

TEXAS CONNECTION

Activity #11

Can It Be Real?



Extra Resources

Texas A&M Univ. Horticulture
Weird Plants
*[http://
generalhorticulture.tamu.edu/
YouthAdventureProgram/
WeirdPlants
/WeirdPlants.html](http://generalhorticulture.tamu.edu/YouthAdventureProgram/WeirdPlants/WeirdPlants.html)*

Texas Parks and Wildlife
Wildlife Fact Sheets
*[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/
huntwild/wild/species/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/species/)*

Texas Overview:

This activity will give Texas students a better perspective on strange and unusual organisms that exist in the Lone Star State. An extension for the activity would be to have students research exactly where the organisms live and find a few more to add to the list.

Hand out the Texas Who's Who student page after finishing Part A-Stranger than Fiction in the Project Learning Tree guide.

Included is the teacher page (read only the text in italics and then have students decide if the organism is real or fictitious), student page and an additional page with color photos of the plants and animals. Additional information can be found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife fact sheets

Project Learning Tree is sponsored in Texas by



www.plttexas.org

Teacher Page — Texas Who's Who

1. Pitcher Plant

These plants use insect for nourishment, but they do not eat their prey. Rather, they trap the prey, which then dies and rots. The nutrients and amino acids from the rotting insect are absorbed by the leaf. Most of these plants live in very poor soil and this is how they get the nutrients they need to grow. An insect crawls down the tube or funnel shaped leaf. Once inside, they cannot crawl out because either the sides of the leaf are too slippery or the plant has hairs pointing down that keep the insects from crawling back up.

Pitcher plants are most commonly found in the bogs of east Texas.

2. Roseate Spoonbill

Roseate spoonbills are close relatives of the Flamingo. Both have pink feathers though the flamingos are much larger and have a longer neck. The roseate spoonbill grows to a height of 32 inches (81 cm) and has an average wingspan of 50 inches (127 cm). Their distinguishing characteristics include their pink body and legs, white neck and breast, pale green bald head, spoon-shaped bill and bright red shoulder patch. They swish their spoon-shaped bills back and forth in the water to find small invertebrates, fish and crustaceans. During breeding season, the male uses gifts of nesting material to attract the female. Both male and female then take turns sitting on the eggs and feeding the young.

From March through October, roseate spoonbills prefer the bays, marshes and estuaries along the Gulf Coast. Occasionally, they will travel inland through the eastern third of Texas. In the winter, most roseate spoonbills migrate to Central and South America.

3. Texas Horned Lizard

This lizard is brownish with two rows of fringed scales along each side of the body. The head has numerous horns, all of which are prominent, as well as two central head spines that are much longer than any of the others. This lizard has dark brown stripes that radiate downward from the eyes and across the top of the head.

The Texas Horned Lizard can be found in arid and semiarid habitats and prefers open areas with sparse plant cover. Because horned lizards dig for hibernation, nesting and insulation purposes, they commonly are found in loose sand or loamy soils.

4. Attwater's Prairie Chicken

Males have large orange air sacs on the sides of their necks. During mating season, the males dance and make a "booming" sound, which is amplified by inflating the air sacs on their necks and can be heard a half-mile away.

Attwater's prairie chickens are found only on the coastal prairies of Texas.

Texas Who's Who?

1. Real Fictitious



2. Real Fictitious



3. Real Fictitious



4. Real Fictitious



1.



2.



3.



4.

