



Chapter News

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A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MIKE



Don't look now but summer is right around the corner. Hudson Woods EE program (HWEEP) is wrapping up and Discovery EE program (DEEP) won't be far behind. The kids will be out of school shortly and the Library program

will be in full swing. The birders among us are watching for the first signs of the travelers returning to their summer grounds. A little party called Migration Celebration is once again here. You know, this thing we have decided to embrace called Mother Nature has always got something exciting for us no matter the time of year.

Our programs over the summer have some really neat subjects such as Bluebirds and Crawdads and Butterflies. I think Peggy could use a few more Nature Quiz presenters if you would like to help. She will gladly work with you on your idea for a subject.

We are still looking for a few more gumbo cooks for the May Graduation luncheon. Let me know if you are willing to bring a pot. We will have the ability to warm it up on an oven or if you use a crockpot it can be plugged in.

We are going to furnish rice and crackers with the gumbo. If anyone would like to bring some salads or other side dishes feel free to do so.

Get out there and have a good time and I'll c'ya at the meeting.

—Mike

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

20th Annual
Migration Celebration
April 12 & 13, 2014
All Free
San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge
www.migrationcelebration.org

14th Annual
Balcones Songbird Nature Festival
April 25-28, 2014
Texas Hill Country
Balcones Canyonlands
National Wildlife Refuge

Registration opens February 15
balconessongbirdfestival.org

FriendsOfAnahuacNWR.com/FishingDay
Family Fishing Day
Saturday, June 7, 2014
Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge

Chapter News is published by Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Contact us at Texas A&M AgriLife Brazoria County Office 21017 County Road 171 Angleton, TX 77515-8903 979-864-1558 (Angleton) 979-388-1558 (Brazosport) 281-756-1558 (Alvin) 979-388-1566 (Fax) <http://tmn-cot.org>

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.

Find us on Facebook
facebook.com/TMN.COT

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, April 9, 2014
AgriLife Building, Angleton**



8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Refreshment Team: Roy Morgan, Marty Cornell, Elaine Crews, Mary Helen Israel, Carolyn May-Monie
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: Bluebirds Speaker: Pauline Tom, Co-founder and President of Texas Bluebird Society <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>



Pauline Tom is a wife, mother, and grandmother who delights in spreading the joy of bluebirds and making memories. She is a co-founder and current President of Texas Bluebird Society, an organization she envisioned to disperse Texas-specific bluebird information and to spread the bluebird population to new locales with appropriate habitat but without cavities for nesting. She assumed the Presidency in 2001, and she hopes someone will take the reins really soon.

She served on the Board of Directors of the North American Bluebird Society Board of Directors, 2001 – 2007. She is recognized by NABS for leadership in bluebird conservation and contributions to the organization. She writes a weekly chit-chat column, *Mountain City Montage*, for her local newspaper.

She reports that she and “RonTom” laugh every day at their dachshunds, BoD and KissMe, participants in past years in the annual Buda Wiener Dog Races.



TEXAS BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

The Texas Bluebird Society is an all-volunteer grassroots organization helping bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds through increasing nesting sites while sustaining and increasing their food supply (insects and berries of native plants).

Each new member who joins (\$15) during the presentation will receive a free bluebird-sized nestbox (well-suited for a variety of cavity nesting birds).

For further information about the society, go to:

<http://texasbluebirdsociety.org>



CALLING ALL CHEFS

By Barbara Burkhardt, Past President

**THE GREAT GUMBO COOKOFF TO HONOR THE GRADUATION OF
THE GREAT 2014 INTERN CLASS!!!
WEDNESDAY, MAY 14TH, 2014**

RULES:

1. Any FLAVOR of gumbo you would like to cook.
2. Amount: One full 6-quart crockpot.

Already signed up:

**Mike Mullins,
Pam Pelteir
Chris Kneupper
Barbara Burkhardt**



Get your name in the POT!!!!

Contact B. Burkhardt for details!
bburkhardt@tmn-cot.org

Membership Report

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Chair

The 2014 time sheets are starting to come in reflecting our chapter member's commitment to the mission. As of March 30, 17 members have submitted time sheets with a total of 1251 hours of volunteer time.

Of significance is how many folks have already recertified for 2014. Members to be recognized at the April general meeting include David Brandes, Barbara Burkhardt, Patsy Lepper, Ruby Lewis, Denis Mudderman, Peggy Romfh, Pete Romfh, Dick Schaffhausen, and Patrick Wilson. Also to be recognized are Peggy Romfh and Mike Mullins, both for 1000 hr of cumulative VT. These chapter management positions keep one busy.

Facebook update

By Richard Schaffhausen, COT Facebook Editor

Thanks to all those who follow the TMN-COT page on Facebook. For those who have a Facebook page but don't follow TMN-COT and want to, here's the link

<https://www.facebook.com/TMN.COT>

I am trying to put more TMN-COT activity photos on that page and if I see something that I think would be of interest to members, I will share those items.

I could use your help. If you are at an event, take some photos. If non-members are in the photo choose an angle that doesn't show faces (otherwise, we need a photo release). Send the photos along with a note about the activity to my email address:

dickanddonna2@comcast.net

If you see something you think would be of interest to your "friends", please share the post. If you like a post, please "like" the post. That way I have a better idea of what people enjoy seeing.

Migration Celebration Publicity

By Richard Schaffhausen, MC Publicity Manager

In my new role as Publicity Manager for Migration Celebration, I need your help here too. Go to the Migration Celebration facebook page, find a post that publicizes the event, and share it with your Facebook "friends".

<https://www.facebook.com/MigrationCelebration>

For better or worse, web-based advertising is about the only way we can reach the younger generations.

ADSPOTS

The adspots appearing in Page 1 are part of a cross-promotion agreement among Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges, Friends of Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge, and Friends of Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. They are displayed on the websites of all three organizations.

TMN-COT members are invited to attend these events.

Jeanne Manry and Richard Schaffhausen join FOBWR Board of Directors

Lake Jackson, Texas — The Board of Directors of Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (FOBWR) has announced that two TMN-COT members, Jeanne Manry and Richard Schaffhausen, have been elected to the FOBWR Board. As board members, they also serve on the Migration Celebration Planning Committee.



Jeanne Manry, TMN-COT Class of 2010, has participated in numerous chapter activities including the 2011 field trip to Matagorda Island and our Environmental Education programs at the refuges and County Libraries. She served as a member of the LEEP transition team, assisting ConocoPhillips employees in their efforts to assume responsibility for the Linnville Environmental Education Program.

As a member of the FOBWR Board, she serves as Treasurer. She reports that she is "looking forward to being the new treasurer for FOBWR" and hopes to encourage more TMN-COT members and others to join us in educating people about our wonderful refuges.



Richard Schaffhausen, TMN-COT Class of 2013, has been an active participant in our activities. He serves as photographer at many chapter events, and as the editor of the chapter's Facebook page where he often posts photos of chapter activities.

As a member of the Migration Celebration Planning Committee Dick has assumed responsibility for publicity. In this capacity, he pursues news articles and advertising in local newspapers, newspaper websites, and cable television public access channels. See his article in the adjacent column.

Barbara Bruyere appointed COT Librarian



Barbara Bruyere, TMN-COT Class of 2004, has agreed to serve as our chapter librarian. In this position, she will be responsible for the chapter's book collection located in the Master Naturalist/Master Gardeners workroom at the AgriLife building.

Our book collection includes books and pamphlets donated to the chapter by the estates of former members Charlie Clements and Carl Dodson, and by individual donors.

All items are available for loan. To borrow a book, catch Barbara at one of our general meetings or see Becky Duke, the Agriculture/Natural Resources Secretary at the AgriLife building.

Five TMN-COT members receive President's Call to Service Award

In January 2003, President George W. Bush signed an Executive Order creating the *President's Council on Service and Civic Participation* (The Council) within the *Corporation for National and Community Service* (CNCS).

The Council created an awards program known as the *President's Volunteer Service Award* program as a way to thank and honor Americans who, by their demonstrated commitment and example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service. The awards recognize individuals, families, and groups that have achieved a certain standard measured by the number of hours of service over a 12-month period or cumulative hours earned over the course of a lifetime.

The Council has established several award levels. The *President's Call to Service Award* recognizes 4,000 hours or more of volunteer service over the recipient's lifetime. Persons of all ages are eligible to receive the award.



The *President's Call to Service Award* includes a lapel pin (left), a Personalized Certificate, and a Congratulatory Letter from the President of the United States. All awards are ordered through officially registered and approved "Certifying Organizations." Certifying Organizations verify hours, nominate qualified volunteers, and distribute the Awards locally.[*]

The Texas Master Naturalist State Office in Kerrville is the registered and approved Certifying Organization for the Texas Master Naturalist Program. The State Office nominates Certified Master Naturalists for recognition and administers procedural matters. Local Chapters present the awards.

Five TMN-COT members have earned the *President's Call to Service Award* during the first quarter of 2014: Ed Barrios, Justina Dent, Jerry Eppner, Sandy Henderson, and Neal McLain.

Jerry Eppner

Lake Jackson, Texas, January 27, 2014

Jerry, a member of the Class of 2004, received the award at the annual Volunteer Recognition Banquet at Sea Center Texas. Jerry qualified for this award through his combined service to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as a Sea Center Texas volunteer and as a member Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Master Naturalist Program state office were the Certifying Organizations for this award.



Presentation ceremony at Sea Center Texas, January 27, 2014. From left: Ross Melinchuk (TPWD), Jerry Eppner (award recipient), John Blaha (Coastal Conservation Association), Johnny Chavez (Dow Chemical Company).

Photo: Sea Center Texas.

Ed Barrios, Justina Dent, Sandy Henderson, Neal McLain

Angleton, Texas, March 12, 2014.

Ed (Class of 2004), Justina (2001), Sandy (2007), and Neal (2004) received the award at the Chapter's monthly membership meeting at the Brazoria County AgriLife Extension Service. These members qualified for the award through their volunteer service to the Chapter and its partners. The Texas Master Naturalist Program state office was the Certifying Organization for this award.



Presentation ceremony at Brazoria County AgriLife Extension Service, March 12, 2014. Chapter President Mike Mullins (right) presents the awards to Sandy Henderson, Justina Dent, Ed Barrios, and Neal McLain.

Photo: Pete Romfh

Since our chapter was founded in 2001, fourteen members have received the award. <http://tmn-cot.org/s/pc.html>

[*] President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. "President's Volunteer Service Award: About the Award." The White House, Washington, 2006. <http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/tg/pvsainfo/dspAboutAwards.cfm>

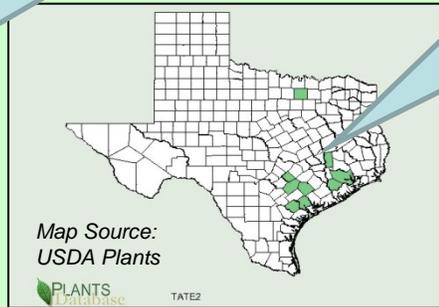
Texas Umbrellawort (*Tauschia texana*) is Found in Brazoria and Fort Bend Counties

By Peggy Romfh



Texas Umbrellawort is found only in Texas...

...and in Texas, USDA Plants maps show that Texas Umbrellawort is seen in only a few Texas counties.



Map Source:
USDA Plants



Photos by P. Romfh

Tauschia is a genus of flowering plants in the carrot family which are known as umbrellaworts. These are perennial plants with taproots or tubers and foliage generally resembling that of relatives parsley and carrot. *Tauschia* are native to the Americas.

Based on reports from several TMN-COT members, Texas Umbrellawort has been seen in 2014 at Brazos Bend State Park, the Betty Brown Unit and Cocklebur Slough in San Bernard NWR, Hanson Riverside County Park off of Hwy 35, CR 309, and at Camp Karankawa north of Sweeny. In 2013, a TMN-COT intern project team identified the umbrellawort at the Betty Brown Unit.

Introduced / Non-native Species are Prolific in Brazoria County

An **introduced, alien, exotic, non-indigenous, or non-native** species is a species living outside its native distributional range which has arrived there by human activity, either deliberate or accidental. Not all introduced species are considered invasive.

An **invasive species is a species that is non-native to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm.** There are 93 species of non-native plants in Brazoria County that may or may not be invasive. Some of them are plants that flower in late winter or early spring and are often found in the grass, ditches, or at the edge of wooded areas. Many have flowers that are about ¼ - 3/8 inch in diameter.



Blue Scarlet Pimpernel (*Annnagallis arvensis*), observed at Quintana jetty; blue variety also known as Poor-Man's Weatherglass.



Henbit Deadnettle (*Lamium amplexicaule*), observed at Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary and Brazoria NWR.



Black medick (*Medicago lupulina*) observed at Brazos Bend State Park and Hanson Riverside County Park.



Common Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) observed at Brazos Bend State Park (BBSP) and widespread in ditches.



L - Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), observed in ditch off Sawmill Road near BBSP.

R – Threelobe False Mallow (*Malvastrum coromandelianum*), observed at San Bernard NWR.

Text by Peggy Romfh
Photos by P. Romfh



Hey!! I'm not a native either!!!



Birds of Prey at O.W. Roberts Elementary School

By Neal McLain, Editor

“Birds of Prey” programs are a regular feature of Migration Celebration. In addition to BOP programs presented during Migration Celebration, volunteers from Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (FOBWR) present Birds of Prey programs at local K-12 schools. The 2014 BOP schedule includes 29 school programs.

Birds of Prey programs are produced by EarthQuest, a non-profit corporation based in, Georgia, and presented by Steve Hoddy, founder and president of EarthQuest. FOBWR (and TMN-COT) member Phil Huxford administers the program on behalf of FOBWR. Working with school officials, Phil

schedules shows during the two months preceding Migration Celebration, raises funds to pay for the programs, and serves as a sort of Master of Ceremonies during BOP presentations.

Phil obtains funding from a variety of sources: corporations, service clubs, and individual donors. Several TMN-COT members have contributed funds.

The following photos were taken on March 28, 2014, during a Birds of Prey Presentation at BISD O.W. Roberts Elementary school in Lake Jackson. Additional photos are here: <http://tinyurl.com/BOP-Roberts-2014>



The entire student body, and their teachers, attend the BOP program



Phil introduces the Birds of Prey program



Female Andean Condor “Storm”



EarthQuest president Steve Hoddy with Storm



Phil Huxford with Harris Hawk “Laredo”

Wilderness at 50: A Remarkable Concept *from the USFWS Newswire*

By Peggy Romfh

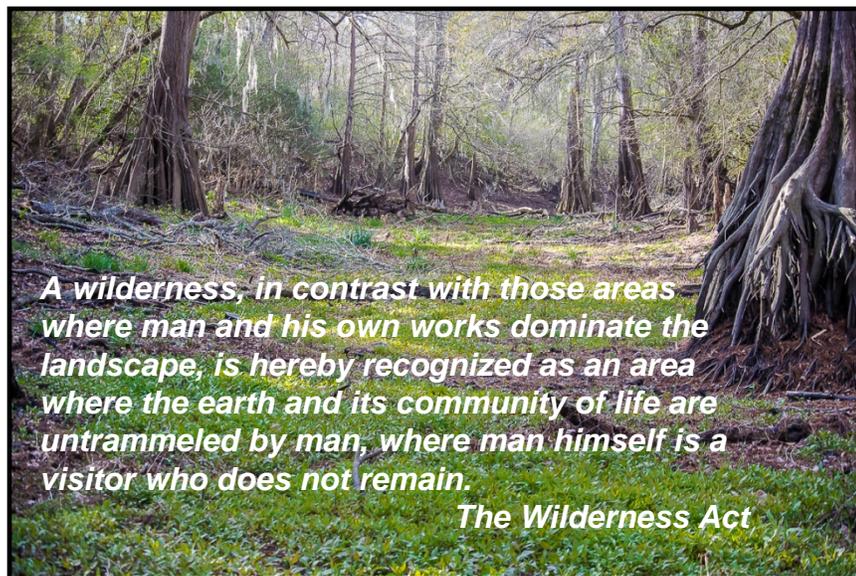
2014 is the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. The law was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on Sept. 3, 1964.

The Wilderness Act established the National Wilderness Preservation System, which today comprises about 109.5 million acres in 44 states and Puerto Rico.

USFWS manages more than 20 million acres of wilderness in the Refuge System (about 20% of the total). There are 75 wilderness areas on 63 refuges in 25 states.

The Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service manage the remaining wilderness areas.

When President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act, he made the following statement: *"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."*



Otto Unit, San Bernard NWR. Photo by Pete Romfh

Other Stories from the USFWS Newswire

Increase in Forest Fires Cause a Re-look at Targeted Burn Strategies

In the Southeast, firefighters on forested wetlands have faced several large wildfires in recent years – including two each at Virginia's Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and Georgia's Okefenokee Refuge, and one each at Pocosin Lakes Refuge and Alligator River Refuge in North Carolina. These fires produced sustained smoke and embers smoldering as deep as eight feet into organic peat soils.

To address the challenges, the USFWS gathered experts to study the problem.

One solution identified was the addition of water control structures at wildlife refuges to reduce saltwater intrusion into wetlands and to move in fresh water during drought conditions. That keeps peat from drying out and becoming flammable.

Additionally, as sea-level rise increases salinity in soil, forested wetlands are dying and being replaced by salt-tolerant shrubs and then marsh. During this transition, standing or fallen dead trees increase fuel for wildfires.

Managers are focused on soil subsidence and accretion studies to help identify the right frequency and extent to use prescribed fire to stimulate plant productivity and biomass accumulation in peat soils.

Urban Initiative Is Vital to Conservation

Eighty percent of people in the USA now live in urban areas.

Jim Kurth, Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System noted, *"While our traditional hunting and angling partners remain crucial to conservation, their numbers reflect a smaller percentage of the nation's overall population. If we want to grow support for wildlife conservation, then we have to go where the people are: We have to go to the cities."*

The good news is the Refuge System is already present in many cities. There are more than 100 national wildlife refuges within 25 miles of cities of more than 250,000 people.

As the Refuge System implements the Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative, further activities will be identified to illustrate the integration of the Refuges into urban environments.



Cedar Elm, Dance Bayou Unit, San Bernard NWR. Photo by Pete Romfh

April is a great month to volunteer as a Texas Master Naturalist!



Photo by P. Romfh

Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary

Warblers are migrating through QNBS. Consider volunteering for Spring Fling with GCBO in April!

Habitat and Ecosystem Photography: A Challenge to Master Naturalists

By Denis Mudderman

This year, 2014, is the ninth year of the Migration Celebration Nature Photography Contest. Kathy Adams Clark, again one of the contest judges, has been a judge for the contest every year since its beginning. This year we recruited a new second judge, professional nature photography Sean Fitzgerald from the Dallas area. Sean has a uniquely different perspective on nature photography that includes the more artistic or surreal. See Sean's website at <http://www.seanfitzgerald.com>

The contest is organized into seven categories:

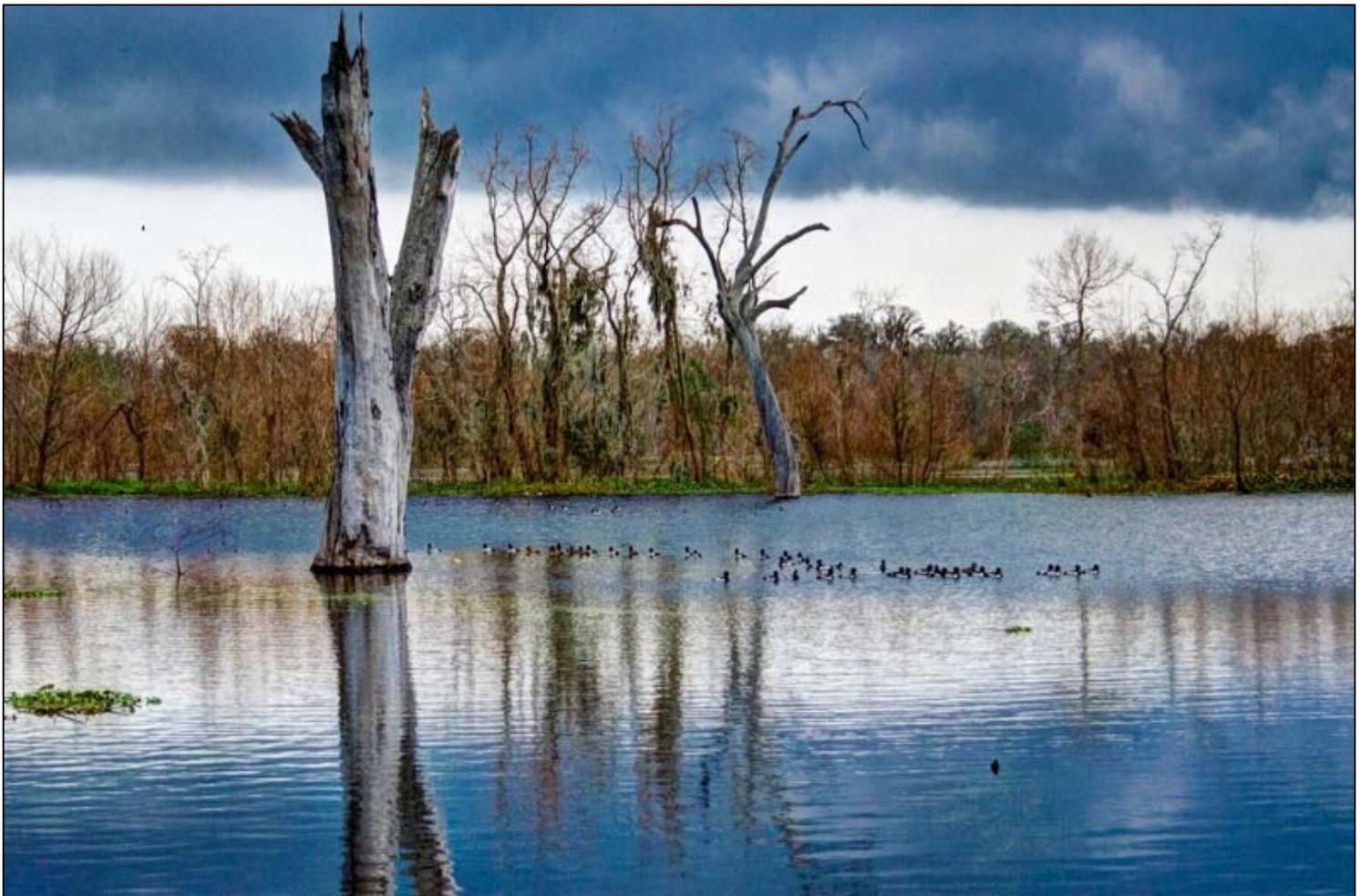
CATEGORY	RESTRICTIONS
Wildlife	Photos taken anywhere in the world.
Birds	
Nature Photograph as Art	
Wildlife	Photos must have been taken in the local six counties: Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Matagorda, Wharton and Jackson.
Birds	
Plant Life	
Habitat & Ecosystems	

The logic behind the six-county geographic restriction was to focus and showcase photography found in an area that roughly corresponds to that of the Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

We further promote photography on the refuge by judging all photos taken on any of the refuges as a separate category. In addition, Jennifer Sanchez, Texas Mid-coast Complex Project Leader, selects up to 40 entered photos for display at the Complex office in Brazoria and the Brazoria NWR field office in Danbury. We award a special ribbon for these photos.

Of the 185 entered photos, nearly half are closeup photos of birds and many of the rest are closeup photos of wildlife. The winning photos in these categories are usually so outstanding they would compete strongly in any national nature photography contest. The Habitat and Ecosystem category usually gets about a dozen or so entries. In reality, Habitats and Ecosystems represent one of the most important and needed category of photography by the refuge.

Continued...



"Elm Lake in Winter" by Peggy Romfh

Habitat and Ecosystem Photography: A Challenge to Master Naturalists (continued)

As we know, national wildlife refuges exist for wildlife. It is the work of refuge managers and staff to manage habitat to benefit wildlife. As with Brazoria and San Bernard refuges, management can be the effort that benefits a wild range of wildlife. Examples include prescribe burns, eliminating Chinese tallow, plantings to enhance diversity and health of coastal prairies. Construction of dikes and control of water level on fresh water ponds maximize benefit to a wild range of waterfowl.

Sometimes management can focus on an individual species. As a result of this direct association between wildlife species and habitat, great photos of wildlife *and* habitat is most needed by the refuge in reports, publications, interpretation, and presentations.

The general focus with the photo contest and the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges / Texas Master Naturalist photo gallery has some great individual species photos. As master naturalists we also need to capture great wildlife-habitat photos.

Two excellent examples of wildlife-habitat photos are shown below and on Page 8. These photos were entered in the 2013 Photo Contest.

In his presentation here on April 19, Sean Fitzgerald mentioned that if your camera equipment doesn't permit framing individual birds and other wildlife, then capture the wildlife in a wider scene.

To help address the need for wildlife-habitat photos, the Friends/Master Naturalist photo gallery will be expanded to include these photos. In the 2014 Migration Celebration Photo Contest, photos for the Habitat and Ecosystem category will be expected to illustrate a specific habitat, not just scenic — and better still, include a wildlife species in its native habitat. Five years ago when I made modifications to the contest and created the Habitat and Ecosystem category, my thoughts at the time were, “who is better than Master Naturalists in appreciating and capturing great photos of habitats?”



“Margin Community” by Patty Brinkmeyer.

CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

President	Mike Mullins, Sweeny
Vice President/Program	Peggy Romfh, Houston
Secretary	Becky McClendon, Lake Jackson
Treasurer	Gerald Forrest, Damon
State Representative	Ed Barrios, Lake Jackson
Past President	Barbara Burkhardt, Lake Jackson
Training Director	Roy Morgan, Lake Jackson
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
Librarian	Barbara Bruyere, Pearland
Webmaster	Neal McLain, Brazoria
Facebook Editor	Dick Schaffhausen, Alvin
Intern representatives to Board	Chris Kneupper, Brazoria; Dick Schaffhausen, Alvin

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

Website	http://tmn-cot.org
Facebook	http://facebook.com/TMN.COT
Email Listserv	See details below

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



MASTER NATURALIST EMAIL LISTS

TMN-COT Chapter list

- Instructions http://tmn-cot.org/Email_Lists/index.html
- Send messages to TMN-COT@googlegroups.com
- Message Archive <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail>
- All messages are sent immediately.

State Master Naturalist list

- Instructions <http://txmn.org/staying-connected/sign-up-for-tmn-listserv/>
- Subscribe listserv@listserv.tamu.edu
- All messages are held for moderation by the TMN State Coordinator

Chapter News is published monthly on the first day of the month by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome. Submission deadline is 5:00 PM the last day of the month. Submissions should be sent by email to *Chapter News* Editor at tmn.cot@gmail.com. Submissions may be edited for clarity, grammar, spelling, and space requirements. Photos are welcome. Please send photos as JPEG files