

THE JESTER



WARBLER

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Nature Watch

by Jim and Lynne Weber

Cryptic Critters

What's all around, producing sound, but is hardly ever seen? While there are many possible answers to this question, there is only one answer when you hear a high-pitched squeaking, peeping, whistling, trilling or chirping sound. Those sounds are most often heard in spring and early summer, and it is a collection of those sounds that appear to come from rocks, walls, and in yards. Is it a bird? Or an insect? It is neither of those things. It is a tiny frog.

You hear them all the time, but hardly ever see one. It is the small, native Cliff Chirping Frog (*Eleutherodactylus marnockii*). These cryptic creatures are only 1.5 inches long, with a delicate brown mottling on a somewhat translucent golden-tan background, and large dark eyes. They love the rocky, limestone outcroppings on the west side of town.



Unlike other frogs, Cliff Chirpers don't have a tadpole stage. Peak breeding season is typically April and May, when mated females lay eggs in moist leaf litter or soil, and the eggs are cared for and protected by the male. The young froglets hatch directly from the eggs, barely a half inch long. Very little is known about how they survive our droughts, heat waves, and freezes, although it is thought that they must slow down their metabolism. They eat very small prey such as spiders, flies, centipedes, and termites.

Cliff Chirpers have two types of calls; one is a trilling sound while the other resembles a whistle or chirp. It is still not known which call is used to defend territory and which is used to attract a mate. Like most frogs, they can hop, but they can also crawl which aids them in hiding in rock crevices. They

range from the rocky hills and canyons of the Edwards Plateau to the mountains of West Texas.

Over the last few decades, another species of chirping frog has moved into central Texas. Native to the Rio Grande Valley, the Rio Grande Chirping Frog (*Eleutherodactylus cystignathoides*) has been transported throughout most of the eastern half of the state in potted plants grown in the valley. As an adult, this frog is just as furtive but noticeably smaller than a Cliff Chirper. An adult Cliff Chirper is about the size of a quarter while an adult Rio Grande Chirper is about the size of a dime or nickel. Their coloring is similar, most often mottled brown and green on a darker or lighter background, and they are highly variable. However, most do have a dark line running from the snout to the eye. Like the Cliff Chirpers, they also make chirping and trilling calls, but those calls are higher pitched likely due to their smaller size.

It is fascinating to think about something that is all around us that we know very little about. Whether it be the crawling Cliff Chirper or the hitchhiking Rio Grande Chirper, these tiny frogs are amazing, cryptic critters!

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, look for our books, Nature Watch Austin, Nature Watch Big Bend, Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies, Native Host Plants for Texas Moths, and Naturalist's Austin, all published by Texas A&M University Press.



CALLING ALL WRITERS, ARTISTS & THE LIKE!

Interested in submitting articles or other content for The Warbler?

We welcome submissions of all kinds from neighbors of all ages!

Just reach out to our Editor, Hope Teel Colt, at hopeteel@gmail.com.

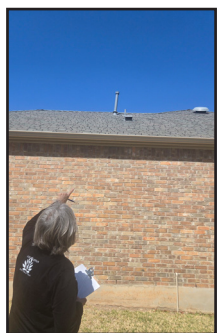
VENTS: AN OVERLOOKED ENTRY WAY FOR BURNING EMBERS

Concerned about increased wildfire risk, Worth Kilcrease thought it would be good to learn to mitigate his risk by scheduling his FireWise evaluation. Worth's home is perched at the top of a cliff with wooded acreage below. The house is stucco and brick, with a new roof and screened gutters, plus his decks are composite material making this house wildfire ready. However, trees under the deck have actually started to grow up through the slats of the deck in several areas, which could be problematic. The space under any deck should be free of any flammable items.



The Altman's also know how devastating a wildfire can be, as their home in Ruidoso was lost to last year's wildfires. Therefore, they were familiar with the Ready, Set, Plan, and were happy that it worked so well by giving regular updates and instructions.

Vents are an easy way for burning embers to enter a home. Both Worth and the Altmans have issues with vents. One of Worth's gable vent screens is torn open. All vents should have a 1/8" screen to keep embers,



insects and critters from easy entry to the attic. Worth was unclear where the dryer vent was until I mentioned that it could be vented to the roof. The Altman's dryer vent was also on the roof. The vent was larger than usual with lint hanging from it and appears to have no screen. It is important that both vents be repaired as

soon as possible to keep critters and embers from entering the attic. A professional service would be best used in these cases with the proper equipment needed. There were two dryer fires last year in Jester. To be safe, do not run the dryer when the house is unoccupied or while sleeping.



To register for your FireWise evaluation email frewise@jesterhoa.org or directly at www.jesterhoa.org.

CELEBRATING ARBOR DAY

Arbor Day is a special occasion dedicated to celebrating trees and the many benefits they provide to our environment, communities, and well-being. Observed annually on the last Friday of April, this day serves as a reminder of the importance of trees in our daily lives and encourages people of all ages to take action to preserve and plant more trees.

Trees are not only beautiful and provide shade, but they also play a crucial role in improving air quality, conserving water, reducing energy costs, and supporting wildlife. Whether it's the towering oaks in your backyard or the smaller decorative trees in the park, every tree is an essential part of our ecosystem. Arbor Day gives us the opportunity to reflect on the trees that enhance our surroundings and to take steps toward ensuring that future generations can enjoy the same benefits. Here's how we can make the most of Arbor Day:

Plant a Tree: One of the most impactful ways to celebrate Arbor Day is by planting a tree. Whether you're adding a new tree to your yard or contributing to a community planting event, each new tree helps the environment by providing oxygen, improving air quality, and adding beauty to your neighborhood.

Learn About Trees: Arbor Day is a great opportunity to learn more about the types of trees that grow in your area. Understanding which trees are native to the region and how they contribute to the local ecosystem can deepen your appreciation for them.

Tree Care and Maintenance: If you already have trees in your yard or community, Arbor Day is a good time to check on their health. Proper tree care, including pruning, mulching, and watering, can extend the life of your trees and prevent problems like disease or pest infestations.

Arbor Day is a reminder that small actions can have a big impact on the environment. Take this Arbor Day as an opportunity to celebrate the trees that make our neighborhoods better places to live and ensure that future generations can enjoy the same benefits.



MONARCH MIGRATION: HOW YOU CAN HELP



Monarch butterflies are one of the most iconic and beautiful species to call Texas home. Known for their remarkable long-distance journey, monarchs travel thousands of miles between North America and Mexico each year. These butterflies are famous

for their striking orange-and-black wings, but their incredible migration from Canada to central Mexico—covering up to 3,000 miles—makes them a marvel of the natural world. Unfortunately, monarch populations have been declining in recent years due to habitat loss, climate change, and other environmental factors. However, Texas plays a crucial role in their migration path, and residents can take steps to help protect these magnificent creatures.

Here are a few simple yet effective things residents can do to help support monarch butterflies during their migration through Texas:

Plant Milkweed- Milkweed is essential for monarch survival, as it provides both food for larvae and a place for monarchs to lay their eggs. By planting milkweed in your garden, you can create a sanctuary for monarchs as they pass through the area.

Create Butterfly-Friendly Habitats- Consider planting nectar-rich flowers like asters, zinnias, and lantanas to provide food sources for adult butterflies. Creating a butterfly-friendly garden with a variety of plants will help attract monarchs and other pollinators, such as bees and hummingbirds, which are vital to the ecosystem.

Provide Water- Monarchs need water to stay hydrated during their migration. You can help by offering a shallow water source, such as a birdbath or a small bowl, in your yard. Be sure to add rocks or sticks so butterflies can land and safely drink without risk of drowning.

Minimize Pesticide Use- Pesticides can harm monarchs and other beneficial insects. By reducing or eliminating the use of chemical pesticides in your garden, you help protect monarchs from harmful toxins. Opt for natural pest control methods, such as encouraging beneficial insects like ladybugs, to keep your garden healthy without posing a threat to monarchs.

With your help, these beautiful butterflies will continue to grace our state each year, reminding us of the importance of protecting the natural world for future generations. Let's work together to make Texas a welcoming place for monarch butterflies, and ensure they have a safe journey.

DID YOU KNOW?

Marigolds aren't just beautiful, they're also natural pest repellents! These vibrant flowers produce a scent that helps keep aphids, mosquitoes, and even certain nematodes (microscopic worms that damage plant roots) away from your garden. Planting them near vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, and beans can help protect your crops from harmful pests. Plus, marigolds attract pollinators like bees and butterflies, making them a great addition to any eco-friendly garden!



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KEEPING YOUR HOME PROTECTED FROM CYBERSECURITY THREATS



With so much of our lives happening online, it's more important than ever to protect your personal information. Here are simple steps you can take to keep your home network secure.

Weak passwords are one of the easiest ways for hackers to access your accounts. Avoid using obvious passwords like your name or "12345." Instead, create long passwords (at least 12 characters) with a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. For convenience, use a password manager to generate and store unique passwords for each account, ensuring no two accounts share the same password.

Your home Wi-Fi is a prime target for hackers if it's not properly secured. First, change the default password your router came with to something strong and unique. Use WPA3 encryption for the most secure network, or WPA2 if WPA3 isn't available. Disable features like WPS (Wi-Fi Protected Setup), which is vulnerable to attacks, and set up a guest network for visitors, so they don't access your main devices.

Phishing scams trick you into giving away sensitive information by pretending to be a trustworthy source. These scams often appear in the form of fake emails, text messages, or phone calls. Always check the sender's email address for legitimacy and avoid clicking on any suspicious links or downloading attachments. If you receive a suspicious message, contact the company directly through their official website or customer service.

If your device is compromised by a cyberattack like ransomware, you risk losing valuable data. To protect against this, regularly back up your files to a cloud service (like Google Drive or Dropbox) or an external hard drive. Having a backup ensures you can recover your data even if your device is attacked.

Smart devices, like cameras, speakers, and thermostats, can be a security risk if not properly secured. Always change the default passwords that come with these devices and use strong, unique passwords instead. Consider isolating your smart devices on a separate Wi-Fi network to prevent hackers from accessing your main network and devices.

By following these simple yet effective tips, you can significantly reduce the risk of cyberattacks and keep your personal information safe. Cybersecurity is an ongoing process, so staying vigilant and informed is key to protecting your digital life.

REMINDER: KEEP YOUR PETS LEASHED!

For the safety of our community and furry friends, please remember to keep your pets on a leash when out and about. Leashes help prevent accidents, protect local wildlife, and ensure that everyone can enjoy our shared spaces comfortably. Thank you for being a responsible pet owner and helping keep our neighborhood safe and enjoyable for all!



SIGN UP FOR INFORMED DELIVERY

We recommend signing up for this free service: USPS Informed Delivery at <https://www.usps.com/manage/informed-delivery.htm>. Informed Delivery allows you to see photos of your mail before it arrives so you can stay on top of picking up important mail.

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SIMPLE STEPS TO A RELAXING HOME

Your home should be your sanctuary, a place where you can unwind and recharge after a busy day. Creating calming environment is all about thoughtful design choices and mindful living.

Here's how you can transform your home into a peaceful space:

1. Incorporate Soft, Natural Lighting

Lighting plays a huge role in setting the mood of your home. Harsh, bright lights can feel jarring, while soft, warm lighting can create a calming atmosphere. Consider switching to soft LED bulbs with warm tones, using table lamps, or installing dimmers to control the lighting in different areas. Let natural light in by keeping curtains or blinds open during the day to allow sunlight to fill the space.

2. Bring Nature Indoors

There's something inherently calming about nature. Bring nature indoors with houseplants, fresh flowers, or natural materials like wood and stone. Plants not only add beauty but can also help purify the air and improve your mood. Consider adding a few low-maintenance plants, like succulents, ferns, or peace lilies, to your home to enhance your space with a touch of greenery.

3. Use Scents to Set the Mood

Scent is a powerful tool! Try lighting a candle or using a diffuser with your favorite scents in the evenings to create a tranquil environment. Just be mindful of your scents—choose subtle, calming fragrances to avoid overpowering the space.

4. Create a Quiet Space for Reflection

Set up a quiet space where you can meditate, reflect, or simply enjoy some quiet time. This could be a simple cushion on the floor, a small reading nook, or even a comfortable chair by a window. The goal is to create a designated area where you can step away from the hustle and bustle and center yourself.

5. Eliminate Noise Distractions

Noise can interfere with relaxation, so aim to reduce unwanted sounds in your home. Use rugs, curtains, or wall hangings to absorb sound and create a quieter environment. If you live in a noisy area, consider adding a white noise machine or using soft background music to mask distracting sounds.

Turning your home into a sanctuary is more than just aesthetics. It's about creating a space where you can find peace. A calm environment helps reduce stress and clears your mind, making it easier to unwind and focus. By making small changes, you're not just improving your space—you're investing in your own well-being and supporting your mental health.



FACEBOOK GROUP REMINDER

Just a friendly reminder to join our Jester Facebook group if you haven't already! The page is still growing, with over 500 members now. It is a great platform to help quickly spread time sensitive information in our community, to ask for or offer neighborly help and an overall resource intended for facilitating quick and easy communication.

Just do a quick search for "Jester" on Facebook, and please answer the questions in order for approval into the group. Please understand that we need the questions answered in order to approve your request for the group as this is a private group to our community.

Thank you!



Jester Village Dental



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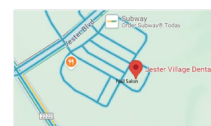
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Interested in submitting an article?

You can do so by emailing hopeteel@gmail.com.

All news must be received by the 12th of the month prior to the issue.

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Anderson, Juliet	x	x			512-552-1846
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Castaldi Caroline +	x				737-267-4720
Davis, Katherine*	x	x	x		512-657-0842
Douglas, Jack		x		x	512-653-4133
Fitzgerald, Vivian	x				512-797-2445
Gerrie, Jack	x	x	x		210-290-3842
Gottschalk, Chance		x	x		512-745-6599
Gottschalk, Ella*+	x	x	x		512-318-5369
Johnston, Roisin	x				512-587-5025
Marlowe, Sebastian*+		x	x	x	737-270-5566
Pantaleoni, Nicholas	x	x	x		310-200-6006
Parker, Reese	x	x	x		512-434-9641
Schwarz, Sadie	x	x	x		512-971-5674
Shafer, Owen		x	x		512-786-2378
Schoffler, Isabella*	x	x			512-804-8047
Schoffler, Tyler*	x	x	x	x	737-280-5644
Sidel, Arianna*	x		x		512-284-4266
Tuttle, Morgan		x	x		737-247-8558
Wright, Brooklyn +	x	x	x		737-465-9459
Wiesman, Erin	x	x			512-712-5841

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TESLA OWNERS - Do you know about Flipper Zero. At a recent Neighborhood Watch training session, APD talked about this device. Check it out here: <https://www.zdnet.com/article/teslas-vulnerable-to-flipper-zero-hack-heres-how-to-protect-yourself/>

FOSTERING CONNECTION IN OUR COMMUNITY



In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to feel disconnected, even in our own neighborhoods. The importance of community connection has never been more crucial. Building relationships and fostering a sense of togetherness in our neighborhood can enhance our quality of life, make us feel supported, and create a more vibrant, welcoming environment for all.

One of the best ways to bring people together is by hosting or attending neighborhood events. From block parties and potlucks to holiday gatherings and yard sales, these events allow us to meet, interact, and form friendships. If large-scale events seem intimidating, consider smaller meet-ups like coffee mornings or book clubs.

Small, everyday gestures also go a long way. Taking a moment to greet your neighbors, offering to pick up groceries for someone, or sharing a homemade treat can make a big difference. These simple acts not only brighten someone's day but also send a message that you care. Over time, these small exchanges can grow into lasting friendships.

Everyone has unique talents or hobbies they can share with others. Whether it's hosting a cooking class, offering a DIY home improvement workshop, or starting a neighborhood book club, sharing your skills can create opportunities for connection. These activities help bring neighbors together over shared interests and offer a chance to learn something new while strengthening community ties.

At the core of fostering connection is creating a welcoming environment. Being open to meeting new people and introducing yourself to neighbors can go a long way. Sometimes, all it takes is a friendly hello or an invitation for coffee to break the ice. The more welcoming we are, the more we create a culture of kindness, where everyone feels valued and appreciated.

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“As a data enthusiast, I have been analyzing home sales in our neighborhood and thought this might pique your interest too. Low mortgage rates correlate to fewer days on market and in some years, sold prices being much higher than their original list price! While we are unlikely to witness mortgage rates as low as those during the pandemic, rates have certainly been higher in the past. Maybe some of you even remember in the 1980's when the rates rose to 16+% and never dipped under double digits. Austin continues to thrive as a vibrant hub - attracting people with its dynamic job market, cultural appeal, and reputation as an ideal city to live and advance their careers. How lucky are we to live here? I hope your 2025 is off to an exceptional start!”
Chrissy ”

Homes Sold - Jester Estates

Year	Number of Homes Sold	Listing Price	Sold Price	Total Days on Market	Interest Rate 30-Year Mortgage
2019	45	703,763	696,818	45	3.94%
2020	38	721,121	726,930	15	3.10%
2021	44	902,632	1,009,117	7	2.96%
2022	27	1,084,441	1,112,609	27	5.34%
2023	26	1,089,584	1,055,253	39	6.81%
2024	32	1,131,509	1,089,951	51	6.72%
Sold Information: Austin MLS 1/1/2019 - 12/31/2024					
Interest rate info: Freddie Mac					

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