

WELDER NOW

VOL. 2, ISSUE 1



| History

Harvey Weil

Harvey Weil was a passionate conservationist, skilled angler, and naturalist who dedicated his life to protecting wildlife and marine environments. Deeply aware of the growing threats to the natural world, he consistently supported conservation, research, and environmental education.

Harvey played a crucial role in establishing the Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation. As Rob Welder's attorney and advisor, he encouraged the creation of the foundation to promote research and education in wildlife conservation and management. He was instrumental in shaping the foundation's mission, operations, and long-term endowment, making it a lasting legacy for conservation in South Texas. He was one of the original trustee members for the foundation.

| Ty Higginbotham

Soil to Sky

Eastern Gammagrass

- Eastern Gammagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*) is a perennial native bunch grass usually found in wetter areas on the landscape like drainages, riverbanks, and marshes. This native grass is extremely important to help decrease erosion in the areas where it is found. Eastern Gammagrass grows anywhere from 2-12 feet tall and has long, flat, and wide leaf blades that can grow as long as 30 inches. The seed head produced is also quite large (6-10 inches) and typically has 1-3 branches. Though the main function of this plant in the landscape is its ability to decrease erosion wildlife does utilize the seeds as forage and its large stature for cover. Due to decreased habitat availability, introduction of invasive grasses, and overgrazing, this native giant has become harder to find in the landscape.



List of Volunteers - December

Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to make the Foundation a better place!

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| — Brittany Arredondo | — Dave Grise |
| — Sara Jose | — Ashley Reed |
| — Yvette Stewart | — Richard Sayles |
| — Paul Swacina | — Greg Simmons |
| — Phil Woods | — Sally Scroggs |
| — Amber Brown | — Michael Tewes |
| | — Christina Tewes |



Events Attended/Hosted

Who have we reached this month?

- December 3-5
 - Texas Children in Nature Network Summit
- December 13
 - Goose Island Christmas in the Park
- December 15
 - Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

- December 16
 - Carroll H.S. Biology Class (Evolution)
- December 19
 - Christmas Bird Count

At Outreach Events

- 408 people

At the Foundation

- 27 people



CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK

Projects

Upcoming Projects

- Repair and Repaint Youth Hunt Blinds



Volunteer Opportunities



Education: Help us with field days and outreach events!



Workday: Refuge Maintenance
– Jan. 8
– Feb. 11



Collections: Herpetology
– Organizing and preserving specimen collection.

*** Join our Volunteer Team!**

Education Team

Monthly Outdoor Family Activity

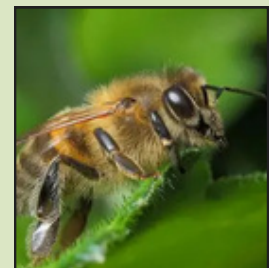
BACKYARD BOWLING GAME

- Turn recyclables into bowling pins.
 - water bottles or soda bottles with or without water in them.
- You can paint them to make them your own.
- Set them up in your yard in whatever design you want.
- Use any medium-sized ball you have in your household.
 - Softball to basketball size.
- **START BOWLING!!**



WELDER INSECT FACT - HONEY BEE

– Honey bees in Texas are incredible pollinators, helping support everything from wildflowers to major crops like almonds and watermelons. They communicate using a “waggle dance,” a unique behavior that tells other bees the direction and distance of food sources. Another fun fact is that a single honey bee produces only about one-twelfth of a teaspoon of honey in its lifetime, making every drop of Texas honey surprisingly precious.




Reptile Facts

Uno's Corner - Western Box Turtle

The western box turtle in Texas is known for its unique hinged shell, which allows it to close completely like a box to protect itself from predators. These turtles can live for several decades, and some individuals may even reach ages of 40–50 years in the wild. A fun fact is that they have an excellent homing instinct, often staying within the same small territory for most of their lives.





Joke of the Month

Q: Where's the best place to find fun facts about African wildlife?

A: SAFARI!!!!

Check out our Handouts

2026 Calendar



2025 Activity Books



Explore nature all year with our fun seasonal activity books! Each Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter issue highlights the amazing wildlife and plant life happening right outside your door—from spring pollinators and summer baby animals to fall migrations and winter survival strategies. Every book also includes a special history page about the Rob & Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation. These activity books make learning about conservation and local wildlife exciting for kids—and even grown-ups!

Research



Spotlight on a past Welder Fellow

Mary Anne Bishop, M.S.

THE DYNAMICS OF SUBADULT FLOCKS OF WHOOPING CRANES WINTERING IN TEXAS, 1978-79 THROUGH 1982-83

Subadult flocks of color-banded whooping cranes were studied on the wintering grounds at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, Texas, for 1978-79 through 1982-83 and from field observations during 1980-81 through 1982-83 winter seasons. Subadult flock composition, habitat selection, movements, daily activities, and intraflock and extraflock relationships were examined.

On the wintering grounds, color-banded subadults joined flocks composed primarily of nonbreeding cranes, including sexually immature subadults, and mature, unpaired adult cranes. Average seasonal flock size varied between 4.4-5.6 cranes over the 5 seasons. Fluctuations in flock size and composition appeared to be a result of seasonal availability of food on the marsh and pair bonding.

Habitat selection of subadult and adult whooping cranes was similar. Cranes fed in the seasonally flooded salt marsh during the fall and spring. During the colder winter months, cranes foraged in shallow bays. In early fall, unusual food concentrations in the marsh and uplands attracted large numbers of subadult and unpaired adult cranes. These aggregations were temporary, and dispersal occurred with the apparent depletion of the food resource.

Subadults principally utilized areas not defended by paired cranes. From 1976-83 the subadult flocks preferred 3 traditional sites: Dunham Bay, middle and southern Sundown Bay, and Ayres and Roddy Islands. Flock site selection was related to 1st year home range.

Pair formation occurred in subadult flocks. Six pair bonds formed between days that exhibited high frequencies of association over 1-3 seasons.

TCINN Summit



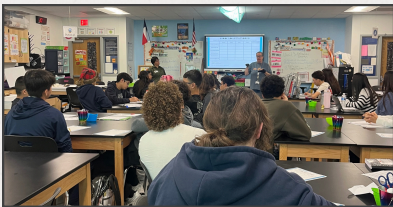
Christmas Luncheon



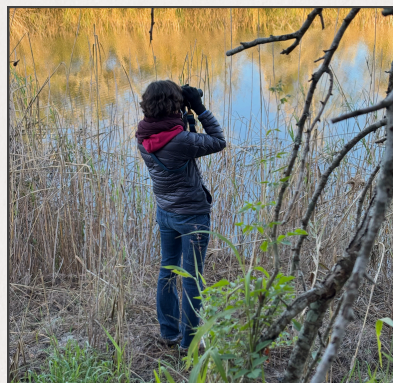
Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon



Carroll H.S. Biology



Christmas Bird Count



CONTACT INFORMATION

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