

# WELDER NOW

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**VOL. 2, ISSUE 6**

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## Fun Facts from the Welder Wildlife Foundation Scrapbooks

### The Birth of Two Whoopers

According to “The Crow’s Nest” column in the Caller, Sep 56, Dr. Cottam stated that he came here because of the whooping cranes. “When Welder Wildlife Foundation was only an idea in Rob Welder’s mind, Cottam visited Corpus Christi: ‘I had been here scarcely 24 hours when I went down to breakfast and picked up a copy of The Caller,’ the Doctor likes to tell his audiences. ‘And over on one of the back or inside pages, under a modest headline, was a short story announcing the birth of the crown prince of England. But on page one, under a glaring three-column headline, was a story announcing that Rusty had been born to Jo and Crip, two of the Aransas Refuge whoopers. I said to myself, then and there: ‘Here in South Texas are people who place a true evaluation on proper values,’ and I made up my mind that if the opportunity ever presented itself, I would jump at the chance to live and work among them. So here I am.”



#### List of Volunteers - May

Thank you to our volunteers for lending a helping hand with our Wildflower Workshops!

- Sally Scroggs
- Greg Simmons
- Phil Woods

## Soil to Sky

I am thrilled to update everyone this month on the status of the refuge! We have received an average of 15.6” of rain this month, with 14” of that occurring through the 19th-27th. This has filled all our wetlands, including Big Lake and Pollito, which have been dry for 4 years. Waterfowl and shore birds immediately started filling these wetlands with life, and there is no better time to see the refuge than now!



## Events Attended/Hosted

# Who have we reached this month?

### At Outreach Events

- 409 people

### At the Foundation

- 111 people

- May 1

- Adult Wildflower Workshop

- May 6

- Private Tour

- May 13

- Gulf Coast Association Tour

- May 14

- Duston Duffie's Tour (fellow)
- Rockport-Fulton MS Artifact Workshop

- May 15

- Kostoryz Elementary Science Spectacular

- May 19

- Audubon Painted Bunting Survey

- May 21

- Trinity Towers Nursing Home Outreach

- May 21-22

- Dr. James College Group

- May 26

- Alice Middle School Classroom Presentation

- May 27

- TCIN - Coastal Bend Meeting

- May 29

- Youth Wildflower Workshop



TCIN COASTAL BEND MEETING

## Projects

### Upcoming

- Herbicide Spraying
- Intern Projects
- Bus Barn
- New HQ Sidewalks
- Burn Plans for Pollito Lake and Big Lake



## Volunteer Opportunities



### Education:

- Camps
- Outreach
- Intern Field Work



### Workday: Refuge Maintenance

- June 15: Camp and Field Trip Prep (possible soil pit maintenance)



### Collections: Organizing

\* Join our Volunteer Team!

## Education Team

# Monthly Outdoor Family Activity

### NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT

- Make a list of things to find.
  - Something smooth, a feather, a yellow leaf, etc.
- Get a basket or a bag and head outdoors.
- Start checking the items on your list.
- Collect what you can!
- If you cannot collect it, then draw it!
- Talk about the finds afterwards.
- Sort what you found by type, color, or size!

|                                                                                       |                                                                                       |                                                                                       |                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |
| BUTTERFLY                                                                             | ROCK                                                                                  | TRACKS                                                                                | WATER                                                                                 |
|  |  |  |  |
| GRASS                                                                                 | MUSHROOM                                                                              | FEATHER                                                                               | BEE                                                                                   |
|  |  |  |  |
| LADYBUG                                                                               | STICK                                                                                 | WORM                                                                                  | TREE                                                                                  |
|  |  |  |  |
| MOSS                                                                                  | FLOWER                                                                                | SQUIRREL                                                                              | ANT                                                                                   |
|  |  |  |  |
| NEST                                                                                  | SPIDERWEB                                                                             | DIRT                                                                                  | CLOVER                                                                                |

## WELDER INSECT FACT - FIREFLY

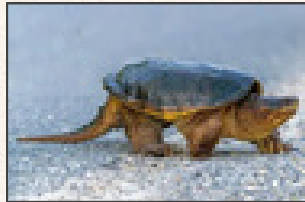
Fireflies are actually a type of beetle that can make their own light through a special chemical reaction in their bodies. They flash their glowing lights to communicate, attract mates, and sometimes warn predators to stay away. On warm summer nights, these tiny insects can turn fields and forests into sparkling light shows!



## Reptile Facts

## Uno's Corner - Common Snapping Turtle

The Common Snapping Turtle is a large freshwater reptile known for its powerful jaws and long, rugged tail. It often lives in ponds, lakes, and slow-moving rivers where it hides in muddy water and waits for food to come close. Even though it may look slow on land, it is a strong swimmer and can move quickly when it needs to. These turtles play an important role in their habitats by helping keep waterways clean as they eat both plants and animals.

*Joke of the Month*

Q: Why did the cow go to space?

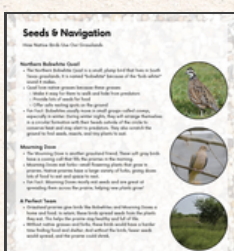
A: to see the MOOOOON!

## Check out our Handouts

## 2026 Calendar



## 2026 Spring Activity Book



This series of Nature Nook activity books explores the diverse habitats found on the Welder Wildlife Refuge. We are beginning the year with a brand-new issue focused on grasslands, highlighting their ecological importance, history in Texas, and the plants and animals that depend on them. This edition also features two engaging activities and a Welder Tales spotlight on the original land grant of the Rob & Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation.

## Research



## Spotlight on a Welder Fellow

Raymond Turner, M.S.

## IMPACTS OF LINEAR INFRASTRUCTURE ON MAMMAL COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH TEXAS AND POTENTIAL MITIGATION STRATEGIES

The ability to move freely through a landscape is essential to the persistence of wildlife species, yet landscapes are increasingly fragmented by linear infrastructure. Fences represent the most widespread and rapidly expanding barrier systems globally; however, the extent of their ecological impacts is poorly understood. Thus far, most research on these impacts has employed a single-species approach, with scarce research on community-level effects. A better understanding of the community-level effects of linear infrastructure on wildlife, as well as how to mitigate their negative impacts to at-risk species, should be a priority as linear infrastructure expands. In South Texas, the expansion of the USA-Mexico border barrier and high fences on private ranchlands presents significant challenges for wide-ranging mammals, particularly the mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), due to their large home range requirements and genetic isolation from an obvious source population. I plan to evaluate the impact of these barriers on mountain lions and the greater mammal community, as well as test novel mitigation strategies to promote habitat connectivity. To evaluate the impact of the border barrier, I am monitoring small wildlife passages (8"x11" sections cut from the barrier's base), barrier section ends, and water gates on creek beds using 75 camera trap sites along approximately 28 miles of barrier. In addition, I will be using a combination of visual, auditory, and olfactory attractants to increase the discoverability of small wildlife passages by mountain lions. I will be characterizing the behaviors of mammals pre- and post-attractant placement to determine the effect on the larger mammal community. To evaluate the impact of high fencing on mountain lions, I am currently monitoring the movements of 7 mountain lions fitted with GPS collars, with continued efforts to collar more lions through May 2026.

## Meet our Land Stewardship Intern - Jay



## Meet our Education Intern - Lindsey



## CONTACT INFORMATION



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## Gulf Coast Association Tour



## Youth Wildflower Workshop



## Texas A&M University - Land Management Lesson



## Adult Wildflower Workshop

