

*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*



## Chapter Christmas Party *By Lynn Trenta*

### Table of Contents:

Christmas Party.....	1
Jan Prog-Native Plants..	3
New Board 2018.....	4
SCNP Arboretum.....	5
Volunteer Zone.....	6
Plant of the Month.....	7
Our Own Backyards.....	8
Invasive Plants.....	9
Book Corner.....	11
The Lighter Side.....	12
Sandhill Cranes.....	13

**Chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter need to be sent to [Lynn](#) by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.**

**Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.**

**Lynn Trenta,  
Courier Editor**



Photos by Lynn Trenta



**December 2<sup>nd</sup>, our Coastal Prairie Chapter met at our old stomping grounds, the Swinging Door, in Richmond, TX for our annual Christmas party. The attendance for the party was sizeable and a crowd of people gathered in the middle of the room, talking and laughing. People who hadn't seen each other for a while got caught up and there was a real feeling of camaraderie and joy in the room.**

**After a short business meeting, during which the slate of executive officers was approved by the chapter, the group settled in with drinks and dinner.**

**Thanks to Debby Wendt for putting the party together and Jessica Jubin for putting out the SignUp Genius.**



More Impromptu Christmas Party Photos

Photos by Lynn Trenta



From Facebook

## January Program on Wildlife Rescue

**January 4, 2018**

**Rosenberg Civic Center Social time 6:30 Program 7:00-8:00**

**How to Help Rescue Abandoned Wildlife**

**Victoria Hepburn with Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation Center will introduce us to animal ambassadors and tell us how we can help wildlife.**

## Native Trees, Shrubs Provide More food for Birds *(Sent in by Carol Schwartz)*

*Plant native trees and shrubs in your yard, and you can really help songbirds. In a study of the Carolina chickadee (Poecile carolinensis) in the metropolitan DC area, researchers found that native trees and shrubs support much more 'bird food' -- caterpillars -- than non-natives do. Over the course of her four-year study, doctoral student Desiree Narango looked at 203 yards. One thing that has stood out to her is the sheer number of different trees that are planted in these yards: over 375 species.*

*It became apparent quickly that while this high diversity may look like a good thing, some trees are better than others with regard to sustaining food webs. In particular, "native trees are better at providing caterpillars for birds," said Narango. There are a lot of non-native plants -- such as zelkova, ginkgo and lilac -- that don't provide any resources for breeding birds.*

*Narango also found that the number of caterpillar species a plant supports predicts how strongly chickadees prefer it. "When these birds would choose a tree, all the other birds in the neighborhood were choosing those trees, too... In a way, our chickadees were telling us what all of the birds want during that period," said Narango.*

**Learn more at [sciencedaily.com](http://sciencedaily.com).**



Credit: [www.aspensongwildbirdfood.com/bird-profiles/carolina-chickadee](http://www.aspensongwildbirdfood.com/bird-profiles/carolina-chickadee)



Credit: Desiree Narango and Doug Tallamy, University of Delaware

**New Coastal Prairie Chapter Board 2018**

**Officers:**

*President – Amber Leung  
Vice President/ Programs – Debby Wendt  
Treasurer – Jamie Fairchild  
Secretary – Pauline Zinn*



**Directors:**

*Past President – Diane Russell  
Volunteer Service Projects – Cheryl Garcia  
Communications/Publicity – Margo Johnson  
Membership – Michelle Sullivan  
Advanced Training – Ramona Ridge  
New Class Training – C.J. McDaniel (through Class of 2018 only)  
New Class Representative – Carol Hawkins  
State Representative – Carol Schwartz*

**WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS !**

*Secretary – Pauline Zinn*

**Directors:**

*Volunteer Service Projects – Cheryl Garcia  
Communications/Publicity – Margo Johnson  
Advanced Training – Ramona Ridge  
New Class Representative – Carol Hawkins*



**Paula Zinn**



**Cheryl Garcia**



**Margo Johnson**



**Carol Hawkins**



**Ramona Ridge**

## New Class Arboretum Project Update By Paula Zinn



Photos by John Chitty



Photo by Lynn Trenta

*Here's an update about what the Arboretum committee of the Class of 17 has been up to this beautiful fall. They include Kelli Adiahen, Karl Baumgartner, Teckla Coven, Garrett Englehardt, Kevin Englehardt, Carol Hawkins, Sethi Pradeep and Pauline Zinn.*

*Once the Class of 17's training was finished, Karl had a project for us ready to go. The initial meeting took place in August of 2017 where eight of us walked the entire circumference of the fishing lake in the sun and no one perished! We learned that in 2009 the lake and hiking trails around it were barren and that since then, many native trees have been planted, are flourishing and are mapped and identified. In addition to the 27 species of native trees, 29 additional species were planted over the years with the help of many volunteers. This is a terrific foundation for an Arboretum.*

*Now we needed to finish this project. Each member was assigned four or five species for possible signage and site selection purposes. Since then we have selected signage and made a few walks to identify site locations and ideal specimens.*

*Currently most of the 51 tree identification signs have been installed with the help of a work crew who dug holes with a post-hole digger, set the new signage posts and poured them in concrete so they won't walk off. The work is not done yet and the committee will have another meeting soon to finish up the project. There are 9 more signs and trees to go. Some trees that did not make it need to be replaced. Other ideas are to develop a site map identifying by location those trees which were planted and those originally present in the park, a handout or brochure for distribution to park visitors and a blurb on our website.*

*An Arboretum interpretive sign is also in the works, to be placed near the entrance to the fishing lake. It is all about transforming the former barren lake into a peaceful, relaxing and enjoyable area full of native trees and shrubs.*

*Have a look around the lake, the oak knoll, former fence area near the demo garden, along the wetlands and in the woodlands with the beautiful mature pecans! Once the project is finished, it will be an important milestone for Seabourne Creek Nature Park.*

**December 20, 2017**

Volunteer Zone



Master Naturalists Volunteer *By Lynn Trenta*

***Rhonda Kuykendall and Jim Butcher spoke to the Exchange Club of Rosenberg October 24, sharing what it means to be a Texas Master Naturalist. The Exchange Club posted this on Facebook: "Great meeting today Rhonda Kuykendall and Jim Butcher, Master Naturalists spoke to the club about their volunteer work in preserving the prairie, about botany, butterflies and how to become a Master Naturalist. Very interesting presentation." The photos are from Facebook also.***

***Way to go, Rhonda and Jim!***



Plant of the Month, *Amsonia* By Mark Morgenstern

*Our featured plant of the month is Amsonia with the common name of Blue star. There are 3 varieties of this perennial in East Texas, Amsonia illustris {Brazos Bend State Park}, Amsonia repens {Nash Prairie} and Amsonia tabernaemontana {North of our area}. The pictures are from Nash Prairie that bloomed out of season due to a prescribed burn. Our resident taxonomist, Susie Doe, met us there and keyed it out. Due to some older maps, most people in the Houston area consider tabernaemontana to be dominant in our area {Plant of the Month Houston Native Plant Society} Thanks to Susie we now know it's not.*

*The normal bloom time is March, April and May. However, I have witnessed it blooming after fires in multiple locations. This is a truly interesting plant with unique characteristics. The seed pods resemble thin green beans in clumps. They only form on a plant that the main stem has branched. When ripe the pods turn brown. Inside are red ribbed cylinders that break off in segments. When laid out to germinate a root will emerge from one end, turn downwards and form a seedling ready to bump up!*



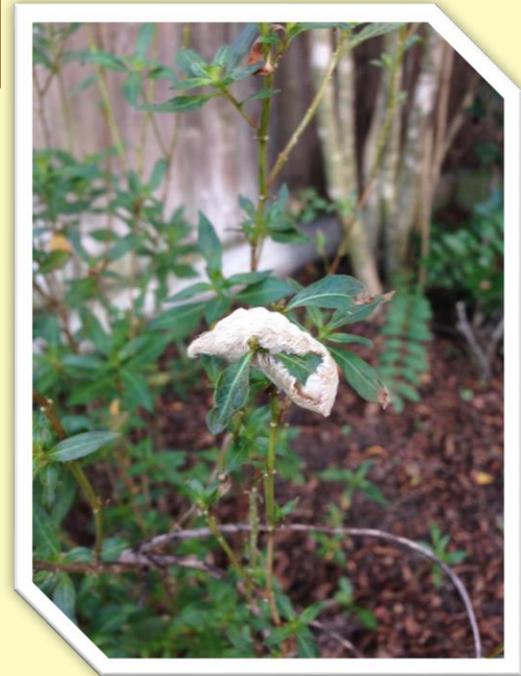
**In Our Own Backyards and Other Places**

**Fuzzy Caterpillars** *By Diane Eismont*

*One of the important things I learned from the Courier! (August 2015)*

**DON'T TOUCH FUZZY CATERPILLARS!**

*This soft white harmless looking ball of fluff (also known as an ASP) has poisonous spines underneath the fuzz. So, when my daughter sent me this picture from her flower garden, asking what it was, I KNEW!*



**White-tailed Kite Spotted at Seabourne Creek Nature Park 201<sup>st</sup> Species!**

*Mark Scheuerman, our Seabourne Bird Walk Expert, notified Wayne Poorman that someone had reported and photographed a white-tailed kite at Seabourne on e-Bird. The report is from Amy Ondrus on e-Bird. This makes our 201<sup>st</sup> species spotted at Seabourne Creek Nature Park!*



*Velveteal represents one of the many invasive plant species that was tested by Dan Atwater and Jacob Barney. Credit: Virginia Tech*

## **Invasive Plants Highly Adaptable from Science Daily-Send in by Toni Huff**

*It's no secret that globalization, aided by climate change, is helping invasive species gain a foothold across the planet. What came as something of a surprise to Virginia Tech researchers was just how mutable these invaders are.*

*The scientists discovered that invasive plant species are not only highly adaptive, they are essentially able to change in order to thrive on new continents and in different types of climates, challenging the assumption that species occupy the same environment in native and invasive ranges.*

*The study, by Jacob Barney, an associate professor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science and Dan Atwater, a lecturer in the Department of Biological Sciences at North Carolina State University and Barney's former post-doctoral advisee, was published Tuesday in Nature Ecology and Evolution, an online journal.*

*"This is important for both changing how we think about species and where they grow," said Barney, who is also a fellow in the Fralin Life Science Institute and an affiliate of the Global Change Center. "The findings also change our ability to predict where they will grow, and how they may respond in a changing climate. This could be a game-changer for invasive species risk assessment and conservation."*

*Atwater used data compiled by undergraduate Carissa Ervine, also an author on the paper, to test a long-held assumption in ecology -- that the climate limitations of plants do not change, which means we can predict where they will grow. Small studies supported this supposition. However, the Virginia Tech researchers blew this assumption away by testing more than 800 species using new models developed by Atwater and Barney.*

*"Some people would say that invasive species have different distributions in a new climate. But we found they are occupying a wider range of new climates," said Atwater. "Species are changing in their ecology when they move from one continent to another. We should expect species to change, possibly permanently, when they cross continents."*

*The results have major consequences for applying environmental niche models to assess the risk of invasive species and for predicting species' responses to climate change. Species capable of changing their ecology and the climates they call home may pose a challenge to researchers using native range data to forecast the distribution of invasive species.*

*The driver behind the study was a desire to forecast the future distribution of invasive species which pose a serious threat to human, environmental, and economic health. The researchers began by posing the question: Do invasive species occupy the same climate in invasive range that they do in their native range? To find out, they compared native and invasive species.*

## Invasive Plants Highly Adaptable (continued)

*Barney and Atwater examined 815 terrestrial plant species from every continent, along with millions of occurrence points, or locations where the plants have been known to occur, and compared models in the largest global invasive species study to date. They found evidence of climatic niche shifts in all of the 815 plant species introduced across five continents. A climatic niche refers to the set of climates in which a species has a stable or growing population.*

*Generally, their findings suggest that niche shifts reflect changes in climate availability at the continent scale and were the largest in long-lived and cultivated species. If species move to a warmer continent, for instance, they tend to shift towards occupying warmer climates. In short, cultivated plants with long lifespans are particularly adept at making themselves home in brand new climates.*

*"There are not only implications for predicting where invasive species will occur, there are management repercussions as well," said Barney. "As an example, for certain species we use biocontrol, introducing one organism to control another, an approach that may not be effective or safe if the targeted species undergoes ecological change. When we do climate modeling, we assume the climate niche may be the same when it may not be. So, there are a broad range of implications in a broad range of fields."*

*Barney raised another concern. "By cultivating species -- bending them for agricultural or ornamental purposes and selecting for traits such as cold-hardiness, we push them into environments they would not have occupied," he said. "Those selection pressures in breeding, plus the environments we put them in, may exaggerate this change. Short-lived species, for example, go into dryer climates. So, the take home is that different species' traits influence the direction of a niche shift."*

*Once Atwater and Barney understand these drivers more fully, they hope to be able to predict how the geographic range of an invasive species will increase in order to pinpoint areas likely to be invaded.*

*"The other piece layered onto this is the assumption that the climate is stable, which is not the case," said Atwater. "We have also relied on the assumption that a species is a species and its ecological tendencies remain constant. This too is not the case. Species vary in space and time. They behave differently on different continents and in different climates. Consequently, the concept of a species climatic niche is less stable and less clearly defined."*

*With food production, human health, ecosystem resilience, and biodiversity at stake as global invasions outpace our ability to respond, a greater understanding of climatic niche shifts is critical to future attempts to forecast species dynamics, according to the researchers.*

---

*Story Source: [Materials](#) provided by Virginia Tech. Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

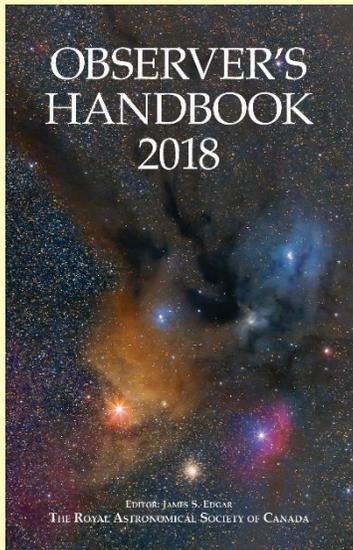
---

*Journal Reference:*

*Daniel Z. Atwater, Carissa Ervine, Jacob N. Barney. Climatic niche shifts are common in introduced plants. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 2017; DOI: [10.1038/s41559-017-0396-z](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-017-0396-z)*

## Book Corner

(From Amber Leung's  
Facebook)



### Observer's handbook 2018

By the Royal Astronomical  
Society of Canada

*The Observer's Handbook is a 352-page guide published annually since 1907 by The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. With the expertise of more than 75 contributors, the Observer's Handbook is regarded as the standard North American reference for data on the sky. This year, for the first time, we have published a USA Edition, using American cities for examples of sunrise and moonrise, solar ephemeris, etc. Star Parties and Planetaria are for US locations, and we have partnered with the Astronomical League for our Guest Editorial. The various sections in the Observer's Handbook are of two kinds:*

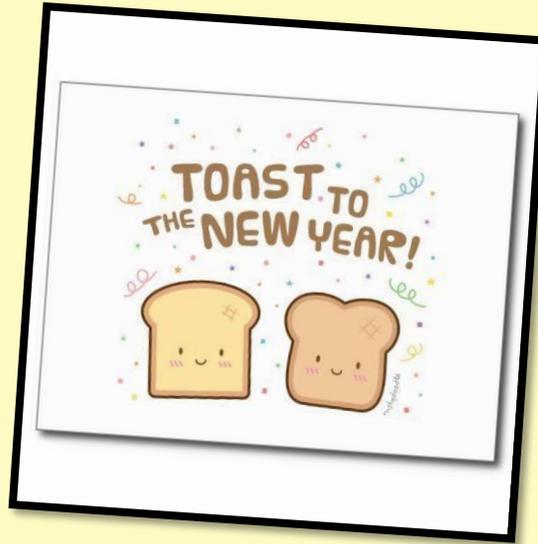
**Upcoming Astronomical Events.** *These are events that occur during the current year, such as:*

- *times of sunrise and sunset and moonrise and moonset (for latitudes 20° to 60° N);*
- *Moon phases and other lunar phenomena;*
- *conjunctions, elongations, etc. of the planets;*
- *eclipses, transits, occultations by the Moon and by planetary bodies;*
- *location of the planets, dwarf, and minor planets and returns of periodic comets;*
- *times of meteor showers;*
- *the orbital positions of the brighter satellites of both Jupiter and Saturn; and*
- *predictions of the cycles of many variable stars. The Sky Month By Month section gives an extensive listing of events throughout the year.*

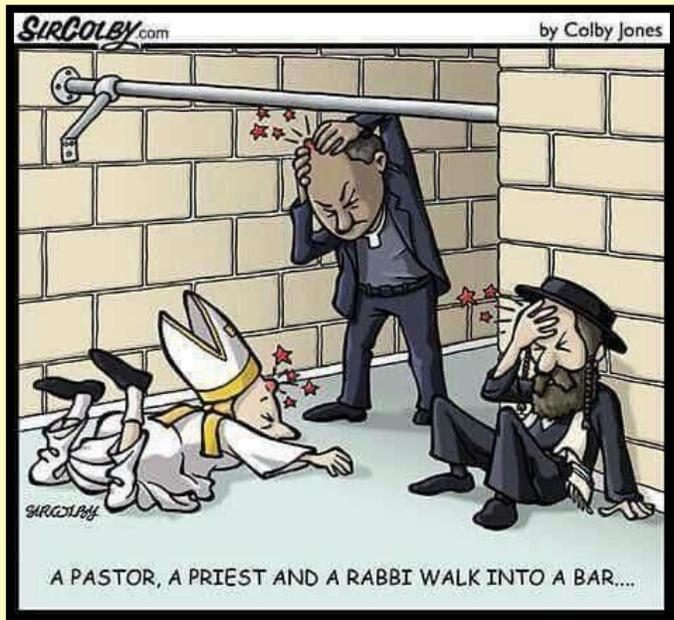
**Astronomical Reference Information** *Astronomical data and other static information (although revisions are made annually to ensure that the information is the best available) includes:*

- *a section on observing artificial satellites;*
- *an annual feature starfield—2018 is The Milky Way;*
- *orbital and physical data on the planets and their satellites;*
- *astronomical and physical constants;*
- *some optical properties of telescopes and binoculars;*
- *a section on the electromagnetic spectrum;*
- *information on filters for astronomical observing;*
- *light pollution and sky transparency;*
- *a description of the various systems of specifying time;*
- *information on the Sun including sunspots and aurorae;*
- *sections on solar and lunar observing;*
- *sections on astronomical sketching and digital photography*
- *essay on deep-sky objects*
- *section and observing list "Wide-Field Wonders"*
- *a list of meteorite craters in North and Central America;*
- *advice on using the Observer's Handbook for teaching astronomy;*
- *information on the Gegenschein and zodiacal light;*
- *a section on sky phenomena;*
- *40 pages of authoritative tables dealing with stars, star clusters, nebulae, and galaxies; and*
- *maps of the Moon and of the entire stellar sky*

The Lighter Side



Thanks to John Donaho (Facebook)



CPTMN 2018 Board Members

2018 Officers

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

2018 Committee Directors

- Past-President [Diane Russell](#)
- Programs [Debby Wendt](#)
- Communication/Publicity [Margo Johnson](#)
- Volunteer Service Projects [Cheryl Garcia](#)
- Membership [Michelle Sullivan](#)
- New Class Training [C.J. McDaniel](#)
- Advanced Training [Ramona Ridge](#)
- New Class Representative [Carol Hawkins](#)
- State Representative [Carol Schwartz](#)

We're on the Web!  
See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal>

Sandhill Cranes Wintering Here



*Sandhill cranes are wintering in our area. Because they are omnivorous they can feed on grains, rodents, insects, aquatic plants, frogs, snakes... just about anything that crosses their path. Their migration can cover thousands of miles. Look for them in short grassed areas, plowed fields and even golf courses. (John Donaho on Facebook)*



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

To post photos and information, email [John Donaho](#)

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

COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

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