

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – April 2011 Editor, Mary Helen Israel

A MESSAGE FROM “the PREZ”

The photographers, Ed, Ellis and Jerry, are lost in the butterfly house in the Monteverdi region of Costa Rica and the little old gray haired lady is acting as a perch for the



hummingbird feeders nearby. Needless to say, a good time was had by all. Wonderful place, Costa Rica, and I hope you all have the opportunity to see it someday.

Is everyone ready for a good time at the Migration Celebration (MC)? I hope you have found a place to help and enjoy educating the folks in Brazoria and surrounding counties, about the wonderful opportunities to study and enjoy wildlife in the area. If you can't help at the event itself, bake some goodies for the Bake sale at the MC on April 15-16. There is also the great kick-off dinner (don't miss my spinach/apple/ cranberry salad), the silent auction and of course, the photo contest entries and winners. Our tour guide in Costa Rica, Kathy Adams Clark is our speaker.

I had the pleasure of filling in for Laura Brandes at the Prairies class. (Laura is recuperating from back surgery.) The speaker, Kirk Feuerbacher from the Nature Conservancy of Texas, did a great job presenting the class. Afterwards, Susan Conaty (a certified member of the first COT class) took us on a tour of Nash Prairie. If you have never seen this natural resource or had the privilege of walking it, you have missed a real treat. Susan has become an expert in prairie ecology.





Rich and Justina looked over the excellent display on Nash Prairie in particular and Prairies in general that Susan has collected in the St Mary's parish hall. There are books, articles and historical information on Nash Prairie over the past hundred years or so. The other photo shows Susan leading the class onto the prairie. My thanks to Kirby and Rich for helping Susan and Kirk.

I hope you saw the information on the Sea Turtle Patrol which will be starting the first of May. Shane Kesson will be having a training session after the Migration Celebration activities are over. You can contact him or Curtis Jones at **(979-964-4011)** if you are interested in signing up to help find the nests of the Ridley sea turtles.

See you at the meeting on April 13.

Thanks to everyone for your help and support

The Prez

Report from Membership Chairman, Jerry Eppner

Chapter members continue to submit great accounting of their accomplishments, and I am sure that by the time Migration Celebration is over and key organizers for that event get a chance to take a breath and catch up, there will be even more hours to tout. Nineteen members have submitted time sheets to date. Total volunteer time submitted is 1796 hrs. Thank you, folks!

At the April general meeting, the following people will be recognized for their service: Recertification – Barbara Burkhardt, Ellis Burkhardt, Rainbo Johnson and Tom Morris. Denis Mudderman and Gerald Forrest will also be recognized for attaining the 1000 hr volunteer time service milestone. Congratulations!

Still a few folks struggling with the 2011 time sheet. The main mistake this month is not renaming the time sheet file name so that it is specific to you. This is not the act of inserting your name and email address on the worksheet you use to enter your hours, but is a renaming of the Excel file itself. If you need help with this, contact Jerry Eppner or Neal McLain. We both smile a lot; so take your pick.

**Reminder from Chapter Host,
Jerry Krampota**

Those members who signed up to bring refreshments for the April meeting are Mary Helen Israel, Tom Morris, Rich Tillman, and Gerald Forrest. If for some reason you have a conflict, please call Mary Helen at 979-297-6968 or email at mh-israel@sbcglobal.net.

**April Meeting
Wednesday, April 13, 2011
Intern Training, and Advanced Training**

- 8:30 a.m.** - Coffee and Social Time
- 9:00 a.m.** - Business Meeting
- 9:30 a.m.** - Program: Levi Jordan Plantation, presented by Bryan McCauley, Site Manager

Training, Laura Brandes

April is a very busy month and the purpose of this “heads up” is to help you with your schedule.

April 6th at 9:00 am: “Archeology” at the Brazosport Museum of Natural Science with Instructor Johnney Pollan. A field trip to the Abner Jackson Plantation will follow the lecture.

April 9th at 9:00 am: “Birds” at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge with Instructor Tom Morris et al. A field trip will follow the lecture.

April 13 at 8:30am: General Meeting with Advanced Training for Certification

April 15 at 5:30 pm: Migration Celebration Dinner with Speaker Kathy Adams Clark on photography (Advanced Training under Certification)

April 16 and 17: Migration Celebration Activities at San Bernard Refuge (Volunteer Time under Certification)

April 20th at 6:00 pm: “Bats” in the AgriLife Conference Room

April 27th at 9:00 pm: “Rivers” with combined lecture and kayaking

(All Intern classes are open to TMN Members for Advanced Training if they have not had the topic during the previous two years.)

Feral Hog Transportation Regulations

By Paul Schattenberg

Editor's note: The following article was excerpted for Chapter News from "Wild Wonderings," a service of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, dated March 21, 2011. Although this article specifically mentions Hays, Caldwell and Travis Counties, the information is relevant to Brazoria County residents.

COLLEGE STATION – Landowners who trap feral hogs on their property also need to know about the regulations regarding the transportation, potential release and other means of utilizing these creatures, said Texas AgriLife Extension Service experts.

“Landowners in the Plum Creek Watershed of Hays, Caldwell and Travis counties who decide to trap feral hogs should ask themselves what they’re going to do with them after they’re trapped,” said Jared Timmons, AgriLife Extension assistant supporting the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership. Timmons said trapping, then cooking and eating feral hogs is one viable option.

“Feral hog meat is delicious when properly prepared,” he said. “And with this option, the trapped animals never have to leave your property.”

However, he added, some people may be averse to eating feral hog or sometimes trapping yields more than can be consumed.

“In such instances, moving live feral hogs must meet a set of rules, and this plays into management decisions,” he said.

The Texas Animal Health Commission regulates the movement of feral hogs, holding facilities and some aspects of hunting preserves, said Dr. Jim Cathey, AgriLife Extension specialist in wildlife ecology.

“However, some clarification is needed here,” Cathey said. “Hunting preserves must have a hunting lease permit issued by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. And feral hog gender is regulated differently.”

Cathey said female feral hogs, sows and gilts, may not be transported and released onto another property.

“Instead, female feral hogs may be held for up to seven days in an escape-proof pen or trailer,” he explained. “They can then be taken directly to slaughter or sold to an approved holding facility which would take them to slaughter.”

A list of approved feral hog holding facilities may be found at the commission’s website at http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/animal_health/feral_swine.html.

Male feral hogs, boars and barrows, also may be held for up to seven days in an escape-proof pen or trailer and may be taken directly to slaughter or sold to an authorized holding facility, he said.

That facility then may either take them to slaughter or sell them to an authorized hunting preserve.

“Authorized hunting preserves must have swine-proof fencing and must individually identify every feral hog released on the property,” he noted. “They are also subject to periodic inspections by the Texas Animal Health Commission.”

Domestication of feral hogs is allowed, but discouraged as a further option, Cathey said. "This process would require quarantine of a minimum of 150 days, and each animal must be tested four times as being free of pseudorabies and swine brucellosis."

Timmons said that in addition to damaging the property of Plum Creek Watershed residents, feral hogs also have been identified as possible contributors to non-point pollution of the watershed and may be partially responsible for the water source's elevated levels of bacteria and nitrogen.

"Feral hogs are among the topics addressed in the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan, which addresses multiple aspects of water quality and source preservation," he said.

Several publications on feral hogs developed by AgriLife Extension can be downloaded free from the Plum Creek Partnership website at <http://plumcreek.tamu.edu/feralhogs>.

These publications address evidence of feral hogs, hunting and trapping methods and other salient topics. The site also contains online tools for use by landowners and the general public in reporting feral hog sightings or control measures.

Funding and support for the development of the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan is provided through a Clean Water Act §319(h) non-point source grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information or technical assistance with feral hogs in Plum Creek Watershed area, contact Jared Timmons at 254-485-4886 or jbtimmons@ag.tamu.edu.

ConocoPhillips Funds Birds of Prey Program



CONOCOPHILLIPS FUNDS BIRDS-OF-PREY PROGRAM

Last year ConocoPhillips donated more than \$6,000 for 20 birds-of-prey school programs. This year's \$7,500 grant will fund programs at elementary schools in Sweeny, Brazosport, Columbia-Brazoria, Bay City, Van Vleck, Tidehaven, Damon, and Danbury.

Environmental education programs featuring birds-of-prey, like the peregrine falcon, help students learn the importance of these birds and their valuable role in nature. The programs feature a falcon, an Andean condor, a great-horned owl, Harris hawk and a black vulture named Igor. In addition to learning about the birds' habitats, diets and life cycle, the kids witness the trained birds soaring overhead and flying free.

L-R: David Phunkett, Friends of Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge board of directors; Phil Huxford, co-chair Migration Celebration and FBNWR board of directors; and Gary Freilburger, General Manager ConocoPhillips Sweeny Refinery.

ConocoPhillips

ConocoPhillips Funds Birds of Prey Program. This photo was published in March 24 issue of *The Facts*, in an advertisement placed by ConocoPhillips. The Birds of Prey Program began on March 21, and is expected to continue through April 12. Four additional Birds of Prey program will be presented on March 16 and 17 at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge, as part of Migration Celebration.

ATTACHMENTS

There are three attachments to this newsletter:

Attachment #1

Minutes of the General Meeting of March 9, 2011.

[April-11_Attach-1_March_General_Meeting_Minutes.pdf](#)

Attachment #2

Migration Celebration Volunteer Handbook

[April-11_Attach-2_Migration_Celebration_Volunteer_Handbook.pdf](#)

Attachment #3

April 30 Beach Cleanup Day Announcement

[April-11_Attach-3_Beach_Cleanup_Day.pdf](#)

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