April 30th, 2018
Volume 6, Issue 4

# Coastal Prairie Chapter Courier

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

## Citizen Science and the City Nature Challenge *Amber Leung*

*Photo by Diane Russell*

***At our March Program, Amber Leung, Chapter President, presented to the chapter a training session for iNaturalist, which allows amateur naturalists to contribute as citizen scientists to the greater body of scientific literature. She prepared us for the fun challenge that happens every year in April, the City Nature Challenge. Cities across the U.S. compete to see which city can make the most observations, record the most species and have the most participants. This year the challenge took place April 27-30, with final data being turned in by May 3.***

***Last year 16 cities across the United States participated in this event and Houston was the city with the most species found, 2419. Statistics for All 16 cities together were: 124,092 observations, 8557 species, and 4051 participants. In these 16 cities these were 3077 species that had not previously been recorded on iNaturalist and there were 5689 new iNaturalist observers who had not previously made observations. (this information was retrieved from https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2017/journal/9605-city-nature-challenge-2017-results )***

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***Chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter need to be sent to Lynn by the 25th of the month. Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.***

Lynn Trenta,
**Courier Editor**

## Citizen Science and the City Nature Challenge (continued)

***Amber reviewed the criteria for the challenge. Any form of plant or animal life is acceptable for recording, including shells, scat, hair, road kill and tracks. iNaturalist should NOT be used to record plants or animals that have been introduced, such as in a garden.***

***The simplest equipment is a smartphone with a camera and the iNaturalist app. You can also use any camera and download your photos to iNaturalist on your computer to enter data. Amber then showed how to navigate the iNaturalist app on a phone with a slide show presentation and answered many questions the audience had.***

***iNaturalist has participants from all over the world, so it is a global activity. This is a fun activity to do all year around, but the City Nature Challenge adds a competitive component to spur people to participate.***

## May Program on A Pilgrimage to Monarchs in Mexico

*Photo Courtesy of the HMNS*

***May 3rd, 2018 Program– Chapter Member Diane Russell will present a photo and video tour of her pilgrimage to the Michoacán region of Mexico to witness the Monarch butterflies that take a 3000-mile journey every fall to overwinter in oyomel fir trees found in the mountain range of Michoacán, Mexico. Come join us to get the latest update on the status of this increasingly endangered migration phenomenon. The program begins at 7pm, with a 30 minute social time at 6:30 PM and takes place at the Rosenberg Civic Center, 3825 Texas 36 South, Rosenberg, TX 77471***

# Chapter Members Enjoy Field Trip to Lavaca Ranch

***Saturday, April 21st, 10 chapter members arrived at Karl Baumgartner's Lavaca Ranch near Edna and after learning about the property and some of the improvements that have been made, the group began their four-wheeler tour around Karl's 500-acre ranch. We saw a plethora of plants and a couple of surprises. An eagle was spotted perching on a giant power tower and we surprised a group of wild turkeys scurrying along a creek bed.***

***It is difficult to capture the beauty of the wildflowers that met us in several fields! Thanks to chapter member's photos we can see some of these wild beauties and the critters who were engaged with them.***

***For anyone who has been out to Karl's ranch you know what a treat it is to see such a large property with about as much variety as you can find anywhere. You see prairies, woods, creeks, riparian areas, and animal habitats for every creature.***

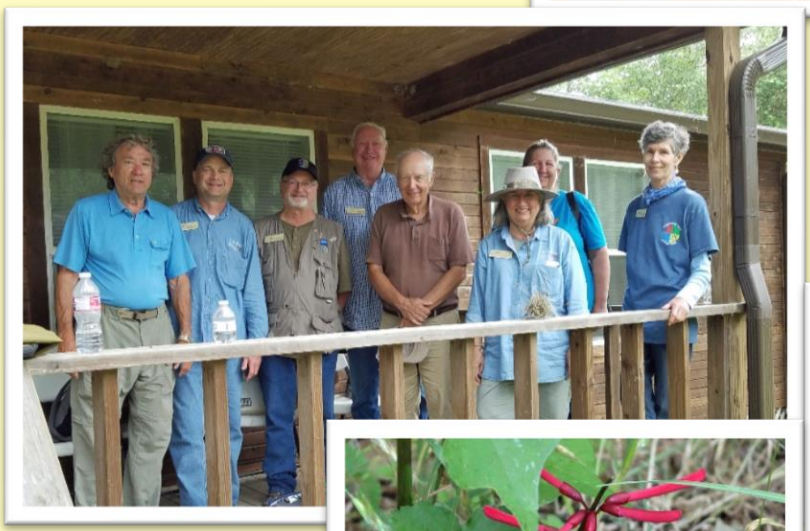
***We enjoyed a wonderful tour and the guidance of our resident plant expert, Susie Doe and the proprietor of Lavaca Ranch, Karl Baumgartner. We also enjoyed the camaraderie of fellow master naturalists Jim Butcher, Kevin Engelhardt, Garrett Engelhardt, Carol Hawkins, Lynn and Jerry Trenta, Barbara Willy, and Pauline Zinn. Great trip!***

*Photos by Barbara Willy*

*Photos by Garrett Engelhardt*

# Chapter Members Enjoy Field Trip to Lavaca Ranch (Continued)

*Photos by Pauline Zinn*



*Photos by Lynn Trenta*

# Chapter Hosts First Seabourne Fishing Tournament *By Karl Baumgartner*

***Coastal Prairie Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist, put on our first fishing tournament at Seabourne Lake on Saturday, April 28t . Rosenberg Parks and Recreation Department puts their annual trout tournament on in February, but we decided on a beautiful spring day with native fish and it was a big success. For many kids it was catching their first fish and it was exciting, even digging worms out of a bucket.***

***There were around 70 kids who came out to fish and the winner was a girl who caught 32 fish.***

***Thanks to Project Leader Lea Hyman and other chapter members Karl Baumgartner, Jim Butcher, Sal Cardenas, Nancy Huffman, Bill Johnson, Linda Lourim and Gary Moore for volunteering to make this a fun and successful event!***

# Pergola in the Prairie Demo Garden

Photo by Sal Cardenas

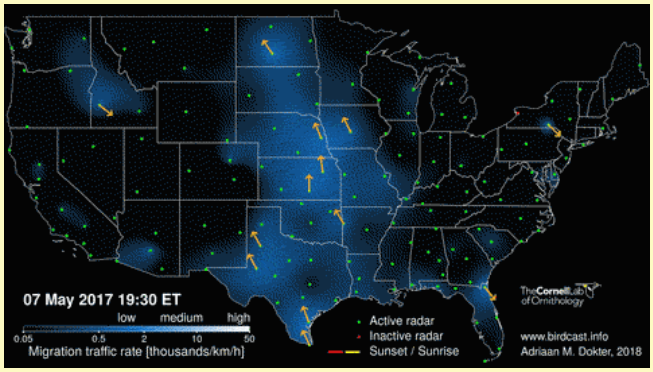
***The Prairie Demo Garden is soon going to have a large pergola located on the north side of it. Jerry Trenta has designed the pergola and construction on it has begun. Sal Cardenas and C.J. McDaniel are assisting Jerry in putting this wonderful structure together. Stop by to see its progress. Jerry has also build 3 picnic tables. This area can be used for children's projects or family gatherings.***

***Kudos to Jerry, Sal, and C.J.!***

Photo by Lynn Trenta

# Cornell Bird News for April

*New maps show where migration is most active and are updated every 10 minutes through the night. This animation shows heavy migration from May 7, 2017.* Image by Adriaan Dokter.




## *Presenting Your Crystal Ball for Bird Migration*

***If you've ever been tempted to ditch your morning appointments and go bird watching, our BirdCast project has something for you. Good birding conditions depend on wind, weather, geography, temperature, and timing—a complicated mix that BirdCast now boils down into two simple tools: a three-day forecast and near-live maps of nighttime migration activity. Check out the BirdCast site or visit our guide on how to use the new tools.***

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*Caspian Tern by Tim Lenz/Macaulay Library.*

## *With Changes to Landmark Treaty, a Storm Gathers for Migrant Birds*

***Since 1918, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act has been a bedrock of conservation. Now, a narrow legal interpretation is aiming to strip away 100 years of wisdom and environmental protection. The Cornell Lab's director, John Fitzpatrick, takes a look at what's at stake.***

***Counter to the Spirit of the Law. That's how Lynn Scarlett, a former deputy secretary of the Interior under President George W. Bush, characterizes the change to the treaty.***

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*Photo by Tony Varela/Macaulay*

*Can you name this little songster?.*

## *Which Species Is This?*

***This is a diminutive songster that seems to have an overactive hinge in its tail, like a door that won't stay closed. It lives in reedy wetlands, where it blends in with the dense vegetation but stands out with a loud, rolling voice. Do you know which species it is? Check your answer and learn more.***

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## Cornell Bird News (Continued)

### Does Your Yard Have a Pollinator Patch?

***Native plants can do a lot of good for birds. They're also a great way to help native pollinators, those wee creatures that are so essential to thriving plants. Habitat Network has advice on how to cater to pollinators in your garden.***

### Jigsaw Puzzles Full of Birds!

***Have you ever puzzled over bird identification? Here's your chance, literally: nine bird jigsaw puzzles from Cornell Lab Publishing Group. eNews subscribers get 20% off through Mother's Day with code PUZZLES20. See them all.***

## Recertification Pin Survey

***Are you getting outside today or this weekend? What crazy critter, creepy crawly, cute Campanula or colorful Coreopsis do you see? (C-what I did there!) Take note of those items big and small!***

***We are searching for a 2019 Recertification Pin for the Texas Master Naturalist Program! What native, iconic Texas species would you like to see pinned to your lanyard at the end of next year?***

***It's time to decide our annual pin for 2019 and we want YOU to help!***

# Fort Bend Herald Reporter Lauds Seabourne

***The following article from the Fort Bend Herald by Marquita Griffin was written about Seabourne Creek Nature Park and mentions our own Jim Butcher as instrumental in getting her out to the park! Good for you, Jim!***

## Sticky Willy

### Tour of Seabourne Park revives memories

When I was a kid and spent countless hours at my grandmother's house along with all my cousins, we had this great game we lived for. It was called playing outside.

When the sunlight broke through the sky officially announcing the day had begun, we'd slide into our dirty sneakers and push open the screen door and unleash our imagination.

**Marquita Griffin**

Cops and robbers. Dinosaurs. We'd build contraptions just like The Little Rascals (although ours rarely worked) and we even opened our own restaurant, by painting black rocks with expired yellow paint to imitate cheese melting on "freshly cooked" burger patties.

Our joint only sold cheese hamburgers, but we could promise you they were the best around.

We routinely cleaned off a rough concrete platform to create our own roller skating rink and we played Superman freeze tag, regular tag or just simply chased one another.

We teamed up against each other.

We tricked one another, sometimes resulting in superficial injuries. We even fought each other, but usually made up by the time the day concluded.

We often had to scrape dog poop off of our shoes before returning inside, only to have to sit down on the floor to pick sticker burrs from our socks or the bottom of our jeans.

When we were at Grandma's we didn't worry about what shows were coming on next (they were probably soap operas, anyway) or playing video games.

Sure we played the Nintendo (I believe I may have just aged myself there) but we were mostly concerned about being outside and getting as dirty as the Lord would allow.

I have limitless treasured memories from those days, but the magic sticky grass was one of my favorites.

All around my grandma's house in Richmond, which is on property shared among several of her siblings, there was this strange grass — which we called sticky grass — that would stick to clothes if you threw it.

We would also pull it and make crowns for our heads, or bracelets for our wrists and many other accessories.

That grass was absolutely magical and no one could tell me otherwise.

Decades had passed since I last saw this sticky grass and for a long time it only existed in my memories. That is until Jim Butcher, a Texas Master Naturalist, showed me clusters of it a few days ago at Seabourne Creek Nature Park — it's commonly called Sticky Willy or Velcro Weed, he informed me.

It was like finding that unreachable pot of gold.

The vintage film reel of my childhood was activated and I swear to you, I could smell, taste and hear the sounds of those days now long gone.

Yes, I pulled it from the ground to feel it in my fingers. Jim even allowed me to throw it at him.

Jim had been trying to get me to tour the park for years, and I regret not visiting these trails sooner because he was undoubtedly correct: This is a gem in our county.

I'm no stranger to parks, but I embarrassedly admit I was a stranger to this one.

Initially, anyway.

Once I started walking the trails, it was like stepping back into the simpler days, which some of us around here are blessed enough to remember.

There are so many areas that created such a soothing silence, that I have found the ideal spot to de-stress when my life has me wound up in knots.

If you ever need to get away from all the bells and whistles that consume our daily lives, this park is the place to go.

It gracefully allows you to shut out the noise and simply remember.

*Reach Marquita Griffin at mgriffin@fbherald.com.*

# Plant of the Month, Prairie Parsley (Polyraenia nuttallii)

*By Mark Morgenstern*

***From year to year, due to weather conditions and growing conditions, certain plants will stand out. This year it's been Prairie parsley. If you haven't seen it, you haven't been outside!***

***Polyraenia nuttallii or Nuttall's Prairie parsley is a biennial. Although it's edible I've heard it's virtually tasteless. Plant grows 1 to 3 ft tall and it's not picky about soil moisture and grows in wet or dry conditions. Its range extends across the Great Plains all the way up into Minnesota.***

***The plant attracts butterflies and insects and it is a larval host plant for black swallowtails. I have some germinating in my Greenhouse and will be introducing more into Seabourne Creek Nature Park.***

# In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

## Black and White Warbler *By Diane Eismont*

***This photo is for everyone who, like me, not only never saw a Black-and-white warbler, but did not know that they existed! (It made #121 on our Property Bird List.)***

***The Warbler is seen from the back, taking a bath in a concrete bird bath under a dripper, & is accompanied by what I believe to be two Nashville Warblers on the rim. It came through in last Fall's migration. The photo was taken on September 29th. I believe I also saw it this Spring, hunting insects along the bark of a tree in the woods, like a nuthatch.***

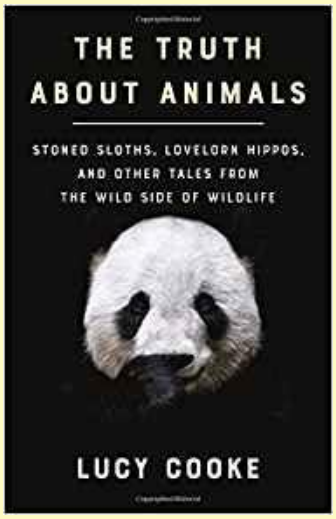
# In Our Own Backyards and Other Places (Continued)

*Terri Hurley enjoys a spring day at Quintana, volunteering for the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. Good work, Terri!*

*John Donaho caught this photo of a baby great-horned owlet. Good shooting, John! (from Facebook)*

*Diane Russell and Ramona Ridge constructed these great dinosaur eggs recently. Stay tuned for more next month! Photo by Diane Russell!*

## Book Corner




**Lab Girl**

*By Hope Jahren*

***Mary Roach meets Sam Kean and Bill Bryson in this uproarious tour of the basest instincts and biggest mysteries of the animal world.***

***Humans have gone to the Moon and discovered the Higgs boson, but when it comes to understanding animals, we've still got a long way to go. Whether we're seeing a viral video of romping baby pandas or a picture of penguins "holding hands," it's hard for us not to project our own values--innocence, fidelity, temperance, hard work--onto animals. So, you've probably never considered if moose get drunk, penguins cheat on their mates, or worker ants lay about. They do--and that's just for starters. In The Truth About Animals, Lucy Cooke takes us on a worldwide journey to meet everyone from a Colombian hippo castrator to a Chinese panda porn peddler, all to lay bare the secret--and often hilarious--habits of the animal kingdom. Charming and at times downright weird, this modern bestiary is perfect for anyone who has ever suspected that virtue might be unnatural.***

## 2018 City Challenge April 27-April 30

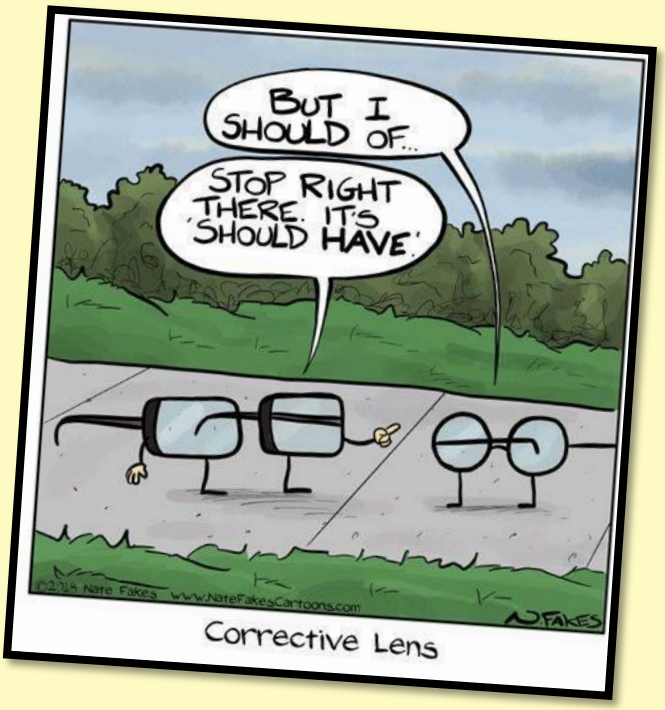
***Photo by Lynn Trenta***

***The iNaturalist City Challenge has been going on since Friday (April 27th to April 30th). Next Month the Courier will report on the results of this fun and interactive event!***

***This event gets people out to see what is inhabiting their surroundings and tests photographic skills also!***

***Chapter Member Jerry Trenta is seen in this photo documenting a Texas Vervain.***

## The Lighter Side




*Thanks to John Donaho (Facebook)*

*Thanks to Julie Gentry (Facebook)*

## CPTMN 2018 Board Members

**2018 Officers**

President Amber Leung
Vice President Debby Wendt
Secretary Pauline Zinn
Treasurer Jamie Fairchild

**2018 Committee Directors**

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

**We're on the Web!**

*See us at:*

*http://txmn.org/coastal*

**COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS**
1402 Band Rd
Extension Office
Rosenberg, TX 77471—8678
Phone: 281-633-7033

## Publicizing Chapter Events

Nextdoor

***Please share information about our chapter programs and other chapter events on your "Next Door" and Facebook or Twitter account. This is a great way to get the word out about what we have going on. For "Next Door" just copy the information that Susan Walther or Lynn Trenta sends out and go to "Events" under Categories and click on Add Event to follow the instructions. We will be sending out information about the Training Program and the Seabourne Nature Fest (formerly the Prairie Heritage Festival) as they are available.***

## 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***

***We also have a Chapter-Only Facebook Page that allows chapter members to post items. You can join by going to the website below and clicking on "Join". The administrator will allow you access. This is for chapter members only.***

**https://www.facebook.com/groups/1882734648662315/?ref=bookmarks**