



Chapter News

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A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MIKE



Greetings all:

I recently attended the Prairie Restoration Roundup at the Texas City Prairie Preserve. We learned of the different techniques used to restore native grasses from

seeding and transplanting by the Galveston chapter, seed drilling by the Wildlife Habitat Foundation and bale busting by the USFWS.

Thomas Adams from the Mid-coast NWR Complex office of the USFWS was one of the presenters talking about efforts at Eagle Nest Lake Prairie and by Boling.

After the presentation he and I talked about projects they had in the Mid-coast region:

Brazoria NWR
San Bernard NWR
Boggy NWR

He told me that later this year, possibly in December, he was wanting to rescue several hundred Little Bluestem plants from the San Bernard refuge and move them to the Eagle Nest Lake Prairie.

This will be an interesting project. One team at the existing plants digging and putting on a trailer and another at the site unloading and planting. Thomas estimated about four hours on each end. Watch for more details later.

Turtle patrol has wrapped up for this year with three rescues that were transported to Galveston for rehabilitation and four Kemp's Ridley nests found and excavated.

Upcoming: Bonus Advanced Training on Wednesday Sept. 18th, Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza, Smith Point Raptor Count, more library programs. Plenty of things to do and help with.

Finally, chapter member Fred Lewis has informed volunteers that help with the INEOS program that the program is closing. Fred and Neeta Shingler plus numerous volunteers introduced the third graders of Angleton schools to the wonders of the outdoors and nature. Thank you Fred and Neeta and volunteers. Job well done!

—Mike

Mike Mullins is the President of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. He can be reached at mcmprm@embarqmail.com

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Chair

As of July 31, 46 members have submitted timesheets. For 2013, chapter members have submitted 5489 hrs of VT. Members to be recognized at the August General Meeting for recertifying for 2013 include: John Marshall, Roy Morgan, Pam West and Shelia Williams. Thanks to all that have met their timesheet submission responsibilities.

TEXAS INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM ESTABLISHED AT UT-AUSTIN

A Texas Invasive Species Program has been established at the University of Texas-Austin with a \$2.7 Million grant from Lee and Ramona Bass Foundation.

The six-year grant will enable researchers at the College of Natural Sciences' Brackenridge Field Laboratory (BFL) to study the basic biology of exotic invasive pests in their native lands and seek novel and sustainable approaches to countering problem organisms that threaten biodiversity in the central and southern parts of Texas. See **Attachment 2** for the story.

http://tmn-cot.org/Newsletters/2013-08_Attach-2.pdf

Chapter News is published by Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Contact us at

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The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by the Texas A&M 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.

Upcoming Events

This list does not include BCLS Library Program schedule. See calendar <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar/>

August 1 — November 15

Smith Point Raptor Migration Count
Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area
Chambers County

See calendar for details <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar>
Approved for Volunteer Time

Wednesday, August 7, 10:00 AM -12:00 PM

TMN-COT Board Meeting
AgriLife Building, Angleton
See calendar for details <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar>

Wednesday, August 14, 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

General Meeting and Advanced Training
Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Building, Angleton
Program: Sea Turtles/Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles
Speaker: Tasha Metz, PhD, Instructor, Texas A&M Galveston
Approved for 1.00 Volunteer Time + Advanced Training
See Page 3 for details

Saturday August 17, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Monthly Bird Banding at GCBO
See calendar for details <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar>

Wednesday, September 4, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

TMN-COT Board Meeting
AgriLIFE Extension Building, Angleton
See calendar for details <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar>

Wednesday, September 11, 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

General Meeting and Advanced Training
Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Building, Angleton
Program: Big Cats of Texas
Speaker: David Heinicke, Park Naturalist, Brazos Bend State Park, TPWD
Approved for 1.00 Volunteer Time + Advanced Training
See calendar for details <http://tmn-cot.com/Calendar>

Wednesday, September 18, 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Bonus Advanced Training
Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Building, Angleton
Program: See sidebar at right
Approved for up to 3.00 hours Advanced Training

Smith Point Raptor Migration Count



HawkWatch International and GCBO first teamed up in 1997 to begin full-season monitoring of the Gulf Coast fall raptor migration at Smith Point, which lies at the end of a peninsula that juts into Galveston Bay. Full-season counts have since ranged between 25,000-115,000 migrants of up to 24 species, with Broad-winged Hawks comprising 60-80% of the total. Other abundant species include Mississippi Kites, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, and American Kestrels.

The site is located in the Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area administered by TPWD. Observers work from atop a 20-ft. tower situated at the southwestern tip of the Smith Point peninsula.

This year's count runs August 1 to November 15.

Volunteers are needed. To volunteer, contact Susan Heath at GCBO.

- Email: sheath@gcbo.org
- Phone: 979-480-0999.

This event is approved for Volunteer Time if you participate as an observer. This event is not approved for AT or IT. Timesheet code **"GCBO."**

Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/0UJs>

Special Bonus AT in September

Wednesday, September 18, 2013

One week after our regular General Meeting. Topics include:

- **Topic 1: Feral Hogs** 09:00 AM – 10:30 AM
Speaker: Mark Tyson, Texas A&M AgriLife
- **Topic 2: Native Bees** 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Speaker: Michael D. Warriner, TPWD

Further information at:

<http://tmn-cot.org/Calendar/2013-09-18.pdf>

Timesheet code: **"COT"**

AUGUST 2013 <small>printablecalendars.resources2u.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	31

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, August 14, 2013
AgriLife Building, Angleton**



8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Refreshment Team: Georgia Monnerat, Michelle Hague, Kirby Repstein
9:00 AM - 9:50 AM	General Meeting <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour Volunteer Time.</i>
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Program: Sea Turtles/Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles Speaker: Tasha L. Metz, Lecturer, Marine Biology Department, Texas A&M University at Galveston <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><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 http://tmn-cot.org/Advanced/index.html</i></p> </div>



Dr. Tasha L. Metz is a Marine Biology Lecturer and Research Associate at Texas A&M University at Galveston where she teaches the Introductory Biology courses and conducts research on sea turtles and coastal fishes. She is originally from the New Orleans area and attended Texas Christian University where she earned her BS and MS degrees in Biology in 1995 and 1997, respectively. She received her PhD. in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University in 2004 under the advisement of Dr. André M. Landry, Jr.



Dr. Metz has over ten years of experience conducting sampling for sea turtles, elasmobranchs and finfish in coastal waters of Texas and Louisiana and has been involved in the capture and processing of over 300 sea turtles, recently including twenty green turtles exhibiting fibropapilloma tumors

Her dissertation research focused on factors influencing Kemp's ridley sea turtle abundance and distribution in nearshore waters of the northwestern Gulf of Mexico, namely the effects of nesting activity, environmental conditions, prey availability and predators.

Dr. Metz's current research focuses on in-water dynamics and satellite telemetry of sea turtles along the Texas coast, with particular emphasis on green turtles in south Texas and Kemp's ridleys on the upper Texas coast. In addition to her in-water research and satellite tracking of green turtles, loggerheads, and Kemp's ridleys, she has managed sea turtle nesting patrols on Bolivar Peninsula for the past two years. Her experience with sea turtle research techniques includes the collection of morphometric data and tissue samples, as well as the application of flipper and PIT tags. She has attended seven Symposia on Sea Turtle Conservation and Biology and the three Texas Bays and Estuaries Meeting to present her research.

Turtle Patrol Report

By Danielle Robisheaux, Turtle Patrol Coordinator
Photos by Patty Brinkmeyer and Neal McLain



Danielle Robisheaux

Congratulations to everyone on another great sea turtle patrol season this year! During the 2013 season, we rescued three sea turtles, a green, a Kemp's Ridley, and a loggerhead. We transported them to the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Program in Galveston for rehabilitation.

We also located and excavated four Kemp's Ridley nests, three on Matagorda Peninsula and one at Quintana Beach County Park.

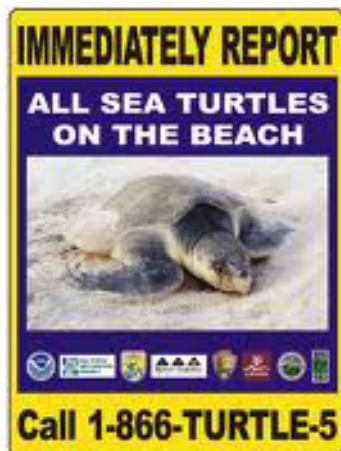
A special thanks to our volunteer patrol spotters. According to my records, our patrol crews logged 279.5 hours and patrolled 1,274.6 km (792 miles) of beach this season. Great Job everybody!

We know that your time is valuable, and the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge and Friends of the Brazoria Refuges thanks each of you for your efforts this season. We hope to see you all again next spring.

If you have a chance, take a trip to Padre Island National Seashore to witness a hatchling release. We encourage those little hatchlings to come back and nest in Texas when they reach reproductive age.

Editor's note: 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. In this position, she coordinated volunteer beach-patrol spotters to patrol the beaches looking for turtles, turtle nests and other signs of turtle activity.



Robisheaux measures a nest as San Bernard NWR Assistant Manager Curtis Jones looks on.



Eggs are removed from the nest and placed in sand for transport to Padre Island for hatching.



Spotter Mike Mullins on Matagorda beach

Photo Gallery Monthly Highlights – August Newsletter

By Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

Delightful additions to the Photo Gallery this month are several species that grace the backyard of Barbara and Ellis Burkhardt. With a mix of native and introduced (non-native) plant species, they have created a garden that showcases both a wide-variety of flowering plants as well as a garden that provides habitat and food for bird species such as hummingbirds and butterflies. Both migrating and year-round resident birds and butterflies are abundant.

Native plants in their garden added to the Photo Gallery include

American holly, Coral honeysuckle, Scarletbush (Hummingbird bush), Blue Wild Indigo, Pipevine, Purple Clematis, Blackeyed Susan, and Texas Coneflower. Non-native (introduced species) include Barbados Cherry, Cigar Flower, Cuphea species, Pentas, Mexican Bush Sage, Mountain Sage, Red Bird of Paradise, Porterweed, and Spiderflower.

Other plant species added to the galleries this month include small coastal germander, bald cypress, scouringrush horsetail, evening rainlily, and woolly tidestromia. Other

species added include clapper rail and egg casings and juveniles from the state mollusk, the lightning whelk. The juvenile whelks are about 3 mm long; they were found within the egg casings. Note that several members reported seeing rain lilies after the rain showers seen along the coast in July.

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. Send new photo submissions to peggyromfh@tmn-cot.org.



Purple Clematis



Pipevine



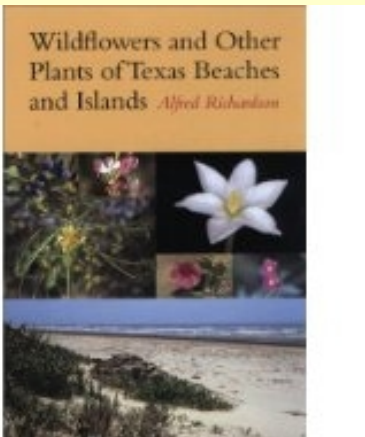
Lightning Whelk Egg Casings and Juveniles

Photos by P&P Romfh



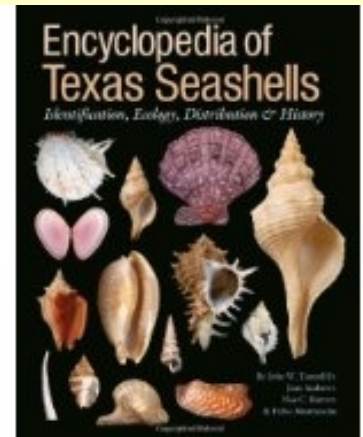
Clapper Rail

Recommended Book



>100 plants described in book already photographed locally.

Recommended Book



Great photos and descriptions of every Texas shell

Food for thought: Does non-native mean non-native to the specific eco-system, non-native to Texas, or non-native to the lower 48 states of the USA? *Non-native = introduced = alien = exotic = non-indigenous.*



Dedication of the James Albert "Al" Clarke Shelter



The Shelter

James Albert "Al" Clarke, passed away in 2010 after a 35-year career at The Dow Chemical Company, where he focused on resins research.

Al was a dedicated naturalist and nature photographer. He was a member of the TMN-COT Class of 2001.

Al Clarke's family donated funds to Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges for the construction of a shelter at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. The shelter was recently dedicated at a ceremony attended by several members of Al's family.



Photo: Tom Morris

Al Clarke, 1993



Tom Schneider, Stephen Clarke

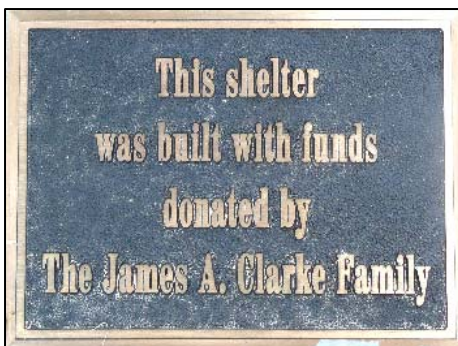
Al's son Stephen (above right), is an Entomologist with the US Forest Service, based in Lufkin, Texas. He was guest speaker at our meeting in August 2007, speaking on *Exotic Insects of Southeastern Forests*.

<http://txmn.org/cradle/files/2010/07/TP-ExoticInsects.pdf>

Al loved hiking and bicycling, exploring many of the national and state parks across the country. Al was also active in community service, working with the Brazosport Symphony Orchestra, Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue, Meals on Wheels, and the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge.



Clockwise from left: Cindy Clarke Krueger, Stephen Clarke, Ed Barrios, Cathy Clarke Standard.



The Clarke Family at the Shelter after the dedication

In Memoriam: William Michael Leebron II



Captain Mike

Mike Leebron passed away on July 6, 2013, at his home in East Columbia. Although Mike was not a member of the Cradle of Texas Chapter, he passionately supported efforts to study, document, and conserve natural resources and to preserve our historic heritage.

Mike was a man of many talents. As an attorney, he held a J.D. from Baylor University Law School and for many years he pursued a successful legal career. At the time of his death, although semi-retired, he was a partner with the Houston law firm Fibich

Hampton Leebron Briggs & Josephson, L.L.P, handling workers' compensation and personal injury cases.

After retirement, he pursued his passion for historic preservation by purchasing and renovating historic structures. His home in East Columbia is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark known as the *Nash-Wright House*, cited by the Texas Historical Commission as "One of oldest houses surviving in [the] Stephen F. Austin colony town of Bell's Landing."

A few years ago, Mike purchased an abandoned paddlewheel riverboat that had previously operated on the San Bernard River. He moved it to drydock in Freeport for extensive repairs, then moved it to the Brazos River and rechristened it the *Brazos Belle* (not to be confused with the original *Brazos Belle*, formerly based in Waco, that was sold for scrap in 2008).

Mike held a United States Coast Guard Charter Boat Captain's license and occasionally piloted the *Belle* on inland waterways. For charter tours, he usually hired a pilot, leaving him free to meet with his guests

. In 2012, several COT Chapter members joined Captain Mike on the *Belle* for a trip along the Brazos River.

In connection with his purchase of the *Belle*, Mike also built *Belle's Landing* as a waiting area for *Brazos Belle* passengers. *Belle's Landing* also serves the community as restaurant, bar, and country music venue. In keeping with Mike's passion for historic preservation, the main building is a recycled barn fitted with salvaged architectural building materials.

A celebration of Mike's life was held at Parador Houston on July 11, 2013.



***Belle's Landing*.** The bollards flanking the entrance were recovered from Boston Harbor.



The *Brazos Belle* at her home dock on the Brazos River in East Columbia.



A group of COT Chapter members aboard the *Brazos Belle*, April 2012.

July AT Session - Cephalopod Anatomy

TMN-COT members got an “up-close” look at squid anatomy during the July meeting. The training session (presented by Brittany Zepeda from Sea Center Texas) included specimens for dissection. Eager (and a few not-so-eager) naturalists shared two dozen foot-long squid and soon had each one carefully spread out for examination.



One of the highlights of the session was creating a quill “pen” from the squid’s gladius and writing messages with squid ink.

Some members enjoyed lunch after the meeting at a local Italian restaurant where fried calamari (squid) was enjoyed.

TMN Outreach – Freeport’s KidFest 2013



The old town square in Freeport was the site for this year’s Freeport KidFest. TMN-COT members set up displays in the Freeport Marine Museum for the kids to enjoy. A large collection of seashells and marine skeletons was part of the “Please Touch” display. Children and adults listened carefully to hear “the sound of the ocean” in various large shells and were amazed at the size of a sperm whale’s tooth.



Periodically the hall was filled with the sound of a conch shell “horn” while children tried their hand at catching plastic “fish” and examining live crabs in the “touch tank”.

Photos and articles by Pete Romfh

INEOS Wildlife Program History

By Fred Lewis, TMN Liaison to INEOS Wildlife Program

Editor's note: As Mike Mullins reported in his message on Page 1 of this issue, the INEOS EE program has come to an end. Following is message sent by Fred Lewis, our liaison with the program, explaining the reasons for this decision. .

We struggled in 2011-2012 and really struggled in 2012-2013. We are getting very few new people from TMN and no new people from INEOS. That combined with the attrition we have seen in our core TMN volunteers over the last two years has made it impossible to guarantee we will have two instructors for every class.

In 2012-2013, we seldom had more than six people. This would require two or more of the classes to be presented by a single instructor. I know the core instructors that will be released when the INEOS program ends will be greatly appreciated by the other programs they will be able to devote their time and efforts to.

Our core TMN volunteers were the best, most reliable group I have ever worked with. You could set you watch by them. However, we have experienced a loss of core volunteers and have not been able to replace them.

The INEOS program was always volunteer intensive, that is why we could never expand it past the three schools in Angleton that we started with. There were simply not enough Fridays or volunteers during the school year grow it, and now not enough volunteers to support it.

It was a very had call for Netta and me to make, but it had to be made.

Beach Cleanup – September 28 Volunteers Needed

Again this year, the Brazoria County Parks Department is sponsoring the annual fall beach cleanup day. Volunteers are needed at Surfside and Quintana. Come on September 28, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon.

The Parks Department will furnish trash bags, inventory sheets, and disposable gloves

Volunteers should bring appropriate clothing (hat, enclosed shoes, gloves), sunscreen, water, insect repellent, and a willing attitude.

Free lunch for all volunteers!

See details and maps at:

<http://tmn-cot.org/Calendar/BeachCleanup-2013-09-28.pdf>

Want to contribute an article?

See an interesting bird? Shoot a photo that you're particularly proud of? Got a question about a species identification? Just want to share some news about the environment?

Write it up! We're always on the lookout for interesting articles or photos for *Chapter News*. Send your contributions to: Mary Helen Israel, Editor, Chapter News
mh-israel@sbcglobal.net

Drift Cards

Posted on Captain's bLOG by John P. O'Connell

Editor's note: "Captains bLOG" is a regular feature published by Marine Agent John P. O'Connell. The following article was posted on July 9, 2013

Drift cards used to help researcher understand surface currents.

Texas A&M University researcher, Dr. Joseph Kuehl is asking the public's help! The Gulf Integrated Spill Research consortium is researching the surface currents of the Gulf of Mexico. In the coming months, bright yellow drift cards will be released into the Gulf of Mexico. These environmentally friendly cards will eventually be washed ashore. This is where the help of the public is needed!

If you find one of more of these cards while visiting a gulf beach report it to the researcher. The more cards that are reported the better the data. Leading to a better understanding of surface currents. Each card will be numbered. If found keep the card. Don't return it to the water. Use the contact information on the bottom of the card to report the card number, date and location.

DRIFTCARD – Please read

This drifcard was released in the Gulf of Mexico as part of an experiment to look at current patterns by researchers at Texas A&M University. Please use below contacts and give date, card number and where it was found as accurately as possible. Thanks for your cooperation.

TARJETA – Leído por favor

Esta tarjeta ha sido dejada a la deriva en el Golfo de México como parte de un experimento para estudiar las corrientes marinas. Esta tarjeta pertenece a un grupo de investigadores de Texas A&M University U.S.A. Si es encontrada por favor pongase en contacto a la dirección indicada en la parte inferior de esta tarjeta favor de ingresar la fecha, el número de tarjeta y el lugar de hallazgo. Muchas gracias por su cooperación

9876

Telephone: 979 845 1231 • Email: driftcard@geos.tamu.edu
Online: <http://gisr.tamu.edu/research/222-drift-cards>

Drift Card

John Gordy Appointed County Ag Agent

By Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

John Gordy has been appointed to the position of Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Brazoria County Office. The appointment was approved by the County Commissioner's Court at its meeting of April 09, 2013

As Ag Extension Agent, John provides consultation and educational programs in the areas of livestock, crops, and forage production. He also provides six annual certification training and testing sessions for the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Private Pesticide Applicator License.

A number of re-certification opportunities (CEU credits) are also made available through the Brazoria County Extension Office for current TDA license holders. The Urban Rancher Landowner Education Series is made available to new landowners throughout the year.

John can be reached at the Brazoria County Extension Office
281-756-1564 ext 110
979-388-1564 ext 110
979-864-1564 ext 110

john.gordy@ag.tamu.edu

Attachments

This issue of *Chapter News* contains two attachments:

- Minutes of the July General Meeting
http://tmn-cot.org/Newsletters/2013-08_Attach-1.pdf
- Texas Invasive Species Program Established at UT-Austin
http://tmn-cot.org/Newsletters/2013-08_Attach-2.pdf

Reminders about the August General Meeting:

- The morning refreshment team includes Georgia Monnerat, Michelle Hague, Kirby Repstein, Donna Graham
- The business meeting is approved for 1.00 hour of Volunteer Time.
- Training provided at this meeting is approved for Advanced Training. 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>

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