

# WELDER NOW MONTHLY WELDER WILDLIFE UPDATES

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3, MARCH 2025

## WELDER FUN FACT >

### HISTORY

The Donald E. Bowman bird collection is one of the premier bird collections in the world. It consists of 405 birds, superbly prepared specimens poised in natural positions that appear perfect to the critic's eyes. The Welder Wildlife Foundation currently houses all 405 birds.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES >

### EDUCATION

- Youth Wildflower Workshop (March 21)
- Wildflower Workshop (April 4)
- Beth Hudson Group (April 15th)
- Birdiest Festival Birding Tour (April 25-26)
- State Wildlife Contest (FFA) (April 28)

### RESEARCH

- MAPS training and events begin in May

## VOLUNTEER MAINTENANCE DAYS

- Thursday, March 20, 2025
- Wednesday, April 23, 2025

### TOURS

- Volunteers are able to lead tours after completing tour training. Fill out an application today!



## PROJECTS >

### IN PROGRESS

- Uploading our Rangeland Curriculum to PocketLab with the Updated 2024 TEKS
- 2024 Annual Report
- 2 more benches being added to the confluence in Hackberry Mott

### JUST COMPLETED

- Dormitory Remodel Phase 2 Rooms 1-4
- Dormitory Remodel Kitchen and Laundry Room
- 2 new benches in Hackberry Mott Trail



## OUR VOLUNTEERS >

We often hear that it takes a village to make great things happen, and our team of volunteers is the heart and soul of our village. Your unwavering dedication and tireless efforts have not gone unnoticed. Each and every one of you has played a crucial role in our success, and for that, we are profoundly grateful. You've given your time and energy, often going above and beyond to support our cause. Thank you for being the backbone of our community, for believing in our mission, and for the countless ways you have made a difference.

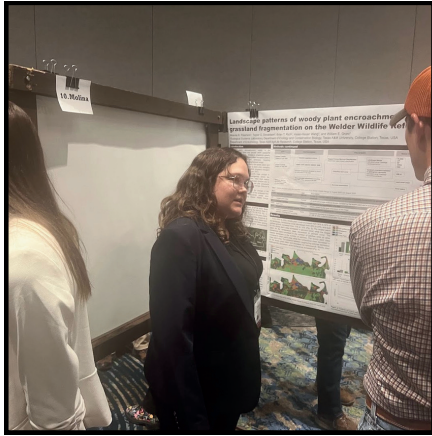
## THANK YOU TO OUR FEBRUARY VOLUNTEERS

- Jorge Barrera
- Clayton Curl
- Ryan Gonzalez
- Nathaly Garza
- George Chaney
- Kayla Garza
- Naitssa Ramirez

## NUMBERS REACHED THIS MONTH >

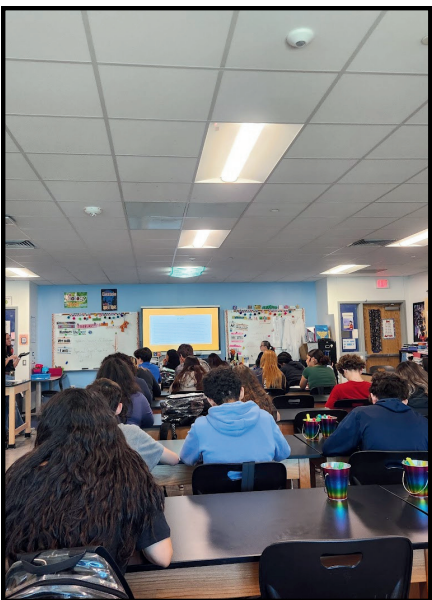
### EVENTS ATTENDED/HOSTED IN FEBRUARY

- February 5th: Sinton ISD Career Day at Sinton High School
- February 19-21: Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society in Denton, TX
- February 24: Carroll High School Biology Class at Carroll High School



### TOTAL NUMBERS REACHED IN FEBRUARY

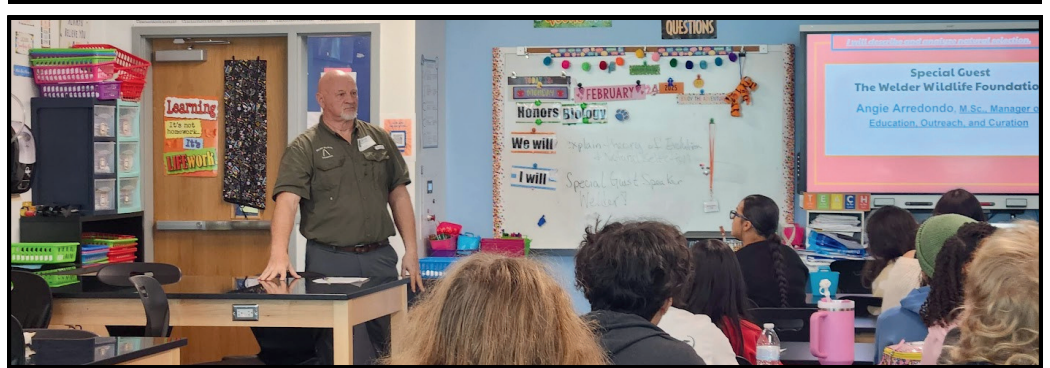
- At Outreach Events
  - 402 people
- At the Foundation
  - 8 people



## UPCOMING PUBLIC EVENTS >

### MARCH - MAY

- March 21st
  - Youth Wildflower Workshop
- April 4th
  - Adult Wildflower Workshop
- April 25-26th
  - Birdiest Festival Birding Tours through the Botanical Gardens



## EDUCATION EVENTS >

### A WORD FROM OUR EDUCATOR - RON SHULZE

Welcome to spring at Weller Wildlife Foundation. We are busy preparing for a spring filled with visiting school groups, outreach to local schools and wildflower workshop for youth and adults. This is my favorite time of year as nature is bursting out in rebirth from our cooler weather. Plants are growing up, animals are starting to move, young are being born and outdoor activities are increasing for us all!

### MARCH - MAY

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • March 6th                               | • April 15th                              |
| ◦ Sinton ISD Outreach Event               | ◦ Beth Hudson Group                       |
| ◦ Mireles Elementary Science Spectacular  | • April 25th                              |
| • March 27th                              | ◦ Sinton ISD Aquatic Class                |
| ◦ Goliad ISD Field Day                    | • April 28th                              |
| • April 1st                               | ◦ State Wildlife Contest                  |
| ◦ Region III Wildlife Contest             | • April 29-30th                           |
| • April 8th                               | ◦ Sinton ISD Aquatic Class                |
| ◦ Junior Master Naturalist                | • May 7-8th                               |
| • April 11th                              | ◦ Austin Waldorf School                   |
| ◦ Kostoryz Elementary Science Spectacular | • May 16th                                |
|   | ◦ Kostoryz Elementary Science Spectacular |



## WELDER TURKEY TRAPPERS >

### CURRENT RESEARCH AT THE REFUGE



## LENDING A HELPING HAND >

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-KINGSVILLE AG MECHANICS STUDENTS HELP BUILD TRAIL BENCHES



"During my time at Rob & Bessie Welder Wildlife foundation, I was able to utilize my knowledge in construction principles to provide a real-world benefit to the foundation. Graduate students, such as I, and a group of committed undergraduates worked together with the foundation in order to enhance a viewing trail of the ranch by installing benches for future visitors to comfortably rest as they walk the trail. In the process of constructing these benches, we applied the construction techniques and principles that we had learned in the classroom on a real-world application that benefits the community and all those who visit in the future."

- Colton Allen (TAMUK Graduate student)

"During my time at the Rob & Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation, I had the opportunity to not only reinforce my understanding of construction principles but also give back to the community in a lasting way. While at the foundation, we built benches for the community, specifically benefiting elementary students who would use them during educational tours. The project allowed me to collaborate with others, applying practical skills in a real-world setting, and deepening my appreciation for craftsmanship and teamwork. Seeing the completed benches that would be used by community members was incredibly rewarding, as it demonstrated how classroom learning can translate into meaningful real-world applications. It was fulfilling to know that these benches would provide a comfortable place for students to rest, learn, and connect with nature, fostering both education and a sense of community. This experience not only enhanced my construction skills but also gave me a sense of pride in knowing my work had a positive, lasting impact on the local community."

-Kayla Garza (TAMUK Undergrad student)







## NICK'S JOKE OF THE MONTH

Q: Why did the dinosaur cross the road?

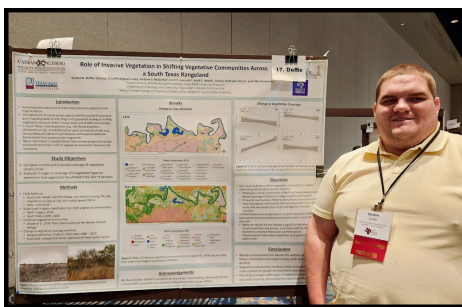
A: **Because the CHICKEN wasn't born yet!!**

## TEXAS CHAPTER >

### PAST AND PRESENT FELLOWS



At Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society, we were able to bring together some of our past and present fellows from the Welder Wildlife Foundation for a picture.



Welder Fellow Dustin Duffie presenting his poster at Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society.



Welder Fellow Amaris Shammaa presenting her research at Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

## RESEARCH : SPOTLIGHT ON A WELDER FELLOW >



CHRISTIN A. MOELLER, M.S.

### Effect of Translocation on the Threatened Texas Tortoise

The population of Texas tortoises (*Gopherus berlandieri*) has drastically reduced in number and distribution. Historically found throughout southern Texas from Victoria to San Antonio to Del Rio with densities of 16 tortoises/ha (i.e., 7-8 acre), their populations now exist sporadically in southern Texas with densities estimated to be 0.26 tortoises/ha (i.e., 0.1 tortoise/ acre or 1 tortoise/10 acres), which constitutes a 98% reduction in population number. Hence, today, Texas tortoises are listed as a threatened species. The Lower Rio Grande Valley is a stronghold for populations of Texas tortoises, but the development of the area by liquefied natural gas (LNG) companies threatens to fragment this refuge. Translocation has been suggested as a possible management option to keep tortoises out of immediate harm from the construction of the LNG infrastructure and resulting vehicular traffic; however, it is unknown if such attempts will alter tortoise movements, survival, and reproduction. therefore, our goal is to assess the viability of translocation for Texas tortoises as a potential mitigation option before their habitat is altered. Currently, we are constructing the recipient enclosure.

Texas A&M University-Kingsville  
Major Advisor: Scott E. Henke, Ph.D.

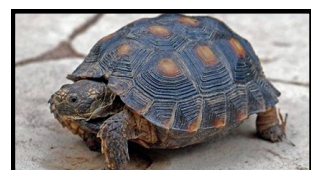
## UNOS CORNER >

### TEXAS TORTOISE



The Texas Tortoises are the smallest tortoises in North America. Tortoise shells are most commonly known to protect their vulnerable bodies by acting like a shield. But these unique tortoises are also very sensitive

meaning that can feel everything due to the nerve endings connected to their shells. They can feel every rub, touch, or scratch.





## WELDER CALENDAR >



### OFFERED INSIDE

We are now featuring our NEW Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation Calendar. All images inside were taken on the Refuge by Bill and Sharon Draker. Contact us at [aarredondo@welderwildlife.org](mailto:aarredondo@welderwildlife.org) to get ahold of our limited supply!



### RON'S INSECT FACT >



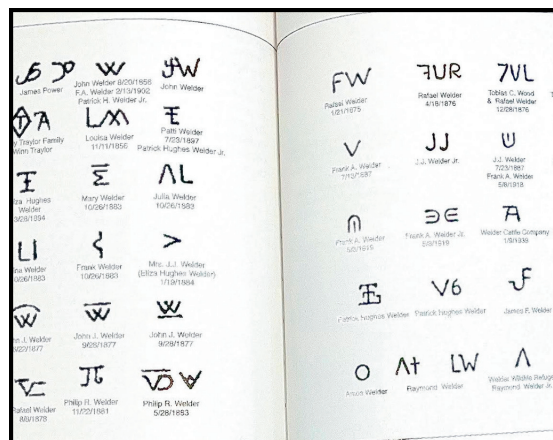
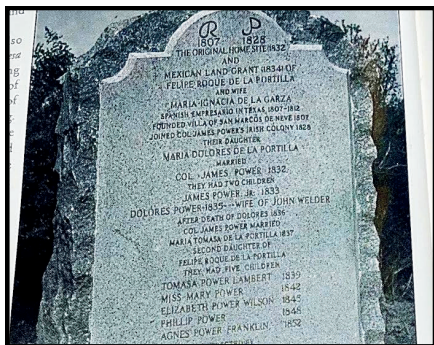
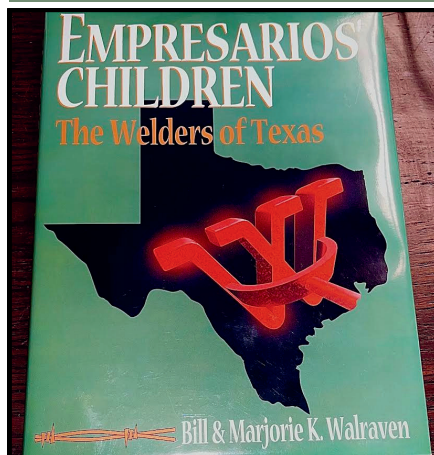
### EASTERN VELVET ANT

These fuzzy ants are actually wasps in disguise. The males, like any other wasp, have wings but the females lack wings and look like ants. These wasps have thick fur on their bodies to protect them from predators. They also have very painful stings. They can be found in the southern states, but mainly Texas.



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## LEARN ABOUT OUR HISTORY



### EMPRESARIOS' CHILDREN

**Author:** Bill and Marjorie K. Walraven

**Price:** \$75

**Summary:** "One of the oldest and largest ranching operations in Texas, the Welder Ranches have had a remarkably low profile. Welders or Welder ancestors survived Indian raids, wars, plagues, elopements, assassinations, and the terrible Galveston hurricane of 1900, but even family members were unaware of their heritage."

**Purpose:** "Patrick Hughes Welder Jr. proposed this history of his family. As a descendent of Spanish, German, and Irish colonizers, he has been determined to preserve his heritage, much of which has been unknown to family members. A rancher, oilman, banker, and an original Trustee of the Welder Wildlife Foundation, he has a profound interest in the land his family has husbanded so many years."

### Quotes:

"Loyalist families were fleeing, as afraid of the Texian raiders as the Texian civilians were of the Guardes." (page 51)

"Later in the day Weather Bureau began warning residents within three blocks of the coast to evacuate. Few heeded the warning." (page 177)

"Although Raymond was spared, the flu would bring great sorrow to the Welders." (page 203)



## CONTACT INFORMATION >

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