

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, March 8, 2017
Texas AgriLife Extension Building
21017 County Road 171
Angleton, Texas 77515-8903**



8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Snack Team: Don Sabathier, Tom Morris, Candace and Leo Novak, John Minkert, Kim Richardson
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	General Meeting and Nature Notes Nature Notes: George Bettinger (<i>Vibrio vulnificus</i>) <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour volunteer time</i>
10:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Program: Ghost Crabs Speaker: Mike Mullenweg - Lead Interpreter, Brazoria County Parks Department



Mike Mullenweg is the Lead Interpreter/Events & Trails Coordinator for the Brazoria County Parks Department. He is a certified Texas Master Naturalist and a member of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. He received Master Naturalist training as a member of the Texas Mid-Coast Chapter

Mike holds an M.S. degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies from the University of North Texas and a B.A. in Communications from Stephen F. Austin State University.

Prior to joining BCPD Mike has had an extensive career in natural resources management:

- **Program Coordinator**, Lower Colorado River Authority
- **Manager**, Natural Science Center, Matagorda Bay Nature Park.
- **Naturalist**, Parks and Wildlife Department
- **Park Interpreter** and Natural Resource Specialist, TPWD

Brazoria County Parks Department is based in Angleton Texas. BCBD operates ten parks, 23 miles of sandy beaches, 21 boat ramps, two RV campgrounds, historical homes, interpretive centers, day use facilities, playgrounds, a swimming pool, horseshoe and volleyball pits, and picnic areas. The Department also offers meeting room, cabin, dormitory, pavilion, and chapel rentals.



Ghost crabs are semiterrestrial crabs of the subfamily *Ocypodinae*. They are so named because of their ability to blend into the sandy beaches and dunes in which they live. Six strong legs are capable of carrying Ghost crabs along at speeds up to 10 mph, allowing them to disappear quickly from sight (yet another reason for the name).

During the day, they spend most of their time housekeeping and digging their burrows. Extending from the carapace, or top section of exoskeleton, are two black eyes that are able to see 360 degrees simultaneously; however, they are unable to see directly overhead. You can often spot ghost crabs at night, which is when they feed on other crabs, clams, lizards, insects and detritus.

Characteristics of the subfamily include one claw being larger than the other, thick and elongated eyestalks, and a box-like body. The differences in claw sizes, however, are not as marked as in male fiddler crabs. The subfamily includes 22 species in two genera.



Ghost Crab, Padre Island National Seashore
Public domain photo by Tracy Parris/National Park Service.