

Birds & Bottomlands Blitz programs for 2012 – 2013

Where: Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, 103 West Hwy 332, Lake Jackson, TX

When: 9:00-11:00am

What to wear: This is an outdoor event that will require hiking through woods and fields. Long pants and long sleeves are encouraged as the mosquitoes can be quite bad. If it has rained recently, rubber boots are a good idea.

Families are welcome and children must be accompanied by parents.

What to bring: Water, Field Notebook and pencil, binoculars* snacks or lunch if you want to picnic after the event, insect repellent

We have loaner binoculars if you need them. If you have questions, call Carol Jones at GCBO, 979-480-0999

Saturday, October 13th

Trees & Shrubs of the Columbia Bottomlands; leaders are Thomas Adams and Mike Lange

Both leaders are employees of the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge complex. Thomas is a botanist and Mike is responsible for identifying and working to preserve quality habitat in the Columbia Bottomlands. They will lead the group on walks through the forest and discuss the plants and trees, teach you how to identify them and talk about their importance in this ecosystem.

Saturday, November 10th

Insects of the Bottomland Forest; leader is Ed Barrios

Ed is a Cradle of Texas chapter Master Naturalist and an avid volunteer in many local organizations. He will lead the group on a walk to locate various insect types. Each will be identified and then discussed – what is the insect family's role in the ecosystem. Maybe even discuss a bit of their natural history. For instance, there are many that are wood decomposers, turning dead trees into rich, organic soil.

Saturday, December 8th

Mini Christmas Bird Count; leaders are Tom Morris and Tom Taroni

Leaders will discuss more details of a Christmas Count, lead participants in a search for birds and compile results after a tour of short nature trails. If you have binoculars, please bring them. If not, a limited amount of binoculars will be available. You do not have to be knowledgeable about birds, as there will be volunteers to help you identify the birds seen. A list of the wintering birds to be expected will be given to all participants.

Saturday, February 9th

Birds & Their Habitat Adaptations (canopy, mid-story, low, ground, water/wetland); Gulf Coast Bird Observatory staff

Birds have evolved to fit into various strata of their habitat. Learn about who likes to hang out where and what might be the advantage. During a walk around the GCBO sanctuary, wintering birds will be spotted, identified and natural history discussed to include their preferred habitat.

Saturday, March 9th

Lichens and Mushrooms of the Bottomlands; leader is Warren Pruess

Warren is an avid birder and native plant expert. His study of mycology spans over several decades. Specimens he has collected the day prior will be identified and viewed under a microscope to see the beautiful and amazing details. A walk through the woods of GCBO will reveal where the various species grow.

Saturday, April 13th

Bird Migration; leaders are Tom Morris and Cecilia Riley

Two well qualified folks will lead the activities on Saturday, April 13th, from 9:00 to 11:00am. Cecilia Riley is the Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory and Tom Morris is a Master Naturalist and lifelong birder who has led trips internationally. Learn why birds migrate, about the dangers and hazards birds must endure during this twice annual event and take a walk to see who has arrived that week from the south. The monthly program is a joint effort by the Cradle of Texas Master Naturalists and GCBO to raise awareness of the importance of the Columbia Bottomlands to birds and other native flora and fauna.

Saturday, May 11th

Wildflowers of the Prairie and Bottomlands; leader is Flo Hannah

Flo is a native plant expert, is the proprietor of Hannah Native Grasses and is a die-hard advocate protecting our native coastal prairies. She is also the Urban Sanctuaries Manager for Houston Audubon Society. Learn from the expert to identify native flowers that will still be in bloom, some lasting all summer and into fall. The importance of the plants and grasses in the Bottomlands ecosystem will become obvious.

Saturday, June 8th

Insects of the Bottomlands wetland; leaders are Dave Brandes and Ed Barrios

Dave and Ed are Cradle of Texas chapter Master Naturalists and both spend many days volunteering in education programs throughout the area. Their knowledge and fun approach to catching and then identifying the critters in GCBO's demonstration wetland will help each participant determine just how healthy our wetland is. After all, this is the food source for lots of birds and other wildlife.