



# Chapter News

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## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MIKE



Little of this and that... Well my dedicated friends we draw to the close of another summer. The Library program has been, as usual, a huge success. I do not have the final figures but the two locations I helped at drew 100+ each. The kids loved the interaction with the demonstrations and for many it has opened new fields to explore.

Now for a little breather before DEEP and the other school programs start. Our chapter can be proud that we introduce the great outdoors to so many kids and adults every year. YOU do make a difference.

Unofficial figures for this turtle season are in and the numbers of Kemp's Ridley nests for the Texas coast were down from 158 in 2013 to 118 in 2014 with only one nest being recovered in our area.

*Continued on Page 3*

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Coordinator

As of July 30, 51 members have submitted time sheets with a total of 5474 hours of volunteer time. The chapter has now accumulated 141,448 hours VT since inception. That is a nice jump since last month considering it is the summer season.

This month we will recognize 2014 Interns Garry Ellis, Janet Jackson-Ellis and Mel McKey for certifying at Texas Master Naturalist. Good job, folks.

At the August meeting, we will also be recognizing Howard Allen, John Boettiger and Phyllis Gerdes for recertifying for 2014. And finally, we have all of our ducks in a row to recognize Dave Brandes and Barbara Burkhardt, COT's latest recipients of the 4000-hour VT milestone award and the President's Call to Service Award.

The fall volunteer season is approaching so be thinking what would be fun and rewarding and prepare to go out to do great, fun things.



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

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.



Rufous hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) near Santiam Pass, Oregon, July 2011. For more about hummingbirds see Tockonhono Naturalist, Page 4.

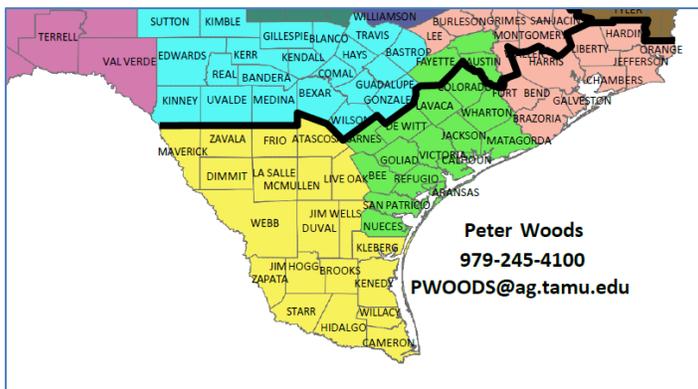
Photo: Oregon Department of Transportation. License: CC BY 2.0

# Texas Master Naturalist Program Cradle of Texas Chapter General Meeting and Advanced Training Wednesday, August 13, 2014 AgriLife Building, Angleton

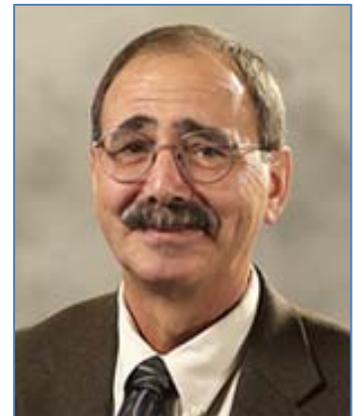


<b>8:30 AM - 9:00 AM</b>	<b>Fun and Fellowship</b> Refreshment Team: Jerry Eppner, Barbara Burkhardt, Ellis Burkhardt
<b>9:00 AM - 9:50 AM</b>	<b>General Meeting</b> <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour Volunteer Time.</i>
<b>10:00 AM - 12:00 PM</b>	<b>Program: Aquatic Ecology and Pond Management.</b> <b>Speaker:</b> Dr. Peter Woods, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Fisheries Program Specialist for South Texas Coastal Counties including Brazoria County. <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>

Dr. Peter Woods is the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Fisheries Program Specialist that serves the south Texas Coastal counties including Brazoria County. His office is located in Bay City.



**Woods serves Texas Coastal Communities including Brazoria County**



**Peter Woods**

Dr. Woods has extensive experience in the Extension Fisheries Program and has been the Extension fisheries program specialist since 2002. His areas of expertise include aquatic ecology, aquatic plant management, pond management, and aquaculture.

He has worked with the Texas Aquaculture Cooperative to improve and expand their production yields, helping growers produce 8,000 – 10,000 pounds of catfish per acre. [1] He has actively been involved with the Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter (Fort Bend and Waller Counties) and Elm Fork Chapter (Denton). He has done many farm pond management programs for the Master Urban Rancher series as well as aquatic plant management Continuing Education segments for pesticide re-certification trainings.

[1] Sealynews.com, 13 Jan 2005.

*President's message continued...*

. This is the second year of decreases in nesting for the entire coast. If you go to [seaturtle.org](http://seaturtle.org)'s *Track a Turtle* app, they have a tracking page that shows the location of the turtles (plus numerous other species) that were fitted with transmitters this year. It is interesting to "see" that nearly all the turtles with transmitters from Padre Island and Mexico are now off the mouth of the Mississippi River.

The end of August marks the expiration of your Texas Hunting and Fishing license. If you do not have one seriously consider getting one. *These funds may only be used for the following:*

(1) *Fisheries and wildlife management activities, including conservation, resource protection, research, habitat management and acquisition, private land initiatives, fish hatcheries, and enforcement of game and fish laws, and*

(2) *Administrative costs of boat registration, boat and motor titling, construction and maintenance of boat ramps, issuing licenses, and enforcement of the Texas Water*

*Safety Act. Proceeds credited to the account from the sale of upland game bird, and migratory game bird stamps may only be spent for research and management of each species and for the acquisition, lease, or development of habitat for each species. Financial Overview Texas Parks and Wildlife*

Finally, for those of you that got some of Chris's trees earlier this year, I have included a picture of my "nursery" for my trees. So far 24 of 25 Willow and Swamp Chestnut Oaks have sprouted. Number 25's trunk is still green and I hope will sprout eventually. Will put them out this fall when they go dormant.

Enough rambling for now. Please stay cool as we are in our most dangerous part of summer but DO enjoy yourself outdoors as much as possible.

C'ya soon

—Mike

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



**Mike's Willow and Swamp Chestnut Oak "nursery."**

### **Cornell "Merlin" Bird ID app for Android**

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has announced the release an Android version of the "Merlin" Bird ID. Both the Android Version and the Apple iTunes version are now available for download at the Cornell Lab website.

<http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

### **Two new VPALs added to website**

TMN-COT Volunteer Service Coordinator Pete Romfh has announced new volunteer service agreements with the following organizations:

- *Challenger Seven Learning Center* (a unit of Harris County Precinct One), Webster.
- *George Observatory* (a unit of Houston Museum of Natural Science) at Brazos Bend State Park, Needville.

Volunteer Project Activity Lists (VPALs) for both organizations are available on the TMN-COT Website at <http://tmn-cot.org/Ongoing/index.html>

## Tockonhono Naturalist HEADS UP: The Hummers are coming!!!

Barbara H. Burkhardt  
Texas Master Naturalist-Cradle of Texas Chapter  
Texas Master Gardener-Brazoria County

It's the time of year when those wonderful creatures we call hummingbirds begin their fall migration to Central and South America. That being the case, come August first, it's time to put up the hummingbird feeders!



Photo <http://www.birdsofoklahoma.net/RtgHum001.htm>

**Ruby-Throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) - male**

I usually put 1-2 feeders up by the first of August. I never use food coloring because it may be harmful to the birds. I also try to avoid feeders with bee guards (it's possible for a hummer to get its beak hung up or broken in these). Instead use a feeder that does not have yellow around the feeding holes. It is believed that it is the yellow color that attracts the bees.

In the heat and humidity of August and September, it is **essential** that the nectar be changed every 3-4 days and the feeders thoroughly cleaned.

This is especially true of the feeding holes. A fungus growing in the feeding holes can be transferred to the hummer's beak. In some instances, the fungus will begin to grow forming a ridge around the beak. If the ridge becomes large enough, it prevents the hummingbird from closing its beak. This causes the tongue to dry out and can be fatal to the bird.

For years, the correct sugar to water concentration has been quoted to be 1 part sugar to 4 parts water. Recent studies have shown the 1 to 4 mixture was based on erroneous data about the mechanics of hummingbird nectar intake. This solution is too dilute and places hummingbirds at risk. The mixture should be a minimum of one (1) part sugar to 2.5 parts water. I now use a simple 1 part sugar to 2 parts water dilution.

I put more feeders out as the first of September approaches. The size of the feeders will also change from a 3- or 4-port feeder to 6- to 8-port feeders. If the population of the hummers is significant, it may be necessary to refill the feeders two to three times in a day. I have several feeders that hold a quart of nectar and these usually only require filling once per day.

If possible, hang the feeders in locations that cannot be seen from each other. Hummingbirds are very territorial and will try to protect every feeder they can see from their favorite viewing perch. To help them preserve energy and build up fat reserves for migration, try to give them only one feeder to defend.

The highest concentration of migrating birds along our section of the upper gulf coast will be seen during the first two weeks of September, but don't take all your feeders down after they have gone. You may not see any hummers for several weeks, but hang in there — our winter residents will soon be here. I normally have more hummingbirds at my feeders during the winter months than I do during the summer. There has been a total of eight different hummingbird species identified at the annual Freeport Christmas Bird count in December. A female rufous hummingbird "Big Mamma" spent September to April in our garden for nine years — always protecting the same feeder location.

The correct styles of feeders and general information on fall migration and winter residents can be found in the Nature Store at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, 103 Hwy. 332 West, Lake Jackson.

So get ready for one of the greatest joys in nature — the hummingbirds are coming!



Photo Kathy Adams Clark ©

**Female Rufous Hummingbird  
#32960 aka "Big Mamma"**

## Tockonhono Naturalist, continued



Photos Wikipedia

**Black-Chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) - female on left; male on right - migrants through Brazoria Co.**

*Editor's note:*

Hummingbird species which migrate southward in numbers through our area in the fall are the Ruby-Throated (*Archilochus colubris*), Black-Chinned (*Archilochus alexandri*), and later the Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*). During the winter, the Buff-Bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*) migrates northward along the Texas coast. All are found here as winter residents.

As they migrate again in spring, all will pass through our area. However, by late spring only the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird is in residence. It will visit feeders in the spring, but does not readily visit feeders in the summer due to the variety of flowers available.

Photo <http://txtbba.tamu.edu/species-accounts/buff-bellied-hummingbird/>

**Buff-Bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*) - winter visitor**



Photo Wikipedia

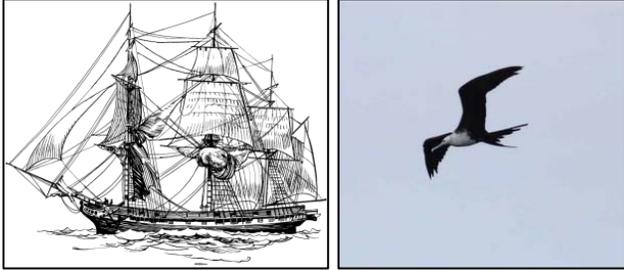
**Ruby-Throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) - juvenile male (females are similar); year-round resident**

## Photo Gallery Updates

by Peggy Romfh, TMN-COT Photo Gallery Editor

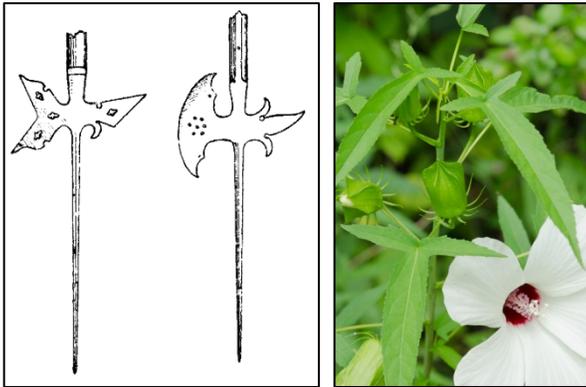
### What's in a Name?

Weapons of war have become part of the lexicon of plant and animal names. Here are a few examples. Photos may be seen in the TMN-COT Photo Gallery.



A **frigate** is a warship built for speed and maneuverability. The magnificent **frigatebird** has a massive wingspan that enables it to soar effortlessly and make graceful aerial maneuvers. It may stay in flight for several days and nights, sleeping while on the wing. Frigatebirds use thermals to soar to heights of up to 8,000 feet with little need for wing flapping.

Drawing – public domain, Wikipedia. Photo by Jerry Eppner.



A **halberd** is a medieval weapon consisting of an axe blade, spike, and hook mounted on a long stick. It was widely used in battle against mounted knights. The **halberdleaf** rosemallow leaf (*Hibiscus laevis*) resembles the halberd weapon. The mallow grows six feet tall in wetland habitats such as this specimen seen at GCBO.

Drawing – public domain, Wikipedia. Photo by P. Romfh.



A **dagger** is a fighting weapon with a very sharp point capable of being used as a thrusting or stabbing weapon. The leaves of the **Spanish dagger** (*Yucca treculeana*) have a sharp, brown terminal spine resembling the tip of a dagger. This specimen was seen at Quintana.

Knives – GammaFightLeader, Wikipedia. Photo by P. Romfh.



**Hercules** is often depicted wielding a club, such as in this painting of him slaying the Hydra. The **Hercules' Club**, *Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*, has large spines in corky lumps along the tree bark, looking somewhat like a fierce club. In fact, the leaves and bark have medicinal properties and were chewed by Native Americans and early settlers for toothaches.

Painting – public domain, Wikipedia. Photo by P. Romfh



The leaves of **arrowhead** plants, such as this **grassy arrowhead**, *Sagittaria graminea*, seen at GCBO, resemble the arrowheads on medieval weapons. There are also photos of **bulltongue arrowhead** and **longbarb arrowhead** in the Photo Gallery. Arrowheads – Paul Hermans, Wikipedia. Photo by Denis Mudderman

### Pygmy Blue Butterflies – Overlooked Gems

Pygmy Blues, with a wing span of ½ to ¾ inch, are the smallest butterflies in North America. The more common Western Pygmy Blue is seen along Gulf Coast marshes and dunes. The outer fringes of the wings are white.

In contrast, the outer fringes of the Eastern Pygmy Blue are brown. Both have a row of black spots on the ventral hindwing. The Eastern Pygmy Blue has been seen at Brazoria NWR.



Left – Western Blue, Freeport Marsh. Photo by Jerry Eppner.



Right – Eastern Blue. Brazoria NWR. Photo by P. Romfh

## How to find a GPS location without a GPS receiver

By Pete Romfh and Neal McLain

Not all of us have the luxury of having a GPS receiver with us in the field, but we still would like to report the geographic coordinates of a picture or a sighting. Here's how you can find those elusive numbers without any hardware.

Go to <http://maps.google.com> and find the spot on the map that you want to report. Sometimes it is easier to pinpoint the spot if your bring up the satellite view. Then follow the instructions below.

**PROCEDURE FOR USE WITH “NEW” GOOGLE MAPS**

Point and *left-click* on the desired spot, and a box will pop up in the *upper left* corner of the screen. That box shows the approximate street address and the exact geographic coordinates of the point. Coordinates are shown in decimal degrees:

29.045927°, —95.475866°.

The minus sign indicates west longitude.

To switch between map and satellite views, click the box in the *lower-left* corner of the map.

**PROCEDURE FOR USE WITH “OLD” (or “CLASSIC”) MAPS**

Point and *right-click* on the desired spot, then left-click on “What’s here?”. The geographic coordinates of the point will appear in the address field. Coordinates are shown in decimal degrees:

29.046444°, —95.476266°. The minus sign indicates west longitude.

To switch between map and satellite views, click the box in the *upper-right* corner of the map.

## CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

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## 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>