

T E X A S

Master Naturalist™  
Cross Timbers



Spring into  
**LUCKY March!**



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## In this Issue:



### Sneak Peak for April

Nature Photography reflections: Follow CTMN Zachary Chapman's progression from his early days of the L830 to the Canon Rebel T6, Nikon D3500 and being behind the lens of a Canon R50; and how he took this medium and ran into the wild.

## Featured Project

Lights Out Fort Worth is back for its' second year and third survey season!

Please check the links in the newsletter for details on days to volunteer, where to go, etc.!



## Lucky Finds & More

See what interesting things members have found in nature! Also pay attention to calendars, alerts, emails and MORE because one of the BUSIEST months to be a naturalist is coming up!





## A Birthday Gift?

To celebrate Cross Timbers Chapter's 25th anniversary, our Board recommends to chapter membership that we join other TMN Chapters by donating **\$2500** to the **Texas Master Naturalist Endowment**. **Chapter members will be asked to vote on this outlay at our April 15, 2024 monthly meeting.**



Created in 2015, The **Texas Master Naturalist Endowment** aims to provide funding to support the growth and sustainability of the TMN program. The TMN Endowment was created as a partnership effort by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Foundation and the Texas A&M Foundation. That these two foundations work together to build sustainable funding for the TMN program speaks to the importance and incredible passion of the TMN volunteers. The Endowment will ensure that our critical volunteer-focused program continues into the future.

The TMN program has grown from one chapter in 1997 to 49 chapters today, yet the level of funding and program support staff has not increased proportionally. The program has outgrown the federal funding available. The Texas Master Naturalist Endowment exists to create a self-sustaining funding source for program expansion and support for local chapters.

From <https://masternaturalistendowment.org/>, the goal is to create a \$5 million-dollar TMN Endowment. The annual budget for the TMN program is over \$200,000. Reaching \$5 million in Endowment funding would generate a guaranteed minimum 4% return annually, **providing \$200,000 back to the TMN program.**

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These funds would be used to bolster the TMN program, enhance its efforts across the state, and support the local chapters in ways that cannot be done with the current funding and capacity. For example, contributions to the Endowment will provide the ability to expand the program through additional administrative support, regional program coordinators to support local chapters, enhanced advanced training, curriculum, and youth program development.

The Endowment is governed by a team of advisors, including TMN volunteers with leadership experience in the program, partnership organization leadership, and leadership from TPWD and AgriLife Extension. The TMN state office will act as resource liaisons for the board.

A few ideas on ways in which endowment funds could be spent once generated:

- Chapter volunteer service project grants
- Investing in advanced training opportunities
- Onboarding additional staff to grow consistency of program support
- Alleviate costs of annual meeting registration to chapters and volunteers in need
- Provide support for technology inclusion (VMS, chapter websites, social media, iNaturalist)

As of March 2, 2024, **our chapter has a total of \$25,016.67 in checking and money market accounts**, and amount has grown slowly but steadily over the years. To honor the TMN program, and to celebrate our 25 years as a TMN Chapter, the board believes that a \$2500 donation to the TMN Endowment is a good use of the chapter's funds and will not hurt us financially. Please address questions to any board member between now and April 15, 2024, when we will bring this donation to a vote.

Graphic: <https://sweetclipart.com/xmas-or-bday-present-clip-art>

# CTMN Announcements



**This volunteer opportunity earns hours in VMS as CTMN Outreach volunteer hours.**

**Saturday, April 13, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm, Grapevine Public Library**

**Keep Grapevine Beautiful** is hosting some educational programming in April. We would like to have a Master Naturalist moderate a screening of four very short videos that were produced by H-E-B.

**We are showing 5 videos that are approximately 15 minutes each, on Saturday, April 13 at the Grapevine Public Library. You can view the videos [HERE!](#)**

Ideally, you would be present to answer questions related to the wildlife featured in the videos, which are bats, redfish, ocelots, and black bears. These will not be in-depth questions, but general inquires from attendees.

**Please contact Cindy Harris if you are interested.**

**Cindy Harris, Keep Grapevine Beautiful, Volunteer Services Supervisor**

**[charris@grapevinetexas.gov](mailto:charris@grapevinetexas.gov)**

**(O): 817.410.3490**

**[www.KeepGrapevineBeautiful.org](http://www.KeepGrapevineBeautiful.org)**

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**In Arlington, we do things right!**

**SAVE THE DATE** on your calendar for Earth Day at **Randol Mill Park** on **Saturday April 20, 2024, 9:00am until 12noon.**

**Master Naturalist Volunteer hours opportunities include but are not limited to:**

Kick Off Bird Walk through Natural Area at 8:30am, Trail Building, Invasive Plant Removal, Seed Balls, Litter Pick Up, Bluebird Nest Box demonstration, plenty of food and drink, and, of course, Give-A-Ways.

**From Sam Kieschnick (sambiology) -**

There are a couple new classes here in the DFW that have iNaturalist projects just for the new students! Please don't feel obligations, but if you're able to identify or comment on observations (even a little message of "cool critter!" or "great photos!" can be super meaningful), that'd be awesome.

Here's the [North Texas Master Naturalist Class of 2024](#) project page. And here's the [ID page with verified observations](#) included.

Here's the [Blackland Prairie Master Naturalist Class of 2024](#) project page.

And here's the [ID page with verified observations](#) included.

Editor's Note: iNaturalist observations and identification time can be logged as "iNaturalist: TMN Field Hours" in VMS

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## Be Award of Online Scams!

Chapter officers, directors, or board members will **NEVER** ask you for money or items of value through email or by text. Like other Texas Master Naturalist chapters, our names and email addresses can be spoofed, leading to you receiving unauthorized requests for gift cards, donations, even bank account access!

When in doubt, contact the individual who purportedly sent the email, but not by hitting reply on the email you received! Call, text, or contact another member.

For more information, see <https://us.norton.com/blog/online-scams/email-spoofing>, which is the source of this graphic.

### Email Spoofing Explained



Email spoofing is a practice used in scams and phishing attacks to **deceive people into believing the message came from a known or trusted source.**

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# Celebrating — 25 YEARS —

## CTMN is Celebrating 25 Years: 1999 to 2024!!

If you know any stories about the chapter, how it got started, newsletter clippings, were a Historian at some point or want to contribute an interview with someone who has been around the chapter a long time, **please** contact Madison Gover at [newsletter@ctmn.org](mailto:newsletter@ctmn.org), we will try to spread out these special stories throughout 2024 to celebrate. And I need your help! (Your Newsletter Editor was only 2 at the chapter's inception!! Teach me your history!)

## CTMN Awards Ceremony 2024

ICTMN Annual Award Ceremony to celebrate Class of 2023, people who certified in 2023, milestone achievements for 2023, and the 25th year Anniversary of CTMN! **Photos needed of this event for next month's newsletter!**

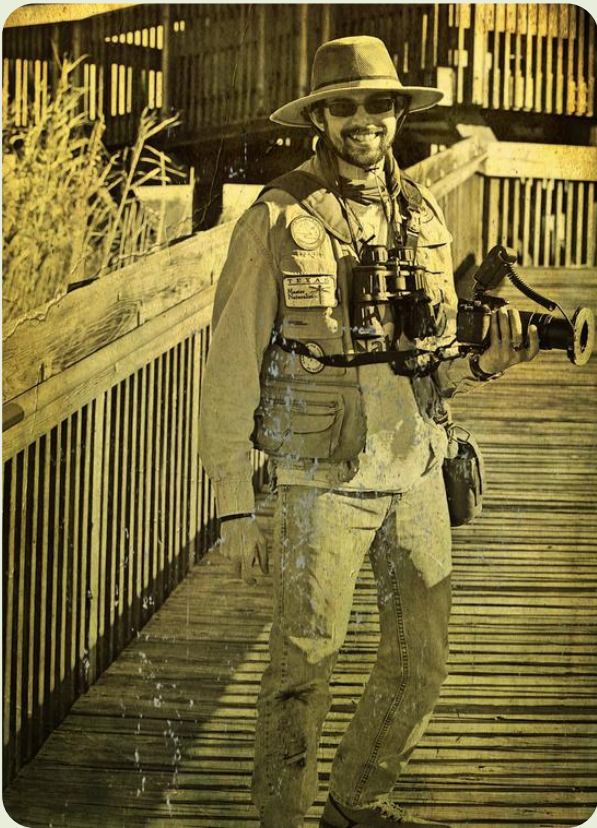
At the Botanical Gardens on March 18, 2024!



# Speakers

## Nature Photography Reflections: Sneak Preview/ Artist's Statement for the April Meeting

by Zachary Chapman



Nature Photography has been the focus of my life for nearly the last decade. I began early on playing with old polaroids, those cheap windup cameras, my parent's point, and shoots, etc. Yet, nature photography is something that chose me. At first, I didn't know where my life would take me. However, in 2014 I found it to be a great source of healing. When I was born it was found I had an enlarged kidney. It took nearly 20 years for it to finally become an issue. I spent six hours under the knife as they removed scarring tissues and helped me gain a better quality of life. After the surgery which was November 3rd on my brother's birthday; I felt pretty awful. All I could do was sit around and let the process of recovery take its course.

Around black Friday or Christmas my grandmother got me a new Nikon Coolpix L830. I was still well into my recovery but still had all the staples and had to go in for checks and tests. I began to use my camera at the school where my aunt taught. They had plenty of grasslands to look for birds. I would spend hours on end out there looking for all the birds that made the grassy farmland and the nearby stock tank their home. I was at the time a student at Tarrant County College and was struggling with my math classes. It was the initial goal to become a nature scientist. I was really shooting for entomology after being part of the Future Farmers of America Program (Sophomore Year 2010 - Senior Year 2012). I had to change course because I was not doing so well.

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Yet, in 2015 I had already been going to the Texas Master Naturalist meetings, I also attended the Eco Summit, and this was the point when I knew things were about to change. Photography in a way saved my life and saved my career path. I was able to change course and take my photography all the way to the University of Texas at Arlington where I currently study Photography as my major and I also study Museum Studies as a minor. Since joining up with the fine members of the Cross Timbers Master Naturalists I have made it my mission to make various connections to where I live and what lives and breaths around my backyard to the vast expanses of the world.



All Photos by Zachary Chapman



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I have recently shifted my focus a bit to just general nature photographs. In recent years going back to my time at Tarrant County College bird collisions with windows would soon be the focus for my photography; especially when it came to the internship with the Lights Out Program, I did in 2023. Now in our changing world we are seeing more dangers as Texas seems to have a big boom of expansion projects. I have now taken my nature photography to a call for action. Yet, it is all vital work. Science may have never been in the cards, but I say thank God for giving the change for observing life through the mechanics of a lens.

I would not be the person I am today without my camera. Nature is still something I can explore and connect with every day. With photography I have found it is a very diverse field with a rich history. It is a wonderful medium to use in exploration of our wildlands. From the tiny plants, to mighty trees, through marvelous landscapes, to the large animals to the micro realms. My goal has been to explore nature in its many realms through the lens and understand the wonders of our world by taking a road less traveled. I still teach about nature as I have volunteered. I speak from experiences from the trails and from those around me.

**This program will show the progression I have made from the early days of the L830 to the Canon Rebel T6, Nikon D3500 and being behind the lens of a Canon R50; and how I took this medium and ran into the wild.**



# TMN Tuesdays

On the second Tuesday of each month at 12:00pm Central Standard Time, the TMN State Office offers an hour-long virtual advanced training event - with fantastic new and returning guest speakers.

## This Month's Speakers - Drs. Ben Skipper and Clint Boal



Texas Raptor Monitoring Network:  
a participatory science program  
to monitor the reproductive  
biology of raptors across Texas

Raptors are charismatic wildlife with wide public appeal. Since the 1960's several species of raptor have adapted to urban and suburban environments, yet much remains to be learned about the reproductive ecology of many species in these areas. This participatory science program therefore would serve to fill this data gap and provide relevant information back to participants.

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

[View Past #TMNTuesday Presentations Here for Advanced Training Hrs.](#)

[Register Here](#)

[Webex Guide](#)

[FAQ](#)

# Meet-a-Member

## Meet CTMN Kim Conrow!

**What year did you become a master naturalist?**

2014

**What is your work career?**

I have been a high school science teacher, homemaker, gardener, dog trainer and handler.

**Where do you like to earn your volunteer hours?**

The Native Plant Society of Texas gets the majority of my volunteer time.

**What are your interests outside of naturalist activities?**

I like dogs, specifically Rhodesian Ridgebacks but we have branched out recently and have two smaller rescue dogs. I've been active in a book club for twelve years. Cooking and photography are other activities I enjoy.



Kim's Rhodesian Ridgeback, pic taken by Madison G. :)



## Twenty-Five years ago...

by Sharon Hamilton

...A group of dedicated naturalists and volunteers formed **Cross Timbers Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists**. Ours was among the second group of TMN chapters instituted, following only **Alamo Area Chapter**, San Antonio, and **North Texas Master Naturalist Chapter, Dallas**. I believe the Alamo Area group predates the Texas Master Naturalist Program, which celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2023!



Early members included familiar folks, some of whom are no longer with us or are now unable to participate in the program. According to VMS records, members who were trained and certified in 1998 included **Molly Hollar** (deceased; attended NTMN Chapter training), **Marian Hiler**, **Marsha McLaughlin**, and **Jeff Quayle** (attended North Texas Chapter training). **Gailon Hardin** and **Jan Miller** trained and were certified in 1999. **Hester Schwarzer**, **Connie Bales**, **Michael Bales**, **Ginger Bason-Bowden**, and **Marshall Fox** (deceased) certified in 2000. The chapter was incorporated as a 501©3 organization in 2002.

Fort Worth Nature Center staff who sponsored and supported CTMN in its earliest years included then Director **Wayne Clark**, Education Director **Rob Denkhaus**, and **Suzanne Tuttle**. **John Davis** and **Louis Verner, Ph. D.** were our early TPWD sponsors. Tarrant County folks met with the North Texas Chapter before training was moved to the **Nature Center** and monthly meetings to the **Fort Worth Botanic Gardens**.

Texas Master Naturalists will recognize and celebrate our Chapter's 25th anniversary this year, as will we. Please contact Sharon Hamilton at [shamilton16@gmail.com](mailto:shamilton16@gmail.com) if you have memories, photos, or documents covering the early years of CTMN and that you are willing to share.

...any errors in this article are Sharon's alone.



# Native of the Month



## Texas Mountain Laurel (*Dermatophyllum secundiflorum*)

by Madison Gover



Photo by mburchea on iNaturalist

Texas Mountain Laurel is a beautiful shrub that is one of the first plants to bloom. The purple, grape soda-smelling flowers begin flowering in February and continue until mid-April.

They are evergreen, and are extremely slow-growing. In the wild, their seeds have such a thick, solid coating that it can take the seeds up to 10 years to scarify and germinate.

These red seeds are beautifully vibrant, yet toxic. Native Americans used this seed for jewelry, clothing, and ceremonial uses. The seeds inside the shell contain cytisine/sophorine, which is related to nicotine. It causes hallucinogens. Keep these away from children and pets!

It enjoys full sun and deep infrequent watering.



My partner has a video on his scarification process that he's used to help scarify and germinate mountain laurel seeds. Take a look if you want! :)



# Featured Project

## Lights Out Fort Worth



from their newsletter - Mariah Campos

**When:**

**March 11 - April 20**

Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat mornings

**April 22 - May 12 (Peak Migration)**

Mon - Sun mornings

**May 13 - June 1**

Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat mornings

**ALL surveys begin at 6 am and end around 8 am!**

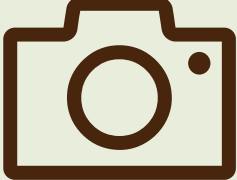
**(Calendar in Current Events)**

**Where:**

Surveys will start and end at the Tarrant County College - Trinity River Campus East Parking lot (see Parking Map). Upon arrival to the parking lot, Lights Out Fort Worth Coordinators and/or Survey Leaders will give you a temporary parking permit. This parking permit is required!

[Parking Map](#)

[FULL DETAILS](#)



# Art & Photography Gallery



Pipevine Swallowtail Chrysalis - Teddi Zonker



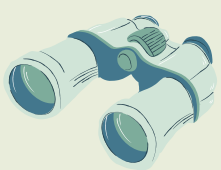
The Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars are always a fun, lucky find! Especially when the plant is blooming. They camouflage so well! - TZ



Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly. Just before this shot, she was in her chrysalis, hiding among the firewood. -TZ

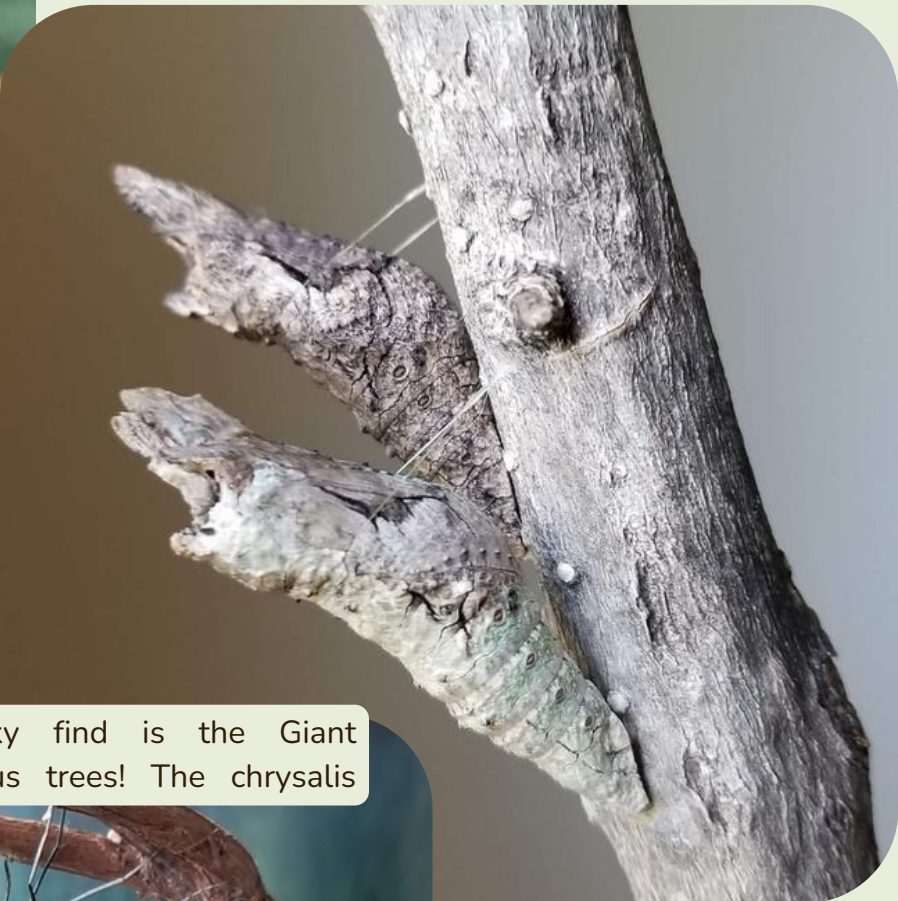


Dragonfly by Teddi Zonker



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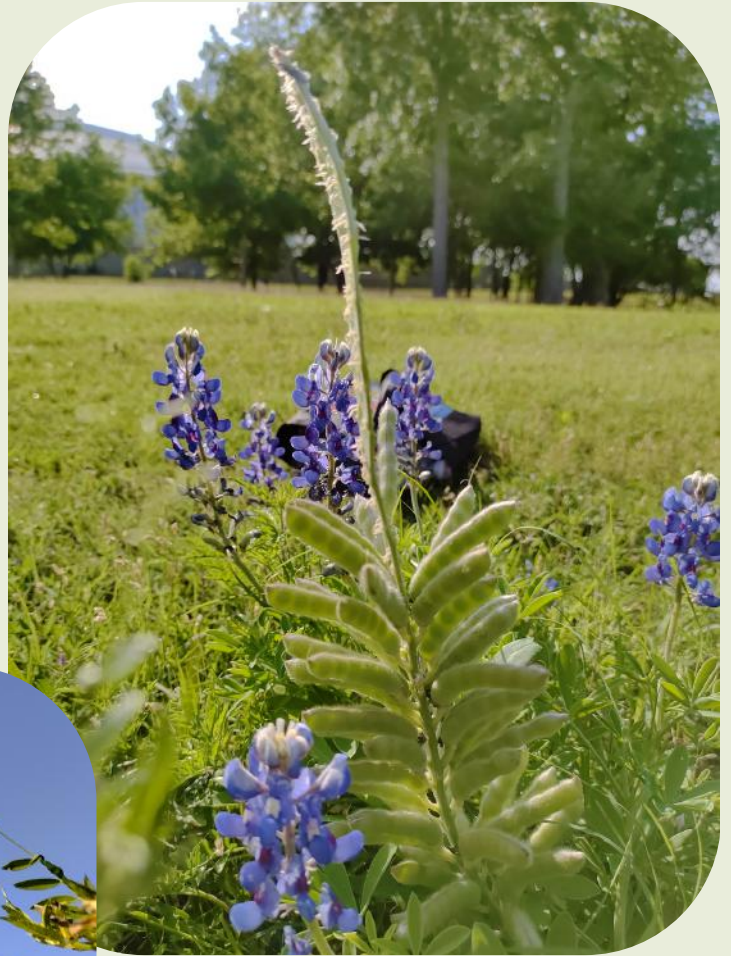




My other favorite lucky find is the Giant Swallowtail on my citrus trees! The chrysalis camouflage so well! - TZ



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On a hike with fellow Master Naturalist Taylor Thorns after a Rangers game, I found this fasciated bluebonnet in the Dr. Robert Cluck Linear Park. Wish I'd seen this mutant when it was in bloom! - **Morgan Chivers**

# iNaturalist Observation of the Month

Each month we will choose an iNaturalist observation made the previous month in Tarrant or Johnson County\*. Make an observation on iNaturalist to be in the running for this achievement! Please go to the observation itself to congratulate the user, add your identification, or favorite (star) the observation.

## Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buno lineatus*)

eangler



**Time:** 8:21 AM

**Date:** 3/5/2024

**Location:**

Benbrook Lake

**Copyright:** CC BY-

NC 4.0 Deed

\*Observation copyright settings must not be set to full rights reserved so that the photo can be used for the newsletter.



# Current Events

## **Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve UPCOMING:**

### **Mindfulness & Journaling at the Preserve**

**March 16, 2024 - 2pm**

Sponsored by FOSCNP

Led by Michael Smith, M.A.

**[REGISTER IN ADVANCED HERE](#)**

### **Third Saturday Volunteer Day**

**March 16, 2024 - 9 a.m. to 12PM**

City of Arlington Parks & Rec

Led by Jim Frisinger & Friends

**Meet in the parking lot**

### **Mini Bio-Blitz & City Nature Challenge**

**Saturday, April 27, 10am @SCNP**

Sponsored by FOSCNP

Led by Michael Smith, CNC can be solo too.

**Meet in the parking lot or on your own**

### **Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve**

5201 Bowman Springs Rd., Arlington, Texas 76017

### **Community Room**

2060 W. Green Oaks Blvd., Arlington, Texas 76013



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**April 26 to April 29, 2024**

GLOBAL Event and also competing against other major cities in Texas!

[List of Participating Cities](#)

[About the City Nature Challenge](#)

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FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN



# BIOBLITZ

March 23, 2024 9am-12pm

WHO: YOU+ PHONE/CAMERA + iNATURALIST APP

WHAT: A BIOBLITZ

WHERE: THE FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN

WHEN: MARCH 23, 2024 9AM-12PM

WHY: AN ATTEMPT TO RECORD ALL THE LIVING SPECIES IN THE NATIVE TEXAS BOARDWALK AT FWBG



Wondering what this goat is doing? Scan here to learn more about our project



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Contact us at:  
kshuback@fwbg.org  
jalarcon@fwbg.org

## UPCOMING iNaturalist Bioblitz and Blacklighting Events

Please [bookmark this iNaturalist journal page](#) and message/comment Sam K. - sambiology for more info.

**March 23** - Bioblitz at Benbrook Lake Richardson Tract Limestone Prairie

**March 30** - South Dallas/Bonton area bioblitz  
March 30 - Blacklighting at LLELA

**April 6** - Bioblitz with Texas Nature Trackers at Post Oak Preserve in Dallas

### **City Nature Challenge - April 26 - 29!**

**April 26** - blacklighting at Mockingbird Nature Park in Midlothian

**April 27** - Walsh Ranch Pocket Prairie Bioblitz in Parker County

**April 27** - Bioblitz and blacklighting at Frisco Grand Park

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**Saturday March 16, 2024, 10am - North Texas Wildlife Center** will be in-store. Join us in-store for a presentation on Your Wild Neighbors! Coconut , the famous Opossum will be in-store with his screech owl friend!

**Saturday March 16, 2024, 3:00pm - Bat World Sanctuary Mid-Cities** will be in-store for a presentation on bats, Kate will talk about what Bat World Sanctuary does and why they do it.

**Wednesday March 20, 2024, 6:30pm** - Amy Martin, local naturalist, and author of **Wild DFW** will be in-store. Amy will give a presentation about the great wildlife and birding areas around DFW.

**Saturday March 23, 2024, 10:00am - Charley Amos.** Join us in-store as our very own master naturalist Charley Amos. You don't have to be a master naturalist to enjoy the birds. Charley will help you get started with the basics.

**Sunday March 24, 2024, 1:00pm - Blackland Prairie Raptor Center** will be in-store. Join us in-store for a presentation to the world of raptors.

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# Board Members

## CTMN Board Members

- Sharon Hamilton - President
- Mary Beth Lampe - Vice President
  - Bill Collins - Secretary
- Dee Ann McGinnis- Treasurer

For submissions, nominations or announcements, please put the subject line as the newsletter category you are entering for and email to [newsletter@ctmn.org](mailto:newsletter@ctmn.org)

## CTMN Chair Members

- Carol Marcotte - Memberships
  - Sharon Hamilton - Outreach
- Melinda Wolfinbarger - Education
- Theresa Thomas - VOL Services and AT Hours
  - Sandy Thornburgh - Hospitality
    - Theresa Thomas - Records
    - Madison Gover - Newsletter
    - Frank Keeney - Webmaster
- Theresa Posani - Class of 2023 Rep.

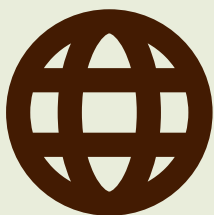


### Inclusivity:

Together we can make the newsletter inclusive to the visually impaired. Consider providing a text description of your photos for screen-reader software.



**Cross Timbers  
Master Naturalists  
Facebook Group**



**Cross Timbers  
Master Naturalists  
Website**

## CTMN Sponsors

- **Rachel Richter**, TPWD, Urban Biologist, [Rachel.Richter@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:Rachel.Richter@tpwd.texas.gov)
- **Jacklyn Jones Doyle**, Texas AgriLife, County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources, [jacklyn.jones@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jacklyn.jones@ag.tamu.edu)
- **Michael Perez**, Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge [michael.perez@fortworthtexas.gov](mailto:michael.perez@fortworthtexas.gov)