



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



## President's Message *By Bert Stipelcovich*

### Table of Contents:

President's Message.....	1
Membership/Annual Mtg..	2
Carol's Milestone.....	2
Programs/Purple Martins.	3
VSP Opps.....	5
Terri's Garden Tour.....	6
Dragonfly Photography...	7
Mark's Video.....	9
Trifoliolate Orange .....	10
Fall Migration.....	11
NPS goes virtual.....	12
Prairie Ecologist.....	13
Signage at Seabourne.	14
SCNP Containers.....	15
Our Own Backyards.....	16
Jim's Pocket Prairie.....	17
Book Corner.....	18
Lighter Side.....	19
SCNP Volunteering.....	20

Fellow Chapter Members:

*Even as the pandemic continues to impact us, we have good news to report!*

### Fall Class Enrollment Sets Records!

*At last count, 31 interns have signed up for the fall class! To my knowledge, that is a record for our chapter. While other chapters have canceled fall classes, Carol Hawkins and her team have stepped up to exceed expectations. The training schedule is well underway with 4 classes already completed. Special thanks to Carol, David Goff, Bob Naeger, Mac McDowell, Jan and Kevin Kolk, and Shannon Westveer for making it happen.*

### TMN Virtual Volunteer Fair

*The state program is holding a Texas Master Naturalist™ Virtual Volunteer Fair on Wednesday, September 2, 9:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. I will forward the email describing the event, but you may have already received an email from the state program.*

*The event consists of 10-minute long sessions highlighting 31 of the projects by our two sponsoring agencies, Texas Parks & Wildlife and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. TMN volunteers can earn Volunteer Service hours for attending all project proposal sessions — live or recorded. Please use the “TMN Virtual Volunteer Service Fair” Statewide Project Opportunity for logging service hours. [Register here!](#)*

### TMN Annual Meeting

*I recently met with Mary Pearl Meuth, TMN Assistant Program Coordinator, to discuss our chapter's role in the Annual Meeting (October 14 - 17). We will volunteer as co-hosts for each of the sessions offered. This role is critical to the virtual event's success, and we can record our time as volunteer service project (VSP) hours!*

*I am creating a SignUpGenius form for you to volunteer for one or more time slots. We ask that you only volunteer for sessions with topics with which you are already familiar. More information will be heading your way soon!*

### Ad Hoc Zoom Meeting to Discuss Upcoming Events

*Please [register here](#) to attend a Zoom meeting Monday, August 31, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the TMN Virtual Volunteer Fair and our chapter's role in the Annual Meeting. “See” you then!*

*Continue to stay safe. As always, contact me with any questions, concerns and suggestions.*

*All the best, Bert Stipelcovich 713-540-2378*

**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**

Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting Registration

https://web.cvent.com/event/d0012216-ad2d-4ae0-9e8b-195d8ad7884d/summary

The Membership Minute By Bob Naeger, Membership Director

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

Initial Certification

- Paula Dittrick

2020 Recertification (38 members recertified so far)

- Sarah Marshall
Diane Russell
Jean Stipelcovich
Jerry Trenta
Shannon Westveer
Pauline Zinn
John Cotterell
Rick Davison



The recertification pin for 2020 is the American Bumble Bee!

250 Hour Milestone

- Robbin Mallett

500 Hour Milestone

- Shannon Westveer

1000 Hour Milestone

- Carol Hawkins



All pins that have been earned this year have mailed to the recipients. We will continue to mail pins as they are earned until we are able to resume in-person meetings.

Carol Hawkins Hits 1000 Hour Milestone!

Congratulations to Carol Hawkins for hitting the 1000-hour milestone recently! Carol has been a valuable chapter member since joining! She has been a cohort of Jim Butcher's out at Seabourne bumping up plants and did some bumping up after the pandemic hit as well. She also helped with prairie plantings. When we needed a New Class Director, Carol stepped up to the plate and is doing a wonderful job in this position. We are lucky to have her introduce the new class to our chapter! Carol is a joy to work with, as anyone who has worked with her knows. Thank you so much Carol!





## Bert Stipelcovich Talks about Purple Martins at August Program

*The August program was scheduled to be a program about bats, but due to a scheduling issue, the presenter was unable to attend. So, Bert Stipelcovich, TMNCPC President, stepped up to present a program on purple martins. With photos and information about these widely- popular birds, he provided an interesting and fun program.*

*Bert referred to the [Purple Martin Conservation Association](#) in his presentation and showed us a video from this website.*

*Thanks, Bert!*



## Where did all the Purple Martins Go? *By Jean Stipelcovich, TMN State Rep.*

*After a Spring and Summer of enjoying this popular songster and aerialist, the Purple Martin is notably missed in late August when it leaves its breeding range in North America to go to its non-breeding range in South America. The majority of Purple Martins spend the non-breeding season in Brazil. They can also be found in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, British Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana.*

*Brazil has a tropical to temperate climate, an extensive river system, and contains over 60% of the Amazon rainforest. Fall migration from North America begins around 4-6 weeks after the nestlings fledge and individual martins will spend several months in South America. While there, they will feast on flying insects that abound along the many waterways. The plentiful and rich diet helps the Purple Martin complete the molting process that began prior to migration. With a whole new set of healthy feathers, they improve their survivability to make the long migration back to North America and attract a mate.*



Figure 1 - Photo courtesy of Purple Martin Conservation

## Where did all the Purple Martins Go? *(Continued)*



**Figure 2 - Purple Martins at Casa Stipelcovich. (Photo: Jean Stipelcovich)**

*Most scientists now believe the Purple Martin is actually a South American swallow that evolved its migratory habit to North America to take advantage of the longer summer days unique to the northern latitudes. Longer days give the martin more hours of daylight each day to gather insects. Purple Martins are aerial insectivores, rather than seedeaters, and they would not be able to survive the winter months in much of North America.*

*To learn a great deal more about overwintering Purple Martin habitat and roosts in South American, visit <https://www.purplemartin.org/uploads/media/26-3-wheredomartinsw-873.pdf>.*

*While the birds are away over the winter months is a great time for Purple Martin landlords to plan for and erect new nest sites. It's also the best time to do maintenance or make improvements to established nest sites. But don't procrastinate! Purple Martins begin returning to Texas in late January. Scouts come first to check out potential nesting sites. By the end of March, breeding colonies and strong social bonds are beginning to establish.*

*If you are interested in becoming a Purple Martin Landlord, or if you just want to learn more about these beautiful birds, the best place to start is Purple Martin Conservation Association. A link to their awesome website is [PurpleMartin.org](http://PurpleMartin.org).*

## Chapter Program "Hawk Migration" by Glenn Olsen September 6<sup>th</sup>

*Hawks are a fun, awesome, exciting and challenging group of birds! In the fall we have hundreds of thousands of them migrating south into Mexico, Central and South America. However, we rarely look up into the sky and most pass through unnoticed. Unless of course you grab binoculars, get outside and search for them!*



*In this presentation we will discuss how and why hawks migrate, some from Alaska and Canada to South America. We will explore good locations to observe hawks during migration as well as how to identify hawks in flight.*

*Most people are more likely to see some of our resident or wintering hawks, perched or flying, and we will discuss how to identify these species as well. Some of the hawk species that we will cover include Red-shouldered, Red-tailed, Swainson's, American Kestrel, Mississippi Kite, Swallow-tailed kite, Peregrine Falcon, Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, Broad-winged, and Northern Harrier among others.*

*Our presenter, Glenn Olsen leads natural history and birding tours with GOBirding Ecotours to the hottest birding locations in the U.S., exotic locales such as the Galapagos Islands, the Amazon Rainforest, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Honduras. His tours include aspects of the culture, ecology and natural history of the region. Contact Glenn at [h.glenn.olsen@gmail.com](mailto:h.glenn.olsen@gmail.com) or 832-517-2478.*



**Volunteer Service Projects Highlights** *By Johanna DeYoung, TMNCPC VSP Director*

Since 6/26/2020, the Texas COVID-19 situation remains a “public health disaster”. Thus, Executive Order GA-28, outlining restrictions, remains in effect: Implement social distancing and good hygiene, and “Individuals are encouraged to wear appropriate face coverings...”. On 7/13/2020, Fort Bend County Judge K. P. George declared Fort Bend County to be “...in the red ‘high risk’ category. This is the highest possible level of risk.” The following table notes the “High Community Risk” Description, Activity, and Guidance.

 <b>Fort Bend County COVID-19 Community Risk Level Summary</b>			
Risk Level	Risk Description	Activity	Guidance
High Community Risk	High potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid all gatherings of any size.</li> <li>• Avoid non-essential business and personal travel.</li> <li>• Avoid public transportation where possible.</li> <li>• Practice good hygiene and social distancing.</li> <li>• Cancel social visits to nursing homes, long term care facilities, and hospitals.</li> <li>• Schools and after-school activities for youth close, as directed by educational authorities &amp; advised by local health authorities.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STAY HOME, STAY SAFE</b></p> <p>Minimize contact with others, wherever possible, and avoid leaving home, except for essential needs.</p> <p>Practice social distancing and use face coverings.</p>

The TMN Coastal Prairie Chapter (TMNCPC) continues to be under the directives issued by Mary Pearl Meuth, TMN Program Assistant State Coordinator, on 3/31/2020. Until Ms. Meuth lifts these directives, please refrain from doing non-essential VSP activities at Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP).

**Seabourne Creek Nature Park Volunteering**

Although the scheduled Seabourne Volunteer Days remain on pause, assistance is needed within SCNP. To volunteer at Seabourne please contact the following people to make arrangements prior going to the park.

- For bump ups, prairie planting, nursery maintenance, and/or trail maintenance, please contact Jerry Trenta, Seabourne Director (713-898-4769 [jerrytrenta@txtrentas.com](mailto:jerrytrenta@txtrentas.com))
- For demo garden work please contact Lynn Trenta, (832-646-4769/ [lynn@txtrentas.com](mailto:lynn@txtrentas.com))
- For bird sanctuary work, please contact Bill Johnson, (281-734-3349 /[rxrelo@aol.com](mailto:rxrelo@aol.com)),
- For butterfly garden work, please contact Katie Sallean, (713-502-5701 /[katie@coastalprairie.com](mailto:katie@coastalprairie.com))

**TMN Virtual Volunteer Fair**

On 8/27/2020, at 9:25 PM, Mary Pearl Meuth sent an email announcing an upcoming “Virtual Volunteer Fair” scheduled for Wednesday, 9/2/2020, 9:00 AM – 4:15 PM. On 9/2/2020, please register for this event using the following link: [Virtual Volunteer Fair](#). Ideas will be generated, and Volunteer Service hours can be earned by attending the “Virtual Volunteer Fair” by using the “TMN Virtual Volunteer Service Fair” Statewide Project Opportunity. For additional information, please reference Ms. Meuth’s email.

**Other VSP Opportunities**

Please continue to check the website calendar, Slack, and the CPCTMN Members Only Facebook page. If you have any questions about VSP opportunities, please contact me at [johanna@coastalprairie.org](mailto:johanna@coastalprairie.org).

The TMNCPC members may be unaware of the descriptions of existing VSP opportunities. If there is no existing VSP opportunity that fits a potential VSP opportunity, there is a process to create a new VSP opportunity. Please request and complete an VSP Proposal Form. In turn, the VSP Committee, Terri Hurley, Lynn Trenta, Amy Barta, and me, will review the proposal and determine if it qualifies to become an VSP opportunity.

**Signage for Seabourne Creek Nature Park**

Jerry Trenta, SCNP Director, is looking for volunteers to do signage SCNP’s Prairie, Butterfly Garden, Prairie and Habitat Garden, as well as other areas of the park. High resolution photos of prairies and prairie wildlife, and plants (it would be best if chapter members could supply these) are needed. Interested volunteers need to contact Jerry Trenta (713-898-4782/[jerrytrenta@txtrentas.com](mailto:jerrytrenta@txtrentas.com)).

[VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category “SCNP-7 Habitats Public Access - TMN Report Hours”]



## REPORTING FROM THE HURLEY EARLY BIRD'S WILDSCAPE: Biodiversity in the Backyard *By Terri Hurley, TMNCPC Vice-President*

*Have you heard that scientists think that one third of American wildlife is at risk of extermination in the coming decades? This is due to habitat loss, pollution, invasive alien species, and even climate change. It's not too late for us to make a difference.*

*Doug Tallamy in his book "Bringing Nature Home" asks us to create our own 'homegrown national park' by converting our lawns and other ornamental plantings into critical habitat with native plants and water sources. Here in the Hurley Early Bird's Wildscape we are simply doing our small part to combat biodiversity loss at a local level – our own backyard. In 2007 we bought our house in Sugar Land with 1/4-acre garden. Since then we have been adding plants, water features and several houses for nesting creatures. To date we have seen 129 species of birds and 18 species of butterflies in, on or flying above our yard.*

*For the birds, we have added native plants and trees that provide either food or cover year-round. We also have several water features with drippers that run continuously. Our philosophy is that each plant must pull its weight in the yard by getting observable results with birds actually using the plant. If not, out it goes...to be then replaced by another plant which better pull its weight! The most successful plants we have for birds are the native mulberry trees, chili pequin, wax myrtle and eastern red cedar. The most successful plants for hummingbirds are hamelia patens, Texas red sage, yellow bells, and Mexican olive. The mulberry trees bring in so many migrating birds in the spring: orioles, tanagers, grosbeak, kingbirds, cuckoos, scissor-tailed flycatchers.*

*The most successful plants for butterflies are the non-native lantana, pentas, milkweed and mistflower. We provide frogfruit as the larval host plant for the phaon crescent, partridge pea for the sulfurs and gray hairstreak, white-veined fimbriata for pipevine swallowtails and milkweed for the monarchs.*

*We also get all kinds of mammals that use our little manmade pond located outside our fence along Oyster Creek. So far we have observed coyote, bobcat, raccoon, possum, armadillo, skunk, ring-tailed cat, feral cats, feral hogs, deer, rats, and mice. And the reason we know is because we have a wild game camera aimed at the pond. It's motion activated and operates at night also.*

*You can do the same in your own backyard. Transform your backyard into beneficial habitat by replacing all those non-natives with helpful plants and trees. Let your backyard go wild!*

*Note from the Editor: Check out Terri's YouTube Video of her Backyard Wildscape at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5SiYcKiCY4> !*



# August is good time for dragonfly photography Text by

Paula Dittrick. Photos from Garrett Engelhardt, Carol Hawkins, Amber Leung, Robbin Mallett, Lynn Trenta, and Shannon Westveer (all TMNCPC members).

*August is the month when I stalk dragonflies to keep in practice with my nature photography. I hang out along the edges of ponds in parks looking for insects, particularly dragonflies. An informal survey of a handful of TMNCPC members shows this is a common practice among us.*

*Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Courier newsletter editor, and Robbin Mallett, TMNCPC Communications Director, both frequent [Cross Creek Ranch](#) in Fulshear.*



*Four-spotted pennant dragonfly perches at the Cross Creek Ranch polishing pond. Photo by TMNCPC Courier Editor Lynn Trenta.*



*Halloween pennant dragonfly perching at Buffalo Run Park. Photo by Robbin Mallett, TMNCPC Communications Director.*



*Closeup of dragonfly eyes taken on a sunny day at Cullinan Park in Sugar Land. Photo by Garrett Engelhardt, TMNCPC member.*

**A 2019 Photo Winner**

*Garrett Engelhardt and Mallett have enjoyed dragonfly photography at Cullinan Park in Sugar Land. Mallett also has taken dragonfly photographs at Buffalo Run Park in Missouri City. My favorite dragonfly spot this summer has been Shadow Creek Ranch Nature Trail in Pearland.*

*At Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP) in Rosenberg, 12 observers have reported 8 dragonfly species on iNaturalist since April 2017. The SCNP list shows: Blue Dasher, Eastern Amberwing, Common Whitetail, Roseate Skimmer, Eastern Pondhawk, Four-spotted Pennant, Red Saddlebags, and Calico Pennant.*

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

## August is good time for dragonfly photography *(Continued)*

*“Dragonflies have the finest vision in the insect world,” said Dennis Paulson in his field guide “Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West”. “The compound eyes in the largest species have as many as 30,000 simple eyes (ommatidia), perceiving the world around them...dragonflies are very good at detecting movement.”*

*Being a predator, the dragonfly always knows the photographer is coming. A photographer’s advantage is that dragonflies tend to concentrate more on finding flying insects than they concentrate on people. My strategy is to move silently and avoid casting a shadow on them.*

*Dragonflies often return to the same perch (or at least to a perch in the same vicinity). I have watched a male dragonfly make regular patrols out over the water to repeatedly return to the same perching area.*

*After figuring out its patterns, I move a little closer to the perch while the dragonfly goes out over the water. As he returns, I stop and wait until he leaves on another patrol when I can move closer again to the perch area before his return.*

*The August heat can become too hot for odonates to stay in the sun so they will move into shade during midday and early afternoon when they can be found resting in shaded areas at or away from the water’s edge.*

*Another heat strategy is to raise their abdomen pointed straight up; a behavior called obelisking. Sidney W. Dunkle discusses this in his book, “Dragonflies through Binoculars, a Field Guide to Dragonflies of North America.”*

*“The raised abdomen reduces the body surface exposed to the sun, as can be seen by the smaller shadow then,” Dunkle said. “However, some King Skimmers raise their abdomens perpendicular to the sun to gain heat, and some dragonflies raise their abdomen as a threat or as part of their normal perching posture.”*



*Past TMNCPC President Amber Leung provided photographs of obelisking and mating behaviors that she observed at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.*

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

## August is good time for dragonfly photography *(Continued)*

*Naturalists tend to be good photographers because they know their natural history, giving them clues on where to find dragonflies and knowing what behavior to expect.*

*Westveer said the Challenger Seven Park in Webster has many dragonflies.*



*Wandering Glider found along Highway 521 near Juliff. Photo by Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC New Class Co-Director (spring).*

## Chapter Member Mark Morgenstern's Prairie Plant Propagation Video *By Lynn Trenta, Courier Editor*



*If you have been wanting to know how to propagate prairie plants check out Mark Morgenstern's video on YouTube. He not only propagates prairie plants, he sells them! He is the owner/proprietor of Morning Star Prairie Plants located in Damon, TX, not far from Brazos Bend State Park.*

*Mark is in charge of propagating plants for our chapter's Seabourne Prairie Restoration Project and a very important part of the establishment and development of the Seabourne Prairie and Habitat Garden.*

*Check out his great YouTube Video at [Mark Morgenstern on Propagating Prairie Plants and More](#). This video was recorded at a Native Plant Society Program in Houston.*

*Thanks to Mark for the many years he has been communicating about prairies and providing his expertise and prairie plants to our chapter and Seabourne Creek Nature Park.*



## Invasive Spotlight: Trifoliate (Hardy) Orange (*Poncirus trifoliata*)

Sent in by Carol Schwartz

Trifoliate orange, also known as hardy orange, is a deciduous shrub or small tree that invades woodlands, forest edges, fence rows and urban green spaces. It can grow into large thickets, crowding out all other plants. Its large thorns make it especially problematic.

It grows from 8 to 30 ft. (2.4-9.1 m) high. The leaves are alternate, compound with three leaflets (trifoliate), up to 2 in. (5.1 cm) long and have a winged petiole. The twigs are green with stout, 1 in. (2.5 cm) or more long thorns. The bark is conspicuously green-striped. Spring flowers are white, 5-petaled, 1-2 in. (2.5-5.1 cm) in diameter and showy. Its fruit looks like a dull miniature orange, 1.5-2 in. (3.8-5.1 cm) in diameter, with a downy skin.

Hardy orange spreads mainly by dispersal of the fruit, which contain several seeds. Fruit can be carried downstream, where they come to rest in bottomlands; the several seeds then sprout, creating a new population.

Trifoliate orange was introduced from northern China as an ornamental due to its unique form and green color, beauty when flowering, and interest provided when fruiting. It was likely also planted as impenetrable hedges. Due to its hardy nature it is often used as rootstock for citrus trees.

Trifoliate orange needs to be watched closely since it can easily become established and create even more competition for desirable trees in forest settings. To prevent the spread of trifoliate orange, do not plant it; choose alternative plants, and eradicate the plants you find outside of a landscaped setting. Control can be achieved by hand pulling seedlings or, for larger specimens, the cut-stump application of an herbicide. Contact your local Texas A&M Forest Service or AgriLife office for specific recommendation and as always follow label directions. To be safe use basic precautions like gardening gloves, long pants & long sleeved shirts, and eye protection.

In Texas this invasive plant is found in mainly in the eastern woods. It is found throughout the southern United States and up into Pennsylvania.

(Some information for this article comes from [this link](#))

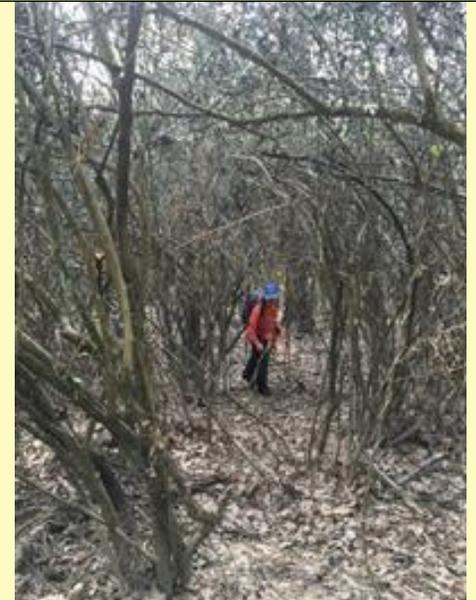
Follow [this link](#) for more information on hardy orange



Photographer: John D. Boyd  
Source: Mississippi State University,  
Bugwood.org



Credit: Diann Mabus, citizen scientist,  
Invaders of Texas



Infestation in Big Thicket National  
Preserve. Note there is nothing growing  
under the thicket.  
Credit: Hans Landel, Lady Bird Johnson  
Wildflower Center

## Fall Migration on the Upper Coast

<https://houstonaudubon.org/birding/resources/fall.html>

[Fall Coastal Landbird Migration](#) Analysis by Don Verser

[Smith Point Hawk Watch](#)

[Migratory Flyways of North America](#)

[A Birdwalk at Bolivar Flats](#)



Kathy Adams Clark

Houston's position on the Central Flyway makes it a hotspot for fall migration. The Upper Texas Coast witnesses a steady flow of migratory birds beginning as early as July and lasting through November. Many species hug the coastline on their way to South and Central America for the winter. Read more on the Migratory Flyways of North America on the Texas Parks and Wildlife web site.

### Shorebirds

Excerpt from "A Birdwalk at Bolivar Flats" by Cin-Ty Lee of Rice University.

By the first week of July fall migration has commenced as southbound dowitchers, Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Piping Plovers, and Black-bellied Plovers start to arrive. All of these will be adults in full breeding plumage. However, their breeding plumages will be duller and more worn-out than when we last saw them in April. This is because their plumage has had to weather two long-distance trips. Now some of these fall arrivals will actually stay to winter and some will continue on to more southerly locations. The former will molt into their winter plumages and the latter will just keep on going. In August, the major influx of juvenile birds will finally arrive. These will be characterized by beautiful, crisp clean plumages. The passage of juvenile birds will continue through September with some bleeding into October. By November, most of the southbound shorebird migration has stopped and the composition of shorebirds at Bolivar stabilizes.

### Hawks

Hawk migration begins in August. Within the city limits in August, Mississippi Kites soaring overhead are a common sight. Later in the season, kettles of Broad-winged Hawks may sometimes be spotted. To fully appreciate hawk migration, though, visit Smith Point on the Bolivar Peninsula, site of one of the best hawk watches in the country. Hawks and many other species are naturally funneled to the tip of the peninsula where Smith Point is located. The Smith Point Hawk Watch is sponsored by the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, which has built a 40 foot hawk tower. Counters and volunteers are at the Hawk Watch daily August 1 through November 15. More information about the Smith Point Hawk Watch can be found on the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory web site.

### Hummingbirds

Migration begins in July and lasts through October; peak numbers are in September.

### Swifts and Swallows

Peak numbers for Purple Martins are in July and August. The largest congregations of Chimney Swifts are in September and October. Not as well-known are the spectacular numbers of swallows, particularly Barn and Tree, which may be seen along the coast August through October.

## Fall Migration on the Upper Coast *(Continued)*

### Fall Landbird Migration on the Coast

*Birding is most often an adventure to observe migration. But migration is not one way and most all spring migrants can also be found in the fall. Some landbirds such as Chuck-will's-widow, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Mourning Warbler and Canada Warbler are actually more common on the coast in the fall than in the spring. To fully appreciate the migration of landbirds try birding the coast in the fall starting in August or even July!*

*In early July the Black-and-white Warbler reappears and is suddenly very common on the coast and for me this marks the start of the fall landbird migration. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher appears on the coast in late July and quickly becomes abundant in the first week of August. It is also interesting how Least Flycatchers become common at the end of July. Also, Louisiana Waterthrush is a very early migrant and the time to see it as a fall migrant is July and early August.*

*Empidonax flycatchers are especially common in August so this is a good time to study this particularly difficult group and attempt to learn their call notes. You may find that at times Yellow-bellied Flycatchers are abundant in the woods and that Alder Flycatchers are more common than Willow Flycatchers.*

*View the full article and Don Verser's spreadsheet of Fall Migration Data linked above. The data is presented as graphs and allows for species comparison.*

## National Park Service and Google offer online tours *By Paula Dittrick, TMNCPC Blogmaster*

*The National Park Service celebrated its 104-year birthday on Aug. 25 by waiving the entry fee to the parks. Free entry also will be offered on National Public Lands Day, Sept. 26, and Veterans Day, Nov. 11.*

*But if you cannot get away for travel, you can take a virtual tour. [Google Arts & Culture](#) worked with rangers from five national parks to explore the individual parks where the rangers are stationed.*

*You virtually descend into an icy crevasse, kayak around icebergs, and watch how a glacier melts at [Kenai Fjords National Park](#), Alaska. Nahuku Lava Tube, which is a cave formed by flowing lava, is featured for a visit to volcanoes at [Hawaii Volcanoes National Park](#), Hawaii.*

*A park ranger takes you 750 feet underground in [Carlsbad Caverns National Park](#), New Mexico, discovered by a Texas ranch hand who saw bats flying out of the caverns.*

*You can see the red rocks of [Bryce Canyon National Park](#), Utah, during an online tour that involves both day and night hikes. There is no need to charter a boat or a plane to get to see [Dry Tortugas National Park](#), Florida, on a virtual tour.*



National Park Service Reine Wonite

## So Far to Go.....from The Prairie Ecologist

Posted on [August 24, 2020](#) by [Chris Helzer](#)  
Sent to Facebook by Robbin Mallett, TMNCPC Communications Director

*If you've followed this blog any length of time, you know that one of my objectives is to show people the wonderful, fascinating aspects of nature, including the insects and other small creatures that can be found right in their backyards. By sharing the amazing natural history stories of those tiny animals, I hope to build empathy and admiration for 'bugs'. I do this knowing that many (most?) people see invertebrates as bothersome, icky, or even scary – and that those attitudes are not likely to lead to conservation support.*

*I've made small gains through my writing/photography, as well as by engaging directly with kids and adults. Give me 2 minutes with just about anyone and I can have them holding a spider and exclaiming that they can't believe they're doing it. I love hearing from people how much my stories about insects have enriched their understanding and even their comfort level with them. But then I read stories like [this one](#) and I want to just crawl into a hole and cry. I hate to even provide the link because I don't want to drive more traffic to it, but it's just so bad...*

*The author of the NBC online article shares her traumatic experiences related to moving out of the city and into the suburbs. Primarily her trauma came from the fact that there were insects (INSECTS!) all over the place. Oh, the horror! She details how she fought back against the awful creatures that had the audacity to live where she did.*

*See, I'm already falling into the trap... I'm not really mad at Pat Olsen for her perspective on insects. (However, I am a little mad that she wrote the article the way she did, and even angrier that NBC published it – especially with such a stupid headline.) Mostly, it's a sobering reminder of how far we have to go if we're going to make nature relevant to the majority of humans. Since most humans live in cities now, our job is even harder – we have to help them understand and care about something they don't have easy access to.*

*Writing and photography is one way to reach people in cities, but it's not enough. We have to bring nature to cities – and interpret it for people living there. Pat says she contacted several university extension staff (and read articles) to learn how to get rid of the pests in her yard. I don't know what those extension folks told her directly, but I read the same articles she did and certainly didn't reach the same conclusions she did about the 'infestations' she was dealing with. That's not completely her fault, it's also a failing on the part of the writers of those articles.*

*The worst misinterpretation came from Pat's research on cicada killer wasps. The extension article said multiple times that the wasps are no threat to humans, but also provided ways to deal with those harmless creatures if people were made uncomfortable by them. That, unfortunately, included swatting them with a tennis racket, which then found its way into the click bait headline. I'm guessing Pat is a person who thinks pandas and eagles are pretty nice. I'll bet she has at least passive support for conservation efforts that keep those species around. What's frustrating is that she isn't drawing a link between the tiny invertebrates she abhors and the species she admires.*

*We in the conservation world need to clearly draw that link for her, and others like her, and help her see that we can only have pandas and eagles (and clean air and water, for that matter) if we also have the complex and interconnected ecosystems that support them. And yes, those ecosystems include bugs...*



**Photos by Chris Helzer/The Nature Conservancy**





## The Storage Containers Have Arrived for our 8-seat Passenger Cart

By Lynn Trenta, SCNP Habitat Gardens Coordinator



*Our new shipping containers to house our 8-passenger cart arrived this month! These are pretty much burglar proof. After several break-ins to our sheds at the Seabourne Prairie area, it was decided that we needed more secure storage buildings.*

*We purchased our 8-passenger cart last year for Seabourne outreach tours. At present we are storing our cart at a City of Rosenberg facility and it is not easily obtained.*

*Jerry Trenta, Seabourne Director, has begun work on the containers and plans are being made to add shelving and paint the containers. There has been talk of painting a mural, which would be a fun project.*

*Many thanks to Jerry for his work on procuring and receiving these containers. We are looking forward to having these secure containers for our cart and other equipment as well as being able to use our cart for outreach.*

## In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

### Frogs and Toads *Photo and Text by Diane Eismont*

*Frogs and toads need constant access to fresh water. In hot, dry weather the frogs and toads in our yard appreciate a low container filled with water - which they do not drink - but sit in, to absorb the water through their skin. The container should be one they can easily get in and out of, as otherwise they could drown.*

*The green frog is a Pickerel Frog. Pickerel frogs are generally brown or tan. To ID, look for Rectangular Spots in two columns down the back and light lines on either side of the back. The long hind legs are banded. Max size is about 3 ½ inches. Pickerel frogs have secretions from their skin glands that are poisonous and may cause skin irritation, but also help protect them from predators. They eat ants, spiders & beetles and are eaten by ribbon & other snakes. They are found throughout East Texas, are primarily nocturnal, & hibernate from October to March. This photo was taken at 6:32 PM.*

*The other photo is of a Gulf Coast Toad. To ID, note the light stripe on the centerline of the back & side and along the mouth. Maximum size is 5 1/8 inches. It is found generally in Central and South Texas. In addition to insects, it also eats slugs & snails, helping to keep the pest population down. It is eaten by racoons and birds of prey.*

*One difference between frogs and toads is that toads have shorter, less powerful legs than frogs - toads run or take small hops while frogs jump. I saw this when I carried a flowerpot into the garage and a pickerel frog jumped out of the pot in long leaps and hid. I found it the next morning lying near the pot looking dehydrated. I put it outside into a pot bottom filled with water and it did recover & returned to the pot bottom the next day to soak some more.*



## Starting Your Own Pocket Prairie

By Jim Butcher



Photo by Wayne Poorman



Photo by Lynn Trenta

*Hello nature lovers! I just got to meet the new class virtually in their training session number 2. As I mentioned at the Zoom class, I had previously handed out seed catalogs to the new folks. But, I can't do that now. I am adding information on accessing your own catalogs for the purpose of understanding the recommended steps to get started.*

*Fall is the best time to get started with the process.*

- *Step one. read the books.*
- *Step two. Start small, unless you are like Shannon.*
- *Step three. be patient. Mother nature will work at her own pace, not yours.*

*I have both a pollinator garden and a native prairie recreation in my back yard. They are surrounded by acres of a " Green Desert" of Saint Augustine grass populated mainly by ants.*

*The native plants draw in pollinators like a magnet. I started with a 10' by 20' area and a \$12.00 bag of Texas/Oklahoma mix seeds.*

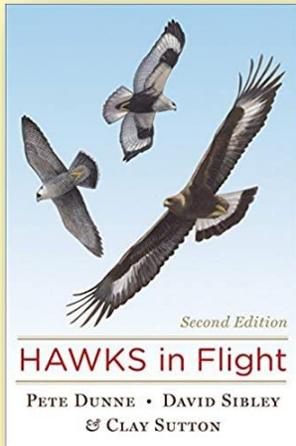
*Check the calendar for volunteer days at Seabourne and learn from other volunteers about propagating, selecting and planting additional species in your plot. See you there!*

1. [Native American Seed](#) The home page offers instructive videos and a link to the entire catalog.
2. [Wild Seed Farms Catalog](#) Phone # 1-800-848-0078
3. [prairiemoon.com](#) An outlier. Phone 1- 507-452-1362

*Call to get a free catalog, Mention you are with the chapter and they will be glad to mail you one. They are beautiful and chock full of plants and info. Good luck!*

*Jim Butcher aka Grand Poobah*

## The Book Corner



### *Hawks in flight, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*

Pete Dunne, David Sibley  
and Clay Sutton

*Among the world's most popular birds, hawks can be some of the most difficult birds to identify. They're most often seen flying high above and at a distance.*

*In the first edition of *Hawks in Flight*, Pete Dunne, David Sibley, and Clay Sutton presented a holistic method of hawk identification, using general body shape, the way they move, and the places they are most likely to be seen.*

*The new edition of the book that Roger Tory Peterson called a "landmark" integrates an array of carefully selected photographs, David Sibley's superb illustrations, and a clear, information-packed text and takes raptor identification to a higher level. This edition covers all of the raptors that breed in North America, including those with limited ranges in Florida, the Southwest, and Texas.*

*Picking up where its predecessor ended by including two decades of raptor identification refinement, *Hawks in Flight* summarizes and places in users' hands an identification skill set that used to take years to master. The unique alchemy of Dunne, Sibley, and Sutton—including their collective experience of more than one hundred years watching hawks—make this book a singular achievement and a must-have for anyone interested in hawks.*

*Written for a general audience, with spectacular images for birders and nature enthusiasts at every level, *Hummingbirds of Texas* reveals the enormous appeal of this tiniest and shiniest of birds. The book opens with a look at the many manifestations of the human attraction to these flying jewels.*

- *The Hummingbird Roundup, a citizen-science project run by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has recruited hundreds of people to feed hummingbirds and record their activities throughout the state.*
- *The Rockport–Fulton Hummer/Bird Celebration, one of several festivals dedicated to hummingbirds, draws thousands of people each fall to the Texas coast where birds gather in huge numbers before migrating south.*
- *Bird-loving landowners invite the public to enjoy hummingbirds that live and breed on their ranches.*
- *Tips make attracting hummingbirds to your own lawn or garden easy, such as what to plant in the ground or in pots and how to choose and take care of feeders.*

*The authors then showcase the nineteen different hummingbird species that have appeared in the region covered by the book. Magnificent color photographs and original artwork aid in identification and accompany descriptions, range maps, and abundance graphs for each species.*



### *Hummingbirds of Texas*

Clifford E. Shackelford  
(Author), Madge M.  
Lindsay (Author), C.  
Mark Klym (Author),  
Clemente Guzman III  
(Illustrator), & Sid and  
Shirley Rucker  
(photographers)

# The Lighter Side

Lawyer Speak (actual trial excerpts)

Q) The youngest son, the twenty-year-old, how old is he?

Q) Was it you or your younger brother who was killed in the war?

Q) How was your first marriage terminated?

A) By death

Q) And by whose death was it terminated?

Q) All your response must be oral, OK? What school did you go to?

A) Oral.

Q) Did you blow your horn or anything?

A) After the accident?

Q) Before the accident.

A) Sure, I played for ten years. I even went to school for it.

Q) Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

(Q) What gear were you in at the moment of impact

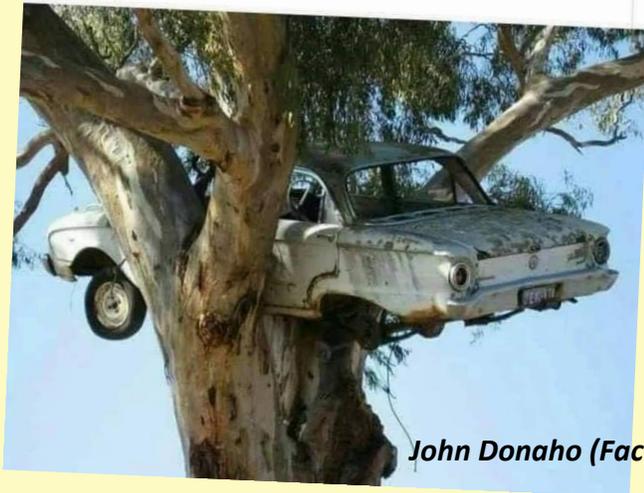
(A) Gucci sweats and Reeboks

Lynn Trenta

Can this year get any worse



Out bird watching today and got this great shot of a falcon resting in a tree. I love nature.



John Donaho (Facebook)



## Seabourne Volunteering

### TMNCPC 2020 Board Members

#### 2020 Officers

President [Bert Stipelcovich](#)  
 Vice President [Terri Hurley](#)  
 Secretary [Becky Waldo](#)  
 Treasurer [Katie Sallean](#)

#### 2020 Committee Directors

Past-President [Jerry Trenta](#)  
 Membership [Bob Naeger](#)  
 Programs [Vicki Broussard](#)  
 Communication [Robbin Mallett](#)  
 Volunteer Service Projects [Johanna DeYoung](#)  
 Advanced Training [Ramona Ridge](#)  
 New Class [Shannon Westveer](#)  
                   [Carol Hawkins](#)  
 New Class Representative  
 State Representative [Jean Stipelcovich](#)  
 Seabourne [Jerry Trenta](#)

Advisors  
[Clint Faas](#)  
[Stacie Villarreal](#)  
[Margo "Mac" McDowell](#) (Chapter Coordinator)

We are on the Web!

See us at:

[www.coastalprairie.org](http://www.coastalprairie.org)

*Chapter members can volunteer at Seabourne but need to follow the Covid 19 precautions of social distancing and wearing a mask when needed.*

*Volunteer activities can be taken on by individuals. We still can't gather in groups. Contact [Jerry Trenta](#), Seabourne Director, if you are interested in volunteering in the prairie area.*

*Volunteering in the gardens is possible, but social distancing and mask wearing (when needed) are required as in other areas of the park. If you are interested in helping with the gardens contact [Katie Sallean](#), Butterfly Garden Coordinator or [Lynn Trenta](#), Habitat Garden Coordinator. If you are interested in helping at the Bird Sanctuary contact [Bill Johnson](#).*

Our Chapter Facebook Page is at



[TXMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)

To post photos and information, email [Robbin Mallett](#)

*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>



*Check out & subscribe to our Chapter's new YouTube Channel:*  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfBuS0aMAOiFuiDHaiuNqTQ?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfBuS0aMAOiFuiDHaiuNqTQ?view_as=subscriber)

### COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

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

Check out our Chapter Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/tmncpc/>

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