

ANR CEA Wildlife Newsletter | July 2019

WHATIZIT?



Little handprint in the mud with a lip balm for scale... who left this track along the banks of the Devils River in Val Verde County?

The answer to the May WHATIZIT? was milk snake, nonvenomous. Jessica McCrory, Terrell County, was the first person to answer correctly, and even gave the correct subspecies (Louisiana milk snake), which could be determined based on the location clue I gave.

Thank you to everyone who participated!

Correct, but too slow: Troy Luepke, Comal Co.; Noel Troxclair, Travis Co.; Mark Arnold, Ellis Co. Marty Morgan, Cooke Co. guessed Sinaloan milk snake, which don't live in Texas.

A few of you knew it was nonvenomous but guessed kingsnake: Janet Laminack, Denton Co.; Laura Miller, Tarrant Co.; Greg Baker, Calhoun Co.

Ryan Martin, Childress Co. and Beth McMahan, Gillespie Co. might be in trouble – both guessed coral snake but nonvenomous. Jessica Rymel, Cass Co., guessed coral snake and venomous – the rhyme is red touch black, friend of Jack (as in the picture), red touch yellow, kill a fellow.

For more info on identifying venomous snakes versus lookalikes, see Dr. Frank's publication in the AgriLife bookstore.



News

- Calling all teachers! There will be a workshop held at the Welder Wildlife Refuge in Sinton on July 29-31 for secondary teachers to learn birding as a classroom activity. CPE credits are available. WEBSITE
- It's not too late to join one of the summer online wildlife series. You can participate for part or all of the series, just email Isabel Hernandez (isabel.hernandez@ag.tamu.edu) to be added to the list.
 1. The [Fact Check series](#), hosted by Dimmit and Frio counties.
 2. The [Texas Game Species series](#), hosted by Bexar County.
- The [Statewide Quail Symposium](#) will be held August 14-16 in Abilene. Early registration (through Aug. 7) is just \$50 and this conference is geared toward landowners, managers,

hunters, and all other quail enthusiasts. The first day will feature a ranch tour and hands-on lessons about quail habitat. Consider attending or just help spread the word.

- Researchers at Mustang Island State Park recently banded the [500th aplomado falcon](#) in Texas as part of an effort to recover the species.

Summer Management Practices

Considering a summer burn? How about disking or mowing? Remember to delay any of these activities until fawns and ground-nesting birds have grown. The exact time will depend on where in the state you live, but waiting until the end of summer is a safe bet.

Most of the state has had good rain this spring, but keep in mind that this can change quickly! Conservative stocking rates are important because tall grass is used as fawn cover, quail and turkey nests, and thermal cover.

Water requirements of wildlife increase during the summer, due to high temperatures and physiological needs such as lactation. Wildlife guzzlers can be constructed to benefit a variety of species. Make concrete troughs wildlife-friendly by adding a stone ramp or setting the float to allow just a little overflow, even just when the wind blows! The resulting lush vegetation will attract insects that are a great food source for quail chicks.

Quail surveys

A recent study from the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch (Kubečka et al. 2019) evaluated the efficacy of quail index surveys for estimating abundance. Spring cock call counts were a good predictor of the number of quail estimated at the ranch scale, and fall roadside covey counts were an even better predictor. More information about roadside counts and other survey methods can be found in this publication: <https://agrifecdn.tamu.edu/texnat/files/2017/02/B-6173-CountingQuail.pdf>.

Summer Wildlife Damage Management Issues

As the summer continues, some clientele may experience problems from wildlife in the form of damages. Predation from some species, such as gray foxes and coyotes, increases during the summer, as food requirements increase for young that are beginning to venture out of the den with their parents. As the summer continues, be mindful of the damage. If you choose a lethal form of wildlife damage management, be sure to work to correctly identify the culprit from carcasses before applying control. This saves money and preserves delicate ecosystem balances. Identifying predation is a skill that Dr. Tomeček regularly teaches. If you have an interest in a training, let your RPL know to schedule a CEA training for your district.

Summertime Wild Pig Control

Many places this year have been blessed with an abundance of precipitation. In these cases, it may seem that wild pigs are “everywhere,” as water availability has spread them over a larger area than normal. In normal years, and areas this year with little rain, water sources, such as

livestock trough and stock tanks, provide excellent “focal areas” for wild pig control efforts, whether that is trapping, shooting, or aerial gunning. Additionally, wild pigs will compete for water and shade at these sites with domestic livestock and native wildlife, so their removal is important for maintaining adequate water for these animals, as well as preventing disease transfer. Water or feed sites are common places where diseases may be transmitted to domestic livestock from wild pigs due a high concentration of fecal matter, and frequent direct contact.