



## Special Interest Articles:

- August Program
- Herpetology Study Group
- Teaming with Life Eco-summit

## Individual Highlights:

- Chapter Program 1
- Asp Caterpillar 2
- New Commissioner 3
- Seabourne Demo 4
- Herpetology Walk 5
- Swainson Hawks 6
- NWF Habitat Prg. 7
- Eco-Summit 8
- State Park Vote 9

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

## Dr. Scott Solomon Talks about Ants at Chapter Program

*This last week at our monthly chapter program, we were treated to a great presentation by Scott Solomon, Evolutionary Biology Professor at Rice University. He gave us a wonderful talk about the fascinating world of ants and then took us outside to observe the ants in front of the Bud O’Shieles Community Center. We learned about different ant behaviors and species of ants, as well as the history of the ants in the Houston area.*

*Dr. Solomon is the author of numerous peer-reviewed research articles and his popular science writing has appeared in publications such as Slate, Nautilus, and Wired.com. His first book, entitled “Future Humans: The Ongoing Evolution of Homo sapiens” will be published by Yale University Press in 2016. Photos by Ron Spahr.*

*Following the presentation at our General Membership Meeting, Reene Spahr, Membership Chair, and Michelle Sullivan, VSP Chair, gave us an overview of the new Volunteer Management System which will allow us to enter our AT and VSP hours directly into an online system on our website.*



## Beware of Asp Caterpillars

*Experts say August is when a poisonous caterpillar typically appears and hospitals all around Texas are reporting more and more caterpillar stings.*

*Phillip Hutto, of The Woodlands, was taking out the trash early Thursday morning when he felt a shooting pain in his left hand. He felt another sharp pain on his right side and that's when he saw the asp caterpillar. "It started on my knuckle then went down my elbow and up to armpit. It was very, very painful," Hutto said. He was in such severe pain he collapsed and his father rushed him to Memorial Hermann Hospital. Asp caterpillars look cute and cuddly, but their fur-like covering contains toxins that are poisonous to humans. Thanks to Chapter Member Georgia Messemer who sent in this story*

*The Asp caterpillar, also known as the Puss caterpillar, is a very hairy caterpillar with fur that ranges in color from white or pale blonde through to chestnut brown and a deep, slate gray. The body of the caterpillar narrows at its base and extends into a long, over-sized tail. Some Asp caterpillars have a dull orange streak running along the body. Typically, this caterpillar is a little over 1 inch in length although it may look much bigger because of its wild growth of hair*

*With a series of venomous spines the Asp caterpillar sting can deliver a zap capable of causing instantaneous and severe pain along with nausea, vomiting, headaches and muscle cramps, itching, fever, and swollen glands. These symptoms, particularly the intense pain, are felt by the victim for between a few hours and several days, whilst a more mild discomfort may continue for up to a week after that.*

*[http://www.asktheexterminator.com/Caterpillars/Asp\\_Caterpillar.shtml](http://www.asktheexterminator.com/Caterpillars/Asp_Caterpillar.shtml)*



## Coastal Prairie Chapter Member Appointed Parks Commissioner

*Coastal Prairie Chapter Member Pat Mollere was recently appointed a Fulshear Parks Commissioner for a 2-year term. As part of her activities, she is currently working on installing bird houses and a bat house in the Fulshear Park System.*

*The Mission Statement of the Fulshear Parks Department is: "The Fulshear Parks Commission exists to facilitate a range of parks and recreation opportunities desired by residents and guests to enrich quality of life and increase their enjoyment through recreation and education in a variety of settings."*

*Pat was in the Master Naturalist Class of 2011 and served as treasurer on our Coastal Prairie Chapter Board of Directors.*

*Congratulations, Pat!*



## Seabourne Creek Nature Park Prairie Demo Garden Hosts Crescent, Fritillaries, and more

*We have been seeing all kinds of wildlife out at the Demo Garden! It has been mostly insects, but we have seen baby toads and a garter snake as well. We have witnessed preying mantis, lady bugs, dragonflies, leaf-footed beetles, spiders, and last, but not least, butterflies. We spotted a funereal dusky, Gulf Coast Fritillary, and a Phaon (might be Texas) Crescent (see photos). One day we arrived to a mysterious foggy web-laced garden. Every time that we go to the garden we experience new wildlife phenomena.*

*Thanks to the wonderful regular volunteers in the garden: Glenda Norwood, Than Colvin, Sal Cardenas, Linda Lourim, Jim Butcher, Bill and Margo Johnson, Donna Pisani and Lynn and Jerry Trenta. We appreciate everyone for their valuable contributions. It is making a difference! Photos by Lynn Trenta.*

Volunteer opportunities are available at Seabourne Creek Nature Park.

Prairie Demo Garden contact [Lynn Trenta](#)

Bird Sanctuary contact [Bill Johnson](#)

Butterfly Garden contact [Diane Russell](#) or [Linda Rippert](#)

For other volunteer opportunities email [Karl Bumgartner](#).



## Herpetology Study Group Explores Seabourne

Thursday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, the Coastal Prairie Chapter Herpetology Study Group, led by Chapter Members Chris Valdez and Monty Criswell of the Houston Zoo, began a trek to find amphibians, snakes, and lizards at Seabourne Creek Nature Park in Rosenberg.

The temperature cooled and the night air enveloped us as we trekked through the woods and around the wetland areas, ending up at the park lake.

With our flashlights beaming across lakes, wetlands, prairie grasses and into the woods, we were successful in finding our quarry.

We spotted several leopard frogs, baby bull frogs, gulf coast toads, a ribbon snake, diamondback water snakes and heard cricket frogs and others. Good pickings for sure!

Narrow-mouthed Toad- Photo Jane Schnell



Leopard Frog-Photo Jane Schnell



Diamondback Water Snake- Photo Debbie Wendt

## Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting Registration is Open!

This year's meeting is scheduled for **October 23<sup>rd</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup>** at the hill country scenic **Horseshoe Bay Resort**, located on the shores of Lake Lyndon B Johnson. Registration for this highly anticipated event is NOW available through the Annual Meeting page on the Texas Master Naturalist State website at <http://txmn.org/2015-annual-meeting/>. Additional information about the annual gathering weekend, annual awards and contests, the advanced training sessions agenda, and registration details can be found on the website as well.

Let's get a good Coastal Prairie Chapter Group to go this year!

To get the classes you want, register NOW!



## Swainson Hawks Grow Up In Seabourne



No bird soars too high  
if he soars with his own  
wings.

William Blake

*Photos by Wayne Poorman*

*Swainson's Hawks have been nesting in Seabourne Creek Nature Park's Wood near the Bird Sanctuary and the babies' growth and maturation has been chronicled by Wayne and Vicki Poorman, Coastal Prairie Chapter members.*

*Thanks for sharing photos of these wonderful birds as they grew into these beautiful raptors.*

*To see more of Wayne's photos go to [Seabourne Creek Nature Park Photos](#).*

## National Wildlife Community Wildlife Habitat Program



*The City of Houston recently registered for the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat Program. Urban areas are an often overlooked wildlife resource and this Federation program is designed to convert cities, towns and counties into wildlife oases. Though often perceived differently, many of our cities were once among the richest fish and wildlife areas. Houston, known as the “Bayou City,” is the 4th largest city in the U.S. with 2.2 million people and a land area of over 650 square miles. The City has Gulf coast prairies, coastal marshes and the east Texas piney woods. A broad diversity of species is found in the region, including thousands of birds, butterflies, fish and other wildlife. There are over 800 unique native plant communities/species found there along with almost 300 bird species identified. Houston sits along one of the major migratory avian flyways and is important habitat for the monarch butterfly.*

*The effort to become a certified [NWF Community Wildlife Habitat](#) has the support of Houston’s mayor and park and recreation director and is engaging dozens of community groups committed to native plant propagation and habitat creation at the grassroots level.*

*More than 1,000 private property owners, schools, community centers, places of worship and businesses will join the City in making Houston into a premier wildlife habitat with increased food, water, native habitat and places to rear young. A focus of this effort will also be to increase monarch butterfly and other pollinator habitat and native food supplies and to benefit climate resiliency.*

*Houston has joined the rapidly growing NWF Community Habitat program with 84 certified cities, towns and counties and 58 more that are registered to become certified – a total of 14 million residents. Other participating jurisdictions include **Austin (TX)**, **Baltimore (MD)**, **Bellingham (WA)**, **Bethlehem (PA)**, **Broward County (FL)**, **Charlotte (NC)**, **Chicago (IL)**, **Fairfax County (VA)**, **Fort Lauderdale (FL)**, **Montclair (NJ)**, **(Newark (DE))**, and **Sonoma County (CA)**.*

*To learn more, please visit our site: <http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife/Community-Habitats.aspx>*

*The Federation has now certified more than 192,000 U.S. sites as wildlife habitats. These sites have twice the wildlife and native species diversity and productivity as other locations. Thanks to Carol Schwartz for sending in this article.*

Kevin J. Coyle, JD.  
Vice President, Education and Training  
National Wildlife Federation  
703-989-6020  
[coylek@nwf.org](mailto:coylek@nwf.org)



## Teaming with Wildlife: True to Texas (TWWTT) Eco-Summit

Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, our chapter was well-represented at the TWWTT Eco-Summit. Coastal Prairie Chapter Members in attendance were Karl Baumgartner, John Cotterell, Linda Rippert, Carrie Sample, Jane Schnell, Lynn Trenta, and Debbie Wendt.

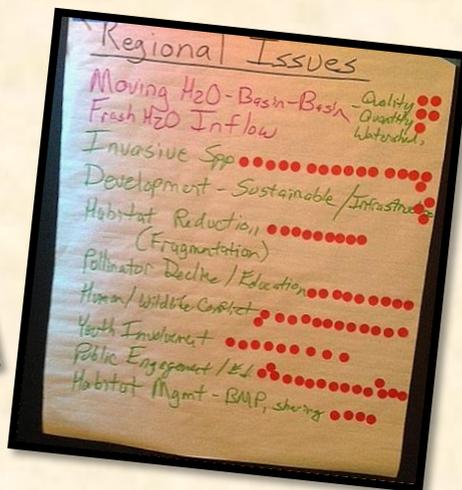
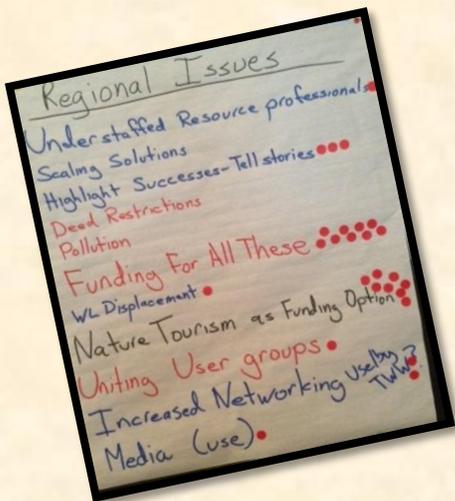
Rob Denkhous, Director of the TWWTT, began the summit with the discussion of the TPWD's Texas Conservation Action Plan (TCAP) (<https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/tcap/>). The plan seeks to address the issue of endangered wildlife. Mr. Denkhous spoke of the need for clear objectives and permanent funding sources for wildlife conservation.

Three other inspiring speakers followed. John Davis (TPWD) emphasized land use planning and funding sources (97% of the state income coming from hunters (who make up only 3.8% of the Texas Population). Jaime Gonzalez (KPC) talked about the need for collaboration between and among people in relevant organizations. John Jacob (A&M Agrilife) addressed the need for curbing development of natural areas to save ecosystems.

The issues that the group attending thought important for our area were written on large sheets and after lunch people voted on the 3 issues they felt were the most important. The group broke into discussion groups for each of these 3 issues. Our group participated in the group on "public engagement".

One message that was repeated often in this summit was "Think Big", even though the first steps may be small.

To find out more about Teaming with Wildlife: True to Texas go to their webpage at: <http://teaming.com/state/texas> . Photos provided by Teaming with Wildlife.



### Vote for Your Favorite State Park

#### CPTMN 2015 Board Members

#### 2015 Officers

- President [Diane Russell](#)
- Vice President [Carol Pawelek](#)
- Secretary [Sharon Smith](#)
- Treasurer [Linda Lourim](#)
- Past-President [Jim Butcher](#)

#### 2015 Committee Chairs

- Programs [Georgia Messemer](#)
- Communications/Website [Lynn Trenta](#) and [Susan Walther](#)
- Publicity Open
- Volunteer Service Projects [Michelle Sullivan](#) and [Julie Near](#)
- Membership [Reene Spahr](#) and [Carrie Sample](#)
- Training [Than Colvin](#) , [Lisa Feighery](#) , [Wayne Helbert](#)
- Advanced Training- [Jimmy Brannon](#), [Lynn Trenta](#) (temporary co-chair)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal/>



Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation has partnered with [Budweiser for the "This Bud's for Texas Parks" contest](#). You're invited to vote as often as once per day from now to Sept. 30 for your favorite Texas State Park; the park with the most votes will receive a \$25,000 grant.

Thanks to Barbara Willy and Carol Schwartz for sending this in. We recommend voting for Brazos Bend State Park, which will require months of repair work after the recent flooding; however you are of course welcome to vote as you choose. Note that this competition is for state parks only, so BBSP does not compete in any way with Seabourne Creek Nature Park. Voting via the link above takes less than 5 seconds!

Please send in nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter by September 10<sup>th</sup> to [Lynn](#). Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome.

Thanks.

Lynn Trenta, Courier Editor



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

### COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

1402 Band Rd  
Extension Office  
Rosenberg, TX 77471—8678  
Phone: 281-633-7033