



## Table of Contents:

CPCTMN Graduation....	1
Class of 2019.....	2
Membership Minute.....	3
Seabourne Fest.....	4
Chapter Outreach.....	6
SCNP Bird Hike.....	7
SCNP flickr site.....	8
Pauline Zinn Prize.....	9
Alisa Kline Blog.....	10
Native Bees.....	11
Plant of the Month .....	12
VSP Highlights.....	13
Our Own Backyard.....	14
Book Corner.....	16
Lighter Side.....	17
Tiger Prairie.....	18

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

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

**Lynn Trenta,  
Courier Editor**

*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*

## New Class Graduation

*Summary by Lynn Trenta*

*November 7<sup>th</sup> our chapter welcomed the Class of 2019 as they graduated from the Master Naturalist classes! Congratulations!!*

*Training Director Carol Hawkins and Training Class Representative David Goff were in charge of getting the speakers and classes together and providing accommodations for the training classes. Carol reported that there are 24 new graduates with 5 graduates having already been recertified.*



*Photo by Lynn Trenta*

*Our graduation celebration dinner included some great fried chicken and wonderful sides and desserts supplied by chapter members. It also included camaraderie with fellow Master Naturalists. A good time was had by all!*

*We are so happy to add these enthusiastic chapter members to our chapter and know that they will be valuable members!*



*Photo by Amy Barta*



## CPCTMN's Class of 2019 *By Carol Hawkins*

*The 2019 TMN Training Class Interns are very busy bees. All have completed their initial training hours, now working on volunteer and AT hours and 5 have obtained recertification.*

*They were busy beavers at SNF, filling in where needed, and volunteering all day. Having way too much fun driving the golf carts.*

*They volunteered at the Fort Bend County Fair Ag'ivity Barn as hands on experts educating area fourth graders on the Beauty and Benefits of Bats, an awesome WOW curriculum designed by Linda Lourim. Amy wore Bat wings as she presented Facts and Myths of Bats.*

*They have settled right in volunteering at SCNP, Jo Willars volunteered along with the guys to help carry part of the new floating dock to the wet land area.*

*They have weeded, planted, and bumped up at the various demo garden and prairie areas, traded jokes with Jim Butcher and some have even earned the elusive blue donut!*

*They showed up for training classes early and stayed late, inquisitive and full of questions and causing classes to run long. Class presenters commented how much they enjoyed presenting to the training class. High praise came from Dr. Barron Rector "good questions."*

*This class is most distinguished by their passion for all things that being a Texas Master Naturalist embodies. They volunteer at other parks, prairies, collect seeds, initiate outreach opportunities in their communities, the Bat WOW has flown near and far, they volunteer for other programs and organizations. It is like herding cats, they are everywhere. They are fun, frolicking, and friendly, a great bunch of people and always up for a great adventure!*



Photo by Terri Hurley



Photo by Amy Barta



Photo by Lynn Trenta



## Christmas Party is Sunday, December 8th



Our Chapter Christmas Party and Chapter Meeting will be on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at El Jarrito Mexican Restaurant, 21724 Highland Knolls Drive, Katy, TX 77450, with the social hour from 5 to 6pm and the dinner at 6pm. The menu will include fajitas (beef and chicken) with fixings, chips, refried beans and rice. Cheese enchiladas will be provided as a vegetarian option. All drinks are cash bar. Beer, wine and margaritas will be available. The meal is \$21 per person. The room is big and we are looking forward to seeing everyone there. It is always a fun party and you won't want to miss out! **Contact: Donna Pisani 281-725-4947 or [donnapisani25@gmail.com](mailto:donnapisani25@gmail.com)** to make your reservations. *She needs to receive your payments by December 1<sup>st</sup>.*

## Membership Minute *By Bert Stipelcovich, Membership Director*



*Congratulations to the following members who recently achieved certifications and milestones:*

### **2019 Recertification (51 members have recertified so far)**

*Karl Baumgartner  
Rick Davison*

*Stella Davison  
Gloria Scheel*

*Carol Schwartz  
Shannon Westveer*

### **Initial Certification**

*Vicki Broussard      Peter Parsons      Isabel Retiz*

### **1,000 Service Hours Milestone**

*Bert Stipelcovich*

*Note that the 2019 recertification pin, the golden-cheeked warbler, is now available! We will advise when we receive the pins.*

*The pin for 2020 is the American Bumble Bee!*



**Seabourne Nature Fest** *By Bert Stipelcovich, SNF Coordinator*



*Photo by Jean Stipelcovich*

*Our chapter's signature event, Seabourne Nature Fest (SNF), was a great success!*

*Saturday, November 2, started out chilly but soon turned into a beautiful, sunny day. Visitors numbered 1200, which is down from last year. However, this year's attendance was the second highest ever, with the next highest attendance numbering 800.*

*We received very positive feedback from visitors, volunteers, exhibitors, speakers, bus drivers, and partner organizations. We sent V.I.P. invitations to the mayor, the city council, and the Rosenberg Development Corporation (RDC). At least one council member and two RDC members attended and had a great time, based on comments given at the last RDC meeting.*

*Our new parking plan worked well, with visitors parking at the Fairgrounds Park and Ride and buses providing continuous shuttle service to and from the park. Traffic control by the Rosenberg Police Department and parking/access control by the Texas State Guard were important components.*

*World class speakers were greeted with standing room only crowds in the Speaker's Tent. And our external exhibitors — numbering 30 this year, up from 15 last year — reported that visitors spent more time at their tables and were more engaged.*

*Continued on the next page-----*

## Seabourne Nature Fest *(Continued)*

*Thanks to everyone who volunteered and spent many hours preparing. All of that hard work paid tremendous dividends. We were able to:*

- *showcase our signature project, Seabourne Creek Nature Park;*
- *educate the public about nature and our role in it;*
- *explain the history of the park and the improvements made by our chapter (many were first-time visitors);*
- *provide a venue for our exhibitors to educate others about the good work that they do;*
- *help instill a sense of community by including partner organizations; and*
- *enlighten our visitors about the Texas Master Naturalist™ program.*

*Also, I want to extend special thanks to the Class of 2018. Jerry Trenta challenged us to take on SNF 2019 — and we did! Congratulations!*

*And, thank you, Class of 2019. Even though you are new to the TMN program, you were challenged to participate in SNF — and you did in a big way!*

*And, finally, thanks to those members who attended our after-action review (AAR). We captured what worked, what didn't, and why. We also developed and captured recommendations for next year's event.*

*To summarize:*

- *huge challenge*
- *hard work*
- *big crowd*
- *significant benefits*
- *great fun!*

*Let's do this again next year!*



*Photo by Jean Stipelcovich*

## Coastal Prairie Chapter Outreach

*Our chapter's outreach members have been busy this month! Debby Wendt gave a presentation on plastic use at Meyer Elementary School and Shannon Westveer displayed the bat presentation at her outreach table at the STEM night at Schiff Elementary School.*

*Diane Russell gave a talk on her trip to the Mexican Mountains to see the place where the Monarchs overwinter and also talked about the Monarch Butterfly at the Sugar Land Garden Club. Thank you to everyone who helped out at our chapter outreach events!*



*Shannon Westveer at Schiff Elementary School*



*Debby Wendt at Meyer Elementary School*



*Diane Russell spoke at the Sugar Garden Club and at the Native Plant Society*

Seabourne Creek Nature Park

Bird Hike Nets 202<sup>nd</sup> Species for SCNP

*The chapter bird hike on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November turned out to be a special day. It was then that the 202<sup>nd</sup> species was spotted at Seabourne Creek Nature Park.*

*Seen below is a photograph of the lesser grebe (left) with an American coot. The photo was taken by Bob Schwartz, who along with Carol Schwartz, leads our monthly bird hikes. The hikes occur on the first Wednesday of the month from 8am to 10am and are a fun way to earn VSP and learn about birds.*

*Congratulations, bird watchers!*



## Seabourne Creek Nature Park flickr Site *By Pauline Zinn,* CPCTMN Secretary



*Photo by Pauline Zinn, found in flickr , Seabourne Creek Nature Park Group*

*Flickr, a photograph sharing site on the Internet formerly owned by Yahoo and now by SmugMug, is alive and well. Ten billion (with a "b") photos are shared on flickr; millions of new photos are uploaded every day; there are 90 million monthly users worldwide; there are innumerable groups used to organize photos. The Zinns (Pauline, Noel and Patrick) have been photographing at SCNP recently, but there was no SCNP flickr group with which to share those photos. Well, we began one. Noel, Pauline and Bert Stipelcovich are administrators of the group. There are currently 66 photos in the SCNP group contributed by Pauline, Noel, Patrick, John Chitty and Mara Saltsman. The following link will get you to the SCNP flickr group:*

<https://www.flickr.com/groups/scnp/>

*All the photos are public and anyone (flickr member or not) can view them (unlike Facebook as a repository). Any flickr member who agrees to the group rules ("Only tasteful photographs relevant to the mission of the Seabourne Creek Nature Park are allowed") can post photos taken at SCNP (up to 6 per day). The total number of photos in the group is unlimited. The photographs can be downloaded at full resolution. There is no cost to anyone: casual viewer, flickr member, SCNP or TMN.*

*This SCNP flickr group can be a useful organizational tool for TMN photographs and a public exhibition of what we're working so hard to build at Seabourne Creek Nature Park.*

## Pauline Zinn Wins 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in the Cullinan Park Photo Contest

*Our own Pauline Zinn, Chapter Secretary and a leader of the Seabourne Arboretum Project at Seabourne Creek Nature Park, won 1<sup>st</sup> prize under the Photographer's Pick Category at the Cullinan Park Photo Contest.*

*Seen below is her prize-winning photo. She also was instrumental in establishing the chapter's flickr Seabourne photography account detailed in the previous page.*

*Congratulations, Pauline!!*



## Exotic, Invasive, Native *by Alisa Kline November 20<sup>th</sup>, sent in by Andrea Morgenstern*

*This week, I visited our [miracle prairie](#) (in Buffalo Bayou Park) and was blown away by how birdy it was. This almost never happens, but that prairie was genuinely full of birds. Maybe not rarely seen birds, but it was full of the birds that should have been there. I saw ruby crowned kinglets, phoebes, orange crowned warblers, a Carolina wren. I also saw red-vented bulbuls.*

*Every couple of years, someone will call me to say they've seen a bird that's not in the bird books. My first question in return is did it have a black crest? Nine time out of ten the answer is yes and I get to tell them that they have likely sighted a bird who shouldn't be here.*

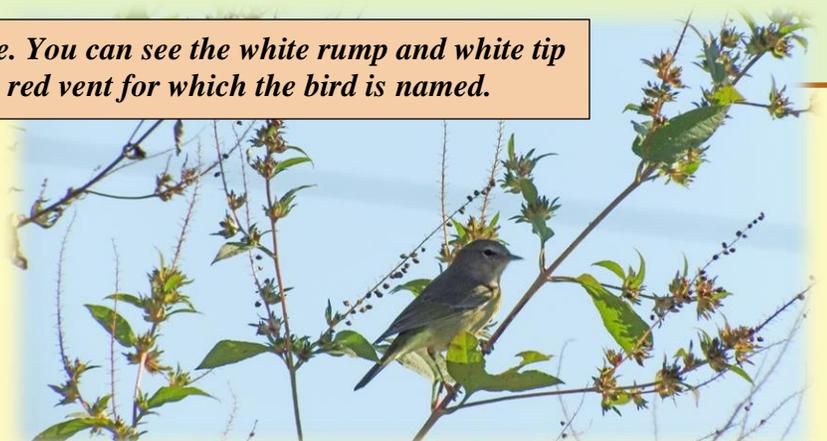
*Houston Heights and the surrounding areas (including our Park) are playing host to an Asian anomaly, the red-vented bulbul. We are pretty much the only place in the continental US that you can see these birds in the wild. It's assumed that caged birds escaped some years ago and set up a breeding population. Red-vented bulbuls (RVBs) are noisy birds and not particularly shy. They are enthusiastic fruit eaters. If you have a fruit tree in your yard and live reasonably near the Heights, you have perhaps been visited by the bulbuls.*

*The miracle-prairie bulbuls were feasting on lantana berries. I smiled at the thought of these Asian birds feasting on our native lantana, a great habitat plant for our area. Admittedly, the lantanas in our Park are mostly common lantanas, the ones with pink and yellow flowers. They are native to Central and South America. The true Texas native is the one with orange and yellow flowers, but close enough.*

*So this was starting off as a celebration of if you build it they will come. Our prairie was full of birds! And then I googled red vented bulbul to flesh out some details and found that they are reviled around the world. They are on the 100 most invasive species list by the Global Invasive Species Database.*

*As evidenced by their growing presence in Houston, they are wonderfully adaptive and introduced populations have grown large enough to threaten biodiversity on some isolated Pacific islands. They are also an expensive pest for fruit growers. In addition, the RVB has been singled out for particular scorn because it is a dedicated consumer of fruits of invasive trees and shrubs, and through the miracle of digestion spreads seeds of invasives far and wide. To read more of this article go to <https://buffalobayou.org/blog/exotic-invasive-native/>*

*Two red-vented bulbuls. Males and females look alike. You can see the white rump and white tip on the tail. The bird on the left is showing a bit of the red vent for which the bird is named.*



*This orange-crowned warbler is a typical winter resident in Houston. There was an abundance of them and at the time I was watching, they and the active, but unphotographed ruby-crowned kinglets spent a lot of time on horseweed gone to seed.*

## Focus on Native Bees, Not Honeybees *Cool Green Science*

Text and photos by [Chris Helzer](#) August 19, 2019 (From Facebook)

*The public is very aware that we are in the midst of a pollination crisis. In fact, concern about bees and other pollinators is nearly unanimous in [public polling](#).*

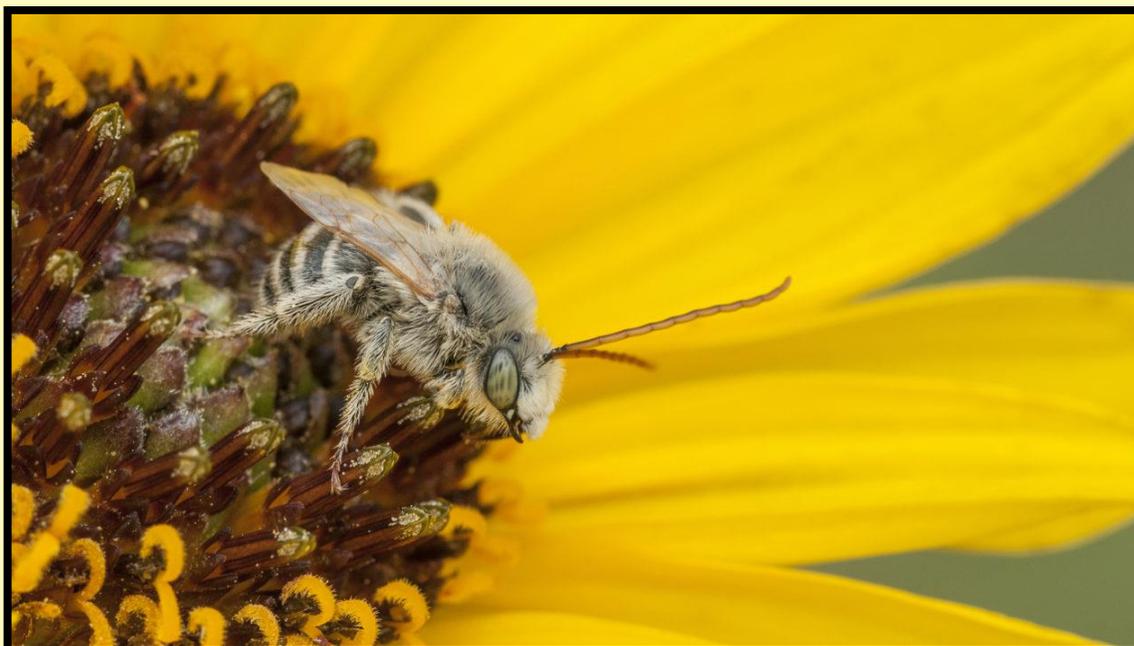
*At a time when we are polarized on most issues, the need to do something about bees is something we can all agree on. Unfortunately, when people fret about bees and the threats they face, most are thinking about strictly about honey bees.*

*Honey bees are fascinating creatures. They've got an incredible social structure within their hives, they play important roles in the pollination of many food plants we like, and honey is delicious. However, honey bees are also an introduced livestock species in North America and only one of about 4,000 kinds of bees found in North America.*

*The thousands of native bee species living mostly below our collective radar are split into categories such as digger bees, carpenter bees, mason bees, sweat bees, bumble bees, and cuckoo bees.*

*The majority of those species don't live in hives where workers cater to the needs of the queen and raise her babies for her. Instead, most native bees are reared in small nests built and tended by single mothers. Those female bees lay eggs, supply them with food, and protect them from enemies – all by themselves. A distinct minority of native bees live under some kind of cooperative system, and only a very few employ the kind of [eusocial behavior](#) we associate with honey bees.*

*To read the rest of this article go to <https://blog.nature.org/science/2019/08/19/focus-on-native-bees-not-honey-bees/?fbclid=IwAR0jDe3Qi2Qirq1C0QTK9UlsTFZn3GzuyLFS6hXjLt0ImNpp4JWBhwLZTM> .*



## Plant of the Month *By Lynn and Jerry Trenta*

### Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria*)

*This month's featured plant is the Yaupon Holly. This time of year, it appears with bright red berries and shiny small leaves arranged alternatively on its thin gray branches. There is a wonderful example of it, although small, in the Prairie and Native Plant Garden in Seabourne Creek Nature Park, our chapter's signature project.*

*Yaupon is a picturesque, upright, single- or multi-trunked shrub or small tree, growing 12-45 ft high but usually no higher than 25 ft. Female plants produce prodigious amounts of bright red, persistent berries. ([wildflower.org](http://wildflower.org))*

*It blooms in April and May and can live with sun, part-shade and shade, as an understory tree.*

*The berries provide food for birds and small mammals, and attract butterflies. It is the larval host of the Henry's Elfin butterfly and also provides a nesting site for birds.*

*The leaves contain caffeine and can be made into a tea.*



*Photo by Carolyn Fannon*



*Photo by Ray Mathews*



## VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROJECTS HIGHLIGHTS

By Terri Hurley, Volunteer Service Project Director

### ONGOING PROJECT of the MONTH: Christmas Bird Counts!

*This year, the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) celebrates its 120th birthday. In 1900, the CBC was started to replace the decades-old Christmas "Side Hunt" tradition during which hunters would compete with each other for the highest number of birds killed in a single day. Ornithologist Frank M. Chapman wisely suggested counting birds for the competition instead of killing them. This led to the first CBC in December 1900 which was conducted by 27 observers in 25 locations across the USA and Canada.*

*Today, many different CBCs are held in the Houston area. They are all open to any level of birder, beginning to advanced. Even if you are a beginner, you can make a valuable contribution to the count simply by knowing the most common birds. Then when you see a bird that is not one of the ones you know, you can point out your sighting to the count leaders and they will happily identify the bird. The more eyes and ears in the field, the better!*

*CPC members can receive volunteer hours for all CBCs in Texas. The biggest CBC in our chapter's area is the Brazos Bend State Park CBC on Saturday December 14. Last year a total of 149 species of birds was seen by 79 participants. The count is divided into several areas and birders choose which area they want to work. A map showing the areas can be found here: <https://brazosbendcbc.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html>. Registration is currently open at <https://brazosbendcbc.blogspot.com/>. A fabulous barbeque dinner is always held after the count is over. Area totals and the winning "Big Bird" Award for the most uncommon bird seen is announced at the dinner. Last year's "Big Bird" was the yellow-throated vireo. Other winning "Big Birds" have included the zone-tailed hawk and the brown booby.*

*Other CBCs in our area will be held on the following dates: Attwater Prairie Chicken Reserve 12/18, Bolivar Peninsula 12/19, Freeport 12/15, Galveston 12/17, Matagorda County-Mad Island 12/16, San Bernard NWR 12/20. The Matagorda area count usually leads the nation in number of bird species seen. Last year 239 species were seen. More information and registration links for all local area CBCs are available at: <https://houstonaudubon.org/birding/christmas-bird-counts>*

*The CBCs are a great way to improve your birding skills and get volunteer hours. Do try to make at least one!*

**[VSP Hours to be recorded in VMS under the category "iNaturalist, eBird and Other Citizen Science".]**

## In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

### Pack Rats *Photo and Text by Diane Eismont*

*You've all heard the term "Pack Rat" and may have even applied that term to someone you know, but, did you ever see the member of the animal world that inspired that term?*

*Well, we have one that comes into our barn - an Eastern wood rat. All the wood rats are "pack rats" that gather food and store it close to their nest. They are generally solitary and good climbers. (I saw ours above the horse stalls once.)*

*I began to suspect it was a "pack rat" when an entire cow feeder bowl of range cubes (about 70) disappeared one night when left uncovered. Photos later confirmed it.*



SCAPES 85°F



**In Our Own Backyards and Other Places** *(Continued)*

**Rufous hummingbird** *Photo by Carol Hawkins*

*Carol Hawkins took this photo of a rufous hummingbird outside of her home. This is the first rufous hummingbird that has visited her and she dubbed it "Pumpkin Spice". It has been in residence for about a month.*



## Book Corner

***Erosions: Essays of Undoing***

*By Terry Tempest Williams*

*I found this book reviewed in the Nature Conservancy Winter 2019 Magazine and thought our group would enjoy it.*

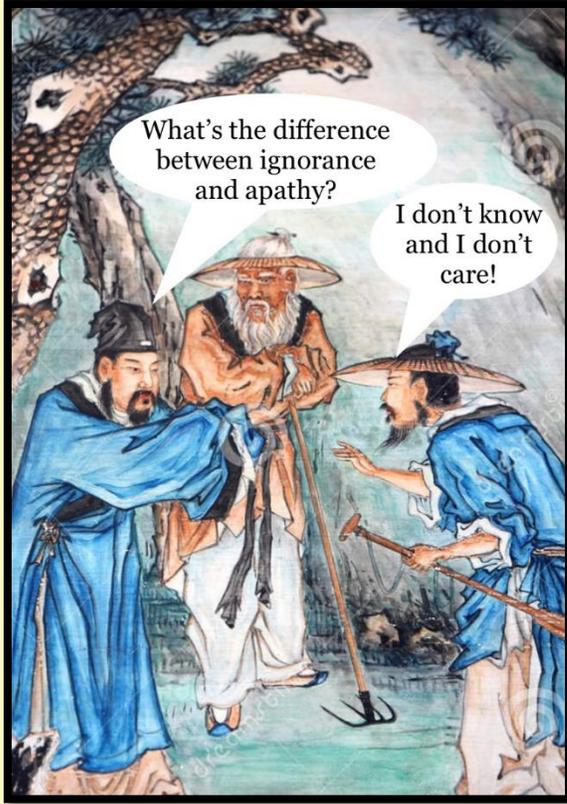
Terry Tempest Williams's fierce, spirited, and magnificent essays are a howl in the desert. She sizes up the continuing assaults on America's public lands and the erosion of our commitment to the open space of democracy. She asks: "How do we find the strength to not look away from all that is breaking our hearts?"

We know the elements of erosion: wind, water, and time. They have shaped the spectacular physical landscape of our nation. Here, Williams bravely and brilliantly explores the many forms of erosion we face: of democracy, science, compassion, and trust. She examines the dire cultural and environmental implications of the gutting of Bear Ears National Monument—sacred lands to Native Peoples of the American Southwest; of the undermining of the Endangered Species Act; of the relentless press by the fossil fuel industry that has led to a panorama in which "oil rigs light up the horizon." And she testifies that the climate crisis is not an abstraction, offering as evidence the drought outside her door and, at times, within herself.

These essays are Williams's call to action, blazing a way forward through difficult and dispiriting times. We will find new territory—emotional, geographical, communal. The erosion of desert lands exposes the truth of change. What has been weathered, worn, and whittled away is as powerful as what remains. Our undoing is also our becoming.

Erosion is a book for this moment, political and spiritual at once, written by one of our greatest naturalists, essayists, and defenders of the environment. She reminds us that beauty is its own form of resistance, and that water can crack stone.

# The Lighter Side



Thanks to Jacob Trenta (Reddit)



Thanks to Marti (Facebook)



Thanks to John Donaho (Facebook)

Photo by Garrett Engelhardt



CPTMN 2019 Board Members

2018 Officers

- President [Jerry Trenta](#)
- Vice President [Debby Wendt](#)
- Secretary [Pauline Zinn](#)
- Treasurer [Jamie Fairchild](#)

2019 Committee Directors

- Past-President [Amber Leung](#)
- Programs [Debby Wendt](#)
- Communication--[Lynn Trenta](#)
- Publicity [Margo Johnson](#)
- Volunteer Service Projects [Terri Hurley](#)
- Advanced Training [Ramona Ridge](#)
- Membership [Bert Stipelcovich](#)
- New Class [Carol Hawkins](#)
- New Class Representative [David Goff](#)
- State Representative [Andrea Morgenstern](#)
- Seabourne—[Jerry Trenta](#)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal>

Seabourne Nature Fest in the Fort Bend Herald Newspaper

The Seabourne Nature Fest was a success! The Fort Bend Herald wrote a glowing report of it and it can be found at [https://www.fbherald.com/free/snakes-owls-gators-attract-thousands-to-nature-fest/article\\_5817e0da-ffb7-11e9-857d-d3f3ad738de7.html?fbclid=IwAR0VPQMilE89TpKHaZjuFFTZCPk6jZ9KHcgqOgZl2eTtKzS72zVjxIDml8E](https://www.fbherald.com/free/snakes-owls-gators-attract-thousands-to-nature-fest/article_5817e0da-ffb7-11e9-857d-d3f3ad738de7.html?fbclid=IwAR0VPQMilE89TpKHaZjuFFTZCPk6jZ9KHcgqOgZl2eTtKzS72zVjxIDml8E)

Our Chapter Facebook Page is at [TXMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)  
To post photos and information, email [John Donaho](mailto:John Donaho)

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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Rosenberg, TX 77471—8678  
Phone: 281-633-7033

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>

Check out our Chapter Instagram  
<https://www.instagram.com/cpctmn/>

To post photos and information, email [Ramona Ridge](#) or [Erik Wolf](#)