

# WELDER NOW

VOL. 2, ISSUE 3



## | History

### John J. Welder IV

John James Welder IV, nephew of Robert H. Welder, served as one of the original trustees of the Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation. He played a vital role in establishing the Foundation's initial organizational structure and provided meaningful leadership during its formative years. His contributions to research development, ranching operations, and overall land management were instrumental in shaping the Foundation into the respected institution it is today.

## | Ty Higginbotham

### Soil to Sky

#### Transitioning

- With February coming to an end, the early signs of spring green-up are already upon us. From our pastures to the burn units, color is coming back to the refuge. It's a great time to schedule a tour and see the wildflowers in bloom!



### List of Volunteers - February

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication in making our first field days a success to start off our year.

- Greg Simmons
- Sally Scroggs
- Phil Woods
- Daizy Silva
- Katie Fernald

Events Attended/Hosted

# Who have we reached this month?

- February 4
    - Sinton Aquatic Class
  - February 6
    - Calhoun County ISD Field Day
  - February 11 - 12
    - Welder Elementary Field Day
  - February 13
    - Sinton High School Career Day
- At Outreach Events
    - 241 people
  - At the Foundation
    - 295 people
- February 18-20
    - Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society
  - February 24
    - Santa Gertrudis STEAM Night
  - February 25
    - Sinton ISD Aquatic Class
    - Coastal Bend Chapter - TCINN Meeting



SINTON AQUATIC CLASS

## Current Projects

- Updating Our Tour Manual
- Advertising For Summer Camps
- Facility Maintenance



## Volunteer Opportunities



**Education:** Help us with field days and outreach events!



**Workday:** Refuge Maintenance  
– Mar. 11  
– Apr. 21



**Collections:** Herpetology  
– Organizing and preserving specimen collection.

**\* Join our Volunteer Team!**

## Education Team

# Monthly Outdoor Family Activity

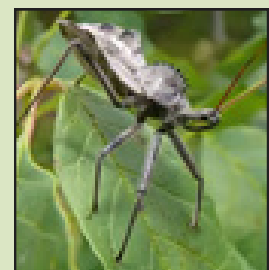
### MINI FROZEN BIRD FEEDERS

- Fill measuring cups or small bowls with birdseed, bird-friendly fruits, or nuts.
- Pour the measuring cup into a large cube silicone tray, small bowl, yogurt cup, or something similar.
- Fill each cube with water.
- Make a loop with ribbon and push the ends down into the middle of a cube to create a hanger after freezing.
- Place tray in freezer for 1-2 hours.
- Remove each cube from the tray and hang it in a tree or on a fence post outside.



## WELDER INSECT FACT - WHEEL BUG

The wheel bug is a large, predatory insect commonly found in Texas, especially in gardens, wooded areas, and grasslands. It gets its name from the distinctive, gear-shaped “wheel” on its back, which makes it easy to recognize. As a member of the assassin bug family, it feeds on caterpillars, beetles, and other insects, helping control pest populations naturally. Although beneficial, the wheel bug can deliver a painful bite if handled, so it is best observed rather than touched.




Reptile Facts

# Uno's Corner - Western Diamondback Rattlesnake

The Western diamondback rattlesnake is one of the most well-known venomous snakes in Texas and is commonly found in deserts, grasslands, brush country, and rocky hillsides throughout the state. It is easily recognized by the dark diamond-shaped patterns along its back and the rattle at the end of its tail, which it shakes as a warning when threatened. This species plays an important ecological role by controlling rodent populations, which helps maintain balance in the ecosystem. Although it can deliver a serious venomous bite, the western diamondback typically avoids people and uses its rattle as a signal to stay away.





**Joke of the Month**

**Q:** What did one ocean say to the other?

**A:** Nothing, it just waved!!!

## 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 Welder Fellow

Lee Cottle, M.S.

SPOTTED SKUNK (*SPILOGALE INTERRUPTA*)  
RESEARCH IN SOUTH TEXAS

Historically, the plains spotted skunk (*Spilogale interrupta*) was commonly found throughout its range in the Midwestern and southeastern United States. However, the species experienced a substantial decline between the 1940's and 50's, and as a result, is now considered a species of conservation concern. Due to this, a dearth of information exists on the natural history and ecology of this species. After 1961, the presence of the plains spotted skunk has only been recorded twice in south Texas. Landscape characterized by closed mesquite and mixed brush canopy that is maintained for large-scale cattle ranching may be contributing to favorable habitat conditions for the plains spotted skunk; however, this remains poorly studied and largely unknown. Therefore, our study on this species is necessary to fully understand the population status, habitat requirements, and habitat use of this species in south Texas. We will establish study plots on the Welder Wildlife Refuge, the Fennessey Ranch, and the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. We will monitor plains spotted skunks via camera trapping to estimate occupancy in the landscape. At each camera site, we will sample the habitat to assess and compare habitat composition at local and landscape scales. Our findings will enhance our understanding of plains spotted skunk activity patterns, habitat use, and general ecology and will inform future management and conservation efforts of the species.

## Welder Elementary Field Day



## TCTWS



## Calhoun County ISD Field Day



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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