

Hester

During our trip to Texas, we arranged to meet our serious birder friends, Lorna and Dodge Engleman, at [Medina River Natural Area](#). Before they arrived, we encountered a stray cat, very emaciated, and quite friendly.

She reminded Jim of The UgWump, one of his favorite cats. Like The UgWump, this cat was a tortoise shell, and had a funny face.



Hester greeted us at the entrance

She followed us around everywhere we went. After the Englemans arrived, she followed all four of us as we birded. At one point, Dodge played the call of an owl as a way of stirring up the small birds. Our new friend heard the call, and immediately took refuge on the safest place she could find, Jim's shoulder.

The Englemans, Lorna in particular, are not cat people, so we left the preserve with the cat still wandering around, while we had dinner at [Down on Grayson](#), an outdoor restaurant near the old Pearl Brewery. Then, we visited the Engleman's house, deep into a major remodeling of the kitchen and adjacent areas. By that time, it was dark, so we just returned to our motel.

The next morning, Linda suggested we should rescue the cat. It was obvious that she was not really a feral cat. She was clearly someone's pet who had probably been abandoned in the area. She seemed to trust women more than men, so we decided that she had probably been taken by a man to be set loose. She had swollen teats, so we thought that the likely source of friction with her former owners.

We returned to the nature preserve to find her still waiting at the entrance for her rescuers. Linda came prepared with some dog food — all the convenience store had — and offered it to the cat. She ate as though



I hear an owl!

it was her last meal, consuming half a large can before stopping. We searched the area around the entrance for kittens, but found none.

The staff at the preserve said that she had been around “for a while.” They welcomed our rescue attempt. Jim returned to a Walmart a short distance away where he acquired a cat carrier, a pillow to fit inside that said it was filled with catnip, and some cans of real cat food.

We learned from the Preserve staff that none of the shelters in town were accepting stray cats, only dogs. So, we considered options. “We could leave her with Marilyn and Abe,” our nephew and his wife. They had cats. A quick call got the expected reply, “No way, José.”

“They’ll change their mind when they see her,” Linda proclaimed confidently.

“If they won’t take her, we can leave her with them for a time and take her back to California, after we return from McAllen,” Jim suggested. He had taken a shine to the feline.

So that decided, we set off to drive back to Austin, with the cat, which we had started calling Medina, asleep in the carrier.

Linda’s prophesy proved to be correct. Marilyn named the cat Hester.

A visit to the vet the next day proved that she was about a year old, and probably not pregnant, but in heat. We know how annoying that can be, so we had a tiny sliver of understanding for the previous owner. We learned that she did not have a chip, and later, that she had a tape worm. Spayed, dewormed, and happy, she now resides with Abe and Marilyn.

Marilyn sent us several pictures to show that she was settling in, making friends with the dog, Ellie, and cat Lando and sleeping happily in Marilyn’s lap.



Hester Sleeping at Marilyn's feet with Ellie



Hester Sleeping in Marilyn's Lap

[Check out the album of Hester pictures online.](#)