

# Herpefauna of Elm Fork Preserve

This category includes both reptiles and amphibians.

**Comments:** The comments section lists remarks in the following order:

- <sup>1</sup> Interesting facts and natural history associated with the animal. Its place of origin is also listed if it is an alien.
- <sup>2</sup> Edible, medicinal or other useful qualities of the animal for humans. The potential for poisoning or otherwise injuring humans is also listed here.
- <sup>3</sup> Food preferences of the animal and potential predators. Ecological impact.
- <sup>4</sup> Identifying features of the animal, especially differences between similar species.
- <sup>5</sup> Dates, times and locations of animals sighted. Observed behaviors.
- <sup>6</sup> Synonyms; outdated or recently changed scientific names are inserted here.
- <sup>7</sup> Control measures. The date, method and reason for any selective elimination.
- <sup>8</sup> Intentional Introductions. The date, source and reason for any animal introductions.
- <sup>9</sup> Identification references. Species identifications were made by the author unless otherwise noted. Identifications were verified using the reference material cited.
- <sup>10</sup> Accession made. Photos were taken and filed by date. Bones or other hard evidence were temporarily collected.

The following tables are arranged alphabetically by Order or Suborder. Each table is sorted alphabetically by Family.

## Anura

(frogs and toads)

Kingdom: Animalia > Phylum: Chordata > Class: Amphibia > Order: Anura

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
(F) Hylidae <i>Acris crepitans blanchardi</i>	Frog, Northern Cricket	<sup>5</sup> 14 Jan 03 – Disturbed a gray-brown, nondescript individual along the bank of the big pond. It jumped into the water and swam a few feet before resting in plain view. Daytime high temperature was ~58° F. <sup>9</sup> (University of Texas Herpetological Research Center, 1997 - <a href="http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/frogs/acris.crepitans.html">http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/frogs/acris.crepitans.html</a> ) <sup>10</sup> 25 Oct 05 - Three photos of a cricket frog at the dry slough. 2006 - Sharp photo of this frog submitted by Tzila Duenzl, (see Principle Contributors page), hereafter referred to as "Z".
(F) Hylidae <i>Hyla cinerea</i> .	Frog, Green Tree	<sup>5</sup> 15 May 05 - Observed several, perched on the long leaves of cattail, above the lily pond beside the parking area. They were pointed out to me by Bill Pitt, a professional photographer who had taken a number of photos of the frogs. 11 April 07 - saw one today. Searched for them unsuccessfully last visit. <sup>9</sup> (Behler & King, 1979, p.405 & photo 146) <sup>10</sup> 15 May 05 - Four photos of these very cool frogs. 14 Oct 06 - Six sharp photos of this photogenic frog. 2006 - 2 photos of adults and one photo of a chartreuse-colored froglet still sporting a stub of tail. Photos taken at the lily pond by "Z".
(F) Ranidae <i>Rana catesbiana</i>	Bullfrog	<sup>10</sup> 2006 - Sharp photo taken within the preserve by "Z".

# Sauria

(lizards and skinks)

Kingdom: Animalia > Phylum: Chordata > Class: Reptilia > Order: Squamata > Suborder: Sauria

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
(F) Phrynosomatidae <i>Sceloporus sp.</i>	Lizard; Texas Spiny or Fence Lizard	<sup>4</sup> Of the nine species of <i>Sceloporus</i> that are known to reside in Texas ( <a href="http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/lizards/">http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/lizards/</a> ), only two make their home in our area: <i>S. olivaceus</i> (Texas spiny lizard) and <i>S. undulatus consobrinus</i> (fence lizard). <sup>10</sup> Fall 2006 - Four photos of one of these two species. Submitted by "Z".
(F) Scincidae <i>Eumeces fasciatus</i>	Skink, Five-lined	<sup>4</sup> Common, large skink occurring throughout north central Texas. This skink undergoes a radical change of appearance as it ages. Juveniles sport bright blue tails and distinct, light-colored stripes, whereas adult males are found to have bright orange heads, faded stripes and no blue tail. <sup>9</sup> See for example: <a href="http://www.chicagoherp.org/herps/lizard/Efasc.htm">http://www.chicagoherp.org/herps/lizard/Efasc.htm</a> <sup>10</sup> 28 April 05 - Four sharp photos of a large, juvenile five-lined skink. <sup>10</sup> 7 May 06 - Nine photos with close-ups of a large, orange-headed male on a fallen tree at 32.95560°N, -96.93587°W (at 'Clepit' on the satellite map).
(F) Scincidae <i>Scincella lateralis</i>	Skink, Ground	<sup>5</sup> 15 April 03 - Noted a small brown skink with 2 black stripes along the length of its back, slipping under the leaf litter at the marked Tickle-tongue tree on the cross trail. 20 April 07 - Good sharp look at one on the main trail near the interpretive center. Definite black stripes along its sides. <sup>9</sup> Jimmy Walker pointed out that given that the skink was small, brown and had two black stripes (as opposed to light stripes in the five-lined juvenile), this was most likely our local ground skink ( <i>Scincella lateralis</i> ). A search of the reference literature (see Behler & King, 1979, p.578 for example), eliminated the other possibilities.

# Serpentes

(snakes)

Kingdom: Animalia > Phylum: Chordata > Class: Reptilia > Order: Squamata > Suborder: Serpentes

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
(F) Colubridae <i>Coluber constrictor flaviventris</i>	Snake, Yellow-bellied Racer (?)	<sup>1</sup> The eastern yellow-bellied racer is a long, slender snake that moves away very rapidly when encountered by a human. These generally docile snakes will bite if cornered or captured, but are not poisonous. This is an extremely common snake in our area and hunts during the day which increases the chances of seeing one. (University of Texas Herpetological Research Center, 1998 - <a href="http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/snakes">http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/snakes</a> ). Adults are a uniform color of brown, grey, olive or blue with a yellow belly. <sup>3</sup> The main prey includes rodents, lizards, smaller snakes and insects. <sup>5</sup> 31 Oct 98 - While conducting a guided hike, the author picked up and examined a juvenile. Tentative identification was made later the same day by examining <a href="#">A Field Guide to Texas Snakes</a> and should not be viewed as a conclusive determination. 15 May 05 - A very large (~5' long) individual was moving slowly from an open space into deep grass- near the southern juncture of the Cross Trail. Observed on a walk with a large group of Girl Scouts and parents. <sup>9</sup> (Tennant, 1998, pp. 175-176)

(F) Colubridae <i>Elaphe obsoleta lindheimerii</i>	Snake, Texas Rat	<sup>5</sup> 28 April 05 - On a walk with Jim Varnum, we happened upon a large snake in the trail near the big pond. <sup>9</sup> Jimmy Walker conclusively identified the snake from the photos. (Tennant, 1998, p.196) <sup>10</sup> Two photos of the snake in the trail.
(F)Colubridae <i>Lampropeltis getula holbrooki</i>	Snake, Speckled King	<sup>5</sup> 31 Oct 98 – While conducting a guided hike, we encountered a large (maybe 4'), vividly black & white speckled snake. Tentative identification made later the same day by examining <u>A Field Guide to Texas Snakes</u> points to only one snake matching the description and found in our area. <sup>9</sup> (Tennant, 1998, p. 203)
(F)Colubridae <i>Nerodia erythrogaster transversa</i>	Snake, Red-banded diamondback water snake	<sup>5</sup> 2 May 98 – Naturalist Jimmy Walker observed this distinctive snake while conducting an interpretive walk in the evening. <sup>9</sup> (Tennant, 1998, p. 116) - <i>N. e. transversa</i> - excellent match for the juvenile snake in one of the photos submitted by "Z" for 2006. <a href="http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/snakes/nerodia.erythrogaster.html">http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/snakes/nerodia.erythrogaster.html</a> <sup>10</sup> 2006 - Four sharp photos, submitted by "Z" of this genus (probably all <i>N. e. transversa</i> ), including close-ups of the head of an adult, a really great shot of a juvenile, and two snakes approaching each other in the water.
(F)Colubridae <i>Opheodrys aestivus</i>	Snake, Rough Green	<sup>5</sup> 28 Oct 99 – The author picked up a rough green snake while leading an interpretive hike and allowed the group to view it up close. <sup>9</sup> Tennant, 1998, p. 99) <sup>10</sup> 2006 - Excellent photo by "Z" of this snake.
(F) Viperidae (sF) Crotalinae <i>Agkistrodon contortrix</i>	Snake, Copperhead	<sup>5</sup> 17 Sept 03 – Encountered an adult at the edge of the trail near dusk on the main loop with 8 Weeblo Boy Scouts and 3 other adults. The copperhead stayed very still as the group examined it, then moved slowly away. Some members of the group saw another copperhead elsewhere on the trail that same evening. 20 April 07 - The author, along with a group of Girl Scouts, observed a copperhead coiled beside the trail, close to the entrance of the slough trail. It remained motionless while everyone got a close look. <sup>10</sup> 28 Oct 04 - Several great photos of a juvenile with a yellow-white tail with a slight green hue. This greenish tail is common in juveniles (Tennant, 1998, p.229). It is interesting to note that the copperhead was uncovered when the author moved a log to look beneath while on a group walk. This was at 10:30 in the morning. At noon, with another group, the snake was still in the same spot. Returning alone at 1:00, the snake was still there and allowed several photos to be taken from less than a foot away.

## Testudines

(turtles)

Kingdom: Animalia > Phylum: Chordata > Class: Reptilia > Order: Testudines

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
(sO) Cryptodira (F) Chelydridae <i>Chelydra sp.</i>	Turtle, Snapping	<sup>5</sup> 15 April 03 – Close encounter with a large individual (shell width >12") at the edge of the big pond. It was resting in the water at the edge of the bank and scooted off as I made a closer approach. <sup>9</sup> (Reid, 2001, p. 137)
(F) Emydidae <i>Chrysemys floridana</i>	Turtle, Cooter	<sup>4</sup> Differentiated from <i>C. concinna</i> by having a wide vertical stripe on the 2nd costal scute as opposed to a 'c' shape. <i>C. floridana</i> has a patternless, yellow plastron. <i>C. concinna</i> has a dark pattern on the

		<p>plastron that follows the scute seams. The carapace of the examined specimen was 12" in length.</p> <p><sup>5</sup>2 Nov 02 – Carapace with attached plastron found in dry slough. GPS: 32° 57.364N, 96°55.987W <sup>9</sup>(Behler &amp; King, 1979, p. 448) (Conant, 1958, pp.60,95 – as <i>Pseudemys floridana floridana</i>) <sup>10</sup>The cleaned carapace is in a labeled box in the interpretive center. 15 June 06 - three photos of the carapace.</p>
(F) Emydidae <i>Terrepepe carolina</i> .	Tortoise, Box	<p><sup>5</sup>23 Jan 03 – Lori Tracy, former Parks &amp; Recreation Leader for the City of Carrollton, stated that she had seen a box turtle on two separate occasions in the preserve.</p> <p><sup>9</sup>2006 - Photo of adult male, taken by "Z" and tentatively identified by her as <i>T. carolina triunguis</i> (the Three-toed subspecies). (Behler, et.al., 1979, p. 468).</p>
	Turtle, unidentified	<p><sup>10</sup>25 Oct 05 - Two nice photos of turtles sunning themselves on logs at the slough near the big pond.</p>



15 species identified/noted as of 31 December 2006

Reference:

- Behler, John L. & Wayne F. King. The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Reptiles and Amphibians. New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1979.
- Conant, Roger. A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern North America. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1958.
- Herps of Texas – [http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/...](http://www.zo.utexas.edu/research/txherps/)
- Milam, Royce. Natural History Notebook. The following dates: 28 Oct 97, 12 Feb 98, 9 July 98, 22 July 98, 27 Sept 98, 31 Oct 98, 1 Nov 98, 13 April 99, 22 April 99, 28 April 99, 29 Oct 99. (All dates pertain to Elm Fork Preserve, but not all contain herpefauna data).
- Milam, Royce. Completed Program Summaries. The following dates: 2 May 98, 19 June 98, 8 July 98, 24 July 98, 22 Aug 98, 1 Oct 98, 10 Oct 98, 31 Oct 98, 1 Nov 98, 2 Nov 98, 26 March 99, 25 April 99, 21 May 99, 21 June 99, 24 June 99, 6 July 99, 28 Oct 99, 4 Nov 99, 31 Jan 00, 30 April 00, 9 Oct 01, (All dates pertain to Elm Fork Preserve, but not all contain herpefauna data).
- Reid, George K (Revised by Jonathan P. Latimer and Karen Stray Nolting). Pond Life. New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 2001.
- Tennant, Alan. A Field Guide to Texas Snakes. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company, 1998.
- Tying, Thomas F. (Edited by Donald & Lillian Stokes) A Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles. Boston, Mass: Little, Brown & Company Ltd., 1990.
- Wernert, Susan J. (Ed.). North American Wildlife. Pleasantville, New York: The Readers Digest Association, 1982.

**Caution: Alteration of this electronic document destroys data integrity and voids all liability for species misidentification by the author.**

Additions to this list are welcomed. Please be sure to include the following information on any submissions: The person's name that is making the identification, as well as the date, time, location, evidence used for identification (bones, tracks, scat, photos, etc) and any reference used in the identifications. Additions to this list are welcomed. Please be sure to include the following information on any submissions: The person's name that is making the identification, as well as the date, time, location, evidence used for identification (bones, tracks, scat, photos, etc) and any reference used in the identifications. Please include contact information for verification purposes. Submissions should be e-mailed to Royce Milam at [wyldivision@aol.com](mailto:wyldivision@aol.com)