



# Chapter News

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## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MIKE



July 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Day.

Independence: *the time when a country or region gains political freedom from outside control ...*

[Merriam-Webster].

With our Independence we gained

the Freedoms to enjoy our lives the best we can. But is Freedom without its costs? No it isn't. We have brave young men and women who go in harm's way in far off places to protect our Independence.

This past Thursday thru Sunday I participated for the fifth year in the annual Fishing Tournament at Sargent that benefits our Wounded Warriors. Soldiers are brought down from bases all across the United States to spend a weekend fishing and enjoying life. They arrive in Sargent on Thursday and Friday with a Matagorda Calvary escort and several hundred well-wishers waving flags and cheering. They are housed and fed by volunteers in the Sargent area and then others take them out in their boats and sightsee, fish or just boat ride. They are fed, housed and treated as the heroes they are.

I had a 33-year-old Army soldier, his wife and 11-year-old daughter from Fort Sill Oklahoma who had been wounded in Iraq. We went fishing Friday in spite of the 20+ mph wind and his wife caught her first fish ever. The daughter caught a croaker to enter in the Kids Tournament and won a rod and reel.

We spent two days fishing from early in the morning until about noon. All the family caught fish and we had a wonderful time. We made memories that will not be forgotten. While fishing we saw Roseate Spoonbills and before they could ask I told them "No. Not Pink Flamingos". We talked about the area and its history and value to the outdoors. They wanted to learn about this area that had taken them in as one of their own.

One of the first things my soldier asked as he caught his first fish of the day — now mind you he is from Oklahoma and fishes freshwater — was "can I lip this fish?" which is what bass fishermen do by pinching the lower lip between thumb and forefinger and picking it up out of the water. Well, it was a sheepshead and I told him I think not. After he got it in and saw the mouth full of teeth the question never came up again.

As you celebrate this Independence Day remember that there are men and women in our Armed Forces that are protecting your right to enjoy this day and some will make a huge sacrifice in doing so. Thank a soldier for protecting your Freedoms, enjoy yourself, and have a safe and happy Independence Day.

—Mike

*Mike Mullins is the President of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. He can be reached at [mcmprm@embarqmail.com](mailto:mcmprm@embarqmail.com)*



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

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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.

**New Newsletter Column**

Recognizing the importance of the Brazos River to the flora, fauna and history of this area in which we practice our skills, the goal of this new column is to share interesting photos, sightings, and experiences within the area the Brazos River has influenced over the ages which includes Brazoria County, the Columbia Bottomlands and all the oxbows and floodplains created by or influenced by this mighty river.

Anyone who has items of interest related to native plants, animals and the great outdoors should submit them with a brief story or explanation. Please send submissions to Chris Kneupper to be published in the *Tockonhono Naturalist* column.

This month's *Tockonhono Naturalist* begins on Page 4.

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



<b>8:30 AM - 9:00 AM</b>	<b>Fun and Fellowship</b> Refreshment Team: Cindy Goodrum, Ed Johnson
<b>9:00 AM - 9:50 AM</b>	<b>General Meeting</b> <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour Volunteer Time.</i>
<b>10:00 AM - 12:00 PM</b>	<b>Program:</b> <i>Texas Crawdads.</i> <b>Speaker:</b> Sterling Ken Johnson is a retired professor and aquatic animal disease specialist from Texas A&M University <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 <a href="http://tmn-cot.org/Advanced/index.html">http://tmn-cot.org/Advanced/index.html</a></i>

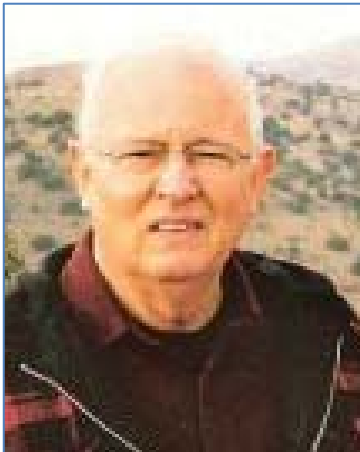


Photo credit [www.texascrawdads.com](http://www.texascrawdads.com)

Sterling Ken Johnson is a retired professor and aquatic animal disease specialist from Texas A&M University. He resides with his wife, Mary Lou, in College Station. He enjoys being outdoors, close to nature, and of course, talking about crawdads.

Dr. Johnson's interest in crawfish began in a ditch near his home when young kids had a freedom not allowed often in our day. Other experiences like the two large crawdads he saw in quart jars at a 5<sup>th</sup>-grade animal day, accompanying his avid fisherman father on fishing trips, and spending hours at the county lake or the 10,000-acre swamp near his home helped form a lifelong interest in aquatic animals.

Crawfishing trips with his own children helped initiate them to appreciation of natural things. After retirement from a career in aquaculture and fisheries he and one of his sons began catching crawfish as they enjoyed exploration of aquatic habitats. They decided to make a written resource about crawfishes, especially for Texans young and old. This book, *Texas Crawdads*, is enjoyed by people in Texas, throughout the United States and elsewhere.

Dr. Johnson spent most of his work life for Texas A & M University, first as a specialist in agriculture extension and then as head of the aquatic animal disease section for the Texas veterinary diagnostic medical laboratory. His co-author and son, N.K. Johnson, has worked in the private sector and presently for environmental health in Aransas County. The Johnsons have helped a number of Master Naturalist chapters throughout Texas with training/talks for meetings and other activities.

## Texas C R A W D A D S



STERLING K. JOHNSON  
& NATHAN K. JOHNSON

Ken and his son Kurt are the authors of a book, **Texas Crawdads**, a resource aimed at helping people learn about the life and habitat of Texas crayfish and how to identify, locate, catch, show, grow, collect, photograph and draw them. The book also provides scientific information to assist serious students and professional biologists who want to learn more about crawdads.

<http://www.texascrawdads.com/>



## Membership Report

By Jerry Eppner, TMN-COT Membership Coordinator



OK, so we are back from vacation, rested and mostly caught up on taking care of the TMN-COT Membership Coordinator duties. Still a little bit of a lag in timesheet submissions, but hopefully as the summer activities get into full swing, members will be motivated to do the right thing.

As of June 30, 43 members have submitted time sheets with a total of 4442 Volunteer Hours. The chapter has now accumulated 140,883 Volunteer Hours since inception.

As reported last month, 2014 interns Dawn Logan and Joycelynn Grigson have certified as Master Naturalists. Now, Kim Richardson has joined them in this achievement.

A number of interns have yet to turn in time sheets. If you need help in getting your first timesheet submitted, just ask me, Roy or any board member. They will be glad to assist.

At the July meeting, we will be recognizing the following achievements: Kim Richardson – certification; Betty Bouley, Leo Novak, and Joan Simonson – all for recertifying for 2014. Also, Dave Brandes and Barbara Burkhardt have reached that special milestone, 4000 Volunteer Hours which qualifies them for the President's Call to Service Award. The paperwork for their certificates has been submitted to state, and we await their arrival.

So go out and do great, fun things, but remember the summer heat is relentless, and attention to heat stress and dehydration is critical to successful volunteering.

**Texas Coneflowers** (*Rudbeckia Texana*) at Nash Prairie Preserve, June 17, 2014. Photo © 2014 by Pete Romfh.

## Federal Duck stamps now on sale

By U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

WASHINGTON. June 27, 2014 — Today the 2014-2015 Federal Duck Stamp went on sale. Did you know that when you buy a \$15 Duck Stamp, 98 percent of your money goes directly toward wildlife habitat conservation?

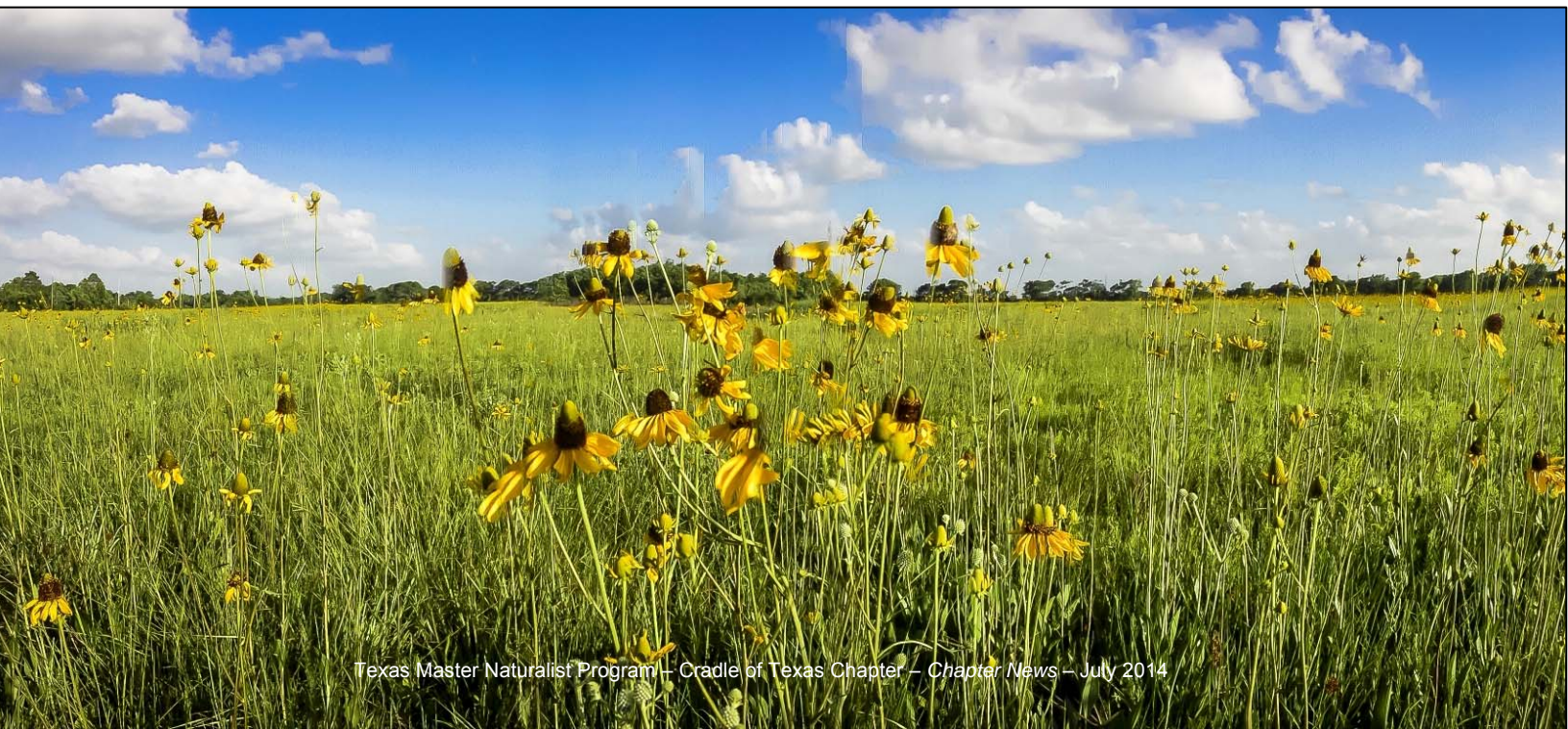


**Canvasbacks by South Dakota Artist Adam Grimm**

South Dakota Artist Adam Grimm won the 2013 Federal Duck Stamp Contest with this oil painting of a pair of canvasbacks. This painting appears on the 2014-15 Duck Stamp.

Sales of the Duck Stamp to hunters, collectors, birders, and conservationists and have raised more than \$800 million to acquire more than six million acres of wildlife habitat on our National Wildlife Refuges.

<http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/>





## Tockonhono Naturalist

### A New Periodic Column about Plants & Other Things Natural or Historic

By Chris Kneupper

Tockonhono what? What kind of naturalist? Just wait, we'll explain later.

The TMN-COT Newsletter is going to have a new feature! Items of interest discovered by our members will be presented this way to the general membership, and all members are invited to write a column. At first, interesting native plants will be covered, but really anything of general interest can be used.

As a start, I'd like to share a few Internet resources, which I find very useful for identification of native plants. Members may wish to know about these several web sites, as these will be referred to often in subsequent columns. Databases of plant species are maintained by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the USDA, which can be searched using common or scientific names:

<http://www.wildflower.org/plants/>

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

Both sources usually have one or more color photos of each species to aid identification. The Wildflower Center database has active links from their pages on individual species to the same species at the USDA database, most especially by clicking on the "USDA Symbol" for the species. The USDA page for each species has a state-wide distribution map, and by clicking on the state symbol (e.g., TX) one can pull up a county-wide distribution within the state.

The University Of Texas maintains a herbarium (known as the Plant Resources Center) with over 1 million specimens, the largest in the southwestern U.S. An index of specimens is now available in several databases that are searchable. The specimens from Texas are in one database known as the "Flora of Texas":

[http://orchid.biosci.utexas.edu/Texas\\_II.html](http://orchid.biosci.utexas.edu/Texas_II.html).

This database is very useful since the search can be confined to one county; for example, a list of specimens from Brazoria County can be found. If searching for all species of a genus or family, be sure to use the Sort feature (by species) at the bottom. This database only uses scientific names and has no photos, but does show a few facts about each specimen. Unfortunately, a link to a scanned image of the "pressed specimen" is not yet available at this web location.

Lastly, in identifying found plants, the Images function of Google is useful for finding many additional photos/maps/drawings of plant species to aid identification, although be forewarned they are only as reliable as the author. Just go to <http://google.com> and click on the word Images in the top bar, and then type a common or scientific name in the search field. The images found often include a scanned image of specimens found in the UT Plant Resources Center or other similar material from other places.

Now, for the rest of the story!



The calm, muddy waters of the Brazos River at Hwy 35, May 2014 .  
Photo by P. Romfh

Tockonhono (sometimes spelled Tockanhono) has been passed down to us as the "Indian" word for the Brazos River, meaning "mighty water of the Tejas". One of the legends about the naming of the Brazos River mentions this word, and it is my favorite version of the many stories about how the river got its current name. J. Frank Dobie published this version (and several others) in one of the annual publications of the Texas Folklore Society (Vol. III, *Legends Of Texas*, 1924, p. 212) which itself is simply a quotation of a story published earlier by Mrs. Mollie E. Moore Davis (*Under The Man-Fig*, 1895, pp.1-3). It is reported to be a version passed to and among the Old 300 settlers of Stephen F. Austin's colony in Brazoria and Matagorda counties. Even Mr. Dobie, and I, cannot write it any better than the original (although words in parenthesis are my clarifications):

*"The bed of it is very deep; and the color of the water – when it creeps sluggishly along between its banks, so shallow in places that the blue heron may wade in it without wetting his knees – is the color of tarnished brass. But when it comes roaring down from the far-away Redlands, a solid foam-crested wall, leaping upward a foot a minute, and spreading death and destruction into the outlying lowlands, then it is red as spilled blood."*

Continued on Page 5



Brazos River from the deck of the Brazos Belle, TMN-COT Trip, July 2012. Photo by P. Romfh

## Tockonhono Naturalist, continued

by Chris Kneupper

*“On its banks, more than a century and a half ago, a handful of barefoot Franciscan friars, who had prayed and fought their way across the country from Mexico, founded the Presidio of St. Jago, and corralled within the boundary walls a flock of Yndios reducidos (mission or Christianized Indians). There were a stately church, cloistered and towered and rose-windowed — a curious flower of architecture abloom in the savage wilderness — and the blockhouse with its narrow loopholes, and the hut into which the Indian women were thrust at night under lock and key.*

*“The mighty forest and open prairies around teemed with Yndios bravos (wild Indians), who hated the burly cassocked, fighting monks, and their own Christianized tribesmen. These came, in number like the leaves of the live oak, to hurl themselves against the Presidio. And, after many days of hard fighting, the single friar who remained alive turned his eyes away from the demolished church, and, under the cover of smoke from the burning blockhouse, led the remnant of Yndios reducidos (who because they had learned how to pray had not forgotten how to fight) out of the enclosure by a little postern-gate, and down the steep bank to the yellow thread of the river below.*

*“Midway of the stream — thridding the ankle-deep water — they were, before the red devils above discovered their flight. The demoniac yell from a thousand throats pushed them like a battering ram up the opposite bank, whence, looking back, they saw the bed of the River Tockonhono swarming with their foes. Then the Yndios reducidos opened their lips and began to chant the death-song of the Nainis; and the friar, lifting his hand, commended their souls and his own to God who gives and who takes away.*

*“But, lo a miracle! Even as the waves of the Red Sea — opened by the rod of Moses for the passage of his people — closed upon Pharoah and his host, so, with the hoarse roar of a wild beast springing upon its prey, the foam-crested wall of water fell upon the Yndios bravos, and not a warrior of them all came forth from the river bed but as a bruised and beaten corpse. So, the friar, falling on his knees, gave thanks. And, the river, which was the Tockonhono, became from that day **Los Brazos de Dios**, which is to say, **The Arms of God**.*

*Such is the legend of the river.”*

So, we selected the earlier name of the river to represent our efforts in writing this column. We hope you all will contribute any interesting tidbits that you discover in your explorations of the bottomlands anywhere near the Tockonhono !



The Brazos River enters the Gulf of Mexico at the west end of Bryan Beach. After a winter storm in March of 2012, the strong river current carried trees from many miles upstream and deposited them on the banks of the river (above) and on nearby Bryan Beach (below). Photos by P. Romfh



At the river’s end, signs warn of the dangerous currents that exist where the river meets the Gulf of Mexico, 1280 miles from its source. Photo by P. Romfh



### Photo Gallery Updates

by Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor



At 38 – 54 inches tall, the great blue heron is the largest North American heron.



Remember the Irish Rover song about the Unicorn? *"There were green alligators and long-necked geese. Some humpy-backed camels and some chimpanzees..."* Well, there might not be camels and chimpanzees in the Refuge, but the green alligators seem to enjoy watching two long-necked herons – the great blue heron (left) and the least bittern (right).

Photos by P. Romfh



Recent sightings at Brazoria NWR

#### LEAST BITTERN FACTS

When alarmed, the Least Bittern freezes in place with its bill pointing up, turns its front and both eyes toward the source of alarm, and sometimes sways to resemble wind-blown marsh vegetation.

Although only about one foot tall, the Least Bittern can straddle reeds, which allows it to feed in water that would be too deep for the wading strategy of other herons.

At 2.0 – 3.5 oz., this tiny heron is among the most difficult to spot in the marsh.

Its summer (breeding) grounds include South Texas.

Source: allaboutbirds.org

## FLOWER AND FRUIT MATCHING GAME

As spring gives way to summer, the Fabaceae (Pea Family) flowers give way to fruit. Note that the fruits of most Fabaceae are not edible to humans and may be toxic to humans and animals.

Match the fruit in the second row to the corresponding flower in the first row. For more photos, see the Photo Gallery on the TMN-COT web site, where these, and many other Fabaceae may be seen. The answers may be found at the bottom of the page.



Coral Bean



Jerusalem Thorn



Longbract Wild Indigo



Rattlebush



Reversed Clover



Sweet Acacia



1



2



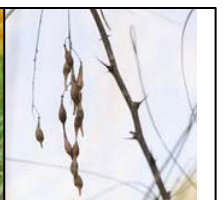
3



4

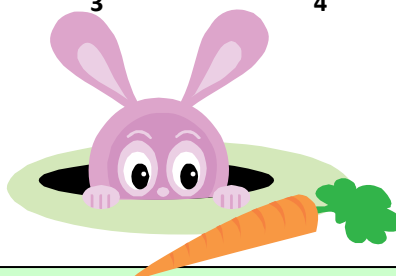


5



6

# DON'T



# PEEK!

Answers to Fabaceae Matching: 1 – Reversed Clover (Persian Clover), 2 – Longbract Wild Indigo, 3 – Sweet Acacia (Huisache), 4 – Coral Bean, 5 – Rattlebush, 6 – Jerusalem Thorn (Retama)

## CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

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Vice President/Program	Peggy Romfh, Houston
Secretary	Becky McClendon, Lake Jackson
Treasurer	Gerald Forrest, Damon
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Past President	Barbara Burkhardt, Lake Jackson
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Webmaster	Neal McLain, Brazoria
Facebook Editor	Dick Schaffhausen, Alvin
Class of 2014 Intern reps	Joycelynn Grigson, Angleton Sherri Wilson, Surfside
Chapter Advisers	Connie Stolte (Texas Parks & Wildlife Department) John O'Connell (AgriLife Extension Service)
Newsletter Editor	Neal McLain
Newsletter Writers	Jerry Eppner, Chris Kneupper, Neal McLain, Mike Mullins, Peggy Romfh
Website	<a href="http://tmn-cot.org">http://tmn-cot.org</a>
Facebook	<a href="http://facebook.com/TMN.COT">http://facebook.com/TMN.COT</a>
Email Listserv	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail">http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail</a>



## MASTER NATURALIST EMAIL LISTS

### ***TMN-COT Chapter list***

- Instructions [http://tmn-cot.org/Email\\_Lists/index.html](http://tmn-cot.org/Email_Lists/index.html)
- Send messages to [TMN-COT@googlegroups.com](mailto: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](mailto:listserv@listserv.tamu.edu)
- All messages are held for moderation by the TMN State Coordinator

### **Apps and maps**

<http://txmn.org/files/2013/09/NatureApps3-2013.pdf>

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