



Chapter News

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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



The end of May marked the end of an era of a great supporter and someone who has touched many of the chapter as well as most of the local school kids in our area. Of course I am referring to Bryan Adams.

That friendly, soft spoken, mild mannered and loveable dictator (oops director) of the

DEEP program is retiring after 15 years of dedicated service.

Yes, Bryan is passing on the torch to an as-yet-to-be-determined successor. We wish him well in his upcoming retirement and expect to see him in an intern class shortly.

May and June also have two very important days that honor our Mothers and Fathers. For most of us they are the ones that gave us our first interest in the outdoors and the wonderful things that go on around us. Be it working in a flower or vegetable garden, camping, fishing, hunting, or any of the other great things a parent can do with a child. Take a moment to remember why we are who we are and what we still have to give ahead of us.

The summer library programs are upon us. Camp Mohawk, Fishin' Fiesta. Our bucket may not runneth over but it is still mighty full. Check the Calendar for opportunities.

Due to a lot of the board being off vacationing there will not be a June board meeting. If you have any business that needs immediate attention let me know.

Have a safe and happy summer

—Mike

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



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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Coordinator

Wow! You guys must have been really busy lately. Unfortunately, it appears we weren't working on many Master Naturalist activities.

As of May 30, I have received very few new time sheets, and no recertifications have presented themselves. But that is OK, all is forgiven. We are in that period of time where school-related activities have concluded, migration-related activities are past us and summer activities are yet to come. So good luck to all with the summer volunteering season.

However there is one ray of sunshine here. Two more of our 2014 interns have certified as Texas Master Naturalists: Joycelynn Grigson and Dawn Logan. Congratulations to both of you!!

As of May 30, 39 members have submitted time sheets with a total of 4224 hours of VT year to date.

NOTE: Due to vacation schedules, new recertification or certification milestones since April will be presented at the July general meeting. Looking forward to a long list of qualifiers at that time.

Jerry Eppner is Membership Coordinator of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. He can be reached at TMNmembership@gmail.com



Check out the Texas Environmental Excellence Awards video on our website home page.

<http://tmn-cot.org>

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, June 11, 2014
AgriLife Building, Angleton**



8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Refreshment Team: Torry Tvedt, Kirby Rapstein
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: Ecological Theory for the Amateur Naturalist. Speaker: Bill Ostrand, Retired. USFWS Wildlife Biologist <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</i> http://tmn-cot.org/Advanced/index.html

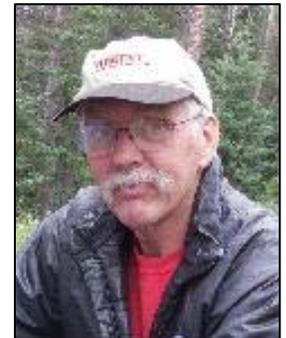
Bill Ostrand recently retired from the US Fish and Wildlife Service where he worked as a wildlife biologist in Texas and Alaska. He has served as a Zone Biologist for the Texas Coast — an area extending from Sabine River to Rio Grande — as a Staff Biologist to the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council, and as Principle Investigator of the Seabird/Forage Fish Interactions Research Project, Alaska. He holds a M.S. in Wildlife Biology from Utah State University and a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Florida.

Bill has published several articles on topics that include selection of forage-fish schools of black-legged kittiwakes and long-term assessment of nesting habits by mourning doves. He has also participated in the aerial whooping crane counts.

Bill began college studying engineering but after his third year switched to Wildlife Ecology. He earned his BS in Wildlife Ecology at the University of Florida in 1973. After college Bill spent many years working seasonally for the US Forest Service and along the way went back to school to earn an AA degree in Civil Engineering. In the 80s, Bill joined the US Forest Service in Alaska. In 1991 he began graduate school at Utah State University. There he studied the habitat and foraging associations of Mourning Doves in the Great Basin and earned an MS in Wildlife Biology. In 1994 Bill returned to Alaska to take a job with the US Fish and Wildlife Service researching seabird ecology in Prince William Sound.

In 2000 he moved into a new position in which he worked with Alaska Native peoples on the management of the subsistence take of migratory birds. The job afforded him the opportunity to visit natives throughout the state and learn about their cultures and traditions.

Five years ago he came to the Gulf Coast to take the position as the Zone Biologist for the Texas Coast. Among his diverse projects were a survey of coastal invertebrates occupying Refuge beaches and marsh coastlines, initiation of a marsh elevation monitoring project to determine if our refuges will be converted to open bays as a result of sea-level rise, and ecosystem monitoring of bottomland hardwoods.



He retired in 2012 and pursues many activities including working with the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory as a Research Associate and keeping his biological skills sharp by working on forest bird ecology. His hobbies are mostly things that get him outside: river canoeing, nature study, Nordic skiing, motorcycling, hiking, camping, fishing, welding, and acoustic blues guitar.

Rather than focusing on learning taxonomy and natural history facts, Bill's goal is to introduce TMN-COT members to some of his favorite theories of how the living world works and to stimulate thought on how the ecosystem functions and how it might respond to change. He describes his theories about ecology as quite simple and often obvious and intuitive. His talk will include a discussion of behaviors we see in ecosystems, island bio-geography, foraging theory, and the impact of population growth on ecosystems.

Photo Gallery Updates

by Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

Brazoria NWR Provides Photo Menagerie: *On any given day and set of weather conditions, different bird species are seen at the Refuge. In mid-May, the ponds and canals were filled with more than 30 species of birds, including Wilson's phalaropes and stilt and spotted sandpipers. Over 25 soras were seen in one hour of observation! A week later, some species such as phalaropes had migrated north, the soras remained hidden, and black terns swooped over the ponds before heading north.*



Wilson's Phalaropes Like Salt Water

Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) breed in northern prairie wetlands and winter on South American salt lakes. Because they have fringes on their toes, phalaropes are good swimmers.

Unlike most bird species, females are larger and more brightly colored than males and compete for mates. After they lay their eggs, they leave all the parental care to the males. These birds lean forward with bills extended as they pick small bits of food from the water's surface. They are easily identified with their salmon/rust-colored neck patches. During migration, they inhabit shallow ponds, flooded fields, and sometimes mudflats. Several pairs were observed foraging at the refuge in the thick grass and shallow ponds. *[Photos by P&P Romfh]*

Spotted Sandpiper

Another bird seen foraging along the canal banks in the Refuge was the spotted sandpiper. It also will head to the northern USA and Canada to breed, and like the phalarope, the male will raise the young.



Magnificent Frigatebird

By late May, the bird population had shifted as the migrants headed north. Jerry Eppner captured this photo of a magnificent frigatebird soaring above Brazoria NWR, while the ponds were filled with the sounds of mottled ducks, black-necked stilts, roseate spoonbills and other summer and year-round residents.

Mottled Duck Family

After the migrants head north, it was time to enjoy resident mottled duck and ducklings at Brazoria NWR. *[Photo by P. Romfh]*



Plant Galleries Bloom with Color and Plant Detail: Thanks to the efforts of Leo Novak, Chris Kneupper, and others, the plant entries in the Photo Gallery are filling with great photos. Leo is focusing on the trees of Brazoria County and has provided some excellent close-ups of bark and the front and back of leaves. Chris is focusing on the Apiaceae (Carrot Family) species found in Brazoria County and is determined to find all of them!

Mustang and Muscadine Grapes are easily distinguished by their leaves, as this photo by Leo Novak shows. Unlike the Muscadine, the lower surface of the mustang grape leaves are very white and densely hairy.

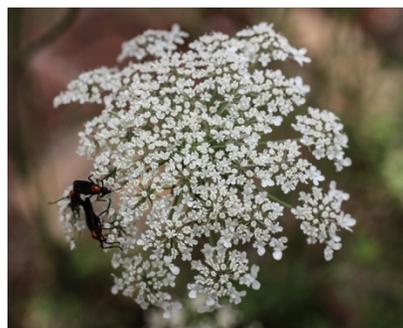


American Sycamore tree bark sloughs off in scales or plates leaving a smooth, whitish inner bark. The sycamore can grow to a larger trunk diameter than any other American hardwood.

[Photo by Leo Novak]



Queen Anne's Lace is one of the non-native (introduced) species of Apiaceae in Brazoria County. The compound umbels are distinctive and are seen in edible plants such as parsley, carrots, and chervil but also in the two deadliest plants in North America – hemlock and water hemlock. *[Photo by Chris Kneupper]*



**TMN-COT
Photo
Gallery
750
species
and
counting!!**

Citizen Science Projects – The “Eyes” Have it!

Citizen Science Projects are sponsored by government, university and nature organizations and provide an opportunity for the naturalist to collect data and observations about topics as varied as threatened and endangered species, bird migration, fish, and water quality. At the January COT meeting, Jim Renfro shared the story of the USFWS bird-banding/survey project in which he and other members have participated for over 10 years. Some of the other Citizen Science projects are showcased below. For more information or to obtain approval for a Citizen Science project, contact Pete Romfh at peteromfh@tmn-cot.org.

What Criteria Should a Project Meet to be Designated “Citizen Science?”

By Pete Romfh, VT Coordinator

I often get asked the question, “I’m doing this ‘scientific’ activity. May I count it as volunteer hours?” Sometimes the answer is ‘Yes’ and sometimes it’s ‘No.’ The decision isn’t truly based on random chance or how I feel at that moment. Here are some of the criteria used to decide if an activity is a valid form of ‘Citizen Science.’

First: Is there an entity or organization this work will benefit? It’s ‘For the good of Mankind’ really doesn’t qualify!

Next: Think of the word SMART. The data gathered must be:

- **Specific** - Is there a clear idea of what is being studied or observed?
- **Measurable** – Can the observation be quantified in some numerical or mathematic manner?
- **Achievable** – Is there a reasonable probability that the work can be done safely and accurately?
- **Reportable** – Is the data reported where it is available for review and utilization?
- **Time Bound** – Are there defined limits on the amount of time proposed to accomplish the project?

Lost Ladybug (Lady Beetles) Project

The Lost Ladybug Project was started about 10 years ago by Cornell University when researchers observed that introduced species of lady beetles were increasing across North America and native species were rapidly declining.

Although the initial goal of the project they started was to get kids involved in collecting, observing and identifying lady beetles in the field, citizen scientists of any age are welcome to photograph lady beetles and provide GPS locations and demographic data to the Cornell University team. Researchers at the University then use the data to track where/when/what lady beetles are seen.

As of 5/27/14, photos of 25,178 lady beetles have been submitted. We recently sent in 3 photos from Brazoria County. For these beetles, national data shows:

Seaside Lady Beetle (only 22 have been reported; native) [left below]



Spotless Lady Beetle (only 570 have been reported; native) [right above]

Seven-Spotted Lady Beetle (5,266 have been reported; non-native)



Photos by P. Romfh

Texas Stream Team – Water Quality

The Texas Stream Team program is a network of trained citizen scientists that gather information water quality in Texas rivers and streams. The data is used to pinpoint problem areas in the state’s watershed and is available to the public.

Trained master naturalists and others take monthly measurements at designated creek or river locations. Measurements include dissolved oxygen, pH, nitrates, turbidity, phosphates, salinity, and bacteria, as well as environmental measures.



Photo by P. Romfh

Currently, TMN-COT members monitor two locations on the San Bernard River and one location on Oyster Creek. In the photo above, Pete Romfh is doing a salinity measurement on the lower San Bernard.

The Texas Stream Team, a program of the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University, is funded through support from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other partners.

TPWD and CCA – Citizen Science – Fishing Survey



To help quantify and measure the impact of a large reef rebuilding project, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) are asking for volunteers to fish at specific locations in East Galveston Bay and report their results. Volunteers need to provide their own boat, tackle, and a GPS system to find the locations.

Our chapter contact for this effort is Louis Peltier 281-782-0742. You may also contact Bill Rodney at TPWD’s Dickinson Marine Laboratory 281-534-0127 for details of the project.

Other Citizen Science Projects

For a list of other approved Citizen Science projects, look on the TMN-COT web site www.tmn-cot.org under VOLUNTEER/ Ongoing Activities.

Volunteers Needed

We always need volunteers! Following is a list of the most recent requests. For a complete list, please see the "Volunteering" pages on the chapter website at <http://tmn-cot.org/Ongoing/index.html>. All of the projects listed below are approved for Volunteer Time.

COT Training Director. Roy Morgan, Johnson, our Chapter's Training chair for the classes of 2014, has elected to step down from this position. This position is now available immediately. The Training Director will be responsible for leading our next training class, expected to begin in January 2015.

Timesheet Code: "COT."

For information, contact Mike Mullins, Chapter President, at mcmprm@embarqmail.com

Baby Bird Rehabber. Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue perennially needs volunteers to raise baby birds. And they *always* need help cleaning cages. These are ongoing requests; interested volunteers may participate at any time.

Timesheet code: "GCWR."

For information, contact GCWR at 979-849-0184.

GCBO Bird Camp GCBO needs volunteers to assist with its Bird Camp program, June 9-13, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Timesheet code: "GCBO."

To volunteer, contact:

- Ruby Lewis rubylewis@tmn-cot.org
- Ed Barrios barrios@tmn-cot.org

Nature Camp at Camp Mohawk County Park Nature Camp is presented by the Brazoria County Parks Department with assistance from TMN-COT. BCPD describes the program as follows:

Outdoor nature-related programming with the Brazoria County Master Naturalists.

Ages 7-12. \$30 per camper; limited space available. Pre-registration required.

TMN-COT members conduct classes and interact with students. We need volunteers to assist.

June 23-27, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Volunteers should arrive at least 1/2 hour early.

See Calendar for further details:

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

Timesheet code: "BCPD."

To volunteer contact:

- Ruby Lewis rubylewis@tmn-cot.org
- Ed Barrios barrios@tmn-cot.org

Joycelynn Grigson and Sherri Wilson elected as student reps to board

According to our Chapter's Policies & Procedures Manual, at the completion of each training class, the members of the class elect two of their members to serve as Training Class Representatives on the Board of Directors. These graduates serve one-year terms as non-voting members.

Members of the Class of 2014 have elected **Joycelynn Grigson** and **Sherri Wilson** to serve in this capacity, **Breana Kitchen** was elected as alternate.

These representatives will serve until the end of the Class of 2015 Training Class.



Grigson



Wilson



Kitchen



Nature Camp at Camp Mohawk, 2013

BCPD/ Facebook



GCBO Bird Camp, 2013

GCBO/ Facebook

This issue of Chapter News includes one attachment:

Congratulations to the Class of 2014!

http://tmn-cot.org/Newsletters/2014-06_Attach.pdf

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
Webmaster	Neal McLain, Brazoria
Facebook Editor	Dick Schaffhausen, Alvin
Class of 2014 Intern	Joycelynn Grigson, Angleton
representatives to the Board	Sherri Wilson, Surfside
Chapter Advisers	Connie Stolte (Texas Parks & Wildlife Department) John O'Connell (AgriLife Extension Service)
Newsletter Editor	Neal McLain
Newsletter Writers	Barbara Burkhardt, Jerry Eppner, Neal McLain, Mike Mullins, Peggy Romfh
Website	http://tmn-cot.org
Facebook	http://facebook.com/TMN.COT
Email Listserv	http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail



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