

# Featherless Flyer

The Voice of The Friends of Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge Foundation

## Junior Wildlife Ranger Program Begins at HNWR

By Jean Flick



Hagerman NWR has joined forces with the Junior Wildlife Ranger program, a project of the Earth Island Institute. The goal of the program is to encourage kids to get outside and get involved with nature. To receive a Junior Wildlife Ranger badge, children complete the HNWR Nature Journal, which involves participation in activities such as identifying animal tracks, completing a nature scavenger hunt, and finding birds. After the completed Nature Journal is reviewed by staff or volunteers at the Visitor Center, the badge is awarded.

Started in 2013 as Junior Refuge Rangers, the program is expanding, with refuges in four states currently participating and others starting soon. The online platform (Continued on Page 2)

## Weekly Butterfly Census Now at HNWR

By Laurie Sheppard

The Friends of Hagerman created a unique resource in 2014, when they broke ground on the Butterfly Garden. The plantings and design have always been selected to attract both butterflies and people to explore and enjoy. For butterflies, that means a good mix of nectar and host plants that target the butterflies likely to be found in Grayson County. For people, there are well-maintained paths and ample seating. For both, there are areas of sun and shade and the gentle sound of running water and bird song in the background.



(Continued on Page 2)

## Coming in May 2018



- May 1 - 8 am - Outdoor Crew
  - May 5 - 10 am - Butterfly Garden Walk; Docents Meeting - Noon
  - May 6 - 3 pm - Cell Phone Photography with Mary Karam
  - May 12 - Second Saturday - Early Bird Walk, 8 am, with Jack Chiles, and Dr. George Diggs, "Trees of Texas", 10 am (See Page 2)
  - May 13 - 3 - 5 pm - Mother's Day in the Garden
  - May 19 - 10 - 11:30 am - The Refuge Rocks - Let's Go Fishing - for youngsters ages 4 - 16 and their families
  - May 19 - 10 am - Butterfly Garden Walk
  - May 19 - 1 pm - Nature Photography Club, Ron & Sharlott Hasty, "Adding Motion + Emotion to Your Photos"
  - May 26 - 10 am - Noon - Wildflower Tour at HNWR, with Brenda Loveless; details at [friendsofhagerman.com/Activities](http://friendsofhagerman.com/Activities)
- C&E Cardinal Express Tram Tours Saturdays & Sundays, 2 pm**  
Please call 903 786 2826 for reservations.

## Mother's Day in the Garden

3 - 5 pm Sunday, May 13 - Free

Enjoy a stroll through the Butterfly Garden, weather permitting. Great for photos and making memories. Light refreshments, Monarch gift posters. Indoor presentation in case of rain.

## Let's Go Fishing! 10 - 11:30 am, Saturday, May 19

For kids 4 - 16, poles, bait provided or bring your own. Free. First pond on Refuge Rd. Bring lawn chairs, picnics, hats, sunscreen and insect repellent, plus container for your catch! Enjoy fishy crafts, too! Cancelled in case of rain.

## BLUESTEM MASTER NATURALISTS

Coming June 13 - NATURE O'LOGY CAMP

For ages 10 -11, limited to 30 participants

For details and registration form, email [bluestemmasternaturalists@gmail.com](mailto:bluestemmasternaturalists@gmail.com)

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Friends for TODAY support programs and activities for TOMORROW and ensure that the Refuge will be here for wildlife AND people in the FUTURE!

## Trees Presentation May 12

Our speaker, Dr. George Diggs's areas of work are with plants and trees of Texas, the relationship between human and plant evolution, and evolution in extreme environments. Dr. Diggs is Research Associate of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) in Fort Worth. In 1999 he was named Texas "Professor of the Year" by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. In 2000, Diggs was awarded the Donovan Stewart Correll Memorial Award for Scientific Writing by the Native Plant Society of Texas for his book *Shinners & Mahlers Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas*. In 2006, Diggs and coauthors were awarded the Donovan Stewart Correll Memorial Award for Scientific Writing by the Native Plant Society of Texas for their book "Illustrated Flora of East Texas, Volume One" Dr. Diggs will focus on trees of Texas in the free nature presentation, open to the public, no reservations necessary. Second Saturday programs are suitable for age 12 - adult.

**Junior Wildlife, continued:** ([juniorwildliferanger.org](http://juniorwildliferanger.org)) allows kids and families to learn about the National Wildlife Refuge system and check out locations where they can earn badges, and, more importantly, learn about wildlife and conservation. An interactive map takes kids to refuge spotlights, including a [spotlight](#) of Hagerman NWR (<http://www.juniorwildliferanger.org/hagerman-profile.html>)

Last year, more than 2000 children participated in guided hikes at HNWR through school field trips and other scheduled events. Many more visit the refuge with family. Courtney Anderson, refuge biologist, often leads these guided hikes along Harris Creek Trail. She states that a favorite activity of kids is finding and identifying animal tracks.

Earning a Junior Wildlife Ranger badge provides a means of recognition for kids who engage in hands-on learning about wildlife and offers children a sense of connection with other kids across the country who are exploring the natural world and gaining an understanding of environmental stewardship.

**Butterfly Census, continued:** Since 2016, random occasional lists of butterflies seen in the garden have been collected and compiled, but as the garden has matured, we find that more reliable information is needed. Sometimes butterflies found elsewhere on the refuge have been included on the lists, and misidentification has occasionally occurred. Also, with random lists, there have been gaps in coverage and understanding. Consistency and accuracy are the hallmarks of scientific methods. It's time to apply those to our Butterfly Garden Census.

Our model will be the weekly bird census at Hagerman NWR. Every Tuesday morning, a group of birders assemble to take a census of all the birds they can find in the next 5-6 hours. The birding group is currently led by Jack Chiles and he is joined by several other dedicated volunteers. The route they take varies slightly each week, but they concentrate on finding and identifying as many bird species in the area as possible at that time.

This year several of the Butterfly Garden Docents will undertake a more formal butterfly census program, ensuring that a comprehensive list of species present in the garden will be documented each week from April through November. When the bird census began, records were maintained manually and that will be the case for our butterfly census. Carl Hill and I have each committed to visiting the garden at mid-day on one or more days every week, beginning with the first week in April. Our butterfly lists are combined with random lists submitted by other volunteers and correlated to a separate listing of plants that are blooming that week. The resulting weekly list is published on the Friends of Hagerman website and can be found on the sidebar of the Butterfly Garden Page. For ease of reference, all lists for a month are combined into a single document.

Collecting and distributing a list of butterflies seen along with flowers that are blooming will help visitors by providing a list of what is on the wing that week in the Butterfly Garden. The information may also help local residents at their home gardens, by indicating what is currently being seen in the Texoma area. Over time, the information will also help the Butterfly Garden Docents know when to expect a particular butterfly to emerge and whether a specific butterfly is rare or common in our area. Maintaining a regular census will also enable the garden managers to correlate butterfly species to plants that are blooming and determine the needs for additional host and nectar plants.

Since the Butterfly Garden was created, more than 25 species of butterflies have been identified on the refuge for the first time. Many of these would have been missed, had they not been attracted to the Butterfly Garden's abundant nectar sources. However, not all butterflies are found in the garden and therefore, will not be identified in this year's census, but perhaps in the future the program can be expanded. In the meantime, visitors who see a butterfly they don't recognize anywhere on the refuge are encouraged to take a photo and share it with the Friends of Hagerman for identification.



## WILDFLOWER TOUR AT HNWR May 26

Meet at the Visitor Center by 10 am for a wildflower tour with Brenda Loveless. You may register online ([friendsofhagerman.com/activities](http://friendsofhagerman.com/activities)) for van seating; once that is full, additional participants may caravan as we will be stopping at various sites. Cameras welcome! Free.

## Birding with Jack

Excerpts from the weekly bird survey write-up  
by Jack Chiles, Master Naturalist

**April 3, 2018** - After having 102 species on our census last week, we were really humbled today which a much lower species count. We started the day with a very strong south wind and finished the day with a strong north wind. Since passerines were hard to find we spent more of our morning looking at shorebirds. The water has come back up and we don't have much in the way of mudflats but there was still a lot of shorebird activity. One shorebird that was a very early date for the species was a White-rumped Sandpiper that breeds in Canada and Arctic tundra and winters as far south as the tip of South America and has been found as a vagrant on Antarctica. There were a couple of breeding plumage American Avocets and also a Black-necked Stilt. There were also lots of Long-billed Dowitchers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and other shorebirds. We saw a couple of male Cinnamon Teals along with other ducks in the pool on the left by the culvert on Wildlife Drive. The Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets are now here in large numbers along with some Little Blue Herons and a few Cattle Egrets We also had great looks at both Red-headed and Pileated Woodpeckers. We finished the morning with 76 species.

**April 10, 2018** - It was a pleasant sunny day with a light northeast breeze. We started our day with a walk down Harris Creek Trail and found a Blue-headed Vireo and a House Wren along with quite a few other birds. Later in the morning we went in search of the Godwits that have been reported the last few days and found both a Hudsonian Godwit and a Marbled Godwit. They were both on a sandbar near the end of Tern Pad. With them we also found Forster's Terns, Bonaparte's, Ring-billed and Franklin's Gulls. Some of the Franklin's Gulls had nice pink breasts. The Godwits flew and one of them joined a group of birds near the end of Egret Pad, including a Black-necked Stilt, quite a few American Golden-Plovers, a Baird's Sandpiper and some Yellowlegs. We had great closeup looks of the Marbled Godwit. We found 9 species of sparrows. Warblers were very scarce. We saw both a Sora, near Wildlife Drive and an American Bittern near the entrance to Plover Pad. We finished the day with 90 species.

**April 17, 2018** - On a morning when the wind was gusting strongly from the south we started the day with low expectations but were we ever mistaken. Shorebird species, a total of 17 species, was impressive, The best areas for shorebirds is the Harris Creek marsh which has some really great mudflats (the area to the left of the first bridge on Wildlife Drive) and the mudflats off the end of Tern Pad. We counted 84 Hudsonian Godwits today. Many were very close to Wildlife Drive and offered great viewing. As for the Hudsonian Godwits, the previous high number was in the seventies and most of those sightings were in May. That is up until yesterday when my son called me and said there were a lot of Godwits there late yesterday afternoon. I immediately went out to the refuge to get a count and my final total before dark was 218. Some of these birds left just before dark headed north like they had a purpose. We watched the Godwits spread out all over the marsh and all of a sudden they started making a sound that I had never heard them make and all bunched together in the middle of the marsh. There they continued feeding. The sound they were making was not like an alarm sound when they sight a raptor which made me speculate that it was some kind of assembly signal. While we were observing the shorebirds at the end of Tern Pad an Osprey flew in near us and alighted on a sandbar and soon left but not before we had great looks. On the way to Meadow Pond we saw Wild Turkeys and had our first of season Prothonotary Warblers and Summer Tanagers. We saw a late Dark-eyed Junco in a yard west of the refuge. We finished the day with 85 species.

**April 24, 2018** - After quite a few weeks of not so friendly birding weather we finally had a beautiful day, calm and sunny, We are now entering the good part of spring migration and we are fortunate to be one of the few places in North Central Texas with some good mudflats for shorebirds. We saw 18 species of shorebirds. Some of the better shorebird sightings were 16 Hudsonian Godwits, 1 Marbled Godwit, 9 Willets, 3 Black-necked Stilts, 2 American Avocets, 34 American Golden-Plovers and 71 Long-billed Dowitchers. We found several Soras and a Virginia Rail in Plover marsh. The breeding plumage Eared Grebe is still in Mineral Marsh. The vetch fields on both sides of Silliman Rd. are a good place to checkout for Dickcissels, Eastern Kingbirds, Western Kingbirds, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Grasshopper Sparrows and within a week or so we should be seeing Bobolinks there. In Deaver Pond we found a Black-crowned Night-Heron and at Meadow Pond we saw a Belted Kingfisher. We have buntings arriving and we saw Painted Buntings, Indigo Buntings and Blue Grossbeaks. We finished the morning with 103 species.



**See [friendsofhagerman.com/BirdSurvey](http://friendsofhagerman.com/BirdSurvey) for complete census data. Don't miss out! Early Bird Guided Walk, Saturday, May 12 at 8 am, weather permitting. Led by Jack Chiles. Meet at the Visitor Center. Return in time for Second Saturday program.**

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**FOH Nature Photography Club** - The club program for May 19 will be, Adding Motion + Emotion to Your Photos, with Ron & Sharlott Hasty (rescheduled from January due to weather). The sharing theme for the May 19 meeting is Butterfly Garden Flora & Fauna. The guidelines for photo sharing are posted in the sidebar on [friendsofhagerman.com/PhotoClub](http://friendsofhagerman.com/PhotoClub).

Session 2 of the Basic Digital Photography Class was held on April 21; the topic, Exposure, led by Dick Malnory. Thanks to mentors Bert Garcia, Jeff Gladden, Becky Goodman, Skip Hill, Larry Howard and Alan Lusk. Session 3, Depth of Field, led by Eileen Sullivan, is set for June 16. Attendance at Session 1 was required for this series.

Thank you to Jeff Gladden for printer donation and Sherry Howard for winning silent auction bid!

The club is sponsoring a free program, Cell Phone Photography with Mary Karam, presenter, on May 6 at 3 pm. Mary asks that attendees bring their phone with a fully charged battery and download the app, *Snapseed*, prior to the program.

Photos by Laurie Sheppard, Alan Daniel, Carl Hill, Jack Chiles, Mike Chiles, Jesus Moreno and Bill Powell are featured on <http://www.juniorwildliferanger.org/hagerman-profile.html>.

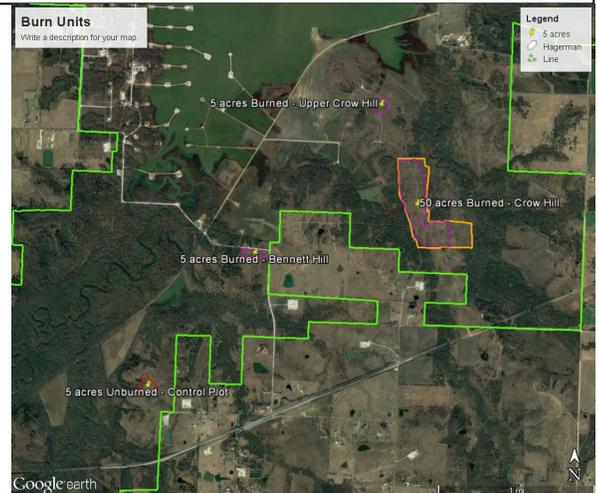
## Efforts to Restore Pollinator Habitat Underway

By Jean Flick

What are the best land management practices for restoring pollinators in the Cross Timbers region of Texas and Oklahoma? Researchers from the University of Texas at Austin and Oklahoma State University hope to find answers to this question through a research project currently underway at various locations in the region, including HNWR. Plats on the refuge were selected to undergo prescribed burns with or without wildflower seeding. The prescribed burns took place on three plats in January. Two of the burned plats will not be seeded. In April, drilled wildflower and milkweed seeding was completed on Bennett Hill, one of the 5-acre burned plats. An additional plat will serve as the control during the two year comparison, as researchers evaluate the effect of these habitat management techniques on plant-pollinator communities.

Over 75% of all flowering plants are pollinated by hummingbirds, bats, bees, beetles, butterflies, and flies. A recent study by the National Academy of Sciences found declines in some wild pollinator populations. The main threats facing pollinators are habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation (<https://www.fws.gov/pollinators/>).

Drilled wildflower seeding was completed by Native American Seed. Seed drillers ensure that seeds are distributed evenly and at an adequate and consistent depth. Native American Seed, a Texas-based company, uses only native seeds in their effort to help restore ecosystem integrity.



## THANK YOU's for April, 2018

**Second Saturday** - Early Bird Walk, Dr. Wayne Meyer; Are You Smarter than a Raccoon, Dr. Jessica Healy

**The Refuge Rocks** - Donna Rogers, Pam Flaming, Sarah Cheeks, Evelyn Bryant, Cindy Steele, Ginger Heiman

**Publicity** - Patricia Crain; Dorothy San Miguel, Connie Hardesty, Susan Knowles, Cindy Steele

**Web Content Assistance** - Laurie Sheppard, Patricia Crain

**IT/AV Assistance** - Dorothy San Miguel, Becky Goodman, Leonard Getrum, John Denton, Nan Campbell

**Outdoor Crew** - John Denton, Lynette Fiscus, Mike Grubb, Steven Walker, Gene Cushion, David McDonald, and staff, Courtney Anderson.

**Gardeners** - Sue Abernathy, Emmy McCurley, David Turner, Lynette Fiscus, Mary Grant, Donna Pelkey, Kathy Nance, Linn Cates, Teresa Crawford, Diane Getrum, Marilyn Biggers, Sue Raasch, Amber Grubb, Valerie Dalton, Sue Malnory

**Garden Docents:** David and Sharon Parrish

**Representing HNWR and FOH** at Texoma Earth Day - Linn Cates

**Event Photos:** Alan Lusk



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