



OCTOBER 2017

Chapter News

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT KRISTINE RIVERS

I don't know about you, but I've been in a Harvey time warp ever since the storm—September was a blur, and I still have trouble remembering what day it is. We're all trying to get back on track. Several events have been cancelled or postponed, and many of us are still dealing with the various things that need to be done to put our lives back together. I know some of you are worried about getting in all your hours needed for certification. I want to reassure you that certification doesn't affect membership status, so even if you don't recertify this year, you will still be considered an active member as long as you have reported time in VMS previously and paid your dues for 2017.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to update you on some newsworthy items that will be discussed at this month's chapter meeting:

- The December Chapter Meeting will begin at 11:00 a.m., with hospitality at 10:30 a.m. We hope that this will be more convenient for everyone who wants to attend the Hog Wild Party afterwards, which starts at noon.
- We've set a date for the day of Advanced Training at which the

state meeting presentation team will be offering "It's a Wild. Wild Life on the Mid-Texas Coast" for all chapter members who wish to attend. It is scheduled for Saturday, January 20, and will include six hours of AT with lunch at mid-day.



After careful consideration, the Board decided to postpone 2018 Intern Training until the fall. It is our hope that this will give everyone in our community time to finish up with Harvey recovery efforts and allow the environment and wildlife to heal as well.

Additionally, it's already time to start thinking about our 2018 Board membership; if you're interested in joining the Board next year, please contact Dave Brandes, who is heading up the Nominating Committee.

I strongly encourage all of you to take some time to rest and recover, to reconnect with nature, and enjoy the beautiful fall weather. I hope to see you at the meeting this week!

Kristine Rivers is the president of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. She can be reached at rivers@tmn-cot.org

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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 socio-economic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Masthead photo by P&P Romfh.

Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
Chapter News – October 2017



Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges invites you to ATFN 2017 for fine wines paired with gourmet appetizers. Benefits Cedar Lake Plantation Trail. Buy tickets on <http://www.refugefriends.org/>

Texas Master Naturalist Program—Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, October 11, 2017
Texas AgriLife Extension Building
21017 County Road 171
Angleton, Texas 77515-8903

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Snack Team: Brazoria County Library System, in appreciation of COT members' participation in the Summer Reading Program
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	General Meeting and Nature Notes <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour volunteer time</i>
10:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Speaker: Glenn Olsen, owner of nature touring company GO Birding Ecotours. Topic: <i>Phenomenal Flights: The Amazing Intercontinental Flights of Birds</i>

ABSTRACT

We will discuss the new understanding of bird migration as a result of the tracking of certain species using recently developed geo-locators. We will explore how birds migrate, how they navigate, the dangers they face, and why they undertake such demanding and extreme flights.

Glenn Olsen leads natural history and birding tours with GO Birding Ecotours and teaches bird identification, gardening for birds and butterflies, and nature-related classes through Rice University's Glasscock School of Continuing Studies, Houston Audubon, Katy Prairie Conservancy, and the Texas Master Naturalist program. He has served on the Houston Audubon Board as Vice President of Education and also served as an Audubon Warden monitoring colonial nesting birds in Rockport, Texas. He is currently Region 8 Director for the Texas Ornithological Society.

Two of his many other efforts towards conservation include monitoring endangered Attwater's Prairie Chickens at the Nature Conservancy's Texas City Preserve and co-founding the Wildscapes Workshop through the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT), where he served as president of both the Houston Chapter and the State NPSOT. He has led field trips and/or given programs for meetings of the Texas Ornithological Society, Houston Audubon, Houston Arboretum, the Native Plant Society of Texas, Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, Rockport Hummer/Bird Festival, Galveston FeatherFest, and other groups and festivals.

Glenn has led trips to locales such as Big Bend, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Amazon Rain Forest and The Galapagos Islands.



Glenn Olsen

Source: <https://gobirdingecotours.wordpress.com/author/glennsbirding/>

Membership Report by Pete and Peggy Romfh, Membership Directors

Congratulations to those who recently recertified for 2017. Receiving awards in October are:

Recertification (Sea Turtle Pin)

Ed Barrios	Donna Graham
Jill Carroll	Phil Huxford
Mickey Dufilho	Bob Whitmarsh

Impact Data—January-September

9,967 Adults 27,867 Youth 37,834 Total

Hours Totals—January-September

13,111 hours VT 1,359 hours AT 115 Volunteers

At the September 13, regular chapter meeting held at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, five members recertified, including: Neeta Allen, Rainbo Johnson, Roy Morgan, Kim Richardson, Robert Salzer.



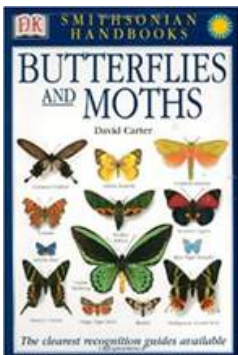
Recertifications announced at the September General Meeting include: Neeta Allen, Rainbo Johnson, Roy Morgan, Kim Richardson, Robert Salzer.

From the Calendar



<https://txmn.org/2017-annual-meeting/>

Smithsonian Handbooks—Butterflies and Moths Book Review by Judy Green



A publication of the DK (Dorling Kindersley) imprint, *Smithsonian Handbooks—Butterflies and Moths* by David Carter, offers full-color, close-up photos of over 500 species of butterflies and moths and focuses on the identification of

both animals. This very useful handbook, donated by the estate of Carl Dodson, a long-term member of TMN-COT, is in the AgriLife Volunteer Media Library.

Carter's introduction states that he included selections "to represent as wide a range of different types of butterflies and moths as possible." He notes that trying to identify all of them would have been impossible due to the enormous range of butterflies and moths.

Twenty-six pages of information follow the introduction and include such information as:

"Butterfly or Moth?" to aid in distinguishing between the two (his hint: check the antennae); life cycle; early stages; survival; conservation; rearing; butterfly gardens; and identifying the region.

Each identification page includes a beautiful photo with basic information about the insect, its early stages of growth and distribution, habitat, wingspan and flight time. A thumbnail world map, included at the bottom of each page, shows the butterfly's or moth's range.

The book fulfilled its promise to be a helpful, accessible handbook. Photos were lush and the information simple to understand. Clearly not intended as a definitive book on the subject, the work provides a starting point for a lay person, and I think the interesting photos spark the imagination and further study.

As is customary with such works, a Glossary, Useful Addresses and an Index are located at the back of the book.

Harvey Harasses Brazoria County Parks reported by Bryan Frazier

According to Brazoria County Parks Director and COT Member Bryan Frazier, the state of the parks as of October 3, is as follows: “Basically, Brazoria County Parks had several boat ramps that were damaged from extreme silt and water currents, and four parks remain notably impacted or closed from the effects of Harvey and subsequent flooding.”

Frazier’s brief overview of hurricane-related impact is as follows:

- **Camp Mohawk County Park** was probably the most seriously affected; most every building and structure were severely flooded from Chocolate Bayou, which experienced extremely high water. Four cabins; two, large, group dormitories; an historic chapel; the park residence and the park headquarters office all received serious damage. Mohawk will likely be closed for several months while repairs and rebuilding take place.
- **Brazos River County Park** was severely impacted, as the 1/4-mile boardwalk trail was damaged beyond repair; downed trees smashed through a picnic pavilion and onto a playground; and the park residence was likely affected as

well. Water covered almost the entirety of the Park footprint.

- **Hanson Riverside County Park**, located west of West Columbia, sits along the banks of the San Bernard River. Most of the park was completely submerged by water, which damaged both restroom complexes, the park’s trail and boardwalks, and the large picnic pavilion. The park residence was completely destroyed. The boat ramp section of Hanson is open, but the western section of the park remains closed.

- **Albert Finkle County Park** in Liverpool received some damage, mainly from Chocolate Bayou’s flooding, which swept through the park and pushed lots of debris into it from surrounding areas.



Clockwise from top left: Debris in a picnic shelter at Camp Mohawk County Park; items set to dry on porch of Camp Mohawk cabin; Hanson Riverside County Park boardwalk and displaced dumpster; Churchill boat ramp covered in silt; mattresses drying in the sun outside Camp Mohawk dormitory. Photos by Bryan Frazier.

Photos far right, from top: Brazos River boat ramp at CR 849 covered with silt; sign blocking through traffic on CR 400; high water mark on tree; damaged Union Pacific Railroad bridge over the San Bernard River. The bridge has been repaired temporarily, allowing trains to cross at a maximum speed of 10 miles per hour. The UPRR plans to build a new bridge next to the old one. UPRR photo by a UPRR employee..

Post-Flood Photos from Neal McLain



Reflections on “Hunting” the Louisiana Eyed Silkmoth

From April through August this year, several intrepid volunteers, all COT members, worked with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Jennifer Wilson on a USFWS regional project to determine if the Louisiana Eyed Silkmoth (*Automeris louisiana*) had expanded its range along the Texas coast. The good news? None of these unwelcome guests was seen in the traps set up by group members. The even better news for those who sacrificed some P.M. and A.M. sleep time? They learned a great deal about the flying critters they did catch.



Photo © Paul Oppler;
<https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org>

Below is the information with which all project members started. The goal was to set traps each month at locations in all the identified, Texas Mid-Coast Refuge sites from April through August. Traps were set at each location for two sequential nights as close to the new moon date as possible, i.e., the darkest nights of the month.

The process was:

- Set trap in the P.M. for night 1; return early the next A.M. and carefully open trap; document, with photos if possible, all species seen
- Re-set trap for night 2; return early the next A.M. and re-check trap
- Document environmental conditions (weather, temperature, wind) and also plants found in trap area
- Document species of insects found.

Although Jennifer Wilson selected the initial sites, participating Master Naturalists provided input and suggestions on additional locations. The sites tested included:

- Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge: Rogers Pond, Weir Dam, Cross Trails Pond, and Alligator Marsh
- San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge: Cow Trap Levee and the Sargent Unit (Matagorda County).

Reflections from Some Project Volunteers

Jennifer Wilson: “Working with this group of volunteers has been wonderful. They were enthusiastic, loved to explore and learn, and brought with them a diversity of talents. Some were already versed in insect identification and shared their knowledge with the group. Those who weren’t as well versed loved the opportunity to learn more. This group also included individuals who could assemble solar power sources to power the traps efficiently. Pete and Peggy Romfh were so skilled that they constructed their own! The project resulted in some notable finds. These included little-noted or range-restricted insects that might become species of concern in the future. We benefit from being aware of their presence today.”



BNWR Cross Trails Pond, 20 July 2017: Jo and Herb Myers, Peggy Romfh.

Oron Atkins: “I have been involved with several Citizen Science projects that included capture of a species; I continue to be intrigued by the different methods and trapping devices utilized, and the “moth trap” was no exception. Everyone knows that insects are attracted to light at night, but having the ability to capture an approximately 10-hour area sampling over the course of a night gave amazing results. There is an incredible number of species you do not see or notice during daylight hours. I also learned first-

hand that insect identification is not an easy task, at least for me. Great project and looking forward to the next one.”

Peggy Romfh: “We love doing citizen science projects, and the Moth Project exceeded our expectations. I must admit to feeling surprise and a bit of trepidation the first time we opened a trap and saw six gigantic water bugs and other insects squirming about in the bottom of the bucket. However, once we got used to the idea of photo-documenting the insects we captured, we brought along our camp stools to sit by the bucket on each trap inspection morning and sorted through everything. From water boatmen to tiger beetles, seaside dragonlets to long-horned beetles, small moths to plant hoppers, we were absolutely amazed at the diversity of insects observed over the spring and summer. We learned something new every month and had a lot of fun!”

Pete Romfh: “The best parts of the Moth Project... were the technical challenges of trapping and documenting the test subjects... After looking at a non-lethal trap, basically a baffled bucket with a light shining in it, and finding limitations (short battery life, only two traps for four sites), I started thinking of improvements while still following the experimental design and protocol. I cast around for ideas and found that I needed to know a lot of information, e.g., What colors of light does a moth see best?; Are LED’s made in UV?; What the heck is “actinic” anyway?; and What was the formula for estimating service life and charging rates of a large battery? After a great deal of Internet browsing and looking through my store of ‘highly valuable reusable components (junk pile)’ and locating a source for those elusive ‘Actinic UV LED Strips,’ I had a Solar Charged, Dark Activated, Robinson Design, Non-lethal, Lepidoptera Trap ready for field testing. There’s something special about taking your own design out in the field and seeing it filled with flying critters the next morning.”

Herb and Jo Myers: “This was our first time participating in a citizen science project, and we really looked forward to our early-morning trap checking. Opening the trap and observing what had been caught the night before was exciting; we never knew what we would find. The variety of insects was amazing, and we probably spent too long trying to identify the different species, but the pursuit of identifying became addictive. Between coaching from other Master Naturalists, reviewing our insect book, and many hours on the Internet, we ended up identifying about 70% of the catch. The most amazing find was trapping two, beautiful, large Sphinx Moths.”

George Valadez: “This was my first citizen science project, and I enjoyed every minute. It gave me the opportunity to work with a group of people who love nature. I... was amazed at the variety of insects that were trapped. I learned so much and will do it again.”


continued on page 6

“Hunting” the Louisiana Eyed Silkmoth continued from Page 5


Information provided to participants to aid in identification:

WANTED


SIGHTINGS OF THE LOUISIANA EYED SILKMOTH (*Automeris louisiana*)
FOUND IN THE COASTAL GRASSLANDS OF THE CENTRAL GULF COAST




Automeris to eggs 36 hours old (left) and 8 days old (right) (similar to *A. louisiana*).



Automeris to in various instars (molts) of larval stage. From left to right: newly hatched, 3rd instar, and 5th instar.



Automeris to fully grown larva (left) and pupae (right).



Automeris louisiana adult stage (♂ left, ♀ right).

Range: Southwest Mississippi, southern Louisiana, extreme Southeast Texas.

Habitat: Treeless, saltmarsh and cordgrass prairie of the outer Mississippi River Delta. Endemic to coastal marsh.

Collect the following information: time and date, location: lat/long, habitat description, dominant plant species, egg/larval host (if applicable), life cycle stage (egg, larva, pupae, adult), and numbers observed.

Take pictures if possible!

Send information to:
 John Savell: John_Savell@fws.gov or call (337) 291-3144
 Beau Gregory: bgregory@wlf.la.gov or call (337) 491-2576

Graphics reproduced from: Brou, V. A. 2005. Spotlight on rearing *Automeris louisiana* Ferguson and Brou. Southern Lepidopterists' News 27, No. 4, Plate 2. University of Florida (UF). 2015. Entomology and Nematology (web application). University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, available at http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/misc/so_moth.htm. Accessed 12 May 2015.

More photos from the field:



Above: Jennifer Wilson setting traps near smooth cordgrass, the larval host of the Louisiana Eyed Silkmoth, at Sargent, 24 April 2017. Right: Jennifer Wilson and Pete Romfh with trap set. Photos: P&P Romfh.



Rogers Pond trap set environment. Photo: P&P Romfh.



From far left: Jo Myers and Peggy Romfh examine a trap; George Valadez and Joe Myers set a trap. Photos: Herb Myers.

Immediate right, from top: Trap contents at Cow Trap Levee; trap placement and view from Cow Trap Levee, accessible only by UTV; smooth cordgrass—prime habitat for Louisiana Eyed Silkmoth, though none were trapped here. Photos: Oron Atkins.

Federal Duck Stamp Contest Winner Announced

STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN, Sept. 16, 2017—The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) today announced the winner of the 2017 Duck Stamp Competition. The winning artist was Bob Hautman of Delano, Minnesota.

According to a USFWS Press Release, "Hautman's acrylic painting of a pair of mallards will be made into the 2018-19 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or Duck Stamp, which will go on sale in late June 2018. The Service produces the Federal Duck Stamp, which sells for \$25 and raises nearly \$40 million each year to provide critical funds to conserve and protect wetland habitats in the National Wildlife Refuge System for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of people."

View all of this year's competition entries at <https://tinyurl.com/yaovju6n>



On Saturday, Sept. 16, 2017, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that Bob Hautman, an artist from Delano, Minnesota, is the winner of the 2017 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest. (Image courtesy USFWS).

Links and Learn

Lifelong learner and web watcher Ed Barrios recommends the following pbs.org link to the video, "The Age of Giant Insects," which provides a fun, brief overview of giant insects during the Carboniferous Period and theories that explain these insect's size and demise.

<http://www.pbs.org/video/the-age-of-giant-insects-mn9nez>

Barrios also enjoyed another short, pbs.org video, "The Trouble with Trilobites." It presents a history of the trilobite, which remains (by far) the longest surviving animal in the history of the world, and a few theories to explain its demise.

<http://www.pbs.org/video/the-trouble-with-trilobites-wxtddw>



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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.

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- 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 Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is 5:00 PM on Friday before the General Meeting. Send submissions by email to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.