

THE  
**PADDLEFISH**  
CYPRESS BASIN CHAPTER  
TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST

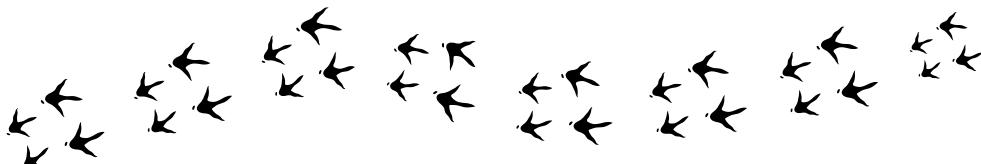
## PADDLING TRAIL TOUR A SUCCESS

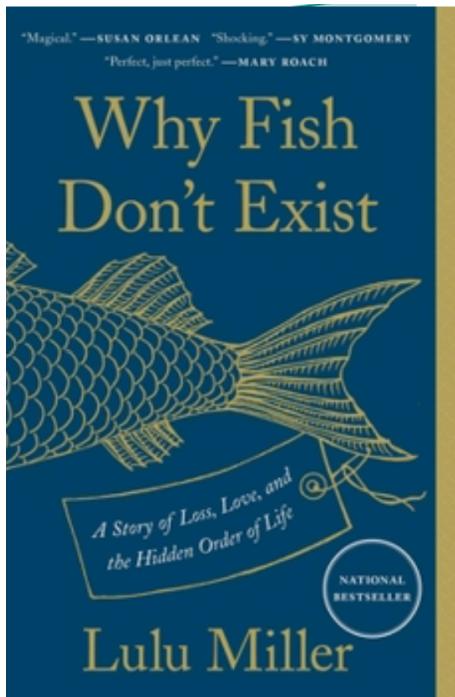
What a beautiful day for a boat tour of the Caddo Lake Paddling Trails! We set out from Johnson's Ranch for a 2 hour tour and enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the only natural lake in the state of Texas. Caddo Lake, well known for its haunting cypress trees covered in Spanish moss and its unique history, has been the location for many movies over the years. As we enjoyed the boat ride, we observed nature at its finest and learned interesting facts about the lake, as well as making note of trail signs that need repair. Each of us disembarked with a renewed sense of appreciation for this precious ecosystem in our own backyard! Special thanks to Captain Ron's Swamp Tours for a fun and educational tour!



### JUNE MEETING- JUNE 9<sup>TH</sup> - 6PM

Caddo Lake State Park is the location of our June Meeting on Monday, the 9th. Lane Neely, the Park Interpreter, will give us some AT on Tracks and Scat. There will be outside time, so you might bring some bug spray. Set up is at 5:45pm and the meeting begins at 6. Hope to see you there!!





# BOOK CLUB

THURSDAY JUNE 19TH AT 6:00 PM

Caddo Lake Wildlife Refuge Classroom  
Caddo Lake Wildlife Refuge

Our next fiction selection is *Why Fish Don't Exist*, by Lulu Miller, a Peabody Award-winning science journalist. It was voted best book of 2020 by The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune, and Smithsonian. The cover reads that it is "a dark and astonishing tale of love, chaos, scientific obsession, and--possibly--even murder..."

The book discussion will be on Thursday, June 19, at the refuge at 6:00. Please bring a lawn chair in case it's still cool enough to sit on the deck.

Due to the increasing temperature, we will not do trail maintenance prior to the meeting.

## HIKE WITH HERPS

Hike with Herps at Caddo Lake State Park – June 14

Curious about the critters that slither, hop, or bask along our trails? Join us for "Hike with Herps" on Saturday, June 14 at 9:00 a.m. at Caddo Lake State Park for a hands-on introduction to herpetology—the study of reptiles and amphibians!

Texas Master Naturalist Ellen Miller will guide the group, offering tips on how to spot herps (if that's your thing) and what to do if you'd rather avoid them on your hike.

We'll meet and park at Saw Mill Pond (near the fishing pier—restrooms available), then explore areas around the water and the Nature Trail. After a lunch break, we'll continue hiking the rest of the park.

- ◆ \$4 park entry fee
- ◆ Bring a sack lunch
- ◆ Trekking poles recommended

Whether you're a reptile fan or just enjoy a good hike, this is a great opportunity to connect with nature.



# AQUATIC VEGETATION CLASS

Join us on Tuesday, June 10, from 10:30 to 11:30 AM at the Avinger Education Center (located just across Hwy 49 from 5D's Steakhouse) for an informative session on identifying and managing aquatic vegetation in Simpson Lake.

Led by local naturalist Roger Geiger, the class will cover common plant species found in the lake and practical strategies for their control.

If you didn't sign up during this week's meeting but would like to attend, please contact Roger to be added to the list.



## TREASURER'S REPORT

### MEMBERSHIP DUES

**\$25 PER INDIVIDUAL  
\$40 PER FAMILY**

Mail checks- made payable to  
Cypress Basin TMN

Mail to  
PO Box 226  
Karnack, Texas  
75661

Cypress Basin Texas Master Naturalists		
Financial Report for May 2025		
Beginning Balance 4/29/25		\$33,772.40
Deposits:	Annual Dues	\$75.00
	Flotilla Sponsorships	\$250.00
	Flotilla Misc	\$40.00
	Flotilla Registration	\$2,289.79
	Check Refund	\$107.13
	Flotilla Shirt/Postage	\$25.00
		\$2,786.92
Expenses:	Flotilla Port-A-Jon	\$200.00
	Flotilla Signs	\$265.83
	Flotilla T-Shirts	\$1,119.90
	Flotilla Misc	\$124.68
	New Checks	\$46.00
	Paddle Trail Tour	\$300.00
		\$2,056.41
Flotilla Fund		\$27,808.38
Trainee Scholarship Fund		\$600.00
General Fund		\$6,094.53
Ending Balance 5/24/25		\$34,502.91

# 2025 TRAINING CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT

**Cypress Basin Chapter**

**Texas Master Naturalist Training Class**

**DO YOU...**

- Like the outdoors, native plants, and wildlife?
- Have a passion for habitat restoration and community outreach?

**Join us!**

**Location:** Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge

**Class dates:** Aug 15-16 | Sept 12-13 | Oct 10-11 | Nov 7-8

**Fridays:** 5:45-9 | **Saturdays:** 8:30-5

**Cost:** \$40 / \$55 (couple)

**Questions?** Call 903-821-4264

**TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE** **TEXAS A&M AGRI-LIFE EXTENSION**

Caroline and Susan are looking for folks interested in taking our training class this fall. Please talk to your friends, neighbors, co-workers, anyone who you think might be interested! It will begin the weekend of August 15th, and be one weekend a month through November. Please be sure and get name, address, phone number and email address. We also need a co-chair for the coordination of food. Thanks so much for helping with this!!

## MINUTES OF MAY MEETING

CBTMN Chapter Meeting May 12, 2025

**Members present:** Jim Meyer, Linda Richtsmeier, Jean Bratton, Caroline Hughes, Michelle Clagg, Terry Venden, Teresa McKinney, Keith McKinney, Kim Delony, Pam Andrews, Stella Barrow, Ted Barrow, Phyllis Wilson, Vicki Gilliland, Jill Wright, Pete Wright, Susan & Steve Sedberry, Laura Wilson, Kathy Koenig, Barbara Judkins, Becky Gullette, Roger Geiger, Ellen Miller. No guests were present.

**Meeting called to order** by President Barbara Judkins at 6:00 PM at the Refuge.

**Treasurer's Report and Minutes** approved as published in the Paddlefish.

**AT Ideas:** Roger Geiger presented opportunities for AT. Roger will present a class on Aquatic Vegetation at Lake Simpson. Tentative date/location set for Tuesday, 6/10/25 at the Avinger Education Center. A sign up sheet was passed around and more details will be emailed. He also brought up the possibility of a Tree Farm Tour in the fall with more details to follow. Roger also informed us that the Eagle Landing "World Famous Trees" (2 trees that shared an adjoining limb) was cut down by contractors.

**Caddo Lake Pontoon Boat Paddle Trail Ride:** The tour will be next Monday 5/19/25. We will meet at the Uncertain Lodge and Inn next to Johnson's Ranch at 3:30pm for the tour to start at 4:00. This tour is full but due to high interest, Susan is trying to secure another date as well. Will count as AT/VT and fees will be paid from the Flotilla Fund.

**New Training Class:** Currently only one person is registered. Let's all do what we can to help find potential members so the class will make! We need a minimum of 6. First two presenters are already confirmed. (David Brotherton-Birds and Barbara Judkins-History of TX Master Naturalists) Interested parties can contact Caroline or Susan. No recertification pins were presented at this meeting.

**Nature Book Club:** New selection is "Why Fish Don't Exist" by Lulu Miller. Discussion will be held at the Refuge on Thursday 6/19/25 at 6:00pm.

**Great TX Birding Classic:** Phyllis gave us a report on hers and Barbara's recent experience participating in the competition. Suggestions were made that our chapter participate as teams next time!

**VT/AT Opportunities:** Several events at Caddo Lake State Park, TMN Tuesdays, Bat Brigade, Mike Woodruff's Bluebird Box Workshop, Jim Meyer's Monofilament Recovery Project

**Flotilla:** Final amount raised is still being confirmed. Date for next year's Flotilla will be 4/18/26. Flotilla funds will provide for the "Kiosk Project"...replacing the kiosks at Shady Glade and Johnson's Ranch with Paddle Trail Information.

**Local News:** Big Pines Lodge has re-opened to great reviews! Please support our local businesses.

**Next Meeting:** June 9, 2025 at Caddo Lake State Park. AT with Lane... "Scat & Tracks"

**Meeting Adjourned:** 7:00 pm **VT:** 1 hour plus drive time

# WONDER OF NATURE LOST

Written by Roger Geiger

March 2025 was a tragic time for those who appreciate the wonders of nature in East Texas as the iconic conjoined trees along Hwy 155 west of Avinger were cut down. In a curiosity seldom seen, these two trees shared a single, live, branch.

In February, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) started clearing the right of way between Lake O' the Pines and Avinger. By March 6, TxDOT contractors had reached the trees. I am a local naturalist so I made a point of checking on them. The trees plus the branch between them were well flagged with pink ribbon, and seemed to be near the outer edge of the right of way, so I had little fear for their continued existence. I was wrong.

Recently I returned to check on the conjoined trees and found they had been removed. I found remains of the pink flagging and a section from the trunk of one of the trees and a stump. Spectrum is currently installing fiber optic cable along Hwy 155 and throughout Eagle Landing. Their subcontractor informed me that his company and others they hired had nothing to do with clearing of trees. "That," he said, "was handled by TxDOT."

TxDOT Mount Pleasant said they were working with two sub-contractors to clear the right of way along the highway and was not familiar with any reason why the trees would have been flagged or removed. The contractor doing the work also said they didn't know why the trees were flagged, removed, or what happened to them. The contractor assumed "They must have been mulched with everything else."

As of the writing of this commentary, all we are left with are a few facts, a few questions, and a few suspicions. We still do not know why our wonder of nature was flagged for special attention and given special attention during its removal. I don't suppose we ever will.

You can read the original article on the Marion County Herald's website: [marioncoherald.com](http://marioncoherald.com).





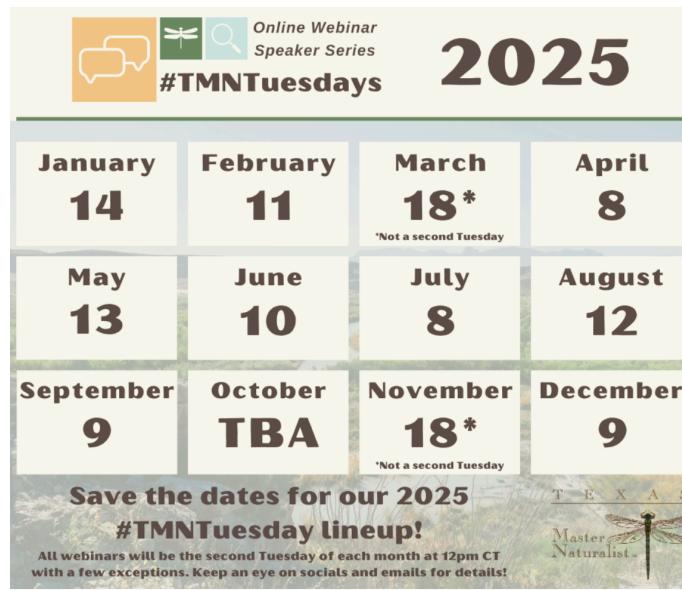
Online Webinar  
Speaker Series  
**#TMNTuesdays**

Join us on the 2nd  
Tuesday of each  
month at 12:00pm CT!\*

\*Some TMNTuesday dates and times are subject to change.  
Join our Email Listserv to stay updated.

# AT ALERT

Caroline and Susan are always looking for AT ideas for both meetings and field trips. If you would like to do a short presentation at a meeting, or have an excellent place you would like to make a field trip to, please let Susan ([caddomama@gmail.com](mailto:caddomama@gmail.com)) or Caroline ([cahughes8@gmail.com](mailto:cahughes8@gmail.com)) know!



## 2025 Officers

Barbara Judkins  
President

Susan Sedberry  
Vice President

Laura Wilson  
Secretary

Teresa McKinney  
Treasurer

Caroline Hughes  
Susan Sedberry  
Training Coordinators

Lara Wilson  
Class Representative

Linda Richtmeier  
Membership Director

Vanessa Neace  
Advisor

Doug Weir  
Advisor

## In Need of AT?

Remember that out of the 8 hours of advanced training required each year, only 4 can be online except the current year TMNTuesdays.

Here are a few good online options:

**#TMNTuesdays**  
[https://txmn.tamu.edu/  
tmntuesdays/](https://txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays/)

**Forestry and Natural Resources Webinars**  
<http://forestrywebinars.net/>

**Conservation of Natural Resources**  
<http://www.conservationwebinars.net>

**Natures Notebook**  
<https://www.usanpn.org/nn/webinars>

**Texas Wildlife Federation**  
<https://www.texas-wildlife.org/>

## 2025 Meeting Dates and Locations

January 13 - Refuge

February 10 - Transportation Center,

Jefferson - Potluck dinner

March 10 - Marshall Library

April 14 - Kellyville

May 12 - Refuge

June 9 - State Park

July - no meeting

August 11 - Transportation Center,

Jefferson - Potluck dinner

September 8 - Marshall Library

October 13 - Kellyville

November 10 - Refuge

December - no meeting