

The Naturalist

Volume 10 Issue 8

August 1, 2025



The mission of the Master Naturalist Program is "to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the state of Texas."

Contents of This Newsletter

President's Corner
Elaine Tiller
Kemp's Ridley
Wellness in the Wild
Oso Bay Wetlands
Cyanobacteria
Kayak Program at Lake Corpus Christi State Park
Wildlife Watch: Captured by Camera
STMN Summer Adventures!
Night at the Ballpark
Brown Pelican
Upcoming Events
Who Did What in July



The Naturalist

President's Corner

by Michele Connolly

Not too much to report this month. I know many of us have spent our time last month with family and friends having lots of summer fun!

I have taken advantage of calm waters of the canals on North Padre Island to go kayaking and stalk fish. The canals are teeming with life right now. I also went on a quest to find our local manatees. No luck with that one. We have been getting regular visits from some of our dolphin friends, but boy are they camera shy.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone soon as our meetings start up again. Stay tuned for details on our summer social August 19th. It's a great opportunity to catch up with everyone and meet our new Initial Training Class.

Happy Summer!



Elaine Tiller

by Cindy Frank

Elaine Tiller is our newest recipient of the 4,000 hour award.

All of Elaine's hours take place at Padre Island National Seashore.

This picture was taken Saturday, June 28th, at the turtle release. Elaine was given her new name badge.

Those in the picture, from left to right, are: Carol Singleton, Cindy Frank, Claude Lewis, Elaine Tiller, Patti Baker, Suzanne Lewis, and Adel Casiano.



The Naturalist

Kemp's Ridley

by Ann Flanagan

2025 has been a record-breaking year for the most endangered sea turtle, the Kemp's Ridley!

Many of our South Texas Master Naturalists have played an important role and have put in many volunteer hours at the Padre Island National Seashore patrolling, dispatching, helping with hatchling releases, and more.

So far this year, 444 Kemp's nests have been found and 27,042 hatchlings have been released!

We also greatly appreciate the efforts and hard work of Dr. Shaver and the turtle programs at PINS, the ARK, and all along the Texas coast.



From April 1st until today, South Texas Master Naturalists have put in 1705 hours under PINS-RM. We have actually put in 1967 hours since January 1st, but the January-March hours will involve things like cold stunned turtles. From April 1st until now, our time is devoted to nesting turtles.

-- Cindy Frank

The Naturalist

Wellness in the Wild

by Bibi Dalrymple

Lari Jo Edwards organized a retreat at the Verdesana Lodge located on the Caribbean side of the Talamanca Mountain Range. Among the thirteen participants there were six Master Naturalists and one Master Gardener. We were immersed in nature, waking up to birdsong and misty mornings. Mindful nature hikes, farm-to-table meals, yoga, and expert-guided bird walks have left us wonderfully refreshed and restored.



From left to right: Jason and Lari Jo Edwards, Leslie Albrecht, Philip Woods, Suzy (MG), Bibi Dalrymple, Brenda Weathered.

The Naturalist

Oso Bay Wetlands

by Randy Bissell

Walking along the Oso Bay Wetlands, it is obvious that there is a bay oyster bed and limestone shoal about 6 ft above the present-day water level, along the low bay cliff near the Pelican Porch.

These perched bay beds above sea-level today speak to the dynamics of our coastal history - beyond what a storm deposit might look like. Sea-level was higher in the near recent past, we know 120,000 years ago and as recently as perhaps 7000 years ago during the mid-Holocene.



Cyanobacteria

By Randy Bissell

Let me also say something good about algae - green algae and their primitive kin, cyanobacteria.

Thank them all in your next breath. Billions of years ago, cyanobacteria ruled the planet and turned a noxious atmosphere into our oxygen-rich paradise through the miracle of photosynthesis.

Today, these little engines provide about half the photosynthetic oxygen on the planet.

It's OK to worry about the rainforests, but healthy marine and estuarine systems are important, too.



The Naturalist

Kayak Program at Lake Corpus Christi State Park

Mike Wenzel

Recently, I had the opportunity to help present a kayak program at Lake Corpus Christi State Park for a group of ladies from San Antonio. This was the second year I've been able to assist with this program for them, and it was a wonderful experience once again.

Some participants had kayaked before, while for others it was their very first time. One of the things I enjoy most about being a Texas Master Naturalist is introducing new ways for people to experience and connect with nature. The group had a great time learning the basics of kayaking and discovering all that Lake Corpus Christi State Park has to offer.

I encourage everyone to volunteer when you can at our State Parks. You never know when you might inspire someone to become a Master Naturalist — or simply to spend more time outdoors enjoying the beauty of nature.



The Naturalist

Wildlife Watch: Captured by Camera

By Mike Wenzel

Welcome to this month's edition of Wildlife Watch, where I share some of the fascinating birds and wildlife captured by my game cameras—both locally and beyond.

This month's theme is all about Texas Master Naturalists — with a little surprise oddity thrown in.

I'm always amazed at what may trip one of my game cameras. For example, who would have thought a dragonfly could set one off? Yet one did! It lingered long enough for several shots, and this picture turned out to be the best of the bunch. I'm not sure of the species, but it certainly made my day to find something so unexpected while reviewing my photos.

The next photo highlights one of our very own chapter members, a Texas Master Naturalist, setting up a game camera. I spend quite a bit of time just deciding where to place mine. Trails and roads often work best, as wildlife use them like highways to travel from point A to point B.

And now for this month's oddity — a jackalope! This one appears to be wandering around our place in Wilson County with only one antler. Did he lose the other fighting off rivals? Or could he be a unicorn jackalope — a new species waiting to be named?

Perhaps one day I'll even capture a photo of a bigfoot to share with you all.

Until next month, keep your eyes open and enjoy the wonders of nature!



The Naturalist

STMN Summer Adventures!

Cindy Frank



I was in California this past week, enjoying a few days at the two mountain cabins my sister and I share. I am sitting in Poso Creek, which runs between our two cabins in Balance Rock, CA.

Sara Carney



This summer I've been volunteering with PINS on egg runs and hatchling releases. This is one of those releases.

Jason & Lari Jo Edwards, Leslie Albrecht, Phil Woods, Bibi Dalrymple, Brenda Weathered



STMN in Costa Rica at Verdian retreat center attending a 5 day nature retreat organized by Lari Jo.

Chelise Hyatt



In July my kids and I went on a 9-day trek in the back country at Philmont Scout Ranch in beautiful New Mexico with a group of 3 adults and 9 youth.

The Naturalist

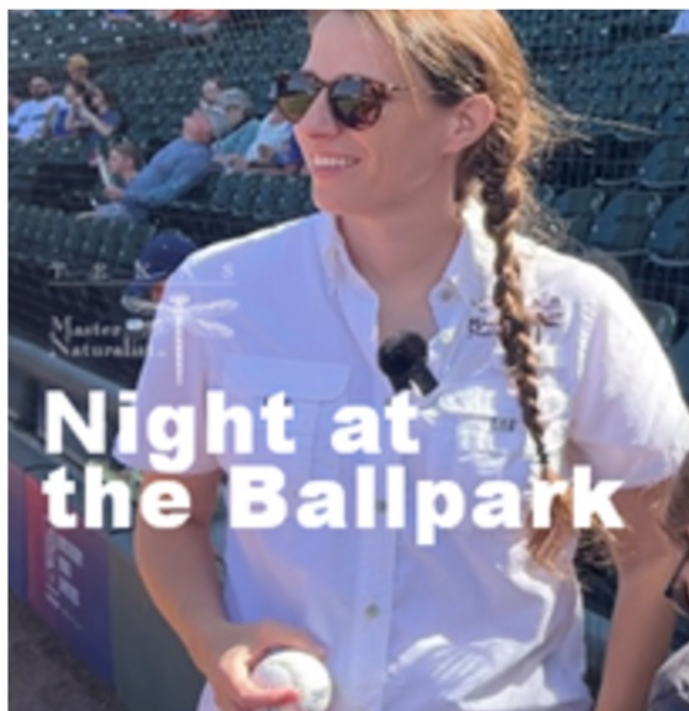
Night at the Ballpark

by Holly Ahern

The video from our Texas Master Naturalist Night at the Ballpark is now live!

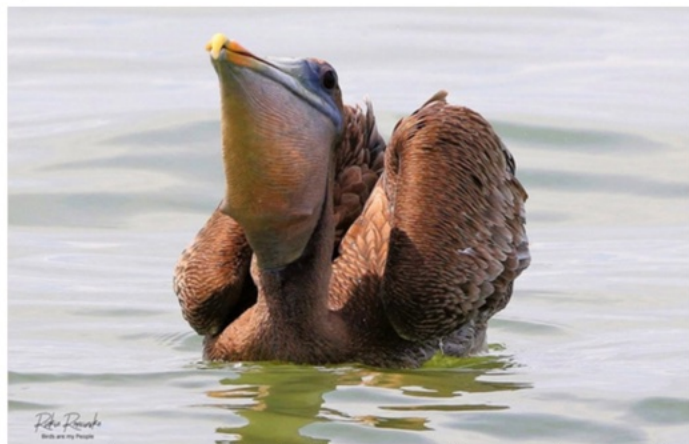
Visit our homepage to catch the highlights, including outreach moments from both chapters and the ceremonial first pitch by Mary Pearl.

It was a memorable evening celebrating nature, community, and baseball. Don't miss it - you can watch it now at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwnEk5veybw&authuser=0>



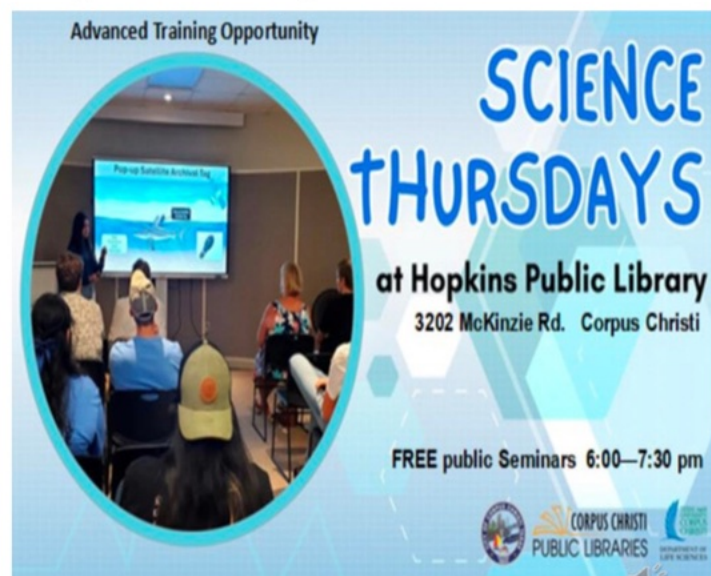
Brown Pelican

by Riekke Roncinske



No one has ever choked from swallowing their pride ... While the Brown Pelican's pouch is used for catching fish, it also helps them cool down by swinging it back and forth and can hold up to 3 gallons of water. Padre Island, TX

AT: Science Thursdays every other thursday



Call 361.826.2350 for dates & topics!

If you're in Northwest Corpus Christi (or anywhere nearby), don't miss this exciting opportunity to expand your scientific knowledge!

NO REGISTRATION is required.

Blucher Bunch

Every Monday & Thursday

New Summer Hours!



The Naturalist

Advanced Training Opportunity!

Saturday, August 9 10:00 AM - Live or ZOOM

Join our friends from the Mid-Coast chapter for a special hybrid event featuring activist and author Diane Wilson and Steve Raabe, trustee for the Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust.

Diane will share insights from her decades of environmental justice work along the Texas coast. Steve will provide updates on how the trust supports local conservation.

Don't miss this chance to engage with two leading voices in coastal stewardship and advocacy.

REGISTER for ZOOM via the QR Code.

No registration necessary for in person attendance.

Join us in person or via Zoom as Diane Wilson and Steve Raabe explain the history and the latest update on the numerous local and regional projects funded by the trust.



DIANE WILSON

Diane Wilson is a fourth-generation fisherwoman, author, activist, and mother of five. She has fought petrochemical industry on the Texas Gulf Coast for 36 years, launching environmental campaigns, demonstrations, hunger strikes, climbed towers, and even attempted to sink her boat in the fight against local industrial polluters. She has been jailed multiple times for civil disobedience. She is executive director of San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper. In 2019, Wilson and Waterkeeper won a 50 Million settlement and zero discharge of plastic in a Citizen Clean Water suit against Formosa Plastics, Texas in Point Comfort, Texas. She was the recipient of the Goldman Environmental Award in 2023. She lives in Seadrift, Texas.

Investing in the future, the Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust's mission is to support and fund environmental mitigation projects, studies, and initiatives in the Matagorda Bay and San Antonio Bay ecosystems.



STEVE RAABE

Mr. Raabe is the Trustee for the Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University and a Licensed Professional Engineer. Mr. Raabe has thirty-eight years of project management, water resources planning and engineering experience previously working for the San Antonio River Authority and private consulting engineering companies.

Register for
Zoom Link



In person
attendance
does not require
registration

Chapter business meeting to follow program.
Contact: vicepresident@midcoast-tmn.org

The Naturalist

Who Did What in June

by Cindy Frank

List of who did what – July, 2025

(total volunteer hours for month = 635.50)

(total people seen for month = 1584 adults + 1456 youth)

ARK-PO – Paula Baker

ARK-RM – Michele Connolly

Blucher Park-RM – Bibi Dalrymple, Sharon Heilman, Sue Barley, Lillian Bass

CC Museum-RM – Chuck Blend

Citizen Science-FR – Cindy Frank, Jean Meadors, Cindy Hanifen, Patti Baker

Community Service-TG – Bibi Dalrymple

ComPartServ-PO – Cindy Frank, Chuck Blend, Mike Wenzel

Flour Bluff-RM – Cindy Frank, Jennifer Pshigoda, Adel Casiano, Kim Ogden

Mustang Island SP-PO – Randy Bissell, Cindy Frank

NDP-PO – Cindy Frank, Jean Meadors, Bill Beaman, Denise Beaman

NDP-RM – Phil Woods

OBWPNC-PO – Gerry Vahle, Phil Woods, Randy Bissell, Cindy Frank, Becca Maestas

PINS-PO – Phil Woods, Patti Baker

PINS-RM – Cindy Frank, Ann Flanagan, Linda Cowley, Patti Baker, Elaine Tiller, Phil Woods, Claude Smith, Sara Carney, Pat Clark, Bill Beaman, Denise Beaman, Erica Salinas, Jim Butcher, John Wilkins

Port A Nature Preserve-PO – Phil Woods

Port A Nature Preserve-RM – Michele Connolly, Cindy Frank, Ann Flanagan, Christina Lee

Public CleanUp-RM – Michele Connolly, Jay Gray, Pat Clark, Jessica Hernandez, Cindy Frank, Jill Smith, Stephanie Lewis, Christina Lee

STBGNC-DO – Adel Casiano

STBGNC-OT – Ric Garces

STBGNC-RM – Adel Casiano

TSA-RM – Patti Baker

TSC-RM – Patti Baker

UTMSI-PO – Jenny Dailey



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs, activities, education and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunities throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

Do you have something you would like to contribute to the newsletter?

Please send it to
chelise.hyatt@scouting.org.
