

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER

Chapter News – May 2004

Editor, Mary Helen Israel

A NOTE FROM THE PRÉZ, (CAROLYN MAY-MONIE)

**A special “Thank You” party --
May 12 at 9 a.m. Be There!!!!**

For all of you who helped at the Migration Celebration in some form or fashion a special “Thank You” party will be given in your honor. Bryan Adams and Tom Schneider, USF&W, are planning to come to our general meeting to thank you personally. According to my calculations 56% of our membership helped out! I think that is fantastic. Let’s keep up the good work. See you Wednesday, May 12 at 9 a.m.

One of the neat events of Migration Celebration was the Night Hike at Hudson Woods. We had 9 master naturalists involved as trail guides/assistants and 22 visitors showed up with flashlights in hand. From all the comments we heard it was a great success. Maybe we can talk Bryan and Tom into having more of these throughout the year. What about a Halloween Night Hike?????

Notice: The State Master Naturalist Advisory Committee has adopted new guidelines for chapter by-laws, policies, and procedures. I formed a review committee to address these new guidelines.

Updates on the committee’s progress will follow as they wade through the details and compare our current by-laws, policies, and procedures with the State’s.

Hope to see all of you at the general meeting to hear about a **new opportunity** right in our own back yard. See you there.

**TMA (OT) GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 10,
2004 (EXT. OFFICE) 9:00 A.M.**

Agenda:

- Re-certifications
- Migration Celebration
 - a) Overview (Phil Huxford)
 - b) Hudson Woods Night Hike (Carolyn May-Monie)
 - c) Van Tour Drivers (Tommie Holt)
 - d) Enviro-Education (Carolyn May-Monie)
- Earth Day (Carolyn May-Monie)
- Other Items (Carolyn May-Monie)
- Program (Monarch Larva Monitoring, Tom Collins)

Re-certifications

Betty Bouley, Tom Collins, Carolyn May-Monie & Maurice Monie
Silver (500 Hours) – Carolyn May-Monie & Maurice Monie

Migration Celebration (San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge)

- a) Overview (Phil Huxford) – April 16, 17 & 18. This is the 10th year and Phil expects the attendance to possibly double from last years attendance of approximately 500 due to pre0-advertising with newspapers and TV and, of course, the appearance of James Fowler (Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom). There will be 6 sign-up sheets for various volunteering opportunities.
- b) Hudson Woods Night Hike (Carolyn May-Monie) – Carolyn needs leaders to held "find critters"!
- c) Van Tour Drivers (Tommie Holt) – Twenty-six van tour drivers are needed over two days. This would be the "worst case scenario". The tours will start every 45 minutes to go around the 1.5 miles of Moccasin Pond. Ommie will have two sessions in early April to give out the information needed.
- d) Enviro-Education (Carolyn May-Monie) – Please sign up and put Saturday or Sunday next to your name for the following events: bug sweeping, fish casting, animal tracks, track casting, fish printing, live animals (snakes, alligators, etc.), and the TMN COT display booth.

Earth Day (Carolyn May-Monie)

April 3rd at Brazos Bend State Park

Other Items

- Denis James let us know that the speaker for our next general meeting on May the 12th will be Charlie Brower. He will do a talk on "Brush- footed Butterflies and

Preparing for the Upcoming Butterfly Count".

Program – Monarch Larva Monitoring by Tom Collins

As usual, Tom did an excellent job of explaining and showing us all about Monarch Butterflies. He even brought us several types of seeds and plant seedlings for us to take home!

Rainbo Johnson, Secretary

FIELD TRIP AND MAY PROGRAM FROM DENIS JAMES

Charlie Brower will be the speaker for the May meeting on Wednesday, May 12, at 9:00 am. The topic is Brush-foot butterflies and preparation for the upcoming butterfly counts.

We have set up a field trip to assess the BP site at Chocolate Bayou on Thursday, May 6th at 5:00 pm. We will assess the site and meet with Fred Lewis to assess the needs for the education program they have started there. Fred will open the gate by the white sign on FM 2004 about 4:45 pm. Drive through and go down the road to the building on the left side, about 1.3 miles. Drive through the fence and park around the building on the hill. If you plan to attend, please let me know so that Fred can notify BP plant security.

REPORT ON THE MIGRATION CELEBRATION FROM PHIL HUXFORD

Attendance was well over 900 visitors for the weekend. Many thanks to the TMN for their participation. The silent auction and bake sale netted over \$2,000 which will go towards the education building.

Prior to the weekend, the falcon program was taken to two school districts. This program reached 2,200 kids and at least 100 adults (teachers, parents, etc.) with an overwhelming positive response.

Over all, it was a great success, and we accomplished most of our goals.

Thanks again!



GREAT TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC, TOM COLLINS

The Great Texas Birding Classic was held recently along the Texas Coastal counties. Members of the Brazosport Birders (including some COT members – Dennis James, Jim Renfro, and myself) participated in the Big Sit at Quintana. This year the 10 folks who participated came in second place (78 species) to Port Aransas Birding Center (100 species).

I participated in the 5 day event for the seventh year and for the past four years have finished in second place. This year, my team of the ConocoPhillips Cranes tied for first with the Wildbirders (a team that has beat me the last 3 years). Our team total for the 5 days was 327

species. Both teams will decide how the \$20,000 Conservation Award will be awarded. Over the past 5 years my teams have accumulated \$72,000 in conservation dollars. These have gone toward purchase of land on Quintana, helped buy land in the Columbia Bottom Lands (Bird Pond, Hudson and Bloodwort). Last year our \$12,000 award went to GCBO to develop a wetland on their site.



TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT BIRDS BY BETTY BOULEY

I recently worked with Girl Scouts, ages 6-12, at Camp Windamere to teach them about birds. I wanted to stress the birds that the girls should know, and I found the best visuals to use for the presentation were juvenile books from the Alvin Library.

A Golden Junior Guide, Cardinals, Robins, and Other Birds, by George S. Fichter, has large colorful drawings. Cardinals, Blue Jays, Sparrows, European Starlings, Chickadees, Orioles, Mockingbirds, Hummingbirds, Chimney Swifts, and Mourning Doves were the birds I discussed with the girls. We talked about how the birds looked, what they ate, sounds they make, and any distinctive habits.

The National Audubon Society, First Field Guide—Birds, by Scott Weidensaul, is also useful to point out pictures of Killdeer, Great Horned Owls, Crows, and Bluebirds. I flagged pages in this book and Peterson Field Guides for Young Naturalists, Backyard Birds, by

Jonathan P. Latimer and Karen Stray Nolting. Raptor! A Kid's Guide to Birds of Prey by Christyna M. and Rene Laubach and Charles W.G. Smith, not only has great photographs of raptors and vultures, but it also has silhouettes for a mobile. Texas Birds from A to Z by Glenna Grimmer would be helpful if trying to name a bird for each letter of the alphabet.

Barnes & Noble has a paperback copy of The Encyclopedia of North American Birds for \$10. This book also worked well for the bird presentation because the photos are large.

Other resources I used were the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail map (Upper Texas Coast) and Texas Parks & Wildlife Backyard Birds in Texas by Mark Klym, which is available at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory.

Cecilia at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory loaned me bird scopes. The girls were able to see a male and female Red-Bellied Woodpecker peeking out and suspended 30 feet above ground on a hollowed tree limb with a cavity. Wow! We also saw Laughing Gulls, Turkey Vultures, Mockingbirds, and Cardinals. Thanks, Cecilia! Also, thanks to Ian, who inspired me with his presentation at Sea Center Texas.



BOOK REVIEW - TOM COLLINS

CATERPILLARS; Amy Bartlett Wright; 1993; Peterson First Guides; 128pp

This is a small (3.5 x 7 inches) pocket field guide for kids and folks like me who crave for more information on butterfly and moth caterpillars. Although it only covers 125 of the more common species, it is still a great little book to have in your library.

The book begins with a forward by Roger Tory Peterson - Read the last paragraph, or better yet I will give it to you. "The little caterpillars are so interesting; imagine living a good share of your life in a form that people mistake for a grub or worm, then going into a sarcophagus or coffin for a while, and finally emerging as a butterfly and dancing like an angel for a period before being recycled again."

After this interesting introduction, you will find sections on life cycle, caterpillar structure, protection and defense, raising caterpillars, and how to use the guide.

The caterpillars are divided into groups based upon the following appearances: Smooth, Smooth with bumps or knobs, Smooth with rear horns or tails, Smooth with fleshy filaments, Sluglike, Hairy, Hairy with tufts or pencils, Bristled, Branched spines, Internal feeders (worm in your apple), and Structure builders (bagworms).

Each species is illustrated by both its egg, caterpillar, pupa, and winged form. It's a great little pocket guide for \$5.95. I believe the GCBO carries them or can get it.

CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

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

CRADLE OF TEXAS OFFICERS

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