

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*

Fellow Chapter Members:

This month I can report good news and good news. First, the good news... Effective October 6, the Fort Bend County COVID-19 Community Risk Level was lowered from orange (moderate/significant) to yellow (low/moderate). This means that we can now meet in groups up to 49, while continuing to practice good hygiene, social distancing, and mask wearing when distancing is not an option.

And the other good news is... the Annual Meeting!

TMN Annual Meeting

Our chapter initially volunteered to provide in-person room facilitators for the event at the Omni West Hotel in Houston. When the state program switched to an entirely virtual meeting platform using WebEx Events, we were quick to volunteer to fulfill the critical role of virtual Content Hosts — introducing speakers, informing attendees of meeting etiquette, moderating questions, and keeping presentations on time.

After six training sessions, over 30 of our chapter members filled 96 slots as Content Hosts to facilitate 48 online sessions held over four days. Feedback from the state program leadership, Michelle Haggerty, Mary Pearl Meuth, Technical Hosts, and speakers has been unanimously positive! Special thanks to Shannon Westveer for working with me behind the scenes to coordinate coverage, monitor sessions, and solve issues quickly as they arose.

In addition, our Virtual Field Trip presentation was very well received! Special thanks to Terri Hurley for leading the effort, Greg Hurley for his videography work, John Vindekilde for his editing work, and for all of the presenters in the video. Awesome job everyone!

Coastal Prairie Chapter Honored with First-Ever TMN Exemplary Service Award!

A surprise award was announced by the TMN Program Leadership at the Awards Session on the last day of the Annual Meeting. Michelle Haggerty (TMN State Program Coordinator), Mary Pearl Meuth (TMN Assistant State Program Coordinator), and the Coastal Prairie Chapter were selected as recipients of the first-ever TMN Exemplary Service Award!

[Fast forward to 46:10 for the special announcement](#) from Richard Heilbrun (TPWD Conservation Outreach Program Leader) and Todd Sink (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Wildlife & Fisheries Extension Program Unit), who serve as the TMN Program Leadership. On the following page is the transcript of the announcement---

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Please send chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter to [Lynn](#) by the 27th of the month.

Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.

***Lynn Trenta,
Courier Editor***

President's Message *(Continued)*

Todd Sink: "This has been an unprecedented and trying year, not only for TMN but for everyone. After the meeting sessions on Wednesday, I listened well into the evening hours as state TMN leadership and host chapter (the Coastal Prairie Chapter) had a meeting to discuss the events of the day and how to improve for the future. It was during this meeting — hearing everyone work so hard to overcoming issues associated with the first-ever virtual TMN meeting — that inspired me for an idea for next year. After running the idea past Richard, he had the wisdom to ask me, "Why wait until next year? Let's do it now."

*"So, with that I would like to announce a new award for TMN: **The Exemplary Service Award**. This award will represent the highest level of service to the Texas Master Naturalist organization. And it is not a lifetime work achievement or longevity award. If you notice, most of our awards are based on how many hours of service and how long of dedication. Think of this as sort of a naturalist of the year type of award because it is an award — to a volunteer and TMN staff member, a TMN working group, or a single chapter — that has exhibited exemplary service over the past previous one or two years. Think of truly Herculean effort for TMN in a very short period of time. There will not necessarily be a winner every year, as this award is reserved for the highest level of service to TMN. To win the award, the person, group, or chapter will need to demonstrate exceptional dedication and service to TMN in a short period of time or during a period of organizational crisis. This is a lifetime award, meaning an individual or working group of recipients can only win the award once, but single chapters will be eligible to win the award again after a five-year period. There will be a maximum of one award per year going forward with winners selected by TMN leadership from AgriLife and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as a team. However, in the first year of this award, there will be three recipients. Based on their exemplary service to plan and conduct this year's first ever virtual meeting in such a short period of time, it would be extremely difficult to separate the three winners, as any one of them could not have done this task without the others. I could not think of a more fitting tie or grand way to kick off the award. What these award winners have done over the past four months to pull together the first ever virtual TMN meeting for more than 1,100 participants, and then to have it run this smoothly, is in my opinion truly unprecedented. I have attended in-person conferences with more than two years of planning for less than 400 participants that have not been this well received. After just the first day of the meeting, I received numerous emails from colleagues, speakers, and attendees — some of whom I had no idea how they even knew who I was — that the meeting content, how smoothly it was going, the level of engagement and questions, the level of inclusion of this year, the technical and program support were amazing, superb, and astounding. I know these are a lot of over the top adjectives, but these were adjectives used by actual attendees and presenters in my letters.*

So please join Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Richard and myself, in congratulating the recipients of the first ever Texas Master Naturalist Exemplary Service Awards: Mary Pearl Meuth, Michelle Haggerty, and the Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists for planning and putting together this meeting. Because this was a short-notice, last-minute award, I plan to have plaques to present to you, hopefully in person, at our meeting next year. I would like to personally hand them to you and hopefully Richard will be right there to present them with me. And on a final note, I know Mary Pearl and Michelle sometimes get a little choked up and they might need just a second. I'll talk just a second longer. On one final note, I want to extend a huge thank you to the Texas Parks and Wildlife and AgriLife employees, and TMN volunteers that served as session Technical Hosts or Content Hosts. Those are people that did a lot of behind the scenes work and they don't necessarily get awards for it so we want to make sure that they are recognized. And with that, I will leave it to Richard if he would like to mention a word, or I can turn it back over to Michelle. Thank you."

Richard Heilbrun: "Hi everyone, this is Richard Heilbrun. Just a sincere congratulations to all three of those Exemplary Service Award winners. It's truly a Herculean effort and your efforts are recognized, appreciated, and valued. So, thank you for being who you are and doing what you do for the program and for the Master Naturalists and for the natural resources of the State." Continued on the next page---

President's Message (Continued)

Sat, October 17th 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Annual Awards Ceremony



Fall Class Initial Training Wraps Up!

The interns in the fall class completed their final initial training class on Thursday, October 29. Carol Hawkins, David Goff, and Jan and Kevin Kolk did a fantastic job of providing awesome speakers and great content during a pandemic. While the overwhelming majority of TMN chapters have put training class training on hold, our chapter adapted and held spring and fall classes!

Spring Class Beginning to Take Shape

The class continues filling up with interns registering early. Shannon Westveer, New Class Director (Spring), is already hard at work securing speakers and finalizing the schedule

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

All the best, Bert Stipelcovich 713-540-2378

The Membership Minute By Bob Naeger, TMN Membership Director

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

INITIAL CERTIFICATION

- ❖ Susan Fortenberry
- ❖ Katherine Grazer
- ❖ John Vindekilde

2020 RECERTIFICATION (56 MEMBERS SO FAR)

- ❖ Sal Cardenas
- ❖ Stella Davison
- ❖ Paula Dittrick
- ❖ Susie Doe
- ❖ Pam Jones
- ❖ Bob Schwartz
- ❖ Pradeep Sethi
- ❖ Erik Wolf
- ❖ Noel Zinn

The recertification pin for 2020 is the American Bumble Bee!

250 HOUR MILESTONE

- ❖ Jean Stipelcovich



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.





TNC Address Urban Problems Using Nature-Based Remedies

Text by Paula Dittrick, TMNCPC blogmaster. Photo from TMNCPC library.

Jaime Gonzalez finds himself networking between nature-related groups, city officials, and others in his wide-ranging job as the Houston Resilient Cities Director for The Nature Conservancy of Texas (TNC).

In an opening speech to the state meeting of the Texas Master Naturalists, he talked about the need to increase the value that people put upon nature. “Every child should have access to the awe of nature,” he said, emphasizing the health values that nature and green spaces provide.

“Cities are important to conservation values. They can be a real lab for innovation,” Gonzalez told the October meeting of the Texas Master Naturalists Coastal Prairie Chapter meeting. He collaborates with others to use nature to address urban issues.

Gonzalez relies on his environmental educator background and his TNC role to help tell the story of Houston’s rich biodiversity. He organizes partnerships and manages projects to make Houston a cooler and healthier city for humans.

He specializes on prairie conservation, having helped create pocket prairies in urban settings such as the MD Anderson prairie in the Texas Medical Center.

“If there’s no reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions, we can expect the average number of days with a ‘feels-like temperature’ above 105 degrees Fahrenheit to increase from 10 to 74 by 2065,” he said of the heat index.

Heat maps of various Houston neighborhoods are expected to be released later this year based upon information gathered by volunteers on a single day in August.

The information was gathered by Houston Harris County Heat Action Team ([H3AT](#)), a collaboration between TNC, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC) in The Woodlands, the city of Houston, and Harris County Public Health. H3AT’s goal is to better understand heat distribution at different times of the day across Houston’s communities and the broader Harris County. Gonzalez also is identifying ecological connections between cities and rural areas.

Before joining TNC, Gonzalez worked on ecological restoration at the Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) where he served as Community Conservation Director. Before KPC, Gonzalez worked at the Houston Arboretum.

NOVEMBER 5, 2020 PROGRAM: “Flora and Fauna of Rice University Campus” presented by Cin-Ty Lee.



This will be a Zoom meeting open to the public. Registration will be required. Check back on the [TMNCPC website](#) for Zoom registration information.

To date, 228 species of birds have been recorded at Rice. It ranks as one of the top migrant traps in Harris County. For an urban environment, Rice stands out for the number of unusual birds that have shown up over the years.

Waterbirds Nest at Pearland Rookery

Text by Paula Kolmar, 2020 fall class intern, (9/28 <https://www.facebook.com/TXMNCoastal>)

Additional colonial waterbird information from Paula Dittrick, TMNCPC blogmaster.

Photos from Pearland Parks and Recreation and by Paula Dittrick.

Scouts working on an Eagle Scout project created nesting structures for colonial waterbirds on an island in one of the lakes at the John Hargrove Environmental Complex in Pearland. Cullen Ondracek, Pearland natural resources manager, said the rookery structure is a great addition because that island has few trees. No birds nested on the artificial structures this year, but birds commonly rest there, he said.



Nesting structures built by Eagle Scout project at Pearland rookery. Photo from Pearland Parks and Recreation Department.

The John Hargrove Environmental Complex consists of about 2 miles of walking trails around two large retention ponds, a wastewater treatment facility, the Stella Roberts Recycling Center, and the Delores Fenwick Nature Center.

In June 2020, Ondracek counted 446 nesting pairs of nine colonial waterbird species on all of the John Hargrove Environmental Complex islands combined. "It is a whole lot of birds when you think about how many are actually on these islands: 466 pairs equals 932 adults, 466 pairs each with three or four chicks equals 1,631 total chicks (this is just an estimate, I do not try to count chicks), for a total of about 2,500 birds living on the islands for a few months," Ondracek said.

The Pearland colony has nine nesting species, Ondracek said, noting the term [colonial waterbird](#) only applies to select species that congregate together to nest.

Continued on the next page--

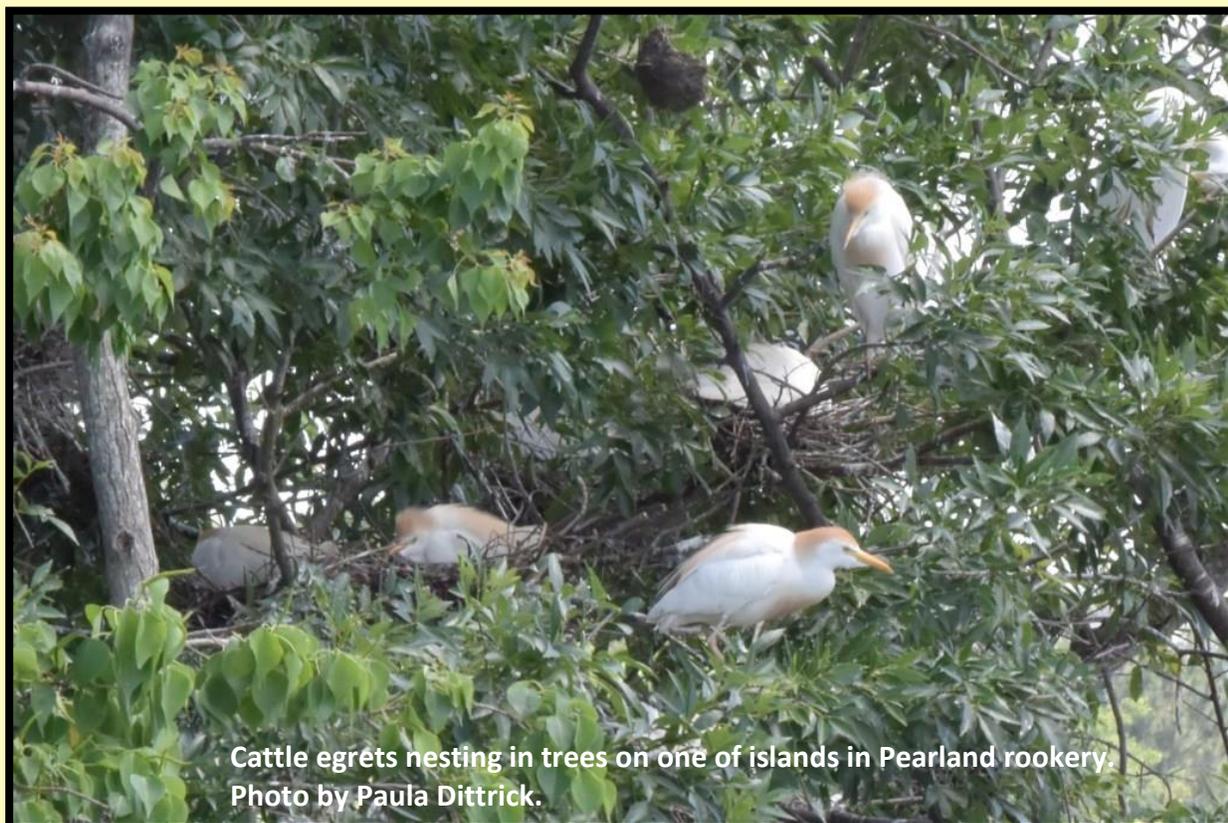


Waterbirds Nest at Pearland Rookery (Continued)

The nine species are Neotropic Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Cattle Egret, White Ibis, and Roseate Spoonbill.



Birds resting near the nesting structures built by an Eagle Scout project for the John Hargrove Environmental Complex. Photo from Pearland Parks and Recreation Department.



Cattle egrets nesting in trees on one of islands in Pearland rookery.
Photo by Paula Dittrick.



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

Covid-19 Restrictions

Although VSP opportunities continue to be limited due to COVID-19, opportunities are evolving with the restrictions easing in Fort Bend County!

CURRENT STATUS

8/7/2020: Texas A & M AgriLife Extension issued an update RE "Return to Service Health and Safety Guidelines" for Meetings/Events:

"Group meetings of 50% capacity of space or fewer people are allowed only if social distancing can be practiced with a limited capacity of 50 people."

"Face coverings are required at all events, unless the county hosting the event is exempt per the Governor's Resolution GA-29 on July 2, 2020."

10/7/2020: Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued Executive Order No. GA-32 noting "Except as provided below by paragraph No. 5, there is no occupancy limit for outdoor areas, events,..." Paragraph #5 reads: "For any outdoor gathering in excess of 10 people, including rafting, tubing, and related services, other than those set forth above in paragraph Nos. 1, 3, or 4, the gathering is prohibited unless the mayor of the city in which the gathering is held, or the county judge in the case of a gathering in an unincorporated area, approves of the gathering, and such approval can be made subject to certain conditions or restrictions not inconsistent with this executive order."

10/6/2020: Fort Bend County Judge K. P. George announced that Fort Bend County moved from an Orange to a Yellow COVID-19 Alert Status. Fort Bend County is at a "Low/Moderate Community Risk" level, and one can "Resume Careful Contact with Others".

Attendance at Events and Entertainment

"Attend events only with proper physical distancing practices in place. Opt for small to medium size events (<50 people) to avoid large group settings"

OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT

"Continue good personal protective measures such as facial coverings and physical distancing. Consider events that are less crowded and have better controls to keep you safe, such as capped numbers of attendees and good cleaning practices."

Per County Judge George, "Continue to wear masks, physically distance, and assess your risk to ensure we keep moving in the right direction. We must continue to be smart & safe."

VSP Opportunities on the next page---

Marilyne, John and Pam in the Seabourne Prairie and Habitat Garden



Volunteer Service Projects Highlights *(Continued)*

VSP Opportunities

Seabourne Volunteer Day

Come help at Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP), Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter's signature project! It is a great way to earn VSP hours; learn about butterflies and prairie plants; and enjoy time with fellow Texas Master Naturalists.

COVID-19 Precautions: Social/physical distancing must be maintained. Please have a mask/face covering in hand in the event social/physical distancing cannot be maintained with a maximum of 50 people.

There are several SCNP areas needing attention:

- *Prairie Restoration Project*
- *Butterfly Garden*
- *Bird Sanctuaries*
- *Prairie and Habitat Garden*
- *Arboretum Project*

When: Every Wednesday and 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month, from 9:00AM – 11:00 AM

Where: Seabourne Creek Nature Park @ 3831 TX-36 Rosenberg TX 77471

What to take/wear to this event: Water, sunscreen, bug repellent, gloves, closed-toe shoes, and long pants. If desired, have a sack lunch. Contact Information: Jerry Trenta, Seabourne Director, jerrytrenta@txtrentas.com

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

VSP Events

A Big Shout Out to TMN Margo Johnson for spearheading this year's "Big Sit" The Great Texas Birding Classic on Sunday, 10/25/2020. There was a great turn out for this event. Our TMNCPC Prairie Perchers sighted some 60 species!

VSP Updates

VSP Opportunity Description Change: "Keep America Beautiful Events: TMN Report Hours" changed from: "Any and all Keep America Beautiful Events that benefit Ft. Bend and Waller Counties, Cities and Towns, HOA's, all areas that benefit from Community Wide Trash Pickup"

to

"Any and all Keep America Beautiful and/or Keep Texas Beautiful events that benefit Fort Bend and Waller Counties' cities and municipalities; HOAs; all areas that benefit from Community Wide Trash Pickup".

Please continue to check the website calendar, the Weekly Bulletin, Slack, and the CPCTMN Members Only Facebook page for VSP opportunities. If there is no existing VSP description that fits a potential VSP opportunity, there is a process in place 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 Johanna DeYoung, will review the proposal and determine if it qualifies to become a VSP opportunity.

If you are aware of VSP opportunities or have questions about VSP opportunities, please contact Johanna DeYoung (832-689-4877/johanna@coastalprairie.com).

Chapter Members Win 1st in the TMN Photo/Art Contest

Congratulations to our two 1st place winners in the TMN Annual Meeting Photo/Art Contest from our chapter.

- Pauline Zinn won 1st place for her photo of a fanciful snowy egret in the bird photography category
- Amber Leung won 1st place for her artwork depicting four extinct species of birds – the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, Carolina Parakeet, Passenger Pigeon and Eskimo curlew.

Viewing Texas Master Natur...

Photography: Birds



Birds:

1st Place

Pauline Zinn,
Coastal Prairie Chapter
"Snowy Egret"

Viewing Texas Master Natur...

Photo, Art and Media Contest: Drawing or Painting

1st Place Drawing or Painting

Amber Leung,
Coastal Prairie Chapter
"Gone But Not Forgotten"





How Did I Become a Content Host? *By John Rouane, Spring 2019 Class*

As a Montana Native, how did I volunteer as a content host for the TMN 2020 Annual Meeting? After a thirty-six-year career with USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, one would think I would know enough about the environment. Unfortunately, this is not the case for me. Here in Texas there are a lot of variation from the plants and animals in my wheelhouse of knowledge.

I became interested in Texas Master Naturalist program because the Coastal Prairie is much different than the Eastern prairies of Montana. There is Little Bluestem in some areas of Montana that was easy to distinguish because of its distinctive red color. Did you know there are over thirty cultivars of native and introduced bluestems in Texas? This lack of knowledge drove me to learn more about the Coastal Prairie.

In 2019, I joined the November birdwatch at Seabourne Nature Park. Due to rainy foggy weather the watch was cancelled. Still, I was there and wanted to see all the special areas of interest the park provided. After a brief visit with Bob and Margo Johnson I was invited to join the Spring 2020 class. After about four weeks, Spring class faced the dreaded Covid-19 Pandemic. This crimped the remaining field trips, and all remaining classes were held virtually.

The pandemic affected everyone. The TMN annual meeting was faced with cancellation or a virtual program. Mary Pearl Meuth and others made the decision to move forward with hosting a virtual annual meeting. All past tools had to be shifted and modified to the guidelines for the new platform.

Chapter President Bert Stipelcovich had already committed to have Coastal Prairie volunteers assist with session moderators, assisting the speakers, etc. With some adjustments, the Content Host idea was born. For about a month before the meeting thirty volunteers met virtually for training. The virtual experience for over 1100 registrants was going forward. Content hosts assisted by introducing the speaker, setting the rules of etiquette, answering questions and kept the sessions on time. At first, it was concerning for the content hosts to successfully carry out their roles. After the first evening huddle, the volunteers gained more confidence and were more prepared to do their jobs in the six tracks of sessions for three more days. During the Awards Ceremony Bert Stipelcovich and Coastal Prairie received the esteemed recognition of first ever lifetime achievement award. All Coastal Prairie members can be proud of their effort of making the 2020 TMN Virtual Annual meeting such a success.

In the meantime, my Volunteer Service hours doubled. I spent a lot of time working on my back yard. With guidance from Shannon Westveer and Mark Morgenstern, the final touches are being made for the Prairie Garden in our backyard along with the raised beds and a Fairy Garden.

My good friend Margo Johnson hosted the first ever Seabourne Big Sit 2020. The field meeting with others was great. I learned more about birds but the shared experience with other Master Naturalists was priceless. I look forward to more gatherings after the pandemic and the happy days to come.





Lynn Goes to the TMN Annual Meeting: Three of My Favorite Presentations *(These are my titles, not theirs)* By Lynn Trenta, Courier Editor

Bee Houses Encouraged by Speaker Carol Clark

This is a follow up on the article about bee houses not being safe for bees in last month's Courier. At the TMN Annual Meeting I took a class about native bees and Carol Clark talked about bee houses. She stated that bee houses are safe as long as you change out the tubes or discard the wooden ones with holes drilled into them at least every two years or when needed to keep them clean. We do not have to bring in bee houses in the winter in our area she stated. She illustrated some examples of bee houses. She gave us information about how to identify native bees as well as so much other information about these wonderful creatures. carol@r-d-clark.com



Bee ID Tips

- Size
- Pattern of colors
- Shape
- Habits
- Nest type
- Odd features—tufts, brushes, spikes, hooks



LICHEN ID CHEAT SHEET

- Substrate
- Growth form
 - Foliose, crustose, fruticose, etc.
- Reproduction structures
 - Sexual:
 - Buttons (foliose/fruticose)
 - Buttons, pimple, or scripts (crustose)
 - Asexual (soredia, isidia, etc)
- Special characters
 - cilia, pseudocyphellae, cyphellae, etc.
- Anatomy
- Chemical Spot Tests



• Cladoniaceae
• Parmeliaceae (including Usnea)



Lichens are Fascinating!

SOME COMMON LICHENS



Photo: L. Geiser
Peltigera

Another great presentation at the TMN Annual Meeting was the one about Lichens by Manuela Dal Forno, a research scientist at BRIT. She gave a fascinating talk about these often overlooked life forms. Her beautiful photos were amazing and she inspired all of us to get out there and start studying lichens! mdalforno@brit.org

Let's Get Native Plants Out There!

Jean Ponzi gave an inspiring talk about how St. Louis Missouri has gotten native plants into the mainstream commercial native plant nursery business ! This is definitely an amazing accomplishment. Our area struggles to keep up with the demand for native plants and we can learn a lot from these organizations who accomplished this fantastic feat. The Missouri Botanical Garden is a highly respected source of information about native plants jponzi@mobot.org





Seabourne Prairie Perchers Spy 60 Bird Species at Chapter's 1st "Big Sit" *By Robbin Mallett, TMNCPC Communications Director*

On a cloudy Sunday morning, members of the Coastal Prairie Chapter flocked to Seabourne Creek Nature Park to participate in the Big Sit. With chairs, binoculars and cameras in hand, the Seabourne Prairie Perchers took up positions inside a 50-foot circle near the Prairie Demo Garden to identify as many bird species as possible in one day.

Early birds Bill and Margo Johnson, Jo and Hannah Willars and Robbin Mallett were at the park before sunrise. They were soon joined by our ringer, Mark Scheuerman, who is highly skilled at IDing birds by their calls, and lots of chapter members, including several from the Fall training class. Additional members arrived to take shifts throughout day. Experienced birders called out sightings and used spotting scopes to identify distant birds and help newer birders get good views.

It was the chapter's first time to compete in the Great Texas Birding Classic – the biggest, longest, wildest birdwatching tournament in the U.S. For the first time ever, this annual Spring event was moved to the Fall due to the public health crisis. Our team was sponsored by the Rosenberg Development Corporation and was one of eight teams competing in the Big Sit Tournament in the Upper Texas Coast region.

Throughout the month of October, 138 teams from across the state competed in the 24th Annual Birding Classic in multiple categories. The tournament is sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and habitat conservation grants are awarded from event sponsorship and registration fees.

Continued on the Next Page---



Seabourne Prairie Perchers Spy 60 Bird Species at Chapter's 1st Big Sit (Continued)

By 11:30 am, the Prairie Perchers had identified 56 species including Pine Siskins, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Crested Caracaras, Vermillion Flycatcher, Indigo Bunting, Northern Flicker and several species of swallows. By the end of the day, the official tally was up to 60 species, a great number, though it won't be enough to beat the teams from locations along the coast where shorebirds really boost the totals. Click here to see the full eBird List <https://ebird.org/checklist/S75408859>

Thanks to Margo Johnson for coordinating our first Big Sit. It was fun to spend some time together outdoors. Please share any feedback or suggestions for next year via the Big Sit channel on Slack or by emailing Margo.

If you missed the Big Sit, but are interested in birding at Seabourne, mark your calendars for the monthly guided bird hikes which are held the first Wednesday of the month from October through May. Currently, face masks are required, and we may split into groups to keep numbers small. To join an upcoming walk, dress for the weather and meet in the parking lot at 8 am.





New Bird Species Identified at Seabourne Creek Nature Park

By Carol Schwartz, Seabourne Bird Hike Co-Leader

A great new addition to the Seabourne Creek Nature Park Bird List was added as a result of the first Bird Hike of the new season. It is a Virginia Rail - #205 for the park! What a gem!

The many improvements made at SCNP over the years, under the direction of the Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter and in cooperation with the City of Rosenberg Parks Department, can be credited for attracting this and many other wonderful bird species.

The Virginia Rail was spotted very briefly by e-Bird expert, Mark Scheuerman, in the wetlands area of the park. This occurred while leading one of two groups during the first bird hike of the new season. Regrettably, due to its elusive nature and excellent camouflage in a marsh environment, the second group of participants, led by Bob Schwartz, was not in the same area and, therefore, was unable to view it.

The monthly bird hikes in SCNP are held on the first Wednesday of the month, October – May. The bird hikes are open to the public and are free. Currently, masks are required and group sizes will be restricted to 10 or less during the pandemic.



https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Virginia_Rail

Seabourne Creek Nature Park Project Ideas Needed

By Jerry Trenta, TMNCPC Seabourne Director



It's the time of the year when we start to prepare our RDC Grant Request for the next year. SNF is usually the largest piece of the RDC Grant budget. In past years we generally highlight one or two SCNP projects in addition to SNF. In 2019 we focused on the floating dock replacement. In 2020 we highlighted the touring cart garage (which was changed to container barns due to security concerns) and prairie pathway improvement. With SNF being cancelled, we focused on putting aeration in Seabourne Lake, improving and extending the prairie pathways by about a half a mile, and the improvement / expansion of the purple martin housing.

So, we are now looking for appropriate projects to put into the 2021 request. One possible project is the addition of permanent educational and interpretative signage along the prairie pathways and/or in the two gardens. We are starting a new signage committee to come up with what we can do and how it can be accomplished. I would expect this type of project to be in the \$7000-\$9000 range based on permanent signage we've used in the past.

We are putting SNF into the budget, but it may not occur if the COVID situation is not resolved in time. As such we should have several possible projects in our back pocket to take its place. Any idea is worthy of consideration. Please let me know if you have an idea on how to improve the park or improve the use of the park for the public.



Seabourne Lake Aerator
Photo by Jerry Trenta



Photos from Willowfork Park, by Jerry Trenta



Prairie/Habitat Garden Plant Label with added photo and wildlife symbols put together by Pam Jones, Spring 2019 Member Photo by Lynn Trenta

In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

Diamondback Water Snake *Photos and Text by Diane Eismont*

One evening about 6:45 PM, coming back from picking up a cattle dish in the pasture, I was going by our 300 gallon water tank, when I saw a snake swimming in there, about 18 inches long. I had never seen a snake in one of the water tanks before! The tank has plants and lots of Mosquito fish (Gambusia) in it. I had fish food with me to feed the fish on the way back, so I threw some in and the fish swarmed over to eat it. The snake immediately came, followed and tried to catch a fish in his mouth. I have since read that they swim in figure 8's with their mouths open to catch fish and I did see him catch and swallow one after various tries.

They are said to be primarily nocturnal, abundant, and vigorous biters if cornered. They have a network of diamond-shaped lines across the back. (They are nonvenomous and not to be confused with the Diamondback Rattlesnake or Western Cottonmouth.)



In Our Own Backyards and Other Places (Continued)

Encounter with a Cooper's Hawk *Photos and Text by Robbin Mallett*

I had a surprising encounter with a young Cooper's Hawk today. I was on my way into the Market at Town Center shopping center when I saw the hawk in a puddle on the street right in front of me. Of course, I had my camera with me, so I grabbed it, but there were cars behind me, so I drove on. The hawk didn't fly away but stared at me through my open window as I slowly drove past. I parked and got out to take some more shots. This hawk was so determined to bathe in that puddle that it would sit there as cars drove within inches. I was afraid it would be hit. It flew into a nearby tree once or twice, but then flew back down for more.



A Blast From the Past



Karl Baumgartner's Lavaca Property March 2015



Stacy Roussel/Mark Morgenstern Field Trip 2017

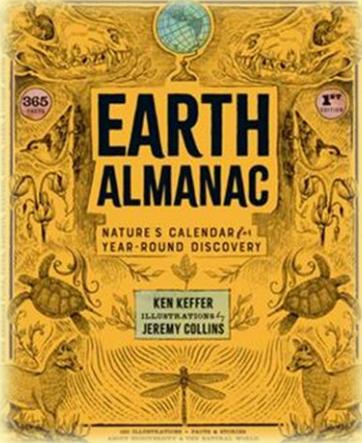


Herpetology Field Trip 2015



Chapter Meeting January 2013

The Book Corner



Earth Almanac

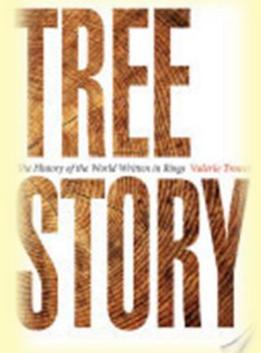
Ken Keffer

Earth Almanac presents the greatest hits of North American nature. Structured around phenology, which is the study of seasonal patterns in nature, the day-by-day descriptions offer insight into activities and connections throughout the natural world. Beginning with the Winter Solstice in December, Earth Almanac highlights a wide range of natural history, including mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, insects, intertidal and marine life, trees, plants, fungi, weather phenomenon, geology, astronomy, notable environmental activists, and more, and reveals the ebb and flow of nature across the planet. Each season features more than 90 entries, and sidebars throughout provide calls to environmental action, citizen science opportunities, and details on special dates or holidays. The book can be enjoyed one day, month, or season at a time--dip in and out as you observe the world around you.

Children around the world know that to tell how old a tree is, you count its rings. Few people, however, know that research into tree rings has also made amazing contributions to our understanding of Earth's climate history and its influences on human civilization over the past 2,000 years. In her captivating new book, Tree Story, Valerie Trouet reveals how the seemingly simple and relatively familiar concept of counting tree rings has inspired far-reaching scientific breakthroughs that illuminate the complex interactions between nature and people.

Trouet, a leading tree-ring scientist, takes us out into the field, from remote African villages to radioactive Russian forests, offering readers an insider's look at tree-ring research, a discipline formally known as dendrochronology. Tracing her own professional journey while exploring dendrochronology's history and applications, Trouet describes the basics of how tell-tale tree cores are collected and dated with ring-by-ring precision, explaining the unexpected and momentous insights we've gained from the resulting samples.

Blending popular science, travelogue, and cultural history, Tree Story highlights exciting findings of tree-ring research, including the fate of lost pirate treasure, successful strategies for surviving California wildfire, the secret to Genghis Khan's victories, the connection between Egyptian pharaohs and volcanoes, and even the role of olives in the fall of Rome. These fascinating tales are deftly woven together to show us how dendrochronology sheds light on global climate dynamics and uncovers the clear links between humans and our leafy neighbors. Trouet delights us with her dedication to the tangible appeal of studying trees, a discipline that has taken her to austere and beautiful landscapes around the globe and has enabled scientists to solve long-pondered mysteries of Earth and its human inhabitants.

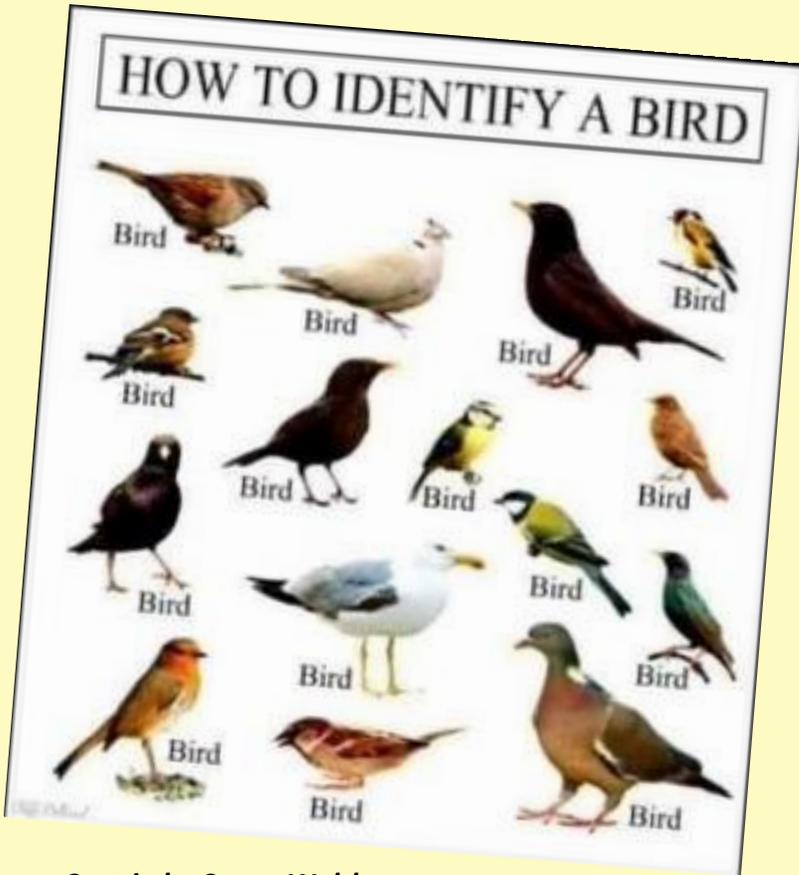


Tree Story: The History of the World Written in Rings

Valerie Trouet

Winner of the Jan Wolkers Prize, Named an April 2020 New and Noteworthy Book by The New York Times

The Lighter Side



Sent in by Susan Walthers

IN A SPAN OF 11 YEARS
115 PEOPLE DIED IN A
WEIGHTLIFTING ACCIDENT
AT THE GYM.

IN THE SAME 11 YEARS
ONLY 1 PERSON DIED
EATING A DONUT.

MAKE GOOD CHOICES.

auntv acid

John Donaho (Facebook)

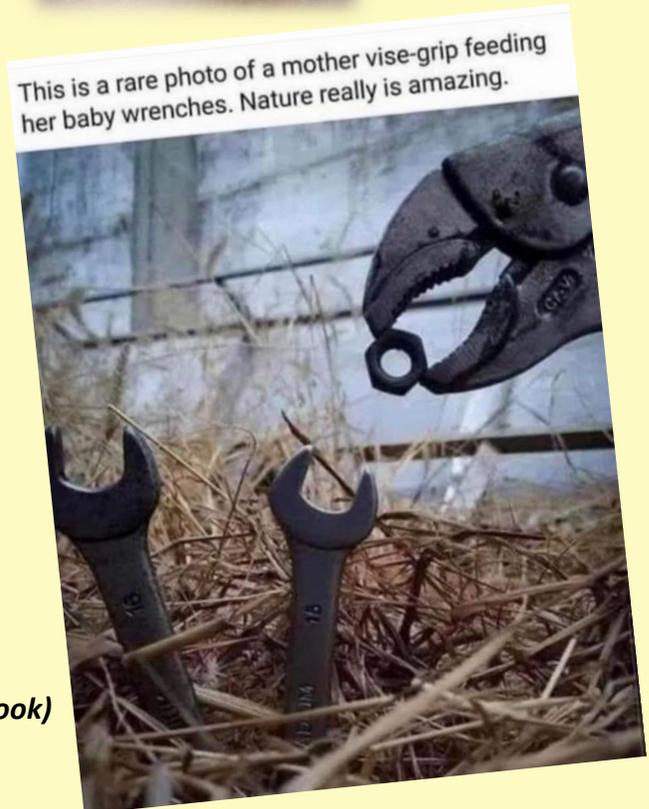


Ramona Ridge (Facebook)
This is an earring!



"Bad news, its curiosity"

Julie Gentry (Facebook)



This is a rare photo of a mother vise-grip feeding her baby wrenches. Nature really is amazing.

Jean Stipelcovich (Facebook)



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We are on the Web!

See us at:

www.coastalprairie.org

Texas Master Naturalist attracts record attendance to 2020 meeting

[AgriLife Today] Shared by Robbin Mallett on our chapter Members Only TMNCPC Facebook

More than 1,170 attendees tuned in virtually to the annual meeting hosted by the [Texas Master Naturalist Program](#) on Oct. 14-17 to learn about a variety of topics relating to nature, natural resource management and conservation.

Check out the rest of this article from AgriLife Today at [TMN 2020 Annual Meeting](#)

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:
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