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January 4, 2024



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EARDC 2024

Reflections and Future Efforts

Ah, the New Year, a time for reflections and goal setting. Here at the EARDC we also partake in these endeavors. Looking back over the past year, the Center has had many accomplishments. Our research center published three peer-reviewed papers (with two more currently in review!), made 4,662 additions to our museum collection (bringing the total over 173,000 individual animals), and sorted 150 samples. Our analytic lab took in and processed 6,136 samples from around central Texas and our Education department served 235 students during field trips and 240 campers in the Aquatic Science Adventure Camps.

While we are proud of our accomplishments from the past year we look forward to making even bigger impacts in 2024. The EARDC will be hiring several individuals over the next few months, a Grant Specialist, a Research Associate, two student workers, and Counselors and teacher staff for ASAC summer 2024. Our research center will be starting Phase 2 of our USACE project where we investigate animal community responses to changing environmental conditions and will be putting a large portion of our aquifer biodiversity collection online, available for researchers and the general public. Camps added several Discovery Days in hopes of serving more campers from our San Marcos community.

We will continue to make strides in research and education, while looking for ways to increase our impact. Happy New Year!

Aquatic Science Adventure Camp Update



ASAC Registration Opens Monday, January 8th!

Get ready for another exciting year at camp! Registration is less than a week away and the platform will go live at 9am on Monday, January 8th. Check out the session line up below to pick the best camp for your child. Descriptions of camps can be found [HERE!](#) Make sure to check out our FAQs and Parent Handbook.

| Aquatic Science Adventure Camps 2024 | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Dates | Camp | Ages | Cost |
| June 2 - 7, 2024 | Overnight Expedition Camp 1 | 9-12 | \$1,000 |
| June 9 - 14, 2024 | Overnight Expedition Camp 2 | 12-14 | \$1,000 |
| June 16 - 21, 2024 | Overnight Expedition Camp 3 | 9-12 | \$1,000 |
| June 23 - 28, 2024 | Overnight Expedition Camp 4 | 12-14 | \$1,000 |
| July 1, 2024 | Discovery Day 1 | 12-14 | \$60 |
| July 2, 2024 | Discovery Day 2 | 12-14 | \$60 |
| July 3, 2024 | Discovery Day 3 | 12-14 | \$60 |
| July 7 - 12, 2024 | Overnight Expedition Camp 5 | 9-12 | \$1,000 |
| July 15 - 19, 2024 | Explorer Day Camp 1 | 12-14 | \$500 |
| July 22 - 26, 2024 | Explorer Day Camp 2 | 9-12 | \$500 |
| July 29 - Aug 2, 2024 | Nature Adventure Half-Day Camp | 6-8 | \$150 |
| August 5, 2024 | Discovery Day 4 | 9-12 | \$60 |
| August 6, 2024 | Discovery Day 5 | 9-12 | \$60 |
| August 7, 2024 | Discovery Day 6 | 9-12 | \$60 |

Go to the registration page [HERE](#).

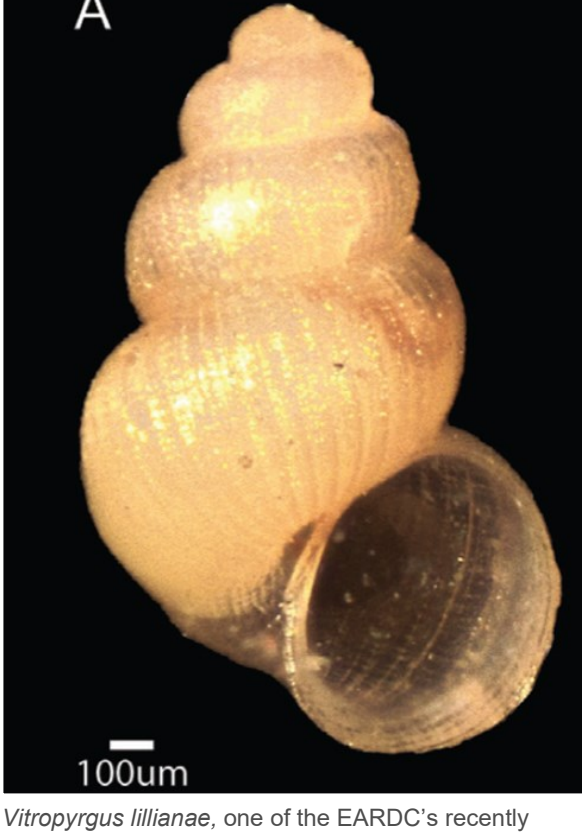
Work with us this summer!

We are looking for Counselors (18+) and Teacher staff for the summer. Check out the descriptions and learn how to apply [HERE](#). Want to learn more? Email EARDC_education@txstate.edu or call 512-245-6176.

For questions, contact Kellie Donajkowski at EARDC_education@txstate.edu or 512-245-6176.

Research Spotlight – What's in a Name?

Just last month, researchers from the Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center collaborated on a description of two new species of tiny, subterranean, aquatic snails from the Edwards Aquifer. With bird names receiving a lot of attention in the news recently, we thought that the descriptions of our new snails would provide a good opportunity to dig into what's in a (scientific) name! When a new species is discovered, the species must be scientifically described before it is formally recognized. Usually, that description is a highly technical manuscript that includes, among other elements, a detailed description of the species' anatomy. The paper must also provide a Latin, scientific name (like *Vitropyrgus lillianae* in the case of one of our snails) and may also propose a 'common' name (this one is the 'glass cavesnail'). Those scientific names follow a huge and painfully technical set of rules called the 'International Code of Zoological Nomenclature', but so long as the rules are followed, scientists have a lot of discretion about what goes into the name. Sometimes the names describe something about the animal ('Vitre' in *Vitropyrgus*, for example, means 'glassy', and refers to the glassy appearance of the shell). Other times, they can tell you where the animal was found (another species EARDC staff helped describe lives in the Colorado River in Texas and is called *Texanobathynella coloradoensis*: yup we see the potential for confusion there!). Other names could be humorous (e.g., *Ytu brutus* and *Pieza pi*) or pop-culture references (see if you recognize *Scaptia beyonceae*, *Polemistus chewbacca*, or *Fiordichthys slartibartfasti*). Species are often named after people, such as their



Vitropyrgus lillianae, one of the EARDC's recently described species.

discoverer or other scientists, particularly those that have relevant, related research (e.g., *Stygopyrgus longleyi*, another snail named after the previous director of the Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center). Unfortunately, some names honor people of dubious or downright indefensible character (e.g., *Hypopta mussolinii*), which is why North American bird names are receiving so much attention and a comprehensive revision. But what about our little glass cavesnail? Happily, that story is much sweeter: "lillianae" refers to Dr. Lillian Perez, the first author's mother!

Analytical Lab Hours

Regular Hours:

Monday – Friday, 8am – 5 pm, closed for lunch 12-1:15pm, bacteriological samples are not accepted on Fridays, only by special request.

Closed Monday, January 15, 2024



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