



TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – March 2004 Editor, Mary Helen Israel

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

At the February Board Meeting it was decided to have a more abbreviated newsletter on alternate months; also that the newsletter would be emailed to save the cost of copying and mailing. Those without email will have a copy mailed to them. If you have any questions or comments, please see either President Carolyn May-Monie or Newsletter Chairman, Mary Helen Israel.

MARCH MEETING ADVANCED TRAINING - TOM COLLINS

At the March 10 meeting I will be presenting Advanced Training on the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP). For those of you that would like to learn more about it in advance, please go to the following web page: www.mlmp.org There is also a great little handbook (*Milkweeds, Monarchs, and More* - \$9.95) that you can buy at the GCBO book store that is used as part of the training on MLMP. A great guide for the monarch and milkweeds and for all the other critters you find in a milkweed patch. I got one for my granddaughter as well.

This is the time to start planting your milkweeds. I suggest you get the Tropical Milkweed seeds or plants as they are the easiest to

start, bloom year round and are a great source for the monarch larva to

feed on. The milkweeds belong to the genus *Asclepias* (pronounced **ah-SKLEE-pee-us**). In Greek Mythology, Asclepius was the god of healing and medicine. The family is Asclepiadaceae which contains about 2,000 species. They include perennial herbs, vines, or shrubs all with milky juice.

Milkweed plants

Tropical Milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) - Native to the tropics. Most stores carry these seeds - Lowes, Home Depot, Wal-Mart. Look for the plants at local nurseries as well.

Other milkweeds to try:

Green or Spider Milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*) - Grows in the wild in Brazoria county - If you know of a patch, this would be a great site to monitor.

Get seeds at:

http://www.seedsource.com/catalog/detail.asp?PRODUCT_ID=3101

Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) - Native to Texas, but difficult to transplant due to long roots and takes one year before it blooms. Most stores carry this seed - Lowes, Home Depot, Wal-Mart.

Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) - Native to more northern areas - I'm trying to propagate seeds this year. Got them, at Home Depot.

Antelope Horns (*Asclepias asperula*) - Native to Texas, but further west.

This is a difficult seed to find, try:

http://www.seedsource.com/catalog/detail.asp?PRODUCT_ID=3068

You can try the following web page to order other milkweeds:

<http://www.milkweedfarm.com/>

ARTICLE OF INTEREST

Thanks to Betty Bouley for submitting the following article for the newsletter. Don't forget if any of you have something you want included, just email it to me at the following address: mhisrael@computron.net.

JESSE H. JONES PARK & NATURE CENTER

20634 Kenswick Drive – Humble,
Texas 77338
(281) 446-8588
www.cp4.hctx.net/jones

The nature center at Jesse H. Jones Park is worth the trip from Brazoria County to Humble. Most impressive is the large display of mounted specimens on the walls and suspended from the ceiling. The visitor can experience the varying wingspans of birds. The specimens include:

Barred Owl
Barn Owl
Screech Owl
Great Horned Owl
Golden Eagle
Turkey Vulture
Black Vulture
Osprey
Mississippi Kite
Red-Shouldered Hawk
Red-Tailed Hawk
Sharp-Shinned Hawk
Broad-Winged Hawk
Cooper's Hawk

Great Blue Heron
Green-Backed Heron
Yellow-Crowned Night Heron
Cattle Egret
Reddish Egret
Brown Pelican
Ring-Necked Pheasant
Wood Duck
Roseate Spoonbill

There are two glass cases with mounted specimens of songbirds. One large case, especially designed for children, shows creatures of the night. Several live snakes are on display.

Children will enjoy the Discovery Window—a chance to view wildlife just outside the window. Binoculars are available, and children can complete the Discovery Window Critter Checklist. Bones, turtle shells, and other nature artifacts are in the “Touch and Discover” section.

Pick up a copy of the illustrated Critter Checklist of wildlife found in the 225-acre park and enjoy over five miles of paved hiking trails, as well as several primitive trails.

The Redbud Hill Homestead represents the lifestyle of the 1820s and '30s, when Texas was still a part of Mexico and Stephen F. Austin brought the first American colonists to live in East Texas. The homestead features a log cabin, smokehouse, root cellar, chicken house, garden, bread oven, privy, wood-working shop, blacksmith shop, barn, and corral. Adjacent to this are recreations of an Akokisa Indian Village and a “mountain man” encampment. These are open for tours on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1 to 4 p.m.

Many nature programs are available. For more information, call (281) 446-8588 or go to the website www.cp4.hctx.net/jones.

NEXT TRAINING CLASS

Don't forget the next training class for Texas Master Naturalist will begin on Wednesday, September 8, continuing until Wednesday, November 17. Talk it up to any of your friends and acquaintances who might be interested. Registration forms will be made available in the near future.

BOOK REVIEW - TOM COLLINS

TEXAS BATS; Merlin D. Tuttle; 2003; Bat Conservation International and distributed by UT Press - 71pp

Ever since we held the Advanced Training on bats at Sea Center, I have wanted to start a project to build and put up bat houses there. So for Christmas I added to my list two books on bats. The one in this review, and next month the other book - "The Bat House Builders Handbook".

TEXAS BATS can be read while you are having your morning coffee or tea. It is a great little book and fun to read.

Did you know??

*About 8 species of bats can be found in Brazoria County.

*Texas has 32 species

*There are 1100 species in the world., almost one-fourth of the worlds mammal population.

*They have five fingers

*They are not blind and usually have excellent eyesight.

*One colony can consume billions of insects each night.

*They are essential pollinators to many of our plants.

This is a field guide. It includes the usual introductions - Where do bats live, where do they winter, courting and young, are bats dangerous and beneficial, and how can we protect them.

There is a simple bat anatomy page followed by separate pages on each of the Texas Bats. Each page includes etymology (scientific name derivation), mating and young, habitat and food, roosting, and human encounters. The species are divided into 4 family groups with the largest being the Vesper Bats. The color photos are outstanding.

The book wraps up with a section on Bat Watching, Books About Bats, and Contact Information. This would be a very nice book to give to a kid. It sells for about \$10.00 and GCBO carries it in stock.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

March 10 – General Meeting 9:00 am, Tom Collins – Monarch Monitoring Program

April 3 – Earth Day at Brazos Bend

April 17 – Migration Celebration

May 12 – General Meeting 9:00 am, Butterfly Identification, Charley Brower

June ? – Field Trip, Design & Selecting Nature Trails, Warren Pruess

July 14 – General Meeting, 9:00 am, Prairie Restoration, Tracie Teague

August ? – Field trip, Butterflies @ Brazos Bend

September 1 – General Meeting, 9:00 am, Oysters, rich Tillman

October ? – Field trip, Grasses, Flo Hannah

November 17 – General Meeting,
9:00 am, Texas Mushrooms, Susan
Metzler

December ? – Field trip at GCBO,
Grassland Birds, Sumita Prasad

At the 11 February, 2004 Board Meeting, the following historical information and a proposed budget were presented. The discussion resulted in the Approved Budget shown below.

CRADLE OF TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST BUDGET ESTIMATE O2/11/2004				
	Approved Budget 2004	Actual 2003	Act. 2002	
INCOME:				
Interest Income	\$ 10.00	\$ 14.26	\$ -	
Misc. Income	\$ -	\$ 44.50	\$ 20.00	
Resale Items Sold	\$ -	\$ 69.00	\$ 158.44	
Student Fees (1)	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$1,400.00	
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,510.00	\$2,627.76	\$1,578.44	
EXPENSES:				
Binders (2)	\$ 100.00	\$ 71.88	\$ 92.69	
Business Cards	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5.40	
Fees-Coordinator Training	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 90.00	
Field Journals (3)	\$ 137.50	\$ 131.01	\$ 77.60	
Honorarium-Gifts	\$ 300.00	\$ 273.00	\$ 354.87	
Lunches	\$ 150.00	\$ 122.42	\$ 102.44	
Misc. Project Exp.	\$ 150.00	\$ -	\$ 18.34	
Name Tags (4)	\$ 210.00	\$ 158.50	\$ 65.00	
Resale Items	\$ -	\$ 75.00	\$ -	
Shirts (5)	\$ 625.00	\$ 512.00	\$ 267.00	
Snacks-Drinks (Mtgs/Field Trips)	\$ 200.00	\$ 170.14	\$ 62.48	
Supplies	\$ 50.00	\$ 46.68	\$ 51.41	
New Curriculum (6)	\$ 750.00	\$ -		
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,672.50	\$1,560.63	\$1,187.23	
Net Operating Income/(Loss)	\$ (162.50)	\$1,067.13	\$ 391.21	
Cash Beginning of Year	\$1,908.84	\$ 841.71	\$ 450.50	
Cash End of Year	\$1,746.34	\$1,908.84	\$ 841.71	

Expenses through January 2004 were \$69.57. Account balances at the end of January, 2004 were as follows:

Checking \$1845.36
Savings \$ 5.13

CRADLE OF TEXAS OFFICERS

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Class Host	Justina Dent
Historian	Rita Pruitt
Newsletter	Mary Helen Israel
Sponsors:	Connie Stolte (TP&W) and Rich Tillman (Extension)