



Turtle! Flathead snake! Frogs! Lizard over here! TIMBER RATTLESNAKE!

Each time a species was called out, I quickly ran over to see what was spotted. I was so anxious to find any species that I had never seen before in person. However, I didn't have much luck two weeks ago, especially in comparison to the Wildlife Department wildlife diversity biologists with me. I am a very competitive person, so I wanted to find as many species as I could in our allotted time for the first evening of the reptile and amphibian survey we were conducting on Cross Timbers Wildlife Management Area. Unfortunately, that didn't happen.

I knew there were many species at my fingertips, right under my nose. But why wasn't I seeing anything that they were finding? Obviously they have more experience than I do, but that's not a good enough excuse. I wanted to find some kind of snake, a skink, something!



*Timber rattlesnake spotted at Cross Timbers WMA during a reptile and amphibian survey in July. Photo by Darrin Hill*

Often, as a wise mentor once noted to me, we tend to only see what we know.

So is that it? I don't know every species that could potentially be seen on Cross Timbers, so I don't know what to look for during the survey? In a way, it makes sense because each species has behaviors, sounds, and habitats that make it that much easier to find if you know some simple characteristics.