

T E X A S

Master Naturalist™  
Cross Timbers



August Issue!!



### Table of Contents

- CTMN Announcements **2**
- Speakers **3**
- TMN Tuesdays **4**
- Member Milestones **5**
- Member Highlight **6**
- Story Corner **7**
- Native-otM **16**
- Featured Project **18**
- iNaturalist Obs.-otM **22**
- Current Events **23**
- Board Members **26**

### In this Issue:



### Month Speaker

Texas Native Cats' overriding goal is to educate Texans about the diversity of our wild felines, the benefits they provide us and the threats they endure.

### Short Story

People from all over the United States call the DFW Wildlife Hotline (972-234-WILD) to report wildlife on or near their property or concerns about abandoned or injured wildlife.



### Featured Project

There are so many reasons to volunteer, especially at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. Learn at your own pace and comfort level and be supported by a solid team of experts, and build the confidence to try new things you may not have otherwise.





# CTMN Announcements



**OCTOBER 24-27**

[Annual Meeting Website](#)

**Registration opened August 1st!**

# Welcome New Class!

We are so very glad to welcome the new CTMN Training Class of 2024. In case you would like to be reminded of their classroom session schedule for August and September, you can see it below.

08/20/2024	Tue	6:00 pm	9:00 pm	How to be a Master Naturalist	Fort Worth Botanic Garden – Lecture Hall	
08/27/2024	Tue	6:00 pm	9:00 pm	Intro Ecology	Fort Worth Botanic Garden-Rose Room	
09/03/2024	Tue	6:00 pm	9:00 pm	Volunteer Opportunities	Fort Worth Botanic Garden-Rose Room	
09/10/2024	Tue	6:00 pm	9:00 pm	Geology and Archeology	Fort Worth Botanic Garden-Rose Room	
09/17/2024	Tue	6:00 pm	9:00 pm	Aquatic Systems	Fort Worth Botanic Garden-Camellia Room	**NOTE-CHANGE OF ROOM
09/24/2024	Tue	6:00 pm	9:00 pm	Reptiles and Amphibians (Herps)	Fort Worth Botanic Garden-Rose Room	
09/28/2024	SAT	9:00 am	3:00 pm	Aquatic Field Trip	Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge	

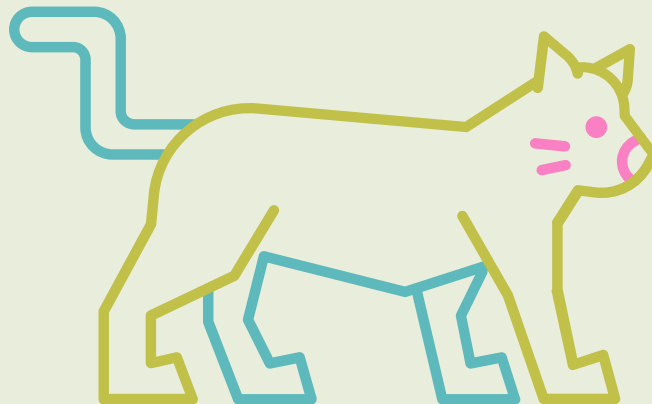
# Speakers

## September's Speaker

Within the last year, history has been made for both mountain lions and ocelots in Texas. Mountain lions, a threatened / imperiled species, and ocelots, classified as endangered, now face a future of remarkable and positive change. Learn what has transpired for both of these amazing beautiful cats and what lies ahead.



Monica Morrison got her start with wildlife more than 20 years ago at the Dallas Zoo as a volunteer and tiger docent. Since that time, she has volunteered in various capacities at two Dallas-area big cat rescue centers. She participated in an ocelot study in Mexico and another in Kenya on African lions. She has also worked with organizations in South America on jaguar and other big cat projects. In 2017, she founded Texas Native Cats, a 501 (c)(3) that provides education, outreach, and advocacy for Texas' five species of wild cats, past and present. Texas Native Cats' overriding goal is to educate Texans about the diversity of our wild felines, the benefits they provide us and the threats they endure. She lives in Dallas.





# 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 Speaker



TEXAS A&M  
AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION

**Title:** Plastic Free July: A Project Highlight

**Description:** Coast into August with a TMNTuesday focused on sustainability projects initiated by some of our coastal Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) chapters focused on plastic clean-up for a belated celebration of Plastic Free July!

Presenting on the **Texas Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program**, John O'Connell, Brazoria County Extension Agent and Cradle of Texas TMN Advisor, will share how the program got started, how the chapter is involved and where others can get involved in their local waterways with collecting monofilament lines.

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

[Register Here](#)

[Webex Guide](#)

[FAQ](#)

# Member Milestones

Let's take a moment to help us congratulate members that have recertified in 2024 so far!

They have completed, logged, and had approved 40 volunteer hours and 8 advanced training hours. They will all receive the Diamondback Rattlesnake Pin.

**C/O 1998**

Marian Hiler  
Jeff Quayle

**C/O 2006**

Sharon Hamilton

**C/O 2007**

Kay Sekio

**C/O 2020**

Michele Cyr

**C/O 2023**

Bonnie Garcia

**1000 Hours (Gold Dragonfly Pin)**

Fonda Fox





# Member Highlight

## Meet CTMN Karen Harden!

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

Class of 2023 – I had wanted to take this course for several years but didn't feel I could devote the time to finish the course work. After I retired in August of 2023, I had all the time I needed, so I enrolled and was fortunate enough to be chosen to participate.



### What is your work career?

I spent 25 years, first as an administrative substitute then as an administrative assistant for two local school districts. Before that, I co-owned a business that sold aftermarket auto air conditioners and parts. During a short break from the school district, I owned and ran a Tea Room in the now demolished North Hills Mall.

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

Most of my volunteer hours are with the North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. I also volunteer as a docent for school field trips at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge.



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

I enjoy traveling with my husband, family, and friends, spending time with our grandkids (12 and one on the way), photography, book club I belong to, and scrapbooking.





## Texas Dark Sky Folklore pt. 1

### Comanche Star Stories:

**The Star Maiden:** In Comanche lore, there is a tale of a beautiful maiden who descends from the stars to live among the people. She eventually returns to the sky, where she becomes a bright star. This story emphasizes the connection between the Comanche people and the cosmos.

**The Seven Star Sisters:** The Pleiades are often referred to in Native American stories. In one Comanche version, they are seven sisters who were pursued by a bear. They prayed to the Great Spirit for rescue and were lifted into the sky to form the Pleiades cluster.

**Coyote and the Milky Way:** This story is common among various Native American tribes, including those in Texas. The tale involves a coyote who, in his mischievousness, throws a bag of cornmeal or sparkling dust into the sky, creating the Milky Way. This explains the band of light seen across the night sky.



### The Big Dipper

Known as the "Drinking Gourd," the Big Dipper has a significant place in African American folklore, particularly among those who traveled the Underground Railroad. The Big Dipper's stars pointed towards the North Star, guiding enslaved people to freedom. This constellation holds historical and cultural significance in Texas.



# Birds, Mammals, Reptiles – Oh, My!

DFW Wildlife Hotline – By Teddi R. Zonker-VP, CTMN 2023

As a Master Naturalist, you might get some questions from friends! “I have an injured bird in my yard, what do I do?” If you want to earn volunteer hours while in your jammies at home, over the phone, using your computer – this is the gig! People from all over the United States call the DFW Wildlife Hotline (972-234-WILD) to report wildlife on or near their property or concerns about abandoned or injured wildlife.



To assist, after a quick training session, you will have access to an amazing database of people that transport and rehab wildlife.

While I was going through the interview process to become a Master Naturalist, Ryan Wiggins shared that she was transporting a baby opossum and I immediately responded, “That’s what I want to do!!” (and I did in April!).

My first call: Rattlesnake on an apartment sidewalk! With a bit of education, I helped the caller realize that the snake was likely flushed out after the days mowing or searching for food. Also, that the snake will not be entering her bedroom that night, on the 4th floor! The snake soon moved on after she went inside for a bit.

*continued ->*

Calls are mostly simple information or assistance. Another call: a snake crawled up a car tire and possibly into the motor. The man was with his family at the park and was afraid to approach the car, fearing that the snake would be at his feet as soon as he started the car. While on the phone, he started the car (and ran away from the car), to watch the Rat snake slowly slither away from the car into the tall grass. Very grateful to be snake-free, everyone came back to the car and drove home without their scaly friend.

Other calls include several bird calls which result in mostly education on returning the bird to the nest or allowing the fledgling to remain on the ground as it learns to fly. Squirrels, opossums, raccoons or a burrow of bunnies in the yard (discovered by canine pets) and much more.



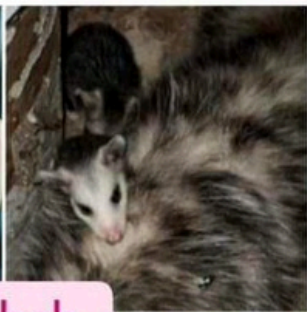
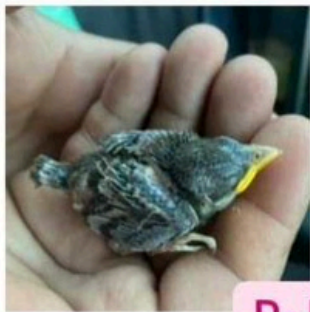
So, if you're up for helping the wildlife community we're all passionate about, reach out for details on how to volunteer! Also, with the proper training, you can earn hours as someone who transports and rehabs wildlife! Y'all, baby opossums!

**Volunteer Contact Details:**

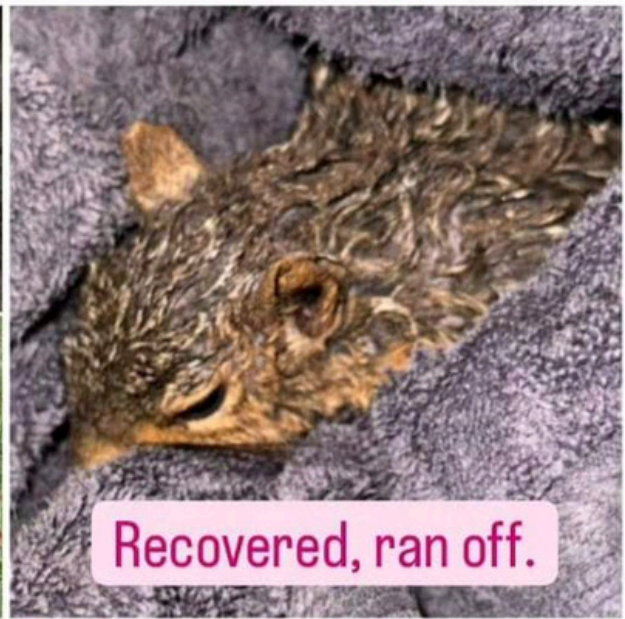
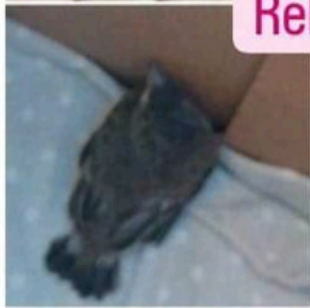
Prudi Koeninger, [prudi.koeninger@gmail.com](mailto:prudi.koeninger@gmail.com)

*continued ->*

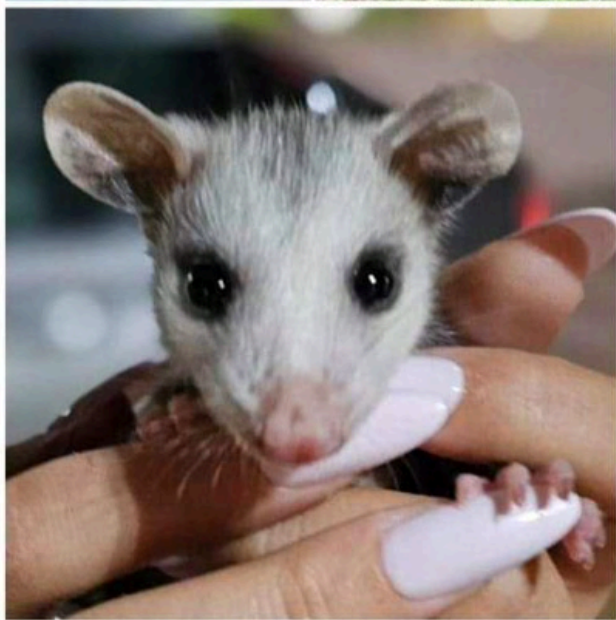




Rehab.



Recovered, ran off.



Stop feeding it!

Another busy night!  
Able to transport two  
opossum this time!



# Texas Dark Sky Folklore pt. 2

## La Llorona and the Stars:

In Mexican and Texan folklore, La Llorona (the Weeping Woman) is a ghostly figure who mourns the loss of her children. Some versions of the story suggest that her tears became stars, symbolizing her eternal sorrow and serving as a reminder of her legend in the night sky.

## Orion the Hunter:

In Texan adaptations of the Greek myth, Orion is often seen as a cowboy or hunter, reflecting the state's frontier history. Orion's pursuit of the Pleiades or his battle with Taurus the Bull is sometimes reimagined to fit the local cultural context.

## The Southern Cross:

Although not always visible from all parts of Texas, the Southern Cross has stories tied to sailors and explorers. It was used for navigation and has tales of adventure and exploration associated with it, especially relevant to Texas' Gulf Coast history.

These stories reflect the cultural diversity of Texas and how various communities have interpreted and passed down their understanding of the night sky.





# Expedition BugShot: The Tricks and Tips I learned from The Indiana Dunes Learning Center on the topic of Entomology Macro Photography

By Zachary Chapman

## Part 1 - Stay Tuned for Part 2 in Sept!



Back in July I was given an amazing opportunity to go to one of the most sought-after conferences in entomology. I was given a sponsorship to go to BugShot Indiana. On the night of Wednesday, the 7th 2024 I headed up to the Dunes. When I arrived on the 8th, I quickly noticed a lot of differences than I had in Texas. The Indiana Dunes is one of the top ten most diverse places in our National Park system. I could see this instantly. Upon arrival I took time to view the southern most edge of Lake Michigan; this is the first time I have got to see any of the Great Lakes. If you were not thinking about it, you would swear up and down you were looking at a vast sea. Yet, there is no salt air, and the sand is a bit different than what we have at the Texas Coast.

*continued ->*

what we have at the Texas Coast. The Dunes have more plant life per square inch than most places I have seen in Texas. I am not trying to badmouth my home state, each place has its own quirks. Diversity brings life to all things for their very survival. The dunes is so vast with various plant life they have tons more insects. This was one of the best places to photograph them. It changed me for the better. As a budding naturalist you have to allow yourself to expand and grow.



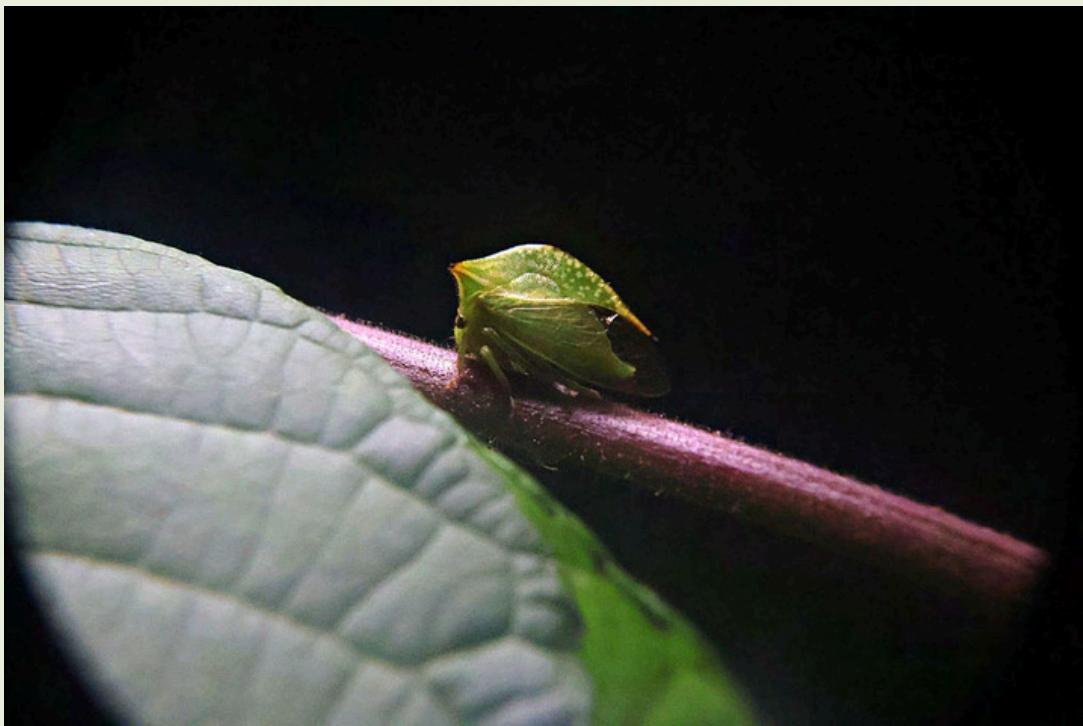
Me on the Beach of Lake Michigan a few hours before check in to the Learning Center.

*continued ->*



The insects here are well adapted for life in the north. Unlike Texas it was very cool; yet, even when the temps would drop in the from the evening hours to the dawn you could find a kings ransom in insects. Caterpillars by the ton, harvestmen could be seen everywhere, bees, wasps and butterflies and other flying insects were common place. I have never been this far north, and it was apparent that the insects were happy with colder climates. Down here our insects need to have a bit of a mid-range in temps 70s, 80s are base line for them to come out like the ones up north. Yet, it gets super-hot and super-muggy which our insects like best. They are not well adapted for life in the cold.

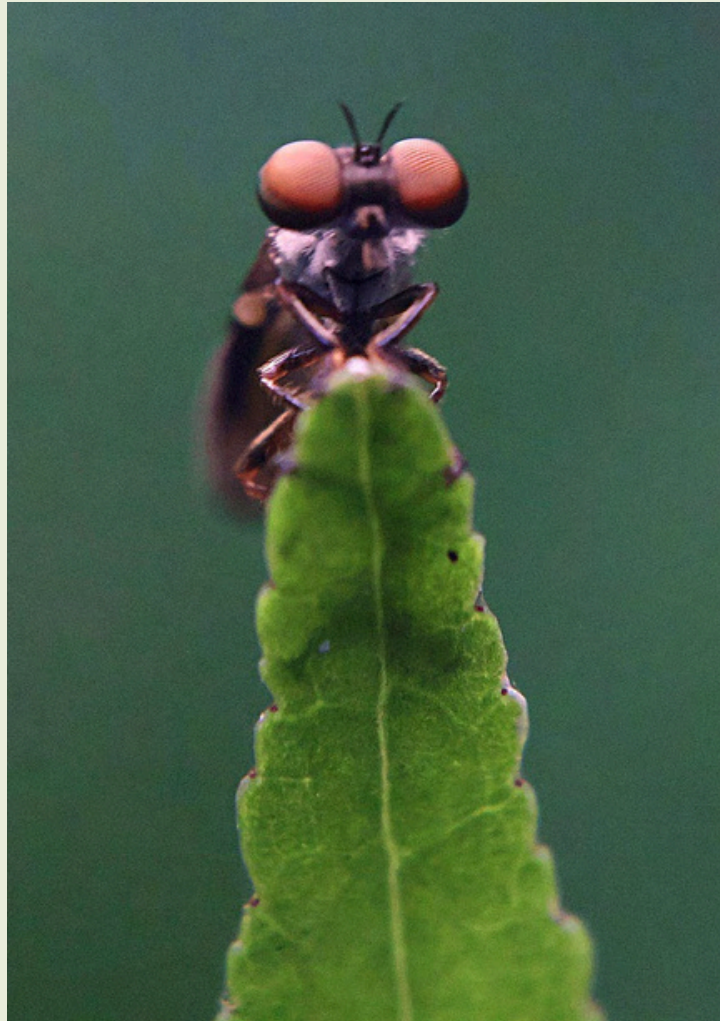
to learn the tricks and tips. We learned about the general ecology, but the photography aspect was very enriching. We learned about lens stacking and how to make photographs that do not look like base observation shots. NatGeo quality was the key for this. Our instructors were there to ensure we got the most bang for our bucks. Truth be told we got a bit spoiled on this trip. Some of our instructors work with National Geographic, Wired Science and BBC. The language was very different from just base-line entomology. Yet, this was good for gaining the techniques I did and that was the aim of the game;



A Buffalo Treehopper (Tribe Ceresini) lit by my light ring in an overhead position *continued ->*



Lighting, diffusion, line, repetition, tension are some of the artistic qualities that come with this type of insect photography. These are the DNA of a good image. For an insect these make them more flattering. There are many techniques you can use to get the best shots. For collections and museum intensive studies rail systems run by remote control can be used to focus on specimens that can be pinned or mounted. Cameras can be turned into microscopes to see details of butterfly wings. light boxes make great staging areas to get nice shots of insects that could be harder to control outside. You can take many shots with parts of the insects in clarity and take them and make a singular composite with programs like Zerene Stacker. Yet even simple photography can yield great quality. For me I took most of my training outside when I had the chance. Using a flash and a diffuser are key for this sort of specialized macro photography. It helps to keep your insect clean, less robotic, and to some maybe less like a monster.



A Gnat Oger closeup on its perch; note the lattice work in the eyes.

*To be continued....*



# Native of the Month



## Native Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*)

by Erika Swyryn



Photos by Erika Swyryn

Summertime in Texas means one thing - HEAT! Most of us have driven through parking lots in July or August looking for the shadiest spot, regardless of how far that is from the door. Large, mature shade trees are a highly sought after asset this time of year, and the native Texas pecan tree is no exception.

The pecan tree is a tall, impressive tree which is not only a beautiful native tree, it was designated the state tree of Texas in 1919. It is also the largest member of the hickory genus, and is a member of the walnut family. They reach maturity around 12 years, but can live and continue producing nuts for up to 300 years.

Pecan trees grow naturally along river and stream bottoms, slopes and riparian areas, or can be cultivated. These trees have low low water requirements once established, but newly planted trees require more frequent watering. They will grow in most soils including clay and caliche, but perform best in well drained, deep sandy loam. This tree will grow an average of 3-5 feet a year, depending on environmental conditions which is considered fairly fast growing.

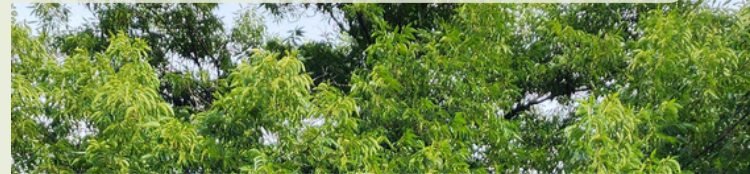
*continued ->*



For home or land owners, a pecan tree can be easily pruned for desired shape or to raise the canopy. It is recommended to prune young trees to establish strong leader branches as the tree grows. In mature trees, removing dead, damaged, or diseased branches can prolong the life of the established tree. The leaves of the pecan tree are alternate and pinnate with 9-17 leaflets, that are finely serrated and can often be curved.



Pecan trees are one of the last native trees to produce buds and leaves each spring and are typically wind pollinated. Flowering of the pecan tree occurs from April through May each year and this species of tree is monoecious. This means they have flowers on both staminate (male) and pistillate (female) catkins or reproductive organs on each tree, but in the case of the pecan tree, they are found in different locations. These flowers will result in pecans, which will grow and develop throughout the summer months and be ready for harvest in the fall.



In addition to being an excellent statement tree and source of summertime shade, the pecan tree is very attractive to many types of wildlife. This includes deer, raccoons, possums, squirrels, foxes, and various bird species, like crows, wood ducks, wild turkeys, and blue jays. For people looking to provide habitat for local wildlife while having a nice shady place to enjoy the summer months, the native Texas pecan is a wonderful choice.







# Featured Project

## Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge

by Wendy Elias/Madison Gover/Banjo Moore

There are so many reasons to volunteer, especially at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge.

You get to help educate others about the delicate balance of nature, be part of a community dedicated to preserving our natural areas, begin to notice all the little things around you, learn about the connections in nature that you may never have considered, meet people who are passionate about the same things and discover new aspects about yourself.

Learn at your own pace and comfort level and be supported by a solid team of experts, and build the confidence to try new things you may not have otherwise.

All of this is possible when you join us as FWNC&R volunteers!

### List of Opportunities

- Aquatic Guides
- Docents
- Greenhouse
- Natural Guard
- Roving Naturalist
- Special Events
- Wildlife Ambassador Care

[Click Here to Go to the FWNC Volunteer Page](#)

*continued ->*

Photo by Teddi Zonker

# Meet the Team



I became a Cross Timbers Master Naturalist in 2014. After completing the course at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge that fall, I inquired about working at the FWNC. There were no job openings at the FWNC at the time, but a volunteer opportunity working the front desk of the Hardwicke Interpretive Center opened up.

**Banjo Moore**

So, in January of 2015, I began volunteering at the FWNC. Veteran CTMN Marsha McLaughlin was a regular volunteer at the HIC front desk and showed me the ropes. After a year of volunteering at the HIC building at the FWNC, a part-time customer service position became available. I applied and got the job as a Customer Service Assistant.

While working in this role, I continued to volunteer at the FWNC by picking up trash throughout the park, using my canoe to go on the Trinity River and pick up trash from the river, participating in Natural Guard and greenhouse activities, and participating in iNaturalist opportunities. After 2 1/2 years working part-time at the FWNC, my position was transformed into a full-time position as a Customer Service Representative. I'll celebrate my 7th year in this position in October 2024.

As a Cross Timbers Master Naturalist, I still earn most of my volunteer hours at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge when I'm off duty doing many of the same volunteer activities I mentioned earlier. I find working and volunteering at the FWNC to be very rewarding!

Banjo Moore  
CTMN 2014

*continued ->*



## Natural Guard

Natural Guard does something different every week. It is usually more labor intensive work, including invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, sign installation, and other projects to benefit the FWNC.



Photos by Linda Little

## Greenhouse

Greenhouse work can entail collecting, harvesting, and sorting native plant seeds as well as creating seed balls, propagating native plants, watering plants and seedlings, preparing for native plant sales or community giveaways, and even planting plants back into areas of restorative need.



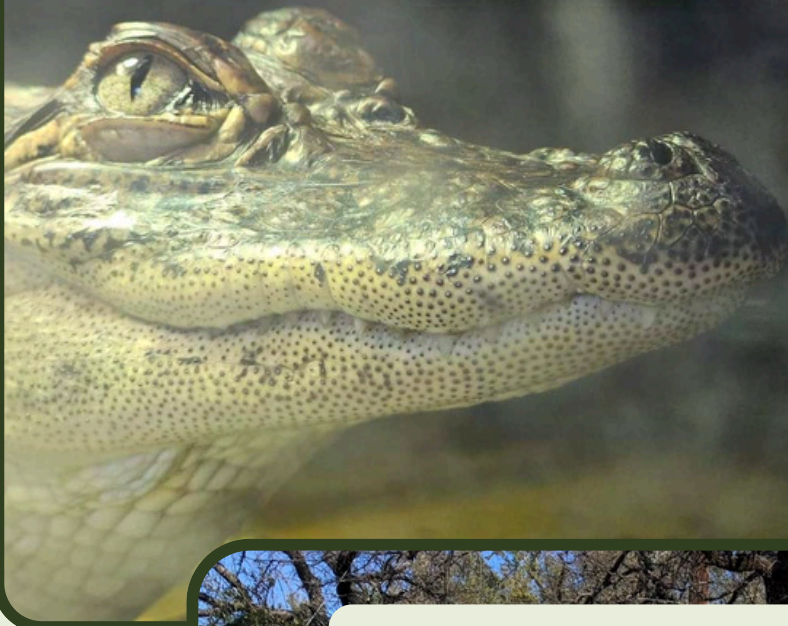
*continued ->*



# Wildlife Ambassador Care

Wildlife ambassador care is perhaps the most important and favorite job of all. This job puts you in charge of the health and livelihood of the animals used to educate and introduce guests to native wildlife. You will feed the animals, take notes on their health, and clean enclosures.

Teddi Z.



Madison G.



Come Check Out the FWNC&R!



Linda L.

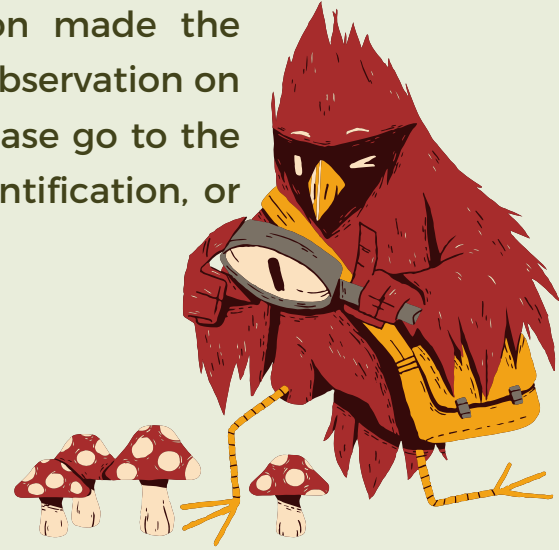


# iNaturalist Observation of the Month

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.

## Gulf Fritillary (*Dione vanillae*)

[konijntje](#)



**Date: 8/4/2024**

**Location:**

**Weatherford, TX**



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



# Current Events

## AUGUST

Fort Worth Audubon Society  
First Friday Feathers  
Friday, August 2, 7:30am-10am  
Kelley Park, Arlington

Fort Worth Audubon Society  
Birding  
Wednesday, August 7, 7:30am  
Foster Park, 4398 Trail Lake Dr, Fort Worth

Fort Worth Audubon Society  
Birding  
Wednesday, August 10, 7:30am  
Foster Park, 4398 Trail Lake Dr, Fort Worth

Fort Worth Audubon Society  
Birding  
Wednesday, August 14, 6:30am-10:30am  
Village Creek Drying Beds, North Arlington

Tandy Hills Natural Area  
Explore the Dark – Mothing event  
Saturday, August 10, 8pm  
Texas Park & Wildlife Department's Urban Biologist – Sam Kieschnick

Prairie Sky/Star Party (sunset)  
Tandy Hills  
Saturday, August 10, 8:18pm



# LIGHTS OUT, TEXAS!

Fall migration  
Aug 15 - Nov 30

## Help migrating birds:

- Turn off non-essential lights
- Make windows visible to birds
- Provide shelter, food and water

White-throated Sparrow/Danny Hancock/ Audubon Photography Awards

# SEPTEMBER

FWNC&R

Wednesday, September 4, 10am-11am

Sounds of Summer Cicadas

Pre-registration required. \$5 (with paid admission)/MEMBERS FREE.

Fort Worth Audubon Society

First Friday Feathers

Friday, September 6, 7:30am-10am

Kelley Park, Arlington

YardSmart

September 7, 8:20am-1pm

Fort Worth Botanic Garden

Prairie Sky/Star Party (sunset)

Tandy Hills

Saturday, September 7, 745pm

Free, all ages, coolers welcome, no pets, cancelled if cloudy

Fort Worth Audubon Society

Birding

Wednesday, September 11, 6:30am-10:30am

Village Creek Drying Beds, North Arlington

FWNC&R

Wednesday, September 11, 10am-11am

Dip-netting for Dragonflies

Pre-registration required. \$5 (with paid admission)/MEMBERS FREE

NPAT event

Camp Leroy Shuman BioBlitz (using iNaturalist)

Saturday, September 21, 9-noon



# Board Members

## CTMN Board Members

- Mary Beth Lampe - President
- Teddi Zonker - Vice President
  - Bill Collins - Secretary
- Dee Ann McGinnis- Treasurer

## CTMN Chair Members

- Carol Marcotte - Membership
  - Sharon Hamilton - Past President
  - Melinda Wolfinbarger - Training
  - Theresa Thomas - VMS Admin & Vol and AT Hours
  - Sandy Thornburgh - Hospitality
    - Theresa Thomas - Records
    - Madison Gover - Newsletter
  - Frank Keeney - Announcement eblasts
- Mary Beth Lampe - Webmaster  
Theresa Posani - Class of 2023 Rep.

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)

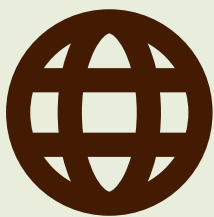


### Inclusivity:

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)