

# Nature Notes

February 13, 2020

A digital journal documenting the search for truth, beauty and goodness in God's lovely creation throughout the diocese of Fort Worth.

## I notice . . . .

This week, the rain seemed unending. It's interesting to note, however, that January and February are not the rainiest months of the year in [DFW](#), May and October are. (For comparison's sake: we've gotten 1.65" of rain this February, May and October average between 4.5" and 4.9").

Have you ever made or used a rain gauge to keep track of the rain in your yard? They work well on a flat surface, but how would you use a rain gauge on the ocean? Since 80% of the world's rain falls on the ocean, scientists need an accurate way to measure ocean rainfall. Recently, they developed an acoustic rain gauge that sits deep in the ocean, and measures the SOUND of raindrops falling on the ocean surface. It's absolutely fascinating how different sizes of raindrops make different sounds. This [website](#) has a fantastic description of the process, and you can even listen to how rain sounds under the water.

(Hint for teachers: the [educator section](#) of the website has lots of neat hands-on sound activities)





Tufted Titmouse Photo from "All About Birds" website, article referenced above.



Found this little bird in the courtyards a couple of months ago, and I saw more in the mixed flock down by the lake. I think he's a ruby-crowned kinglet.

## I wonder. . . .

Sometimes, down by the lake, I hear a myriad of bird songs, and have trouble picking out individual birds. Then all the birds seem to go from one place to another, as if on cue, flying from the neighborhood to the lake, or the other side of the lake. After a while, they sometimes come back. When I'm lucky enough to be close to the birds, I see cardinals, tufted titmice, ruby crowned kinglets, wrens, and others. Once I saw bluebirds. Sometimes, I hear woodpeckers.

Evidently, this phenomenon is called a "[mixed flock](#)", and they're pretty common, especially in winter. Scientists aren't sure why birds flock this way, but some research indicates that birds like the tufted titmouse "lead" the flock. Other species may just follow along with the titmice, relying on their alarm calls instead of keeping watch with a member of their own species. Not having to watch for predators means more time and energy to forage for food.

Are you, or is someone you know, working towards an Eagle rank, Gold Award or Stars and Stripes Award? We have lots of service project opportunities available at Nolan, from building fountains to blazing nature trails and designing interpretive signage. Please e-mail Mrs. Breclaw for more information.

## Courtyard Adventures

