Hot Science Cool Talks

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Cool Activities groups – Thank you!

• Austin Bat Refuge
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Cool Activities groups – Thank you!

- Breecker Lab (UT)
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- Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center
Group Stars!

• Austin High School
• Pflugerville High School
• LASA High School- Planet Earth sophomores
PLEASE REMEMBER

SILENCE MOBILE DEVICES

NO CONVERSATIONS DURING TALK
126th Hot Science - Cool Talk

Living Wonders of the Hill Country

David M. Hillis
Director, UT Biodiversity Center
College of Natural Sciences
University of Texas at Austin

September 29, 2023
Living Wonders of the Hill Country
with David M. Hillis, UT Biodiversity Center

Photo courtesy of Bill J. Boyd Photography
Living Wonders of the Hill Country

Today’s journey...
1. The Texas Hill Country: A Naturalist’s Paradise
2. The Seasonal Life of a Vernal Pool
3. Flowing Waters: Aquifers, Caves, Springs, and Rivers
4. Life of a Grassland
5. In the Woodlands and Brushlands
6. Backyard Biology
7. Climatic Adaptations
8. Restoration and the Future of the Hill Country’s Natural Resources

I emphasize actions individuals can take to protect what we love for the future
Part 1 - The Texas Hill Country: A Naturalist’s Paradise
Ecoregions of Texas

- Chihuahuan Desert
- Edwards Plateau
- Grasslands
- Llano Uplift
- Tamaulipan Thorn Scrub
- Sierra Madre Oriental
- Austin
- Coastal Prairies and Marshes
- Forests
Part 2 - The Seasonal Life of a Vernal Pool
Time-lapse photograph courtesy of Ian M. Wright
Part 5 - In the Woodlands and Brushlands
Audio courtesy of Insect Singers

Neotibicen pruinosus

Megatibicen auletis
Western Coachwhip
Part 8 - Restoration and the Future of the Hill Country’s Natural Resources
The Texas Hill Country is a biodiversity hotspot, full of unique species that can be seen nowhere else in the world.
The aquifers of the Hill Country provide the freshwater for most of Texas, and are themselves a focal point of unique biodiversity.
The Hill Country is a crossroads of the major ecoregions of North America, where east meets west and temperate grasslands meet tropical ecosystems.
This is a beautiful, but fragile, ecoregion, where efforts are needed to restore and preserve its beauty and diversity for generations to come.
The biggest threats to the Hill Country are human development and climate change. But small changes by individuals in the present can add up to big differences for future generations.