

Hot Science Cool Talks

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Cool Activities groups – Thank you!

- Austin Bat Refuge
- Austin Reptile Service
- Austin Wildlife Rescue
- Capital Area Master Naturalists
- Children's Research Center (UT)
- Colorado River Alliance
- David Hillis Lab (UT)

Cool Activities groups – Thank you!

- Breecker Lab (UT)
- Banner Lab (UT)
- Project CRESSLE
- UT Press
- Travis County Balcones Canyonlands Preserve
- Vertebrate Paleontology Laboratory (UT)
- 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

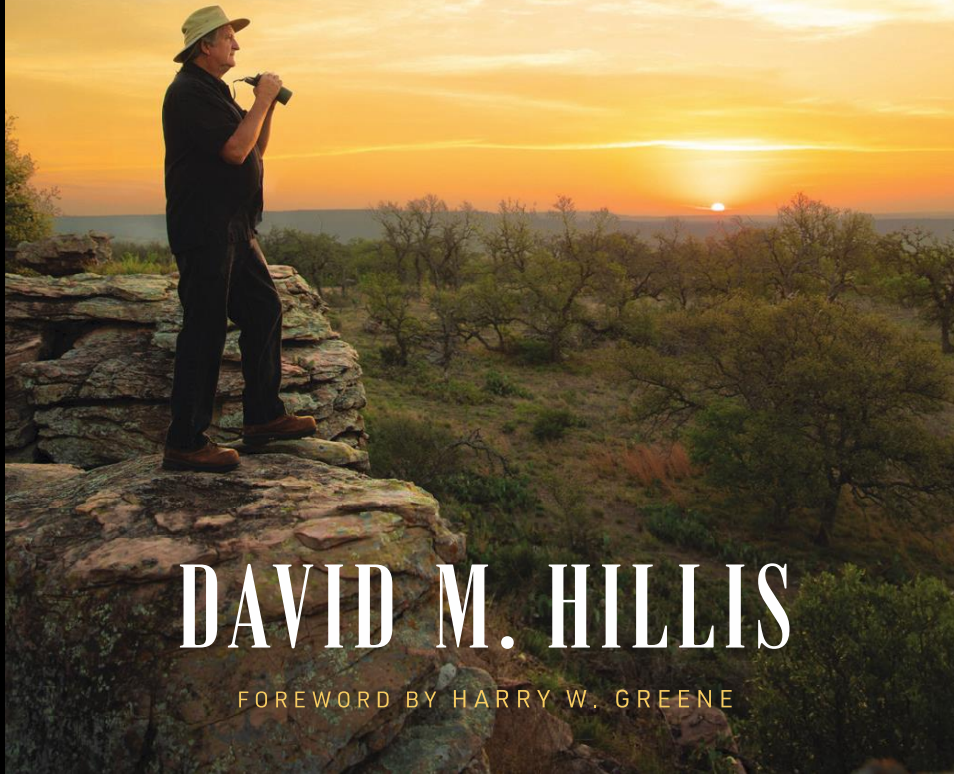
with David M. Hillis, UT Biodiversity Center



Photo courtesy of Bill J. Boyd Photography

ARMADILLOS TO ZIZIPHUS

A NATURALIST IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY



DAVID M. HILLIS

FOREWORD BY HARRY W. GREENE

Living Wonders of the Hill Country

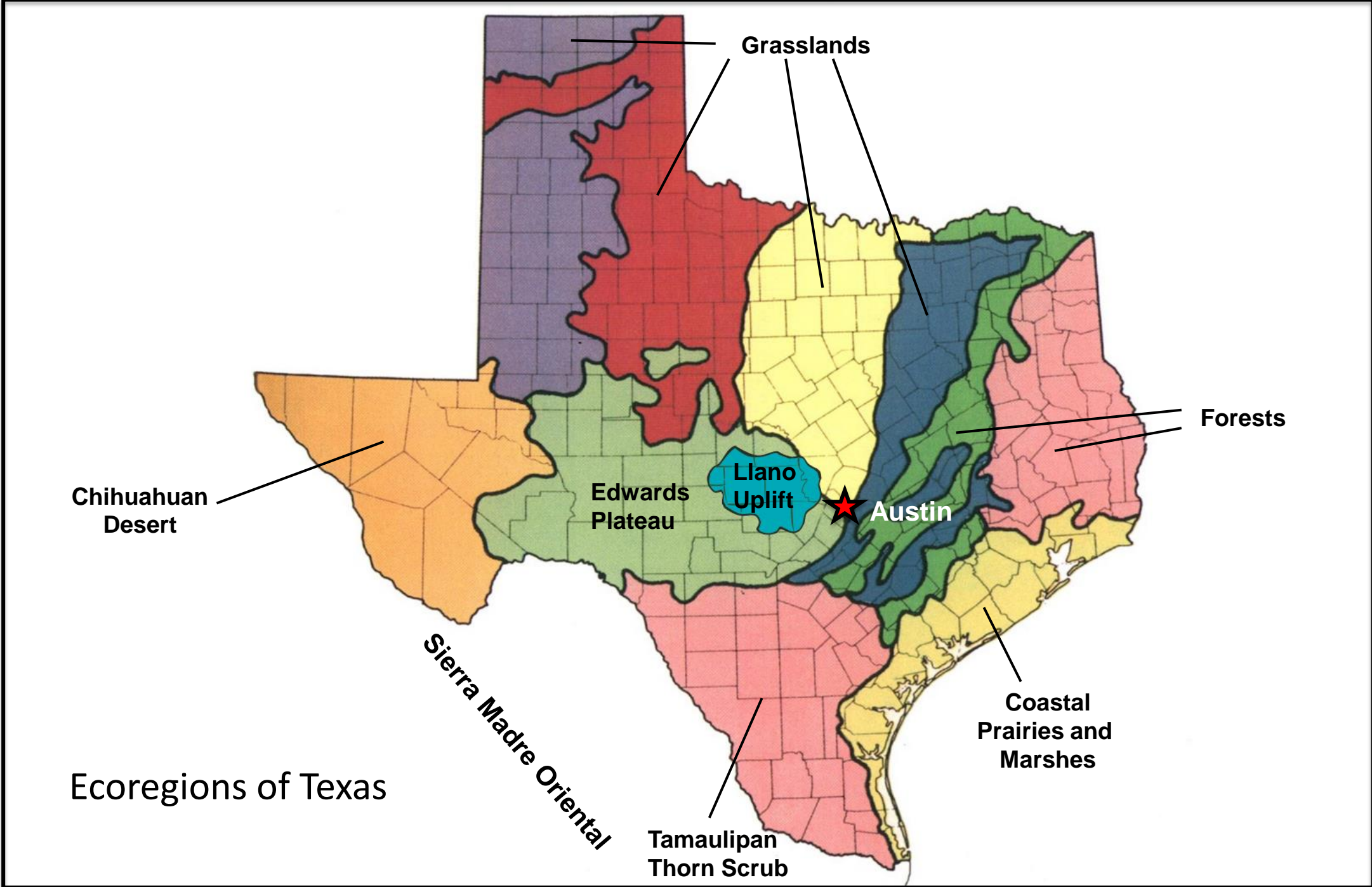
Today's journey...

- 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

















Part 2 - The Seasonal Life of a Vernal Pool











Part 3 - Flowing Waters: Aquifers, Caves, Springs, and Rivers







Time-lapse photograph courtesy of Ian M. Wright



Photo courtesy of Chris Barnhart









Part 4 - Life of a Grassland











Photo by Melody Lytle.



Part 5 - In the Woodlands and Brushlands







Neotibicen pruinosus



Megatibicen auletes



Audio courtesy of
Insect Singers



Western Coachwhip





Part 6 - Backyard Biology









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Photo courtesy of Bill J. Boyd Photography



Part 7 - Climatic Adaptations





Photo courtesy of Bill J. Boyd Photography.



**Part 8 - Restoration and the Future of
the Hill Country's Natural Resources**





Photo by Melody Lytle





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.

