



Chapter News

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A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MIKE



Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.

—William Shakespeare

Our chapter is blessed to have great members. We now have three members who have attained the 5000 hours milestone with the Texas Master Naturalists. We have members who have attained the 4000 hour milestone with Sea Center Texas. And we have those who have various hours from beginning to somewhere between.

Each hour our members volunteer is a celebration. Each hour represents some child, someone, or something being enriched and left better than when we found it.

Occasionally we may question "Why am I doing this?" but then you look into the face and see the smile or know there are several more young birds because of what you have done and you know WHY.

Please take a minute and remember the smiles and the ah-has. It makes the effort valuable to you and to those around you. We give what we can, when we can and that is what makes our chapter GREAT.

Continue to do what you do best and we will continue to make this world a little better place than we found it.

Thank you everyone

— Mike

PS: The October General Meeting is at regular time and regular place this month. Lots going on so check the calendar.

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



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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.



TMN-COT member Marty Cornell (left) was recently awarded the 5000-hour volunteer service award, the highest-level award offered by the Texas Master Naturalist Program. Also shown are Phil Huxford (who received the award in 2008) and Jim Renfro (who received it in 2009).

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, October 9, 2013
AgriLife Building, Angleton**

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Refreshment Team: Carolyn Schlein, Louis Peltier, Julia Geisler
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: Grasses Speaker: Flo Hannah, Urban Sanctuaries Manager, Houston Audubon <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 http://tmn-cot.org/Advanced/index.html</i></div>

Flo Hannah is the Sr. Sanctuary Steward for Houston Audubon Society since 2002. Her responsibilities include co-managing Houston Audubon's 17 sanctuaries. She has a Master of Science in Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University. She is a current Board member for the Native Plant Society of Texas-Houston Chapter, Outdoor Nature Club, and the Coastal Prairie Partnership. She participates in bird banding and surveying for the USFWS. She owns Hannah Native Grasses, Inc., a small business that grows native coastal prairie grasses and wildflowers.



Membership Report

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Chair

As of September 28, 2013, 53 members have submitted timesheets. For 2013, chapter members have submitted 6833 hrs of VT. Members to be recognized at the August General Meeting for recertifying for 2013 include Betty Bouley, Elaine Crews, and Jim Renfro. Elaine has also reached the 250 hr VT milestone. Good job, Elaine.

As mentioned in a recent communication, to remain active in the chapter, members must submit time sheets documenting general meeting attendance and volunteer activity in 2013.

Just for comparison, the chapter finished the year with 72 members submitting time sheets with 13,652 hours of VT reported. So keep those timesheets coming.

Texas Archaeology Month

By Neal McLain, Webmaster

October is Texas Archaeology Month. Several programs have been planned by local organizations:

- Brazoria County Historical Museum
- Brazoria County Historical Commission
- Brazosport Archaeological Society
- Brazosport Museum of Natural Science
- Texas Historical Commission

Check the calendar for details

<http://tmn-cot.org/Calendar/>

Texas Archaeology Month events are not approved for Advanced Training, Intern Training, or Volunteer Time by TMN-COT.

Urban Initiative and the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex

By David Plunkett, Outreach Leader and Migration Celebration Chairman
Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges

Editor's note: the following article was contributed by David Plunkett, the outreach leader for Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges. KBR Kids Day is expected to attract as many as 5000 kids. Volunteers are needed! All volunteer hours may be counted at VT toward certification. Timesheet code: "USFWS"

David and Ruby Lewis are working together to recruit volunteers so plan on an all-day volunteer adventure on October 19!

Academic research and many organizations recognize an increasing disconnect between people – especially younger generations – and the natural world. In addition, American society is more ethnically and socially diverse and increasingly more urban, with 80% of Americans living in urban or suburban areas (2010 U.S. Census data). Nature seems to be, or is, farther away from the majority of Americans than ever before and is harder to access for a multitude of reasons. The bottom line is that people generally have fewer experiences in nature.

The United States Fish & Wildlife Service, in its strategy document *Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation*, sets out an ambitious plan to enhance the relevance of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Service to a rapidly changing America. One of the elements of this strategy is the Urban Initiative.

As a pilot project, five refuges in the country have received grants to start implementing this strategy. Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex was one of the recipients and is moving forward with a Houston Initiative involving the six National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) within 60 miles of the center of Houston. These are

- **Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR** on the west,
- **San Bernard and Brazoria NWRs** on the South
- **Anahuac and McFaddin NWRs** on the Southeast
- **Trinity River NWR** on the northeast side of Houston.

Initially, the focus is on “taking the Refuges” to the Greater Houston area. With more than six million people this is a huge opportunity and challenge. One of the ways to facilitate this is partnering with groups like Houston Wilderness, The Woods Foundation and the Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP)

Among its many activities the BBP conducts the **KBR Kids Day** on Buffalo Bayou. October 19 will be the seventh year for this event. KBR (formerly Kellogg and Brown and Root construction/engineering companies) is the lead of many sponsors.

Friends of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuges and Texas Mid-coast NWR Complex will be participating in KBR Kids Day on Buffalo Bayou this year. To make a big impact, we also plan to include:

- Two **Birds of Prey Shows**
- **Educational outreach** with the reptiles located in a prime location at the entrance to the event
- A a separate **Butterfly Encounter** (similar to Migration Celebration this year) at a different location.

The Butterfly Encounter is separate because we and the BBP were concerned about clogging the trail with too many people at our events.

Again, the goal is the promote Houston's Wildlife Refuges (website under construction) and, hopefully, create greater support for our wild lands.

Additional information is on BBP's Kids Day of Buffalo Bayou website at

<http://www.buffalobayou.org/kidsday.html>.

Photo Gallery Monthly Highlights – October Newsletter

By Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

In September, many migrating birds are seen in Brazoria County. After a summer of flowers, fruits and nuts are found on many plants.

Plant species added to the galleries this month include Santa Maria Feverfew (False Ragweed) and Threelobe False Mallow. Insect species added include Rough Stink Bug and Hyacinth Glider Dragonfly. New bird species include the Semipalmated Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, and Red-headed Woodpecker.

Thanks to Denis Mudderman and Jerry Eppner for their contributions. Thanks to Thomas Adams and Tom Morris for support with species ID. To see all the photos that have been posted to date, go to <http://tmn-cot.org/> and click on PhotoGallery. Send new photo submissions to peggyromfh@tmn-cot.org

Red-headed Woodpecker



Jerry Eppner

Western Pygmy Blue is the smallest butterfly in North America, with a wing span of about ½ inch.



Dave Brandes, 2012



Jerry Eppner, 2013

Santa Maria Feverfew (False Ragweed)



Peggy Romfh

FUN FACTS

- Black-bellied whistling are primarily cavity nesters.
- Both parents share all tasks associated with the raising of young, from incubation to the rearing of ducklings.
- Ducklings leap from nest cavities within two days of hatching, can feed themselves immediately, and stay with the parents for up to eight weeks.




*Ducklings, Black-bellied Whistling Ducks:
Photo by P. Romfh, Freeport Ponds, 8/2013*



QUIZ FUN (Multiple Choice)

From the Wildflowers.org site comes a new, fun photo-quiz section:

http://www.wildflower.org/collections/quiz.php?collection=TX_south

WILDFLOWER QUIZ - TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE SHARE   

Welcome to Wildflower Quiz, a new feature of the Native Plant Information Network. Select a quiz from the different skill levels to test your wildflower knowledge.

Select a Quiz:

Beginner - Wildflowers	▼
Intermediate - By Region	▼
Texas-South	▼

Test your knowledge of local species by review of the Photo Gallery. There are close to 600 species of plants and animals on the Photo Gallery site.



Texas Feral Hogs and Native Bees Special AT Day a Success

by Peggy Romfh, Vice President

Over 60 participants enjoyed hearing Mark Tyson from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Michael Warriner from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department speak about feral hogs and native bees at the September 18th Special AT Day. Members joked that the day was about “Honey-baked ham,” a reference to both hogs and honey bees!

Feral Hogs

Sounder: a mixture of 2 – 50 adult pigs that form a family group; typically includes the dominant female, one or more other females, and piglets.

Native Bees

Source: www.txnativebees.com

A lack of dead wood nesting habitat can be addressed by installing wooden nest blocks; bird houses for bees essentially. Nest blocks should be eight or more inches in height and must be constructed from untreated lumber. A range of dimensions, from 2'x4', 4'x4', to 4'x8', can be used. Holes of varying diameters, from 1/4" to 3/8", should be drilled into the blocks spaced 3/4" apart. Do not drill completely through but rather about 1/2" from the back of the block. Attach a roof to provide protection from intense sun and rain. Face nesting blocks to the southeast to catch morning sun and affix firmly to a building, fence, or post, at least three feet above the ground. Unlike the real dangers of honeybee colonies in suburban and urban landscapes, the bees that use these nest blocks are all native solitary species that do not defend their nests.



Hog Trap. Photo Source tamu.edu

on feral hogs in Texas. Several of the slides that Mark used in his presentation may be found on this site.

http://www.extension.org/feral_hogs: Note – see sections on feral hog history and biology, damages, and management and control, as well as videos on building hog traps.



Michael Warriner.
Photo by Pete Romfh

wildlife through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitat. There are several identification guides and fact sheets referenced on this site under “Publications.” More specific information on bee pollination conservation may be found under “Invertebrates/Bees” or at <http://www.xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/>.

<http://www.txnativebees.com/>: This site was created by Michael Warriner and contains photos and information about bumble bees and solitary bees in Texas. In the section “Managing for Native Bees,” he provides the information on how to improve your property to support native bees. This is a great site and provides a lot of useful information. Several of the slides Michael shared on bee identification may be found in the section on “Resources/Bee Survey Protocol.” He also provides references to other bee identification sites.

Mark’s presentation included a discussion of ecology, predation, habitat, and diet as well as feral hog impact on both watersheds and crops. He also shared efforts underway to reduce pig populations, including use of traps. For additional information on wild pigs/feral hogs, Mark recommended the following web sites:

<http://feralhogs.tamu.edu/>: Note – see section on “Publications” for information on trapping/hunting, control and management of damage and information

Michael’s presentation included a discussion of the non-native European and Africanized honey bees, information about many of the native bees found in Texas such as digger bees, carpenter bees, mason bees, and bumble bees. He provided tips on bee identification and showed members how to construct nest blocks to support solitary bee habitat.

For additional information on native bees, Michael recommended the following web sites:

<http://www.xerces.org>: The Xerces Society is a nonprofit organization that protects

Attachments

This issue of *Chapter News* contains one attachment:

- Minutes of the September General Meeting
http://tmn-cot.org/Newsletters/2013-10_Attach-1_Minutes.pdf

Reminders about the October General Meeting:

- The morning refreshment team includes Carolyn Schlein, Louis Peltier, Julia Geisler, Barbara Bruyere
- 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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