



AUGUST 2019

Chapter News

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT KRISTINE RIVERS

We are incredibly lucky to have not just one but *two* National Wildlife Refuges in Brazoria County, and I hope you enjoy them when you're not out volunteering. Despite the heat, this is a wonderful time to visit Brazoria NWR. The wetlands and ponds there are quite ephemeral during the summer, and as the ponds diminish, they are teeming with fish and other aquatic wildlife, attracting thousands of birds to a feeding frenzy. It's an amazing sight to see and interesting to observe all the different foraging behaviors. I love watching spoonbills sweeping their bills from side to side, dowitchers probing deeply into the mud, sandpipers picking tiny things off the surface, terns diving into the water as they fish, herons and egrets stalking their prey, ducks tipping up to forage vegetation from the bottom of the pond—all in one location!

All the chicks that hatched out this season are easy to see as they learn to forage on their own. There are large families of ducks and gallinules and juvenile night-herons everywhere. My favorites are the baby Black-necked Stilts that look like fuzz balls with ridiculously long legs. You'll know if there are any nearby because the parents raise the alarm with strident calls and frequent flyovers.

There's a lot more to see than just birds, of course! I saw a raccoon peeking out from under the bridge near the Discovery Center, nutria swimming in the deeper ponds, a variety of crabs, and too many dragonflies to count (get those mosquitoes!).



Immature Black-necked Stilt

The summer library program has finished, and Ruby Lewis reports that we provided outreach to over 3,100 participants this year, with nearly half of our chapter members volunteering. It's a great way to get VT during these hot summer months. Some of our partners also have volunteer opportunities inside in the air conditioning—just let Oron Atkins know if you'd like to act as a docent at the Brazosport Museum of Natural Science or Sea Center Texas.

Giving presentations is one of the ways that I get a lot of my VT, and that's another indoor opportunity. Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) has opened a new location in Angleton and needs instructors to provide everything

from two-hour workshops to eight-week courses on a variety of subjects. If you're interested in learning more, follow up with Ed Peebles or me, and we'll get you involved.

Our August chapter meeting will be in our temporary location once again, at **First Presbyterian Church, 130 S. Arcola Street, Angleton**. Our guest speaker is Dr. Robert Lonard, who will share his wealth of knowledge about the barrier islands of Texas. In addition, Candace Novak will be teaching us about "the inner life" of mollusks during Nature Notes. It should be a great meeting.

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 Dept. 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 – August 2019

REMINDERS:

- 1) August General Meeting at First Presbyterian Church, 130 S. Arcola Street in Angleton.
- 2) Bench dedication for Bryan Adams at BASF Planetarium in Clute at 2p on September 2.

Texas Master Naturalist Program—Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, August 14, 2019
First Presbyterian Church
130 S. Arcola Street, Angleton, TX 77515-8903

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Morning Snack Team: Bill Ahlstrom, Marty Cornell, Lisa Myers, Robert Salzer, George Valadez
9:00 AM – 9:40 AM	General Membership Meeting <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour volunteer time</i>
9:40 AM – 10:00 AM	Nature Notes Speaker: Candace Novak Topic: “Mollusks, the animals within the exoskeletons”
10:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Advanced Training Speaker: Dr. Robert Lonard, biologist and professor emeritus, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Topic: “The Barrier Islands of Texas” <i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>

Dr. Lonard holds a Bachelor of Science in Education (1964) and a Master of Science in Biology (1966) from Emporia State University, Valley Falls, Kansas. He earned a Ph.D. in plant systematics from Texas A&M University. Following graduation, Lonard accepted a faculty position at The University of Texas–Pan American in Edinburg, Texas, where he achieved the rank of Full Professor, served as Department Chair for two years, and after a 34-year career, retired in 2004. Lonard continues his appointment at the university as a Research Professor. The author of 89 scientific publications, Lonard also secured 24 grants during his long career, and he successfully mentored a number of graduate students.

Having won numerous awards for research and faculty excellence, Lonard is also the author of four books on plants:

- *Guide to the Grasses of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas* (1993) ^[1]
- *Field Guide to the Broad-leaved Herbaceous Plants of South Texas* (1999) ^[2]
- *Trees, Shrubs, and Cacti of South Texas* (2003) ^[3]
- *Weeds in South Texas and Northern Mexico: A Guide to Identification* (2007) ^[4].

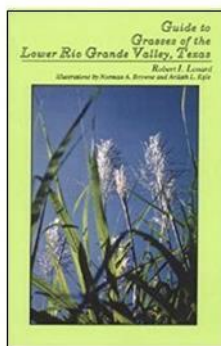
Lonard remains active in wetland research, and flora and vegetation of southern Texas, including barrier ecology and remote sensing of the Rio Grande floodplain vegetation. He credits his student days at Emporia State for inspiring his distinguished career.

Source: Emporia State University

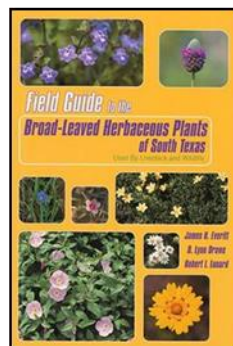


Emporia State University

Dr. Robert I. Lonard



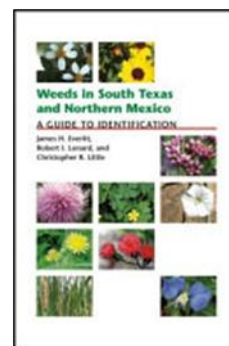
[1]



[2]



[3]



[4]

Membership Data Report by Pete and Peggy Romfh, Data Managers

Congratulations to those who will be receiving awards at COT's August 2019 General Meeting:

Recertification 2019 (Warbler Pin)

Bill Ahlstrom	Ellen Lasseter
Julia Geisler	Georgia Monnerat
Cindy Goodrum	Rose Wagner

500 Hours Milestone (Silver Dragonfly Pin)

Chip Sweet

1000 Hours Milestone (Gold Dragonfly Pin)

Herb Myers Don Sabathier

Impact Data YTD—January 1—July 31, 2019

10,121 Adults 27,295 Youth 37,416 Total

Hours Totals YTD—July 31, 2019

10,385 Hours VT 1,149 Hours AT 98 Volunteers



At the July 2019 General Meeting, President Kristine Rivers presented Bob Whitmarsh with the 500-hour milestone pin. Photo by Dick Schaffhausen.

New Gulf Coast Bird Observatory Water Feature

by Martin Hagne, Executive Director, GCBO; edited by Neal McLain

Many things here at GCBO were damaged by hurricane Harvey. Thanks to generous donations and many hours of volunteer help, most of the damage was repaired within a year after the storm.

One damaged item was the water feature outside the headquarters building. Strong waters washed out dirt under the rock structure and it collapsed. Thanks to numerous volunteers, led by longtime volunteer Phil Huxford, the old water feature has been replaced with a pond. Phil worked for a week digging by tractor and by hand. Other volunteers dug up plants from around the old feature and potted them for replanting. Rocks from the old feature were also saved for the new structure.

Volunteers Sam Dufilho, Vic Wade, Tom Taroni, and Oron Atkins recently spent a morning hand digging the finer features of the pond, while Phil operated his tractor. The watering system around the pond has also been re-plumbed thanks to board member Michael Heather. A few more weeks and it will be done. Thank you, Phil, and all involved. This will be a wonderful feature and will be visible from the rocking chairs on the new front deck.

Come enjoy!



From left: Volunteers Oron Atkins (left) and Sam Dufilho take a break from digging as Phil Huxford's blue tractor stands ready; Phil Huxford digging the edge of the pond by hand; the pond as seen from the porch of the GCBO Administration Building. Photo credits (left to right): Vic Wade, Martin Hagne, Neal McLain.

Nature Camp Quintana 2019

This year's Camp Quintana, July 15 through 18, run by the Brazoria County Parks Department (BCPD) and staffed by COT members, was a huge hit with the 16 campers who attended at Quintana Beach County Park. Mike Mullenweg, Lead Interpretive Ranger and Programs Coordinator, planned a learning- and fun-filled week that included shelling, seining, fishing, crafting, microshells, swash-zone investigation and other activities. The COT volunteers included: Bill Ahlstrom, Herb Myers, Lisa Myers, Jo Myers, Pam Peltier and help from BCPD's Patty Brinkmeyer and Bryan Frazier.



Group photo by Bryan Frasier; all others by Herb Myers.

COT's Brazoria County Summer Reading Programs End on High Note

Coordinating more than 20 days of programs during June and July, Ruby Lewis and numerous, intrepid COT volunteers presented over 50 programs at public libraries throughout Brazoria County. June's focus was reptiles and July's was sea and shore. The photos below, by library staff, were taken on July 24 at Lake Jackson Library.



Game-changing, Bipartisan Wildlife Legislation Introduced in Congress

by Tom Harvey, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; John Shepperd, Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife; Janice Bezanson, Texas Conservation Alliance; 15 July 2019



Some of the numerous species that would benefit from RAWA: Monarch butterfly, Red-shouldered hawk, Kemp's ridley sea turtle. Photos by TPWD.

Fish and wildlife populations are under increasing pressure from habitat loss, invasive species, emerging diseases, and extreme-weather events in Texas and throughout the country. As many as one-third of our nation's species are on the brink of becoming threatened or endangered. A bill just introduced in Congress seeks to reverse this trend.

[House Resolution 3742](#), known as the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), would provide \$1.3 billion annually to state initiatives and \$97.5 million to tribal nations to support at-risk fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. The funding would come from existing revenues and would not require any new taxes. Texas would get an estimate \$50 million per year.

Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) introduced the bipartisan legislation with 61 original cosponsors and with nationwide support from conservationists, hunters, anglers, businesspeople, oil and gas company representatives, and the outdoor recreation industry.

Texas is home to more than 1,300 of the 12,000 species identified nationwide as *Species of Greatest Conservation Need*. Many iconic fish and wildlife are in decline, including the much-loved Texas horned lizard, Pronghorn antelope, Guadalupe bass, sea turtles, and many grassland and coastal birds. The H.R. 3742 bill is being called a once-in-a-generation opportunity to save these wildlife species and to provide more regulatory certainty for businesses, land developers, the oil and gas industry, and governmental entities.

According to John Shepperd, Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife spokesman, "The Recovering America's Wildlife Act is a cost-effective way to recover fish and wildlife populations without the more reactive, "emergency room" measures of the Endangered Species Act. Once a species reaches the need to be listed as Threatened or Endangered, the process of recovery is more difficult and expensive. It is much smarter to act

before these at-risk populations reach a critical point. "Healthy fish and wildlife populations are the backbone of Texas' multi-billion-dollar outdoor recreation economy," Shepperd added, "which includes hunting, angling, wildlife watching, kayaking, nature tourism, camping and hiking. Research has proven children do better in school when they connect with nature. Functioning ecosystems provide food, fiber, timber, pollination, and clean air and water, which benefit all of us."

Janice Bezanson of Texas Conservation Alliance notes that "the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would bring much-needed funding to Texas for projects designed to keep species off the endangered species list without raising or creating new taxes. This legislation is good for wildlife, good for business, good for Texans."

The bill directs existing federal revenues to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program established in 2000. State wildlife agencies will distribute the money through grants and partnerships within the conservation community for habitat restoration, research, land protection, establishing conservation easements, reintroducing wildlife, and other initiatives listed in each state's Wildlife Action Plan.

Particularly interesting for a private-lands state like Texas, the funding could expand cost-sharing programs for private landowners to conduct voluntary wildlife and habitat stewardship activities on their property. It will also be used to fund educational programs and introduce more Texans to outdoor-recreation opportunities.

The Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife is a coalition of more than 160 organizations and businesses that actively supports the legislation. A [preliminary report](#) by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department outlines early ideas on Texas goals and objectives and highlights examples showing how RAWA funds could be spent in Texas.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/wildlife-legis7-15-19>.

While Targeting Destructive Creatures, Don't Make Beneficial Insects Collateral Damage

by Margaret Lauterbach, Special to the *Idaho Statesman*, 18 July 2019



Praying mantises are regarded as destructive because they can kill honeybees, but gardeners think they're beneficial because they eat other insects, such as grasshoppers and earwigs. Photo: AP FILE.

Destructive insects are difficult to control, but defining destructive creatures is a problem in some cases because earwigs, for instance, are regarded as beneficial by entomologists because they consume aphids; gardeners regard them as enemies because they eat holes in leaves and invade fruit. Praying mantises are regarded as destructive by experts because they can and do kill honeybees, but gardeners think they're beneficial because they eat other insects, such as grasshoppers and earwigs.

One thing gardeners should keep in mind is the fact that most insects are harmless. Nondestructive insects might be helping more than you realize. I have ants in my garden, but they've done no harm, so I make no attempt to control them. They are turning over soil particles, making my soil looser and more friable.

There are several ways to control destructive insects: another creature eating them (ladybug or lacewing larvae, for instance); another creature parasitizing them; washing them off plants with a strong jet of water (aphids); trapping them (earwigs); withholding or not planting their preferred food; hand-picking them and dropping them into a bucket of soapy water (mature squash bugs); turning chickens or ducks loose to consume insects and slugs (they'll probably nail some beneficial insects, too); or if all else fails, some pesticide. Using IPM (Integrated Pest Management), we should use only the least toxic pesticide.

Neem-based pesticides have been deemed a proper organic control in this country because they don't kill honeybees, but Europe has recently banned their use after finding they killed bumblebees. Insects sprayed with Neem don't simply keel over dead: They get confused about eating and die. Some pesticides kill only caterpillars (*Bacillus thuringiensis* or BT) but most kill many different insects. Some liquid pesticides must touch the insect and after drying out, are no longer effective. Other toxic substances such as pesticide dusts or Diatomaceous Earth (DE) just lie in wait for an insect to get into it. Those pesticides can and do kill bees and other beneficial insects.

Some folks think that if they apply such pesticides in evening, after bees have retired for the day, then they won't kill bees. But dusts and DE will be available to kill anything in the morning and for as long as it remains on foliage. Also, bees do not confine their explorations to flowers. I see them every day on nonflowering plants on foliage.

There is a lot of misinformation on Facebook gardening forums, and gardeners must figure out which people are giving good information. Many advise using aspirin, not advised by any experts. Many advise lavish use of "dish soap" such as Dawn. Dawn is a detergent, and not all plants survive contact with detergents. True soap is Fels Naphtha or Dr. Bronner, usually available in laundry soap sections of the supermarket. They are generally sold in bars, so to use them, shave slices with a potato peeler and dissolve them in water for spray use. Or use Safer's soap spray.

Some pesticides are identified as "botanicals," meaning they're derived from plants, but they could be as toxic or even more toxic than some made of manufactured chemicals. If you want to garden organically, at least look for the OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) "seal of approval" on pesticides and follow IPM guidelines. Gardeners must always obey the instructions on pesticide labels for their own protection.

Source: <https://preview.tinyurl.com/insecticide-damage>.

In Memoriam—John Marshall



Photo credit: TMN-COT records.

John Thomas Marshall, 75, passed on February 24, 2019, at his home in Lake Jackson, Texas. He was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, and spent his childhood years in Mobile, Alabama. John attended college at Emory University and Georgia Tech, graduating with degrees in mathematics and chemical engineering.

After graduation, he worked for 35 years at The Dow Chemical Company, holding various roles in process engineering.

John enjoyed woodworking as a favorite pastime. In retirement, he enjoyed travelling the world with his wife; family and friends; and volunteering, including wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.

Published on the Restwood Funeral Home website in February 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/y63gk8lf>

John was a member of the COT class of 2004 and was an active participant in the activities of the chapter. He accrued more than 2200 volunteer service hours and was awarded a 1000-hour service pin in March 2008.

In Memoriam—Ellis Burkhardt



Ellis Harry Burkhardt, 78, was born in Mount Ephraim, New Jersey, and passed away in Lake Jackson, Texas, on June 12, 2019. He graduated from Audubon High School in Camden County, New Jersey, and attended Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and graduated from the University of Houston, magna cum laude, with a degree in Marketing. Ellis served in the Marine reserves for six years, and his career in retail spanned over 40 years.

Ellis loved the outdoors and photographing nature, especially birds. He was a member of the Cradle of Texas Master Naturalist Chapter, Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges, and the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory.

Published on the Restwood Funeral Home website in June 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/y4w9qnrx>

Ellis was a member of the TMN-COT class of 2004 and was an active participant in the activities of the chapter. He regularly attended state meetings with his wife Barbara. He accrued more than 2200 volunteer service hours and was awarded a 1000-hour service pin in November 2007.

Photo Credit: Freeport-Lakewood Funeral Home.

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- 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.

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