



THE PADDLEFISH

Briefings from Becky

Yes, here it is May already and still no face-to-face meetings, events, etc. as per the state TMN office at least through May 20. There should be an update on the 18th of May. So.... we've already cancelled our AT field trip to Tyler State Park originally scheduled for May 16. AND, in the words of the state office, "Because the period may well be extended, all TMN chapters should continue to make contingency plans for no face to-face events through the summer out of an abundance of caution."

To that end, Jill is working to communicate with presenters for our scheduled AT & field trips to see what other dates might be available, if they are needed. Stella, Susan, and I met by phone with Stella sending a follow-up email to the Flotilla committee. We are looking at a date in September for our Flotilla.

As per the CLNWR website and my personal experience, the refuge is still open to visitors. And, those trails really need some help. Cal has done some work on Cemetery Trail. Though we don't recommend working a trail alone, he was checking in with his wife. Having at least 2 on a trail is advisable even in non-Covid times. Especially if you drive separately, it is pretty easy to maintain correct distancing if you have 2 working a trail together. The state TMN office has simply said to honor the federal regulations and the local regulations. I'll talk to Erik this week and let you know if he says something different.

On a more pleasant note, Tammi has a great idea for a new project, ongoing, year-round, individual/group, chapter and/or public! Hmmm....what can it be? Tammi and I'll be checking in with the leadership board this week and then the mystery will be revealed.

In the meantime: GET OUTSIDE! The weather is good! Birds! Flowers! Green! Being outside is actually healthy.... but wait you folks are Master Naturalists, you already know that! Stay safe and healthy! Reach out to others that might feel hemmed in!

~Becky Gullette, CBTMN President



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2020 Meeting Dates

- June 8
- July 13
- Aug 10
- Sept 14
- Oct 12
- Nov 9

"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." ~Albert Einstein

Cypress Basin Texas Master Naturalists Financial Report for April 30, 2020

Beginning Bank Balance, 03/31/2020		\$ 12,429.66
Add Deposits:	Annual Dues \$ 65.00	
	Flotilla Donation 1,450.00	+ 1,515.00
Less Expenses:	Flotilla 2020 \$ 189.75	
	Memorial 40.00	
	Sam's Club Membership 45.00	- 274.75
Ending Balance, 04/30/2020		<u>\$13,669.91</u>
	Flotilla Funds \$ 6,766.86	
	General Funds 6,903.05	<u>\$13,669.91</u>

NOTES:

Donors for Flotilla 2020 thus far:

Friends of CLNWR	\$ 200
Diann Mabus - Pine Valley Farm	50
Dallas Caddo Club	100
GCLA	250
City of Uncertain	1,000
Patrick Noon	<u>50</u>
	\$ 1,650

We still have a few dues outstanding. You can mail to me at 709 Lovely Road, Marshall, TX 75672.

~ Submitted by Charles Gillis

CBTMN Treasurer

"If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere."

- Vincent Van Gogh

Preparing for Wildfires with Firescaping- A Virtual Training

Thursday, May 14, 2020, from 10am-noon Eastern

Description: This free, Zoom training on fire-resistant landscaping, or firescaping, will teach Master Naturalists about what firescaping is and how to implement it in their communities. Specifically, participants will learn about fire history and behavior and ways to prevent home ignition through understanding plant flammability and firescaping design. The presentation will also address ways to maintain wildlife habitat with firescaping. This Zoom training will include presentations, "interactive" activities, and a discussion period.

Speaker: Holly Campbell, Public Service Assistant, University of Georgia, Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources. Project Manager for the USDA-NIFA Smith-Lever funded project, Preparing for Wildfires with Firescaping.

Zoom training details: (please note that there is a password required to join the webinar training) Contact Holly Campbell for password.

Topic: Master Naturalist Firescaping Training

Time: May 14, 2020 10:00 AM-Noon Eastern

J. Holly Campbell Daniel B. Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources | *Public Service Assistant*
706-542-3277 | hollycam@uga.edu | <https://www.warnell.uga.edu>

2020 8th Annual Flotilla Update



New date set —September 26, 2020

We refuse to let Covid-19 win so third time is a charm! More to come later.

***"Between every two pines there is a doorway to a new world."
~ John Muir***



Join the Bird Herd!

Looking for volunteers to help maintain the bird blinds at the refuge. As part of the blinds there is a need for the birds to be fed! If you would be interested in being part of the team to rotate and keep the feeders filled, please contact Stella.

Nature Reflections

A Texas Master Naturalist Video Diary Project



The State Office launched this project a week ago and have had an overwhelming response with some incredibly passionate and creative responses sent in by both video and with written words – there has even been an original song written! I You still have time to enter!

Check out the first few submissions uploaded to the website - <https://txmn.tamu.edu/nature-reflections/>

Get your Smart Phones, iPads or Cameras out to record your thoughts on the value of nature and time outside – especially during moments of stress, worry or unknown such as our current pandemic.

Giant hornets genuinely frightening

Last year's quiet arrival of a foreign wasp known as the Asian giant hornet is no longer a secret outside of Washington state. Within the past few days, all the major TV networks have broadcast stories of the arrival of the wasp to the Pacific Northwest. Known to entomologists as *Vespa mandarinia*, it has been named by the press the 'murder hornet'.

It's hard to argue with the name 'murder hornet' given that this wasp causes 30-50 human deaths a year in Japan. And the threat is serious enough that the Washington State Department of Agriculture has devoted a website to the pest and assigned public engagement officer, Karla Salp, to handle public concerns. "Our hope is to eradicate it before it can get established in Washington," she said. "Barring that, containing it is our second goal."

Let's face it, the thought of giant stinging wasps touches our deepest fears. If proof was needed of how scary wasps are to most people, look no further than the Hunger Games and its "tracker jacker" wasps. Even Hollywood knows the idea of being attacked by a swarm of wasps or bees is horrifying in the most primal way (and therefore sells tickets).

How bad?

Given the fact that lots of other stinging wasps and bees are already a part of the landscape in Texas, why the fuss? After all, it's just another wasp. One of the reasons the Asian giant wasp generates so much attention is its size. At 1 1/2 inches long (queens up to 2 inches) it is reportedly the largest wasp in the world. Its sting is excruciating and, unlike the honey bee, it can sting repeatedly.

And while we're talking bees, a gang of 30 Asian giant hornets can take out a hive of 30,000 honey bees in a few hours. The European honey bee—the predominant species used by beekeepers—lacks the behavioral defenses that Japanese honey bees use against this wasp. With its giant jaws capable of decapitating honey bee defenders, and an exoskeleton impervious to bee stings, the giant hornet makes a formidable foe. To make matters worse, beekeepers who encounter these wasps face 1/4-inch-long stingers that penetrate standard beekeeper garb.

Impact on Texas

The bottom-line is that the chance of Asian giant hornets invading Texas soon is slim, given that at the moment only a few wasps have been found in only one county in the far northwest corner of the U.S. Also, hornets are less likely to be transported by humans than many other exotic insects, like fire ants or emerald ash borers.

As with any social insect, hornets live and survive in colonies, not as individuals. So an individual worker wasp that accidentally flies into a vehicle, for example, will not be able to survive away from its colony. The only way to spread the wasp is by transporting an entire subterranean nest (highly unlikely), or to transport a pre-



The Asian giant hornet has recently been spotted close to the Canadian border in Washington state. Photo courtesy Washington State Department of Agriculture.



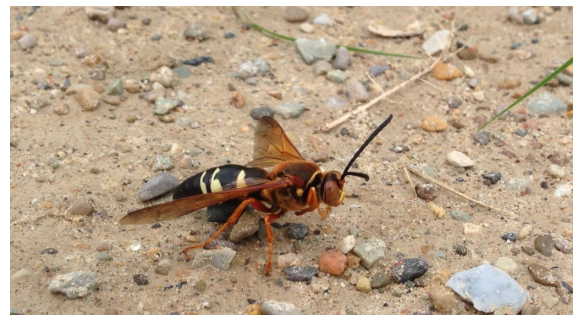
The Asian giant hornet has a distinctive yellow-orange head and heavier body than those of our largest native wasps. Photo courtesy Washington State Department of Agriculture.

viously mated queen, capable of starting a new nest on her own. The chance of the latter happening is greatest if a mated queen going to bed for the winter (they like to do this in loose plant debris or soil) happens to bury herself in the loose soil of a potted plant, and the plant shipped elsewhere. This is currently the leading theory for how the hornet got to North America.

Natural spread on the ground could certainly also occur, but it should take much longer. In China the wasps seem to favor forested areas and avoids high altitudes and open grasslands. Texas does not seem to be ideal habitat for this wasp. Nevertheless, it's hard to feel completely safe from an insect that just successfully hopped an ocean. And according to Salp there is genetic evidence that the Asian giant hornet (against the odds) slipped into British Columbia not once, but twice in the past year.

Look-alikes

It's not unusual when a scary new pest gets reported in the news for everyone to start seeing them in their backyard (it's a natural human response to believe that if something bad is going to happen, it will happen to us personally first). But in this case, there are much better explanations for big hornets in your backyard. In Texas one of our largest stinging insects is the cicada killer wasp. Cicada killers range in size from 1 to 1 1/2 inches-long, approaching the Asian giant wasp in length. Although the bodies of cicada killers are more slender, and heads not as distinctively orange, they are still easily mistaken for the more sinister giant hornet. Washington state officials are also responding to a worried public. "We have created a chart to show people the size differences in native bees and wasps compared to the Asian giant wasp," said Salp. "It's common to see other wasps and mistake them for the giant wasp."



The cicada killer wasp, Sphecius speciosus, is another large wasp, approaching the length of the Asian giant wasp, common in Texas

In Texas, it is highly unlikely that the Asian giant hornet will be spotted for many years, if ever. But if you see something unusual, a good picture is usually sufficient to roughly identify a bee or wasp. Send the image to your county Extension office with a description of the city and county and date where it was taken. Also, as accurately as possible estimate the length of the insect. The better the picture and description, the more likely you are to get an answer.

And, as for now, don't watch the Hunger Games if you want to sleep well tonight.

(Used by permission of Mike Merchant, Texas A&M Department of Entomology, m-merchant@tamu.edu)

Texas A&M Launches New Online App

This new online app helps Texans find the most impressive views of fall foliage throughout the state. In the spring, Texans can use the app to find routes that showcase beautiful wildflower displays. Users can preview routes, view photos, read reviews and download directions to their mobile device while browsing scenic points and drives. The application displays a map that shows the current rating of each route to help users find the best Texas scenic views.

Texas Scenic Views

Buckle up for a scenic drive!

We'll show you the way to the most beautiful seasonal views in Texas. Click on different points on the map to learn what you'll see, the best time to visit, and how to reach each destination. Or, browse our location galleries:

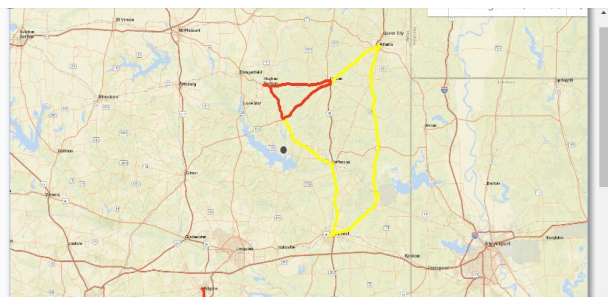
WILDFLOWERS

Deep East Texas Fall Foliage Trail



FALL COLORS

Garner State Park



Brazosport Area



Sabine National Forest



Angellina National Forest



E.O. Shecke State F



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Meetings, Training & Volunteer Opportuni-

Please note: Where field trips or trainings occur on a regular workday, this does not mean there will be no workday at all. Some may choose to do the workday instead of the special activity. We may group up to do trail work, etc. on a different day. **** All events are pending the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.**

MAY

- May 11 Regular Meeting 6:30pm (CANCELLED)
- May 16 FIELD TRIP and AT: Tyler State Park, Boyd Sanders, "Birds"
WORKDAY consider alternative scheduling (CANCELLED)

JUNE

- June 06 AT morning: iNaturalist Training – Craig Hensley, Tania Homayoun TPWD; possible VT afternoon – BioBlitz using iNaturalist
- June 08 Regular meeting 6:30pm: AT presenters: Tim Bister, Margaret Staddig, TPWD Fisheries Biologists: "Paddlefish Project and Invasive Aquatic Species"
- June 13 AT Insect "Hike" with Tony Bosworth – 2 Hours in the Morning
WORKDAY

JULY

- July 13 Potluck meeting 6pm
- July 18 WORKDAY

AUGUST

- Aug 10 Break from meeting
- Aug 15 WORKDAY if needed

In Need of AT?

Remember that out of the 8 hours of advanced training required each year, only 4 can be online. Hopefully we will be able to continue with our chapter face-to-face AT before too long. Here are a few good online options:

Forestry and Natural Resources Webinars
<http://forestrywebinars.net/>

Conservation of Natural Resources
<http://www.conservationwebinars.net>

Natures Notebook
<https://www.usanpn.org/nn/webinars>

Texas Wildlife Federation
<https://www.texas-wildlife.org/webinars>

Cornell University
<https://academy.allaboutbirds.org>

Volunteering Without Violating COVID-19 Restrictions

- * <https://www.inaturalist.org/>
- * <https://www.cocorahs.org/>
- * <https://ebird.org/home> (You may remember that we have an ebird kiosk in the visitor center at CLNWR. If you have the bird app you can enter sightings you may have at the refuge even though you can't get in to use the kiosk)
- * School and community native plant or pollinator gardens: Please honor the state and local laws/rules/guidelines related to the Covid-19 restrictions.
- * State parks are opening but go online to keep up with their status.
- * Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge trails are still open but remember, you should have someone with you on the trails; family member eliminates the worry of the safe distancing. If you partner with a friend, PLEASE, maintain the appropriate distance.
- * Visitor Center, classroom and Admin Building are not open at this time. Contact person is erik_duerkop@fws.gov 903-407-9303

Please share pictures and updates of any presentations, field trips, etc that is going on! We also can use interesting articles you come across. You can email them to cypressbasintmn@gmail.com



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