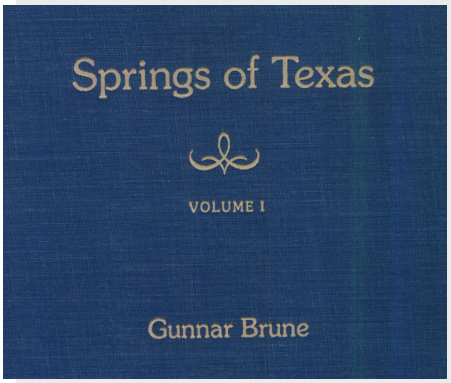
WATERSHED WEEK IN REVIEW

Gunnar Brune's *Springs of Texas* is the bible for those interested in the topic. Unfortunately, the book is out of print.

Thanks to the folks at Edwards Aquifer Authority, the information is now available on-line.

Unfortunately, Sutton and Edwards counties are the only ones in the watershed included in the book.

You can access the information through our Water Resources Page.



Why is it So Dry?

Dr. David Hillis
Mason Science Corner - Mason County News

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After the rains of an El Niño winter, the wildflowers on the Double Helix Ranch are spectacular. The wildflowers tend to be much more sparse after a dry La Niña winter, as we are experiencing this year. So in today's Mason County Science Corner, I address the question:

Why Is It So Dry?

Central Texas is well known for both its droughts and floods. We seem to go back and forth between these two states on a roughly five-year cycle. Our annual average rainfall is about 26" (slightly more in the eastern part of the county, and slightly less in the west). But an "average" year is uncommon.

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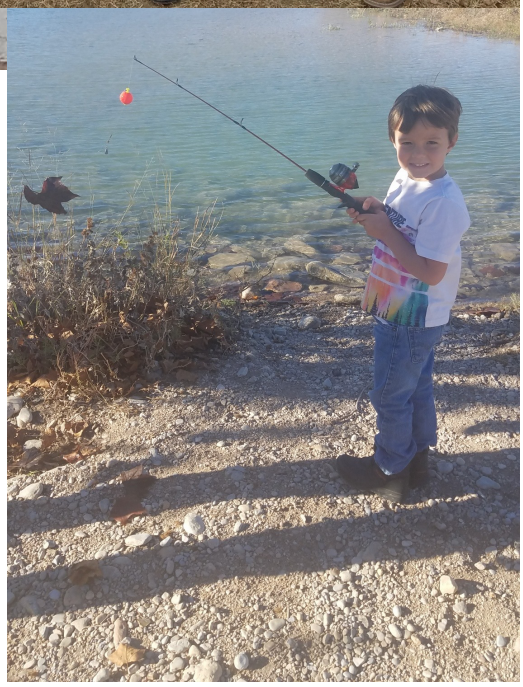
Winterfisch - Celebrate the Good Times



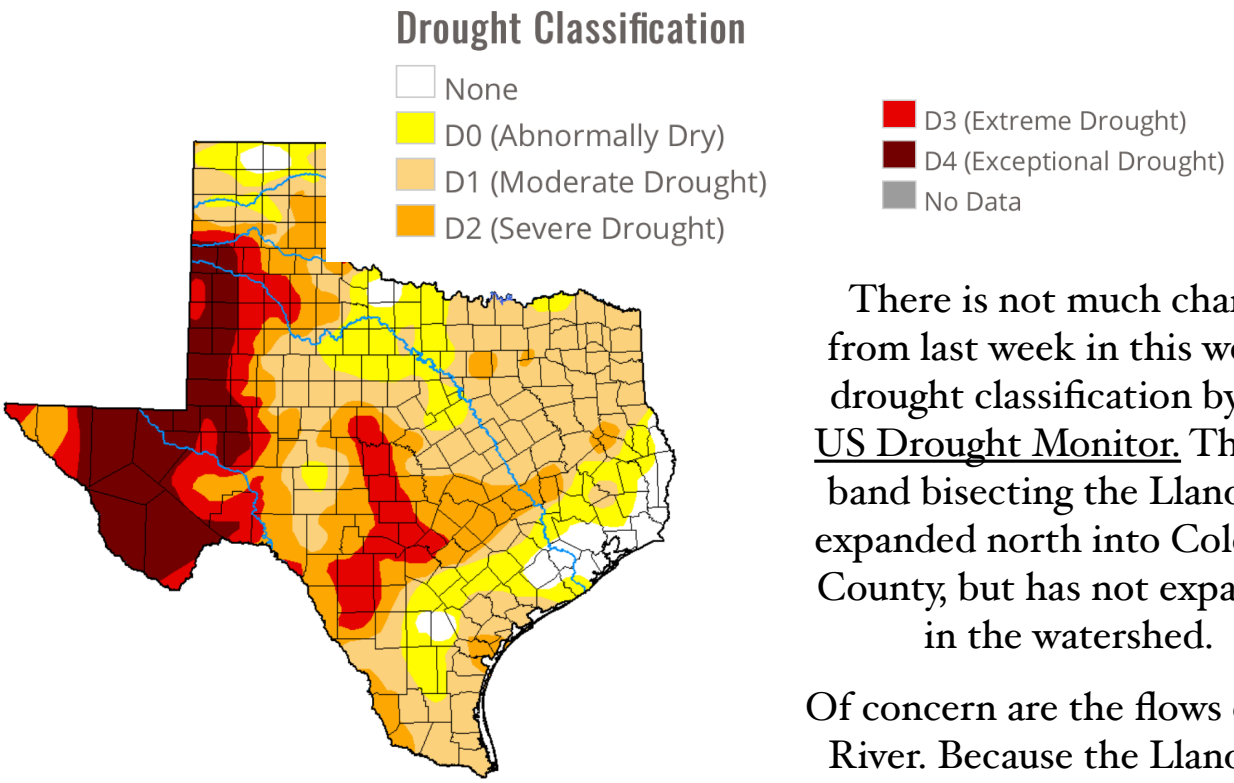
By Tony Plutino
Photos : Winterfisch Facebook Page

Over 200 fishers and other celebrants came out for the 4th Annual WinterFisch Celebration on Saturday, December 5th to celebrate good times on the banks of the Llano River with an afternoon of trout fishing, fishing demos, and live music. The WinterFisch Celebration kicked off the three months long Rainbow trout fishing opportunity known as Mason County WinterFisch (WinterFisch). In addition to fishing for trout, attendees could learn about rod building, fly tying, fly fishing and how to select and rig a fishing kayak... continue

Other Llano River Release Dates

South Llano River State Park (12/17/20 & 1/13/21)
Castell downstream (1/22/21)
James River Crossing (2/3/21)

The Drought to Come?



There is not much change from last week in this week's drought classification by the US Drought Monitor. The red band bisecting the Llano has expanded north into Coleman County, but has not expanded in the watershed.

Of concern are the flows of the River. Because the Llano is a spring-fed system, decreases in flows are more gradual and what we are experiencing now can help us to predict what flow conditions will be in the future.

Since 1939, when the gage at Llano was installed, there have been 21 years when the seven-day average flow of the River fell below 21 cfs. Ten of those years occurred during the drought from 1945-1957. Four years occurred during the 60s, and five years have occurred since 2011. The last instance was in 2018 when the River at Llano dropped to 0.26 cfs over a 7-day period.

With one exception, each those dry summers could have been predicted in February using the monthly averages for the Junction gage between August and February. If the monthly average for this time period falls below **85 cfs**, or if the monthly average for February is below 75 cfs, flows at Llano will drop below 21 cfs. Since August of this year, monthly average flows at Junction are **82 cfs,** indicating the possibility of low flows this summer. The exception occurred in 2006 and 2007 when heavy rains in May of both years resulted in higher flows the rest of the summer.