



We are a group of trained volunteers who share our appreciation and knowledge of nature with the community through outreach, education and conservation/restoration projects

Lan Shen's "Be a Seedy Soul"



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A large group of chapter members and others came out on January 5th to hear Lan Shen, from The Katy Prairie Conservancy & Houston Chapter - Native Prairies Association of TX, talk about preserving and using seeds from prairie plants. We met at our new meeting place, the Rosenberg Convention Center at 3825 TX-36, Rosenberg, TX.

Lan is instrumental in gathering seeds for a large project which is concerned with improving the viability of prairie plant seeds, as well as distributing seeds for plant propagation. Large prairie projects are in constant need of prairie seeds to restore prairies. She is also active in the Katy Prairie's "Great Grow Out", a project where people volunteer to use the collected prairie seeds to grow prairie plants at their home for use in prairie projects.

She spoke to us about how important it is to preserve the native prairie seeds locally, as prairies are greatly endangered, which in turn endangers many native species of insects, birds, and other animals.

To sign up to help with seed projects, email Lan at shen.gcmn@gmail.com

Chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter need to be sent to Lynn by the 15th of the month. Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.

***Lynn Trenta,
Courier Editor***

Meet the 2017 CPCTMN Board Members and Advisors

Officers

President Amber Leung



*President---Amber Leung
Vice-President—Debby Wendt
Secretary—Jamie Fairchild
Treasurer—Doug Simon*

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*AgriLife Advisor—John Gordy
TPWD Advisor—David Lobpries
AgriLife TMN Coordinator—Margo “Mac”
McDowell*

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*Past President—Diane Russell
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Publicity—Teresa Bailey
Membership—Michelle Sullivan
Advanced Training—Margo Johnson
New Class Training—C.J. McDaniel
State Representative---Carol Schwartz
Seabourne Creek Nature Park—Karl Baumgartner*

New to the Board are Vice-President and Program Director Debby Wendt, Secretary Jamie Fairchild, and Publicity Director Teresa Bailey.

Vice-President/Program Director Debby Wendt’s formal education includes a Bachelors in Elementary and Special Education from Sam Houston State and a Master’s Degree in Special Education Diagnostics from Houston Baptist University. Debby retired in May 2012, after 33 years working in the education field. A 2015 certified CPCTMN, she has always loved nature and sharing it with children, especially her two sons. Debby says “I relish in learning new things to appreciate and share with others.”



Debby Wendt, Vice President & Program Director

Secretary Jamie Fairchild, CPCTMN Class of 2012, earned a BSMe from Ohio State University. Following her education, she worked as an Engineer for DuPont from 1981 to 1996. During this time, she moved from Ohio to Texas. She then started her family, which includes a husband and 2 daughters. In 1998 Jamie started working part time as a ISO Quality Consultant and became a fulltime homemaker in 2001. She has volunteered with the Nature Conservancy, The Audubon Society, The Texas Stream Team, HMNS and several school organizations. Among her hobbies are travelling, dancing, stitching, reading, hiking, snorkeling, advocating for wildlife/the environment, and birding. Jamie says “I love being a part of the Master Naturalist Community!”



Secretary Jamie Fairchild

Meet the 2017 CPCTMN Board Members and Advisors [Continued]

And last, but not least, we have a new Publicity Director, Teresa Bailey, Class of 2009, who is currently President of Rosenberg Parks and Recreation Board of Directors, Secretary and Director of the RDC, and previous President of Rosenberg Lions Club. And she enjoys the dubious distinction of working for Karl Baumgartner since 1977!



Publicity Director Teresa Bailey

February Field Trip: An Owl Prowl Donna Pisani, Program Committee



Our CPCTMN February Program will be a field trip to attend an Owl Prowl with Mary Anne Weber at Houston Audubon's Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary.

This event includes an indoor owl presentation with live owls and a walk in the woods to find resident owls.

Charge: \$10.00 per person, checks can be made out to Houston Audubon. There are only 4 slots left at the time of the Courier's publication, so please email [Donna Pisani](mailto:Donna.Pisani@cpctmn.org) if you want to go.

*Time: Optional Dinner: Meet at 5:30 PM at Cafe Express
780 W. Sam Houston Parkway N #100
Houston 77024
In the Town and Country Village*

The indoor/classroom portion will start at 7:00pm. The outdoor portion will start about 8:00 PM, and will last about 30 minutes. Please plan to arrive at Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary by 6:50 PM.

Sand Hill Cranes in Nebraska [They're Here Now!] Sent in by Wayne Poorman

Watch the [Sandhill Crane Video](#) here



GIBBON, Neb. -- Along the Platte River in the chilly moments before dawn, the silence is broken by a morning call.

The chorus builds as the sun rises, and there they are: hundreds of thousands of sandhill cranes awaiting some signal from their sentinels that it's time to wake up and face the day.

"It's almost like watching ballet in slow motion, because the wing beats are slow and they move in such an elegant way," he says. "Both in the air and on the ground. There's nothing awkward about them. It's just poetic."

Nebraska is a way station for the cranes -- and a magnet for bird lovers. The world-renowned naturalist Jane Goodall has visited for the last 13 years.

"I wasn't quite prepared for the absolutely unbelievable, glorious spectacle of all these thousands of birds coming in," she says. "It's just unbeatable, and it's really peaceful."

Nebraska is a way station for the sandhill cranes. Suddenly, they stir and lift off all together, resuming a ritual of one of the world's great natural migrations.

Sand Hill Cranes in Nebraska (continued)



"I describe it as the sounds of a chorus of angels, none of whom could sing on key, but all trying as hard as they can," says Paul Johnsgard, a retired professor at the University of Nebraska who's been coming here as a witness for 52 years.

The shallow Platte River is perfect for the cranes, because they sleep standing in the water to avoid predators. This is familiar turf to them -- it's where they pick out mates or discourage rivals.

The nearby cornfields are where they fatten up for three weeks before resuming a 7,000-mile trip that starts in Mexico and ends as far north as Siberia.

And this migration has been going on far longer than there has been a Nebraska.

"We don't know when it started," Johnsgard says. "They stop where their parents and grandparents and great-grandparents stopped."

As dusk approaches, the cranes are stuffed and ready for their river bed. On cue, back they come, settling in for another night in Nebraska.

"You can't help but love a crane," Johnsgard says. "You really can't."

Tawny Crazy Ants Revisited

Thanks to Carol Schwartz for sending this in.



Credit: Photographer: Bastiaan Drees, Texas A&M University



Credit: billclarkbugsperts.com

Tawny Crazy Ants So Bad, Some Wish for the Return of Fire Ants

Yes, that's right. In some places in Texas, the invasion of tawny crazy ants (*Nylanderia fulva*) is worse than the red imported fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta*) that it has replaced. Yes, that's right, too: the crazy ant displaces the fire ant. Both are from South America, where they naturally compete and are kept in check by the full ant community there. The crazy ant has evolved resistance to the fire ant's venom, which combined with its ability to form large, multi-queen colonies and the absence of other population control factors, allows them to outcompete the red fire ant here in Texas.

It's the crazy ant's ability to form huge colonies, rather than a sting or bite, that makes it such a nuisance. It will nest in any cavity and literally take over buildings, swarming inside and wreaking havoc with electronics, air conditioning units, and wiring. Outside, "they drive out almost all other bugs, including spiders, through sheer weight of numbers... Even nesting songbirds can be overrun by crazy ants."

In order to learn more about the crazy ant as part of efforts to control it, researchers at the University of Texas Brackenridge Field Laboratory (BFL) are focusing on its behavior, and on a species of fungus and of phorid fly that are potential biological control agents.

Learn more about the tawny crazy ant and the research at the BFL in [this very interesting American-Statesman article](#). For video, see these stories on [Austin's KVUE](#) and [Dallas' NBCDFW.com](#).

Because of its potential negative impacts in Texas, the tawny crazy ant is a Report It! species as part of the Sentinel Pest Network, a component of [Texasinvasives.org](#). If you believe you have found tawny crazy ants, please report this species. Please also contact your local AgriLife Extension agent, as well.

Follow [this link](#) to learn more about the tawny crazy ant.

Seabourne Creek Park Feral Hog Wars By Diane Russell

Massive rains and flooding brought more than water to Seabourne Creek Nature Park in 2016. When the Brazos River floodwaters receded in late May, the softened, muddy earth became an inviting stomping ground for feral hogs that had been previously lurking in remote wooded areas.

They were especially attracted to the park's two gardens – a butterfly garden on a path leading from the parking lot, and a prairie demo garden further back across from the wetlands. Both gardens have been designed, built, planted, labelled and maintained by the Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists for several years. They are enjoyed by many visitors who stop to enjoy the diversity of beautiful flowering plants and to marvel at the caterpillars, butterflies, and other pollinators that come to them. It is not unusual to see professional photographers spending time in the gardens. The Naturalists rely on these gardens to teach visitors from the community about the relationships between pollinators and plants, butterfly life cycles, and the rich history of Texas's diverse and interesting native plants. In order to do this, many of these volunteers spend countless hours doing maintenance and planting to improve the gardens every year. Seabourne is fortunate to be host to these garden gems, found nowhere else Ft. Bend, Waller, or Harris Counties.



Feral Hog Wars (Continued)

It was with great dismay that the Naturalists could only watch helplessly as the damage to the gardens continued and intensified day by day. Newly planted forbs (flowering plants) and grasses were uprooted and tossed onto the pathways, as were the soil and mulch. Irrigation lines were twisted and lifted into the air. The clean pathways became covered with soil and debris as the hogs burrowed and created deep wallows for themselves. There were several concerted efforts to repair the damage, but to no avail, as overnight destruction by the hogs regularly wiped out all attempts at order. In the butterfly garden, many plants were removed and taken to a safe place for the day a solution could be found. Work at the butterfly garden couldn't be maintained. It was temporarily abandoned and began to grow weeds, obliterating the path borders.



Discussions ensued between the Naturalists, AgriLife Extension Service and Rosenberg Parks and Recreation about ways to control the hogs. Initially these talks focused on the feasibility of trapping the hogs. (Hunting hogs in the city park is not an option according to Darren McCarthy, Parks Supervisor.) Trapping hogs, who are extremely wary and intelligent, is a time-consuming and incomplete approach, since the hogs become suspicious once several of them are trapped, necessitating moving the traps and patiently waiting for more to arrive. Traps themselves need to be sophisticated, with remote-control gates, to be successful.

Texas has begun to experience exponential growth of its hog population in the few years, with one sow capable of producing 3 litters of 11 piglets per year. The reality is that Seabourne Park can never really eliminate the hogs, thus leaving the gardens perpetually vulnerable to destruction. With that in mind, Chapter President Diane Russell threw out the idea of fencing the gardens, having found a Texas A&M AgriLife research paper documenting that they can reliably be prevented from getting into protected areas with a simple wire fence 28"-34" in height. She further found attractive cedar fence designs that would complement the rustic prairie fence erected last year by Karl Baumgartner, Seabourne Creek Project Manager.

Feral Hog Wars (Continued)



With collaboration of other members, funds from a Rosenberg Development Corporation grant to the Chapter, and the engineering skills of Jerry Trenta, a beautiful cedar fence has been completed to around the prairie demo garden, and is a successful barrier to the hogs.

Additionally, the Chapter's Texas Parks and Wildlife advisor, David Lobpries, and his helper/hog trapper Richard Lockley, have used a sophisticated feral hog corral with a remote-control gate to capture 44 hogs at Seabourne Park since the floods, including a 307 pound boar!

Unfortunately, even the removal of so many hogs has not eliminated them, as they continue to uproot and destroy all other areas of the park. The park as a whole, like many areas near us all that can't reasonably be fenced, will continue to experience the depredations of this out-of-control species until a more effective way of limiting their population growth can be found than what is currently available.

Update (Lynn Trenta, editor) The butterfly garden now has a beautiful new fence around it and is protected from the hogs so that we can now restore this wonderful garden.



Feral Hog Program—Learn about Trapping Methods, Eradication, etc.



March 4, 2017

*Yelderman House
9220 Padon Road
Needville, TX 77461*

*Registration: 8:30 am
Program: 9:00 am - 2:00 pm*

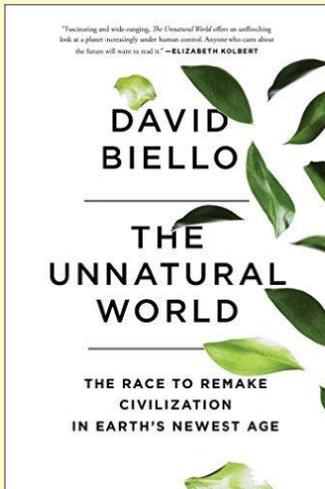
*FREE with an RSVP by February 27th Catered lunch included *Limited to 40 participants* RSVP REQUIRED*

Program Topics:

- ☐ Feral Hog Processing and Field Dressing Demo*
- ☐ Eradication Methods in Fort Bend County*
- ☐ Feral Hog & Nuisance Control*
- ☐ Technological Advancements in Trap Types and Equipment RSVP REQUIRED*

To RSVP, please contact Brandy at 281-342-3034 or by email at brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu

Book Corner



David Biello

The Unnatural World: The Race to Remake Civilization in Earth's Newest Age

*With the historical perspective of *The Song of the Dodo* and the urgency of Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth", a brilliant young environmental journalist argues that we must innovate and adapt to save planet Earth. Civilization is in crisis, facing disasters of our own making on the only planet known to bear life in the vast void of the universe. We have become unwitting gardeners of the Earth, not in control, but setting the conditions under which all of life flourishes—or not. Truly, it's survival of the innovators.*

The Unnatural World chronicles a disparate band of unlikely heroes: an effervescent mad scientist who would fertilize the seas; a pigeon obsessive bent on bringing back the extinct; a low-level government functionary in China doing his best to clean up his city, and more. These scientists, billionaires, and ordinary people are all working toward saving the best home humanity is ever likely to have.

What is the threat? It is us. In a time when a species dies out every ten minutes, when summers are getting hotter, winters colder, and oceans higher, some people still deny mankind's effect on the Earth. But all of our impacts on the planet have ushered in what qualifies as a new geologic epoch, thanks to global warming, mass extinction, and such technologies as nuclear weapons or plastics. The Unnatural World examines the world we have created and analyzes the glimmers of hope emerging from the efforts of incredible individuals seeking to change our future. Instead of a world without us, this history of the future shows how to become good gardeners, helping people thrive along with an abundance of plants, animals, all the exuberant profusion of life on Earth—a better world with us. The current era of humans need not be the end of the world—it's just the end of the world as we know it.

In Our Own Backyards

WINTER HUMMERS By Diane Eismont

YOU CAN have hummers throughout the winter!

You need to keep your feeders fresh & have some hummer flowers blooming in late Oct./early Nov. after the Ruby throats have left. I put my feeders in front of the kitchen window for the best view & move my container flowers in & out of the garage for frosts. Feeders come in for nights below 27 degrees.

My most common winter hummer is the Rufous, which summers in the Northwest.

The one pictured is a female, green above, rufous colored flanks, orange center throat spot, rest of throat green spotted, white under parts, tail with a black line across & white below. Wings don't reach end of tail when perched. The male Rufous is copper-orange with a reddish-orange throat - a Spectacular bird!

You also have a chance of seeing other winter hummer species! The 2015 Edition of "The Texas Hummer" by Texas Parks & Wildlife reported 3 WINTER species in Ft. Bend Co. & 2 in Waller County.

Always a pick up to see one of these amazing birds!



The Lighter Side



Thanks to Debby Wendt (from Facebook)



Thanks to John Donaho (from Facebook)

CPTMN 2017 Board Members

2016 Officers

- President [Amber Leung](#)
- Vice President [Debby Wendt](#)
- Secretary [Jamie Fairchild](#)
- Treasurer [Doug Simons](#)

2016 Committee Directors

- Past-President [Diane Russell](#)
- Programs [Debby Wendt](#)
- Communication [Lynn Trenta](#)
- Volunteer Service Projects [Margo "Mac" McDowell](#) (interim)
- Membership [Michelle Sullivan](#)
- New Class [C.J. McDaniel](#)
- Advanced Training [Margo Johnson](#)
- New Class Representative--Open
- State Representative [Carol Schwartz](#)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal>

Sign up for Rosenberg Publications

Sent in by Wayne Poorman

Rosenberg Insider Newsletter

Jenny Pavlovich, communications manager for the City of Rosenberg, has advised that if anyone would like to sign up to receive an electronic copy of the Rosenberg Insider newsletter, they may do so at [this link](#):

<http://rosenbergtx.gov/communication-sign-up/>. The February edition will feature Seabourne Creek Nature Park on the cover.

Past issues are available here:

<http://rosenbergtx.gov/communications-department-publications/>

She also plans to write an article about the work TMN's do for Seabourne Creek Nature Park in an upcoming of a new publication called Rosenberg Magazine. I believe folks can sign up for the eEdition of that magazine [here](#):

<http://www.rosenbergmag.com/> That magazine is scheduled to premier sometime in February. Their [Facebook](#) page is here:

<https://www.facebook.com/rosenbergmagazine>

This is a great opportunity for our members who spend so much time on TMN projects here in Rosenberg, yet live elsewhere, to receive these two publications.

Jenny has graciously offered to help promote our events and activities, and we are grateful for her interest in our Master Naturalist program.

Check out our Facebook Page at [TXMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)

To post photos and information, email

[John Donaho](#) or [Jade Hems](#)

Also, share our chapter Facebook entries with your friends on your Facebook Page

COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

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