



# NOVEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

friends of  
LAGUNA ATASCOSA  
national wildlife refuge

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## FRIENDS OF LAGUNA ATASCOSA NOVEMBER EVENTS



**WILD FRIENDS STORYTIME**  
11/5/22 AT 10AM (SOUTH TEXAS ECOTOURISM CENTER)

**RGV BIRDING FESTIVAL**  
11/9/22- 11/13/22 (HARLINGEN CONVENTION CENTER)

**NATURALLY NATIVE GARDEN TEAM**  
11/14/22 AT 9 AM (VISITOR CENTER)



**FEED THE BIRDS/DOCENT WALK**  
11/5/22 AND 11/12/22 AT 9 AM (VISITOR CENTER)

**FRIENDS SCIENCE SERIES-POLLINATORS**  
11/17/22 AT 9 AM (VISITOR CENTER)



**KISKADEE CRUISERS RUN CLUB TURKEY TROT**  
11/26/22 AT 8 AM (PRAIRIE TRAIL)

**REGISTER HERE!**







## **CREATURE FEATURE- MEXICAN GROUND SQUIRREL**

These cute little rodents don't get much attention but they are frequent visitors of the bird feeders, filling their cheeks with seeds and dashing back and forth between their burrows. The Mexican Ground squirrel is a common sight at the refuge, and is very well adapted to life at the refuge. Their light brown fur and nine white-spotted stripes down their backs make them easily identifiable as they share the feeders with the local birds. Ranging from northern Mexico and along the gulf coast into central Texas and parts of New Mexico, these ground squirrels prefer a habitat filled with heavy brush or grass and are typically found in sandy areas with lots of gravel. Areas of thick Mesquite are a favorite as they use the leaves to line their nests. Their diet is omnivorous and generally consists of plants, seeds, nuts, grains, and even carrion if the opportunity arises. In the early spring, the female constructs a careful nest within her burrow and gives birth to as many as ten pups. Completely helpless and hairless at birth, the babies are raised by the mother for the first three months of their lives. Although Mexican Ground Squirrels prefer a solitary lifestyle, the occasional community burrow is formed. Next time you visit the refuge, keep an eye out for these fuzzy creatures along the paths and among the birds at our stocked bird feeding stations.

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## RIO GRANDE VALLY BIRDING FESTIVAL

The Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival kicks off on Tuesday November 9. Friends will have a booth at the trade show from Wednesday, November 10-Sunday, November 13 from 12-6 pm on Wednesday-Saturday and 12-4 pm on Sunday. Come visit us for exclusive books and new items that we will have for sale! The Festival features an impressive schedule of tours as well as talks from prestigious wildlife professionals. Be on the lookout for a presentation from our Treasurer, Dr. Tom deMaar about Bird Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Release on Thursday at 4 pm. We look forward to this event where birders and nature enthusiasts come from far and wide to experience the height of the migratory bird season in the Rio Grande Valley! Visit their website [HERE](#) to learn more about the festival.

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## Friends Science Series- Bird 101

Our second Friends Science Series was a blast as we learned all about birds. The kids learned about common birds at the Refuge through hands-on activities including building a nest, learning the parts of a bird, and writing with a quill pen. The Refuge provided each child with an adventure pack for their nature hike and they used their new skills to identify a variety of birds along the trails. We look forward to continuing to teach our children about a different wildlife found on the Refuge each month as our Friends Science Series continues to thrive. Be on the lookout for our next Friends Science Series about pollinators on November 17. Click [HERE](#) to register!

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## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Are you a plant enthusiast and like to get your hands dirty? We are looking for enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers to help restore our native pollinator garden outside the visitor center. Our garden attracts many of the native butterfly and bee species and we hope to continue this especially as we get into the migratory season. Our next garden team will meet on November 14 at 9 AM at the visitor center. If you are interested in getting involved with this activity, visit [flanwr.org/volunteer](https://flanwr.org/volunteer) to learn more or contact Nicole Ektrom at [director@flanwr.org](mailto:director@flanwr.org). We look forward to meeting you! We also have other volunteer opportunities such as helping in our nature store, engaging the public at events, leading interpretive hikes, and helping design and implement youth programs.

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### OPERATIONAL HOURS

*Hunt Season is here! Please check the [Refuge website](#) for closures before heading out.*

**Visitor's Center**  
Wednesday - Friday  
7:00am-2:00pm

**Nature Store**  
Wednesday  
8:00am-2:00pm  
Thursday - 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!



Baltimore Oriole

We accept donations of citrus fruit and bird food!  
Help us feed our feathered friends and provide  
incredible viewing at our bird blinds! Check out our  
wish list at: <http://flanwr.org/wish-list>

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