



# Chapter News

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Chapter News is published by Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter.

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The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Texas Master Naturalist programs serve all people without regard to socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MIKE



Fellow Members:  
Here we are in the most diverse and bountiful time of the year. Birds returning, butterflies, trees leafing, wildflowers everything we are about is happening around us now

Migration Celebration is upon us. DEEP and INEOS are in full swing. Library programs and Spring Fling are starting. There is literally someone or some event seeking your precious spare time every day.

Give of yourself as you can and most importantly enjoy what you are able to give. If you wear yourself out or don't take time to enjoy what you are helping with then it will become a burden.

We must first treat ourselves to the splendor that Mother Nature has provided for us and THEN we can enthusiastically share this with others. Don't lose the passion that brought you to the Cradle of Texas Chapter to start with.

We now have in Jami's office in the AgriLIFE building several books that were donated by Shirley Dodson in memory of Carl and Patty Clements in memory of Charlie. These are available for members to check out and take home. We thank Shirley and Patty for the fine gesture on behalf of their husbands

One last thing in the "you don't know till you ask category." I took some pictures of what I thought was an American Bumblebee last week. To confirm this I sent a picture and inquiry to Michael Warriner at the TPWD Invertebrate Biologist Wildlife Diversity Program who has the [texasbumblebees.com](http://texasbumblebees.com) website. He replied: "Yep, no doubt about it, that's an American bumblebee. Looking at my historical data, the last time the species was formerly documented from Brazoria County was 11/14/1980. That record is based on a specimen at the Texas A&M University Insect Collection. Now reconfirmed 33 years later, cool!"

He added that this summer he would be glad to come give our chapter a lesson in collecting specimens. So, watch for news of a class later on.

Enjoy the last cool days before summer takes a grip and HAVE FUN!

—Mike

Mike Mullins [mcmprm@embarqmail.com](mailto:mcmprm@embarqmail.com)



American bumblebee

Photo: Mike Mullins

## Upcoming events

### April 1 — April 30

Quintana Spring Fling  
Approved for Volunteer Time  
<http://tmn-cot.org/Calendar/SpringFling.pdf>

### Wednesday, April 3, 8:30 AM

Intern Training Class  
Columbia Bottomlands with Mike Lange at Hudson Woods  
[http://tmn-cot.org/Intern\\_Training/index.html#schedule.pdf](http://tmn-cot.org/Intern_Training/index.html#schedule.pdf)

### Wednesday, April 3, 10:00 AM

TMN-COT Board Meeting  
Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Building, Angleton  
Approved for Volunteer Time  
See calendar for details <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar>

### Wednesday, April 10, 8:30 AM

General Meeting, Advanced Training, and Intern Training  
Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Building, Angleton  
Subject: *Ichthyology 101*  
Speaker: John O'Connell, Marine Resources Agent  
Approved for 1.00 Hour Volunteer Time  
Approved for Advanced Training and Intern Training  
<http://tmn-cot.org/Advanced/2013-04-General-Meeting.pdf>

### Friday, April 12, 5:30 PM — 8:30 PM

Migration Celebration Kickoff Dinner  
Freeport RiverPlace <http://goo.gl/maps/gqyUb>  
Volunteers needed! Approved for Volunteer time.  
See page 4 for details about volunteering..  
<http://migrationcelebration.org/Friday.html>

### Saturday, April 13, 8:00 — 12:00 AM

Water Conference at Munson Park  
Conditionally approved for AT or VT  
<http://tinyurl.com/waterconf>

### Saturday, April 13, 9:00 — 11:00 AM

Birds & Bottomland Blitz  
Bird Migration with Tom Morris and Cecilia Riley at GCBO  
Conditionally approved for Advanced Training.  
**See sidebar at right**

### Wednesday, April 17, 8:30 AM

Intern Training Class  
*Beaches, Dunes, Estuaries* at Stahlman Park  
[http://tmn-cot.org/Intern\\_Training/index.html#schedule.pdf](http://tmn-cot.org/Intern_Training/index.html#schedule.pdf)

### Saturday, April 20, 9:00 AM — 6:00 PM

Migration Celebration  
San Bernard NWR <http://goo.gl/maps/SfDRi>  
Volunteers needed! Approved for Volunteer time.  
See page 3 for details about volunteering.  
<http://migrationcelebration.org/Saturday.html>

### Sunday, April 21, 12:00 PM — 5:00 PM

Migration Celebration  
San Bernard NWR <http://goo.gl/maps/SfDRi>  
Volunteers needed! Approved for Volunteer time.  
See below for details about volunteering.  
<http://migrationcelebration.org/Sunday.html>

### Wednesday, April 24, 8:30 AM

Intern Training Class  
*Birds and Bird Migration* at Sea Center Texas  
[http://tmn-cot.org/Intern\\_Training/index.html#schedule.pdf](http://tmn-cot.org/Intern_Training/index.html#schedule.pdf)

### Wednesday, May 1, 8:30 AM

Intern Training Class  
*Herpetology* with David Heinicke at Brazos Bend State Park  
[http://tmn-cot.org/Intern\\_Training/index.html#schedule.pdf](http://tmn-cot.org/Intern_Training/index.html#schedule.pdf)

### Wednesday, May 1, 10:00 AM

Board meeting at Agrilife Building  
Approved for Volunteer Time  
See calendar for details <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar>  
Approved for Volunteer Time

### This page does not include:

- BCLS Library Program schedule. See calendar <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar/>
- DEEP School Program schedule. See calendar <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar/>
- INEOS School Program Schedule. See [http://tmn-cot.org/INEOS/2012-13\\_Schedule.pdf](http://tmn-cot.org/INEOS/2012-13_Schedule.pdf)

## Birds and Bottomland Blitz

April 9, 9:00 AM

by Dave Brandes

Birds from all over the world flock to the Texas Coast this time of year to witness the spring bird migration and our area sits right in the middle of it.



Come discover more about this phenomenon with

our host Cecilia Riley, Executive Director of The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. We are so fortunate to have both the Central Flyway and the circum-gulf Mississippi Flyway birds stop in our area to feed and gather their strength to continue their journey north.

There are few better places to see these migrants than GCBO's 36-acre headquarters and none better at showing them to us than Director Riley.

We'll meet Saturday April 13, 9:00am at GCBO and expect about a two-hour program. You won't want to miss this!

Map to GCBO: <http://goo.gl/maps/65mUU>

All Birds and Bottomland Blitz events:

- Count as Advanced Training provided that you haven't had the same subject in the past two years.
- Count as Volunteer Time if you assist with the planning and execution of the event.

APRIL 2013						
<small>www.freebookmarks calendars.com</small>						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**Texas Master Naturalist Program**  
**Cradle of Texas Chapter**  
**General Meeting, Intern Training, and Advanced Training**  
**Wednesday, April 10, 2013**  
**AgriLife Building, Angleton**

<b>8:30 AM - 9:00 AM</b>	<b>Fun and Fellowship</b> Refreshment Team: Leo Novak, Ed Johnson, Pete Romfh, Peggy Romfh
<b>9:00 AM - 9:50 AM</b>	<b>General Meeting</b> <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour Volunteer Time.</i>
<b>10:00 AM - 11:30 AM</b>	<b>Program:</b> Ichthyology 101 <b>Speaker:</b> John P. O'Connell, Brazoria County Coastal Marine Resources and Sea Grant Agent, <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <i>This training is approved for Advanced Training. The number of approved hours will be announced at the meeting and will be available after the meeting at <a href="http://tmn-cot.org/Advanced/index.html">http://tmn-cot.org/Advanced/index.html</a></i> </div>

John P. O'Connell has been the Brazoria County Extension Agent – Coastal and Marine Resources, Texas Sea Grant College Program and Texas AgriLife Extension Services since April of 2012. He serves as the Texas A&M AgriLife adviser to the Cradle of Texas Chapter. The Texas Sea Grant Program works in partnership with federal and state government and universities across the state to improve the understanding, wise use and stewardship of Texas coastal and marine resources.

John earned a MS and a BS degree from Texas A&M University. His coursework focused on aquaculture, fisheries management, and fish nutrition. He published a thesis on "Effects of Dietary Calcium and Vitamin D3 on Weight Gain and Mineral Composition of Blue Tilapia in Low-Calcium Water."

Previously, John served as County Extension Agent – Coastal and Marine Resources in Matagorda and Calhoun Counties, Extension Agent with the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, and Farm Manager at the Aquaculture Center at Texas A&M University.

As part of the Texas Sea Grant College Program, John is also the Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program (MRRP) Coordinator for the State of Texas

MRRP is a statewide, volunteer-led effort to reduce monofilament in the environment by educating the public about the problems caused by monofilament line and encouraging recycling through a network of line recycling bins and drop-off locations.

In January of 2013, John was one of nine team members that were awarded the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's 2012 Superior Service Award.

The team was given the award in honor of their work with the shrimp fishing industry to implement the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAAF) program. As a result of their work, Texas shrimp fishermen earned \$9 million in TAAF cash benefits.

Recently, John spoke at the Brazoria County Historical Museum on the history of the shrimping industry along the Gulf Coast and the art of making shrimp nets. In October of 2012, he provided advanced training at the TMN-COT meeting with a program topic of *Bats: The Most Misunderstood Mammal*.





## Membership Report

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Chair

At the end of March, eighteen COT members have turned in 1247 hours of Volunteer Time. Two more chapter members have recertified for 2013: Ed Barrios and Mike Mullins. Good job guys!!

## Turtle Patrol Coordinator for 2013

By Mickey Dufilho and Neal McLain



**Danielle Robisheaux**

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges has hired Danielle Robisheaux as Turtle Patrol Coordinator for the 2013 Sea Turtle breeding season.

The Sea Turtle Patrol is an ongoing project sponsored by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project is administered by San Bernard NWR staff.

In past years, the Fish and Service has hired a temporary employee for this project. However, the Service was not able to fund this position for the 2013 season, so Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges has provided the needed funds.

Danielle Robisheaux holds an Associates degree in Science and is currently a student at Brazosport College finishing up lower level courses in preparation for transferring to the University of Houston to major in Environmental Science. She is also employed at Brazosport College as supplemental instructor in Biology to teach students skills to effectively learn Biology.

Danielle attended training in late March to prepare her for her role as Turtle Patrol Coordinator and will begin in mid-April to coordinate volunteer beach-patrol "spotters" to patrol the beaches looking for turtles, turtle nests and other signs of turtle activity

TMN-COT members please note: participation in this program as spotter is approved for Volunteer Time. Further information about volunteering will be announced by a separate email message when available.

Spotters may claim Volunteer Time as follows:

- Volunteer time for all time spent on patrol or in spotter training.
- Round-trip travel time required for beach patrol or training.

Please code your timesheet "USFWS."

## Migration Celebration April 12, 20, and 21

Migration Celebration is an annual spring nature festival presented each spring by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges. Many Cradle of Texas Chapter members participate in the planning and execution of the celebration.

Migration Celebration 2013 kicks off with a fundraising dinner at Freeport RiverPlace on April 12, followed by a two days of events at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge on April 20-21. Our guest speaker will be at the kickoff dinner will Keynote Speaker Dr. Felipe Chavez, Director of Conservation Programs at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, speaking on **"Whooping Crane Ecology and Conservation History."**

Volunteers are needed and participation is approved for Volunteer Hours. This is a good opportunity to rack up some volunteer hours toward certification or recertification!

Volunteer positions are available for a wide variety of interests — everything from assistant cook to parking attendant and tour guide to information booth host. If you'd like to volunteer, contact Ed Barrios:

Home: 979-297-1815

Cell: 979-415-4998

Email: [ed77566@comcast.net](mailto:ed77566@comcast.net)

: For further information about Migration Celebration check the following sources:

- **Official Migration Celebration Website.**  
<http://migrationcelebration.org/>  
Lots of information about events with daily event schedules,
- **Migration Celebration for Master Naturalists.**  
<http://tinyurl.com/Attach-2-MC>  
More information about:
  - Kickoff dinner
  - Photo Contest
- **Volunteer Handbook.**  
<http://tinyurl.com/MCVH-2013>  
Information specifically for volunteers:
  - Emergency Procedures
  - Volunteer Services Agreement
  - Information Booth Instructions
  - Kayaking on Cedar Lake Creek
  - Kayaking release form
  - Marsh Buggy Rides
  - Junior Naturalist Passport Instructions
  - Severe Weather Policy
- **Photos of Migration Celebration 2011**  
<http://tinyurl.com/MC-photos-2011>  
Lots of photos from Migration celebration 2011. If you've never participated in Migration Celebration before, this site will give you an idea of the wide range of events planned for Migration Celebration 2013.

**Be sure to read this right now!**

## Photo Gallery Monthly Highlights

By Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

Several new species have been added to the TMN-COT/Friends Photo Gallery web site this month. There are over 800 photos currently on the site, and new photos are always welcome from TMN members.

March in Texas showed us plant species with berries and nuts still providing winter fuel for birds and animals and new plant growth and flowers bringing back color to the landscape.

New species added this month include Gulf Croton, Yaupon, Possumhaw, Entireleaf Paintbrush (Texas Paintbrush), Crowpoison (False Garlic), Roadside Blue-eyed Grass, Water Lettuce, Giant Cutgrass (Southern Wild Rice), Bushy Bluestem, Hairy Leafcup (Bearsfoot), Pink Evening Primrose (Mexican Evening Primrose) and Texas Thistle.

Species added from San Bernard NWR and Otter Slough included Southern dewberry, Sweet Acacia (huisache), Texas Vervain, and Longbract Wild Indigo.

Species added from the Lake Jackson area included Carolina buckthorn, Common elderberry, Roughleaf dogwood, Sugarberry, and Western soapberry.

Non-plant species added included a Warty Anemone, Tricolor Anemone and Flat-clawed Hermit crab (all seen by the Beach Project Intern Team on Quintana Beach) and photos of a Giant Leopard Moth, Double-Crested Cormorant, Sea Nettle, and Calico Crab.

A special thanks goes to Leo Novak for his contribution of plant photos this month and to Brenda Bowling, TPWD employee that created and supports the Texas Marine Species website, who helped with identification of marine species..

To see all the photos that have been posted to date, go to the new TMN-COT web site <http://tmn-cot.org/> and click on Photo Gallery. Please send new photo submissions to me at [peggyromfh@tmn-cot.org](mailto:peggyromfh@tmn-cot.org).



**Double-crested Cormorant**  
Photo: Pete Romfh



**Sweet Acacia (Huisache)**  
Photo: Pete Romfh



**Warty Anemone)**  
Photo: Dave Brandes



**Sea Nettle**  
Photo: Neal McLain



**Roadside Blue-eyed Grass**  
Photo: Peggy Romfh



**Western Soapberry**  
Photo: Leo Novak



## Feral Hog Reporting Program

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

COLLEGE STATION – Feral hog management experts need your help, said a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service associate who deals with the unwelcome critters.

“AgriLife Extension has developed an online feral hog reporting system, but for it to be successful, we need ongoing input from landowners and the general public,” said Jared Timmons.

Jared Timmons, who is based in San Marcos, said the system at <http://feralhogreports.tamu.edu/> is meant to document feral hog activity. The system, originally piloted beginning in 2009 in the Plum Creek Watershed in Caldwell and Hays counties, has just been made available statewide.

“This newly expanded reporting tool was developed to record two types of feral hog activity,” Timmons said. “One reporting method is the public report, which allows the general public – most likely motorists seeing hogs along the highway – to report feral hog sightings and activity. The other method solicits landowner input relating to feral hog damage and financial loss, and control measures conducted on their property.”

Timmons said feral hogs contribute to watershed pollution through wallowing and defecating in and around streams. This can increase E.coli bacteria, nutrients and sedimentation in the water bodies. Feral hogs not only pose a problem for water quality in the state, they also compete with wildlife and livestock for habitat, harbor endemic and exotic diseases, and transmit parasites to domestic livestock and humans. Their rooting, wallowing and other behaviors cause damage to pastures, cropland and wildlife habitats.

“The reporting system will be used to support AgriLife Extension’s outreach efforts and those of our watershed partnerships across the state,” Timmons said. “These partnerships include landowners and citizens, city and county officials, and state and federal agencies working together to protect water quality.

“The public and landowner reporting of feral hog sightings and/or signs of damage will help us locate areas of high activity and guide both management and educational efforts to reduce their impact to watersheds,” he said.

Timmons was recently joined by Mark Tyson in College Station who, like Timmons, is an AgriLife Extension associate hired to help address the burgeoning statewide feral hog problem. The men are tasked with providing technical assistance to landowners, by conducting site visits to assist in creating a feral hog management strategy specific to their property. They also provide watershed-based educational training to increase public knowledge of feral hog biology, behavior and management options.

Timmons is assigned to the Plum Creek, Geronimo and Alligator Creek, Gilleland Creek and Lower San Antonio River watersheds. These watersheds are in Caldwell, Comal, DeWitt, Goliad, Guadalupe, Hays, Karnes, Refugio, Travis, Victoria and Wilson counties.

Tyson’s area of responsibility involves Bastrop Bayou, Dickinson Bayou, Lake Houston Area Watersheds, San Bernard River Watershed and Upper Oyster Creek. These watersheds are in Austin, Brazoria, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Grimes, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Walker, Waller and Wharton counties.



Further information:

<http://feralhogreports.tamu.edu/>

Reporting form:

<http://feralhogreports.tamu.edu/public-report/>

Jared Timmons

254-485-4886

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Mark Tyson

979-845-4698

[mark.tyson@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:mark.tyson@ag.tamu.edu)

## TMN-COT on Facebook

by Angelika Fuller, Facebook Editor

This Social media is here to stay and our chapter is joining this method of communication through Facebook!

Rather than posting funny pictures of cats or Harlem shake videos (although these are not entirely out of the question), our page will attempt to keep our members informed about upcoming events and the outcome of past events, as well as shedding light on some of the latest environmental news.

Our Facebook page is a forum for our current members to share any interesting stories they may find and to generate thoughtful discussions. We also hope members of the public will find an interest in our page, thereby reaching potential interns. If you have a Facebook account, I encourage you to "Like" our page by going to <https://www.facebook.com/TMN.COT>.

When you click on the "Like" button, you will be able to interact with our page and posts from our page will appear in your News Feed so you are always up to date! Be sure to Like and Comment on our posts and Share our page with your friends! Feedback is always appreciated.

If you don't know a thing about Facebook and have an interest in changing that, talk to a board member. They are willing to help you or can direct you to someone who can. This is everyone's page so please check it out!

## 2012-2013 Winter Whooping Crane Survey Results

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Southwest Region.



**Whooping Cranes**  
Photo: USFWS  
Steve Sykes.

February 2013 — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Winter Whooping Crane Survey (survey) estimates there are a total of 279 whooping cranes, including 257 found within the primary wintering grounds and 22 beyond that area.

During December, Service personnel conducted seven surveys of the primary wintering grounds of the Arkansas-Wood Buffalo flock, the last remaining wild flock of whooping cranes. With the help of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Texas Whooper Watch and other observers, documented sightings during that same time frame suggest there were at least 22 additional whooping cranes found outside the primary wintering grounds.

Last year, the survey estimated a total of 267 whooping cranes in the wild, including 254 on the primary wintering grounds and 13 beyond.

Citation: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>

## TMN-COT training class at Brazos Bend State Park

Needville, Texas - March 20, 2013. David Heinicke, Park Naturalist at Brazos Bend State Park, hosted members of the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas 2013 Intern Class today.

Heinicke spoke to the class on the topic "Mammals of the Gulf Coast." Following his talk, Heinicke led the class on a walking tour through the park.

TMN-COT Intern Training Director Ed Johnson accompanied the class. Johnson reported that "It was a beautiful day! Hope you enjoy the pic from my little camera."



From left; David Heinicke, Peggy Romfh, Dee Eddins, Patrick Wilson, Patsy Lepper, Denis Mudderman, Pete Romfh, Roger Allen, Dick Schaffhause, Becky McClendon, Chris Kneupper, Ed Johnson.



## Attachments

This issue of *Chapter News* contains one attachment: Minutes of the March General Meeting  
[http://tmn-cot.org/Newsletters/2013-04\\_Attach-1\\_Minutes.pdf](http://tmn-cot.org/Newsletters/2013-04_Attach-1_Minutes.pdf)

Reminders about the April General Meeting:

- The refreshment team includes Leo Novak, Ed Johnson, Pete Romfh, Peggy Romfh, Kathy Speights
- The 9:00 AM meeting is approved for 1.00 hour of Volunteer Time.
- Training provided at this meeting is approved for Advanced Training hours. The number of approved hours will be announced at the meeting, and will be available after the meeting at  
<http://tmn-cot.org/Advanced/index.html>

<b>CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS</b>	
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Vice President/Program	Peggy Romfh, Houston
Secretary	Marty Cornell, Lake Jackson
Treasurer	John Marshall, Lake Jackson
State Representative	Ed Barrios, Lake Jackson
Past President	Barbara Burkhardt, Lake Jackson
Training Director	Ed Johnson, Angleton
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Advanced Training Chair	Tom Morris, Lake Jackson
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