

*Visit the Nature Store @ Visitor Center for new merch!*



## MAY 2023 NEWSLETTER

friends of  
LAGUNA ATASCOSA  
national wildlife refuge

**IN THIS ISSUE:**  
Upcoming events  
Creature feature  
Refuge Happenings



# May Calendar

May 2 Naturally Native Garden Team, 9-11 am

May 5 Wild Friends Storytime, 11-12 pm

May 17 Wild Friends Storytime at the LV  
Library, 5-7 pm

May 20 Friends Science Series - Family Fish  
Camp, 9-12 pm

May 27 Living Art Class, 10-12 pm



Register at: [www.flanwr.org/eventcalendar](http://www.flanwr.org/eventcalendar)

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Good news! We feed the birds year round at Laguna Atascosa on days that staff are present! Come visit during the morning hours to watch the show of colorful birds enjoy their breakfast.

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### **EARTH DAY CLEAN-UP**

Thank you to all the volunteers who showed up to celebrate Earth Day by showing a little love to our refuge! The clean-up day was a huge success- thank you to our volunteers from Starbucks, the Marine Military Academy, and everyone else who came out. A special thank you also to Defenders of Wildlife, whose sponsorship made it possible for us to buy materials including the trash grabbers that made this day possible.

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## ALLIGATOR HUNT

The first ever alligator hunt at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge concluded this week, and 17 of the toothy creatures were taken by permitted hunters. The biggest was a massive 12 footer wrangled by 15 year old Tripp Payne and his dad Heath. American alligators are found in the United States from North Carolina to the Rio Grande River. They can reach 200-500 pounds and live for up to 50 years. The American alligator, *Alligator mississippiensis*, was once on the verge of extinction but has made a tremendous comeback over the past 30 years. In Texas, American alligators were protected in 1969, classified as endangered after the passage of the Texas Endangered Species Act of 1973, then delisted in 1985 after they made a full recovery.

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## CREATURE FEATURE: INDIGO BUNTINGS

Easily missed but highly sought after, this sparrow sized bunting is a beautiful sight to behold. The Indigo Bunting has made its stop in South Texas during the peak of migration and is frequently sighted around the refuge. The males boast bright blue plumage while the females are mainly brown with some faint blue streaking. Although they are typically solitary birds, large groups may be spotted during their migration season. They are seed eaters as well as feeding on various insects and berries, preferring specialty seed such as thistle, of which there are plenty currently blooming in the vicinity. They can be spotted on grassy roadsides as well as brushy forested areas. The female nests close to the ground near the edges of woodlands or roadsides and wraps her cup-shaped nest in spider webs. Three to four eggs are laid and hatch in approximately two weeks. Keep an eye on the roadsides for these tiny buntings this spring season.

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## OPERATIONAL HOURS

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Visitors Center has new hours. It will now be open Wed-Fri from 8-4. Due to staffing shortages, these days and times may be subject to change.

**Visitor's Center**  
Wednesday-Friday  
8:00am-4:00pm

**Nature Store**  
Wednesday - Saturday  
8:00am-4:00pm

**Refuge Access**  
Sunday - Saturday  
Sunrise to Sunset

### SUPPORT US

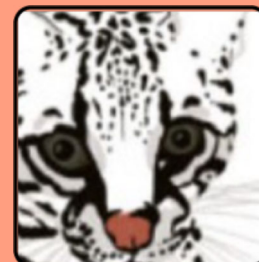
Save Texas Ocelots  
License Plates

The Nature Store @  
Laguna Atascosa

Adopt an Ocelot



GO SHOPPING!





Help us keep our birds fed this season! We accept donations of citrus and bird seed. Check out our wish list at <http://flanwr.org/wish-list>

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22688 Buena Vista Blvd.  
Los Fresnos, TX 78578

956-748-3607, ext.112

<http://www.flanwr.org>

[friends@flanwr.org](mailto:friends@flanwr.org)