



What Kind of Naturalist Are You?

ARE YOU...



 Fascinated with all things outdoors? How could you possibly choose?! You don't need to pick a topic to be a student of nature. What will it be today? A walk through the woods, a painted prairie in full bloom, a bird's flight through binoculars, or a fossil from an ancient ocean? With so much to discover, there's no time to waste. Nature calls!




 Bring on the unpaved trails, rushing water, and rocky slopes! Obstacles are a welcome challenge for the Outdoor Adventurer. An adrenaline seeker, you love all things active that test your skills. Mountain bikes, hiking boots, kayaks, and more, outdoor adventure is the best kind of fun.


Who do YOU become
when you step outside?

OR, ARE YOU...




 From cranes to songbirds and everything in between, the Birder has eyes fixed on the sky. When bird calls get stuck in your head instead of the latest hit single and you can read flight patterns better than social cues, you might just fit this character.




 Fascinated with all things plants? Why look up when you can look down? There is so much to discover when the grasses, the trees, and the flowers all have a story to tell. From the prairies to the woods and beyond, the botanical world is full of wonder and complexity just waiting for you to take notice.




 Iridescent beetles, flitting fritillaries, a flash of dragonfly wings—for the Entomologist, excitement comes from your next big little discovery! When bug nets and headlamps become your favorite fashion accessories and your Friday night lights involve a white sheet and moths, this whole kingdom of life in miniature may be your calling.




 Called to the woods, the Forester is in awe of the gentle giants of the plant world. A welcome environment for all, trees provide shade and shelter for many kinds of life. Find something new around every bend each time you walk down a winding wooded trail.




 The history of the distant past is written in the land. Landscapes, rocks, and fossils tell a vivid story of ancient oceans, lands, and life. Uncover your Geologist and hold in your hands a moment in the deep time of natural history.



 Are your daydreams filled with the warm feeling of sunlight on your skin, birds chattering overhead, and sparkling water? Caught in the currents and swept along like the shimmering fish and underwater plants, you simply can't resist. For this character, a rushing river, the salty coastline, or a sunrise over the wetland never fail to amaze.



 Channeling your inner "Crocodile Hunter," reptiles, birds, and critters have never intimidated you. Through the woods, under the logs, into the water, discovery awaits! When animals are easier to understand than people, and you follow more muddy tracks than Instagram pages, you might just be a Wildlife Biologist.

22 Marvels of Nature
TO EXPLORE
in the Dallas area



22 DALLAS-AREA PARKS FOR THE NATURALIST IN YOU

PARK	FEATURES FOR THE NATURALIST									
Arbor Hills Nature Preserve	200 acres of Blackland Prairie. Upland and riparian forest ecoregions with creeks. Nine miles of paved, dirt, and DORBA trails, some with interpretive signage. Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Site. Partner in American Kestrel Partnership. Monarch migration stopover. Parking lot biofilter for rain runoff.	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Boulder Park	100+ acres of upland forest on limestone hills. Highly rated for off-road biking—features one of the most difficult DORBA trails in DFW. Blue Trail—6-mile beginner, more family friendly, bypasses difficult terrain. Red Trail—12-mile intermediate/advanced, hills, rocky descents, creek crossings.		●	●	●	●	●			
Breckinridge Park	400+ acres. East of Rowlett Creek: Home to Texas champion Box Elder. Deep woods on south end. West of Rowlett Creek: Limestone outcroppings and plentiful fossils in Beck's Branch. A wildflower meadow with loop trail supports a vigorous Eastern Bluebird population.	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Cedar Hill State Park	1200+ acres of rugged limestone hills with pockets of Blackland Prairie along 7,500-acre Joe Pool Lake. Off-road biking/hiking loop maintained by DORBA, with some interpretive signage. Home to over 200 bird species, including the endangered Black-Capped Vireo. Overnight camping, swimming, fishing.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cedar Ridge Preserve	Nearly 10 miles of well-maintained, rugged trails explore 600+ acres of steep limestone hills and soaring 755-foot escarpments with epic views. Lush valleys, riparian corridors, and ponds. Blackland prairie restorations. Butterfly garden. Site of native Texas orchids. Great spot for birders.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Coppell Nature Park & Biodiversity Education Center	A few miles of gentle trails through 66 acres of Eastern Cross Timbers, Blackland Prairie, and riparian Cottonwood Creek corridor. Natural springs that flow north (a rarity) are found along the creek. Butterfly garden. Center offers naturalist training for children and guided nature walks.	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center	Three hiking trails of varying difficulty trace the canyon floor up to the hill tops—one trail with a view all the way to Arlington! Dogwood grove flowers in spring. Superb bird watching. Rich in native plant species and pollinators. Excellent visitor center with talks and events for all ages.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Elm Fork Nature Preserve	Quiet, deeply wooded preserve along Trinity's Elm Fork with 14-acre pond, wetlands, and wildflower meadows. Loop walking path through the woods and along the pond.	●		●	●	●			●	
John Bunker Sands Wetland Center	Wetlands purify wastewater and provide habitat for waterfowl and wildlife. Home to nesting pair of bald eagles. Sightings of over 260 varieties of birds. Fantastic views of the wetlands from the one-mile boardwalk and a trail to the Trinity River. Water education center. Monthly public days.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Joppa Preserve	Nearly 315-acre park with wetlands and Lemmon Lake, plentiful migrating waterfowl, year-round shorebirds. Paved lakeshore trail part of extensive Great Trinity Forest system that leads to Trinity River Audubon Center.		●		●			●	●	●
Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA)	1100+ acres where Blackland Prairies and Eastern Cross Timbers meet. Bobcats, wild turkeys, river otter, beaver, wide variety of reptiles/amphibians. Wading and woodland birds and the iconic dickcissel in its prairie habitat. Two blinds for wetland wildlife viewing. 10+ miles of trails, including boardwalks and paddling trails. Pollinators, damselflies, dragonflies, and beetles galore! Guided walks/workshops.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Mountain Creek Preserve	60+ acres of wooded riparian habitat on Elm Fork of Trinity. Great views of river, birds, and wildlife. Four-mile loop trail connects to Campion system. Canoe launch. Equestrian area.	●	●	●	●	●			●	●
Oak Cliff Nature Preserve	121 acres of upland forest, steep limestone ravines, and Blackland Prairie with eight miles of DORBA trails. Abundant wildflowers in spring.		●	●	●	●		●		
Oak Point Park & Nature Preserve	800-acre park along Rowlett Creek with 13 miles of concrete and soft surface trails through Blackland Prairie, woods, wetlands. Zip line. Equestrian area.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Rowlett Creek Preserve	Nearly 100 acres of riparian hardwood forest along channelized creek. Four miles of flat naturalist trails with bird blinds. 15+ miles of DORBA trails. Wildlife tracks in bottomland mud. Pollinator garden.			●		●	●	●	●	●
Spring Creek Forest Preserve (Garland)	About 200 acres of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest with some of the oldest (up to 150 years), tallest (100+ feet tall), and widest (trunks 4 feet wide) trees in the county. Paved/soft-surface trails.	●		●	●	●	●		●	●
Spring Creek Nature Preserve (Richardson)	Over 100 deeply wooded acres along limestone creek. Several miles of paved trails with picnic areas. Trail links to Galatyn Woodland Preserve.	●		●		●	●	●	●	
Trinity River Audubon Center	130 acres reclaimed from an illegal dump. Four miles of hiking trails and boardwalks with bird blinds through wetlands, riparian forest, and Blackland Prairie. Bottomland trail with river access. Pollinator garden. Excellent visitor center. Classes and events for all ages. Perfect place for new naturalists!	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Trinity Skyline Trail	Paved 5-mile trail atop levees along channelized section of Trinity River with views of downtown Dallas. Dirt trails in river bottom. Waterfowl, birds of prey, and wading birds when river is up. Ronald Kirk Bridge for bicyclists/pedestrians. Connects to extensive trails going south and north.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Twelve Hills Nature Center	Wonderful getaway in heart of Oak Cliff. Gentle 5+ acres on former apartment site. Trails through woods and Blackland Prairie recreation. Pollinator garden. Outdoor classroom for elementary students.	●		●	●					
White Rock Lake	Beloved 1254-acre lake with 10 miles of paved trails. Great birdwatching at northern end, Sunset Bay, and below spillway. Brown pelicans and other waterfowl migrators overwinter. Look for twiggys nests of monk parakeet colony at electrical substation and nearby towers off White Rock Rd. Naturalist museum at Bath House Cultural Center. 250+ acres of Blackland Prairie. Sailboating, canoeing, kayaking.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

DORBA: Dallas Off Road Bicycle Association

T E X A S



NORTH TEXAS CHAPTER

The Texas Master Naturalist program is designed to develop a corp of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension serve as sponsors for the program.

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22 DALLAS-AREA PARKS FOR THE NATURALIST IN YOU



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PARK MAP #	PARK	ADDRESS	PHONE	RESTROOM (R) PORTALET (P)	VISITOR OR ACTIVITY CENTER	HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE	TRAILS PAVED (P) TRAILS UNPAVED (U)	BIKE TRAILS PAVED (P) BIKE TRAILS UNPAVED (U)	WATER ACCESS/FEATURE	DOG FRIENDLY (ON LEASH)	FAMILY- FRIENDLY FEATURES	SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES	PICNIC TABLES	ENTRY FEES	PARK HIGHLIGHTS
14	Arbor Hills Nature Preserve	6701 W. Parker Rd., Plano, TX 75093	972.941.7250	R	●	●	P/ U	P/ U		●		●	●		Grand park with many features and activities, balancing naturalist and recreational. Interpretive trail guide available online. Observation tower offers a spectacular view of landscape. Pavilion for rent.
7	Boulder Park	3200 W. Red Bird Ln., Dallas, Texas 75237	214.670.4100	P			U	U		●			●		Best known for complex off-road biking trails.
17	Breckinridge Park (east of Rowlett Creek)	3400 Park Vista Rd., Richardson, TX 75082	972.744.4100	R/ P	●	●	P/ U	P/ U		●	●	●	●		Open areas and deep woods. Pavilion, sports fields, playgrounds, and more.
16	Breckinridge Park (west of Rowlett Creek)	Beck Dr. at Moroney Dr., Richardson, TX 75082	972.744.4100				U	U		●		●			Quiet and wooded trails along Beck's Branch. Wildflower meadow.
21	Cedar Hill State Park	1570 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill, TX 75104	972.291.3900	R	●	●	U	U	●	●	●	●	●	●	Family fun at Joe Pool Lake with hiking, swimming, developed and primitive campsites, fishing piers, boat ramps. Tour historic Penn Farm Agricultural Center.
20	Cedar Ridge Preserve	7171 Mountain Creek Pkwy., Dallas, TX 75249	972.709.7784	R			U		●	●					Sprawling preserve with a variety of terrain types from escarpments to wetlands, laced by miles of trails in a range of difficulties, some with immense views. Terrific nature immersion.
9	Coppell Nature Park & Biodiversity Education Center	367 Freepoint Pkwy., Coppell TX 75019	972.304.3581	R	●	●	U		●	●	●	●			Gentle nature oasis tucked between warehouse district and sports-oriented Wagon Wheel Park complex. Biodiversity Education Center provides hands-on environmental education to schools and the community.
22	Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center	1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill, TX 75104	469.526.1980	R	●	●	U		●	●	●		●		Wonderful place to learn about nature and watch birds from inside the center or outside in the preserve. Easy to moderate trails, some with naturalist signage. Dogs welcome on Saturdays.
10	Elm Fork Nature Preserve (within McInish Park)	2335 Sandy Lake Rd., Carrollton, TX 75006	972.466.3080		●		U		●	●			●		Naturalist nirvana with immense bottomland trees and access to the Elm Fork of the Trinity River.
19	John Bunker Sands Wetland Center	655 Martin Ln., Seagoville, TX 75159	972.474.9100	R/ P	●	●	U		●	●		●	●	●	Bring your binoculars to sprawling wetlands with boardwalks that get you close to wildlife on monthly open-house days. Great educational trails and visitor center in this unusual habitat.
6	Joppa Preserve	4737 River Oaks Rd., Dallas, Texas 75241	214.670.4100			●	P	P	●	●			●		Fishing/waterbird wonderland on western edge of Great Trinity Forest. Named for historic Freedman community. Fun pop-culture trivia—Texas Ranger scene in <i>Bonnie & Clyde</i> filmed on footbridge over creek separating Little Lemmon and Lemmon Lakes.
13	Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA)	201 E. Jones St., Lewisville, TX 75057	469.635.5483	R	●	●	U		●	●		●	●	●	Largest nature preserve in Dallas area features wide range of habitats. Easy to hike deep and forget the city here. Self-guided canoeing/kayaking and guided kayak tours (see LLELA website). Nine campsites for primitive camping. Charming 1870s homestead log cabin in the woods.
8	Mountain Creek Preserve	825 W. Irving Blvd. Irving, TX 75060	972.721.2600	R	●	●	P		●	●			●		Park with bottomland forest and trails on the Trinity River. Watch a cricket match! Site of pioneer river crossing.
4	Oak Cliff Nature Preserve	2875 Pierce St., Dallas, TX 75233	972.696.9810				U	U	●	●			●		A wild wooded urban oasis on rocky hills. Plentiful complex trails make it easy to get wonderfully lost.
15	Oak Point Park & Nature Preserve	5901 Los Rios Blvd., Plano, TX 75074	972.941.7250	R	●	●	P/ U	P	●	●	●	●	●		Large park with features to please naturalist and sports enthusiast alike. Lake provides pastoral spot for fishing. Great views of Rowlett Creek.
18	Rowlett Creek Preserve	2525 Castle Dr., Garland, TX 75040	972.205.2750	P			U	U	●	●			●		Deep bottomland hardwood forest with trails is cool, even in summer.
12	Spring Creek Forest Preserve (Garland) (2 areas)	1770 Holford Rd. & 1787 Holland Rd., Garland, TX 75044	972.205.2750	P		●	P/ U	P	●	●					Download interpretive guide for trail through riparian woods and Blackland Prairie on preserve's west side. Paved trails on east side enable everyone to experience the creek and forest. Trout lily tours in spring.
11	Spring Creek Nature Area (Richardson)	1600 E. Lookout Dr. at N. Plano Rd., Richardson, TX 75082	972.744.4100	R		●	P/ U	P	●	●			●		Paved trails through deep forest for peaceful strolling. Picnic, bring your horseshoes for fun in the horseshoe pit, and visit two historic cemeteries. Best access from Lookout Rd. with trail under Plano Rd. leading to nature area.
5	Trinity River Audubon Center	6500 Great Trinity Forest Wg., Dallas TX 75217	214.309.5801	R	●	●	P/ U	P	●		●	●	●	●	Premiere nature center in LEED Gold building with educational displays on the river ecosystem. Easy trails with educational signage through a variety of habitats. Best access to the Trinity River in the county and occasional kayak tours.
2	Trinity Skyline Trail	110 W. Commerce St., Dallas, TX 75205	214.671.9500	P		●	P/ U	P	●	●			●		A blend of nature and downtown delights. Follow up a dinner at Trinity Groves with a trail amble as the skyscrapers light up. Pedestrian bridge over river provides impressive views.
3	Twelve Hills Nature Center	817 Mary Cliff Rd., Dallas, TX 75208	469.249.2817				U			●			●		Retreat to this inspiring neighborhood park in Oak Cliff that is beloved by adults and children. Participate in guided educational bird and plant walks. Eco-education site for the community.
1	White Rock Lake	8300 Garland Rd., Dallas, TX 75201 (northern access from Mockingbird Ln. at Buckner Blvd.)	214.670.4100	R/ P	●	●	P/ U	P	●	●			●		Treasured urban lake with extensive paved trails for bicycling/walking, birdwatching areas, cultural center with naturalist museum, and watersports from paddleboard to kayaking to sailing. Popular dog park and picnic pavilions with views.