



Chapter News

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Chapter Officers

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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.

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MIKE



Happy Holidays

Here is wishing all of you the very best of the season. Another year is quickly coming to a close and we have a lot to be thankful for in our lives. As a chapter we have had a wonderful year touching literally thousands of young kids and adults with, for some of them, their first exposure to the wonders of

nature. Migration Celebration, the library programs, Buffalo Bayou, DEEP, and all the other opportunities that we have participated in make a difference. Be proud of yourself and your chapter. You do have an impact.

As we draw to a close for the year we still have the Christmas Bird Counts, Chris's tree seed planting and some DEEP. The Hog Wild party will follow our December general meeting on the 11th. The December general meeting will start at 10:00 am and be fellowship, eating, some entertainment, and a little business of elections. A note here that the January general meeting will be the third Wednesday on January the 15th.

I am proud to be a part of such an excellent group. I personally look forward to every chance I have to be with all of you and listen to why you joined and what difference it has made in your lives. The beauty of a group like this is there is no monetary gain or job advancement for what you do. Everything you do comes from a special place in your hearts and the joy of seeing a child's eyes light up at touching or learning is reward enough.

Say a little prayer for those in our chapter that are not in the best of health. Enjoy the holidays and be safe and happy.

Thank you for a wonderful year

—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 early December 28, sixty-seven members have submitted timesheets. For 2013, chapter members have submitted 9479 hrs of VT.

Members to be recognized at the December General Meeting for recertifying for 2013 include: Howard Allen, Ellis Burkhardt, Justina Dent, Mickey Dufilho, Mary Holler, Jerry Krampota, and Louis Peltier.

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. Final 2013 time sheets need to be submitted by the first week of January. 2013 time sheet can only be submitted on a 2013 time sheet and cannot be carried over.

FACEBOOK

By Neal McLain, Editor

You've probably seen this little message a hundred times. Every website you go to today says "Check us on Facebook."



[facebook.com/TMN.COT](https://www.facebook.com/TMN.COT)

The Cradle of Texas Chapter Chapter has a Facebook page too. Check it out! Our Facebook editor, Dick Schaffhausen, Class of 2013, has done a fantastic job. Lots of information and photos.
<https://www.facebook.com/TMN.COT>

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting
Wednesday, December 11, 2013
AgriLife Building, Angleton**

| | |
|---|--|
| 9:30 AM - 9:50 AM | Fun and Fellowship Refreshment Team: De Eddins, Becky McClendon, Patsy Lepper, Phil Huxford |
| 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (tentative) | General Meeting Agenda: Election of Officers for 2014 · Holiday Party (bring some goodies to share, if you wish) <i>This meeting is approved for Volunteer Time.</i> |

Nominations Committee Report

By Barbara Burkhardt, Chair, Nominations Committee

The nominations committee offers the following candidates for the 2014 TMN-COT Board of Directors. Voting will take place during the December 11 general meeting. The nominations committee was comprised of Barbara Burkhardt (Chair), Barbara Bruyere, and Gerald Forrest.

President



Mike Mullins

Vice President



Peggy Romfh

Secretary



Becky McClendon

Treasurer



Gerald Forrest

Membership



Jerry Eppner

Training Director



Roy Morgan

State Representative



Ed Barrios

2013 Christmas Bird Count Schedule

By Tom Morris and Tom Taroni

Brazos Bend State Park - Saturday, December 14, 2013

Meeting point: Brazos Bend State Park Visitors Center.
21901 FM 762, Needville, TX 77461.

Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/wMuv7>

Coordinators/Co-compilers:

Bill Godley - fribbish@msn.com - 281-341-6684

Justin Bower - jbower47@hotmail.com - 281-293-7389

Countdown: TBA (contact compiler)

TMN-COT contact: Gardner Campbell - 979 297-5293

gardnercampbell@sbcglobal.net

Freeport - Sunday, December 15, 2013

Meeting Point: TBA (contact compiler)

Countdown: 5:00 PM at Freeport Community House,

Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/ltNwy>

Coordinator/Compiler:

Mike Austin - mj_eh@comcast.net

Matagorda Co. - Mad Island Marsh - Monday, December 16, 2013

Meeting point: TBA (contact compiler)

Countdown: 6:00 pm at Wadsworth Community Center, on East FM 521.

Coordinator/Compiler:

Brent Ortego

361-576-0022

brent.ortego@tpwd.state.tx.us

Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR - Wednesday, December 18, 2013

Meeting point: 6:30 AM at Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR Refuge

Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/jPaZH>

Countdown: TBA (contact compiler)

Coordinator/Compiler:

Sumita Prasad, Director, Southwest Region, Wildlife Habitat Council

713-287-2570 (office) 832-453-4374 (cell)

Email: sumita@alumni.utexas.net

San Bernard NWR - Friday, December 20, 2013

Meeting point: San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters

6801 County Road 306, Brazoria, TX 77422.

Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/t8LKj>

Countdown: San Bernard NWR Headquarters

(Meal prepared by USFWS Volunteers Ron Bisbee and Marty Cornell)

Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/Rf3aY>

Coordinators/Co-compilers:

Ron Weeks - ronweeks@sbcglobal.net - 979-299-0066 (evening)

Jennifer Wilson - jennifer_wilson@fws.gov - 979-964-4011 (weekdays)

Brazoria - Saturday, December 28, 2013

Meeting point: TBA (contact compiler)

Countdown: 4:00 pm at Dow Brazoria Reservoir

Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/tvMsk>

Coordinator/Compiler:

Tom Taroni

taronitom@gmail.com

979-297-5563 Cell

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 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.

Timesheet code: "other".

| DECEMBER 2013 | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 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 | | | | |

This list identifies the bird counts traditionally of interest to residents of Brazoria County. For information about bird counts elsewhere in Texas visit the Audubon 2013-2014 Texas Christmas Bird Counts page at <http://tinyurl.com/CBC-2013-14>

What is a countdown?

Most bird counts include a *countdown*. At the end of the day, participants gather together to count the number of individual bird species observed during the day. Each team compiles its count separately, and the totals of all teams are added together by a designated compiler. The compiler then reports the totals to the National Audubon Society's CBC Regional Editor.

Following are photos of the Brazoria Bird Count countdown at Mouchette Hall in East Columbia, on December 31, 2011. Tom Taroni, of Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge, served as compiler. Brent Ortego, TPWD Regional Diversity Biologist for the Oak-Prairie District, was CBC Regional Editor.



Countdown teams compile the day's counts.



Jim Renfro, TMN-COT member and one-man countdown team



CW from front: Jerry Eppner, Mike Lange, Krissy Plunkett, David Plunkett, Ron Weeks



TMN-COT members Sherry Summers, Kathy Speights, and Mary Holler.



Mike Leebron, Cecilia Riley, Mike Lange, Tom Taroni



Lisa Reznicek, Phil Huxford, Tom Taroni

More photos: <http://tinyurl.com/Brazoria-CBC-2011>

Class of 2014 Training Report

By Ed Johnson, Training Director

Great news! The Cradle of Texas chapter already has a very nice group of eleven Interns committed for the 2014 Intern Training Class which will begin the last Wednesday in January, Jan 29th, with the "Introduction I Class". Most of these individuals have already been attending our monthly Member Meetings and we are all privileged to be getting better acquainted with them. We are very happy to observe that many of them are already volunteering in various TMN volunteer opportunities such as DEEP, Outreach and other.

These individuals are:

- Lorna Witt, Lake Jackson
- Dawn Logan, Clute
- Louis Golish, Surfside
- John Minkert, Angleton
- Kenneth Sluis, Richwood
- Linda Sluis, Richwood
- David Plunkett, Lake Jackson
- Christina Hartman, Pearland
- Cindy Goodrum, Angleton
- Sheree Muzny, Lake Jackson

In addition, there are ten or twelve other people who are still expressing a possible interest in participating and we anticipate at least some of these submitting Applications by class time in January.

I have copied to all my fellow Board of Director Members all the contact information and brief Bio's for all the committed Interns. In addition I have copied them with the list of "still-interested" individuals and the history of our contact and encouragement with each of them over the past weeks and months.

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for the privilege of having served as your Secretary in 2010 and now having served as Training Chairman for 2012 and 2013? Thank you especially for the tremendous support and assistance that so many have contributed toward the Intern Training program. That is what makes the program successful, and I have no doubt that your support and encouragement will continue for the new 2014 Intern Training Class.

FWS Updates on Bats, Frogs, and Economic Impact of Refuges

The USFWS Refuge Friends Newswire stories from November include updates on bat and frog research as well a status report on the economic impact of wildlife refuges. To read the full stories, go to <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/friends/newswire/>.



Photo by USFWS

Bats: USFWS ecologists are using a bat detector to map bat populations and to track the impact of the deadly white-nose syndrome as it moves into the Southeast. The disease has already shown up in Northern

Alabama and NW Arkansas. The bat detector, called an Anabat, is a 'black box' attached to a vehicle roof. It records the ultra-high frequency clicks and squeaks that bats use to navigate. More than 40 national wildlife refuges are contributing data to the Southeast Region mobile acoustical bat monitoring project.

Frogs and Toads: A 10-year-study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed that, on average, fewer than 2 percent of frogs and toads sampled on 152 refuges had physical abnormalities involving the skeleton and eyes. In 1995, middle school students discovered frogs with misshapen, extra or missing limbs at a Minnesota wetland. Since then, scientists have continued to report frogs and toads with severe abnormalities and documented global amphibian population declines, disease outbreaks and an

increased rate of species extinctions. The research effort – called the National Abnormal Amphibian Program – sampled more than 68,000 frogs on 152 refuges, and in the process, compiled one of the world's largest databases on amphibian abnormalities.

Economy: America's national wildlife refuges are important to the nation's economy, pumping \$2.4 billion into the economy and supporting more than 35,000 jobs, according to a new national report released by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell. The National Wildlife Refuge System is the largest network of lands in the nation set aside for wildlife, with 561 national wildlife refuges – at least one refuge in every state – covering more than 150 million acres.

Photo Gallery Monthly Highlights – December Newsletter

By Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

Plant species added to the galleries this month include Lavender Thrift (Sea Lavender), Longbarb Arrowhead, Whitemouth Dayflower, and Rosy Palafox.

Thanks to Jerry Eppner, who participated in the Butterfly Count at Brazos Bend State Park, four new Lepidoptera

species were added. They included Turk's Cap White Skipper, Common Buckeye butterfly, Dun Skipper, and Dusky-blue Groundstreak butterfly.

The horned lark was the sole new bird species added.

Scientific Name Tells a Story of Accomplishment vs. Laziness

The Whitemouth Dayflower (*Commelina erecta*) is said to be named for the three Dutch botanists named Commelin. The two large blue petals represent the two Commelin brothers that were published botanists, while the inconspicuous white petal represents the third brother that did not accomplish much. (*USDA Plant Guide, Erect Dayflower*)



Whitemouth Dayflower, Brazoria NWR, P. Romfh.

Dusky-blue Groundstreak (Hairstreak) Shows off Orange and White Streaks

Calycopis isobeon was originally described from a Costa Rica specimen in 1872. The species ranges from south Texas to Venezuela.

Eggs are laid in leaf litter on the ground. Caterpillars eat dead leaves and fruits, and detritus.



Dusky-blue Groundstreak, Brazos Bend State Park, Jerry Eppner

THREE PASSERINES SHARE YELLOW AND BLACK IN DIFFERENT PATTERNS

Three birds from the Order Passeriformes all have yellow and black feathers around the head and neck but belong to different families. The **Dickcissel** (left) is easily distinguished by its sparrow-like size, its stout bill, yellow chest feathers, and a rusty patch on its shoulder. It migrates from Venezuela and Central America north through Texas from March to June.

The male **Horned Lark** (middle) is distinguished by its black face-patch, a short, stubby bill and the 'horned' look of its head feathers. The **Eastern Meadowlark**, a year-round resident, is often perched on fence posts or low bushes, its long, spear-shaped bill wide open, piercing the air with a long, lazy whistle.

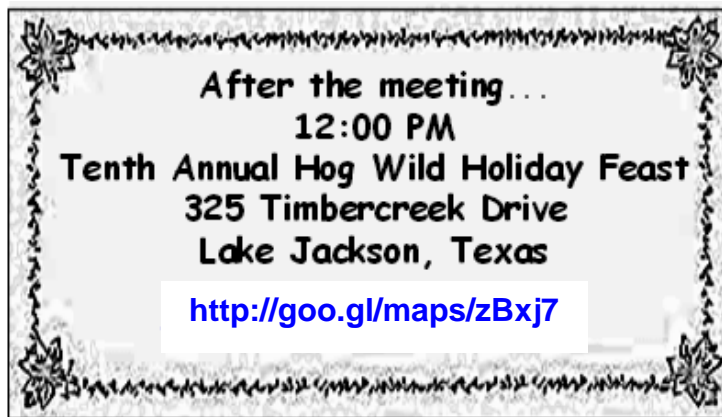


L-R: Dickcissel (San Bernard NWR, May 2013, Horned Lark male (Surfside Salt Flats, Oct. 2013, and Eastern Meadowlark, Brazoria NWR, Oct. 2013 (Photos- P. Romfh)

Reminders

Reminders about the December General Meeting:

- This meeting begins **one hour later than** usual (9:30 snacks 10:00 business meeting)
- The morning refreshment team includes **Dee Eddins, Becky McClendon, Patsy Lepper, Phil Huxford**
- This meeting is approved for Volunteer Time (approved hours to be announced)..
- There will be no training at this meeting.



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS

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|---------------------------------|--|
| President | Mike Mullins, Sweeny |
| 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 |
| Membership Director | Jerry Eppner, Lake Jackson |
| Volunteer Service Chair | Pete Romfh, Houston |
| Advanced Training Chair | Tom Morris, Lake Jackson |
| Outreach Chair | Ruby Lewis, Angleton |
| Chapter Host | Jerry Krampota, Alvin |
| Calendar Editor | Andy Smith, Lake Jackson |
| Webmaster | Neal McLain, Brazoria |
| Facebook Editor | Dick Schaffhausen, Alvin |
| Intern representatives to Board | Chris Kneupper, Brazoria; Dick Schaffhausen, Alvin |

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| Chapter Advisers | Connie Stolte (Texas Parks & Wildlife Department) John O'Connell (AgriLife Extension Service) |
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| Newsletter Editor | Neal McLain |
| Newsletter Writers | Mike Mullins, Peggy Romfh, Jerry Eppner, Neal McLain |

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| Website | http://tmn-cot.org |
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