



# Chapter News

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<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.

## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT DAVE



Happy anniversary everyone -- 15 years and going strong making a difference in our communities. After our business meeting at 10:00 AM Wednesday, we will celebrate our chapter's accomplishments and the retirement of one of our advisors. I hope

all of you that plan to attend at the LAKE JACKSON CIVIC CENTER and have sent an RSVP to our chapter host Pam West. We'd hate to run out of food for the luncheon.

Our pit crew will need to start cooking Tuesday, which means the meat has already been ordered. The last I heard, have 100 RSVPs. We are definitely having a party.

We also have a surprise for all active chapter members. I'm not going to reveal what this is, but I do want to remind you what it means to be *active* on our roster. See sidebar at right for details.

So, get ready to party and eat. Come with stories (the good, the bad, the ugly, and especially the funny) about your experiences as a TMN-COT member and stories about volunteering with or for Connie at Sea Center Texas or with our chapter.

### ARE YOU AN "ACTIVE" MEMBER?

There are five criteria to be "active" in any given year and it's easy to let this lapse if you are not out working our mission with us.

Here are the criteria:

1. You must have completed the required curriculum courses.
2. You must have paid your dues by March 1st.
3. You must have attended at least one chapter meeting the previous year unless waived by an approved written request for work or other significant conflicts that make attendance impossible.
4. You must have volunteered and submitted time the previous year.
5. You have a valid YPS background check or have signed the form declining a background check.

Active members remain active until March 1st of the following year to allow for dues payment.

*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)*



**We celebrated our tenth anniversary in 2001 at the Lake Jackson Civic Center in 2001. Note the projected images on the walls.**

Photo: Neal McLain

**Texas Master Naturalist Program  
Cradle of Texas Chapter  
Celebration of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chapter**

**There will be no Advanced Training at this meeting**

**Wednesday, September 14, 2016**

**Lake Jackson Civic Center**

**333 Highway 332 East**

**Lake Jackson, TX 77566**

**NOTE  
LOCATION**

**MAP: <http://tinyurl.com/LJCC-Circle-Way>**



<b>9:30 AM – 10:00 AM</b>	<b>Fun and Fellowship</b> No morning snack needed but feel free to bring side dishes, salads, or desserts for the anniversary celebration at 11:00 AM
<b>10:00 AM – 11:00 AM</b>	<b>General Meeting</b> <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour Volunteer Time.</i>
<b>11:00 AM – 1:00 PM</b>	<b>Celebration of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cradle of Texas Chapter Celebration of Connie Stolte's retirement from Texas Parks &amp; Wildlife Dept. No Advanced Training – just food and fun!</b>



## IT'S PARTY TIME!

Time to celebrate the 15th Anniversary Celebration of our chapter, and to celebrate Connie Stolte's retirement from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

We'll be meeting at the Lake Jackson Civic Center at 333 Highway 332 East. But you have to enter the parking lot from Circle Way. Here's a map:

<http://tinyurl.com/LJCC-Circle-Way>

No advanced Training – just good old fashioned fun. Our resident cooks – Roy, Marty, Ellis, and the gang – will roll out the Cooker Monster and cook up their patented brisket and sausage lunch. We are asking members to bring side dishes, salads, and desserts.



**The Cooker Monster**

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Coordinator

As of September 9, 107 COT members and interns have entered 10,712 hours of VT for 2016 and 1254 hours of AT.

At the September general meeting, we will be recognizing:

- **Jimmy Salinas** has been certified since our last report. Congratulations on this official entry into the Texas Master Naturalist program.
- **Marty Cornell, Kristine Rivers** and **Larry Ruhr** have recertified since our last report. Kristine and Larry are 2016 interns.

Congratulations to all!!

Members reaching VT milestones include:

- **Mel McKey** (250 hours)
- **Don Sabathier** (250 hours)

Great effort!!

And there is some more good news. We have just finished an internal audit at the state level of our VMS records. Your COT VMS Implementation Team believes we came out in pretty good shape overall – remarkable shape if we want to brag and take into account we have made almost 6700 time entries into VMS this year. Changing our code structure a few months ago to a more simplified format continues to pay dividends in reduced error entry rate. However, since everything is now computerized AND searchable, a number of miss-entered hours from our earlier cumbersome period have been identified. We are working now to correct all we can behind the scenes, but there may be a few that we will have to ask you to help us get within the guidelines. Just be flexible and try to understand this magnifying-glass scrutiny of your time entries is coming from the outside in preparation for federal audits later in the year.



**Cornell**  
Recertified



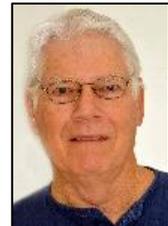
**Salinas**  
Certified



**Rivers**  
Recertified



**Ruhr**  
Recertified



**McKey**  
250 VT hours



**Sabathier**  
250 VT hours

## VOLUNTEER HELP WANTED

### MEDIA LIBRARY LIBRARIAN

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

Duties:

- Catalog new contributed books (record author, title, etc.),
- Monitor the library to verify that books are shelved in order.
- Monitor checked-out books records to make sure books are returned.

This activity is approved for Volunteer Time.

Interested? Contact Dave Brandes at [brandes@tmn-cor.org](mailto:brandes@tmn-cor.org)



### FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES PUBLICITY ASSISTANT

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (FOBWR) is looking for a few more good people who care about our local refuges. One area we need help with is publicity. If you are interested in publicity or becoming a FOBWR member contact Richard Schaffhausen at

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

FOBWR is a group of volunteers who work tirelessly to support our local wildlife refuges. Our members are dedicated to protecting the natural wonders of the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex and sharing their bounty through various refuge projects and educational and public outreach programs. Financial support for our programs is generated through fundraising, membership fees, donations, grants and other gifts.

Some of our activities:

- Construction of public use facilities at the refuges
- Environmental education
- Hosting the annual Migration Celebration
- Clean-up efforts at the refuges
- Promoting public awareness of refuges and wildlife
- Fundraising for refuge projects and programs
- Participating in data gathering and bird counts

How can you help? Join the many volunteers who care about the unique wildlife heritage of our area refuges. Contact [schaffhausen@refugefriends.org](mailto:schaffhausen@refugefriends.org)

## REMEMBERING OUR 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

By Barbara Burkhardt, Cradle of Texas Chapter President 2011-12

*Editor's note: the following narrative was originally published in the October 2011 issue of "Chapter News". We reprint it here in anticipation of our upcoming 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.*

The Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter, recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of the founding of the chapter. Over sixty-five members and guests gathered at the Lake Jackson Civic Center to hear the Texas State Co-coordinator for Master Naturalist, Michelle Haggerty, of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, present the keynote address. The first TMN-COT president, Tom Collins, formerly of Lake Jackson, gave a brief history of how the chapter got its start.

In 2001, a group of twenty highly motivated individuals, interested in nature and the natural sciences, learned of a new program being sponsored by the AgriLIFE Extension Service, Texas A&M University, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The Master Naturalist program, similar to the Master Gardeners program, educates the public in the natural resources of their county. The trained individuals then spread that knowledge through youth education and support of natural science organizations.

Over the past ten years, the TMN-COT Chapter has contributed over 100,600 hours in volunteer time to support our Brazoria County partners which include the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Brazoria County Parks Department, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Sea Center Texas, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue

—Barbara Burkhardt, October 2011



Jane Eppner with the "volunteer tree" she created for the event. Photo: Neal McLain



The Gatorcake Photo Neal McLain

### More photos:

- Photo Spread <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-10-Spread>
- Lots more photos <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-10-LotsMore>
- Sidewall photos <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-10-Sidewall>



After lunch we all gathered on the steps of the Civic Center for a group photo. Photo: Ed Barrios

## CELEBRATE THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF BRAZORIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

By Richard Schaffhausen, Publicity Coordinator

Come celebrate the 50th anniversary of Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge (BNWR) on November 12, 2016 at the refuge.

Brazoria NWR was established on October 20, 1966 with the acquisition of 6,398 acres which includes the public use area now referred to as the Big Slough Recreation Area. Soon after Ray Fleetwood was hired as the manager. Some of the observations taken from Mr. Fleetwood's notes:

- *The first year "fewer than 50 visitors including those that called at the office."*
- *"The largest predator on the refuge is the Red Wolf and less than 6 individuals were observed during the year."*
- *An area northeast of the Discovery Center had been double disked and planted with wheat. "Up to Dec 13 only four Canada geese and 17 Sandhill cranes had been seen in the wheat field."*

With acquisitions over the years Brazoria NWR now encompasses 44,414 acres. For more information on the history of Brazoria NWR read the excellent article in the fall 2011 edition of the Refuge Beat

[http://refugefriends.org/Refuge\\_Beat/2011\\_Fall.pdf](http://refugefriends.org/Refuge_Beat/2011_Fall.pdf)



### FAMILY EVENTS

- **Air rifles**
- **Archery**
- **Birds of Prey programs** by EarthQuest™
- **Butterfly Encounter**
- **Estuary station**
- **Fishcasting**
- **Kite building and flying**
- **Live reptiles**
- **Microscopes**
- **Prairie exhibit**
- **Sandpile**
- **Trail walks**

### REFUGE HISTORY

The early history of the land before the refuge was founded:

- **Native Americans** by Chris Kneupper and members of the Brazosport Archaeological Society,
- **Austin Colony** by Stephen F. Austin re-enactor Stanley Murray.
- **Brazoria Historical Militia** by the members of the Militia.
- **Maddox Monument** by Percy Beacroft, Jr. the grandson of the Maddox family.
- **Railroads and Sulfur** by members of the Brazos Valley Railroad Society.



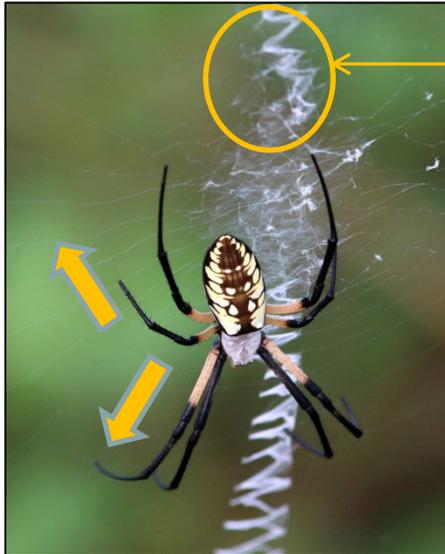
**Event Headquarters:** Discovery Center at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge.

## PHOTO GALLERY POTPOURRI

By Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

Brazoria County species are often colorful, as these summer species show.

### Black and Yellow Garden Spider (*Argiope aurantia*) (Female)



The web of the Black and Yellow Garden Spider is usually decorated with a bold, zigzag band of silk called a **stabilimentum**.

The spider sits in the center of the web, hanging head down. Each day, the spider usually eats and rebuilds her web, except during times of egg-laying and molting.

Prey for Black and Yellow Garden Spiders are insects that jump or fly. These spiders can trap insects as large as grasshoppers and they occasionally capture lizards.

The female is identified by the yellow and black stripes on her abdomen and legs that are yellowish or reddish brown at the base and black distally.

The legs are long. The first two pairs of legs are directed forward when the spider is at rest in the web; the hind two pairs of legs are directed backwards.

[Source: <http://spiders.us/species/argiope-aurantia/>]  
Photo by Jerry Eppner, Sea Center Texas, Aug. 2016

### Black-bordered Lemon Moth (*Marimatha nigrofimbria*)

Adult Black-bordered Lemon Moths are distinguished by tiny blackish dots on the wings with a black, purplish gray fringe. The larval hosts for this moth include smooth crabgrass (*Digitaria ischaemum*) and saltmarsh morning-glory (*Ipomoea sagittata*), both found along the Texas Gulf Coast.

[Source: BugGuide.net]



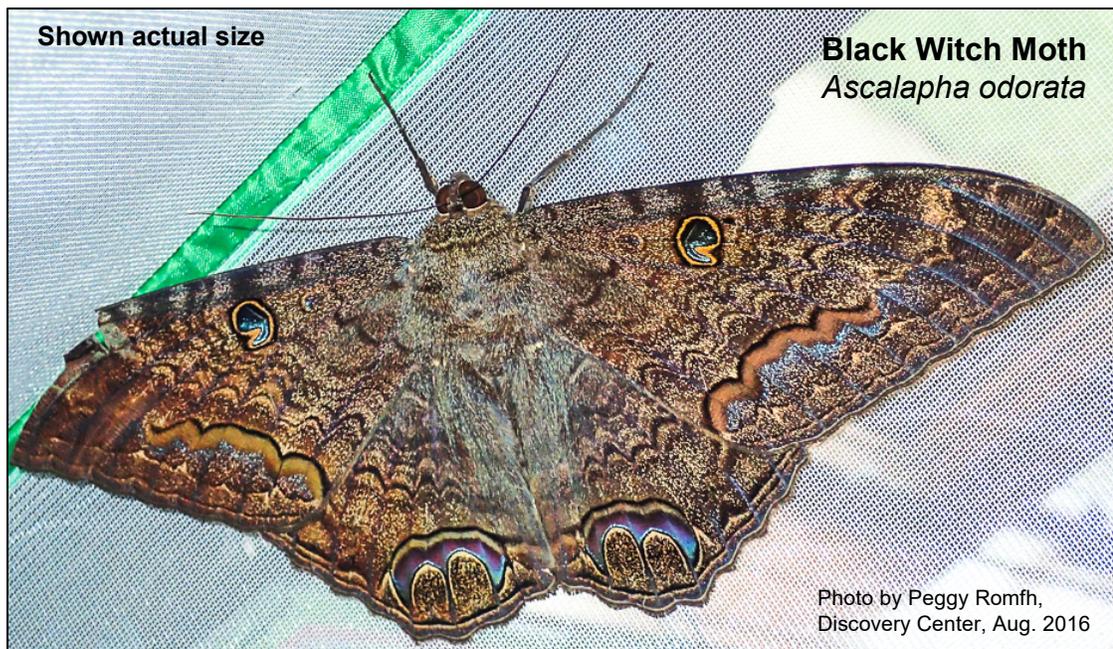
Photo by Peggy Romfh, Quintana, July 2015.



Larval Host

Photo by Jerry Eppner, Sea Center Texas, Aug. 2016

Shown actual size



**Black Witch Moth**  
*Ascalapha odorata*

Photo by Peggy Romfh,  
Discovery Center, Aug. 2016

The Black Witch Moth is the largest moth in the continental USA. It is often mistaken for a bat and has a wing span up to 7 inches. It is common across Texas in late spring and summer.

Hurricanes in the Gulf may create a 'fallout' of large populations of moths that are blown north of their normal range.

Source:  
<http://insectidentification.org>

## JUDY'S JOTTINGS: WHOOPING CRANE – A COMEBACK STORY

By Judy Green

The endangered Whooping Crane, *Grus Americana*, nearly extinct in 1941 with only 21 cranes, has slowly recovered to number 600 Whooping Cranes today (440 in the wild, 160 captivity). This was accomplished by determined conservation biologists employing extensive methods such as captive breeding, wetland management and an innovative program using ultra-light aircraft to teach young Whooping Cranes migration routes.

The endangered Whooping Crane nests in shallow, freshwater marshes and is omnivorous, its diet dependent on locale and may include seeds, berries, fish, crustaceans, fruit, insects, aquatic invertebrates, amphibians, and acorns. A great place to view these magnificent birds is at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

In 2017, the annual Whooping Crane Festival takes place Feb. 23 – 26 in Port Aransas, Texas. For more information on the Texas festival, visit <http://whoopingcranefestival.org>.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Whooping Cranes are the tallest bird in North America, measuring 52" high, with a wingspan of 87", which is equal to or larger than the Bald Eagle.
- Rarest of the 15 Crane species.
- Can fly up to 50 m.p.h.
- Females and males look alike with snowy white plumage, black wingtips and a bare patch of red skin on their head.
- Have a rich, loud bugling voice that can be heard over 2 miles away.
- Mature at 4-6 years of age, living average of 22+ years.
- Female produces 1-2 eggs annually but usually raises only one chick.
- Both parents feed the young.
- Elaborate courtship dances.
- One population, numbering 300, migrate in October from West Canada breeding grounds to the Texas Gulf Coast wintering grounds.



**Whooping Cranes.** Source: Friends of the Wild Whoopers.  
<http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/>

#### Sources

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- Kenn Kaufman. *Kaufman Field Guide to Mammals of North America*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005.
- Edward S. Brinkley. *National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Birds of North America*. Sterling, 2007.
- Stan Tekiela. *Birds of Texas Field Guide*. Adventure Publications, 2004

## CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson
Vice President/Program	Jill Carroll, Pearland
Secretary	Jean Britt, Lake Jackson
Treasurer	Donald Sabathier, Pearland
State Representative	Ed Barrios, Lake Jackson
Past President	Mike Mullins, Sweeny
Training Coordinators	Carolyn May-Monie, West Columbia Laurel Owen, Brazoria
Membership Coordinator	Jerry Eppner, Lake Jackson
Volunteer Service Coordinator	Pete Romfh, Houston
Advanced Training Coordinator	Peggy Romfh, Houston
Outreach Coordinator	Ruby Lewis, Angleton
Chapter Host	Pam West, Freeport
Publicity Coordinator	Richard Schaffhausen, Alvin
Publications Coordinator	Neal McLain, Brazoria
Class of 2016 representatives	Kristine Rivers, Pearland Larry Ruhr, Lake Jackson

Chapter Adviser John O'Connell (AgriLife Extension Service)

Newsletter Editor Neal McLain, Brazoria  
Dave Brandes, Jerry Eppner, Judy Green, Neal McLain, Richard Schaffhausen, Peggy Romfh, Pam West

Website <http://tmn-cot.org>  
Facebook <http://facebook.com/TMN.COT>  
E-mail Listserv <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail>



## 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 Monday before the General Meeting by the Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome. Submission deadline is 5:00 PM on Saturday before the General Meeting. 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.