Rio Grande Valley & South Texas Border Chapters
Texas Master Naturalist

The Chachalaca

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IN THIS ISSUE

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The Rio Grande Valley Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program is organized exclusively for charitable, scientific, and educational purposes, more specifically to develop a group of knowledgeable volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the study of conservation of natural resources and natural areas within the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

Moth Night at the South Texas Ecotourism Center – A Nature Story

Article by Camille M. Rich, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

Saturday, July 22, 2023, marked the first event celebrating night pollinators during Moth Week held at the South Texas Ecotourism Center (STEC) in Cameron County. When I received the email asking if I could help with this first-time event, I was excited to be able to help STEC! Before I agreed, there was one key phone call I needed to make. I called my friend, and fellow breast cancer survivor, and "South Texas Sand Sheet Sister," Cat Traylor. I knew that with her experience and my organizational skills, we could pull off this event, even if we only had less than two weeks to prepare.

After Cat graciously agreed to jump right in and help, I formally committed both of us to helping the STEC present their Moth Night to the public. Cat brought her years of experience with mothing, her skill with building moth setups, and her expertise in macro photography. By my rough estimate, I would say that Cat donated easily over 100 hours of her time to this project, not to mention the financial donation of lending the STEC all her mothing equipment for their inaugural mothing event, right down to the reusable zip ties we used to secure sheets to metal frames for the moth setups.

Cat, Jake and Javi at "Small Fry" moth setup- photo by Camille M. Rich

Cat and I quickly compared calendars and set up a STEC scouting trip along with Roberto Gaitan and Barbara Peet. We all sat down with Mr. Edward Meza, Director of the STEC, to discuss the event, materials needed, logistics, and scope of layout. This meeting was instrumental in bringing many other activities and events together, set up, and in place for this inaugural moth night event.

As for the chance to be a part of the first event of this kind at the STEC, my teacher's heart burst out of my chest with excitement. Educational opportunities surrounding this event abounded---numerous "teachable moments" to be planned for, fostered, supported, and promoted. A few of the "teachable moments" I was excited about were:

- Bringing awareness to night pollinators and their role in the pollination process.
- Promoting participation in an event that provided equal access to the public for a first-time mothing experience, regardless of their income, educational background, or socioeconomic status.
- Fostering community involvement in some of the things they might be able to be a part of if they were to want to become a Texas Master Naturalist.

- Enjoying the night with fellow Texas Master Naturalists while also learning from both their experience, expertise, and education.
- Supporting my Texas Master Naturalist chapter in this endeavor for the community we live in and serve---icing on the cake for me!

However, the most notable reason, personally speaking, for me being involved in this event is that I know this is what Uncle Frank Wiseman would have wanted. As a teacher, he and I shared that same passion for learning and helping others to learn. As many of you know, he was a pioneer in the Texas Master Naturalist program in the Rio Grande Valley, and this sort of "first time" event would have been right up his alley (and I would have been right alongside him). You see, when you are a teacher, that is the first cap you put on at the beginning of each day, and some of us never take our caps off. It is a cap we don daily and for a lifetime.

Admittedly, I am a novice when it comes to mothing experience. Nevertheless, I was not deterred from trying to make this a memorable, fun, educational event. In fact, in many ways, this event was no different for me than when I was planning lessons for my fifth and sixth graders years ago. Back when, as a rookie teacher, I taught all subject areas, which required self-guided research, pouring over teacher manuals and their accompanying workbooks, and completing work behind the scenes to get materials ready for class. Teaching required impeccable organizational skills and logistics management ---Moth Night at the STEC would be no different.

STEC moth setup Cat and Camille named, "The Wall"- photo by Camille M. Rich

There was a lot of work to do in a very short amount of time. Regardless of how difficult I thought pulling off this event would be, and despite my lack of knowledge on the subject matter, I rolled up my sleeves and got to work. Cat and I were not alone in helping to pull this wonderful event together. Many individuals dedicated their time to Moth Night at the STEC. Pretty soon, after a blur of days in my hot carport where Cat and I assembled moth setups, to flurries of emails with questions regarding logistics to Mr. Edward Meza, STEC Director, and so forth, finally the day of the event arrived.

Just prior to sunset, the ultraviolet light "beacons" were switched on. Their neon glow popped in sharp contrast to the muted shades of habitat silhouetted against the last few remaining moments of sunlight hanging in the sky as the sun had just slipped down below the horizon. Pauraques began swooping and diving overhead as they hunted for their snack of insects on the wing. The barbed-wire cacti blooms unfurled and were visited by scores of tiny ants.

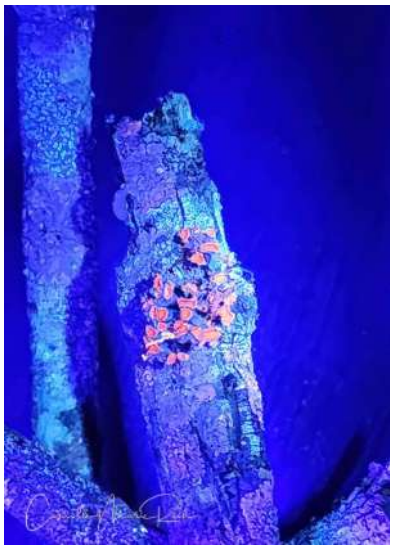
Above: Pyramid moth setup beckons insect visitors

Left: Barbed-wire cactus under UV light-
photos by Camille M. Rich

While I was busy interacting with visitors, even guiding some of them out to the Tamaulipan thornscrub installation in front of the STEC building, Cat dutifully and methodically surveilled the moth set ups for moth activity. Visitors also gathered around the moth setups—scouring them for insect activity. Everyone waited on bated breath for that first moth to show up, and then it did! The first moth showed up at a setup that Cat and I named "Small Fry."

Cat and Jake at "Small Fry" moth setup -photo by Camille M. Rich

Left: First moth of the night---a fuzzy, pretty Theodore Carpenterworm Moth. (*Givira theodori*) –photo by Cat Traylor



Right: Lichen under UV light - photo by Camille M. Rich

As the night wore on, many other insects visited the moth setups, but they did not show up as quickly as one would have hoped. While we waited for them, many other incredible nature stories were unfolding. For instance, while taking a break from the moth setups, several of us had the good fortune of sitting on a bench together and being dazzled by fellow Texas Master Naturalist, Drew Bennie, on how lichen glows under ultraviolet light. Who knew? I, for one, did not.

Fellow Texas Master Naturalists Javi Gonzalez and Jake Reinbolt arrived and almost immediately---and spontaneously---began nature talks and tours with visitors—pointing out all manner of both flora and fauna alike to the visitors at their side! Magical, teachable moments that they did not waste. They even guided walking tours with visitors out on the trails with their black light flashlights and came across some dazzling scorpions that fluoresced. Many thanks to both!

Left: Scorpion photographed under black light -photo by Cat Traylor

Right: Chestnut-banded Wave (*Idaea pervertipennis*) – -photo by Cat Traylor

Time continued to tick by, and our patience paid off. Many other insects showed up, including several more moths.

Where there is prey, there will be predators. This is the way of things in nature, and on this night, that relationship would prove itself out at about ten o'clock. At the moth setup that Cat and I had named "The Wall," a young visitor and her father were enjoying the nature stories unfolding right before their very eyes when a little crab was observed by them on the ground at the base of the moth setup.

The young visitor brought this little crab to my attention, and I do not know what I marveled more at---her bravery to pick up the little crustacean or the fact that the little predator had shown up for a snack. After all, it makes perfect sense that a predator would show up where there were certainly enough insects (prey) there to make a fine meal for it! A moment captured in time. A memory made.

Right: Small crustacean ready to prey on insects
-photo by Camille M. Rich

Below: *Oxacis bernadettei* – photo by Cat Traylor

Nature stories are both complex and interdependent. The nature story of night pollination does not begin and end with only moths; it also involves many other insects like beetles. Beetles are incredibly diverse and dazzling, and Cat captured a few spectacular portraits of some of these beetle visitors to the moth setups.

Seaside Lady Beetle (*Naemia seriata*) -photo by Cat Traylor

As this nature story comes to an end, even though Uncle Frank was not with me in a physical presence, I felt his strong support in this endeavor every step of the way. I would like to think that he was most pleased with this celebration of moths, and that he looked down upon the whole "Moth Night at the STEC" scene with a sense of happiness and satisfaction—his teacher's heart bursting with pride at the continuation of his legacy of learning and sharing with the community.

On that note, and in the spirit of community, I would like to thank everyone that contributed to this event. Whether you showed up prior to the event to help set up tables to display and share information on both the Texas Master Naturalist program and the Rio Grande Valley Pollinator Project, or to help Cat and I build the moth setups, to bringing items to share with visitors, or staying until the very end to help us load my truck to take everything home after midnight. Your presence, support, and contributions were valued, respected, and greatly appreciated.

Going forward, I am excited to continue to work with STEC on ideas and information to empower them to begin working on activities that will bolster, support, and facilitate their future mothing events. As for Moth Week 2024, mark your calendars for July 20-28. I already have some bright ideas for next year's event. I hope to see you there, and if you have never been to the STEC, please do not wait until Moth Week 2024 to do so. The sooner the better!

iNaturalist and STEC – Join the fun!

Article & photo by Camille M. Rich, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

For those of you not familiar with iNaturalist (iNat), I offer, here, an abbreviated overview of what it is and what it is all about. Briefly, iNaturalist is a nonprofit social network that enables individuals to record and share observations of living things---across the globe---either from iNat's website on their laptop / desktop or via iNat's mobile application on their cellphone or other electronic device---iPad, for example.

Just prior to the July 22 Moth Night at South Texas Ecotourism Center (STEC), a project was created for STEC in iNat to facilitate data collection for this mothing event. This project can be located in iNat under the general heading of "STEC Wildlife."

As Texas Master Naturalists, many of us are familiar with iNat, and we use it as a tool to help identify and learn about the flora and fauna in the natural world around us. So, the next time you visit the STEC, you can don your citizen scientist cap, and assist them in continued data collection for their site. Thank you, in advance, for your help on their "STEC Wildlife" project.

For a complete and thorough view of both Roberto Gaitan's and Cat Traylor's extensive insect documentation and portraiture from Moth Night at the STEC 2023, please visit the "STEC Wildlife" project in iNat at your earliest convenience. Here is the link to view their observations in this project: https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?project_id=174172

A beautiful sunset kicks off the first Moth Night at South Texas Ecotourism Center on July 22, 2023.

Proceed with caution when nurturing mystery plants

Article & photos by Anita Westervelt, South Texas Border Chapter

I accumulated a few one-gallon pots of upstart plants from the yard in late spring and stashed them under the arbor in a make-shift nursery. There were no more plant sales slated; several of the plants were naturalized, rather than native, but a mantra goes through my head sometimes, "no plant left behind," and I end up babysitting stray plants.

One plant in the little nursery dried up. Out of laziness, I didn't remove the pot of soil, so it continued to get watered. In June, a cotyledon pushed through the soil near the edge of the pot, and I kept it in the nursery, periodically trying to identify the burgeoning specimen via iNaturalist.org.

Even with a good head of feathery branches on the plant, I didn't trust the answer I was getting because I was completely unfamiliar with their selection, and I couldn't fathom how I could have come across a seed of such, although the identifications were consistent.

My preliminary research of the suspected species indicated the plant could eventually turn out tree-like, required a moist environment and could grow to 10 feet tall, which made me cautious about planting it in the yard anywhere just to see what it would become.

Finally, the first week of August showed a bud nearly in bloom and the next day, several blooms had opened around the upper stalk of the now four-foot-tall plant, still in its gallon pot of soil. No question about it, the plant identification in iNaturalist.org confirmed the plant as **bigpod sesbania (*Sesbania herbacea)***.

I got serious with researching the plant. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's plants database, bigpod sesbania is a cover crop/green manure, grown mainly for use as a soil-improving crop. It is an erect, large, semi-woody, herbaceous perennial that can reach heights of three to 10 feet. I've not noticed any farm fields with such a crop in my area.

Bigpod sesbania (*Sesbania herbacea)* seedling

Other common names are Colorado River-hemp, tall river-hemp and coffeeweed, a flowering plant in the legume family, native to the United States, particularly the southeastern states, where it grows in moist environments. Elsewhere, it is an introduced species.

Nine other Rio Grande Valley observations have been uploaded to iNaturalist, showing the plant to be speckled around Hidalgo and Cameron counties, mostly documented since 2020; one entry showed documentation in 2015 in the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge, La Sal Del Rey.

The flowers are typical pea-like blooms, bell-shaped, yellow to yellowish orange with purple spots or streaks; mine are solid yellow as yet. It reproduces by seed. The seedpod also is typical pea family, four to eight inches long, smooth, jointed, four-sided, tipped with a small beak and containing 30-40 seeds that are mottled with orange, green or brown colors, which I'm curious to see.

Yellow, pea-like blossoms of bigpod sesbania

I'll keep a strict watch, especially once it produces seed pods. I don't need a forest of tall, woody, perennials that require plowing under getting out of hand, and I doubt the farm field adjacent to our property needs any volunteer soil improvements.

Schmidt honored in Youth Photo Contest

Article & photo by Velma Schmidt, South Texas Border Chapter

South Texas Border Chapter Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) Robert "Zeke" Schmidt placed second in his age division during the recently concluded Southern Exposures Youth Photo Contest with his entry of a ribbon snake taken at the Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center. The annual contest sponsored by the Valley Land Fund premiers the work of young photographic artists from throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

Robert has participated in the competition for five consecutive years–each time placing as a finalist. As a seventh-grader, Robert received a perfect score and highest honors. Robert credits his love for photography and nature to his parents and his participation in Scouting. He has attained the rank of Eagle –Scouting's highest youth honor.

Robert recently began his senior year in high school at South Texas ISD World Scholars in Edinburg, where he lives with his family. He continues to be involved with scouting as Junior Assistant Scoutmaster in Troop 1927 chartered by Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Edinburg.

Robert enjoys being outside photographing wildlife whenever time permits and continues to educate and inform his community about the beauty and diversity of nature within the Valley through his continued involvement as a Texas Master Naturalist.

TMN South Texas Border Chapter member Robert "Zeke" Schmidt with award-winning photo of a ribbon snake.

Mediterranean House Gecko

Article & photos by M. Kathy Raines, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

Aah, nothing compares to the soothing, pulsing choirs of frogs, crickets and geckos of an evening! Geckos? Yes, some of those chirps, squeaks and clicks may come from Mediterranean house geckos that hunt along our fences and bricks as they entice mates and defend turf. Here's a sample of their songs: https://californiaherps.com/lizards/pages/h.turcicus.sounds.html

I haven't seen many of these geckos lately. We once spotted them pasted to our windowpanes almost nightly, and we'd watch, bemusedly, as our cats played with their wriggling, detached tails. I wonder if our brown anoles (*Anolis sagrei*), of which I've noted an increasing abundance, are infringing on gecko hunting grounds.

Nonnative Mediterranean house gecko (*Hemidactylus turcius*)

I still see a few geckos. When investigating a blind snake under a log in Harlingen this summer, I startled a gecko, which darted, froze briefly, then zipped this way and that. I spotted one while I searched for nighttime orbweavers, and another that eyed tiny insects on a windowpane.

As its name suggests, the Mediterranean house gecko (*Hemidactylus turcius*), along with its possible rival, the brown anole (*Anolis sagrei*), is a nonnative, so, if my hunch is correct, one nonnative might be usurping another. But then, the snake I recently studied, the Brahminy blind snake (*Indotyphlops braminus*) is a nonnative, and, come to think of it, so am I—well, as of 42 years ago.

The verdict is not in on whether these introduced geckos or anoles, for that matter, do any damage —though it does appear that the brown anole, which hunts on or close to the ground, may be replacing the green one (*Anolis carolinensis*). But the latter may be holding its own, hunting amid higher foliage.

This gecko's family, Gekkonidae, for "true geckos", includes 58 genera and over 1,300 species worldwide, three of which are introduced species in Texas, though, the Mediterranean is the only one widely established here. Hailing from southern Europe, northern Africa and western Asia, it first appeared in Florida in 1915—likely via its (and/or its eggs') hitchhiking on plants, crops or lumber.

This gecko has since spread broadly, especially throughout much of the South; it doesn't abide cold temperatures for long—though it adeptly crawls under whatever it can to survive. Resistant to pesticides, it thrives in disjointed urban areas—hunting for insects, spiders and other invertebrates along fences, under bark and bricks, near lights and, especially in its native lands, within canyons and along and between rocks. Fond of human habitations, it appears unwilling, in most cases, to face the Texas wilds.

The Mediterranean gecko, which may grow to five inches long, has a distinct, flattened head, whitish underside and lidless eyes shielded from dust and debris by a transparent, moisturizing membrane; it also licks its eyes. Its pupils are oval like those of a cat. This gecko has granular, or bumpy, scales, with tubercles, or raised bumps—which may assist in camouflage, diffusion of light for thermoregulation or anchoring itself within cracks. Its spots are tan, pinkish or brown, with spots appearing more intense in daytime.

Mediterranean geckos lay several two-egg clutches of hard, sticky eggs, individually or communally, between walls, within cracks or under debris. Two-inch long hatchlings appear in about 50 days and reach sexual maturity within a year.

A gecko readily adheres to walls, fences and trunks by way of the setae—minute, hair-like structures—on the pads of its five toes, which contain bristle-like spatulae; these, like wee spatulas, stick to surfaces. This short video from *National Geographic* well illustrates this phenomenon: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhfXbSSrabw

The adhesiveness of gecko feet inspires scientists and engineers, who seek to create substances that can stick and detach from surfaces as adeptly. Geckos have prompted the creation of numerous useful items: climbing robots, adhesive pads to help soldiers climb and substances to seal wounds without staples or stitches. Interestingly, geckos cannot stick to everything—like some wet surfaces, or Teflon.

Since this introduced species is unregulated by Texas Parks and Wildlife, one holding a Texas hunting license can collect these geckos at any time. They are nonvenomous, easy to catch and have an extremely weak bite, which makes them popular pets. We do not know their effects on native species, so of course, this merits monitoring.

The Southwestern Trapdoor Spider

Article by Camille M. Rich, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

Trapdoor spider with front legs raised -photo by Camille M. Rich

Spiders are around us day in and day out. Sometimes I spot them, and sometimes I do not. I have noticed that the number of times I catch sight of spiders is in direct correlation to how big they are. The bigger the spider, the more (and sooner) I notice it.

This was precisely the case on July 6, 2023, when my friend Cat and I were out and about at El Mesteño Ranch and Arboretum, which is in Northwestern Hidalgo County. As we walked the property, we observed from a few yards away what we thought, at first, was a Texas brown tarantula making tracks across the night sky viewing area.

Southwestern Trapdoor spider -photo by Cat Traylor

Upon closer inspection, we realized that although large (over one inch in overall length), this individual was a bit more delicate and refined—less fuzzy, overall, than a tarantula. It turns out it was not a Texas brown tarantula after all. It was the Southwestern Trapdoor spider.

Britannica online reveals the following information about Trapdoor spiders:

> "Trap-door spiders construct burrows in the ground; at the entrance they build a silken-hinged door. The spider feeds by quickly opening the trap door and grabbing an insect that is passing close by. The door, often camouflaged, usually exceeds 2.5 cm (1 inch) in width. Tunnels off the main tube may also have doors. The spiders remain in the tube except when hunting. They are timid and quickly retreat into the tube if frightened."

Cat and I observed this spider species once more on the night of July 29, 2023. It was out several hours after the sun had gone down—presumably looking for a late-night meal. We used our flashlight to study the intricate features of its form, down to the small hairs covering its entire body, legs included. On this night, this individual seemed much larger than the individual we had seen just a few weeks prior. Nevertheless, the sight of it on the red, sandy soil beside us gave us an appreciation for its ability to survive in this arid summer of extreme heat out on the South Texas Sand Sheet.

Night view of Southwestern Trapdoor spider -photo by Cat Traylor

There have been a few other historical observations of Trapdoor spiders at El Mesteño Ranch and Arboretum. Once upon a time, a brilliant, turquoise-colored Trapdoor spider (*Ummidia funerea)* came out after a rain back on February 8, 2019. A year or so later, on May 23, 2020, a Southwestern Trapdoor spider was washed out of its tunnel by rain. On the very next day, May 24, 2020, a Texas brown tarantula was also washed out of its home due to rain.

Above: Brilliantly hued Trapdoor spider (*Ummidia funerea)* -photo by Camille M. Rich

Left: Southwestern Trapdoor spider portrait -photo by Camille M. Rich

Articles on the Texas Brown Tarantula and the Trapdoor spiders found at El Mesteño Ranch and Arboretum in 2019 and 2020 can be found at the following links:
https://elmestenoranch.com/2020/05/_/1619/
https://elmestenoranch.com/ranch-fauna/insects-and-arachnids/
https://elmestenoranch.com/2019/02/_/1079/

Texas Brown Tarantula -photo by Camille M. Rich

Online Sources / Resources used for this photo story:

Brittanica Online: https://www.britannica.com/animal/trap-door-spider

iNaturalist: https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?taxon_id=264036

Discover Life: https://www.discoverlife.org/mp/20q?search=Ctenizidae

BugGuide:
https://bugguide.net/index.php?q=search&keys=southwestern+trapdoor+spider&search=Search

Texas Parks & Wildlife:
https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/resources/texas-junior-naturalists/be-nature-safe/arachnids

Red-tail Hawks and Cormorants -What do they have in common?

Article & photo by Carolyn Cardile, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

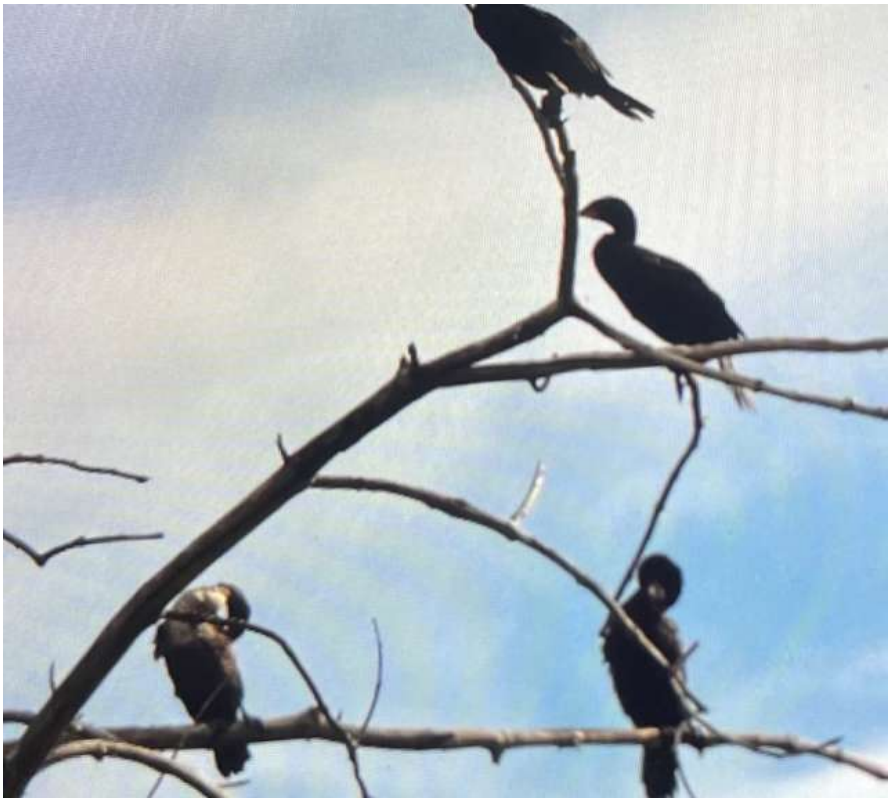
Each of these species spends time in both the Denver metro area and the Rio Grande Valley. This summer we are staying with my daughter in Thornton, a suburban area north of Denver. My daughter's house is at the entrance to a subdivision overlooking an open space. This space borders a long walking trail that follows the creek which was once a watering system for agricultural. I remember riding my bicycle along this road before it was paved when we lived nearby.

The suburbs have really expanded in recent years! Because this city has preserved numerous open space areas, trails, and parks, there is still a lot of wildlife here. Two of my favorites are the Red-tail Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*).

There is a Red-tail Hawk that hangs out on the light pole or the traffic light looking for a meal. This species is common throughout North America. They are very large hawks with broad, rounded wings and a short tail typical of the genus Buteo. The article I read on the internet says that Red-tails in South Texas are "darker above without the dark belly band most other Red-tails have." The article also mentions that dark-morph birds can also occur and is more common in western North America.

The Double-crested Cormorant is a large waterbird with a small head and hooked bill that weighs about 10 pounds. They are very good at diving underwater to catch fish.

I drive by a pond with a large tree beside it every day. There are between one to twelve cormorants surveying the pond every time. I have watched them catch dinner at the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center. Perhaps I'll see one catch a fish here someday. Double-crested Cormorants are the only cormorants that live in Colorado.



Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Texas Horned Lizard Population Survey – Pixie Preserve

Article & photos by Luciano Guerra

As the Texas state reptile, Texas horned lizards, also known as “horny toads,” are among the most recognizable species of wildlife across the Lone Star State. The fact that once abundant “horny toads” have all but disappeared from parts of the state has not diminished their popularity among Texans.

Many of my childhood memories include horned lizards. In my youth, I spent countless hours outdoors communing with nature. I remember being fascinated by these modern day dinosaurs as they scurried along the ground or feasted on harvester ants (their main diet) in my backyard and around my father’s wholesale plant nursery in south Mission.

Texas horned lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) -photo by Diane Hall

The fact that most kids today have never seen a horned lizard saddens me. However, I had pretty much resigned myself to accepting the fact that their dwindling numbers were an irreversible trend and that they would eventually go the way of the margay and the jaguarundi.

This all changed for me when I attended the Texas Children in Nature Summit in Austin last December. I just happened to sit in on a presentation by staff from the Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, one of whom mentioned the fact that they were working with the Fort Worth Zoo to have captive bred Texas horned lizards reintroduced at their center.

Wait…WHAT? Horned lizards are being bred in captivity and released into the wild as a way of reestablishing populations on land they once inhabited? Why didn’t I know about this? I had just heard about this project, but I instantly knew it was something I wanted to get involved with. I didn’t know in what way, where or even when, but I was going to get involved.

Upon my return to Mission, I started researching this possibility. I came across the Horned Lizard Conservation Society (HLCS) Facebook page and website and I began reading their posts and articles. That was when I discovered that the San Antonio Zoo also has a Texas horned lizard breeding and reintroduction program. I also learned that the HLCS makes grants available for individuals interested in working with horned lizards.

Even though the application deadline was only a few days away and I didn’t have a specific project in mind at the time, I decided to apply for a grant. After all, what did I have to lose? But what would my project be? After thinking it over, I decided I wanted to work toward helping reestablish a healthy horned lizard population at Pixie Preserve, the National Butterfly Center’s

recently acquired 300+ acre wildlife refuge formerly known as Chihuahua Woods. I also decided that if I was going to approach the San Antonio Zoo about acquiring some of their horned lizards a good first step toward this goal would be to conduct horned lizard population surveys there to determine how many horned lizards already inhabit this property.

I quickly put my grant application together and I submitted it to the HLCS on the day before the deadline. Approximately three months later I was notified of the fact that my project had been selected to receive a grant. While I was thrilled, I knew that in order to do a proper and accurate population survey, I needed to be able to have the ability to record each and every horned lizard's individual data by weighing, measuring, sexing and photographing them. The only way to do all of this legally would be by acquiring a permit from Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD).

I contacted TPWD's Benjamin Anderson, who is in charge of issuing permits. Hoping to be issued a permit in my name, I soon found out that since the Texas horned lizard is a protected species in Texas, this was not likely to happen. However, I was told that it might be possible to have this permit added to the National Butterfly Center's (NBC) Educational Display Permit, which would be fine with me since I am on staff at the NBC.

After going back and forth with Mr. Anderson via e-mail over a three to four week period and addressing all his concerns about my project, the NBC was issued a permit that would allow the hand capture of horned lizards at Pixie Preserve and the handling of them for as long as necessary to collect the target data before releasing them at the site of capture. As the NBC's executive director, Marianna Trevino Wright was designated as the permittee and Stephanie Lopez (my collaborator on this project) and I were designated as the only two sub-permittees.

I believe that one of the reasons we were successful in obtaining this permit was because I made it clear to Mr. Anderson that the volunteers we would recruit for this project would be fellow Texas Master Naturalist (TMN). I did not know how many TMN members would actually volunteer, but I figured we'd make it work with however many did. My goal however was to have four teams of four people each, so 16 was my target number.

Texas Master Naturalist volunteers at Pixie Preserve

The plan was to do an initial survey as soon as possible, and two or three follow-up surveys approximately three months apart from each other. While the initial survey had to be postponed several weeks due to scheduling conflicts, we ended up scheduling it for August 12. I contacted both the South Texas Border Chapter and the Rio Grande Valley Chapter of TMN about this volunteer opportunity. The response we received was amazing. While we had more than 20 TMN members wanting to volunteer, several were not available on the 12th. I did however submit all the

volunteers' names to TPWD so that they could be added to the permit as sub-permittees, as required by the state of all participants in a project such as this.

On the morning of August 12, we had 17 volunteers show up to assist with the survey. We met at the NBC for a review of how we would be documenting sightings of horned lizards, their scat and/or harvester ant mounds. We also demonstrated techniques we would be using to capture the horned lizards themselves. Finally we assigned each volunteer to one of the four teams and handed out supplies and maps with each team's section highlighted in a different color.

For 90 minutes or so the four teams walked their respective sections at Pixie Preserve in search of horned lizards, their scat and/or harvester ant mounds. Each of these they came across was pinpointed with GPS coordinates and was marked with a surveyor's flag. This was done to facilitate follow-up surveys, since these areas would be designated as hot spots for possible horned lizard activity.

Teams of four scout for signs of Texas horned lizards at Pixie Preserve

Knowing we would only be able to cover a small portion of the property during the time we had available to us, we focused on the more open and arid areas. These sites are the preferred habitat for horned lizards and they were more accessible to us. Upon completion of the survey, everybody returned to the NBC to review our findings and to discuss what, if anything, could be done differently during the follow-up surveys.

While no horned lizards were found during this initial survey, there were 16 harvester ant mounds pinpointed and flagged and nine lizard scat specimens found, documented and collected. Whether any of these are horned lizard scat or not has not yet been determined. However, if they are proven to be from horned lizards, the exact location they were found will be searched extensively during the subsequent surveys.

I wish to thank all the volunteers that participated in this survey for the part they played in making it such a success. Thanks to their efforts, we are now one step closer to determining the current population of Texas horned lizards at Pixie Preserve, and one step closer to the eventual goal of helping to establish a healthy population of our beloved horny toads there. Well done!

The Eastern Oyster

Article & photos by Jack Austin, South Texas Border Chapter

Have you ever heard the phrase, “The world is my oyster?” Well in a way, that applied to me in my childhood, as I grew up in a small town in Virginia that was heavily involved in the harvesting and processing of oysters. The shells of the processed oysters were often so plentiful that they were used to form roadbeds on private roads. This, of course, was back in the 1940s and 50s, when the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries were blessed with an abundance of the tasty bivalves. As a boy, I had a small wooden skiff and a short set of oyster tongs called “nippers,” and I could easily go out into the tidal creek we lived on and harvest a bushel of oysters in an hour or so. I would then either sell them to the “shucking house” operator or get my dad to help me shuck them so Mom could fry them up for a tasty meal accompanied by coleslaw and hush puppies.

Eastern oyster -photo by Anita Westervelt

Unfortunately, the days of abundance of Eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) were relatively short-lived. Many oyster beds were over-harvested and not replenished with shells for young oysters to attach to. Also, the oysters were attacked by parasitic diseases such as Dermo and MSX. The oyster industry along the central Atlantic Coast suffered greatly from these diseases and almost collapsed completely.

Many efforts were made during the decades of the 70s, 80s and 90s to restore the oysters. Tons and tons of shells were placed on played out oyster beds and seed oysters were imported from waters that had not been invaded by oyster diseases. In addition, a new way of growing and harvesting oysters was developed called oyster farming. Oyster farmers placed tiny seed oysters in wire cages and deposited these in clean water with adequate tidal flow to keep nutrients available to the young oysters so that they could remain healthy. In this way, the seed oysters could grow to market size rapidly, usually within 12 to 15 months. Oyster farming is not only prevalent along the Atlantic Coast but is also practiced along many areas of the Gulf Coast.

Additionally, conservation organizations have been actively building new oyster reefs in tidal waters and planting healthy strains of seed oysters on these new beds which will help restore native oysters to waters that had been devastated by the combination of disease and over-harvesting. Hopefully, we will continue to improve the management of our coastal waters and the wonderful marine species that inhabit them.

Bailey's Ball Moss

Article & photos by Camille M. Rich, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

I have some Bailey's ball moss (*Tillandsia baileyi*) in my backyard that I enjoy tremendously. Some were given to me by friends while others I picked up at either festivals or events and meetings that were part of both the Texas Master Naturalist program and the Native Plant Project. I have had them for several years now and am always amazed when they are in bloom. Their delicate, tiny flowers in hues of blue and violet, are always a nice surprise and joy to behold.

Recently, while out watering plants one muggy morning, I noticed that a couple of dried fruit capsules on one of my Bailey's ball moss individuals had split open into three parts, and inside each of the split capsules, small, thin, filament type seeds were bursting forth---just waiting to float out into my backyard ecosystem on the gusty, strong wind currents and start the Bailey's ball moss life cycle all over again.

Blooms of Bailey's ball moss (*Tillandsia baileyi*)

Double seed pod of Bailey's ball moss

I dropped my watering hose and ran inside the house to grab my cellphone. I wanted to snap a few pictures of the delicate seeds before picking up the hose again and giving my potted plants a drink of water before the midday sun began to dry them out once again. I studied one of the dried capsules and its filament-like seeds for a few minutes. The intricate features of the entire flower's structure sparked my natural curiosity about its pollination. My thoughts seemed to logically transition to the following question, "What could have pollinated this lovely little flower? A hummingbird, perhaps?"

Whenever I admire my Bailey's ball moss, I think of my Grandma Smith and our visits to the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge in Alamo, Texas. She was fascinated by Spanish moss and was always dazzled by how it hung from trees high up in the riparian canopy on the refuge trails' twists and turns. Many treasured moments passed under this canopy as we looked up together and admired the long, textured, living scarf that appeared to be artfully strewn over and draped around the branches hanging above us.

As I reflect on our times looking at plants in the Rio Grande Valley, I know that my Grandma Smith and I never saw any Bailey's ball moss together. I would have remembered this. Regretfully, I do not know if she ever had the opportunity to see Bailey's ball moss in person, either. Nevertheless, I know that she would have loved this plant just as much, if not more than I do.

Right about now, you may be wondering why I am mentioning Spanish moss in a story about Bailey's ball moss. Could Bailey's ball moss and Spanish moss possibly share something in common? It turns out that they have quite a lot in common. For starters, they are both members of the Bromeliad family, and would you believe that neither one of them is a true moss?

They are also both epiphytes. This means that they do not take any water or nutrients from the host plant material that they cling on to. They are simply using their host plant as an anchor. Instead, Bailey's ball moss and Spanish moss get their water and nutrients from the air around them.

Bailey's ball moss is not a true moss, but rather a bromeliad.

In *Plants of Deep South Texas*, we learn that the distribution of Bailey's ball moss in the Rio Grande Valley is in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties. We also learn that Bailey's ball moss has an affinity for Ebony trees, and it is threatened by fox squirrels (that were introduced into our area). The squirrels "eat the hearts of the plants, discarding the rest."

Additionally, in *Plants of Deep South Texas*, we learn that Spanish moss is found in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties. "Spanish moss was used extensively for stuffing cushions until synthetic materials became available. A word of warning: various pests can be hiding in Spanish moss."

I learned numerous, fascinating pieces of information about Bailey's ball moss in *Remarkable Plants of Texas,* but there is one fact that practically leapt off the page at me. I was amazed (and awestruck) at the suggestion that because this plant absorbs "multiple airborne trace substances that can be extracted and quantified, and because of their high ratio between surface area and mass…they provide a cheap and easy way to assess air contamination in a given locale."

Remarkable Plants of Texas also lists some amazing facts about Spanish moss, as well. For example, "Spanish moss has been employed successfully in Brazil to monitor atmospheric mercury in and around gold workshops, and ball moss has been utilized in two industrialized cities in Colombia to ascertain the degree of pollution from heavy metals, pesticides, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons." Wow.

Who would have ever thought that Bailey's ball moss and Spanish moss are actually "Native Plant Super Heros?" They are key players in the fight against pollution across the world. We must continue to protect, care for, and promote knowledge of and the use of not only these two native plants, but all native plants. Native plants hold so many keys to the history, health, and stability of the ecosystems on our planet. Knowledge is power, and we must unite to spread the word about how important native plants are to our very existence.

In closing, I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed researching Bailey's ball moss. I pulled several books from my personal library to locate information for this story. In the process, I learned many new, exciting facts about this unique, treasured plant that hangs in a basket beneath the shade of my Guajillo tree. I invite you to read more about Bailey's ball moss. In addition to *Plants of Deep South Texas* and *Remarkable Plants of Texas,* the following list of texts offer detailed information on this epiphyte as well.

Sources (and Resources):

Eason, Michael. *Wildflowers of Texas.* Oregon: Timber Press, Inc, 2018, page 118.

Richardson, Alfred, and Ken King. *Plants of Deep South Texas.* College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2011, pages 28 – 29.

Poole, Jackie M., William R. Carr, Dana M. Price, & Jason R. Singhurst. *Rare Plants of Texas.* College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007, pages 494 – 495.

Richardson, Alfred. *Wildflowers and Other Plants of Texas Beaches and Islands.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002, page 26.

Turner, Matt Warnock. *Remarkable Plants of Texas.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009, pages 278 – 283.

Sea Oats - Holding Strong

Article & photo by Anita Westervelt, South Texas Border Chapter

The forefront of shoreline protection is anchored deeply in the sand. Iconic dune scenes, like those of majestic coppery **Sea Oats (*Uniola paniculate)*** seedheads blowing in the wind beckon even the most ardent landlubber to the beach. Sea oats is an extremely valuable plant for coastline and barrier island protection. Its massive root system is capable of holding soil and sand in place during extreme weather events such as hurricanes and tropical storms. It is also capable of catching blowing sand and building dunes. Sea oats, a perennial grass, grows erect to about six feet in height. It is long lived, slow growing and is associated with upper dune establishment along beach fronts. It produces a massive root system. Burial of the plant's base by blowing sand actually stimulates plant growth and helps the plant spread via rhizomes and tacking down at the stem nodes. Interestingly, despite producing many large panicles – the flat spikelets containing seed – it is not a prolific seed producer. The seeds are dispersed by wind and can be carried long distances by storms and ocean currents, but reproduction commonly occurs vegetatively by the plant forming buds around stem bases. The plant forms both dense surface roots and penetratingly deep roots that are colonized by beneficial organisms such as mycorrhizal fungi. The seedheads are eaten by Red-winged Blackbirds, sparrows, beach mice and insects. (USDA and Wikipedia information)

Happy Heartleaf Hibiscus

Article & photos by Ethel Cantu, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

There are many rewarding experiences when gardening with plants native to Deep South Texas but one of the most spectacular for me was this third of August bloom of over 40 heartleaf hibiscus flowers in our front yard in Rancho Viejo. Heartleaf hibiscus, *Hibiscus martianus, (H. cardiophyllus)*, also known as Tulipan del Monte, Tulipa de Monte, and Malva Rosa del Monte is a perennial flowering plant in the family Malvaceae. The leaves are silvery and heart-shaped and its red two to three inch solitary flowers occur at the branch tips. Heartleaf hibiscus attracts birds, bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and is an excellent long blooming nectar source. While the plant blooms all year, each flower lasts only one day so this prolific bloom was especially meaningful.

Heartleaf hibiscus (*Hibiscus martianus)* creates a spectacular display with its bright red flowers.

This planting is behind the buffalo grass along the street and just in front of the tree line where some shadow is cast by pecan and Texas persimmon trees and by white brush and baby bonnets shrubs. This location is consistent with descriptions of its habitat as it is often found growing in full sun or in part shade under spiny shrubs. In its native distribution in Northern Mexico and Texas, from the Rio Grande Plains northwest to Val Verde County, it is found in canyons, gravelly hillsides, and chaparral, where it thrives in well-drained, gravelly, limestone soils. It is heat and drought tolerant, though blooms more with rainfall or watering.

Our front yard faces west so the plants receive plenty of afternoon sun but also partial shade from the trees and shrubs. This location seems to be its happy place as heartleaf hibiscus prefers full sun and part shade. It took some research as well as trial and error to find this happy place along the tree line.

Over three decades ago I first planted heartleaf hibiscus further back in a sunny area between the two trees. While heartleaf hibiscus is a short-lived perennial, lasting about three to five years, it reseeds readily so I had plenty of volunteers. Over the years the shade deepened as the trees matured and the plant did not do well in that location. It did, however, volunteer further away from the shade to the sunnier area in the buffalo grass. I learned an important lesson that has informed my philosophy of gardening ever since. While books and the internet provide useful information, plants know their happy place and I now respect that. When a plant volunteers in my garden, I take note of the growing conditions there and use that as a guide. Sometimes I don't want the plant there so I transplant it to a more suitable place in the garden that is similar.

Flowers of the Heartleaf Hibiscus last only a day.

Before I learned from the plants themselves, I learned much from Mike Heep who developed the initial plans for our native plant landscape and who has been a most valuable resource and friend over the more than 30 years we have developed this landscape, expanding the gardens and making adjustments as the plants matured. Books that have been most helpful are Native Texas Plants: Landscaping Region by Region (1988) by Sally and Andy Wasowski and Plants of Deep South Texas: A Field Guide to the Woody and Flowering Species (2011) by Alfred Richardson and Ken King. Helpful websites have been the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center https://www.wildflower.org, the Native Plant Project https://nativeplantproject.com, the National Wildlife Federation www.nwf.org, and the North American Butterfly Association www.naba.org .

Change is inevitable. When the buffalo grass lawn diminished and the heartleaf hibiscus and other plants in the butterfly garden disappeared because of the increased shade from the trees, I was dismayed. Research, consultation with experts, field trips and closer observation of the plants where they were thriving helped me learn to adapt. The rewards were gratifying once the plants were in their happy places!

Dance of the Male Bronzed Cowbird

Article & photos by Camille Rich, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

For many years, I have sought out opportunities to experience, firsthand, the dance of the male Bronzed Cowbird. His dance involves vocalizations and a series of postures, ruffling of feathers, and an impressive hovering and helicoptering flight pattern above a female Bronzed Cowbird. The sole purpose of all this is to catch the eye (and favor) of a potential mate. He delivers quite an aerial spectacle to impress her with an unbelievable flight performance comprised of rapid-fire, fast moving wing beats that lift him up off the ground, a mere foot or so, directly above her.

Hovering flight display of male Bronzed Cowbird

Before I go any further in my nature story, I must make you a promise. My promise to you is this: I will do my best to relay the "Dance of the Male Bronzed Cowbird" for you in still images---which are "video grabs" taken from my original trail camera video. However, if these still images leave you yearning to see the authentic trail camera videos with your very own eyes, check the links to the Mesteño Mini Movie---in its entirety---at the end of this story. Then, you will be able to see, hear, and experience, for yourself, the entire dance of the Bronzed Cowbird.

Now, back to the Bronzed Cowbird nature story….

As I began to do a deep dive into birding over the last several years, I have had the good fortune of having numerous opportunities to listen to fantastical tales of the hovering and helicoptering aerial dance of the male Bronzed Cowbird from experienced birders. Naturally, I was (and have been) really intrigued by stories of how visually stunning this aerial display is. Frequently, as I listened to these stories, my mind would often wander back in time through all my bird memories from years of traipsing around natural habitat in the Rio Grande Valley. At the end of each trip down birding memory lane, I always ended up at the same conclusion. The conclusion being that I had never, not even once, witnessed any birds' flight pattern that remotely came close to resembling stories of this almost unbelievable hovering / helicoptering aerial dance performed---just a few feet off the ground---by a striking black bird with eyes as red as garnets or rubies.
Then, one day about three years ago, it happened. I saw the dance!

It came without fanfare, or binoculars, or a cellphone, or a camera, and my view of the dance was almost completely obstructed by knee-high plant material. Rats! This dazzling flight happened about fifty yards away from me on a red, sandy sendero, and the glance I caught of it was just enough for me to realize that it was the elusive dance and subsequent flight of the male Bronzed

Cowbird. The glimpse I caught of him was just as he had reached his max flight height of about two feet off the ground---and well above the native plant material.

Almost as quickly as the dance had begun, however, it was over. The male Bronzed Cowbird effortlessly fluttered back down to Earth, once again obscured by plant material. Equal parts of both elation and disappointment flooded and raced through my mind. Nevertheless, I vowed to keep going and not give up on the pursuit of a full, unobstructed, up close, and personal front row seat to the "Dance of the Male Bronzed Cowbird." ---either by my own observation, trail camera footage, or both.

It took another year or so, but I finally did catch the helicoptering / hovering behavior on trail camera, only to have it completely blurred by condensation that had developed on the trail camera lens. All you could really hear was the sound of its wing beats, which, by the way, reminds me of the sound film projectors used to make in elementary school. Once again, I was disappointed. My hopes were dashed, but I kept the faith that I would be able to document the dance of the male Bronzed Cowbird at some point.

This summer I have finally been able to document this dance in its entirety! I am elated to report that I have been fortunate to have more videos of this male, Bronzed Cowbird doing his "helicopter / hover" flight pattern than I had ever dreamed or imagined possible to have. Be careful what you wish for! His performances do not lack effort or intensity despite the brutal, extreme heat of this summer of 2023. Would you believe that there have been so many encore presentations of the "Dance of the Male Bronzed Cowbird" on my trail camera this summer, that I even got tired of watching them for a few weeks? Can you believe that?

Trail camera captures mating dance of the Bronzed Cowbird

Well, that is a bit of an over exaggeration, but what is not an exaggeration is that I would say that I am truly amazed that in heat indices above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, this little bird is expending huge amounts of energy, not to mention expiring a lot of moisture out of its system, to win favor from a potential mate. In fact, he valiantly hovers in the air for several seconds, while glancing down at his potential mate, numerous times over the course of several weeks. As I watch these beautiful exchanges on the hot, dry, arid South Texas Sand Sheet, I can almost hear him chirp, "Look at me! Look at me! Pick me!" The dance of the male Bronzed Cowbird is a testament to a few adages like "survival of the fittest," and "where there is a will there is a way."

My favorite part of this dance: The mesmerizing, stroboscopic effect of his wing beats. One cannot help but become transfixed on the imagery. The visual phenomenon, known as the "stroboscopic effect" that one experiences when observing the male Bronzed Cowbird in flight, in and of itself, is quite astonishing. However, while the visual story of the "Dance of the Bronzed Cowbird" is quite remarkable, the rhythmic, hypnotic sounds emanating from his wing beats during his dance leave quite an equally dazzling impression on my naturalist mind. Music to my ears. Frankly, the sight and sound of this dance is not something that you will soon forget!

In closing, this nature story has been years in the making, and it would be a travesty to keep this dance all to myself. It was difficult to pick the top three or four videos to make the movie compilation---each one giving a slightly different view or angle of the dance. I even have several close-up videos of the male Bronzed Cowbird's take off, flight display, subsequent landing, and continued ruffled-feather display---which reminds me of Elvis in one of his capes on a TV concert from the 1970s, but I digress.

For those of you that would like to watch the dance of the male Bronzed Cowbird, I will share a couple of links to the "Mesteño Mini Movie" I created. The mini movie is a compilation of a few of my recent trail camera videos of this incredible nature story. I hope it wows you as much as it has wowed me!

"Look at me! Look at me! Pick me!"

Links to view:

El Mesteño Ranch and Arboretum Website
https://elmestenoranch.com/2023/08/_/5034/

El Mesteño Ranch and Arboretum YouTube Channel
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYIgG6Oz8CQ

Changes

Article & photos by Anita Westervelt, South Texas Border Chapter

I've hesitated to speak aloud the word drought, in case it would make it real, but without an abundance of water, things "they are a-changin,'" as Bob Dylan wrote in a 1963 folk song.

The abnormally hot June and July temperatures, lack of rain and persistent wind have caused many water sources to dry up. In place of the water is a veritable sea of new vegetation. Two species particularly noticeable where the edge of our resaca once was, are described below.

A **Camphorweed (***Heterotheca subaxillaris)* is using the retaining wall for support. Camphorweed is widespread across much of the United States, so no surprise it's taking advantage of a void. It is in the Asteraceae family, described as a perennial, aromatic herb. Even in the early morning the plant appears stressed. I've not seen any of its flowers fully open. It's a multi-branching, gangly looking plant. For the first few weeks, I thought it was a common cow thistle, *Sonchus oleraceus*, long past its due date, until I realized how many and how long the branches were.

Camphorweed **(***Heterotheca subaxillaris)*

Camphorweed is a composite plant with both yellow disk and yellow ray flowers. It produces two different seed types, according to uswildflowers.com. One type, produced by the disk flowers, can germinate immediately; the seed produced by the ray flowers requires a period of dormancy and must undergo a period of high temperature before germinating, thus germinating in the fall – a daunting prospect. Both kinds of seeds are distributed by the wind.

The plant can be mistaken for other species until the leaves are crushed. I put mine to the test and it had a distinct camphor-like aroma. Foraging value is rated as fair, and it is unpalatable for grazing livestock on open ranges, but it attracts pollinators, according to rangeplants.tamu.edu.

Behind the camphorweed, a spindly vine, looking too delicate to withstand the heat and surrounding new wilderness had wended its way across what appeared to be a prolific stand of Southern annual saltmarsh asters (*Symphyotrichum divaricatum)*. Pale yellow "mouse ear" blooms gave rise to the plant being in the pea family (pun intended of the flower stalks reaching toward the top of the aster bushes). The vine is **wild cowpea (***Vigna luteola)* also called yellow cowpea and hairypod cowpea. It is a perennial vine found on many continents in tropical areas, generally in moist soil.

Wild cowpea vine **(***Vigna luteola)* is also known as yellow cowpea or hairypod cowpea.

The leaves are in groups of three. The flowers are one large standard petal, two lateral wing petals and two lower keel petals, creating bilateral symmetry, a predominant, common and highly elaborate trait in legumes. Wildflower.org site suggests the stems scramble, an interesting description of plant locomotion. The vine can reach six feet or longer. The fruit, or seed pods are flat legumes about two inches long with fine hairs, containing numerous large black seeds; the pod twists spirally when the seeds are dispersed, according to Wikipedia.

Wild cowpea is a larval host for Cassius blue, grey hairstreak, long-tailed skipper and Dorantes skipper butterflies. Ground-feeding birds eat the seeds.

South Texas Border Chapter

Milestones

2500 Hours

Joseph Connors
River Rivera

500 Hours

Cynthia McKee
Jani McGee
Jack Austin

WELL DONE!!

250 Hours

Rohny Escareno
Katie Krause
Stuart Warren

100 Hours

Maria L. Pickens
Bill Rich
James Gerry
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Would you like to help? Please contact us at riograndevalleychapter.tmn@gmail.com

RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalist: This chapter is an affiliate of the Texas Master Naturalist Program jointly sponsored by Texas AgriLife and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

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