WELDER NOW

VOL. 2, ISSUE 11







New Manager of Education & Outreach

Welcome Sarah Wood

We'd like to welcome Sarah Wood as our new Education and Outreach Manager! Originally from Natchitoches, LA, Sarah earned a BA in history at LSU, volunteered as an English teacher in the Marshall Islands, worked at a fishery in Alaska, and taught in the public school system in Pittsburgh, PA. During the pandemic, she decided to combine her teaching experience with her newfound love of birds and found her way into the field of environmental education. Since then, she has worked as a naturalist and educator for nature centers and environmental non-profit organizations in Kansas and Minnesota. Before joining us in July, Sarah earned her MS in Natural Resources with an emphasis in Environmental Education and Interpretation from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. While there, she served as Summer Camp Director and Program Director at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station for two years, providing outdoor programming for local youth and mentoring college students beginning their careers as environmental educators. She also served on the board of the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society and on the UWSP Bird Strike Prevention Team. Sarah loves to explore the outdoors with her dog, Banjo, and couldn't be happier to be a part of the Welder Team!



List of Volunteers - October

Thank you to our volunteers for helping with our Sinton HS Aquatic class and Trunk-or-Treat events!

— Phil Woods — Sara Rock — Daizy Silva
— Sally Scroggs — Brian Doherty — Amy Lowe
— Greg Simmons — Amber Brown — Shirley Thornton



Soil to Sky

This month on the refuge we have been fortunate enough to get some great rains to hopefully end our short dry spell that followed our May/June floods. Rainfall this October pushed us to our yearly rainfall average of 35.8". With a predicted wet fall and winter we should maintain water within the wetlands going into the new year!





A visit from former WWF Director Dr. Lynn Drawe and his wife, Kay

Events Attended/Hosted

Who have we reached this month?

At Outreach Events

- **200** people

At the Foundation

- **325** people

- October 3
  - Island Science Day - UTMSI
- October 7-10
  - Welder Research Symposium
- October 13-15
  - TAEE Conference in Rockport, TX
- October 15-18
  - TPWF Stewards of the Wild Workshop
- October 20
  - Public Tour
- October 21
  - Sinton High School Aquatic Class
- October 21-23
  - Teer Leadership Institute Workshop
- October 24
  - Audubon Outdoor Club
- October 27
  - Public Tour
- October 29
  - Dr. Lynn and Kay Drawe Family Visit



AUDUBON OUTDOOR CLUB

- October 29
  - Highland Lakes Master Naturalists
- October 30
  - Trunk-or-Treat

Projects

Upcoming:

- Education Trailer
- Herbicide Spray



Volunteer Opportunities

Education:
11/14 Kingsville Recycles Day
11/18 Santa Gertrudias Field Trip

Workday: Refuge Maintenance

Collections: Organizing

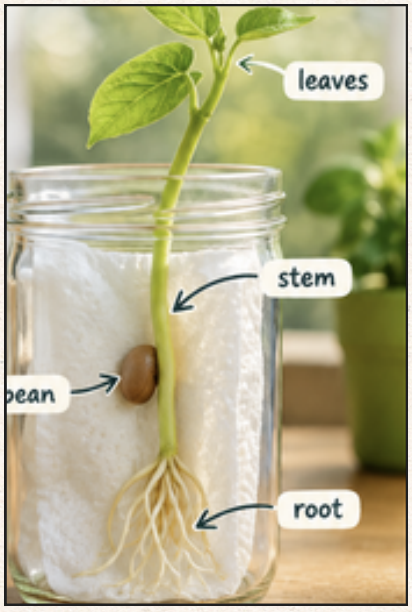
Join our Volunteer Team!

Education Team

Monthly Outdoor Family Activity

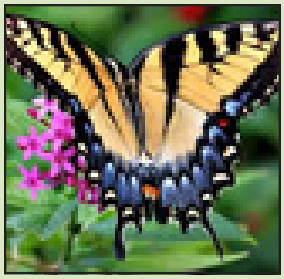
GROW A BEAN IN A JAR

- Line the inside of a clean glass jar with a damp (not soaking wet) paper towel.
- Place a dry bean between the glass and the paper towel.
- Keep the jar in a sunny spot and mist the paper towel regularly (to keep it damp).
- Track the growth stages and label the root, stem, and leaves as your bean sprouts.



WELDER INSECT FACT - *EASTERN TIGER SWALLOWTAIL*

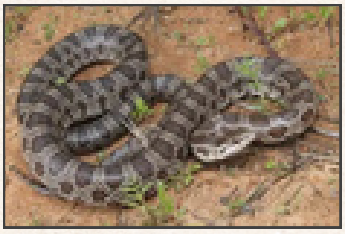
The eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly is a large, colorful butterfly with bright yellow wings and black tiger-like stripes. It visits flowers to drink nectar and helps pollinate plants as it moves from bloom to bloom. Its caterpillars feed on the leaves of trees such as tulip poplars, wild cherries, and ash trees, making them an important part of the food web.

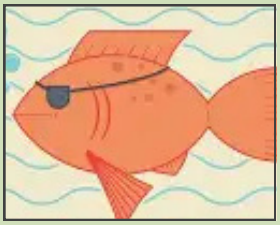


Reptile Facts

Uno's Corner - Prairie Kingsnake

The prairie kingsnake is a nonvenomous snake found in grasslands, brushy areas, and open woodlands across Texas. It helps keep the ecosystem balanced by eating small rodents, lizards, frogs, and other snakes. Its brown or dark blotches help it blend into its surroundings, making it a skilled hunter and a master of hiding!





Joke of the Month

Q: What do you call a fish with no eyes?

A: Fsh!!

Check out our Handouts

2026 Calendar





2026 Summer Activity Book









Explore the amazing world of wetlands in this summer's Nature Nook Activity Book! Journey through the wetlands of the Welder Wildlife Refuge and discover fascinating wetland habitats from around the globe. Meet incredible animals and plants that call these watery ecosystems home, challenge yourself with fun games and activities, and test your knowledge with a wetland quiz. Don't miss this issue's Welder Tales story, where you'll dive into the history of the Welder family and learn how ranching first became part of their legacy. Adventure, discovery, and learning await on every page!

Research



Spotlight on a Past Welder Fellow

Kim Withers, Ph.D.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MACROBENTHIC PREY AVAILABILITY TO SHOREBIRD USE OF BLUE-GREEN ALGAL FLATS IN THE UPPER LAGUNA MADRE

Shorebirds were censused and macrobenthic invertebrates sampled biweekly on two blue-green algal flats in the upper Laguna Madre from October 1991 to October 1993. Researchers observed 22 shorebird species, with peak abundance from November to March. We identified three microhabitat guilds: open-water tactile foragers, wet-habitat visual and tactile foragers, and damp-wet habitat visual foragers, including Piping, Snowy, and Semipalmated Plovers. Shorebirds used intertidal microhabitats less than expected and wet microhabitats more than expected ($P < 0.05$), potentially reflecting habitat limitations or prey depletion. More than 50 taxa of macrobenthic invertebrates were identified, with polychaetes, tanaids, and dipteran larvae most common. Invertebrate abundance was lowest from July to October, generally highest in surface sediments (0–5 cm), while biomass was often greater at depths of 5–10 cm. Aquatic organisms increased in abundance at lower elevations, whereas semi-terrestrial organisms became more dominant at higher elevations. Log-transformed linear regression models indicated that shorebird density was best predicted by species, site, and season. Overall, shorebird abundance depended on sufficient tidal-flat area and inundation patterns that supported diverse, well-developed benthic communities. Exclosure experiments detected shorebird-related prey depletion in three instances, while most observed invertebrate changes were associated with inundation and exposure. These findings demonstrate that tidal-flat productivity and suitability for shorebirds are strongly influenced by inundation regimes and benthic community development, making prey-rich habitats more reliable indicators of critical shorebird habitat than bird presence alone.

Research Symposium



TAEE Annual Conference at Camp Aranzazu in Rockport





Highland Lakes Master Naturalists



CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Phone: (361) 364-2643

Email: tzamora@welderwildlife.org

Website: www.welderwildlife.org

Sinton HS Aquatic Class





Teer Leadership Institute Workshop





Trunk-or-Treat at Welder











