



Chapter News

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Chapter News is published by Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter.

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A MESSAGE FROM "the PREZ"



Are you ready for a really great year?

2011 was very rewarding. We had fun at our 10th anniversary party and the 8th Wild Hog party. We reached many youngsters with our educational programs at DEEP and INEOS. Hopefully, 2012 will see the ConocoPhillips's LEEP program up and running again. Our reptile program at the Brazoria County Libraries will be in June this year, with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Program coming in July.

Mark your calendars for April 11 when Dr. Barron Rector will be our speaker. If you have a particular question about our coastal prairies that you would like answered, please submit them to Dave Brandes. Dave will compile them and ask Barron to include that information in his program.

Also in April, the Migration Celebration dinner is on Friday the 13th (it won't bother us scientific types) with the activities schedules for the following weekend, April 20-22.

Our intern training classes begin on Wednesday, Feb. 1, with the class orientation. We have a number of folks that have already expressed interest, but if you know someone who is interested, please invite them.

The Prez continues...

Please give freely of your time and help Ed with the new training class when he calls on you. The interns will be attending the general meetings, so please get to know them and make them welcome.

I hope you enjoyed the Wild Hog Party in December. We had a wonderful crowd and one uninvited guest. This young red shouldered hawk dropped in to see if Ed had a handout for him. Sure enough, he found a nice filet of salmon waiting for him. The hawk had been seen for several days and quickly learned where he could get a handout.



Remember to get your time into Jerry by January 10th. It is important to our sponsors, to have this information.

Thanks for letting me serve our fine chapter as your president again this year. I know I can count on everyone to be generous with their time and talents. Please help by giving me and/or the executive board your suggestions on program topics and new activities and projects that will benefit our community. **THE PREZ**

Upcoming events

This list does not include DEEP or INEOS schedules.
These schedules for 2011-12 are posted at:

- DEEP - <http://bit.ly/DEEP-2011-12>
- INEOS - http://bit.ly/INEOS_2011-12

Tuesday, January 10, 11:59 PM

Deadline for 2011 Timesheet Submissions

See Page 4 for details

Wednesday, January 11, 8:30 AM

General Meeting and Advanced Training

Agrilife Building, Angleton

Approved for 1.00 Volunteer Hour

Approved for Advanced Training

See Page 3 for details

Saturday, January 14, 9:00 AM

Birds and Bottomlands Blitz

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Approved for Advanced Training

Approved for Volunteer Hours

Saturday, January 21, 8:00 AM

Monthly Birdbanding at GCBO

For details see TMN-COT Calendar

<http://tmn-cot.org/calendar/>

Saturday, January 21, 9:00 AM

Dunes Day 2012 - Beach Cleanup

Approved for Volunteer Hours

See Attachment 3 for details

Friday-Sunday January 21-23

Master Naturalist CAMP OUT 2012

Brazos Bend State Park

Details bit.ly/MNC-2012

Map <http://g.co/maps/rrzzz>

Approved 5.00 hours Advanced Training

Wednesday, February 1, 8:30 AM

Intern Training Class - Session #1

Agrilife Building, Angleton

See Attachment 2 for details

Approved for Intern Training

Wednesday, February 1, 2:00 PM

COT Board Meeting

Agrilife Building, Angleton

Approved for Volunteer Hours

Birds and Bottomland Blitz



Thomas Adams



Mike Lange

Join Mike Lange and Thomas Adams for the January Birds and Bottomland Blitz at GCBO on Saturday, January 14 from 9:00 to 11:00am. The monthly program is a joint effort by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter and GCBO to raise awareness of the importance of this habitat type to birds.

This month's focus will be Trees and Shrubs of the Bottomlands. Come learn about the Columbia Bottomlands from the experts. Our leaders are both biologists at the Texas Midcoast National Wildlife Refuge Complex which includes Brazoria NWR, San Bernard NWR, and Big Boggy NWR. Mike is in charge of the Columbia Bottomlands refuge acquisition project and Thomas is the resident botanist. We are sure you will enjoy learning everything about bottomlands trees and shrubs from them!

Dave Brandes, a member of the GCBO Board of Directors, will be host representing the Board.



**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, November 9, 2011
AgriLife Building, Angleton**

8:30 AM	<p>Fun and Fellowship Refreshments: Barbara Burkhardt, Mary Holler, Mary Helen Israel, Jerry Krampota</p>
9:00 AM	<p>General Meeting This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour Volunteer Time.</p>
9:30 AM	<p>Program: Topic: Plankton. Speaker: Dave Brandes</p> <p>Dave is the Brazoria County Leader and Instructor for the NOAA Phytoplankton Monitoring Network. Dave also serves our TMN chapter as Past President.</p> <p>This training is approved for Advanced Training credit. Approved credit hours will be announced at the meeting, and will be available after the meeting at http://bit.ly/AT_Opportunities</p> <p>The Texas Master Naturalists mission is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. Many communities and organizations rely on such citizen volunteers for implementing youth education programs; for operating parks, nature centers, and natural areas; and for providing leadership in local natural resource conservation efforts. In fact, a short supply of dedicated and well-informed volunteers is often cited as a limiting factor for community-based conservation efforts.</p> <p>When the Phytoplankton Monitoring Network worked with the TPWD in 2007 to train new volunteers along the Texas coast, the Texas Master Naturalists answered the call. Nearly 30 TMN members attended the training sessions and helped establish over 20 new sampling sites. Currently the TMN PMN members do not just monitor for the program, but some members also conduct new volunteer trainings all along the coast. The TMN is playing a vital part in monitoring the Texas coast for potential Hazardous Algae Bloom (HAB) events.</p> <p>This training is approved for Advanced Training credit. Approved credit hours will be announced at the meeting, and will be available after the meeting at http://bit.ly/AT_Opportunities</p>

Membership Report

By Jerry Eppner

The window for reporting 2011 hours is fast closing, and a number of final time sheets have been received. Thank you very much.

To date, 66 chapter members have submitted time sheets. Their total VT is 12688. Both of these numbers are a little lower than 2010's final count, but we have yet to hear from quite a few of you.

Members reaching milestones during this reporting period include Janet Clemenson, Candace Novak, Louis Peltier, Carolyn Schlein and Sherry Summers, all recertifying. Congratulations to everyone. Also, Kathy Speights has reached the 250 hr VT, and Barbara Bruyere has passed the 500 hr VT milestone. Congratulations to all!

IMPORTANT MESSAGES

If you have not done do already, it is time to **get your final end-of-the-year time reports in shape and ready to submit.**

The annual chapter report is due to state on January 16. It takes time for your leaders to collect all the requested year-end data and finalize our submission. To this end, **no timesheets for 2011 VT and AT will be accepted after January 10, 2012.** Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter.

Spring Intern Training Classes begin February 1

TMN-COT Training Director Ed Johnson has announced that our spring 2012 Intern Training Classes will begin on February 1 with an orientation presented by Chapter members. We expect to begin the training with a class of 15 to 20 interns.

For details, including the full schedule, see Attachment 2 to the issue of *Chapter News*.

A New Mobile App for Wildlife Refuges

By National Wildlife Refuge System
Division of Visitor Services & Communications

"Myrefuge," a mobile application by Zaia Design, is now available and free for a limited time. This app will help outdoor enthusiasts explore natural areas and learn what resources refuges offer. It features searchable maps and instant information on bird watching, trails and historic sites. The app launched with 42 of the country's 555 national wildlife refuges, and more will be added in the future.



Among refuges featured to date in MyRefuge are some from the West, the Midwest, the South, and the East. Unfortunately, our local refuges here along the Gulf Coast are not yet available. Hopefully, they'll be available shortly.

"MyRefuge" can be downloaded from the Apple iTunes store at <http://bit.ly/MyRefuge>.

New address for USDA Service Center



The US Department of Agriculture Service Center for Brazoria County has moved to the Old Ash Square shopping mall at:

711 N Velasco St
Angleton TX 77515-4448

The following USDA agencies are located at the new address:



Farm Service Agency

Suite D
979-549-0238 ext 2
979-848-8336 fax



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Suite C
979-549-0235 ext 3
979-549-0031 fax



Rural Development

Suite B
979-549-0215 ext 4
979-549-0031 fax

The offices formerly located at 209 East Mulberry Street (Wells Fargo Bank Building) have been closed.

Source: USDA <http://1.usa.gov/BC-USDA>

2012 Re-certification Pin Announced

By TMN-COT State Office



The 2012 Re-certification pin is the Mexican Free-tailed bat and was announced at the recent Annual Meeting. The 2012 pin artwork was drawn by Jan Redden of the Gideon Lincecum Chapter. Thank you Jan for another job well done!

The recertification pin will be available for order in the first quarter of the New Year. The pin certifies that a Master Naturalist volunteer has reached their annually-required 40 hours of service and 8 hours of advanced training in the 2012 calendar year. All service and advanced training has to be completed and reported IN the year the pin is available.

Once the calendar year has ended, the annual re-certification pin for that year retires and is no longer available. The 2011 re-certification pin was the Horned Lizard. A complete listing of past years' pins can be found on the TMN website <http://txmn.org>

Christmas Bird Count Reports

The 2011 Christmas Bird Count season has ended, and the final reports have been written. Several TMN-COT Chapter members participated in the counts.

Each bird count ends with a "countdown" at the end of the day, usually accompanied by snacks or dinner. See Page 8 for photos of two countdowns.

New Secretary at AgriLife Office

By Corrie Bowen, County Extension Agent-Agriculture and Natural Resources

The Brazoria County Agrilife Extension Office recently announced that Jami Geserick has joined the office as secretary. She also serves as receptionist at the front desk. Next time you visit the AgriLife office, stop by and introduce yourself!

Coastal Wetlands Grant

Press release from US Fish & Wildlife Service

WASHINGTON – January 3, 2012 – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced \$20.5 million in grants to support 24 projects in 13 states to conserve and restore coastal wetlands and their fish and wildlife habitat. The grants, awarded under the 2012 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program, will be matched by nearly \$21 million in partner contributions from state and local governments, private landowners and conservation groups.

"Coastal wetlands serve as some of nature's most productive fish and wildlife habitat while providing storm protection, improved water quality, and abundant recreational opportunities for local communities," Salazar said. "I am pleased that with these grants we are able to help our state partners implement some of their high-priority projects that support both conservation and recreation along their coasts."

The grants will be used to acquire, restore or enhance coastal wetlands and adjacent uplands to provide long-term conservation benefits to fish, wildlife and their habitat. States receiving funds include Alaska, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Texas, Virginia and Washington.

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and funded under provisions of the 1990 Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act. Funding is provided by Sport Fish Restoration Act revenue – money generated from an excise tax on fishing equipment, motorboat and small engine fuels.

The grants support President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors. A recent 50-State Report lists more than 100 of the country's most promising projects – a result of 50 meetings with governors and stakeholders held by Salazar and other senior Interior officials to solicit ideas on how to best implement AGO in their states.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department was awarded a \$1 million grant to protect and restore coastal and estuarine barrier island habitats in West Galveston Bay along the north shoreline of Galveston Island, Texas. The project will restore approximately 70 acres of estuarine marsh complex, which will provide additional protection to the existing intertidal marsh that has been degraded by the effects of relative sea level rise.

Sandy Claws visits Sea Center Texas

Photos by Jerry Eppner and Neal McLain

LAKE JACKSON, TEXAS — December 10, 2011. In a widely anticipated visit, Sandy Claws appeared right on schedule at Sea Center Texas today. Numerous children of all ages were on hand to watch as Sandy descended the chimney. During his short appearance, he placed several candy canes and a Christmas Tree in their proper positions. After placing the tree, he introduced his friend Rudy while the audience sang a delightful rendering of the well-known Christmas carol, "Rudy, the Red-nosed Redfish."

Sea Center volunteer Mary Helen Israel introduced Sandy with a stirring reading of the famous poem *'Twas the Night before Christmas, when all through Sea Center...*



Mary Helen Israel reads *'Twas the Night before Christmas* as Sandy Claws arrives.



Visitors were delighted at the first sight of Sandy's boots as he descended the chimney.



Look! You can see Sandy's boots up there. He's coming down the chimney!



Above: Sandy had to return to his sleigh to get the Christmas Tree.



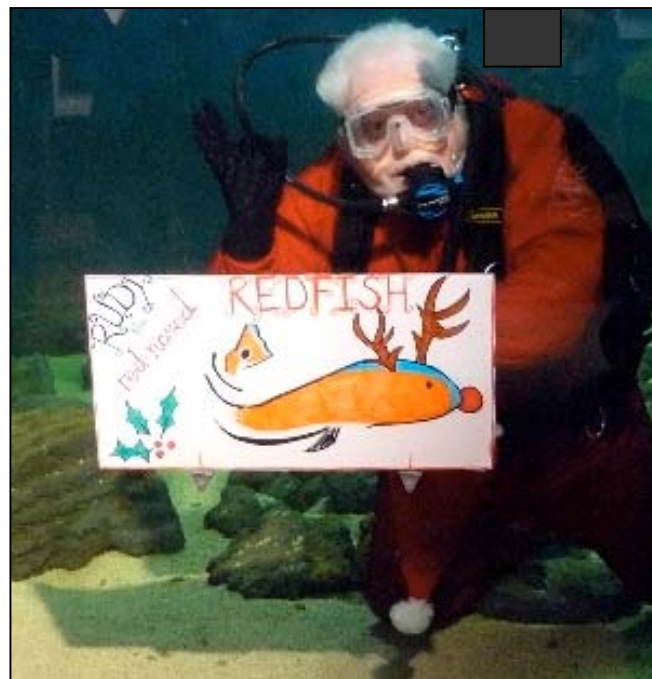
Left: The Christmas Tree, right where Sandy put it.



Continued . . .

More photos from Sandy Claws' visit to Sea Center Texas

Sandy Claws introduced his friend Rudy while the audience sang Rudy's favorite song.



Brittney Zepeda, Connie Stolte, Mary Helen Israel, Krissy Plunkett. Peeking from behind the glass: Roy Morgan as Sandy Claws.



"Laying his finger aside of his nose, giving a nod, up the chimney he rose."

More photos of Sandy Claws' visit are at bit.ly/SandyClaws_2011



San Bernard Christmas Bird Count

Countdown photos and captions by Barbara Burkhardt

The San Bernard Bird Count Countdown was held after the count at the one of the refuge service buildings. Marty Cornell, John Marshall, Jane Eppner, Krissy Plunkett and Barbara Burkhardt helped to prepare a supper of seafood gumbo, chicken gumbo and vegetarian bean soup for the crowd of about 30.



Now what was I going to put in here???



Chef Marty really getting down and dirty to get the job done. Sous chef John Marshall watches carefully.



CW from left: David Plunkett, Tom Taroni, Mike Lange, Jim Renfro, Jerry Eppner

While the chefs prepare dinner of seafood gumbo and chicken gumbo, everyone else was busy double-checking their sightings for the day.

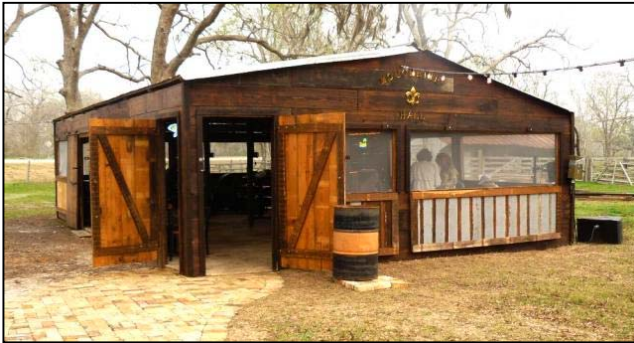


Marty Cornell, Krissy Plunkett, John Marshall, Jane Eppner



Phil Huxford, Jennifer Sanchez, Denis Mudderman

Brazoria Christmas Bird Count Countdown photos and captions by Neal McLain



Mouchette Hall at Belle's Landing

The Brazoria Christmas Bird Count Countdown was held at Belle's Landing in East Columbia. Tom Taroni led the countdown.



Each team assembled the count for its area in preparation for the final countdown.



Lisa Reznicek, Phil Huxford, Tom Taroni



TMN-COT members Sherry Summers
Kathy Speights, and Mary Holler



Jim Renfro



Jennifer Wilson, Charlie Brower,
Olivia Brower, Woody Woodrow,



Mike Lange, Tom Taroni



Margo Johnson, Bill Johnson,
Kristine Brashears, Irene Walters



CW from front: Jerry Eppner, Mike Lange,
Krissey Plunkett, David Plunkett, Ron Weeks



Mike Leebron, Cecilia Riley

More photos here:
http://bit.ly/Brazoria_CBC_Griffith



Cathy Hay, Rose Wagner,
Carol Jones, Michelle Romedy

Attachments

There are three attachments to this issue of *Chapter News*:

Attachment 1 - Minutes of the General Meeting of December 14, 2011

http://txmn.org/cradle/files/2012/01/2012-01-Att-1_Minutes.pdf

Attachment 2 - Intern Training Schedule

http://txmn.org/cradle/files/2012/01/2012-01-Att-2_Intern-Schedule.pdf

Attachment-3 - Dunes Day - Beach Cleanup flier

http://txmn.org/cradle/files/2012/01/2012-01-Att-3_DunesDay.pdf

CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS	
President	Barbara Burkhart
Vice President/Program	Mary Holler
Secretary	Marty Cornell
Treasurer	Sandy Henderson
State Representative	Ed Barrios
Past President	Dave Brandes
Membership Director	Jerry Eppner
Volunteer Service Chair	Neal McLain
Advanced Training Chair	Tom Morris
Outreach Chair	Ruby Lewis
Chapter Host	Jerry Krampota
Webmaster	Neal McLain
Chapter Advisors	Connie Stolte (Texas Parks & Wildlife Department) Corrie Bowen (AgriLife Extension Service)
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Newsletter Columnists	Barbara Burkhardt, Jerry Eppner
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