

# The Texas Star

## Newsletter of the Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter

T E X A S



HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

Rare, Endangered,  
and Threatened  
in the Four Counties.



Golden orb  
*Quadrula aurea*  
Kendall County

...were you one of  
the lucky ones...  
page 5.

June  
2010



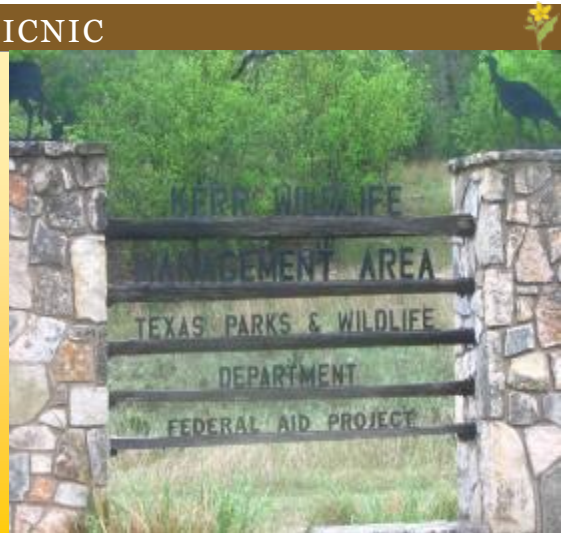
Volume 8  
No. 6

### JUNE MEETING .... CHAPTER PICNIC

See you at the Chapter Picnic  
on Saturday, June 12!

Nature Walk observing forbs,  
birds, and butterflies with  
chapter guides at 10:00 a.m.  
Self-catered Meal at 1:00 p.m.

Kerr Wildlife Management Area  
2625 FM 1340 in Hunt  
830-238-4483



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE .... John Huecksteadt

#### Most Beautiful Spring Ever

Jackie and I recently attended a meeting of the cemetery association for Windcrest Cemetery, a historic cemetery just west of the Morris Ranch Schoolhouse in central southwest Gillespie County. Many life-long residents of the area attended, including some crunchy old Germans well into their 80s. Probably the oldest, at least the oldest-looking, rancher there commented to me that, "This was the most beautiful spring he'd seen in all his life." Being in the throes of spring, the first Sunday in May, it was hard to do anything but nod in agreement with the truth of his comment, for all around us Nature shouted out colorful testimonials.

However, the antithetical "other shoe" hit the floor not five seconds later.

"Good grief," I thought, "Will we never see another spring so beautiful as this?" The conclusion immediately threw me into an inexplicable funk I'm still struggling to understand.

For a week or so I tried to argue *ad hominem*, that this guy was an exaggerator or his memory was already where my own seemed to be heading. But no, he was the association treasurer... as sharp as a tack. A month later, I seem restlessly inured to the truth of the syllogism. In fact, several friends have reported new forbs at their places, after twelve years of careful and relentless observation. On my part, at least six new forb species, some spectacular (e.g. *Sabatia formosa*), have appeared where there had been nothing but yellow bitterweed for the past five years.

Continued, page 2.

THIS MONTH WE HONOR

<u>Milestones</u>	<u>2010 Recertification</u>	<u>Special First Year Recertification</u>	<u>First Year Certification</u>
<i>Gold 1,000 hours</i> Julie Clay	<i>Wood Duck</i> Fane Downs	Joseph Bergmann	<i>Dragonfly</i> Nita Hazle
<i>Brushed Silver 500 hours</i> Warren Ferguson	Ward Miller Virginia Sawin		
<i>Bronze 250 hours</i> Cynthia Burgin			

If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life.

Rachel Carson

Do you know?

The French invented the picnic – well, the word at least. It comes from the verb *piquer*, meaning to pick or peck. Originally, a picnic was a social gathering where everyone brought along a dish. This idea of mutual sharing or cooperation was fundamental to the original significance of the picnic. Only later, some time before the 19th century, was the outdoor element introduced.

President’s Message continued.



Stately Rose Gentian *Sabatia formosa*  
[plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=SAFO7](http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=SAFO7)

I feel somehow that I’ve had to grow up over the past month, like I’ve lost some optimism I’ll never recover. The spring has turned sort of bitter-sweet, like the Pennyroyal, which when I now hold to my nose, find myself trying to memorize its wonderful spicy, citrus aroma, as if I may never enjoy it again.

Oh, yes, saws like *Carpe diem* keep running through my mind, but nothing has helped, really.

Dan Behringer has said to me many times, “When the oak trees are gone, enjoy your grasses.” Perhaps his advice comes as close to making me feel better as I’m going to get.

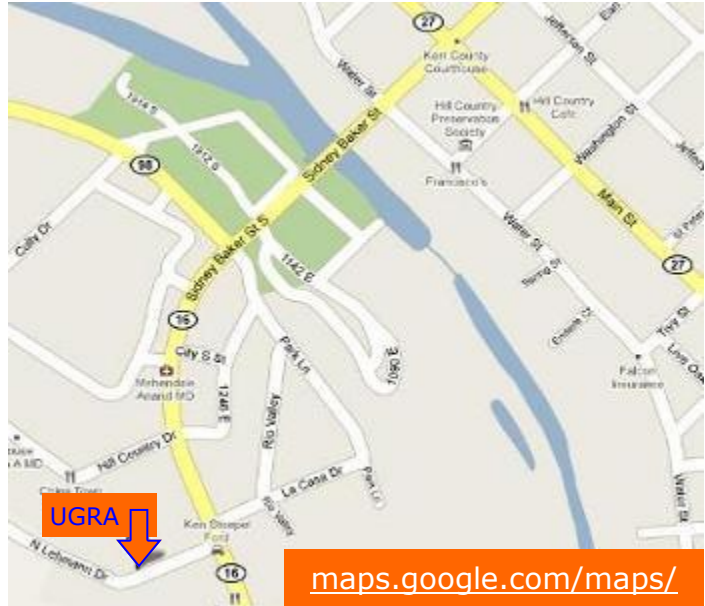
## ADVANCED TRAINING .....Your chance to learn more

- **RAINWATER HARVEST WORKSHOPS** AT 10-067 or AT 10-068  
 Saturday, June 12 or July 10; 9a.m. - noon; [Cibolo Nature Center](#) auditorium/visit to Kight installation; Members \$25; non-members \$35. Pre-registration required. Limited to 30. Call 830-249-4616.  
 John Kight, engineer and rainwater catchment owner, gives the latest technological information and the most practical advice. His system comfortably supplies delicious water for all household and landscape needs.

## NOTICE

Monthly chapter meetings are now held in  
*the* **Upper Guadalupe River Authority**  
**Lecture Hall**  
*at* **125 North Lehmann Drive**  
*in* **Kerrville.**

Remember to arrive early to chat with members and guests during our social half hour beginning at 6:30 p.m.



[maps.google.com/maps/](https://maps.google.com/maps/)

**NOW ACCEPTING  
 APPLICATIONS**

The chapter is now accepting applications for the Class of 2010.

*Member referrals are our best source of new Master Naturalists!*

Encourage friends and family in Bandera, Gillespie, Kendall, and Kerr counties to join our chapter.

Email Director of Membership [Koy Coffey](mailto:kcoffer@texas-wildlife.org), [kcoffer@texas-wildlife.org](mailto:kcoffer@texas-wildlife.org), and request an application or visit our website at [grovesite.com/tmn/hcmn](http://grovesite.com/tmn/hcmn).

Classes begin August 25 and end with commencement on November 17.

Applications must be postmarked by July 16.

The first responsibility of the Vice President is to act in the place of the President, should the President be unavailable. This is a rare occurrence; everyone on the board *really wants* to serve on the board, so board members make plans around chapter activities. The Vice President, like all board members, is expected to attend all board meetings, chapter meetings, and some or all of the new training class meetings, as well as commencement.

The second duty of this office is what makes the position so interesting and challenging. The Vice President is in charge of programs for chapter meetings and field trips. Each year, the newly elected Vice President is responsible for obtaining a speaker for the months of February through May; July; and September through November, as well as the January program for the following year. Historically, there have been no speakers in June (chapter picnic/field trip), August (new class reception), or December (chapter holiday party). This could change, so the Vice President needs to confirm this schedule with the board at the first of the year.

The Vice President determines the content for the programs. This function could be dealt with through a committee, however, that has not been done on a regular basis. The content may follow a given theme, seasonal activities, or be somewhat random. There are always suggestions for speakers and programs from members, the previous Vice President, and other sources. These programs often result in Advanced Training hours. Of course, the board is informed of the direction that the programs will follow.

The selection of the program speaker can be quite exciting. Once the topic has been determined, then the best speaker available for that topic is selected, contacted, and secured for the specific meeting. The speakers are asked to provide a brief description of their presentation and a short biography. The Vice President then prepares a description of the presentation for the chapter newsletter and publicity purposes. This description is

forwarded to the Communications Director, who then forwards it to the newsletter editor and to area newspapers and other media outlets. Ideally, the program description should be presented to the Communications Director by the fourth day of the month. The Vice President also determines if the speaker requires any presentation equipment or other special items such as tables or stands for display purposes.

As you can see, there is a lot of communication between the Vice President and the speaker. This includes a "checking in" call a few days before the presentation to be sure that everything is on track. The Vice President introduces the speaker at the chapter meeting. At the Vice President's discretion, he or she may host the speaker for dinner prior to the meeting. The chapter's annual budget provides reimbursement funds for the speaker's dinner, if appropriate. Also, if a speaker is coming from a long distance, the Vice President can offer overnight lodging with one of our members who have indicated a willingness to accommodate the speaker.

The monthly chapter meetings have been held at Riverside Nature Center up to this year, however, this year's higher attendance has made it necessary to move the meetings to the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall which can hold up to 100 people. The Vice President must make reservations and pay the UGRA rental fee well in advance of each meeting. A line item in the chapter budget covers this expense and the Vice President is reimbursed by the chapter Treasurer. The board may seek other venues for our meetings in the future.

The third duty of the Vice President is to be a member of the Audit Committee. Typically, the Audit Committee meets in January to review the work of the Treasurer from the previous year.

The position of Vice President is one of the most enjoyable and rewarding ways to serve the chapter.

Sandy Peña

# My Favorite Tree

by Ward Miller

In mid-April, were you one of the lucky ones to encounter one or more tall, thin understory trees with beautiful white flowers? Did they suddenly appear overnight among the oak mottes on your property? Did you know they were there, or was it the first time you had seen them?



I promised to show him some bluebonnets that he could photograph. I decided to take him just west of our home to Loudon Road which follows Live Oak Creek to the east. After driving a number of scenic miles the creek turns to the west. I told Pete this was where my wife and I had seen a Golden Eagle some six years ago. We crossed the low water crossing and drove up the bank. I could

not believe it. First we saw one, and then two, and then we were suddenly in a forest of flowering Rusty Blackhaws.

We must have seen at least fifty trees in the next few miles.

Pete gets the photo credits and loved taking the pictures. How I enjoyed sharing those moments with



him. The sad part... with the winds and rains over the next few days, and Pete had gone home to Tampa, the Rusty Blackhaws lost their flowers and faded back into the lush, green Hill Country landscape. But I am not faint-hearted - I am already anticipating the day in October that they will reappear with their clusters of



Each spring of the past eight years I have tried to record the locations of the elusive short-blooming Rusty Blackhaw viburnums in my subdivision in Fredericksburg.

I had never really seen more than ten trees over the some 200 acres. But with help from the fall and winter

rains and the sharp-eyed reporting from two neighbors and my wife, I had eight new sightings. One tree was within fifteen yards of my driveway. I was in heaven.

But this is not the end of the story. My son-in-law, Pete, was visiting at that same time and after trying not to bore him with the Rusty Blackhaws,



bluish-black drupes and brilliant hues of red, orange, and yellow.

My favorite tree!



An enthusiastic group of chapter members recertified or reached milestones in May. Congratulations! Front row - Phyllis Muska, Laura Baker, Mary Frances Watson, Karla Trefny, and Susan Longacre. Back row - Tom Schall, Myrna Langford, Norma Bruns, Ruth McArthur, Sandy Leyendecker, Bob Spencer, Bill Csanyi, Diane McMahon, and Floyd Trefny.



Phyllis Muska, Karla Trefny, Nita Hazle, Susan Longacre, Sandy Peña, Martha Miesch, and Priscilla Stanley study a Carolina Buckthorn during LMAP training. Photo by Lars Nielsen.

# HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

## Website Tip of the Month

We're in the middle of our application period for the fall 2010 class. If you know of someone who would be interested in applying for our program, everything they need can be found on our web site <http://grovesite.com/tmn/hcmn> under the menu option "Become a Master Naturalist."

The requirements are explained along with a description of the training and a tentative class schedule. An application can be downloaded and printed, and there is even a .pdf document with the 2010 brochure.

Deadline for applications is July 16, so tell your friends and encourage them to check it out!

Questions or suggestions? Contact webmaster Phyllis Muska, [pmuska@windstream.net](mailto:pmuska@windstream.net).

### HEY, WHAT IS THAT ?

Be the first to identify the photo below and the psychedelic dragonfly is yours next month. [ENTER TO WIN!](#)



Last Month



### #1 Marilyn Knight

- Garry Speir
- Stephanie Perry
- John C. Worden
- Colleen Everson
- Cynthia Burgin
- Phyllis Muska

## SHOW US YOUR SIGN!



Barkley and Jack, Texas Canine Naturalists  
John Huecksteadt, Gillespie County



Bobwhite Quail

## 36th annual NABA Butterfly Count will be held in June and July.

The counts are fun-filled and track butterfly populations of North America. Volunteers select a count area with a 15-mile diameter and conduct a one-day census of all butterflies sighted within that circle.

This is a great way to learn butterflies and contribute volunteer hours (use project code CC-09-A).

If you wish to participate in a scheduled count, please contact the count leader. A \$3.00 fee to participate supports NABA's national advocacy for butterflies.



BOERNE  
June 19  
Saturday  
Cathy Downs  
[mzdowns@hctc.net](mailto:mzdowns@hctc.net)

GUADALUPE RIVER SP/CORDILLERA  
June 26  
Saturday  
Craig Hensley  
[rcraig.hensley@gmail.com](mailto:rcraig.hensley@gmail.com)  
Kip Kiphart  
[skipkip@gvtc.com](mailto:skipkip@gvtc.com)

CENTER POINT  
July 10  
Saturday  
Bob Tanner  
[bintense@hotmail.com](mailto:bintense@hotmail.com)

KERRVILLE  
July 16/17  
Friday/Saturday as a rain make-up  
Tom Collins  
[towhee@hctc.net](mailto:towhee@hctc.net)

The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) organizes the counts and publishes annual reports. These reports provide important information about the geographical distributions and population sizes of the species counted. Comparisons of the results over the years monitor changes in butterfly populations and reveal effects of weather and habitat change on the different species. In some years the butterfly count shows dramatic changes in butterfly populations, while other years indicate little fluctuation in butterfly numbers. No matter how much or how little butterfly watching you've done, the results of butterfly counting can be surprising and interesting.



Tom Collins

Bordered Patch at RNC.



# A Country Day Celebration

**June 20 at Muleshoe Farm**

Muleshoe Farm and Ranch Trust and Last Chance Forever/The Bird of Prey Conservancy present the First Annual Country Day Celebration, June 20, from 10a.m. to 5p.m., at the farm on Highway 87, two miles north of Comfort. The day celebrates the simpler times of the past and raises funds for the continuing care of the land, farming, ranching, and wildlife conservation.

This event takes place on the grounds of a centennial farmstead with an 1800s limestone house built by German masons, barns constructed of hand-hewn timbers, and a working blacksmith shop.



Visitors may take a ride in a mule-drawn wagon, visit the chuck wagon 'cookie' and hear his western tales, watch as a working dog pens sheep, or pay a call to a mountain man's encampment.



Cheese-making, story-telling, terrier races, and flintknapping, plus Native American dancers will also delight visitors. At 1p.m., Betty K. Barth will share her vision for the Muleshoe Farm and Ranch Trust and the gift her family has planned for the community.

Be sure to spend time with the Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter members and learn about our incredible Texas Hill Country.

Master Falconer John Karger and his team will display hawks, falcons, eagles, and vultures during two presentations.

Master Naturalists displaying nametags will receive discounted admission.

Contact Project Coordinator [Cynthia Burgin](mailto:cburgin@omniglobal.net), 210-381-4121, or [cburgin@omniglobal.net](mailto:cburgin@omniglobal.net).



The Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center are planning a nature festival that showcases natural flight in the Hill Country - birds, butterflies, dragonflies, and bats. The festival is scheduled for April 29-30, May 1, 2011.

The festival needs your help to be a success!  
 Interested in volunteering?  
 Please contact  
 Bill Lindemann, [billin2@beecreek.net](mailto:billin2@beecreek.net).

## An Opportunity You'll Get Stuck On



**The Cactus Garden at Lady Bird Johnson Park** is in need of a volunteer director. Bill Lindeman of the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center would like a volunteer to work with local cacti experts to reorganize the garden. The Cactus Garden consists of thirty square feet of native and non-native species. The volunteer director would identify cacti species, remove non-natives, resolve soil and drainage issues, and plant new species to obtain a representative sample of plants from the Hill Country and eastern Chihuahuan Desert.

This would be an excellent project to develop for someone interested in cacti and succulents. The Friends want a first class exhibit and are looking for creativity and diversity.

Contact [Bill Lindemann](mailto:billin2@beecreek.net), [billin2@beecreek.net](mailto:billin2@beecreek.net).

From Sharon Corley  
N.I.C.E. Committee Chairman

## Fredericksburg Chapter & Kerrville Chapter Native Plant Society of Texas

### N.I.C.E.

Natives Instead  
of Common Exotics

### for Summer

MEXICAN  
FEATHERGRASS  
(*Nassella tenuissima*/  
*Stipa tenuissima*)



**PLANT CHARACTERISTICS:** Mexican Feathergrass is an ornamental grass with yellow-green leaves and silver blooms in summer. It's feather-like leaves sway in the breeze. It stays golden brown even in dormant periods of winter and drought. Height is one to two feet.

**GROWING CONDITIONS:** Mexican Feathergrass prefers well-drained, calcareous or acid soil. Does well in sun or part-shade; requires little water. It is an excellent container plant.

**DEER RESISTANCE:** Highly deer resistant.

## ONLINE AGRILIFE COURSE ON RAINWATER CAPTURE FOR LIVESTOCK AND WILDLIFE

Texas AgriLife Extension Service is offering three opportunities for small-acreage landholders to participate in an online course on rainwater collection for livestock and wildlife.

The four-lesson "Rainwater Harvesting for Livestock and Wildlife" course can be taken from anywhere with reliable Internet access and is designed to be completed over a four-week period. The course may be completed more quickly if desired. Each of the four course lessons is comprised of a Power Point presentation with audio, assignments, discussion board, and supporting videos and publications. The discussion board allows participants to ask questions directly to the course teachers.



Course opportunities will be offered June 7-July 2, July 26-August 20 and September 13-October 8. The course lessons can be taken and completed at any time within the selected registration period.

The courses will be facilitated by Justin Mechell, AgriLife Extension program specialist, and Billy Kniffen, an AgriLife Extension state water resource specialist from Menard County.

The cost for the online course is \$50 and registration is through Texas AgriLife Extension Conference Services website at [agrilifeevents.tamu.edu](http://agrilifeevents.tamu.edu). For more information, contact Justin Mechell at 979-845-1395 or visit [rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu](http://rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu).

# Tick Removal



Ticks can carry and transmit a remarkable array of pathogens, such as bacteria, spirochetes, rickettsiae, protozoa, viruses, nematodes, and toxins. A single tick bite can transmit multiple pathogens. In North America, the following diseases are caused by tick bites: Lyme disease, human granulocytic and monocytic ehrlichiosis, babesiosis, relapsing fever, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Colorado tick fever, tularemia, Q fever, and tick paralysis.

## Equipment

- Gloves
- Isopropyl alcohol or other skin disinfectant
- Fine-toothed forceps - or -
- Over-the-counter tick removal device:

[TRIX TICK REMOVAL SYSTEM](#) - A tick lasso that grasps the mouth parts with a fiber loop.

[THE TICK KEY](#) - A key-sized device that has a tapered slot, which allows gentle traction to remove the tick.

[SAWYER TICK PLIERS](#) - Cradlehead pliers with attached magnifier.

[PRO-TICK REMEDY](#) - Small metal device with tapered end used to grasp and gently pull tick.

[TICKED OFF](#) - Spoon-shaped device with notched end to grasp tick and slide off with gentle pressure.

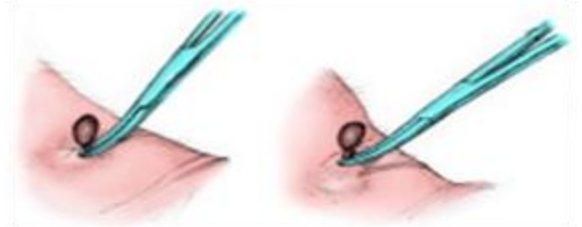
[TICK TWISTER](#) - Hook-shaped device with pronged end used to grasp tick and gently pull while twisting.



## Technique

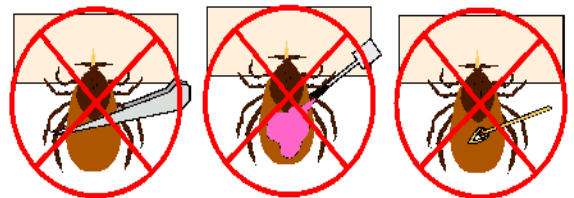
- Use fine-tipped forceps and wear gloves, handling ticks with bare fingers may result in infection through breaks in the skin. This precaution is directed particularly to individuals who remove ticks from domestic animals. Children, the elderly, and immunocompromised persons may be at greater risk of infection and should avoid removing ticks with unprotected fingers.

- Grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as possible (e.g., grasp the mouth parts) and pull upward with steady, even traction (see image).
- Do not twist or jerk the tick, as this may cause the mouth parts to break off and remain in the skin. Do not be alarmed if the mouth parts remain in the skin, as they are not infectious.



- Do not squeeze, crush, or puncture the body of the tick because its fluids (saliva, hemolymph, gut contents) may contain infectious organisms.

- Do not put a hot match to the tick or try to smother it with petroleum jelly, gasoline, nail polish, or other noxious substances. This only prolongs exposure time and may cause the tick to eject infectious organisms into the body.



- Once the tick is removed, wash the bite area with soap and water or with an antiseptic to destroy any contaminating microorganisms. The person who removed the tick should wash his or her hands.

Author: Steven Brett Sloan, MD, Assistant Professor, Department of Dermatology, University of Connecticut School of Medicine; Director of Nail Disease Clinic and Chief of Dermatology, Newington Veterans Affairs Medical Center <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1413603-overview>. Copyright© 1994-2010 by Medscape. Originally published in [emedicine.medscape.com](http://emedicine.medscape.com). Reprinted by permission.

DISCLAIMER: This information should NOT be used as a substitute for the advice of an appropriately qualified and licensed physician or other health care provider. The information provided here is for educational and informational purposes only.

From Tom Collins

# Improve Your ID Skills

## TWO NEW BIRD SPECIES ADDED TO THE RNC FAUNA LIST

The Acadian Flycatcher and the Louisiana Waterthrush were identified by their songs on May 7.

The Acadian Flycatcher gives a very short, emphatic "peet - saa" call, or as I say, "Pizza bird."

The Louisiana Waterthrush is a different story. I heard the bird singing, and like last week, I ran back to the truck to get my recording equipment. I was able to get about one minute of the bird singing along the creek.



Louisiana Waterthrush  
[allaboutbirds.org/guide/Louisiana\\_Waterthrush](http://allaboutbirds.org/guide/Louisiana_Waterthrush)

I loaded the song into my computer and began studying it. The song was similar to a Yellow-throated Warbler (YWTA), but I knew it was not an YTWA, plus the song was coming from close to the ground a place you seldom see YTWAs and always find waterthrushes.

I used the Cornell Lab songs to compare the bird I recorded with all North American Wood Warblers. The closest choices I found on my first pass were the Northern Waterthrush (NOWA) or the Louisiana Waterthrush (LAWA). I recorded the NOWA and pasted into my RNC recording to compare frequencies. I felt it was a reasonable match, but not exact.

I then sent the song to Tony Gallucci. His reply was LAWA. I also found that Sibley compares the song of the YWTA to that of the LAWA.



Yellow-throated Warbler

I recorded the Cornell LAWA and pasted it in with the RNC bird and compared the frequencies. It

was a much closer match, almost identical, with a few minor differences probably due to background noise. Thus I believed the bird to be a LAWA. The only negative is that the bird never gave its distinctive waterthrush "chip."

The creek would be an acceptable nesting site for LAWA. They prefer small, slow-moving streams with very narrow channels, like the creek as it approaches the bridge. The LAWA typically sings before daylight, but like all birds they seldom follow the rules as we humans expect them to do.



Acadian Flycatcher  
[allaboutbirds.org/guide/Acadian\\_Flycatcher](http://allaboutbirds.org/guide/Acadian_Flycatcher)



Northern Waterthrush

Learn about ticks in the Hill Country @ [ticktexas.org](http://ticktexas.org)

T E X A S

Master  
Naturalist™



Hill Country Chapter

FIND MORE INFORMATION  
ON OUR WEBSITE!  
[grovesite.com/tmn/hcmn](http://grovesite.com/tmn/hcmn)

### *Board of Directors 2010*

John Huecksteadt - President  
Sandy Peña - Vice President  
Gracie Waggener - Secretary  
Cathy Downs - Treasurer  
Steve Dodge - Director of Advanced Training  
Cathy Downs - Director of Class Training  
Susan Longacre - Director of Communications  
Koy Coffe - Director of Membership  
Priscilla Stanley - Director of Volunteer Service Projects  
Laura Baker - 2009 New Class Representative  
Jim Stanley - Immediate Past President

We meet the fourth Monday of each month (excluding June and December) at 7p.m. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. We welcome anyone interested in our monthly topic and the Texas Master Naturalist program. Please join us.



**Lindheimeria texana: Texas Star**

### Texas Master Naturalist mission:

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

*Questions about our chapter?*

Contact Koy Coffe  
Membership Director  
[kcoffer@texas-wildlife.org](mailto:kcoffer@texas-wildlife.org)  
830-792-3070

*The Texas Star* newsletter is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program. News, comments, information, and ideas are always welcome. Please contact Kristie Denbow, [denbow@gvvc.com](mailto:denbow@gvvc.com).

T E X A S

Master  
Naturalist™



TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

AgriLIFE EXTENSION  
Texas A&M System