

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

Waugh Bat Colony Field Trip By Debby Wendt

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Photos by Debby Wendt

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**

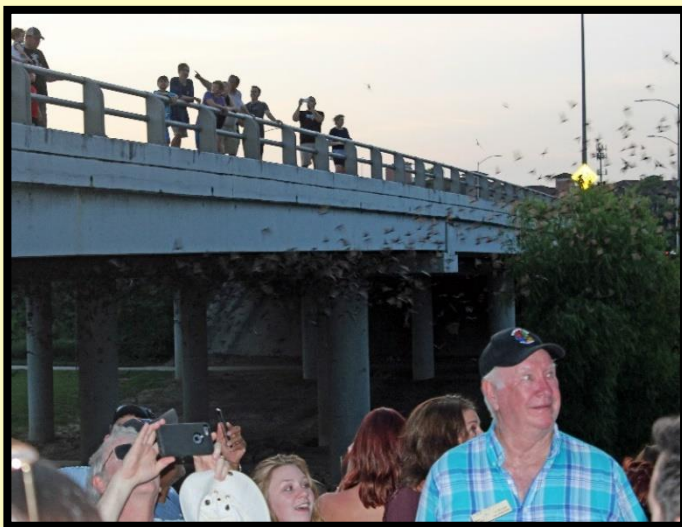
The Coastal Prairie Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists had a field trip on Friday, July 20 to the Waugh Bat Colony. This colony was established in 1993. They are over 100,000 Mexican Free Tail Bats currently at this location. Hurricane Harvey killed about 200,000 due to drowning. This colony is the largest colony of any mammals in the world. The bats emerge from the bridge around dusk to fly out 30-40 miles and eat agricultural moths. Other bat species feed on mosquitoes or other insects. There were Black Crowned Herons in a Willow Tree waiting to feed on the bats or occasionally swooped under the bridge to snatch a bat from the crevices. Two Swainson Hawks showed up about 30 minutes before the bats emerged from the bridge to capture a bat or two. The babies are born at the end of May to the first of June. Each Mother Bat has one pup. The Moms find their babies by their call. An orphaned pup will find another Mother if their Mother does not return from the nightly feeding. Their life span is 15 years. This colony of bats do not migrate because there is a constant source of food unlike the bats at the Frio River or Fredericksburg where it gets colder in the winter. The bats fly head first then put out their wings. They are called free tail because they do not have a membrane on their tail.

Continued on the next page-----

Waugh Bat Colony Field Trip (Continued)

Bats can change direction quickly. They are not “blind as a bat” and can see some colors. They also “drink on the wing” since they do not stop to drink water. If you have not seen this amazing site I highly recommend it. It was hot but a good time to visit since most of the pups are also learning to fly.

Garrett Engelhardt captured the bats in flight in this [video](#)



Chapter Program on August 2nd about Indigenous Snakes

Educating people about the snakes indigenous to Texas is a passion at Crossbone Corns, who feel that if people understand native wildlife, they are more likely to respect it. That respect makes nature safer for the animals and people who encounter them. The program will include venomous species. While this sounds scary, it is important to allow people to learn how to recognize venomous snakes they might encounter here in Texas.

The program will be held at the Rosenberg Civic Center, with social time at 6:30pm and the program at 7pm. A short chapter meeting will take place following the program

The Texas Master Naturalists are sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. For additional information call [281.633.7033](tel:281.633.7033) or email mmcdowell@ag.tamu.edu



Photo by Amber Leung

Seabourne Creek Nature Park

Seabourne on Front Page of the FB Herald



Seabourne Creek Nature Park made the front page of the Fort Bend Herald! Unfortunately, the article was about how our Arboretum Project Signs were being vandalized. See the story below and on the next page. Thanks to Karl Baumgartner and Garrett Engelhardt for sending this in.

Vandals strike Seabourne Creek Nature Park

BY TYLER JOHNSON

sjohnson@fbherald.com

Since 2010, the Coastal Prairie chapter of Texas Master Naturalists has been planting trees, flowers and pathways at Seabourne Creek Nature Park so visitors can have an educational and relaxing experience.

But not all of the park's visitors have appreciated all the hard work.

Recently, the Coastal Prairie chapter began a new arboretum project, which is

basically a garden devoted to trees.

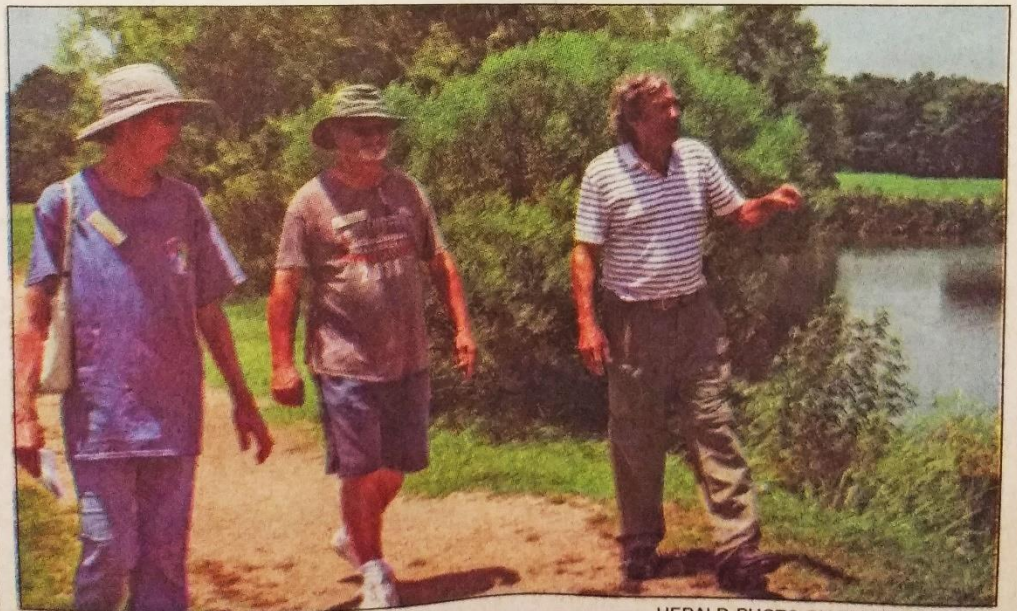
Volunteers placed signs to indicate what species the trees are.

"Arboretums are pretty cool," former Coastal Prairie chapter president Karl Baumgartner said.

"There are some people who are just interested in trees and they would like to know what they are. Some people don't know one tree from Adam."

However, it appears that those signs

SEE PARK, PAGE 12



HERALD PHOTO BY TYLER JOHNSON

Coastal Prairie chapter of Texas Master Naturalists members Pauline Zinn, Garrett Englehardt and Karl Baumgartner examine the areas that have been vandalized around Seabourne Lake.



Photos by Pauline Zinn

PARK: Some visitors have been destructive

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have been the focus of vandalism, Coastal Prairie secretary Pauline Zinn claimed.

She said volunteers noticed that some signs were missing and had been tossed into Seabourne Lake in January.

At first, she and others guessed a lawn mower or other kind of heavy machinery hit them, causing it to break.

But the cement used to secure the sign into the ground was still attached to the pole, which made it appear to be an act of vandalism.

Earlier this month, it occurred again.

Signs were bent, dug up and thrown into the lake.

The park hours are from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., but Master Naturalist Garrett Englehardt says the gates aren't closed during the night, which would allow the vandals easy access.

"When the ground is wet enough, you can just wiggle the

sign until it becomes loose and pull it out," Englehardt said.

The Master Naturalists have begun placing the signs deeper into the ground and securing them with more cement.

They are also brainstorming ideas for a potential surveillance system.

According to Baumgartner, there was nothing at the park except a parking lot and a lake for 15 years before the Master Naturalists began volunteering.

He said not many people visited the park during that time because it wasn't well known and it didn't have much to offer.

Up until 2010, there was nothing surrounding Seabourne Lake.

The Master Naturalists, with the help of other volunteer groups, began planting trees and shrubs around the lake to provide shade so people can relax and enjoy nature.

These days, it's one of the most popular parks in Rosenberg and the home of 57 species of trees,

such as American sycamore, Mexican sycamore, American elms, cedar elms and bur oaks thanks to the hard work put in by the Master Naturalists.

The Coastal Prairie Master Naturalists often team up with Boy Scouts, helping them earn merit badges.

Currently, Englehardt is working with Boy Scouts to create a pathway for better accessibility from the main trail to the trails in the prairie restoration area.

The Master Naturalists host events and learning experiences for the community throughout the year.

They host events like the Prairie Heritage Festival, nature walks, bird watching and volunteer days.

The volunteer days are scheduled for every Wednesday and the first and third Saturdays of every month from 8-10 a.m.

The Master Naturalists also will provide training, starting Aug. 25.

Get ready for Hummingbirds! *By Jade Hems*

As we move into mid-August, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds will begin returning to our area on their southward migration to Central America. Male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds usually arrive first as they begin fall migration, ahead of the females who raise the young alone. Fall is a great time to observe hummingbirds because they typically proceed south more slowly, taking time to feed and gain weight as they go.

Hummingbirds are attracted to red tubular flowers. Some great native plants include Scarlet Sage, Turks Cap, Cardinal Flower, Trumpet Creeper, Passion Vine and Coral Honeysuckle. We can add a hummingbird feeder to provide an additional food source. The nectar recipe is 1-part white table sugar to 4 parts boiled water. Do not add red food coloring. Clean the feeder and change the nectar solution every three days, more frequently during hot weather or if the sugar water turns cloudy, as this indicates mold growth which is unsafe for hummingbirds. Hummingbirds are fiercely territorial; if one hummingbird is defending the feeder, hang multiple feeders in locations out of line of sight.

Most migrants have passed through our area by mid-October, but some Ruby-throated hummingbirds stay all winter and watch for other species such as Rufous Hummingbirds and Black-chinned Hummingbirds too! Check ebird.org for the latest sightings.



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Photo by John Donaho

Get ready for Hummingbirds! *(continued)*

Ruby-throated Hummingbird Fun Facts

- *Before migration they feed intensely, increasing their body weight by 50 % to fuel their long journey, this is known as hyperphagia.*
- *Some hummingbirds fly across the Gulf of Mexico in a single 500-mile, 18 to 22-hour long flight.*
- *They are 3.5 inches long and weigh only 1/8 oz!*
- *The wings of a hummingbird average 52 beats per second!*
- *They are incredibly acrobatic flyers; they can hover, fly sideways, fly backwards, and hang motionless in midair.*
- *Nectar does not provide all their nutritional needs, they also feed on tiny insects and spiders for protein and also on tree sap.*
- *The nest of a hummingbird is the size of a thimble and the eggs are the size of a navy bean!*
- *Hummingbird legs are extremely short, and they are unable to walk or hop.*
- *When they sleep they go into a hibernation like state known as torpor. Their breathing, metabolism and heart rate slow dramatically, reducing energy usage by 60%!*



Photo by John Donaho



Photo by Nina Ehmer



TMN 20th Anniversary Annual Meeting Registration OPEN!

<https://txmn.org/2018-annual-meeting/> Join us for our Texas Master Naturalist Program Annual Meeting to gather, learn and celebrate our 20th Anniversary. This year's event will kick off Friday October 26th and run through the weekend to October 28th. It is being hosted at the Sheraton Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center.

This year's agenda is PACKED with over 150+ sessions – more than we've ever had before. As in years past, registration includes signing up for technical sessions and field session attendance as many of the classrooms and space available on the field sessions is limited. Please prepare before registering with your preferred attendance at sessions. Our field sessions typically fill up very quickly!

*As an added BONUS this year, we have 30 – THIRTY – off site field sessions throughout the Georgetown and surrounding county areas. These are all in ADDITION to our typical concurrent technical session happening on site at the Sheraton Georgetown throughout the weekend. These field sessions are scattered from Thursday through Monday and we have developed a "Get Outside Guide" to be used for learning about these unique opportunities. All sessions contained in this guide will require pre-registration through the event registration page.. *Note – not all of the field sessions count for Advanced Training or have transportation provided. Pay special attention to the key on the pages to see what's included or needed for each session.*

[Get Outside Guide!](#)

All hotel room reservations for the meeting dates (Friday night & Saturday night) will be made through the TMN Annual Meeting Registration Page. Please DO NOT call the Sheraton Georgetown.

Links for the Annual Meeting

[-About Georgetown](#)

[-Agenda](#)

[-Registration](#)

[-Lodging](#)

[-20th Anniversary Gala](#)

[-Annual Meeting Contests](#)

[-Sponsorship Requests](#)

[-Silent Auction](#)

[-Texas Waters Day](#)

[-Texas Wildlife Association](#)

[-Call for Proposals](#)



Growing Some Good Weed at Laurel Creek Country Club Golf Course

Sent in by C.J. McDaniel

Hang on a second--before anybody gets the wrong idea, we are not talking about a potential new revenue stream for the golf course. No, in this case, the "weed" we are referring to is milkweed.

The monarch butterfly population has declined dramatically during the past 20 years. These beautiful insects are dependent on milkweed, and out of play areas on golf courses can provide a great habitat for this plant, and the butterflies.

As a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, Laurel Creek is committed to managing the course in an environmentally sensitive manner. Therefore, when Audubon International established their "[Monarchs in the Rough](https://www.auduboninternational.org/page-1863480)" program, the decision to join was an easy one. Assistant Superintendent, Don Holgersen, continues to do a great job in keeping us involved in programs such as this. <https://www.auduboninternational.org/page-1863480>

So, yes, while milkweed may have that four-letter word (weed) in its name, it is an important, beneficial plant. Based on what we are seeing thus far on the course, it's definitely being appreciated by the monarchs!

<http://laurelcreeksuper.blogspot.com/>



How to Recover America's Fish and Wildlife *Sent in by Carol Schwartz*

Texas Parks and Wildlife staff may have been hearing a buzz lately about a nation-wide effort to modernize the way that fish and wildlife conservation is funded. To be "in the know," read on.

What is this bill?

The Recovering America's Wildlife bill was introduced in December 2017 to update the way fish and wildlife conservation is funded. The proposed Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) would provide \$1.3 billion per year nationally and more than \$60 million in Texas each year to recover imperiled fish and wildlife and restore natural habitats. That would nearly triple our current fish and wildlife management budget.

Where does the money come from?

The money will come from existing royalties from energy and mineral production on federal lands and waters. This is a small portion of the overall revenues from these sources.

Seems like we're ok right now. Why do we need to change anything?

Currently, the primary source of conservation funding in Texas is the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Fund. This fund specifically pays for the conservation of birds, mammals, and fish of sport-fishing and recreation value. That means that turtles, salamanders, butterflies, beetles, individual plants, snakes, sharks, jellyfish, freshwater mussels and many more wildlife are left out of the planning and prioritization of a primary funding source. However, the proposed Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647) funds research and conservation of any species determined to be a Species of Greatest Conservation Need, including any mammal, bird, fish, jellyfish, plant, snake, and turtle that needs it.



How to Recover America's Fish and Wildlife (Continued)

Are we really allowed to talk about this bill?

Yes. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647) is proposed federal legislation for which TPWD is authorized to help spread the word and advocate. Therefore, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department employees using state time (time not coded to any federal grant) are not prohibited from advocating for this federal legislation. In order to coordinate strategic impacts and leverage connections, employees must coordinate all advocacy events by contacting John Davis (john.davis@tpwd.texas.gov). This authorization does not affect restrictions and prohibitions already in place regarding employee involvement in state proposed legislation.

Seriously, what do you think the chances of this bill passing are?

The momentum behind the Recovering America's Wildlife Act continues to build and now has over 70 total co-sponsors. The Texas co-sponsors include: Kay Granger, Pete Sessions, Henry Cuellar, Gene Green, and Beto O'Rourke. The outlook for the bill has never been brighter.

What are you asking me to do about it?

The [WildNet Employee Blog](#) provides a bit more information about the Act, how it might affect conservation in Texas, and links to employee resources. Give it a read, and then consider keeping up with the news via the Texas Alliance for Fish and Wildlife [Facebook page](#) and by signing up for email updates through the [Texas](#) Finally, if you're asked to give a presentation on fish or wildlife conservation, and believe it would be appropriate to incorporate information about RAWA, the Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife has developed a "[Future of Texas Conservation](#)" presentation – those who have already given it have found it to be a very positive and empowering program.

It's up to us at TPWD to Keep Texas Wild. But it's up to everyone to ensure resources are available to do that good work. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will do that, now and for another 100 years.

TPWD Recovering America's Wildlife Task Force
via Kelly Conrad Simon
Conservation Outreach Program
Kelly.simon@tpwd.texas.gov



Plant of the Month, Fall Obedient Plant (*Physotegia virginiana*)

By Mark Morgenstern

This month's featured plant is fall obedient plant. I was unfamiliar with this perennial until recently. I picked up a pot of them off the giveaway table at a Native Plant Society meeting. I was able to separate the 1 gallon into 8 individual plants. They are now blooming at Seabourne Creek in the prairie area across from the greenhouse. This will be a good resource for seed collecting. There is also a gorgeous colony at Seabourne's butterfly garden.

*This three to six-foot perennial is known scientifically as *Physotegia virginiana*. Another common name is False dragonhead. It has a square stem common with mint family plants. If the flowers are moved they tend to stay in the new position, hence the name "obedient" plant. The bloom is long lasting from August to November. It grows in wetlands, prairies and riverbanks. It is a good nectar source used by Hummingbirds and Butterflies. Come over to Seabourne and check them out.*



In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

Pyrrhuloxia By Diane Eismont

*This bird is not a Northern Cardinal - but it is in the cardinal group of finches. Its scientific name is *Cardinalis sinuatus*, another "new bird" for us.*

On June 29, 2018, this bird appeared in one of our feeders. I've read that it is a common resident in Texas south and west of here and in the dry country of the Southwest, but I had never seen one before. It eats weed and grass seeds, grasshoppers and caterpillars and comes to feeders for sunflower seeds.

The female is gray to buffy brown with prominent splashes of red, stocky, with a short, curved bill. Check out "Google" to see the variations in the red color pattern! A good website is <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Pyrrhuloxia/id>.



Illustration by David Sibley

In Our Own Backyards and Other Places (Continued)

Jade Hems has taken many great photos recently. Below is the trumpet vine in her backyard. a swallowtail on a basket flower and her hummingbird plot in the Seabourne Prairie Demo Garden. Way to go, Jade!



In Our Own Backyards and Other Places (Continued)

Erik Wolf took these amazing photos of Great Horned Owls.



Bill Archer caught this fox in his backyard for a wonderful photo!

In Our Own Backyards and Other Places (Continued)



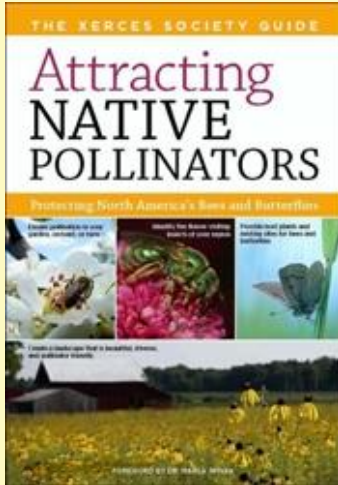
Diane Russell caught Pauline Zinn on the job at Seabourne in this delightful photo, watering newly planted trees for the Arboretum Project! And she is doing a fantastic job!

John Donaho took this great photo of the rising "blood moon" on July 27, Friday and another one of a hummingbird/ sphinx moth!



© jcdonaho

Book Corner



Attracting Native Pollinators

By Eric Mader, Matthew Shepherd, Mace Vaughan, Scott Black and Gretchen LeBuhn

Xerces book, *Attracting Native Pollinators: Protecting North America's Bees and Butterflies*, is available to purchase from their website. .

[To purchase, please visit our store.](#) The book was published in 2011 by Storey Publishing, North Adams, Massachusetts. *Attracting Native Pollinators* is coauthored by four Xerces Society staff members Eric Mader, Matthew Shepherd, Mace Vaughan, and Scott Black in collaboration with Gretchen LeBuhn, a San Francisco State University botanist and director of the [Great Sunflower Project](#).

Since Xerces published the groundbreaking *Pollinator Conservation Handbook* in 2003, conservation practices have evolved, and the handbook has begun to show its age. At 380 pages, *Attracting Native Pollinators* provides dramatically expanded breadth and detail, reflecting the latest understanding about creating and managing pollinator habitat. Illustrated with hundreds of color photographs and dozens of specially created illustrations, *Attracting Native Pollinators* is divided into the following four detailed sections:

Pollinators and Pollination explains the value of pollinators and includes informative chapters on the natural history and habitat needs of bees, butterflies, flies, beetles, and wasps.

Taking Action provides comprehensive information on ways to help pollinators and on creating nest sites and safe foraging areas. It includes guidance on conserving pollinators in all kinds of landscapes: gardens, natural areas, farms, recreation land, even ecoroofs.

Bees of North America provides help with identifying the more abundant and important bee species and supplies detailed profiles of more than thirty commonly encountered genera.

Creating a Pollinator-Friendly Landscape shows how various kinds of land, including urban gardens, suburban parks, and farms, can be enhanced to support diverse pollinator populations. Sample planting designs and fifty pages of illustrated plant lists facilitate selection of the best plants for any region. [To purchase, please visit our store.](#)

"Attracting Native Pollinators belongs on the bookshelf of everyone who values the future of the natural world."

– Douglas W. Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*.

"Precise, elegant, and thoughtful, the recommendations offered by the Xerces Society will become essential to advancing a healthy and diverse food-production system."

– Gary Paul Nabhan, author of *The Forgotten Pollinators and Renewing America's Food Tradition*.

The Lighter Side



Thanks to John Donaho (Facebook)



Thanks to Julie Gentry (Facebook)



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- New Class [Carol Hawkins](#)
- New Class Representative--Vacant
- State Representative [Carol Schwartz](#)
- Seabourne—[Jerry Trenta](#)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal>

Publicity Kicks into High Gear

Publicity Chair, Margo Johnson, is working at full blast on publicity for our new class training coming up in August and for our program meetings and other chapter activities. She is putting advertisements and notices in newspapers, magazines and online publications as well. This is an ongoing endeavor and we applaud her for her perseverance and dedication. Thanks, Margo!



**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
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*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>