



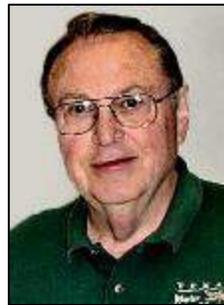
# Chapter News

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## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Coordinator



As of March 29, our members have entered 3575 hours of volunteer time and 507 hours of advanced training this year. This marks a good increase over the first two month of the year. I am hopeful this increase not only signifies that

volunteer opportunities for the year are picking up, but also that chapter members are becoming more comfortable using VMS.

Members to be recognized at the April general meeting include: Mike Bettorf for recertifying and Ed Barrios for passing the 5000-hour volunteer service milestone. Congratulations to both.

Simplifying the VMS code structure has improved the accuracy of our time entry (this is good news), but not made it flawless (this is bad news). The major sources of error include still just not picking the correct opportunity code. This can be due only to not using the code cheat sheet that is on the COT website under the VMS Info button because virtually every volunteer opportunity that is available to us is described somewhere on that sheet under the correct code to select. A good rule of thumb, choose the TR code if

you are presenting to a fixed stationary audience with a specific training goal in mind – think DEEP, HWEEP, presenting AT to the chapter, etc.

. Choose the PO code if you are simply making information and/or critters available to an audience that is free to come and go at will – think public outreach activities at the mall, Pearland ribbon cuttings, library programs, etc.

Regardless of which code you choose, always pick the type of hour that is detailed in the parentheses in the code name.

Also, the “Make Another Entry” button goblin is still victimizing several members. If you have multiple time entries to make, this can be a useful button, but it does NOT change the code from the previous entry. YOU MUST do that or you will enter a whole list of volunteer times under the wrong code. Incorrect codes cannot edited, the entry will have to be deleted and you will have to start over on that entry. Sigh!!

We are getting better at VMS. No doubt about that. We just need to keep using it and paying attention to the details. Make sure every entry details your service correctly OR you will get one of the dreaded emails from Samaritan initiated by me. Then we both have more work to do.

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.



**Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle. See page 8 to volunteer for this year's turtle patrol.**

Photo: Conservation in Action: Kemp's Ridley Turtle.

<http://www.arkive.org/conservation-in-action/#kemps-ridley-turtle>

**Texas Master Naturalist Program  
Cradle of Texas Chapter  
General Meeting and Advanced Training  
Wednesday, April 15, 2016  
Texas AgriLife Extension Building  
21017 County Road 171  
Angleton, Texas 77515-8903**



<b>8:30 AM – 9:00 AM</b>	<b>Fun and Fellowship</b> Refreshment Team: Ken Arnold, Anna King, Sandy Henderson, Mary Helen Israel, Donna Graham
<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: Ferns</b> <b>Speaker:</b> Darla Harris, President, Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society . 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>



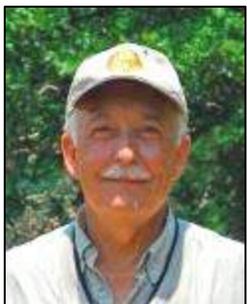
Darla Harris is President of the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

Organized in 1998 by a group of fern enthusiasts (a.k.a. fern lovers, fernies, pteridologists), to cultivate, foster and promote interest in ferns and fern allies, the TGC Fern Society presents educational programs including "how to" sessions, presentations by local, national and internationally known fern experts, and field trips and tours-thus providing a forum for fern enthusiasts to visit, learn, share plants, ideas, information, and have a good time.



Photo: Darla Harris via Facebook

## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT DAVE



They say April Showers bring May Flowers. Well, maybe El Nino failed to deliver much of our expected rainfall. What happened?

Adapted from the Winter 2015-2016 Texas CoCoRaHS Observer (meaning paraphrased in my own words):

In simplest term, it was the track the storms took. The strength of an upper level high pressure ridge west of California forced low pressure systems farther north than was expected for January and February. This allowed dry air to move from below the high pressure ridge through the southern Rockies and the Mexican Sierra Madres. As this dry air then sped down the eastern slopes it blocked the influx of tropical moisture necessary to produce large volumes of rain in south Texas. However, there was still enough southerly tropical flow from the Gulf and the Caribbean available farther east, so they received the large rains.

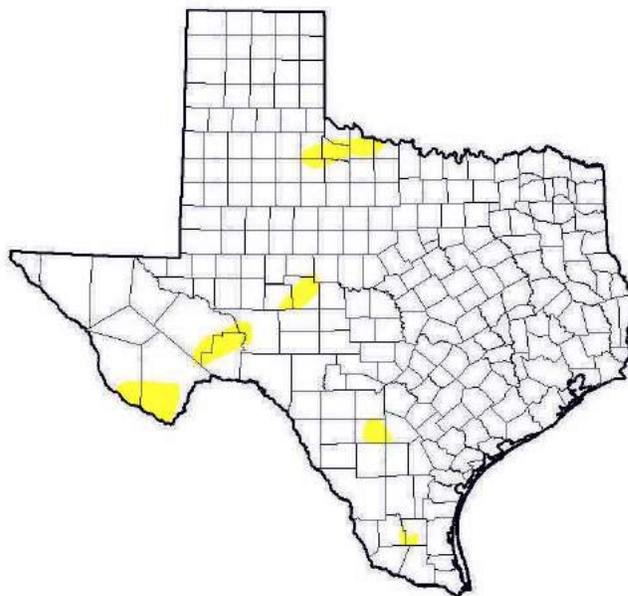
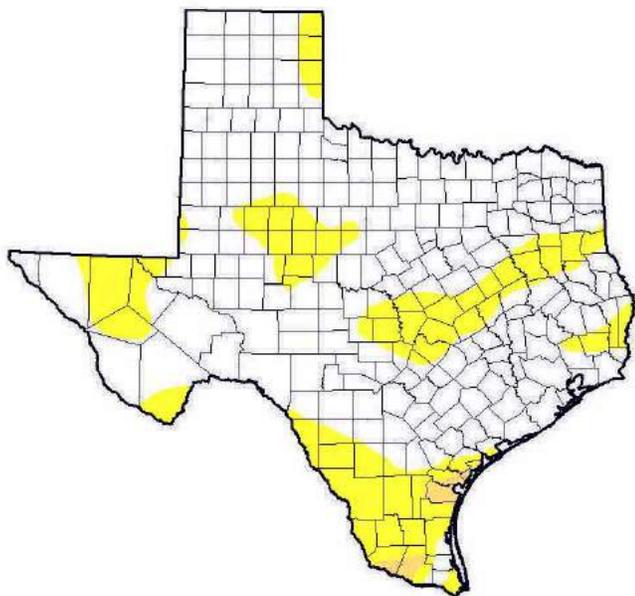
It's really not known why the large high pressure ridge developed west of California. We do know that the pool of warm water west of the U.S. was cooler than the last time we had a strong El Nino form in 2010. We also know that a strong positive North Atlantic Oscillation (Remember? Marty told us about these.) persisted. The last time we had a strong El Nino the NAO was negative. Either of these could have contributed, but again, we don't really know. I guess this will be something for a future PhD thesis.

Whatever the reason, this winter showed that seasonal forecasting continues to be a humbling experience. Basically, the forecasted 800-pound gorilla El Nino didn't consider all of the other monkeys in the room.

OK, coming back down to earth, I want to thank all of you that supported our Pearland projects by attending the ribbon cutting for the new nature trail at the Stella Roberts Recycling Center. The Pearland Parks Department is doing great work and we are helping where we can.

—Dave

*Dave Brandes is the president of Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. He can be reached at [brandes@tmn-cot.org](mailto:brandes@tmn-cot.org)*



Above: *Left* – Texas Drought Monitor, March 1, 2016. *Right*: Texas Drought Monitor, December 1, 2015. Note the expansion of the abnormally dry (yellow) area, and the moderate drought (tan/light brown) areas, particularly across south Texas. Not exactly how the winter 2015/2016 forecast was drawn up!

### **Chapter News Publication date change**

Beginning with the May issue of *Chapter News* the publication date will be changed to the Friday following the first Wednesday of the month. This change has been made so that the newsletter can include a report of the monthly Board Meeting.

## SPRING FLING STARTS APRIL 1st AT QUINTANA NEOTROPICAL BIRD SANCTUARY (QNBS)

By Peggy Romfh, Spring Fling co-coordinator

# QNBS



### Spring Fling Host Station

*Location:*

Quintana City Hall  
814 Lamar St.

Freeport TX 77541

Directly across the street  
from Quintana Neotropical  
Bird Sanctuary.

Google map:

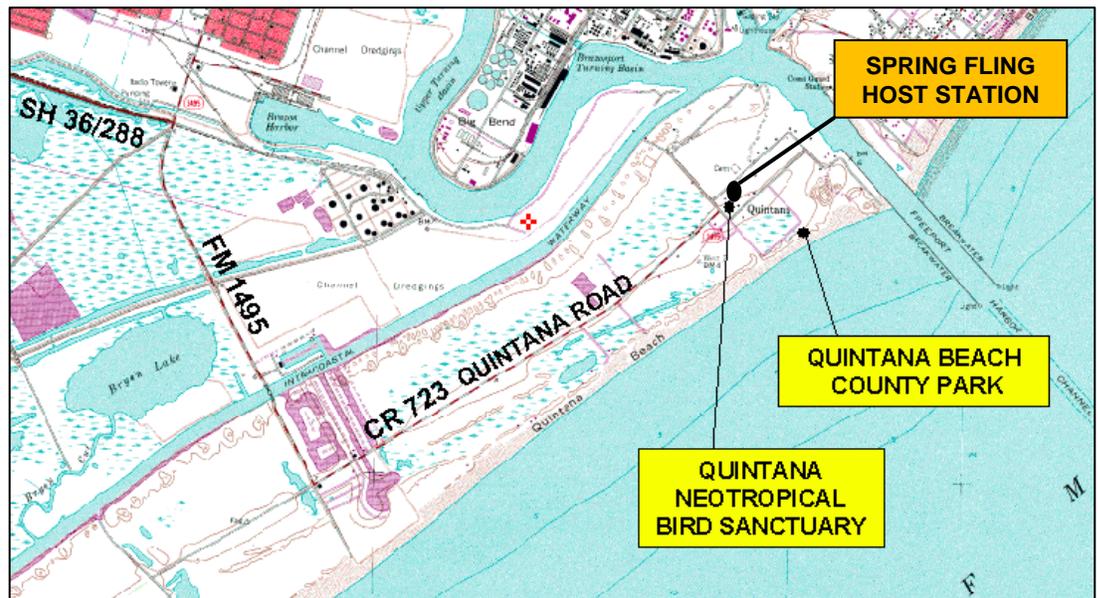
<http://tinyurl.com/mbg3ma>

Spring Fling is a month-long event sponsored by the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO) at Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary in Quintana. The host station, which is located next to the Quintana City Hall building, is staffed by master naturalists and other volunteers every day in April. They keep a daily log of birds sighted in the sanctuary.

The expansion of the LNG plant all along Quintana Road means that the bird sanctuary has become an oasis amidst a mega-construction area. Holley Road, which is the road behind the City Hall building, is closed off until August, so access to the xeriscape area must be done from a trail near the county park.

The City of Quintana has filled the low spots in the sanctuary trail with crushed rock and has also fixed the water features. In late March, several species of birds were already stopping at the sanctuary for a welcome respite before they headed north for the summer.

Although the host station is only staffed from 9 AM to 4 PM, visitors are welcome to spend time in the sanctuary at any hour. Many birders come by early in the morning to see what birds spent the night and come back again in late afternoon to see what birds have landed after transmigrating the Gulf that day. Birders hope for a strong north wind to create a 'fall-out' of birds along the Gulf, and sometimes a spectacular number and variety of birds are seen after storms from the north.



### Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes have already made their presence felt at Quintana and the wildlife refuges in Brazoria County.

Wearing long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and plenty of mosquito repellent is advised!



Migrants seen at QNBS on March 29<sup>th</sup> included this hooded warbler (above), yellow-throated vireo (top right), and Louisiana waterthrush (bottom right).



Photos by P&P Romfh

## ALL WASHED UP ON QUINTANA BEACH – THE PERFECT PLACE TO SEE CNIDARIA

By Peggy Romfh

Storms and winds from the south cause many ocean species in the Phylum Cnidaria (pronounced 'ni-dare-ee-a') to wash up on the beach. This phylum contains corals, jellyfish, and sea anemones. [photos by P&P Romfh]

### Portuguese Man o' War – A Stinging Warship! It's a They!



March 2016

The Portuguese Man o' War (*Physalia physalis*) IS NOT a jelly (jelly fish). Jellies are each a single, multicellular organism. Each Man o' War is a **siphonophore**, a colony of specialized animals attached to one another that work and function together as though they were a single organism.

Man o' Wars live on the surface of the ocean. A gas-filled bladder filled with carbon monoxide and other gases acts like a sail, and the Man o' War moves about the ocean by a combination of winds, currents and tides.

Its tentacles are 30 – 100 feet long, with stinging, venom-filled structures that can paralyze and kill adult squids and fishes and create severe pain and large welts in humans. Detached tentacles and dead specimens can sting for hours or days after an animal has died.

### Moon Jelly – Moon Landing on the Beach!



October 2013

The Moon jellyfish or Moon Jelly (*Aurelia aurita*) is a single, multicellular animal with a clear to whitish body that is 10 – 15 inches in diameter.

There are four horseshoe-shaped gonads found at the top of the bell of the moon jelly, giving it an easily identifiable appearance.

In the ocean or Gulf, the full bell shape and short, hanging tentacles can be seen as the jellies drift about in ocean currents, but when they wash up on the beach, they resemble a round, gelatinous mass.

Moon jellies eat mollusks and plankton as well as eggs and other small ocean species. Their tentacles have toxins that immobilize prey long enough for them to swallow it. Then, digestive enzymes in their stomachs break down the prey.

Moon jellies are a food favored by leatherback sea turtles.

### Mushroom Jelly – Toadstool of the Sea!



March 2016

The 15 – 20 inch bell diameter, jumbled digestive glands and 16 radial canals in the bell (mantle) help distinguish this jelly from others that wash up on the beach.

The bell of the mushroom jelly (*Rhopilema verrilli*) may vary in color from creamy white to light yellow, brown, blue, pink or green. This 16 inch specimen seen recently on Quintana beach was a pinkish-tan in color.

The mushroom jelly has no tentacles; underneath the bell are 8 oral arms with finger-like appendages. However, they still have stinging cells within their bells and can produce mild stings in humans.

In the ocean or Gulf, the bell shape resembles a mushroom – hence the name.

## June Bugs/May Beetles Create March Hordes in Texas!

Whether you call them June Bugs or May Beetles (*Phyllophaga spp.*) or just a nuisance, the site of hundreds of this scarab beetle moving clumsily about and filling the floors and sinks of Brazoria County park bathrooms in mid-March is not for the faint of heart.

Up close, they are oval, stout, and have clubbed antennae with segments that can be fanned open like a feather.

The many spurs and claws on the legs of June Bugs cause them to get easily trapped in long hair or clothing.



Oyster Creek Municipal Park Rest Room, March 2016 [photos by P&P Romfh]

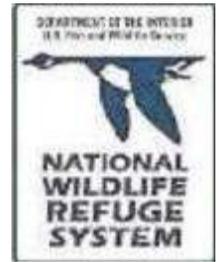
The surprisingly hairy look on the thorax gives a bearded appearance to common species seen in Southern Texas.





## MIGRATION CELEBRATION is THIS MONTH!

Migration Celebration is an annual spring nature festival presented each spring by the **US. Fish & Wildlife Service** and **Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges**. Many Cradle of Texas Chapter members participate in the planning and execution of the celebration. Migration Celebration kicks off with a fundraising dinner at Freeport RiverPlace followed by a two days of events at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge.



DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DETAILS
April 8, 2016 5:30 PM	Kickoff Dinner and photo exhibit	Freeport RiverPlace <a href="http://tinyurl.com/nabxv29">http://tinyurl.com/nabxv29</a>	Tentative Schedule <a href="http://tinyurl.com/ptjvfo7">http://tinyurl.com/ptjvfo7</a>
April 16, 2016 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Migration Celebration	San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge <a href="http://tinyurl.com/lud2vqr">http://tinyurl.com/lud2vqr</a>	Tentative Schedule <a href="http://tinyurl.com/os5yqw2">http://tinyurl.com/os5yqw2</a>
April 17, 2016 11:00 AM – 4:30 PM	Migration Celebration	San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge <a href="http://tinyurl.com/lud2vqr">http://tinyurl.com/lud2vqr</a>	Tentative Schedule <a href="http://tinyurl.com/o4qukom">http://tinyurl.com/o4qukom</a>

## VOLUNTEERS ARE STILL NEEDED

Volunteers are needed, and participation is approved for Volunteer Hours. This is a good opportunity to rack up some volunteer hours toward certification or recertification!

Volunteer positions are available for a wide variety of interests — everything from assistant cook to parking attendant and tour guide to information booth host.

Check out the list of volunteer opportunities at

[http://migrationcelebration.org/Volunteers/MC2016\\_Volunteers.pdf](http://migrationcelebration.org/Volunteers/MC2016_Volunteers.pdf)

**Contact** Migration Celebration Volunteer Coordinator:

Ed Barrios

979-297-1815 home

979-415-4998 cell

[barrios@refugefriends.org](mailto:barrios@refugefriends.org)



Butterfly Encounter, one of many public activities. Volunteers are needed to help with Butterfly Encounter as well as other activities.

## BAKE SALE CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

Calling All Bakers!!! We need your help in making homemade cookies and cupcakes and cakes for our bake sale in support of Environmental Education at our wildlife refuges.

Our Bake Sale is going to be on April 16th and 17th 2016 at the Migration Celebration at the San Bernard Wildlife Refuge.

Please bring your bake sale donations to the Bake Sale site (Exhibit Hall) at 9:00 AM on Saturday the 16 and 10:30 AM on Sunday the 17th.

Please have your home-baked goods in plastic bags or containers and label them clearly as to type, i.e. chocolate chip or oatmeal/raisin. If they have cookies with nuts please label with nuts. Also label if sugar-free or gluten free.

Thank you!



Larry Jablecki, Deputy Cookie of the bake sale, with Donna Jablecki, Chief Cookie.

# RE STOCKING THE FISHING POND FOR KIDS FISHING AT MIGRATION CELEBRATION

Photos by Steve Hoddy and Neal McLain



KIDS FISHING is a Migration Celebration children’s activity started last year. It was immensely popular, attracting numerous children (and accompanying adults),

So popular in fact that we needed more fish this year. Phil Huxford and Steve Hoddy recently purchased about 80 catfish and over 900 bluegills and dumped them into the pond. Steve Hoddy sent these photos of the fish dump.



Here are a couple of photos from Migration Celebration 2015.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - SEA TURTLE PATROL



Photo: National Park Service / Wikipedia. Public domain

Sea Turtle Patrol is an ongoing project sponsored by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project is administered by San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge staff. Bryan and Vicky Adams will administer the program during the 2016 breeding season. Volunteers are needed to monitor beaches between Quintana and Matagorda Bay.

Objectives of the Sea Turtle Program:

- Locate Kemp's ridley's nests to excavate the eggs and transport them to an incubation facility on the Padre Island National Seashore.
- Locate live turtles stranded and transport them for rehabilitation at the NOAA facility in Galveston.
- Document any dead or stranded turtles.

We accomplish this mission with the help of volunteers. Volunteers may patrol the beach by walking, by bicycle, or by driving a USFWS off-road vehicle. Agency training is required before using any USFWS vehicle.

Even if volunteers can't donate more than a couple hours of time a week, that is still a big help. The more eyes we have on the beach the better.

You must have the training class to patrol for the refuge. Also, remember that UTV training is good for three years. If you think or know that you need to update your training please let Bryan and Vicky know. If you do not know or are unsure they will be able to tell you.

This years training dates:

- Meeting 1 - April 6 at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge
- Meeting 2 - April 20 at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge
- Meeting 3 - April 28 at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge

**Location:** San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge

6801 County Road 306, Brazoria, TX 77422

Map: <http://tinyurl.com/SBNWR-Main-Entrance>

Enter at main entrance (red marker)

**Contact information:**

**Turtle hotline** - 866-887-8535 or 866-TURTLE-5

**Curtis Jones** - 979-299-3965 (San Bernard NWR manager and main contact if you spot a sea turtle or sea turtle tracks)

**Roland Davis** - 979-799-8950 (San Bernard NWR assistant manager in charge of the Sea Turtle Program)

**Vicky Adams** 979-373-6971 (Volunteer Coordinator)  
sanbernardseaturtle@gmail.co

**Credit (TMN-COT members only):**

- **Training:** Approved for Advanced training for actual hours for *first-time trainees only*. Not approved for members who have had the same training in 2014 or 2015.
- **Program Participation:** Approved for Volunteer time for all turtle-patrol activity.
- **VMS Coding:**  
RM: Managing Natural Resource Areas & Wildlife  
Type: Service Project  
Description: USFWS: Turtle Patrol

To volunteer please contact:  
Bryan and Vicky Adams, Turtle Patrol Managers  
San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge  
979-964-3639  
[sanbernardseaturtle@gmail.com](mailto:sanbernardseaturtle@gmail.com)

### CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Vice President/Program	Jill Carroll, Pearland
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Treasurer	Donald Sabathier, Pearland
State Representative	Ed Barrios, Lake Jackson
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Chapter Host	Pam West, Freeport
Publicity Coordinator	Richard Schaffhausen, Alvin
Publications Coordinator	Neal McLain, Brazoria
Class of 2015 representative	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Chapter Advisers	Connie Stolte (Texas Parks & Wildlife Department) John O'Connell (AgriLife Extension Service)
Newsletter Editor	Neal McLain, Brazoria
Newsletter Writers	Dave Brandes, Jerry Eppner, 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>
E-mail 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

*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 next-to-last day of the month. Submissions should be sent by email to *Chapter News* Editor at [tmn.cot@gmail.com](mailto:tmn.cot@gmail.com). Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.