



Chapter News

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Officers and Directors



<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.



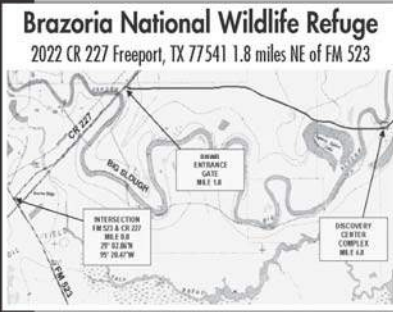
**CELEBRATE THE 50th ANNIVERSARY
BRAZORIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2016
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**



REFUGE HISTORY

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

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



FAMILY EVENTS

- Kayak Salt Lake Creek
- Encounter Butterflies Close Up
- Practice Casting for Fish
- Catch Crab, Shrimp and Minnows
- See Small Critters Close Up
- Get Muddy - Make Seed Balls
- Build and Fly Your Own Kite
- Pet a Gator, Touch a Snake, Hold a Turtle
- Tour Wetlands Full of Birds
- Help a Fireman Hose a Target
- Target Shoot with Air Rifle...
...Or Bow and Arrow
- Find Treasure in a Sand Pile

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE



Presented by:
the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex
with assistance of
Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges

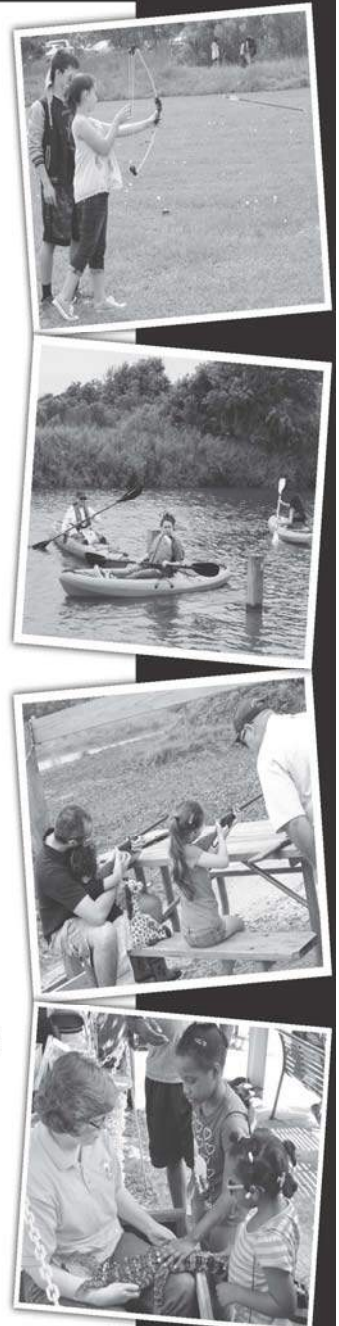
VAN TOURS AROUND THE REFUGE

Birding Tour: Birds of the Refuge
departs every 90 minutes

Points of Interest: Big Slough Auto Tour
departs every 20 minutes

Food Service - Pavilion 10-3
Hot Dogs, BBQ Sandwiches, Chips, & Drinks

For schedules, updated activities, and other information see bnwr-50th.org or call 844-84-BIRDS



Newspaper advertisement published in the November 3, 2016 issue of *The Brazoria County News*. Created by BCN Staff based on information provided by Richard Schaffhausen, Publicity Director for Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, November 9, 2016
Texas AgriLife Extension Building
21017 County Road 171
Angleton, Texas 77515-8903**



8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Refreshment Team: Lorna Witt, Sheree Muzny, Joanna Harlan, Larry Ruhr, Anne Bettinger, Anna King
9:00 AM – 9:50 AM	General Meeting <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour Volunteer Time.</i>
10:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Program: "Smartphone Apps for Naturalists". Speaker: David Sarkozi, Secretary Texas Ornithological Society <i>This program is approved for Advanced Training. Hours will be announced at meeting.</i>



Texas Ornithological Society

David Sarkozi is currently the Manager of Public Safety Systems at the University of Houston. In this capacity he supervises the management of department records management system, the computer aided dispatch, the emergency call box system, and technicians and police dispatchers.

When not at his job as UH Sarkozi cites birdwatching and fly fishing as his interests. He is an experienced birder and has served as president, Texas Ornithological Society (2005-07) in addition to his current position as secretary.

Sarkozi writes about his birding activities in his blog and in his personal website:

- Website: <http://www.kozibirding.com/>
- Blog: <http://davidsbigyear.blogspot.com/>



David Sarkozi via Twitter



From Sarkozi's Facebook:

I photographed this banded Piping Plover at the Bolivar Flats Wednesday 10/26/2016. Today I got back the following on the bands "That was a bird we originally captured there at Bolivar on 11/29/2012 for a radiotelemetry project we were doing. It was later recaptured on breeding grounds at Lake Sakakawea on the Missouri River by USGS crew and a metal band was added to the upper left."

Amazing to think this bird may have made the round trip to North Dakota three times now!

—David Sarkozi via Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/david.sarkozi.737>

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Coordinator

As of November 4, 107 COT members and interns have entered 12619 hours of Volunteer Time for 2016 and 1434 hours of Advanced Training Time.

At the November general meeting, we will be recognizing some milestones. Members recertifying for 2016 include:



Roger Allen Ellis Burkhardt Mickey Dufilho Donna Graham Phil Huxford Jeanne Manry

Congratulations to all!

The following members have reached the 250-hour Volunteer service milestone:



Anna King Robert Salzer Linda Sluis Lorna Witt

Well done, folks

As we approach the end of the year, we need to start being more diligent about recording our volunteer hours in VMS. For many of us the VMS implementation represented some major changes in how we record our hours — a different way to do it, a tad more complex (but we have worked on that issue) and the dreaded 45 day deadline to get your time in.

But one thing has not changed, and that is the state TMN organization’s deadline for getting end-of-the-year

numbers into the system. We have not received the cut-off date yet, but if previous years are any indication, it is safe to be your “lunch money” that we will need you to have entered your final 2016 hours before mid-January.

So start getting that time entered and please try to keep up. With the exception of a few Christmas bird counts, there are not many volunteer opportunities in December, and so this shouldn’t be a big issue for most of us.

At our October meeting two members received special awards. Dave Brandes, Class of 2006, has reached to 5000-hour Volunteer Service milestone. The award including a gold pin with a diamond insert. Jim Calvert, Class of 2004, was recognized for reaching the 4000-hour milestone and received the President’s Call to Service Award



Jerry Eppner (Membership coordinator) with Dave Brandes, holding the award pin.



Jerry Eppner (Membership Coordinator), Jim Calvert, Dave Brandes (President).

Photos: Richard Schaffhausen

AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 2016-2017



Editor's note: This page is a reprint of an article originally published in the November 2013 issue of Chapter News. We reprint it here in anticipation of the 2016-17 Christmas Bird Count,

The 117th annual Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for December 14, 2016 to January 5, 2017. Organized by the National Audubon Society, this all-volunteer effort takes a snapshot of bird populations to monitor their status and distribution across the Western Hemisphere. The results are compiled into a database that is shared with federal, state, and private authorities. Past data can be viewed at the Audubon's website. Counts are open to birders of all skill levels. Novices are placed in groups with more experienced birders.

New to CBCs? Join us in the fun! Discover new areas to bird which may not be normally accessible and take advantage of this great opportunity to bird with some of our foremost birding experts. Be part of a long-standing holiday program that ultimately helps protect our extraordinary birds!

— Houston Audubon

TMN-COT VOLUNTEERS PLEASE NOTE

The 2016-17 Bird Count Schedule has been announced.

<http://refugefriends.org/BirdCounts/>

Christmas Bird counts are supported by the Houston Audubon and are accredited by the National Audubon Society. For a complete list of all Texas Bird Counts see the Houston Audubon website at:

<http://tinyurl.com/BirdsBirdsBirds>

Participation in any Audubon-accredited bird count is approved for volunteer service hours *provided that* you sign in and participate in the counting activity. "Counting activity" includes all time spent in the field plus training meetings, travel among count sites (if any), lunch, the countdown, and your travel time to and from the meeting points.

VMS CODING:

Code FR: Citizen Science/Field Surveys.

Description: CBC: Location of Event

Hour count: :All counting activity as defined above..

Some introductory words

by Tom Morris, David Plunkett, and Neal McLain

The Audubon Christmas Bird Counts is a North-, Central-, and South-American campaign to count as many birds and species within a fixed circle 15 miles in diameter. The first Christmas Count was in the Northeast in 1900 on Christmas Day.

Bird Counts were started to counter a popular "sport" of killing as many birds as one could on Christmas Day. The data from the counts are compiled in a database and results are printed annually and the raw data is available to researchers and amateurs. Population trends have been used to help protect species that show marked decreases.

A typical count day requires a lot of walking — two to three miles — and you are exposed to the elements a good part of the day. However, in case of bad weather such as rain, we resort to birding by car. In the evening we meet at a "countdown" for dinner and to tally results.

Good hiking shoes, hat, rain gear, repellent, layers, water, light snacks, and binoculars are the basics.

Less experienced birders are welcome to participate. If you wish to participate, please contact the Count Coordinator as soon as possible. Names of coordinators will be posted on the TMN-COT calendar when available. The coordinator will assign you to a specific group, and let you know where to meet your group on the morning of the count.

Every Bird Count is named for something — a city, a park, or some geographic feature — located inside the 15-mile-diameter circle. These names can sometimes be confusing. For example, the Brazoria Bird Count is named for the City of Brazoria, but it includes a much larger area. Similarly, the Freeport Bird Count is named for Freeport, but it also includes a larger area.

During these counts, we typically meet early in the morning, around 6:30 am and work in small groups with at least one knowledgeable birder in each group. Each group covers a specified territory in the morning, and usually covers another in the afternoon, with a break for lunch. Less-experienced birders thus have an opportunity learn from experienced colleagues.

PHOTO GALLERY POTPOURRI

by Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

The refuges are replete with yellow goldenrod, pink and yellow grasses, and tall, white Baccharis hedges gracing the auto-routes. The cattails are bursting with seeds and ducks and raptors are migrating to their Texas winter habitat. It's a beautiful time to be outside and a perfect time to avoid 'nature-deficit disorder,' a metaphoric condition that occurs if people do not spend enough time outdoors.

Eastern Baccharis (*Baccharis halimifolia*)



Eastern Baccharis, also called groundsel or sea myrtle, is a member of the Aster Family (Asteraceae) that blooms in the fall. It is a hardy native shrub that is highly resistant to salt spray and flooding.

Although the leaves of this plant are poisonous to livestock, it provides cover and nesting habitat for various species of birds. Bees and small butterflies use the nectar from the male flowers. Birds are attracted to the insects. Walk up close to Eastern Baccharis shrub and you will see hundreds of small insects crawling among the flowers.

Eastern Baccharis is **dioecious**, so there are male and female plants. The fruit (or achenes) are topped by a ring of slender, silvery-white bristles called the **pappus**, which catch the wind and are blown up to 140 meters from the shrub.

[Source: USDA Plant Guide]
[photos by Peggy Romfh, Brazoria NWR]

Know Your Toads and Frogs!



Photo by Dave Brandes

Gulf Coast Toads (*Bufo nebulifer* and *Bufo valliceps*) may be found living in cities around roadside ditches, storm sewers, and meter boxes. They often gather under street lights to feed on insects. We have one that parks himself near our back door at night, feasting on insects that congregate by our back light. The dorsal color varies from almost black to brownish-yellow.

[Source: Herps of Texas]



Photo by Jerry Eppner

The American Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) has an olive green back and sides blotched with brownish markings. The eyes are prominent and the eardrums (**tympanic membranes**) are easily seen just behind the eyes. Their loud, guttural calls reverberate across ponds and swamps.



Photo by Pete Romfh

Ha, Ha! I don't have nature-deficit disorder (NDD)!!!
Do you?



Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) Brazoria NWR.
[Photo by Peggy Romfh]

Richard Louv: "Nature-deficit disorder" is not a medical diagnosis, but a useful term—a metaphor—to describe what many of us believe are the human costs of alienation from nature: diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses, a rising rate of myopia, child and adult obesity, Vitamin D deficiency, and other maladies." [Source: Richard Louv in *The Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life*, Sept. 16, 2016]

ST. FRANCIS WOLF SANCTUARY

Story and photos by Judy Green



Achilles

Recently I visited St. Francis Wolf Sanctuary, located on the outskirts of Montgomery, Texas. The sanctuary is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with an on-site manager (only paid employee), and a workforce of dedicated volunteers. Their mission states that they are dedicated to rescuing and caring for non-releasable wolves and wolfdogs, providing them with a stable, loving, and exceptional home, with an abundance of loving and compassionate care.

The sanctuary was located in a fairly remote, piney woods area, at the end of an unpaved road. It had a couple of modest wood buildings (a small gift shop & living quarters) and behind them stood an expanse of high chain link fencing dividing up the area into individual pens, completely enclosed with roofs, nestled beneath trees.

Each pen housed 1-3 wolves, the number dependent upon each wolf's character. One dominant wolf (male or female) is placed into a pen along with 1-2 submissive wolves. Each pen has a flat-roofed house with one or more portable wading pools filled with water each day to help wolves cool off in the heat of the day.

The sanctuary currently cares for 13 wolves and wolfdogs. I observed that each wolf had a distinct personality. Some were very playful, some were shy, some were nervously pacing and one was very wary of human contact. Each wolf's story is different. Some were relinquished by owners who could no longer provide care, several had been chained at roadside attractions, one had been abused and kept in a tiny closet, one had been shot and its foot nearly severed by a steel trap. All of the animals seem to not only survive but thrive at St. Francis.

Wolfdogs are the result of breeding a wolf and dog or a "wolf hybrid". Most end up being euthanized by animal shelters or county pounds. Suspected wolfdogs are not deemed suitable for adoption.

Wolf Facts...They:

- Have average life span of 4-7 years in wild
- Are mammals
- Are carnivores
- Are the ancestors of domestic dogs
- Can run up to 38 mph
- Can weigh up to 120 pounds.
- Have around 2x bite strength of a German Shepherd

St. Francis Wolf Sanctuary is looking to relocate within the next few years to expand their operations. That will allow them to help more wolves and wolfdogs, provide larger enclosures and install running water features in each pen.



Lapua



Meeko

For more information visit the website at <http://wolvesofsaintfrancis.org>



Lapua

KBR KIDS DAY 2016 RECAP

Story and photos by Richard Schaffhausen

I volunteered to help with the activities at KBR Kids Day 2016 at the Water Works at Buffalo Bayou Park in Houston. I was joined by many of the usual suspects who volunteer at outreach programs: Ed Barrios, Johnny Dwyer, Joycelynn Grigson, Phil Huxford, Ed Johnson, Ruby Lewis, Jeanne Manry, Roy Morgan, David Plunkett, Kim Richardson, Carole Wenny, Sheree Muzny, Tom Schneider, Jo and Herb Myers. There may have been others but alas those grey cells have died.

The activities were set to begin at 11am. The stars of the party made their grand appearance shortly before to the oohs and aahs and "are they alive." Once again the "Birds of Prey" program, alligators, turtles, butterflies, and snakes stole the show.

We are but pawns to our show stoppers. Much to the delight of the estimated 5,000 children and adults who came by our 'stars' did not disappoint and the amazing group of volunteers did an outstanding job educating those who wanted to learn.



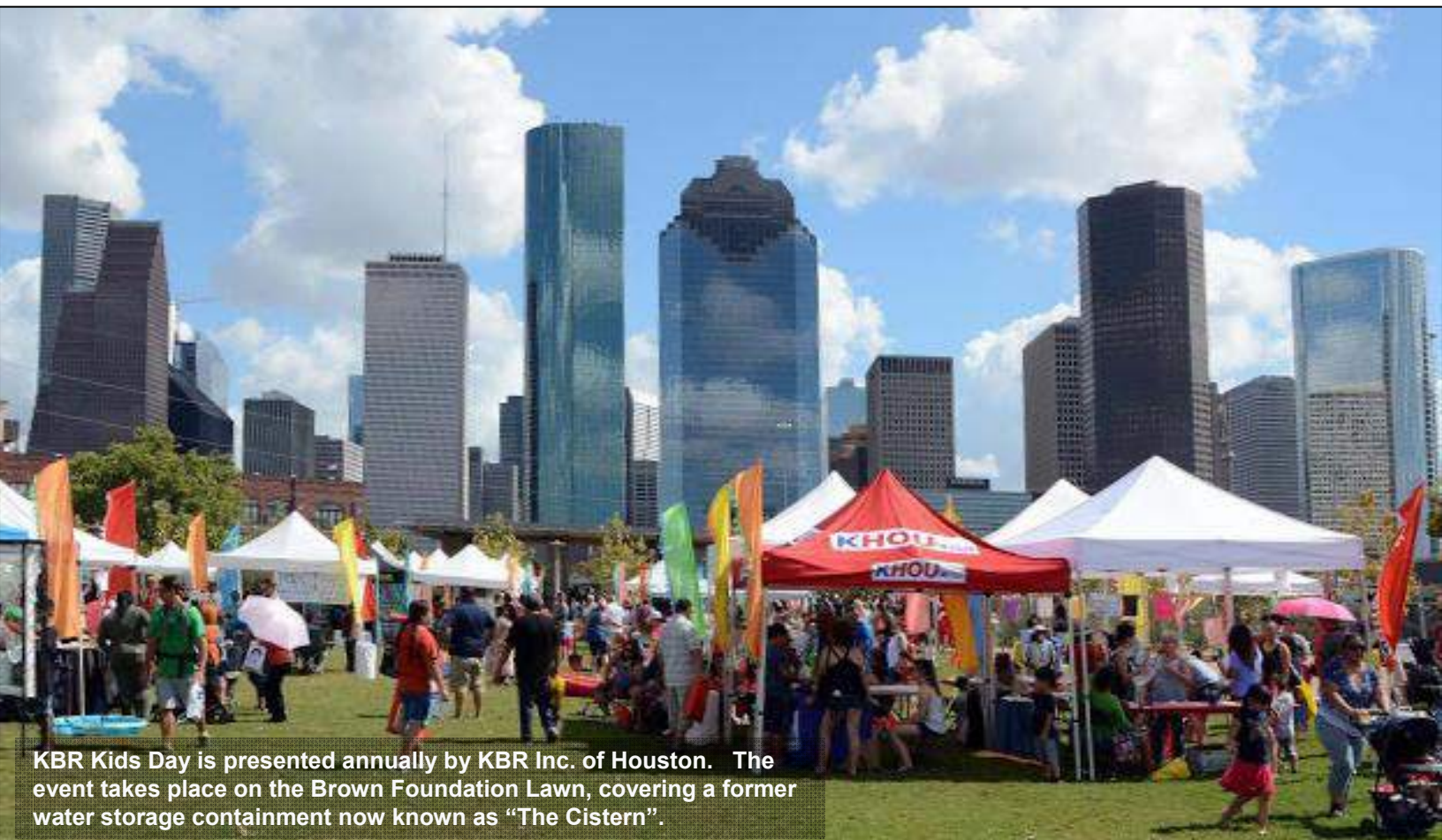
Steve Hoddy, *Birds of Prey* handler, with *Storm*, a female Andean Condor.



Roy Morgan introduces a young visitor to a corn snake.



Ruby Lewis introduces a canine visitor to a juvenile alligator.



KBR Kids Day is presented annually by KBR Inc. of Houston. The event takes place on the Brown Foundation Lawn, covering a former water storage containment now known as "The Cistern".

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
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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
 Newsletter Writers Jerry Eppner, Judy Green, Neal McLain, Peggy Romfh, Richard Schaffhausen

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
- 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

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. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.