# The DICH REVIEW

May 2019 Volume 13, Issue 05

News for the Residents of Legends Ranch

### The Killdeer A Skilled Actor

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

A concerned citizen who came across a nest on the ground with eggs in it and an injured mama nearby contacted us via Facebook. The lady wanted to know what she could do to help. She posted pictures to help us identify the bird. Not being familiar with the hundreds of bird species we have here, I reached out to our former Executive Director who not only identified the bird but also shared some interesting information about the species.

The bird was a Killdeer. They find small depressions in the ground and build their nests with sticks, grass, weeds, shells or rocks. Their nests can be found in parking lots, golf courses, lawns, athletic fields, etc. Their nests are often overlooked because they are almost level with the ground around it. What makes this bird so fascinating is that females will fake injuries to lure predators away from their nests. As a predator approaches, she will drag herself farther and farther away from her nest continuing to fake her injuries. It's also been observed that she may roll completely over, pant and gasp for air-all an act. Another tactic they use to protect the nest is by pretending to build a nest. When a predator approaches the real nest, the Killdeer will move away, find a depression in the ground and pretend to be covering her non-existent eggs. As the predator approaches the fake nest, the Killdeer will leave only to repeat this fake-out until the enemy tires of her games and flies away.

Sometimes groups of Killdeer get in on the action of chasing away real or perceived predators. The first one to spot the enemy will fly very close to the face of the animal while making a loud, shrill cry as if to be yelling at it. Soon others join in with the same loud cries. In most cases, this is enough to scare anything away.

Because Killdeer build their nests on the ground, it can take up to six attempts in a season to successfully hatch their eggs. Pesticides, other lawn chemicals and cats are the biggest threats.

The Killdeer is a member of the plover family. Plover, as defined by the Free Dictionary, is, "Any of various widely distributed shorebirds of the family Charadriidae, having rounded bodies, short tails, and short bills". Although defined as a shorebird, it's



equally happy in dry or wet locations. It is classified, as migratory but is a year-round resident in most areas of Texas.

According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, the Killdeer is one of the noisiest birds in America. Their name was derived from their call—a loud "KILL-DEER".

Nature is amazing, isn't it?

TWRC Wildlife Center invites you to like our Facebook page. You'll find useful information, cute photos and a community of great people who love nature and wildlife: https://www.facebook.com/TWRCWildlifeCenter

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Conroe ISD	
Montgomery MUD #89	.713-932-9011
Police & Fire	
Emergency	911
Montgomery Sheriff	.936-760-5800
Pct. 3 Constable Office	.281-364-4211
S. Montgomery Co. Fire Dept. Non-Emergency.	
Montgomery County EMS Non-Emergency	
Crime Stoppers	
Poison Control	
Texas DPS	
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Public Services	
Local US Post Office	
Toll Road EZ Tag	
Voters Registration	.936-539-7843
Vehicle Registration	.281-292-3325
Drivers License Information	
Montgomery County Animal Control	
Montgomery Chamber	.281-367-5777
Conroe ISD	.936-709-7751
Birnham Woods Elementary	.281-863-4200
Cox Intermediate	
York Junior High	.832-592-8600
Oak Ridge High	.832-592-5300

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### Recognize a Great Neighbor:



Every day, we hear inspiring and touching stories about our Legends Ranch neighbors supporting and improving our community in a variety of ways. Whether it's collecting trash from around our lakes and common areas, taking care of a neighbor's pet, or creating meal trains and rallying around a neighbor in need, we are constantly reminded of the power of good neighbors.

To nominate a good neighbor for recognition, please share a short story with us about what this person has done to make our community a better place to call home. Please ensure you include their name, your name and contact details and the reason for recognition in the email contents.

Email your nomination to: ranchreviewnewsletter@gmail.com



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# Neighborh Sod WATCH Tips

Let's all work together to help eliminate neighborhood crime. Please watch out for these activities in our neighborhood:

- \* Someone running from a car or home.
- \* Someone screaming. If you can't explain the screams, call law enforcement and report them.
- \* Someone going door-to-door in the neighborhood or looking into windows and parked cars.
- \* Someone asking about past residents.
- \* Someone who appears to have no purpose wandering through the neighborhood.
- \* Unusual or suspicious noises that you cannot explain, such as breaking glass or pounding.
- \* Vehicles moving slowly without lights or without an apparent destination.

- \* Business transactions conducted from a vehicle. This could involve the sale of drugs or stolen goods.
- \* Offers of merchandise available for ridiculously low prices. The merchandise might be stolen.
- \* Someone walking or running while carrying property at an unusual time or place.
- \* Someone removing property from unoccupied residences.
- \* A stranger entering a neighbor's home which appears to be unoccupied.
- \* A stranger in a car who stops to talk to a child.
- \* A child resisting the advances of an adult.



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### **Mosquitoes**



Mosquitoes can not only be irritating by biting, but they also are able to transmit various diseases to humans and animals. They are known to transmit heartworm in dogs and cats, and they can spread encephalitis (including West Nile Virus), Chikungunya, Zika, dengue, yellow fever, malaria and filariasis among humans.

Most female mosquitoes require a blood meal for egg production whereas males feed on nectar and do not bite. Eggs are laid on the surface of water or in dry locations that can be flooded by water. Eggs laid in dry locations can remain dormant under for several months. Eggs hatch into larvae, or wigglers. Mosquito larvae live in water and feed on organic debris or microscopic plants and animals. Larvae molt into pupae which are non-feeding. Mosquito pupae spend the majority of their time at the surface of the water, only moving when disturbed.

Many things can help to reduce mosquito problems around the home. Since three of the four life stages of mosquitoes are in or near water, it is best to eliminate all sources of standing water. Containers such as watering cans, buckets and bottles can turn into mosquito breeding grounds. Water should be drained from birdbaths, gutters, flowerpots and pet dishes at least once a week. Children's wading pools should be emptied of water at least once a week and stored so they cannot collect water when not in use. Tree holes should be filled in with sand or mortar, or drained after each rain. Leaky faucets and pipes located outside should be repaired.

Areas that cannot be drained, such as ponds or large rain collection systems, can be stocked with fish that eat mosquito larvae. Dunks can also be used in these areas. Dunks are a small, donut-shaped

product that contains Bacillus thuringiensis var. israeliensis. The donut disrupts the life cycle of the mosquito and is non-toxic to humans, amphibians and fish.

Avoiding outdoor activities during peak mosquito hours is the best method to avoid being bitten. When outside, wear loose-fitting, light colored clothing with long sleeves & long pants. Repellants containing active ingredients such as DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), para-methane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone can be effective to keep mosquitoes from biting when evening activities cannot be rescheduled.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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#### RANCH REVIEW

### Become a Host Family - FAQs

What does hosting mean? Hosting means you open your heart and home to a teenager from another country. You provide the same loving, caring environment for them as you do a member of your own family.

**What kinds of families are acceptable?** We accept many types of families: single parent families, families with children of any age, childless families and families with grown children.

What is the host family responsible for? The host family is responsible of providing three meals a day, registering the student in school, a separate bed and a quiet place to study. The STSF local LC will obtain the signed school acceptance form prior to the student's arrive to the country.

What happens if the student is ill or in an accident? Our students have their own medical insurance. Each student should have an ID card and claim forms before they arrive. STSF will help with the filing of claims.

What about spending money? The student's natural parents agree to send adequate spending money. This money should be enough for clothing, social activities, trips, school expenses, and telephone calls to their home country. Ideally, students will already have a bank account when they come over that they can access with an ATM card. Host Families can also assist their students in setting up savings or teen account.

Are we supposed to show them America? Trips are organized and available to the students through their Regional Directors or through an STSF approved travel organization. Keep in mind that this is an academic program with opportunities for travel for students who are meeting academic standards. RDs also sponsor trips for students. More information about these trips will be given throughout the year.

What is expected of the exchange student? Our students are here on an academic program. This means, they must attend all of their classes,

participate in class and maintain at least a C or above in each class. The student has an orientation that explains the rules they agree to abide by. These include obeying all local, state and federal laws. They may be immediately dismissed from the program and sent home for violation of these laws. They are expected to follow host family rules concerning family responsibilities such as chores. They must also obey curfews established by the host family.

What is the length of stay? Most of our students arrive in august for a 10 month academic stay. They must return to their home country 7 to 10 days after the last day of school. These are a few students who only come for a semester. Some arrive in January and stay until December. How do you match students to Host Families? We try to find students whose hobbies and interest match the family members. We look for common interest in the arts, sports, and religious involvement. The host Family may request a student from a country they have special interest in. We try and match as much as possible to ensure a successful experience.

*Are Host Families paid to host?* No, but host families receive a \$50.00 tax deduction (Charitable Contribution) per month for each month the students live with you.

What are the rewards of hosting? Your family gains a new family member. The relationship that evolves throughout your year as a host parent will last a lifetime. The focus of this program is to have host families and students learn from each other.

If you are interested in hosting, please contact Vicki Odom at 832-455-7881 or vicki.stsfoundation@yahoo.com.



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