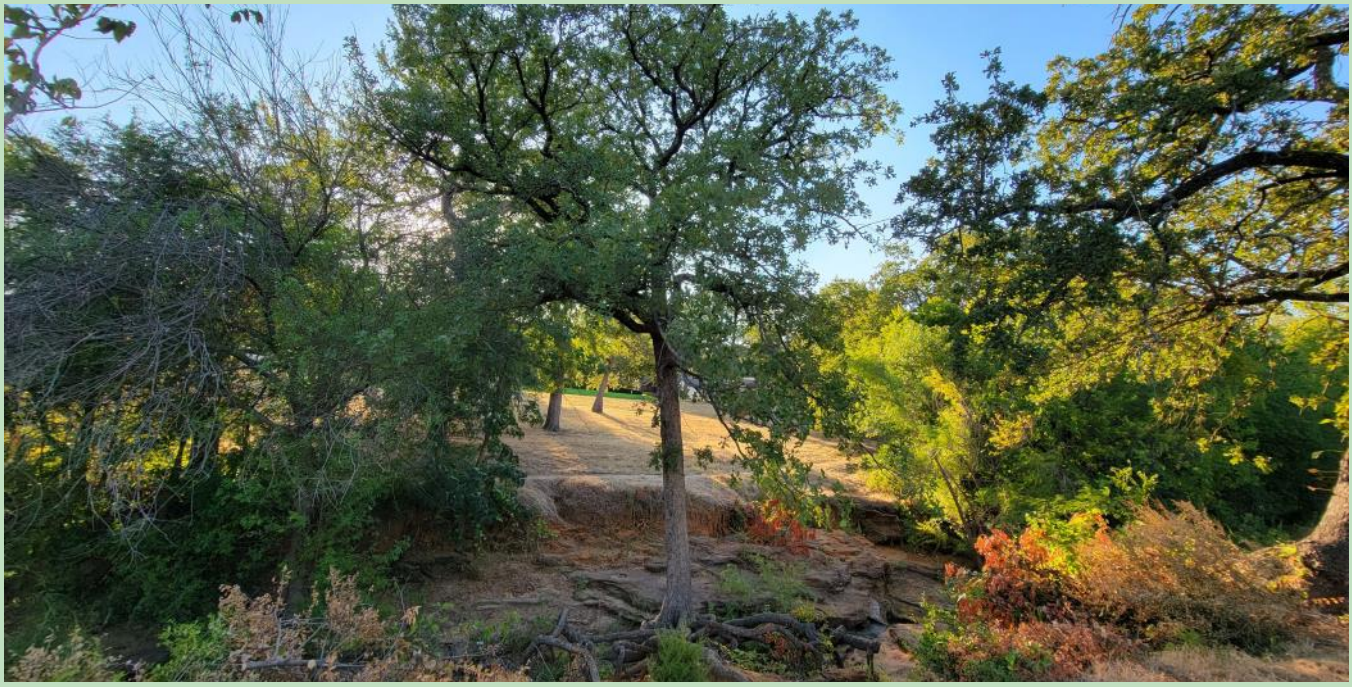
**ACC's Facebook page**
**and**
**Arlington Conservation Council**
**Discussion Group**

**We'll be watching.**
**No, wait. Actually, we won't.**

# Arlington's Heritage Trees

## ACC Heritage Trees

Park visitors, especially kids, always yell, "WOW, come look at this." when they find this Randol Mill Park tree. It's not the tallest, widest, best shaped, or prettiest tree in the park but a close look reveals a rare sight that's usually hidden under ground. It has an anchoring tap root and multiple lateral roots holding on to the creek bank so rising flood water cannot take it down. The key question is how long it can hang on. Climate change and the recently installed mile of creek bed concrete upstream has increased the speed of the water this tree must withstand. It deserves a special place in ACC's Heritage Tree hall of fame.



# Wildscape Update Marian Hiler

Wash. Rinse. Repeat. This month brought more of the same as last month. Watering and deadheading. This is the time for plants to take it easy after putting on quite a display during the first half of the year. Just like us, they are doing their best to get through this hot, hot summer. The odds are great these plants will because they are tough Texas natives.

High note for August. Actually, for the whole year and beyond. The wildscape is one of the many beneficiaries of the disbursement of assets from the recently dissolved Arlington Men's Garden Club. Its last president presented the wildscape with a $25,000 check to be used for a new greenhouse. For more details, see Grace Darling's thank you note on page 25.

And then the low note. It had to be a photo shoot for a gender reveal as evidenced by all the blue bits of paper and metallic baby pacifier confetti left behind, probably shot from a confetti cannon. Surely, it wasn't a party. You might be litterbugs, but would you put that on your friends to come to an outdoor party in 110° weather? I'm sure it was an exciting moment worthy of capturing for posterity, but couldn't you clean up after yourself? Instead, wildscape volunteers picked up most of your trash, though we are still finding it up and down the sidewalks. The bright spot was Veterans Park walker Yvette, who graciously stepped up to help, staying until the end. Long gone are the days it seems that a simple cutting into a cake to see whether it's blue or pink was enough to discover your baby's gender. (And why are we so obsessed with the baby's gender anyway?) While this recent gender reveal example didn't cause explosions, forest fires (like the **2017 Arizona Sawmill fire** and **2020 El Dorado fire in California**) or injuries (at least not to my knowledge) these kinds of actions do cause environmental harm across the spectrum. Just Google it and you can easily find incidents throughout the country. See **Mother Earth Hates Your Gender Reveal Parties Too**. At least these Veterans Park parents-to-be didn't use **glitter**.

### The Wild in the Wildscape this month

Every summer you can find many, many sheets of webs close to the ground throughout the woodland

*continued on page 20*

*From left, "Son, this is how we trashed a city park while finding out you were a boy." Marylee Thomason and Christine Brinson picking up the many, many tiny confetti bits. Marian Hiler photos.*

# Wildscape Update continued from page 19

*From left, Grass spider (**genus *Agelenopsis***) webs covering the woodland area. The grass spider's funnel-shaped retreat. Marian Hiler photos.*

area. That means the American grass spiders, members of the genus *Agelenopsis* of funnel weavers, are active. As their common names indicate, they weave their horizontal webs in grasses with a funnel shelter on one edge. The webs aren't sticky so the grass spider uses its amazing speed to easily catch its dinner before the prey can escape. I couldn't get a picture of one as they aren't easily tricked to come out of their funnel. I'll try again next year to get some shots of these spiders who look similar to wolf spiders.

*A long-legged harvestmen (Order Opiliones) blending very well on the woodland floor. Marian Hiler photo.*

Another arachnid spotted was a daddy-longlegs. Not the crane fly variety (Tipulidae) but the one also known as harvestmen of the order Opiliones. Harvestmen are not spiders. Their body shape is different. It appears to be only one segment vs the spider's two main body segments. However, its body is also segmented, lacking only a defined waist. They have no silk glands therefore no webs. They also lack fangs so have no venom, which debunks the myth they are among the most venomous and toxic of all arachnids. Instead, their defense mechanism is giving off a foul-smelling liquid.

**First Saturday mini-classes**

At the **August** mini-class, Dr. Ellen Edwards Ravkind, River Legacy's Naturalist Manager gave a fascinating talk about the bats that are common in our area, bat houses, and echolocation devices.

*continued on page 21*

# Wildscape Update continued from page 20

Some interesting facts we learned were that a baby or pup can be up to 25% or 30% of the mother's weight when it's born. Mother bats often fly with their pups when they are tiny. Pups cling to their mother with their mouths and toes. Mexican free-tailed bats are the fastest horizontal flying animal being clocked at 106 mph.

If you are going to mount a bat house in your yard, Ellen suggested putting it on a pole over a garden so you can fertilize your plants. Bat World Sanctuary has guidance on what to look for when purchasing a bat house and has links to free plans if you want to build your own.

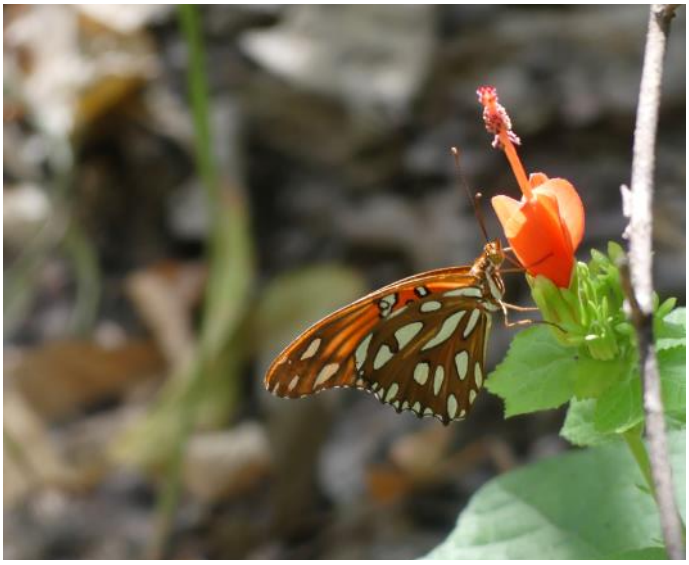
She also demonstrated how she uses an Echo Meter Touch 2 by Wildlife Acoustics echo location device with her phone to monitor and identify bats when she goes bat watching in the evening.

No first Saturday workday in **September** due to the Labor Day holiday.

*Right, Ellen Ravkind telling us about another cute bat. She sure loves those bats. Ann Knudsen photo. Below, A peaceful spot to take a morning walk. Marian Hiler photo.*

# Wildscape Extra **photos by Marian Hiler**

*Editor's note: There are times when we just can't construct a story. We tell you it's hot, plants are struggling, volunteers are staggering, and that's it. At such moments we go back to basics and say, "Hey, look! Birds, flowers, butterflies! Nice, huh?" That's what's happening right here. Clockwise from upper left, Texas lantana, scarlet sage, gulf fritillary on Turk's cap, American beautyberry, eastern bluebird.*



# Efforts to Save Bluebird Nestlings from the Heat

## Donna Piercy and Dick Schoech

This is our ninth year of monitoring the Bluebird Nestbox Trail at the Audubon International-certified Tierra Verde Golf Club in Arlington. This year had been exceptional after two pitiful years following Snowmageddon in February 2021 and the loss of many birds. Then the 104-108 degree temperatures hit.

One clutch of eggs didn't hatch. Another nest held nestlings close to fledging, but two were found dead and one was barely hanging on. That nestling was given water via an eye dropper and allowed to cool off that evening, but he was found dead the next morning. We had one nest with eggs left. Would they hatch? A temperature of 107 degrees can be lethal for bluebird eggs. What could be done to help them survive if they did hatch?

We had painted the tops of the boxes white some time ago to keep them cooler, but at these temperatures, that did little to help nestlings. After three of the five hatched, we cut pieces of insulation board to fit the top and two sides of the box. The golf course staff was gracious and put up an insulation screen to shield the box and one side. Live

*continued on page 24*

*Desperate times call for desperate measures. A heavily modified bluebird box at Tierra Verde Golf Club.*

# Saving Bluebirds continued from page 23

mealworms hadn't been used before but were supplied to help with hydration and nutrition of the parents and nestlings. Two shallow basins of water were placed close to the nest. Staff filled the water stations on the days we could not come.

We always visit in the morning, but we decided to visit in the afternoon to see how effective our screen was in the middle of the day. It failed inspection: The box had direct sun for several hours in the middle of the day. Now we were really stumped. There had to be something else we could do.

We talked to several bird rehabbers and they advised against umbrellas (too windy and possibly frightening to the parents) or moving the nest into a basket and into a shaded tree close by. One suggested putting a cold soaked towel, folded, on top of the box. We immediately headed back out to the nest with our towel. Surprise — the nestlings had fledged early. In Texas, bluebirds fledge at 15 to 18 days. This was day 14!

What we had done for this clutch ended up being enough. This last group of nestlings fledged on Aug. 9, and what a relief it was. The season ended with 65 having fledged. A great success!

We will be better prepared for next year. One of our cohorts mentioned a new type of paint called Ultra White which reflects 98% of the sun's rays. Will it be available and safe for birds? We would like to try it if so. But there is a dilemma. The paint that would help protect them from the heat in the summer would also block the heat in the winter and early spring when it can be helpful. Bluebird nesting season usually starts in mid-February.

**More about Ultra White:**

**https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/12/climate/white-paint-climate-cooling.html**… "if materials such as Purdue's ultra-white paint were to coat between 1 percent and 2 percent of the Earth's surface, slightly more than half the size of the Sahara, the planet would no longer absorb more heat than it was emitting, and global temperatures would stop rising."

**https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2021/Q2/the-whitest-paint-is-here-and-its-the-coolest.-literally..html**

# Energy Transfer Grace Darling

The snowy owl was desperately trying to keep her three chicks warm and fed during the harsh Siberian winter. Spring was late and ice and snow still covered her ever-broader hunting grounds, but no lemmings could be spotted. The owl's efforts to feed her family were mighty, but the challenges were too severe; the smallest chick grew progressively weaker and died. For a whole day mother owl stood by the inert form of her youngest, smoothing the downy coat with her beak and prodding it to move. Eventually, having stared at her two surviving offspring for a while, she bent down to start ripping apart the body of her little one to nourish its siblings.

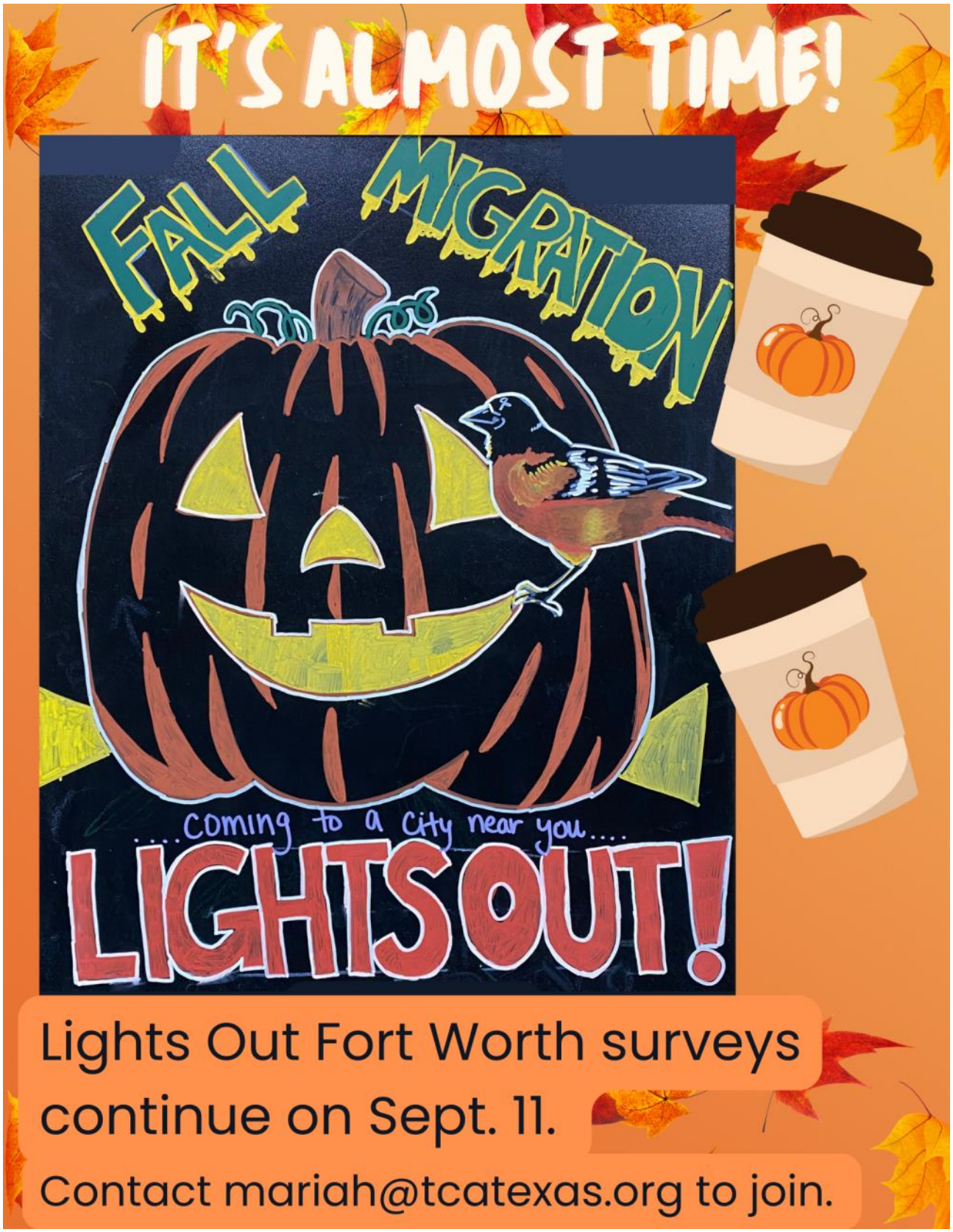
So what does this nature documentary scene have to do with us, you ask? Enter Mike A., last president of the Arlington Men's Garden Club and our own wise bird. In the face of changing demographics and an aging population, the club had struggled to maintain its focus and live up to its mission for several years, to no avail. Recently the club's leaders decided to close their doors permanently, and it became Mike's task to distribute its assets to other 501(c)(3) organizations in compliance with IRS rules. He has done a magnificent job.

In keeping with the generous nature of gardeners everywhere and guided by Mike's good sense, the Arlington Men's Garden Club will live on through cash donations to groups all over Arlington, Mansfield, and Fort Worth. The criteria for recipients include purpose, organization, and need. The gifts are unencumbered and in some instances will enable a much-needed capital expenditure (e.g., a dedicated greenhouse) while for others it may mean continued success of an established program (e.g., free food distribution from a church community garden).

Whether growing flowers, vegetables, or fruit, recipients or not, we all share a passion for working in the dirt and vow to follow your donor spirit. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

*From left, Grace Darling, Mike A., Ann Knudsen*

**For more, go to [Lights Out, Texas]**



# Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve Annabelle Corboy

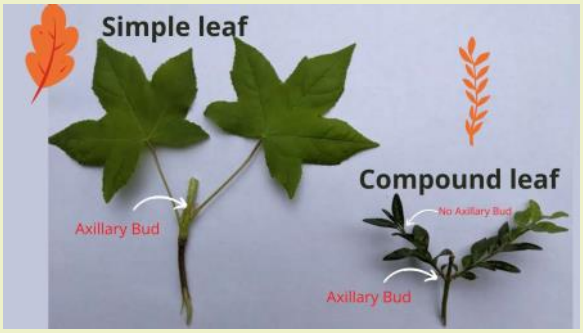
## July 18 Program Review

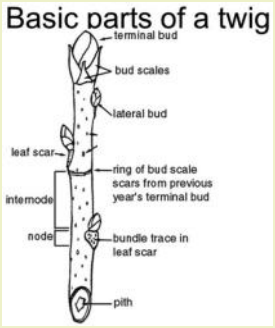
**Botany Skills for Naturalists - How to really start seeing the plants around you**

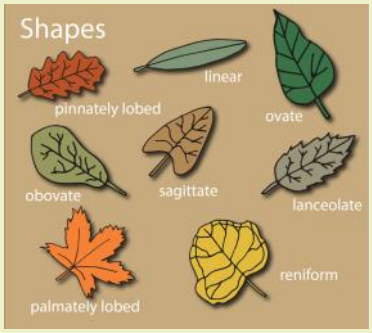
Thank you to Carol Clark for helping us brush up on our botany skills AND to understand why they're so important. Is that ferny looking plant with the pretty white blooms beggars ticks, or Queen Anne's Lace or maybe deadly poison hemlock? Is that compound-leaved plant box elder, or Virginia creeper…or poison ivy? Foraging anyone?!? Knowing what to look for can make a big difference!

Carol brought a great variety of carefully selected fresh plant samples for us to study as she described leaf shapes, color patterns, leaves vs. leaflets, margins, leaf arrangements, vein patterns, bristles vs. prickles and more. The hands-on approach made it much easier to understand and remember botanical terms and to see the unique differences between plant species.

Carol Clark is a Texas Master Naturalist, long-time Native Plant Society of Texas member, Chair of the Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas committee of NPSOT, and a Monarch Watch Conservation Specialist. When she isn't busy teaching others about pollinators or native plants, she enjoys looking after her own colossal Monarch Waystation and wildlife refuge in Cooke County.




## August 12 Program Review

**Nature Journaling at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve**

Michael Smith and Jessica Smith met with a group of people at SCNP on August 12 to talk about using writing and drawing to enrich time spent in nature. Nature journaling is not only a way to preserve thoughts and images from a day in nature. It also is likely to make your memory of the day richer, it's an opportunity for self-reflection while writing and drawing, and promotes mindful awareness of the present moment.

*continued on page 28*

# Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 27

## Weather Report: It's Hot and Dry at SCNP

This is the droughty time of year, and a quarter teetering in a crack in the soil along the Meadow Loop Trail proves it.

One way to track rainfall at the preserve is to tap into a personal weather station in the Weather Underground network. The closest one appears to be on Lake Park Court, about four blocks NW of the NW Gate of the preserve. It has recorded only 8.7 inches so far this year (compared to 13.6 inches recorded at DFW Airport for the same period a year ago). Rain in Arlington has been hyper local this year, and many cloudbursts have steered clear of the preserve. It has rained only 0.1 of an inch at the preserve since June 23. And it has been HOT!

Since we transplanted more than 150 plants in December-January on the North Prairie and Pollinator Meadow, watering them as best as possible will keep them alive until the rain returns. Those that make it this year should survive to provide seed supplies on an annual basis to help restore our prairies. Established prairie plants sink roots deep, making them ideal for weathering our summer droughts.

## 3rd Saturday Volunteer Day July 15, notes from Jim Frisinger

Friends' Jim Frisinger, in yellow, is surrounded by a crew from South-Point Constructors on Third Saturday Volunteer Day *(Jan Miller photo)*. The young men boasted a nice turnout of volunteers at 7 a.m to beat the heat. They cleared Johnsongrass and giant ragweed from the beds surrounding the parking lot. Looking good! The next Third Saturday Volunteer Day is Saturday, Aug. 19, meeting at the parking lot.

*continued on page 29*

# Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 28

## SCNP iNaturalist Observations and Species July 2023

We thought June was hot. July's totals: 54 Observations, 46 Species, and 7 Observers. Way down from June, which was down from May. Still, there is life and color.

Painted Lady *(Vanessa cardui)* - drawntoscales, Butterfly Pea (Centrosema virginianum) - cindylcobb5, Scarlet Toothcup *(Ammannia coccinea)* – knightericm

Giant robber fly, *Promachus hinei* – joshmols, Soft Goldaster *(Bradburia Pilosa)* – drawntoscales, Oblique Heterocampa Moth *(Heterocampa obliqua)* - cindylcobb5

# Blackland Prairie Preserve Guy Random

*Looks just like last time.*
*No, no. Pay more attention.*
*Late summer? Nuance!*
*Nope, I'm bored and hot —*
*it's only a vacant lot.*
*You could not be more wrong.*

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**Membership Information**

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Address _____

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## Our September Zoom Meeting

**See page 7 for more on this presentation.**