



PROMOTING PRAIRIE CONSERVATION AWARENESS



WE NEED YOUR HELP FUNDING OUR HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT on MADDIN PRAIRIE PRESERVE. RESTORE 470+ ACRES! POLLINATORS & MORE WILL BENEFIT! TAG YOUR DONATION for "Maddin Restoration".

Thank you for assisting us in our mission.

August, 2018 Features:

PRAIRIE of the MONTH: Simpson Prairie

ARTICLE of the MONTH: TEXAS STANDARD, July 18, 2018

BIRD of the MONTH: Painted Bunting

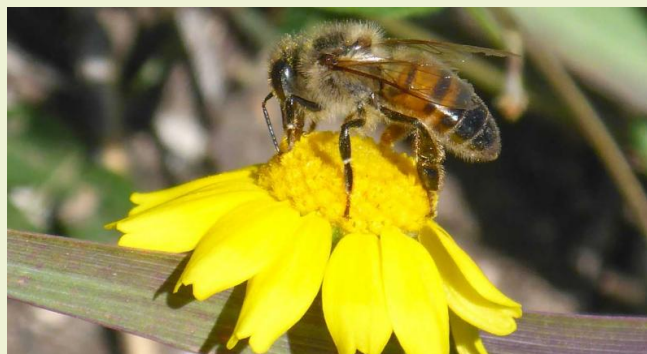
GRASS of the MONTH: Little bluestem

PRAIRIE of the MONTH: Simpson Prairie: a 75-acre prairie remnant of the Cross Timbers, Grand Prairie Ecoregion. This prairie is owned by Mike & Marliiss Williams, and NPAT holds the conservation easement. Surveys on Simpson Prairie have documented our Bird and Grass of the Month!

(Photo below by Stalin SM captured our tour of Simpson Prairie, June 4, 2017.)



ARTICLE of the MONTH - TEXAS POLLINATORS - URBAN BEEKEEPERS
TEXAS STANDARD, July 18, 2018 (scroll to the 2nd article).



for several decades due to a number of reasons, including habitat loss, as natural lands are replaced by urban and suburban environments."

Clint Walker, owner of Walker Honey Farm and a member of the Texas Beekeepers Association, highlighted the current success and potential for additional beekeepers to 'set up shop' in cities throughout the U.S.: "Urban beekeepers do quite well. They don't suffer droughts." Learn opportunities to provide a pollinator habitat in your own backyard!

Our Texas Legislators have the power (and can be encouraged) to balance the needs of farmers (using pesticides) and beekeepers who rely on flowering plants (killed by pesticides) to sustain flowering plants and pollinators for future generations (of humans, bees, butterflies, and more).

BIRD of the MONTH: Painted Bunting, *Passerina ciris*

*What bird has an INDIGO BLUE head,
each eye is trimmed by a red ring,
feathers across his shoulders are LIME GREEN,
they transition downward to ORANGE,
and his breast is BRIGHT RED? The Male Painted Bunting!*

"Nonpareil" = unrivalled

The Female, camouflaged by her 'soft' green/brownish plumage, is an extreme contrast to her partner, the 'Rainbow Flyer' Male. He's even more cautious!

(Photos: Female from Audubon.org; Male from allaboutbirds.org.)



-The painted bunting was "deservedly recognized as a 'single species' by the American Ornithologists' Union" (1998).

Surveys show declining numbers in recent decades; nests are frequently parasitized by cowbirds.

-Locally common in the SE United States (has been seen wintering in Florida).

-They are secretive, stay low in dense cover of woodland edges, brush, gardens and favor semi-open areas with dense low growth. The Texas Breeding Bird Atlas

Habitat: These beautiful birds prefer the heavier cover found around streams, forest edges and other areas with dense under story.

Distribution: Painted buntings are common summer residents in much of Texas, and the southeastern U.S. and Mexico. In the fall they migrate south to Mexico, Panama and a number of Caribbean islands.

Other: The Greek myth of Scylla who turned into the bird keiris, inspired the name *ciris* (or *ciris*) for the beautiful painted bunting. TPWD

-**Do you want one in your yard?** Painted Buntings are seed eaters. Plant wildflowers. Let the birds feast on native wildflower and grass seeds after the plant goes to seed. Then you can mow away without destroying one of their primary food sources. Provide seed at your feeders. Millet seeds are a special favorite. Have several feeders. Painted Buntings are shy, yet very territorial.

-**Provide water.** Running or dripping water is best. As you can see, they love to bathe. One local birder wets a bush and enjoys watching them frolic in the water-filled pottery saucer beside it.

-**Leave plenty of brush.** Since the buntings nest three to six feet off the ground, wild native vines, agarita, and yaupon or other bushes you have planted on the perimeter of your property, as well as other indigenous plants, are extremely important to their survival. Visit Wimberley.

GRASS of the MONTH: Little bluestem *Schizachyrium scoparium*

aka, *Popotillo azul* and *THE BLUES Bunchgrass*

Top Photo: Little Bluestem in the Spring, LBJWC site Photograph by Wasowski, Sally and Andy.

Easily grown in average, dry to medium moisture, well-drained soil in full sun. Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions. Tolerates clay soils. Performs well in poor soils. Good drought resistance once established. Tolerates high heat and humidity.



(What more can you ask for during global climate change?)

Cut to the ground in late winter to early spring. [As documented in Missouri, another 'prairie state'](#).

Of particular value to small birds.

-a very ornamental bunchgrass with fine-textured foliage that forms very dense mounds 18-24" tall.

-slender, **blue-green stems, appearing in August**, can reach 3 ft. by September and become **radiant mahogany-red with white, shining seed tufts in the fall**. Winter time foliage is vibrant and sparkles with droplets of ice or snow.

-gets its name from bluish color of the stem bases in the spring.

-is most striking in fall when it **transforms to reddish-tan color**, persisting through winter snows; the seeds are a fuzzy white at maturity. Source: [LBJWC](#)



Bottom Photograph Little Bluestem in the Winter is from [LBJWC site](#) by [Bolin, Kathryn E.](#) of Minnesota. (It REALLY does glisten this way in Texas during January and February 'winter days'!)

NPAT is proud of the work of local chapters in [Dallas](#), [Fort Worth](#), [Georgetown](#), [Houston](#) & [San Antonio](#), offering opportunities to experience prairies and learn and share common interests. NPAT Membership is NOT REQUIRED. You do not need to own land!

COME AS YOU ARE!!

Expand your knowledge of flora and fauna; presentations and discussions are led by dedicated and highly-qualified 'subject matter experts' serving communities in fields of water conservation, native vegetation, habitat restoration, ecological practices, as well as fellow conservation organizations!

WHAT'S GOING ON AT NPAT in AUGUST and EARLY SEPTEMBER?

(Details on [News & Events](#) and Chapters' Webpages - links included below)

Our Blackland and CenTex Chapters WILL NOT MEET IN AUGUST.

Tuesday, August 7, 2018: 7pm, SANPAT Chapter: "Locating, Collecting, Propagating Native Seeds" by Cleveland Powell. (City of San Antonio's Lions Field Adult and Senior Center.)

Monday, August 13, 2018: 6:30pm, FW Chapter: "NPAT Prairies & Conservation Easement Properties", by Pat Merkord. (Tarrant Co. College, 5301 Campus Dr, Ft Worth, [Parking & Map](#).)

Saturday, August 18 - 2 events:

7:30am to 12 Noon in Austin: Nature Walk and Workday: Indiangrass Prairie Preserve. 7:30am-we'll start our **nature walk & bird survey** followed at 9 am by our 'work day' (if there are no attendees for our 9am work day, that portion will be cancelled).

-8am to afternoon at Kirchoff Family Farm: 3rd Saturday Workday, sponsored by SANPAT. 8am-work on projects with Kirchoff Family (they also will provide lunch); leave when you're ready!

Wednesday, August 22, 2018: Arrive@ 6:30pm; Program @7pm. Houston NPAT Chapter's Monthly Program Meeting. Location and Program info on [HNPAT](#) website.

Tuesday, September 4, 2018: 7pm, SANPAT Chapter: "Cultural Resources of Restoration Sites" by Susan Snow, Archeologist, [San Antonio Missions](#). (City of San Antonio's Lions Field Adult and Senior Center.)

Wednesday, September 5, 2018 6:30pm, CenTex Chapter: Kirsti will introduce **Nate Custer** from [Douglas King Seeds](#), a San Antonio-based seed company. ([Georgetown Library](#))



Above - Monarch butterfly on Pitcher Sage, Reisel Prairie Preserve, Photo by Pat Merkord.

Thank you for continuing to support NPAT!

We have more NPAT-protected prairies, their flora and fauna, to feature in upcoming monthly eNewsletters: the Paul Mathews Prairie, Clymer Meadows-Wylie Tract, Maddin Prairie Preserve, Deer Park Prairie, and others.

Please email pat_rinn@texasprairie.org if you have any questions or suggestions.

NPAT Board of Directors and Staff

NPAT's Staff remain dedicated to sustaining the work of our former associates, Pat Merkord and Phillip Quast, who recently left their positions with us. Many regarded them as the 'faces' and 'voices' of NPAT for many years, and rightly so! Pat is now serving on our Board of Directors after retiring from her position as our treasured Executive Director. Happily, there will be opportunities to enjoy her vitality and benefit from her vast knowledge (she will present at the 08-13-18 FW Chapter Monthly Meet-up). Phillip's contributions as Program Director (and Interim Executive Director after Pat retired) enabled NPAT to stay-the-course over the past 10 years. Their collective achievements and contributions to NPAT are too numerous to list, but **they defined NPAT**. They facilitated our successful application to earn the highly-valued Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission in February, 2018!

Please know your staff continues to support NPAT's Board and committees. We are working together and focused on managing NPAT's day-to-day operations efficiently and successfully.

Kirsti Harms, Interim Executive Director;
Della Barbato, Director of Education, Lawther Deer Park Prairie;
Pat Rinn, Office Administrator