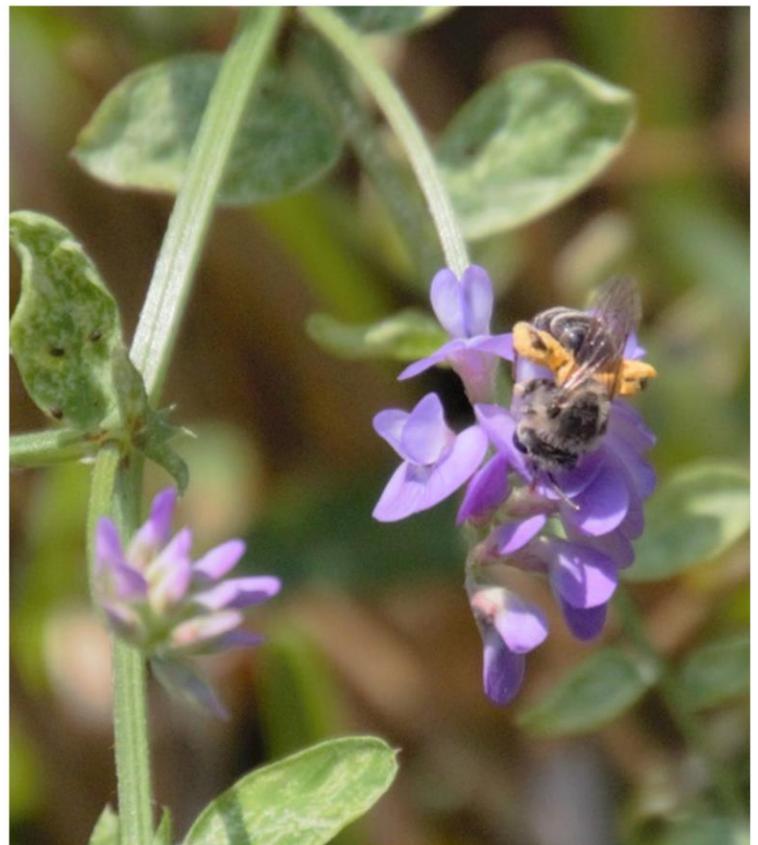
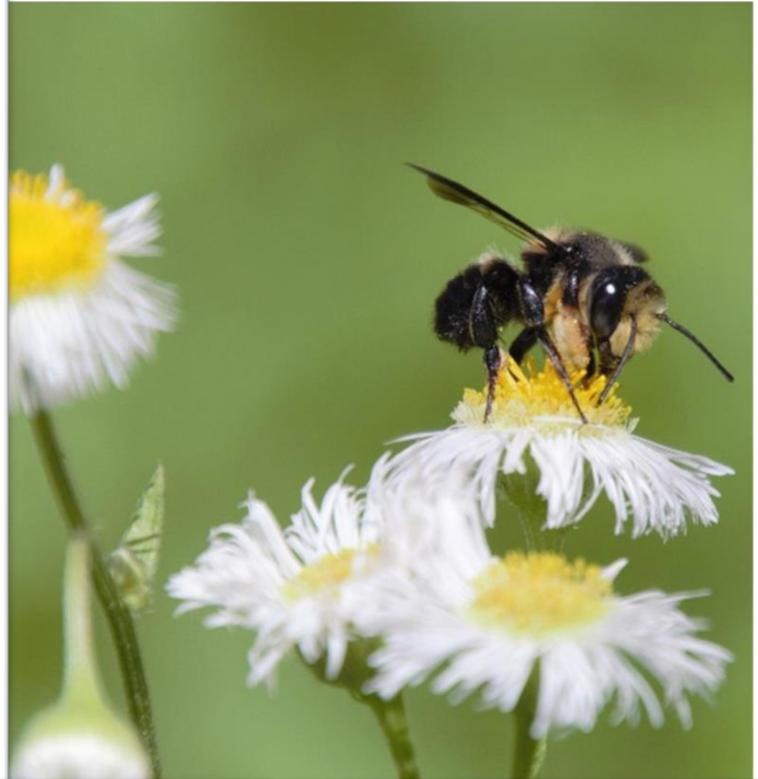


Coastal Prairie Chapter Courier

April 2022 Volume 10 Issue 4



Inside This Issue

Texas Welcomes Migrating Monarchs
Houston Rodeo Outreach Fun
Annual SCNP Tree Planting Springs Up



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 Terri Hurley TMNCPC President

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Exciting news! Fort Bend County is finally, finally in the GREEN risk level for COVID-19. It's hard to believe it's finally here, after two long years of restrictions that prevented us from doing practically anything in-person. The world is opening up again and there are activities and volunteer opportunities aplenty for us.



April 7 Monthly Program in Person: Chapter members will finally be able to meet face-to-face in our beautiful new meeting location at the Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land. **To attend in person, chapter members must register in advance through SignUp Genius,** which will be emailed to all members. Another option is Zoom. Chapter members and the public may attend via Zoom by registering in advance. The Zoom registration link will be posted on our website a couple days before the meeting.

The presenter for the April 7 meeting is also planning to attend in person, so let's give him a great turnout! Our own Dr. Ron Masters will talk about "Understanding the Climate Predicament." Human activity is now a significant driver of climate change, with incremental environmental degradation and sporadic weather catastrophes. Learn about concepts that help us understand how much and how fast our world is changing, and what options we have for mitigation and adaptation.

Seabourne Nature Fest: Keep an eye out for the first planning meeting for our next SNF in spring 2023. Jim Butcher and Bert Stipelcovich have recruited a wonderful new point man who will lead the planning committee and his name is John Rouane. Thank you, John! It will be a pleasure working with you on the committee.



Cover
Spring insects
photographed by
Shannon
Westveer.



Niagara "Perk Your Park" Grant Submitted: Our grant writing team finished our very strong application for this \$75,000 grant in record time! Our project is entitled "Arboretum at Seabourne Creek" and will consist of 6 acres of newly-planted, mature native trees, new crushed granite pathways and ADA-accessible picnic tables, plus irrigation and flood control.

Please send articles and photos by the 25th of the month to Lynn Trenta, Courier Editor. Thanks!

Ten semi-finalists will be announced in mid-April and each will then get \$2000 to promote their project to the community for voting. The three projects that get the most votes are the winners of \$75,000 each! If we win this grant, we'll need a team and a project leader!

Continued on the next page--

President's Message *(continued)*

Volunteer Hours are Worth the Big Bucks! Did you know that all of the volunteer service hours we enter into VMS get reported to our Texas Parks and Wildlife Department sponsors? TPWD uses nationally-accepted values for each hour of volunteer work reported. Currently that value for the TMN program is about \$20 per hour! **For 2021, our chapter reported over 16,000 hours of volunteer service, which were valued at over \$320,000!** TPWD applies for federal grants to support the work they do, including sponsoring the TMN program.

This federal program awards grants to TPWD with our service used as in-kind match. So please take the time to keep track of the hours you work and then be sure to enter them into VMS in a timely manner. It's worth the big bucks!



Membership Minute

By Jan and Kevin Kolk, Membership Directors



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

Initial Certification

- Neil Lisco Fall, 2021
- Sandra Gardner Spring, 2020

2022 Recertification

- Scott Tufts Fall, 2021
- Jan Kolk Spring, 2020
- Susan Walther 2011
- Kevin Kolk Spring, 2020
- Izzy Retiz 2019
- Shari Lewis Fall, 2020
- Lynn Trenta 2011
- Hoiman Low Spring, 2021
- Terri Hurley 2017
- Greg Hurley Fall, 2020

Membership Minute *Continued*

250 Hour Milestone

- *Marilyne Malone Fall, 2020*
- *Lucy Randel Spring, 2021*

1000 Hour Milestone

- *Jamie Fairchild 2012*
- *Carol Schwartz 2012*

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I get VSP hours for picking up trash in parks and other public places?

Yes. Log it under the opportunity "Keep America Beautiful". (Note: this does not include picking up after family members or taking out your weekly trash!)

2. I didn't catch the VMS logging information from the last chapter meeting. What should I do?

Check the SLACK channel '#meetings-minutes-and-reports' for the minutes of the meeting. Susan documents the time on the last page of the report. (Thank you, Susan!)

3. Can I leave the description section of the VMS posting blank?

Please don't. The approvers need to know in what county the activity occurred, the organization or person sponsoring the activity, and your participation. (Don't worry, no need for a long epistle - "just the facts".)



Chapter Meeting: “Understanding the Climate Predicament: Data, Concepts, Economies, & Ecosystems” By Dr. Ron Masters



Human activity is now a significant driver of climate change, with incremental environmental degradation and sporadic weather catastrophes. Concepts like carbon budget, net zero emissions, positive feedback, ocean acidification, afforestation, and carbon sequestration help us understand how much and how fast our world is changing, and what options we have for mitigation and adaptation.

Ron Masters has a PhD in Physics from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Retired from decades of Exploration and Research with Shell and ARCO, he has worked in Houston, New Orleans, Rijswijk, London and Plano, and has traveled extensively in the Americas, Europe, and Asia.

He volunteered in various capacities for the Society of Exploration Geophysicists. He has also followed several academic consortia and co-organized industrial workshops on Carbon Capture and Sequestration.

NOTE: This will be both in person and a Zoom meeting and is free and open to the public. Advance registration is required. Check back here a couple days before the presentation for the Zoom registration link. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Please join us for a great presentation! Chapter members can look for the SignUpGenius to sign up to go in person.

To see previous chapter programs go to the Members' Section on the chapter website.

Volunteer Service Projects Highlights 3/22

By Johanna DeYoung, Membership Director



At last, and it came very quickly! On 3/4/2022, Fort Bend County moved from COVID Orange to COVID Yellow status. And then on 3/21/2022, just 17 days later, Fort Bend County moved from COVID Yellow to COVID Green status.

As a chapter within the State TMN Program, the TMNCPC assumes and applies the highest risk level within our jurisdiction (Fort Bend, Waller, and Wharton Counties), as well as, within other neighboring counties we serve.

CURRENT STATUS

3/21/2022: Fort Bend County moved from a Yellow COVID Risk Level, “Low/Moderate Community Risk”, to a Green COVID Risk Level, “Minimal Community Risk”. This level involves the following as it applies to the TMNCPC:

“Resume normal contact with others unless sick. Resume attending public and private gatherings freely. Resume visiting vulnerable populations while practicing good hygiene and social distancing.” The Green risk description follows: “Minimum and controlled level of COVID-19 in Fort Bend County. New chains of transmission are rare.”

Texas Master Naturalist members or members of the public should not be asked about their vaccination status. Chapters may encourage persons in program settings to continue following CDC guidance.

There shall be NO EFFORT (including casual comments made publicly or privately) to DISCOURAGE the use of face coverings or any COVID related safety precaution. Those who wish to wear masks and practice COVID protocols should be respected and their wishes supported.”

Reminder: No more than 20 hours of VSP service outside of Fort Bend, Waller, and Wharton Counties may be counted toward certification or recertification.

Continued on the next page---

Volunteer Service Projects Highlights *(Continued)*

VSP OPPORTUNITIES

New VSP Opportunity! *Kudos to Neil Lisco! Neil submitted a proposal which was approved by the VSP Committee on 2/18/2022: "Restor.Eco: Your Home for Nature Restoration: TMN Field Research Hours" with the following description: "Providing, gathering, and/or entering data for public nature areas into Restor's online platform, properties can include city or county parks, state parks, nature preserve, etc. in the state of Texas."*

TMNCPC Big Sit

Again, and graciously, Margo Johnson is spearheading this event. Sponsorship for a Big Sit team was included in this year's RDC budget. The Big Sit will take place at Seabourne Creek Nature Park on Friday, 4/22/2022, Earth Day, with two-hour shifts from dawn to dusk. The challenge is on to surpass last year's 82 bird species count! Experts, Carol and Bob Schwartz, will be on hand to provide guidance/confirmation. For further information, please contact Margo. [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category "iNaturalist, eBird, and Other Citizen Science: TMN Report Hours"]

Spring Bird Count - James B. Harrison Long Point Ranch

Birders and those interested in learning more about birding--It's the Spring Bird Count at the James B. Harrison (JBH) Long Point Ranch, 8200 FM 1994, Richmond, TX ,77469. This event will take place on Saturday, 4/2/2022, 7:30 AM - 12:30 PM (gates open at 7:00 AM). Registration required. Link to register: <https://birdingwithjbhfound.as.me/springlongpoint> Participants are welcome to bring a sack lunch if the event runs into lunch.

Texas Master Naturalists Spring 2022 Training Class

There remain VSP opportunities with facilitation of the classes. Check the SignUp Genius for available opportunities: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f084dabaa22a4f85-spring4>. [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under: Chapter Business: TMN Report Hours". Under "Chapter Administration", note "Training Classes"]

Texas Master Naturalist Virtual Volunteer Fair – Call for Proposals

Deadline for submission of proposals is Friday, 4/1/2022:

<http://www.cvent.com/c/abstracts/f20f91e9-5c97-4930-ac3c-be2109580f1e>. Suggested volunteer proposals include needing hands on help with a project; collecting and inputting field data; etc. The TMN is seeking "virtual" and/or distanced based service" ideas. The accepted proposals are presented online to the Texas Master Naturalist volunteers on either 5/4/2022 or 5/5/2022. Each project is allowed a 5–10-minute presentation.

[VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category: "TMN Virtual Volunteer Service Fair: TMN Report Hours."]

Seabourne Volunteer Days

Wednesday mornings 9:00 – 11:00 AM; and 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 9:00 – 11:00 AM,

Jerry Trenta, Director says "Tasks do not need to be completed on regular volunteer days." Available tasks include:

***Bird feeder refilling** – Check with Bill Johnson (281-734-3349)*

***Bump ups and separations:** Bump ups and separations can be done at SCNP or the materials can be taken home to be done in the comfort of your home. You will need to keep them watered until they are returned to SCNP.*

***Invasive tree removal:** several tasks include brush mower clearing; branch trimming, chipper feeder, chainsaw work, log haul-off duty.*

***Native Plant & Butterfly Gardens:** check with Lynn Trenta (832-646-4769), lynn@coastalprairie.org or Katie Sallean (713-502-5701) katie@coastalprairie.org.*

For additional information, check with Jerry Trenta (713-898-4769).

Continued on the next page--

Volunteer Service Projects Highlights (Continued)

Katy Prairie Conservancy – Stewardship Saturdays

Assist KPC in removing invasive species; clearing fences of vegetation; and planting Texas native plants at the Indiangrass Preserve, 31975 Hebert Road, Waller, TX, 77484, on Saturday, 1/8/2022, 9:00 – 11:00 AM. All other tools are provided. Register in advance if planning to attend. Contact: 713-523-6135 ext. 4032, info@katyprairie.org, website link <https://www.katyprairie.org/stewardship-saturdays> [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under: “Katy Prairie Conservancy: TMN Report Hours.”]

Deer Park Prairie Workdays - 4th Saturday of the Month

Scheduled workdays for DPP are the 4th Saturday of each month, from 9 a.m. to 12:00 Noon. These “...workdays offer an opportunity to explore and help maintain this special coastal prairie. The boardwalk project continues as well as brush control and work on the native gardens around the house.” Please RSVP to [Della Barbato@TexasPrairie.org](mailto:Della_Barbato@TexasPrairie.org). Lawther-Deer Park Prairie (DPP), 1222 East Purdue Lane, Deer Park, TX 77536 [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under: “Community Nature/Public Access Deer Park Prairie: TMN Report Hours”]

Houston Audubon – 2nd Saturday of the Month

Join Houston Audubon on the 2nd Saturday of the month, from 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM, (September through May) at the Raptor and Education Center at Sims Bayou for a morning of gardening and sanctuary maintenance. Activities can include trail maintenance, filling bird feeders and baths, litter pick-up, native gardening, and invasive species removal. Raptor and Education Center at Sims Bayou, 3997 River Drive, Houston, TX, 77017 [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under: “Houston Audubon Society: TMN Report Hours”]

Brazos Bend State Park - Eco-Explorer, Wildlife and Science in the Park Program

Our partner, Brazos Bend State Park, will be back this summer with its Eco-Explorer, Wildlife and Science in the Park Program! They are asking the Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter (TMNCPC) to provide a 45-minute “Predator and Prey” presentation on Thursday, 6/9/2022, from 8:45 – 10:00 AM. The TMNCPC's Skulls and Skins WOW will be presented at this event. [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under: “TPWD Volunteering: TMN Report Hours”]

Seabourne Garden Group

Zoom meetings and field trips include the education committee meetings (signage is under this), and program meetings that offer information for members, as well as trips to gardens and natural settings. For those interested, please contact Jan Kolk, [Lynn Trenta](mailto:Lynn_Trenta), Joanie Havlick, or Katie Sallean. [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category “SCNP-7 Habitats Public Access: TMN Report Hours”]

Texas Master Naturalist Virtual Volunteer Fair - August 31, 2021 - September 1, 2021:

The recordings from the Virtual Volunteer Fair were recorded and uploaded to the TMN website post-event for those who could not attend the live presentations and wish to attain VSP hours. To access the recordings, go to: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/virtual-volunteer-fair-august-2021/#attendee>. [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category: “TMN Virtual Volunteer Service Fair: TMN Report Hours”]

Please continue to check the website calendar and Slack for VSP updates. If there is no existing VSP description fitting a potential VSP opportunity, please request and complete an VSP Proposal Form. In turn, the VSP Committee, Terri Hurley, Charris Powers, Lynn Trenta, and Johanna DeYoung, will review the proposal and determine if it qualifies as A VSP opportunity.

If you are aware of VSP opportunities, have questions about VSP opportunities or are unsure how to record a VSP opportunity, please contact Johanna DeYoung (832-689-4877 johanna@coastalprairie.org).

Texas Welcomes Migrating Monarchs This Month

By Diane Russell, TMNCPC Class of 2011



Who doesn't love Texas in the spring? Especially the monarch butterflies, who have finished resting all winter in the packed into 12 remaining high-altitude oyamel fir forest colonies of Michoacan, Mexico. In March, they leave the asexual phase of their months' long winter diapause, their little butterfly hormones start to flow again, they make butterfly love, and bring new life back to Texas. In Houston we begin to see the first monarchs sometime in mid-March. Peak migration numbers occur here in April and May, and stragglers continue a while longer. To see the progress of the monarch population, check out the map on Journey North's website, <https://maps.journeynorth.org/map/?map=monarch-adult-first&year=2022>. This map shows the parts of the country reporting first sightings of monarchs as they move up to Canada.

The spring migration north is multigenerational. The first stop for the overwintering population in Mexico is south Texas, and our back yards! The biggest boost for monarch numbers comes at this time. Monarchs seek milkweed, an obligatory host plant for the monarch on which to lay its eggs, and without which the next generation cannot be continued. There are 73 species of native milkweed (*Asclepias*) across the United States, but they can be very tricky to grow. Most of us rely on tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) which is widely available to purchase and grows happily year round. The purchasing and installing the tropical milkweed is not recommended as there are problems with the plant carrying a parasite damaging to the Monarchs.. Having native milkweed available now is the best thing you can do to help the monarch population.

If you see a female monarch at this time of year, she will be looking for milkweed leaves to deposit hundreds of eggs she is capable of laying. The scales of her wings will be faded and dull, and the wing edges tattered. (See photo) She will be very old - at least 6-7 months, if she has traveled the previous fall from the northern United States to overwinter in Mexico. She will have flown 3500 miles! She is at the end of her lifespan as a member of the super generation of monarchs.

From those eggs, the next generation emerges in Texas, then flies northward, laying eggs on native and purchased milkweeds as they go. After several more short-lived generations, they arrive back at the border of North America and Canada, from which their ancestors left the year before. These multiple generations only live a matter of weeks, lay their eggs, and die. The last generation, finishing the summer in our northern states and Canada, is the next super generation. In the fall they will head straight back to Michoacan, even to the same colonies that their great-great-great grandparents inhabited and rested. They will overwinter there as well, and return to Texas in the spring, as the generations of Monarchs have done since the last Ice Age.

The monarch population is calculated in terms of size in hectares (1 hectare = about 2 football fields) in the Michoacan colonies. Since data collection began in 1993, total colony areas have been as high as 20 hectares, but mostly under 6 in the last decade. Year before last, only 2 total hectares of forest were filled. This year's final numbers have still not been announced, but, sadly, predictions are fearing we are down to ONE hectare, which scientists agree is not enough to sustain the migration pattern over the long run. Although we may end up with permanent resident populations, as they are found in Florida and Hawaii, the migration phenomenon may soon be coming to an end.





Don't Mow ... Let It Grow! Promoting Suburban Superpowers

By Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC Vice-President and New Class Director

When TMN's speak of wildlife promotion, people often think of the larger animals: birds, frogs, even mammals like deer. A mere mention of insects to a neighbor and the conversation quickly steers to stinging wasps, roaches, mosquitoes, and other pesky (to humans) variety. Few consider insects as important and valuable wildlife, but they are. Coastal Prairie winged insects, simply called 'The Pteras' (P is silent), are Nature's top pollinators.

If we place insects in order of their importance to the environment, many are surprised that #3 is Coleoptera (Beetles) and #2 is Diptera (Flies). Butterflies and skippers make last place as #4 Lepidoptera. Though beautiful insect ambassadors, they are dainty nectar-sippers, not pollinators. Their larvae eat leaves and grow into tiny plant-based sausages, the main food for everything else in Nature's food web. Food for baby animals is their Superpower! Native bees, however, actively collect pollen for their young and have co-evolved with plants to form the tremendous variety of flowers and fruit we enjoy. Bees' Superpower? Pollination. The #1 pollinator is Hymenoptera (Bees and Wasps).

Early spring is the time to get to NOT-work helping our pollinators—NOT using pesticides, NOT using toxic fertilizers, NOT tearing up the soil. How about NOT mowing? Delaying the turf mowing until all the turf-hidden annual and perennial wildflowers have completed their seeding cycle is perhaps the best move for promoting wildlife early on every year, before the bigger insects arrive to your native plant gardens and prairie pockets during summer and autumn.

Tiny bees *Andrena*, *Osmia*, *Agapostemon* and small mason wasps *Pseudodynerus*, *Euodynerus*, depend upon the limited buffet within the food desert that our turf-dominated yards have become. A variety of skippers, moths and small butterflies will visit, too. Start with the wildflowers that grow in your yard.

Slender vetch (*Vicia ludoviciana*) is prized in Nature with its Superpower of converting atmospheric nitrogen into a form that plants can uptake (via the bacterial colony at its root zone), its small lavender flowers a fasting break for tiny creatures emerging from their long winter's nap. If you leave it, you'll not only promote wildlife, but a resulting lush, green summer turf will be envied by your two-legged neighbors—all possible without fertilizers or supplemental watering. What do you know? That's a bonus benefit for your environmental protection, for your NOT-work: conserve water and our streams and rivers.

Wild Fleabane (*Erigeron philadelphicus*) of the aster family is a flower with a different kind of Superpower: each white-and-yellow ray is not just pretty, it's a one-stop malt shop for everything tiny. Want to attract butterflies? Start by not mowing the flower stalk down before it's had a chance to feed someone. Small patches of fleabane visible throughout the yard are a gorgeous spring sight—one most HOA won't mind either.



Agapostemon on Erigeron

Don't Mow...Let It Grow! (Continued)

For the beneficial management of natural resources in Texas, keep the mower in the garage just a little while longer. Tiny wildflowers hidden from view await their opportunity to provide for wildlife, so, let us let them exist.

Gift the spring bloom to them, your oldest neighbors. As we work daily to improve life for ourselves, consider for just a few weeks making life possible for the tiny Earthlings that have called Coastal Prairie home for 100's of thousands of years before we arrived.

- Keep it 'edgy.' Use a lightweight battery-powered weed-whip vertically to keep the edges of garden spaces tidy and defined. Put the blade all the way up and mow a strip around the perimeter of your property, next to your neighbor's likely scalped turf.
- Make it look intended, not unintended. Mow paths to and around the spaces you frequently walk so neighbors know you're on it.
- Communicate your practice. Place a sign in view for the neighbors and HOA that it is temporary like [this one from NPSOT](#). Here's another: "I garden for Wildlife. What's Your Superpower?"
- Rake fallen leaves. No gas-powered equipment needed. As the live oaks drop all their leaves each spring, rake them directly into the ring at their base or use to mulch your garden. It's free carbon and what the tree promotes (mycorrhiza!) at its base.
- Watch for seeding. Once the annuals have done their annual thing, go ahead. Mow with impunity.
- Walk and enjoy. See if you can name all The Pteras that come visit your yard and be wowed by the diversity that Nature brings straight to you.

Don't Mow. Let It Grow! by Shannon Westveer (2021, 3 minutes)

<https://youtu.be/bnUNp82iP9Y>

Management Recommendations for Native Insect Pollinators in Texas by TPWD's Michael Warriner and Ben Hutchins (2016, 59 pages)

https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/nogame/native-pollinators/media/TPWD-Native-Pollinator-Management.pdf



Megachile on Erigeron



Monarch on Nothoscordum



Adrena on Vicia

Give a Whoop!

By Robbin Mallett



Did you know that one of the most endangered bird species in North America winters just 3 hours from us in the Rockport/Port Aransas area? Each year in mid-September, hundreds of whooping cranes migrate 2,500 miles from northern Alberta, Canada to the Texas coast for the winter. They return in late March or early April. While they're here, the birds forage in marshes, shallow bays and coastal uplands for crabs, insects, fruit and other foods. Whooping cranes are the tallest birds in North America. The majestic cranes stand 5 feet tall, weigh between 11 and 17 pounds and have a wingspan of 7 to 8 feet. Whooping cranes mate for life but will accept a new mate if one dies. Each pair of whooping cranes needs at least 25 acres, so habitat preservation is an ongoing challenge. Whooping cranes can live up to 24 years in the wild.



The number of whooping cranes crashed to just 15 birds in 1941 due to extensive habitat loss, illegal hunting and collisions with overhead power lines. With a lot of hard work, the species has been brought back from near extinction, and by 2020, the flock that migrates between Canada and Texas rebounded to over 500 birds. Aransas National Wildlife Refuge protects and manages the largest expanse of protected whooping crane habitat in Texas.

In past years, the Coastal Prairie Chapter has coordinated field trips to the Port Aransas/Rockport area to view these incredible birds that have been brought back from the brink. In fact, the last chapter field trip was to Rockport on Valentine's Weekend 2020, just before the pandemic halted in-person gatherings, and I hope we can resume this fun trip next February. A boat trip is the best way to get up-close views of the whooping cranes and many other species of coastal birds.

I was able to attend the 2022 Whooping Crane Festival in late February and saw the beauties on a boat tour. I also saw a family of four in the pasture surrounding the Big Tree. It was amazing to hear their loud bugling call when a pair of cranes flew over their territory. I was also impressed by the ongoing efforts to protect the species. Here are a few things I learned from Dr. Liz Smith and other staff members of the International Crane Foundation.

- The International Crane Recovery Program is dedicated to the recovery of this endangered species.
- The Aransas-Wood Buffalo Whooping Crane population, the only self-sustaining wild population in North America, has seen a steady increase in recent years and now has more than 500 individuals flying from Wood Buffalo to Aransas, Texas every year.
- At Wood Buffalo National Park, monitoring surveys of the nesting area are conducted annually. They count the number of nesting pairs after the birds arrive in the spring and survey again to count the number of chicks that survived to the fledgling stage prior to their migration to Texas. In 2021, 102 nests were recorded.
- The goal of the International Crane Foundation's Gulf Coast Program Expansion is to protect sufficient habitat for 1,000 individuals and 250 breeding pairs which will require 125,000 acres of coastal marsh and 300,000 acres of coastal prairies and fresh marsh. This will require a lot of work with private landowners.
- Texas Parks and Wildlife has developed a Large Water Bird Identification Guide for hunters to help prevent accidental shooting of whooping cranes. Several species resemble whooping cranes in flight, but the only one that can be shot during hunting season is the snow goose.



Houston Rodeo Outreach *By Johanna DeYoung, TMNCPC VSP Director*



At the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, from Monday, 2/28/2022, through Saturday, 3/5/2022, the TMNCPC had 11 volunteers attending to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) booth who displayed Skins, Skulls, Tracks, and Scat. The volunteers included Jan and Kevin Kolk, Megan Cromeens, Angela LeDoux, Janis Hodgson, Mary Saville, Linda Mueller, Jim Butcher, Sal Cardenas, Joanie Havlick and Johanna DeYoung.

This opportunity provided outreach to some 286 attendees, and three (3) persons expressed interest in pursuing initial training with the TMNCPC. The TMNCPC volunteers worked directly with Clint Faas, TPWD Wildlife Biologist, Wharton and Jackson Counties, in the Ranching and Wildlife Expo areas on the 2nd floor of NRG Center. Because the TPWD Booth was on the 2nd floor of the NRG Center, there was considerably less foot traffic than found on the 1st floor of the NRG Center.



Joanie Havlick shows girl the skins and skulls

Kevin Kolk at the chapter's table



Spring Break--What a week! *By Jamie Fairchild*



We kicked off our partnership with the Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land over the spring break week of March 13 – 19. A total of twenty-one master naturalists covered shifts each day at the museum’s outdoor butterfly garden. Everyone involved enjoyed the experience, and we all felt so energized to get out and interface with the public again. The Butterfly WOW provided us with all kinds of interesting visual aids to use in our chats with the adults and children. This early in the season, there was not much happening in the garden, but our MN’s brought a caterpillar and some iMovies to show the patrons. We still were able to walk the garden and talk about plants. We saw hummingbirds several times throughout the week, many spotless lady beetles, and the first Monarchs of the season started flying over! We reached about 300 patrons and we had gorgeous weather all week! The children and the adults were all very interested in our information.

In order to make this happen, everyone had to go through a museum orientation and a Butterfly WOW training – we trained over 25 people. It was VERY busy the week before spring break pulling it together, but we did it! If you are interested in joining the HMNSL MN team, please contact Jamie Fairchild or Katie Sallean. We will be planning more fun outreach events in the future.



Spotless Lady Beetle



Bert and Jean Stipelcovich



Swallowtail



Robbin Mallett and Shannon Westveer



Shannon Westveer and kids



Sandy Gardner and kids

New Class Tours Brazoria Wildlife Refuge

By Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC Vice-President and New Class Director



March 12, 2022, marked the New Class first field trip for the year! [Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge](#) was chosen for the Spring Class 2022 as one of two US Fish and Wildlife properties for the course schedule; these are where the wildlife are. It was a brisk but beautiful day, and the class learned about the freshwater and saline estuary, its various wildlife associations, and why refuges are important resting places for both wintering and migratory waterfowl.

The class rotated through several stations for the 4-hour field trip.

The first station, led by Mary Schwartz, Kathy Pittman, and Melanie Hollenshead—TMN Cradle of Texas Chapter—led small groups for aquatic insect picking and identification. “I definitely could have done the bug picking all day,” New Class member Lauren shared with her classmates. It was chilly to be getting hands wet, but the enjoyment of learning what lived in the water made it fun. They even got to see a mama alligator with babies on her back.

Susie Doe took the other small group on a trail hike, using her prepared visual sheet created for the trainees. It helped them tie together the plants at the refuge with those mentioned at previous Sessions she gave on plants. Keeping the groups small and intimate helped trainees to have plants in hand and practice describing the parts of the flowers, shapes of leaves, and other species-related features. Some species which often get misidentified were conveniently growing side-by-side, like the two pimpermels, *Lysimachia foemina* and *L. arvensis*. It was a unique opportunity for in-hand comparison.

The auto tour groups followed in a few cars behind Shannon Westveer, stopping along the route several times to describe and identify various birds in the mud flats and ducks diving for goodies along the shallows. At Olney Pond, Shannon saw what she thought was an American Golden Plover and asked the class to get more eyes on it, not having seen that species in more than eight years. Class member Kerry Padilla and a couple others helped confirm the ID on-site, and Mark Scheuerman, Fort Bend’s eBird curator, also agreed once photos were shared later.

Hoiman Low provided a little more background on the bird: “American Golden Plover is a migratory bird. It winters in South America and migrates to its breeding ground in the northern parts of Canada and Alaska. It flies on average 20,000 miles per year, a circular migration route, passing our area on its way to the north, then flying south along the eastern coastline back to South America. We are very lucky to have seen it!”

In addition to dozens of bird species, TMNs also saw a lone Lesser Black-backed Gull, equally uncommon. Though we did not list any birds in eBird, many of the photos made it into iNaturalist as observations through various users that day.

We value the organization of Hosts Ute Welk, Simon Tice, and Debby Wendt in making the day’s events run smoothly for the class. Without collaboration from fellow TMNs as well as the knowledge from neighboring chapters like Cradle of Texas, training classes would not be as coveted as they are. We appreciate all of our volunteers and their efforts to train our future corps!

Next field trip: Katy Prairie 3/26.

Continued on the next page--



Lead car (TMN CPC) with class to get out and identify birds

New Class Tours Brazoria Wildlife Refuge *Continued*



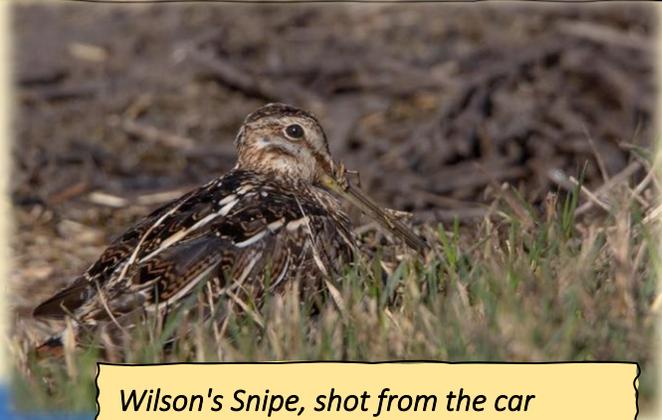
Lunch break, from front to back: Lauren DeShazo, Kelly Vaughan, Shari Lewis (Mentor), Savitha Rao, Dawn Homan, Debby Wendt (Mentor), and Simon Tice (Host).



Comparing plant species: two from the same genus side-by-side, tiny and on the ground.



Bird of the Day! Migratory American Golden Plover



Wilson's Snipe, shot from the car



Group Shot: Spring 2022 Class of TMN CPC



Fishtastic Children's Fishing Tournament

By Shari Lewis Photos by Terri Hurley and Marilyn Malone

The City of Rosenberg's Parks and Recreation Department held its 20th Annual FISH-tastic Fishing Tournament for kids on March 5, 2022 at Seabourne Creek Nature Park's lake. FISH-tastic 2022 was a sunny, windy morning, full of fun for our region's young anglers and their families. Trophies were awarded in 3 age divisions for both biggest fish and most fish caught. In addition, some awesome fishing supplies were raffled off throughout the morning. Many CPC volunteers were on hand to assist with the day's events. John Cooper directed traffic in the parking lot, while Ursula Cooper greeted anglers at the check-in. John Rouane and Bill Johnson had the important task of measuring the fish. Our President, Terri Hurley, stopped in and took photos of the event. And Linda Lourim, Marilyn Malone, Sandra Brown and I presented the Bat WOW to both curious passers-by and some kiddos bored by a slow day of fishing!

Turnout was great in terms of anglers, but not so great in terms of fish! About 100 eager anglers and their families packed along the south side of the lake, to avoid casting into the strong south wind. Huge shout out to all the hardworking CPC volunteers who cleared the banks and gave the kids plenty of space. Kids tried jigs, lures, worms, corn, stink bait, and chicken liver. Unfortunately, the fish just weren't biting. And the anglers were in stiff competition.... with the birds! The cormorants and herons must have appreciated their rainbow trout feast, provided by TPWD who stocked the lake before the original FISH-tastic's date of 2/26. Only one trout and some catfish were caught that morning. "I was surprised there were no blue gill," John Rouane commented on the lack of other species caught.



Above: Seabourne volunteers Linda Lourim, Marilyn Malone, and Shari Lewis, John Rouane measures fish



Seabourne News (Continued)

Fishtastics Continued



Parks and Rec Director, David Junek and John Rouane



Visitors enjoy the fishing



Ursula and John Cooper

According to Rouane, the biggest fish of the tournament was a 19 ¾" channel catfish, caught by one of the youngest participants in the tournament using liver for bait. He also took home the "Most Fish Caught" trophy for his age group.

We call it "fishing", not "catching" for a reason! Participants I spoke with were simply happy to be outside with their families, enjoying one of the first lovely, long-awaited days of spring. And they plan to be back for FISH-tastic 2023.

Seabourne Tree Planting *By Jerry Trenta, Seabourne Director*



The Apache Annual Tree Planting Event was a great success this year thanks to Greg Hurley organizing and coordinating the project and to the many chapter members who volunteered to help. Apache donated 104 trees which were planted in various areas around Seabourne Creek Nature Park. This included 50 Live Oaks planted along the southern and eastern portions of the outer loop, Wax Myrtles and a Red Mulberry grove near the bird sanctuary, Possumhaw Hollies in the North Woods, Eastern Redbuds along the outer loop's north portion, Black gum Tupelos east of the parking lot, and Cherry Laurels north of Seabourne Lake.

The planting method was done differently than in past years and it worked out very well. A new 18-inch auger on the tractor was used to dig the holes, which provided a hole more consistent with recommended planting guides. Additionally, one or two buckets of our potting soil mix was added to the backfill to allow for easier root establishment (recommended by the tree supplier.)

Many thanks again to Greg and the volunteers who helped with this hard work. (See Photos)



Photos by Lynn Trenta

Sal and Scott with auger



Photos by Joe Chou



Wayne, Pradeep and Phil



Elaine



Terri, Jamie, Jan and Sharon

Seabourne Tree Planting (continued)

Starting upper left: Sharon Watson, Terri Hurley, Jerry Trenta, David Goff, John shepherd, John Vindekilde, Mary Parkhouse, Linda Mueller, Greg Hurley, Pradeep Sethi, Pam Jones, Don Parkhouse, Mary Seville, Jan Peterson, Marilynne Malone, Ella Stroupe, Jamie Fairchild, and Joe Chou. Not pictured were Johanna DeYoung and Angela LeDoux (that I know of) Photo by Joe Chou



Below starting upper left: John Cooper, Phil Ward, Wayne Barentine, Julie Barentine, Jerry Trenta Greg Hurley Pradeep Sethi, Scott Tufts, Terri Hurley, Elaine Whitely, and Lynn Trenta. Not shown are Johanna DeYoung and Jan and Kevin Kolk. Photo by Johanna DeYoung



Seabourne Tree Planting *(continued)*



Instructions by Greg Hurley



Buckets hold water and soil

Photos by Lynn Trenta



Pradeep and Johanna form berm



Jan tamps stakes



Don brings stakes



Marilyne and John add soil

Photos by Joe Chou



Jan and Sharon water trees



Linda and Mary with tree

Infrastructure and Invasive Plant Team Clear Brush in Wetlands

March 19 chapter members Charris Powers, John Rouane, Pradeep Sethi, Phil Ward, and Elaine Whitely began clearing the overgrown area by the Seabourne Wetlands to improve visibility there. Photos by Charris Powers



In Our Own Backyard and Other Places

Whose Burrow Is This?

Text and Photos by Diane Eismont

On the 6th of March, we noticed a newly excavated den hole under the side of the barn in a patch of Crinum lilies.

On the 7th of March, we put out a night vision camera on the dirt pile and at 8:22 PM got a photo of a Virginia Opossum - the first visitor. On the 8th at 12:20 AM, we got a photo of a striped Skunk and on the 8th at 8:19 PM - a photo of a Swamp Rabbit. On the 9th, we got photos of a Raccoon - all at the entrance hole to the new burrow!

After that, the opossum made 5 visits. On one of the visits, his tail was neatly wrapped around a bunch of vegetation! The skunk made 3 visits; the rabbit made 2 visits and the raccoon made 3 visits.

Did any of these animals dig the new den?

My research indicates that opossums are not adept at digging burrows for themselves but use those excavated by other animals. Striped skunks also seek out burrows of other animals. Rabbits rest in thickets of brush or briars, small culverts, holes in logs or stumps or underground. Raccoons usually den in a hollow log.

Could this den have been dug by a nine-banded armadillo? They are active diggers - few animals are said to have as many dens per individual as they do!

We will continue to watch for more evidence as to whose burrow this is! Check back with us next month and let me know if you have any suggestions!



In Our Own Backyard and Other Places

Williams Prairie Restoration Project

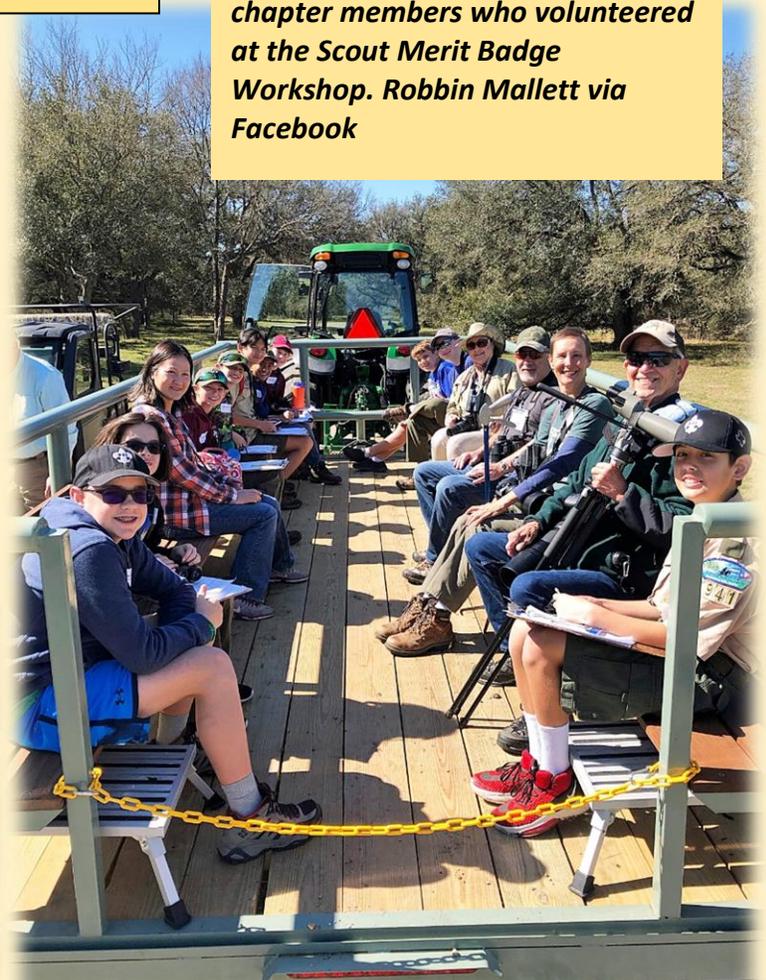


CPC was well represented at the Williams Prairie restoration project this brisk morning! Thanks Jan Kolk, Linda Mueller, Charlie Winker, Mary Saville, Savitha Rao and John Shepherd.—Jan Kolk via Slack

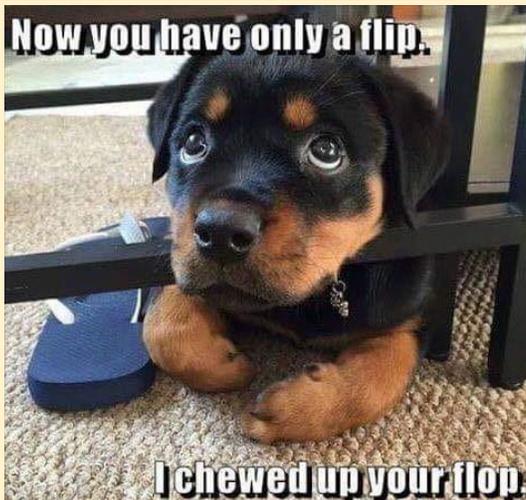
JB Harrison Scout Merit Badge Workshop



Great job supporting a partner organization. Thanks to all the chapter members who volunteered at the Scout Merit Badge Workshop. Robbin Mallett via Facebook



The Lighter Side



Sent in by Jim Butcher

I've been using this as a water bottle for about a month now. I kinda love the judging eyes it gets me at the gym



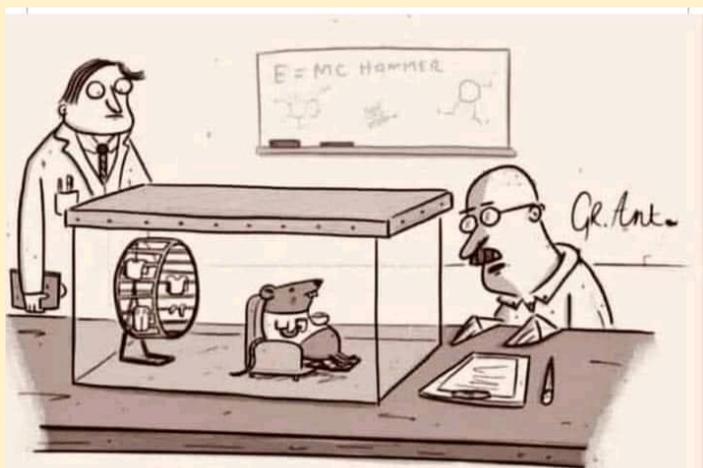
WHAT KIND OF SHOES DO FROGS WEAR IN THE SUMMER?



Sent in by Debby Wendt



The Far Side (Facebook)



"Fascinating. He ran on it the first few days, but now he's just using it to hang his clothes."

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See us at:

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Linda Lourim Organizes Chapter Office

By Terri Hurley, President

Have you been to the TMN office lately? If not, then you will certainly want to make a trip there to see how fabulous it looks. TMNCPC member Linda Lourim has been working for weeks to completely reorganize, label, and rearrange our office. Not only that, but Linda is also updating our equipment and supply inventory. Thanks so much, Linda!



Our Chapter Facebook Page is at

[TMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)

To post photos and information, email

Paula Kolmar or [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.*

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Check out & subscribe to our Chapter's new YouTube Channel:
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