



MARCH 2012

Chapter News

CALENDAR

- Mar 7, 21, & 28** Intern Training Classes begin
- Mar 10** - Birds and Bottomlands Blitz. See page 2
- Mar 14** - General Meeting and Advanced Training See page 3
- Mar 27** - GCWR Wildlife Rescue Basics Training

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A MESSAGE FROM "the PREZ"

What a great day to be outdoors! I have spent the day in the garden cleaning up, pulling weeds and listening to the birds sing. The calendar doesn't say so, but judging from the birdcalls, spring is definitely here.

The Carolina wrens have their nest in the little German made rope birdhouse by the back door. They roosted there all winter and I guess they just decided to stay put. He loves to sit on a branch right over my head and sing at top volume. He knows he may be rewarded with a large grub worm.

Out three events for February and March 3rd appeared to be a great success. The weather didn't cooperate too well for the Gulf Coast Adventure Weekend, but we had a fairly good crowd.

The weather was perfect for SCT's Family Day and the Heritage Day at Brazoria. Both were well attended and we had very good opportunities to publicize the upcoming Migration Celebration.

Donna Jablecki sent out the dates for the Migration Celebration bake sales today. The first one is Friday, March 31, at the Lake Jackson Wal-Mart store. Hope you will plan to help. The other dates are during Migration Celebration itself. Check the Migration Celebration website for complete information.

<http://migrationcelebration.org>

I hope everyone is maintaining their hummingbird feeders. They will be here for another month. We have three Rufus in the garden. One is a young, first year male and there are also two females. The females were banded in the garden in February, 2010. This is more data on site fidelity.



Photo by Ellis Burkhardt

The 2012 intern class is going well, thanks to Ed Johnson's hard work. A very special thanks to Ed for doing such a good job with organization. I also want to thank Ann McLain for doing the botany class for me. I have heard nothing but rave reviews.

Thanks to everyone for making COT Such a great organization. Happy St. Pat's Day!

The Prez



Upcoming events

This list does not include the following:

- DEEP - see <http://bit.ly/DEEP-2011-12>
- INEOS - see <http://bit.ly/INEOS-2011-12>
- Quintana Spring Fling - see page 6

Wednesday, March 7, 8:30 AM
Intern Training Class
 "Archaeology"
 Brazosport Museum of Natural Science
Approved for Intern Training

Saturday, March 10, 9:00 AM →
Birds and Bottomlands Blitz
 "Bird Migration"
 Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
Approved for Advanced Training (if it's not a repeat)
Approved for Volunteer Hours (if you help)

Wednesday, March 14, 8:30 AM
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Intern Training Class
 "Mushrooms"
 Agrilife Building, Angleton
Approved for 1.00 Volunteer Hour
Approved for Advanced or Intern Training
See Page 3 for details

Saturday, March 17, 8:00 AM
Monthly Birdbanding at GCBO
 For details see TMN-COT Calendar
<http://tmn-cot.org/calendar/>

Wednesday, March 21, 8:30 AM
Intern Training Class
 "Mammals of Brazoria County"
 Brazos Bend State Park
Approved for Intern Training

Saturday, March 24, 8:00 AM
 GCWR Wildlife Rescue Basics Training Workshop
 Art League at Brazosport Center for the Arts & Sciences
<http://tmn-cot.org/calendar/>
Approved for Advanced Training
(restrictions apply - see calendar)

Wednesday, March 28, 8:30 AM
Intern Training Class
 "Columbia Bottomlands"
 Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Approved for Intern Training

Wednesday, April 4, 8:30 AM
Intern Training Class
 "Beaches, Dunes, Wetlands"
 Quintana Beach County Park
Approved for Intern Training

Birds and Bottomland Blitz

By Tom Morris



Cecilia Riley



Tom Morris

This month's Birds and Bottomlands Blitz is scheduled for March 10, 2012, at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory.

In this session, the emphasis will be "Bird Migration," led by Cecilia Riley, director of Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, and assisted by Tom Morris, a member of GCBO and the COT Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists.

The Columbia Bottomlands supports a variety of birdlife, flora and fauna. The GCBO site offers great habitat that is evident as we walk the trails.

Next month's Birds and Bottomlands Blitz is scheduled for April 14, featuring "Wildflowers" by Thomas Adams, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service. The May 12 session will feature "Insects of the Forest" presented by Ed Barrios, one of our Chapter members..

MARCH 2012						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, March 14, 2012
AgriLife Building, Angleton**



8:30 AM	Fun and Fellowship Refreshment team: Kathleen Murray, Kerry Magee, Donna Graham
9:00 AM	General Meeting This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour Volunteer Time.
9:30 AM	Program: Topic: <i>Mushrooms</i> Speaker: Teri MacArthur <p>MacArthur is manager of the Spring Creek Greenway Nature Center, a branch of the Commissioner's Office, Montgomery County Precinct 3. She is a member and former President of the Heartwood Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists,</p> <p>This training is approved for Advanced Training. The number of approved hours will be announced at the meeting, and will be available after the meeting at http://tmn-cot.org/advanced-training/</p>

Robert Patrick, a former student of Teri MacArthur, recently posted the following article on [Lake Livingston's The Dam Good Times](#)

East Texas has a bounty of wild edible mushrooms. I have been blessed with the time and ability to have found folks who have taught me how to identify these delicious edibles. Puff balls, Hericiums, Oysters are three that I have found that I have personally eaten and started to add into my monthly diet. The puffballs and the Hericiums are not as prolific as the oysters and are only found in small quantities, but when found can be harvested and eaten to add these nutrient rich foods into your diet.

My first teacher about mushrooms was Teri MacArthur, a member of the Heartwood chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists. Teri MacArthur, is now the Manager of the Spring Creek Greenway Nature Center. Teri held a mushroom walk and I was eager to attend, the trip into Houston was not to bad and the hours we spent walking the trails was well worth my effort.

Source: Robert Patrick. "East Texas Bounty." [The Dam Good Times](#). March 2, 2012 Accessed March 2, 2012.

This article continues at <http://tinyurl.com/77wh4al>

One of the most memorable finds was a group of shiny reddish mushrooms growing from the side of an old dead oak; Teri identified them as a Ganoderma species or Red Reishi. These are prized for their medicinal value and tons of info is available on the net to study up on them. I have since found a few more growing wild in my area, but they are not as prolific as I would have liked. They are slow growers and slow to decompose, so at least you have some time to find them and wait for them to complete there growing cycle so that the harvest is one that will produce a fair amount of useable material.

My favorite for our area is the Oyster mushroom; it grows in abundance and is excellent in meals. I have been drying/dehydrating as much as I can find. This species grows pretty fast, so you have to know where they grow and know the habits of growth to pick these wild. I happen to have a fallen willow on my place and when I see little mushrooms coming from it, I can be pretty certain that the woods will hold the mother lode.

Membership Report

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Chair

We are off to a good start for 2012. As of March 4, fourteen COT members have submitted time sheets including two of our new interns (Neeta Allen and George Bettinger). A total of 701 VT hours have been reported so far. Great job, folks!!

Special recognition goes to our first two recertifications for the year – Barbara Burkhardt (awarded her pin at the February meeting) and Tom Morris.

Also, Ed Johnson has achieved the 500 VT hour service milestone. Congratulations to all.

Calendar Administrator

By Neal McLain

Chapter member Andy Smith has agreed to take over as administration of the chapter calendar. <http://tmn-cot.org/calendar/>



Andy transferred to the Cradle of Texas Chapter in 2011 from the Mid-Coast Chapter, where he was a member of the Class of 2008. Since joining our chapter, Andy has volunteered at Sea Center Texas.

Andy has a longstanding interest in Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles. In 2007, he published an essay about his experiences under the title "Turtle Patrol Heaven."

<http://tmn-cot.org/files/2010/07/July07-Attach-1.pdf>

Savor Early Signs of Spring at a National Wildlife Refuge

From the National Wildlife Refuge System

Signs of spring abound at national wildlife refuges. What better time than this — March 14 is the 109th birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System — to discover and savor them. Look for refuge open houses and birthday celebrations; or just go for the wildlife and the thrills.

Refuges improve human health, provide recreation, and stimulate local economies, boosting tourism and generating jobs. In 2010 more than 40 million people visited a national wildlife refuge, generating about \$4.2 billion in economic activity, according to an October 2011 report commissioned by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, a nonprofit conservation organization. Sample a refuge event and find out what all the excitement is about.



In the drought-parched Southwest, Sandhill cranes take advantage of precious water at Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge in west Texas, which has three lakes fed only by runoff. The refuge was established as a wintering area for migratory waterfowl and Sandhill cranes.

Credit: Wyman Meinzer/USFWS

John O'Connell appointed Brazoria County Marine Extension Agent

By Neal McLain

ANGLETON, TEXAS -- February 28, 2012. At its regular meeting today, the Brazoria County Commissioner's Court appointed John O'Connell to the position of Brazoria County Extension Agent - Coastal and Marine Resources. This position was formerly held by Rich Tillman, and it has been vacant since Tillman's retirement.

Dale A. Fritz, Ph.D., District Extension Administrator, introduced O'Connell to the Court. After the presentation, the Court unanimously confirmed the appointment.



Above: Fritz (left) introduces O'Connell to the Court.



Left: The Commissioners greet O'Connell after confirming his appointment.

According to a statement dated February 20, O'Connell earned a Master of Science Degree and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University. His course work focused on aquaculture, fisheries management, and fish nutrition. His thesis focused on "Effects of Dietary Calcium and Vitamin D3 on Weight Gain and Mineral Composition of Blue Tilapia in Low-Calcium Water."

For the past eight years, O'Connell has served as the Matagorda County Extension Agent - Coastal and Marine Resources. Major responsibilities for this position include...

- Conduct front-end analysis to determine community needs and establish partnerships for the purpose of planning, designing, implementing, evaluating and interpreting Extension educational programs to address coastal and marine issues

- Develop and foster a corps of trained Master Naturalist volunteers to assist in dissemination of unbiased, research based information through workshops, seminars, classroom instruction, tours, mass media, result demonstrations, and one-on-one contacts.
- Serve as a resource for commercial and recreational fisheries, coastal community development, coastal hazards, water quality, nature tourism, 4-H youth programs and K-12 students and faculty.

"John is looking forward to working with the excellent coastal and marine resources program in Brazoria County," said Fritz

Read the complete statement at
<http://tinyurl.com/News-OConnell>

Volunteers Needed for Quintana Spring Fling

By Cecilia Riley, Executive Director, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Every April, thousands of migratory songbirds arrive along the Texas coast. And every year, hordes of local and out-of-town birders descend upon the bird sanctuaries at Quintana to witness the migration. There are few services for visitors in the vicinity, so GCBO has established the "Quintana Spring Fling." During the month of April, GCBO staff and volunteers are stationed at a Host Trailer parked at Quintana city Hall.

We need volunteers to assist with Spring Fling! Volunteers perform several important duties:

- Serve as hosts for visitors, provide information about the sanctuary, and help novice birders identify birds.
- Periodically walk through sanctuary, listing birds seen, and maintain a daily log of birds.
- Update the "birds seen" board near the sanctuary entrance.
- Assist with the operation of a small gift shop located in the trailer, selling snacks, water, soft drinks, and some nature store items.

The Spring Fling Station located just across the street from Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary is operated seven days a week, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, throughout the month of April. Volunteers are assigned in three-hour shifts (9:00 -12:00 and 12:00 - 3:00). Volunteers may choose to work a full day, or work single shifts on multiple dates throughout the month.

Volunteers must attend a training session at the Quintana Host trailer on Sunday March 25th at 3:00 pm. The training session will include an explanation of the duties, and the location of location of keys and supplies.

GCBO is a partner of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. Volunteer hours count toward certification or recertification.

If you are interested volunteering, please email contact GCBO Office Manager Reba Craft at rcraft@gcbo.org or 979-480-0999

GCBO is an independent non-profit organization. It is recognized as an innovative organization, which has designed and conducted a significant number of large conservation projects, including migration studies, habitat enhancement, land acquisition, and regional habitat mapping. For further information, see the GCBO website at <http://gcbo.org/>

TMN-COT MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

Quintana Spring Fling is approved for Volunteer time. You may claim:

- All hours spent at the Spring Fling Station.
- Travel time for each round trip to the station.

Travel time is limited to your actual daily travel time or the amount of time that you spend at the station *on that same day*.

Please code your timesheet "GCBO."

Spring Fling Station is located at the Quintana City Hall, 814 Lamar St., Freeport TX 77541. 979-233-0848
Directly across the street from Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary. Map: <http://g.co/maps/dz42p>



Migration Celebration is coming up in April

Migration Celebration is an annual spring nature festival presented each spring by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges. Many Cradle of Texas Chapter members participate in the planning and execution of the celebration.

For more information, see Attachment 2.



This year, Migration Celebration kicks off with a fundraising dinner at Freeport RiverPlace on April 13, followed by a two days of events at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge on April 21-22. Volunteers are needed, and participation is approved for Volunteer Hours. This is a good opportunity to rack up some volunteer hours toward certification or recertification!

Volunteer positions are available for a wide variety of interests — everything from assistant cook to parking attendant and tour guide to information booth host. If you'd like to volunteer, contact Ed Barrios:

- Home: 979-297-1815
- Cell: 979-415-4998
- Email: ed77566@comcast.net

Commissioner's Court proclaims Migration Celebration Days

By Neal McLain

ANGLETON, TEXAS -- February 28, 2012. At its regular meeting today, the Brazoria County Commissioner's Court proclaimed April 21 and 22 as **Migration Celebration Days**. Migration Celebration, an extensive nature festival sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges, is scheduled for April 21 and 22, at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge.



Left to right: **Stacy Adams**, Precinct 4; **Larry Stanley**, Precinct 2; **Tom Schneider**, Fish and Wildlife Service; **Joe King**, County Judge; **David Plunkett**, Co-Chair, Migration Celebration Committee; **Sarah Heller**, Publicity Manger, Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges; **Dude Payne**, Precinct 1; **Matt Sebasta**, Precinct 2; **Ravi Singhania**. Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

Deadline nears for 2012 Migration Celebration Nature Photography Contest

By Sarah Heller, Migration Celebration Publicity Manager

This year's deadline for the annual Nature Photography Contest sponsored by Migration Celebration, is 4 p.m. March 30. With Adult and Youth Divisions, everyone has an opportunity to try their hand at nature photography and have it appraised by the pros.

The pictures will be evaluated on image impact, technical excellence, print quality (Adult Division), and originality and creativity. Back to judge the Adult Division photos this year are Kathy Adams Clark and Larry Ditto, both nationally recognized photographers and long friends of the Migration Celebration. Youth Photo Contest submissions will be judged by local naturalists and educators.

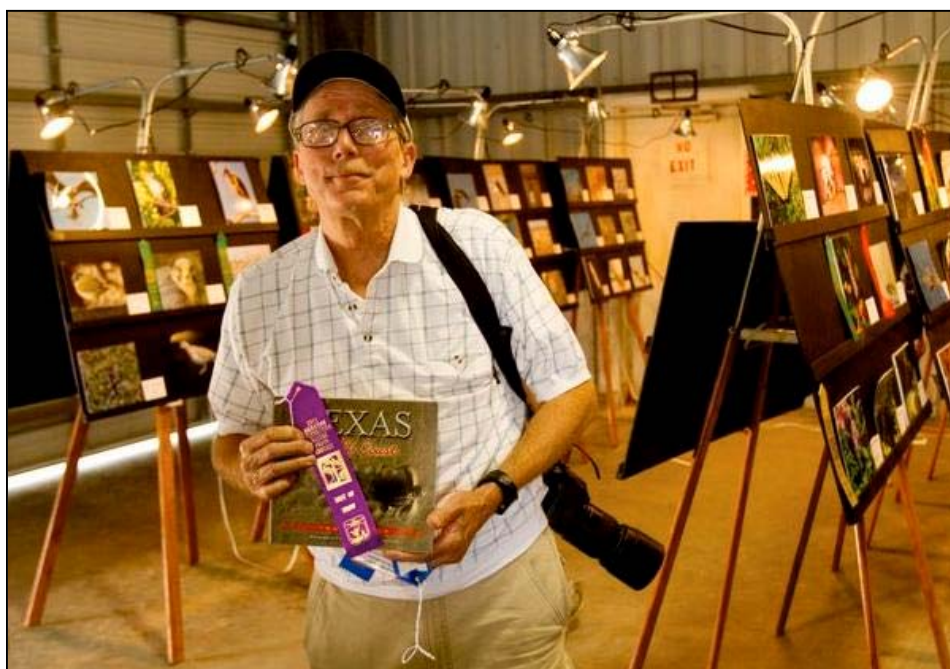
This year the general categories of Wildlife, Birds, and Nature Photography as Art, may be taken anywhere. The photographs in the following categories must be taken in the Texas Mid-Coast counties of Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Jackson, Matagorda or Wharton: Wildlife of Texas Mid-coast; Birds of Texas Mid-coast; Plant Life of Texas Mid-

coast; Habitats and Ecosystems of Texas Mid-coast. The Youth Division categories vary slightly.

Winners will be announced and photos will be displayed April 13 at the Migration Celebration dinner at RiverPlace in Freeport. They will also be on exhibit during Migration Celebration April 21 and 22 at the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge.

For more information and contest rules, visit <http://www.migrationcelebration.org/>. Questions can be directed to the coordinator: photocontest@migrationcelebration.org.

Migration Celebration is a joint effort the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Friends of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuges, along with many of their partners in conservation. The event is held to help raise awareness of the local National Wildlife Refuges and the valuable wildlife resources of Brazoria County and surrounding counties.



Gerald Mueller, winner, Best of Show, 2011 Nature Photo Contest

Attachments

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

Attachment 1 - Minutes of the General Meeting of February 8, 2011
http://tmn-cot.org/files/2012/03/2012-03-Att-1_Minutes.pdf

Attachment 2 - Migration Celebration
http://tmn-cot.org/files/2012/03/2012-03-Att-2_Migration.pdf

Reminders about the March 14 General Meeting

- The refreshment team includes Kathleen Murray, Kerry Magee, Donna Graham
- Our new interns have been invited to join us. If you meet a new intern, please introduce yourself!
- This meeting is approved for Advanced Training for current members *and* intern training for the new intern class.

CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS	
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Vice President/Program	Mary Holler
Secretary	Marty Cornell
Treasurer	Sandy Henderson
State Representative	Ed Barrios
Past President	Dave Brandes
Training Director	Ed Johnson
Membership Director	Jerry Eppner
Volunteer Service Chair	Neal McLain
Advanced Training Chair	Tom Morris
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