



Chapter News

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A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MIKE



Well, you can sleep at night again knowing our Federal government is back at work.

All kidding aside, DEEP is now in full swing and plans for an INEOS replacement with the Angleton schools are progressing.

Everyone who made the trip to Houston for the KBR Kid's Day had a really good time. it ended up being a really neat event and the Friends extravaganza manned by COT members and Friends was the hit of the show.

Kudos to David and Krissy Plunkett for good directions to the event and content for the event. It was a long day but the smiles on the kid's faces were priceless.

News from the State convention per Peggy is that grant opportunities are available to chapters for educational/environmental

projects funded by the Horny Toad license plate. The state is allowing the use of select webinars for Advanced Training from home.

This could be an excellent tool to get additional AT and for those of you that work and have trouble getting all of your AT hours. We will explore this more.

The new 2014 pin will be the Armadillo. Unfortunately it does not come with a Lone Star beer bottle in its paws.

And last but not least the revisions to the State chapter management guidelines will begin shortly. I appreciate Peggy attending in my absence and all the chapter members who made the trip and participated in the contests. See you at the meeting and I promise to bring the program with me this time.

—Mike

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.

Membership Report

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Chair

As of October 28, 57 members have submitted timesheets. For 2013, chapter members have submitted 7732 hrs of VT. Members to be recognized at the November Meeting for recertifying for 2013 include John Boettiger, Jane Eppner, Sandy Henderson, and Becky McClendon.

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.

Christmas Bird Counts

Christmas bird counts will resume in December and run throughout the end of the month. See Page 10 for details



Phil Huxford and Sherry Summers at Brazoria Bird Count, Griffith Ranch, 2011
<http://tinyurl.com/logug2n>



<http://facebook.com/TMN.COT>

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, November 13, 2013
AgriLife Building, Angleton**



8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Refreshment Team: Jerry Eppner, Andy Smith, JoAnna Harlan, Pam West
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: Research on the American Oystercatcher Speaker: Dr. Susan Heath from Gulf Coast Bird Observatory <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>

Susan Heath is the Avian Conservation Biologist at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, in Lake Jackson. She is a native Texan who returned to the state in 2007 after being transplanted to Virginia for 24 years. She received a master's in biology from George Mason University for her work on wintering waterfowl on the Northern Virginia Piedmont and a Ph.D. from the same institution in the spring of 2008. Her dissertation involved the effects of pesticides on birds that nest in agriculture in the north central states. She is thrilled to be back in her home state of Texas.

At GCBO, Sue coordinates the Site Partner Network and assists with various research efforts. Currently she is heading up a four-year study of American Oystercatchers on the Texas coast.

Source: GCBO



Dr. Susan Heath



Photo courtesy of Susan Heath / Facebook



Photo by Hanson Nature Photograph / Susan Heath / Facebook

Susan Heath with American Oystercatchers at West Bay, Galveston, Texas.

These babies are only a couple days old. We watched as their parents frantically tried to fend off the Laughing Gulls that wanted to make lunch of them. There are so many hazards for our nesting shorebirds! —Susan Heath

14th Annual Statewide Meeting and Advanced Training Held Oct. 25 – 27th in New Braunfels

TMN-COT attendees at the TMN State Meeting included Roger and Neeta Allen, Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Justina Dent, Mickey Dufilho, Ed Johnson, Jerry Krampota, Tom Morris, and Pete and Peggy Romfh.

Marty Cornell Recognized with President's Call to Service Award



President's Call to Service pin

For TMN-COT members attending, the highlight of the Awards and Recognition Ceremony came when Marty Cornell was recognized by State Master Naturalist Coordinator Michelle Haggerty and awarded the new 4,000-hour ruby and 5,000-hour diamond dragonfly pins as well as the President's Call to Service Award. The Call to Service award includes a service award pin, a personalized certificate, and a congratulatory letter from the president of the United States.

Marty's name was prominently displayed on a banner that hung high on the wall of the meeting assembly room. The 4,000-hour recognition was added this year at the urging of TMN-COT leaders and others to match the Presidential awards program.



Marty along with two other winners of 4,000- and 5,000-hour pins



L-R: Marty Cornell, Ed Johnson, Peggy Romfh, and Tom Morris count ballots.

Other recognition of attendees included Pete and Peggy Romfh for achieving the 500-hundred service hour milestone and Roger Allen for achieving his first year certification.

COT Attendees Volunteered at Meeting

The TMN-COT team volunteered to manage the photo, sewing/stitchery, scrapbook, brochure, and newsletter contests. Mickey Dufilho hauled the photo easels usually used at Migration Celebration to the meeting, and Ed Barrios, Mickey and other COT attendees set up the exhibits and managed the ballot process.

Pete Romfh Won Photo Awards

Pete Romfh won three awards in the Photo Contest. His photo entitled "Reddish Egrets Getting Ready to Dance, Surfside" won the 'Wildlife' Category Popular Vote Contest. His photo entitled "Photographing Mud Daubers, Brazoria NWR" won the 'Master Naturalist at Work or Play' Category

Awards in both the Judged Competition and Popular Vote Contests.



Pete next to winning photo of reddish egrets

TMN Statistics Delighted Director of AgriLife

Statewide, Texas Master Naturalists achieved some impressive statistics for volunteer and advanced training hours in 2012, including:

- 321,187 service hours
- 47,812 advanced training hours
- \$3.276 million in economic impact of TMN volunteer service
- 159,000 youth, adult, and private landowners impacted by outreach, education, or consultation

Keynote speaker Doug Steele, Director of Texas AgriLife Extension, summed it up in his praise of all Texas Master Naturalists when he stated, "You made a choice to make a difference!"

Ed, Jerry and Tom Comment on the Meeting

From Ed Johnson: *"I enjoyed my first state meeting last year so very much and it was so fantastic to me that I didn't see how it could be matched. I was a little concerned this year that I may be let-down, but, such was not the case... Another class I enjoyed had to do with many ideas about teaching young children to learn about and enjoy nature. We five "older" guys (yes, I was the oldest) had a wonderful time sharing a condo and I got to hear some nice personal history stories from my friends. It was a wonderful weekend and now I am looking forward to next year!"*

From Jerry Krampota: *"First of all, let me salute and thank those of the*

COT group that came to

the conference as dedicated workers/volunteers in the photography displays and competition. As for myself, I was involved primarily in the joy of saturating myself in as much of the AT as was possible. Overall it was a very rewarding conference."

From Tom Morris: *"TPWD and AgriLife really demonstrated their support of the Master Naturalist program [at the state meeting.]"*

2014 Re-certification pin is an armadillo!

State Meeting News Continued

TMN-COT Members Enjoy Tour of Canyon Lake Gorge

At the state meeting, tours of nearby nature attractions such as the Bracken Bat Cave and Nature Preserve, Canyon Lake Gorge, Guadalupe River State Park, Comal Springs and Bastrop State Park were offered.

Ed Johnson commented, *"My most enjoyable activity ... was my Saturday morning "Canyon Lake Gorge tour": outdoors, a unique opportunity, knowledgeable and personable tour guide, many fossils and dinosaur tracks revealed from various geological time periods, and the unique camaraderie of Texas Master Naturalists enjoying nature together."*

Jerry Krampota added, *"Certainly the highlight of the weekend, for me, was the half day walk through the newly created gorge downstream of the Canyon Lake overflow."*

The gorge was created in 2002 in less than a week's time when 34" of rain fell in the Guadalupe River watershed, causing a wall of water



Ed, Jerry and Tom share their stories about Canyon Lake Gorge.

seven feet high to pour through the overflow spillway. This tremendous force of the water carved a gorge through one million years of sediment in the ancient seabed which covered today's limestone hill country, exposing fossils of the sea creatures as well as footprints of the dinosaurs that walked on its shores."

Tom Morris added to the story of this magnificent geological formation: *"The very best program this weekend for me was the Canyon Lake Gorge field trip. Two Master Naturalist tour guides gave us a close-up view of the fossils, dinosaur tracks, and geology exposed by the July 2002 flood that created a gorge about a mile long and 40 feet deep in one section. Over 67,000 cubic feet of water per second flowed from the spillway for days. The*

most that is allowed by the dam flood gates into the Guadalupe is 5,000 cu.ft./sec. The flood exposed an earlier million years of history not seen on the normally exposed limestone.

Fossils showed a wide variety of sea life whose calcium carbonate skeletons formed the layers of limestone.

Another geology lesson was about the four major geologic events in the Big Bend Ranch area. The first occurred about 300 million years ago with the formation of the Appalachian mountain range which extended all the way from the northeast to the Rio Grande in Texas. Next the Rocky Mountains event which is seen in the Guadalupe. The third event was the Pacific plate submerging and creating the volcanic activity resulting in the Chisos mountain range. The fourth is the Basin and Range event which formed the deserts as fault lines form and allow settling."

[Photos by Tom Morris and P&P Romfh]

KBR Kids Day – Buffalo Bayou Park:



A visitor gets "hands on" with a snake

COT Chapter members journeyed to Houston to support Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges at a nature-oriented kids' day. Our traveling menagerie included alligators, snakes, and turtles. Additionally the ever popular Butterfly Encounter and Birds of Prey exhibits were enjoyed by both young and old alike. The event was attended by over 1000 families. For many of the children this event was their first encounter with non-domestic animals.

Photos by Pete Romfh



Phil Huxford with Igor, a black vulture.

More photos of KBR Kids day: <http://tmn-cot.org/KBR.html>

Eagle Scout Project for Reforestation of Otto Tract

by Chris & Carl Kneupper

The Otto tract is a rectangular-shaped property of over 1100 acres that has been recently acquired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), intended to become part of the Columbia Bottomlands. It is located in extreme western Brazoria County just west of Danciger, and just north of FM1301 along Linnville Bayou, almost on the county line. The central portion of this tract is a prairie (former farm land) of approximately 56 acres, and the USFWS wishes for this portion to become forest, like much of the remaining property.

Under the supervision of Thomas Adams (USFWS Botanist), Carl Kneupper, son of TMN-COT member Chris Kneupper, has decided to adopt a project to help reforest this property as an Eagle scout project. The objective is to re-seed the prairie area with selected tree seeds in the winter period of 2013-14, so they will sprout in the spring. Seeds will be collected from native trees in fall 2013, and stored for later use in this project.

Seeds of native trees and bushes that are distributed by winds or birds (such as elm, hackberry, willow, box elder, cottonwood, yaupon, or possum-haw holly) spread easily by themselves over long distances, and will not be intentionally planted. Types with heavy seeds or which spread less easily (such as pecan, oaks and red cedar) will be planted, in order to more quickly create diverse climax woodland useful to our local wildlife.

A planting event has been tentatively scheduled for Saturday, 14-Dec-2013, 9:00 AM, with a rainout date of 4-Jan-2014. We expect that it will require about four hours.

Use of seeds (instead of potted trees) will allow a much greater coverage of the large area, with minimal cost in terms of money or time. Trees grown from seed also have a higher survival rate than plantings of potted trees (which often require after-planting care such as watering), and they eventually grow faster than transplants from pots.

Soil types on the property are known as Edna fine sandy loam and Pledger clay. Native tree species that occur naturally in the immediate area of the Otto tract will be noted, and used as a basis for seed collection.



Photo: Christy Kneupper

Prairie section looking north from southern end (wooded edge of Linnville Bayou is to the left)

Eagle Scout Project for Reforestation of Otto Tract (continued)

Initial target list

Canopy:

- Native Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*)
- Water Hickory (*Carya aquatica*)
- Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*)
- Water Oak (*Quercus nigra*)
- Shumard Red Oak (*Quercus shumardii*)
- Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)
- Durand White Oak (*Quercus sinuata* var. *sinuata*)
- Swamp Chestnut Oak (*Quercus prinus*)
- Overcup Oak (*Quercus lyrata*)
- Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*)

Smaller Trees:

- Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
- Western Soapberry (*Sapindus drummondii*)
- Carolina Basswood (*Tilia caroliniana*)
- Eastern Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*)
- Texas Honeylocust (*Gleditsia texana*)
- Hercules Club (*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*)

Understory:

- Mexican Plum (*Prunus mexicana*)
- Cherry Laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*)
- Rusty Blackhaw Viburnum (*Viburnum rufidulum*)
- Green Hawthorn (*Crataegus viridis*)
- Viburnum Hawthorn (*Crataegus viburnifolia*)
- Downy Hawthorn (*Crataegus mollis*)
- Parsley Hawthorn (*Crataegus marshallii*)
- Little-hip Hawthorn (*Crataegus spathulata*)
- Carolina Buckthorn (*Rhamnus caroliniana*)
- Red Bay (*Persea borbonia*)
- Common Hop-tree (*Ptelea trifoliata*)
- Eastern Coral Bean (*Erythina herbacea*)
- Indigo Bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*)
- Hemp Sesbania (*Sesbania exaltata*)
- Drummond Rattlebox (*Sesbania drummondii*)



Photo: Christy Kneupper

View upstream of largely-dry Linnville Bayou at Otto tract (as of 20-Aug-2013)

Eagle Scout Project for Reforestation of Otto Tract (continued)

The seeds actually collected will depend on availability, which can vary based on the weather during this past growing season. This spring and summer has been dry, and may limit the amount of native seed. Although some types or desired amounts might not be available this year, it is thought that it is better to plant some seeds and get them started than to plant nothing. Or, if only a portion of the property is planted with tree seeds, this will be better than waiting until a later time to do it all. The objective remains to cover the entire 56-acre with the broadest possible variety of locally-native seeds. Nature will sort out those that do not belong.

Certain species of the Legume family are included to obtain nitrogen-fixing in the soil, for ultimate use as fertilizer by other tree species. It is also desirable to collect seeds of each species from several individuals or differing locations to increase genetic diversity. Based on what is available by the planting date, and also based on site visits, a mixture of seeds appropriate to the Otto tract will be prepared just ahead of the scheduled planting time.

Contact: Thomas Adams
Botanist, Texas Mid-Coast Wildlife Refuges
office: 979-94-4016 cell: 979-583-8639
e-mail: thomas_p_adams@fws.gov

Leader: Carl Kneupper
1083 Riverview Ranch Drive
Brazoria, Texas 77422
979-964-4000
e-mail: kneupper@brazoriainet.com



Photo: Christy Kneupper

Thomas Adams and Carl Kneupper on the jeep trail from FM 1301 to southern end of prairie section (roughly follows the eastern edge of Linnville Bayou).

We are asking for help from the TMN-COT chapter in two areas:

1. **Collection of native seed this Fall** – Since TMN members probably know what they are looking at, could you be on the lookout for any native trees laden with seed? We are looking for seed from a variety of local native specimens (to enhance genetic diversity) which are big/old/healthy/fruitful (to enhance genetic quality), from the species list above. Due to rain at key times after some dry years, last year produced a bountiful crop of pecans and acorns, but many of the trees seem to be "resting" this year, and this spring/summer has again been dryer than normal. Consequently, the number of trees bearing seeds appears very limited, and we need your help to identify any of the few seed-bearing trees present this year! They could be in your yard, or any property you know about, in Brazoria or Matagorda counties. Please let us know about these trees, or feel free to collect the seed yourself and bring it in to us. If not, just give us a location or directions. To give you an idea, quantities desired are anywhere from a handful to a gallon Zip-Lock bag. Chris is usually at the TMN member meetings, and can collect and store them until needed.
2. **Participation in the seed planting event** – Tentatively scheduled for 14-Dec-2013, at 9:00 AM, when the grass and weeds have died down, and the snakes and gators are in their holes. Carl will lead the activity and invite interested TMN members to join in with Boy Scout volunteers. The process will involve forming a line at one end of the prairie, with each participant equipped with a steel re-bar planting rod and a bag of mixed seeds (these will be provided). We ask participants to wear sturdy outdoor clothes, and bring work gloves and their personal water bottles. The line will walk abreast slowly across the prairie, planting seeds quickly every 2 paces or so, for the 3600-foot long prairie. Then, we will turn around and repeat the process, as we walk back to the starting point. We figure 30 people can do it in about 4 hours. Kolaches for snacks at the beginning, and gumbo for lunch afterwards!!

This event has been approved for volunteer time. You may claim VT for all time spent at the Otto Tract plus all Travel Time for one round trip per day. Timesheet code: USFWS.

*The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago.
The second best time is now!
—Chinese proverb*

Eagle Scout Project for Reforestation of Otto Tract (continued)



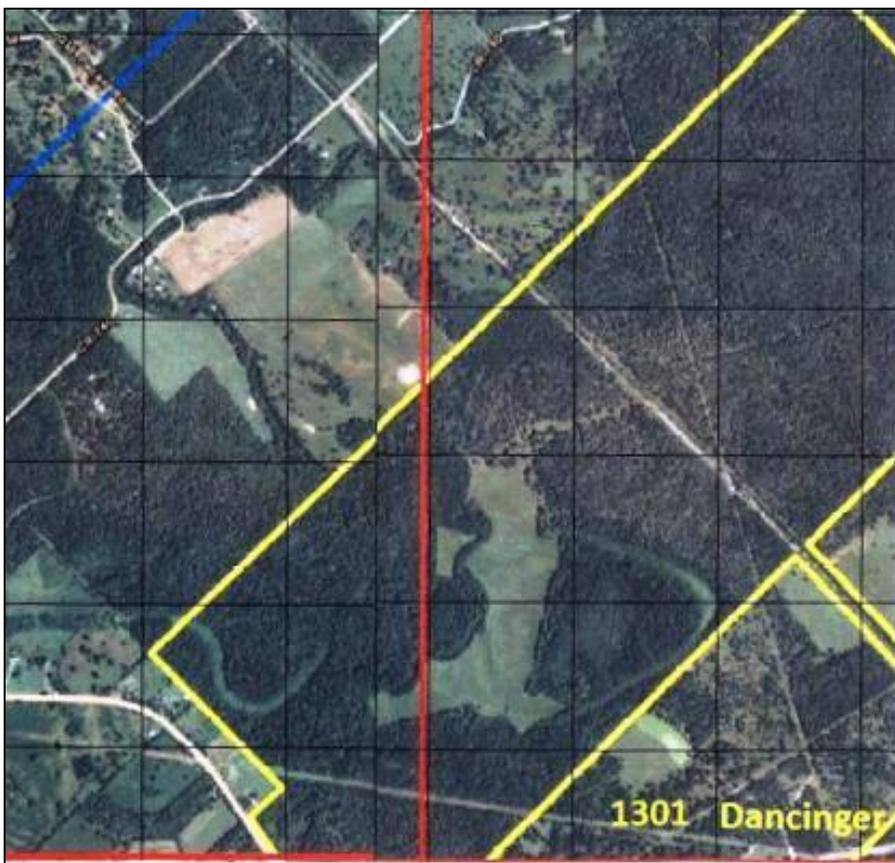
Photo: Christy Kneupper
Thomas Adams, Chris Kneupper, and Carl Kneupper
at the southern end of prairie section



Photo: Christy Kneupper
Chris and Carl examining a soil sample at
the Otto tract



Photo: Christy Kneupper
Five baby alligators in a mud hole in the
bottom of Linnville Bayou



Aerial view of Otto tract (yellow-bounded
rectangle). The prairie is kidney-shaped
area in the center along east edge of
Linnville Bayou. Image courtesy of Thomas
Adams, USFWS.

Photo Gallery Monthly Highlights – November Newsletter

By Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

In October, bees continued to fiercely gather nectar from all the fall-blooming flowers. Insects are everywhere, especially mosquitos that proliferated with the rain this month.

Plant species added to the galleries this month include Pecan, Poorjoe, Maximilian Sunflower, Slim Milkweed, Blue Mistflower, Showy Fanpetals, Carolina Wolfberry, Partridge Pea, and American Germander.



Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*), a fall-blooming member of the Asteraceae family, is unique in that it has disk flowers but no ray flowers. (Photo by P. Romfh)

Insect species added include Blue Ceraunus butterfly, Needham's Skimmer dragonfly, Love Bug, Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle, Earwig, and Ichneumon Wasp.

New bird species include the Mourning Warbler, female Blue Grosbeak and female Indigo Bunting.

Other species include Brown Anole and Moon Jelly.



Uncommon moon jelly variant was seen at Quintana Beach. (Photo by P. Romfh)

Thanks to Mike Mullins, John Minkert, Pete Romfh, Chris Kneupper, Dick Schaffhausen, Dave Brandes, and Jerry Eppner for their contributions this month. Thanks to Jerry Eppner, Brenda Bowling, and Chris Kneupper 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

Moon jellies typically have four gonads that look a bit like a clover-leaf in the translucent jellies. We recently photographed a moon jelly on Quintana Beach with six gonads.

Brenda Bowling, TPWD, shared a reference in which scientists found that *Aurelia* species showed a variation in symmetry at a rate of 2 – 10%, with one – 8 gonads seen instead of the normal four. It is currently unclear whether the symmetry variation is caused by genetic, environmental, or developmental factors, or some combination.

Gershwin, L. A. (1999) Clonal and population variation in jellyfish symmetry. J Marine Biolog Assocn of UK 79, 993-1000.



TAN FEMALE BIRDS REQUIRE SECOND LOOK TO IDENTIFY IN THE FIELD

Jerry Eppner provided photos of two female birds that take careful scrutiny to distinguish in the field. They are the female blue grosbeak (left) and female indigo bunting (right).

The female blue grosbeak has a mostly tan body, a solid, un-streaked breast, rusty wing bars, and a **very large gray bill**, and some pale blue on rump and tail. The female indigo bunting is a stocky songbird with a **short, conical bill**. It is a warm brown above and paler below with faint streaks on the breast.

FUN FACTS: Carolina Wolfberries

- Wolfberries are relished by both whooping cranes and other wild fowl.
- Whooping cranes depend on Carolina Wolfberries as a food source to regain energy after they arrive at their winter feeding grounds in Texas.
- A member of *Solanaceae* (Potato Family), the wolfberry resembles a tomato and was eaten raw or dried by Native Americans.



Whooping crane and wolfberry Photos by P. Romfh



Christmas Bird Counts

By Tom Morris, David Plunkett, and Neal McLain



The Audubon Christmas Counts is a North-, Central-, and South-American campaign to count as many birds and species within a fixed circle 15 miles in diameter. The first Christmas Count was in the Northeast in 1900 on Christmas Day. The counts were started to counter a popular "sport" of killing as many birds as one could on Christmas Day. The data from the counts are compiled in a database and results are printed annually and the raw data is available to researchers and amateurs. Population trends have been used to help protect species that show marked decreases.

A typical count day requires a lot of walking — two to three miles — and you are exposed to the elements a good part of the day. However, in case of bad weather such as rain, we resort to birding by car. In the evening we meet at a "countdown" to eat and tally results.

Good hiking shoes, hat, rain gear, repellent, layers, water, light snacks, and binoculars are the basics.

Less experienced birders are welcome to participate. If you wish to participate, please contact the Count Coordinator as soon as possible. Names of coordinators will be posted on the TMN-COT calendar when available.

The coordinator will assign you to a specific group, and let you know where to meet your group on the morning of the count.

There is a \$5.00 fee charged by the National Audubon Society for each individual who participates. These fees fund the program and help to cover the costs of generating materials for compilers, producing an annual CBC summary issue, and maintaining the CBC website and database. There is no fee for persons 18 years old and under.

Every Bird Count is named for something — a city, a park, or some geographic feature — located inside the 15-mile-diameter circle. These names can sometimes be confusing. For example, the Brazoria Bird Count is named for the City of Brazoria, but it includes a larger area. Similarly, the Freeport Bird Count is named for Freeport, but it also includes a much larger area.

During these counts, we typically meet early in the morning, around 6:30 am and work in small groups with at least one knowledgeable birder in each group. Each group covers a specified territory in the morning, and usually covers another in the afternoon, with a break for lunch. Each group includes at least one knowledgeable birder to assist with identification. Less-experienced birders thus have an opportunity learn from more-experienced colleagues.



TMN-COT MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

As of press time, the 2013 Christmas Bird Count schedule had not yet been announced. For scheduled counts, see the calendar.

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

Christmas Birdcounts are supported by the Houston Audubon and are accredited by the National Audubon Society.

Participation in any Audubon-accredited birdcount is approved for volunteer hours *provided that* you sign in, pay the entrance fee, and participate in the counting activity.

"Counting activity" includes all time spent in the field plus training meetings, travel among count sites (if any), meals, and the countdown.

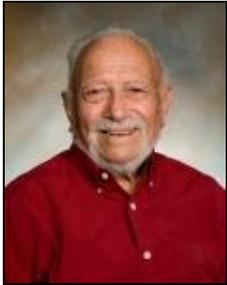
TMN-COT approves credit as follows:

- Current members may claim all hours as volunteer time.
- Subject to the approval of the training director, interns may claim up to 2:00 hours toward initial certification. Additional hours count as volunteer time.
- All members may claim round-trip travel time to/from the meeting point, not to exceed the total number of hours claimed as volunteer time and intern training.

Please code your timesheet (in the "partners and events" column) as "other".

In Memoriam: Sammy Ray

By Rich Tillman



Howdy. The angels have a new biologist working with them, when he is not bird hunting or watching. Dr. Sammy Ray, 94, of Galveston, passed October 13, 2013. <http://tinyurl.com/RayObit>

Sammy was a dear friend and spoke to our chapter about another of his loves, oysters. He once proclaimed, with his characteristic smile, that he was the greatest Lebanese oyster biologist in the Gulf of Mexico.

Sammy was an expert on many things, among them was how to live a joyous life. This was evident in all that he and in his founding work of the Aggie Sea Camp, at Texas A&M Galveston, where he was affectionately known as “Papa Smuff”.

Sammy was loved by all of Galveston and this was more obvious in a story by his granddaughter, April. She had acquired her grandfather’s love of fishing from Sammy’s son, her father, and granddad. Recently she offered to take Sammy fishing, so early one morning she and her father picked him up at his lab, April’s comment was “really, you’re 94 — you don’t need to go into the lab today”. When asked where Sammy wanted to go fishing he said just pull out on the pier, jetty off the seawall, near Ft Crocket. April thought, we can’t fish here, but onto the jetty they pulled and Sammy fished from the car. Of course, it wasn’t long before a policeman lights flashing, pulled up and asked April what they were doing. He said you can’t fish here — out of your car. When he got to Sammy’s side of the car and saw Papa Smuff, he greeted Dr. Ray and wished him a good day of fishing.

Sammy was a veteran and served as a Navy Corpsmen, with the 1st Marine Division. Sammy was in the invasion of the Island of Peleliu. While in the South Pacific, Sammy, as a medic, was given a shotgun and permission to collect specimens of the native birds. He stuffed the collections and sent them to the Smithsonian Institute. Many years later someone from the Smithsonian remarked how well preserved his collection was and that it was done under combat conditions.

Oysters are where Sammy made his name in the field of marine biology. After WW II Sammy earned an MA from LSU and then started working on his PhD at Rice. It was at Rice where he made his name in oysters and more specifically his work on a disease know as *Dermo*. This is caused by a protozoan parasite *Dermocystidium marinum*. The detection of this disease was not easy, but it causes massive oyster mortality, and poses a significant economic threat to the oyster industry. The disease is not a direct threat to humans consuming infected oysters.

Sammy developed a technique to quickly and relatively easy way to determine the presents of *Dermo*. We now use Ray’s Fluid Thioglycollate Medium.

I recently heard there were some in the marine biology field that said Sammy was lucky in developing his technique and another replied if you worked as hard as Sammy you would be twice as lucky.

Sammy loved his wife of 70 years, his family, his students, and his hard work. We will miss you Sammy. Save some birds for us.

Dr. Sammy Ray was Professor Emeritus in the Marine Biology Department at Texas A&M University at Galveston. His research interests were marine biology, oyster biology, oyster aquaculture and hatcheries invertebrate pathology, environmental impact assessment and coastal zone management.

His education included:

*A.A., Mississippi Delta Junior College, 1940
Pharmacist's Mate I/C, U.S. Navy, 1942-1945
B.S. (Zoology) - Louisiana State University, 1942
M.A. (Biology) - Rice University, 1952
Ph.D., (Biology), Rice University, 1954*



Photo: Galveston Daily New

Dr. Sammy Ray in his laboratory at TAMUG



Photo: TAMUG

R/V Sammy Ray, a 26-foot research vessel owned by Texas A&M University, Galveston.

More information about *Perkinsus marinus* can be found on the Virginia Institute of Marine Science website at <http://tinyurl.com/l7ayabs>

Attachments

This issue of *Chapter News* contains one attachment:

- Minutes of the October General Meeting (to be published when available)
http://tmn-cot.org/Newsletters/2013-10_Attach-1_Minutes.pdf

Reminders about the November General Meeting:

- The morning refreshment team includes Jerry Eppner, Andy Smith, JoAnna Harlan, Pam West
- 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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