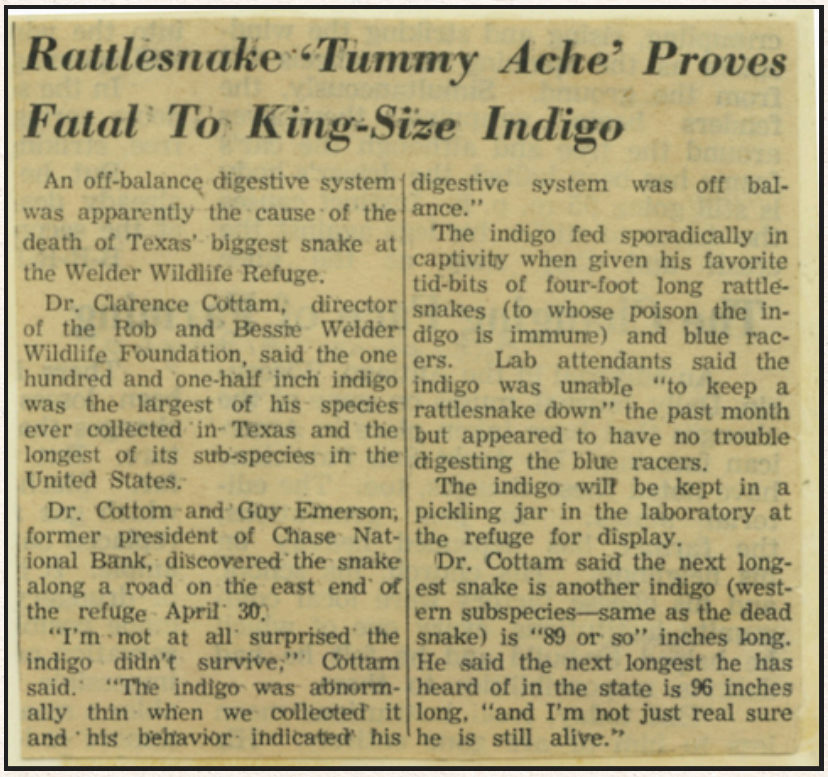
# WELDER NOW

VOL. 2, ISSUE 9

## Fun Facts from the Welder Wildlife Foundation Scrapbooks:

# Rattlesnakes at Welder



**Rattlesnake 'Tummy Ache' Proves Fatal To King-Size Indigo**

An off-balance digestive system was apparently the cause of the death of Texas' biggest snake at the Welder Wildlife Refuge.

Dr. Clarence Cottam, director of the Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation, said the one hundred and one-half inch indigo was the largest of his species ever collected in Texas and the longest of its sub-species in the United States.

Dr. Cottom and Guy Emerson, former president of Chase National Bank, discovered the snake along a road on the east end of the refuge April 30.

"I'm not at all surprised the indigo didn't survive," Cottam said. "The indigo was abnormally thin when we collected it and his behavior indicated his digestive system was off balance."

The indigo fed sporadically in captivity when given his favorite tid-bits of four-foot long rattlesnakes (to whose poison the indigo is immune) and blue racers. Lab attendants said the indigo was unable "to keep a rattlesnake down" the past month but appeared to have no trouble digesting the blue racers.

The indigo will be kept in a pickling jar in the laboratory at the refuge for display.

Dr. Cottam said the next longest snake is another indigo (western subspecies—same as the dead snake) is "89 or so" inches long. He said the next longest he has heard of in the state is 96 inches long, "and I'm not just real sure he is still alive."



## Volunteer Appreciation

A heartfelt thank you to all of our volunteers who have dedicated their time and talents to our program this year. Your support has made a tremendous impact, and many of our events would not have been possible without your generosity and commitment. We are incredibly grateful for everything you have done and look forward to accomplishing even more together throughout the rest of the year.



## Soil to Sky

Silver Bluestem (Bothriochloa laguroides) is a perennial, warm-season grass native to the southern Great Plains and extends south into northeast Mexico. This native grass can be identified easily by its silver-white fuzzy seed head and its distinct sweet fragrance. It can grow up to 5 feet tall and is an early to mid-successional species. Silver bluestem can grow on diverse soil textures and site conditions and is commonly found on disturbed sites; this ability makes it an excellent species for restoration of over-grazed sites and drought. While providing fair forage for livestock and decent cover for wildlife, it is also found to be resilient in areas heavily populated by grasses.



## Events Attended/Hosted

# Who have we reached this month?

**At Outreach Events**
- **0** people

**At the Foundation**
- **9** people

- August 4
  - Public Tour
- August 18
  - Private Tour

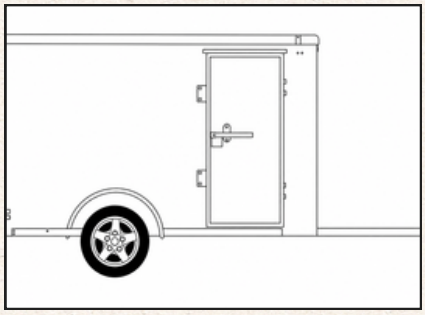




# Projects

Upcoming

- Wrap & Design Education Outreach Trailer



## Volunteer Opportunities

**Education:**
– Outreach

**Workday:** Refuge Maintenance

**Collections:** Organizing

**Join our Volunteer Team!**

## Education Team

# Monthly Outdoor Family Activity

BUILD A MINI DEN

- Head outside and gather sticks, branches, and leaves from the ground. Find a safe spot in your yard, garden, or a park (with permission), then build a small lean-to or tipi-shaped shelter. Once it's finished, gently test how sturdy it is and imagine it as a cozy hideout for you—or even for small wildlife! Leave it standing for a few days and check back to see how wind, rain, and sunshine change your nature shelter over time.



## *WELDER INSECT FACT - GREEN DARNER DRAGONFLY*

The green darner dragonfly is one of the largest and fastest dragonflies in Texas, zipping through the air at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour as it hunts mosquitoes and other small insects. These amazing fliers can even migrate hundreds of miles, traveling south in the fall and returning north in the spring, much like monarch butterflies. If you spot a bright green dragonfly with a long blue body near a pond or wetland, you may have found one of Texas's most impressive insect acrobats!



Reptile Facts

## Uno's Corner - Brown Anole

The brown anole is a small lizard that you can often spot climbing trees, fences, and walls across Texas. These quick little lizards can change the color of their bodies and have a bright orange or yellow throat fan, called a dewlap, that males puff out to attract mates or warn other males. Brown anoles are excellent climbers and use their long toes and sticky toe pads to grip smooth surfaces. Keep an eye out for them on warm, sunny days—they may be tiny, but they are fascinating little reptiles!





### *Joke of the Month*

Q: What do frogs like to read?

**A: Ribbiting Stories!!!**

# 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

### Cord Eversole, Ph.D.

**A THEORETICAL HARVEST MODEL FOR AMERICAN ALLIGATORS IN TEXAS.**

The American Alligator (Alligator mississippiensis) is a crocodilian species that was once listed as endangered in the United States, but is now harvested both recreationally and commercially throughout its range in the southeastern United States. Harvest of alligators typically includes egg collecting and hunting. However, review of scientific literature reveals that the effects of harvest on alligator populations have received little scientific scrutiny. We built a theoretical simulation model to evaluate the impact of several harvest strategies on long-term (i.e., 100 years) alligator population trends. We used system dynamics software to develop the model and acquired data for the model from literature and field studies on alligator ecology. Although widely applicable across the species' range and for other crocodilians, we used the Texas alligator management program as an example for model use. Results of model simulations showed that current harvest (50% egg harvest, 2% subadult harvest, 2% adult harvest) is sustainable, but alligator populations will stabilize at levels below population potential. The best harvest scenario for a sustainable harvest that maintains alligator populations at a relatively unchanging level is a 38% egg harvest, 2% subadult harvest, and 2% adult harvest. An elevated egg harvest (80%) can be sustained if no hunting harvest occurs. Contrarily, an increased hunting harvest (4% subadult, 4% adult) can be sustained with no egg harvest. This model identifies the function of current alligator harvest within populations and provides a tool for future use in determining the effect of changes in harvest or life-history characteristics on alligator population dynamics.

## Intern Wildlife Photos







## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Upcoming Public Events




Join HawkWatch International on September 27-29, 2024, at the Celebration of Flight at the Corpus Christi HawkWatch.

This festival is a celebration of raptor migration of the Corpus Christi HawkWatch at Hazel Bazemore County Park.

