

The Naturalist

Volume 10 Issue 10

October 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."

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President's Corner

by Michele Connolly

A group of your South Texas Master Naturalists buddies are competing in the Toughest Scout Challenge on October 3rd at Camp Karankawa. Our team name is the Wild Roadrunners. If you want to come out and support us, all are welcome. Thank you Chelise for making this happen for us!

Also this month is the State Conference in College Station on October 16 - 19. Registration has closed but if you are already registered, I look forward to seeing you there! If you are going, consider carpooling and room sharing to save costs.

I hope everyone enjoys this slight weather change and gets to go outside and have fun!



Wildflower Planting Begins at FBISD Wetlands

by Chad Huckabee

Fall planting of wildflower and native grasses has begun at FBISD Wetlands.

A planting team of South Texas Master Naturalist (Debbie Plowman, Nana and Rick Martin, Jennifer Pshigoda and daughter Vivian) broadcast a mixture of 25 pounds of wildflower/native grass seeds and dampened sawdust Saturday afternoon, September 6.

A prepared grassland area was selected for the first planting. The timing of the planting was done ahead of a higher-than-normal week-long rain chance.



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Painted Lady

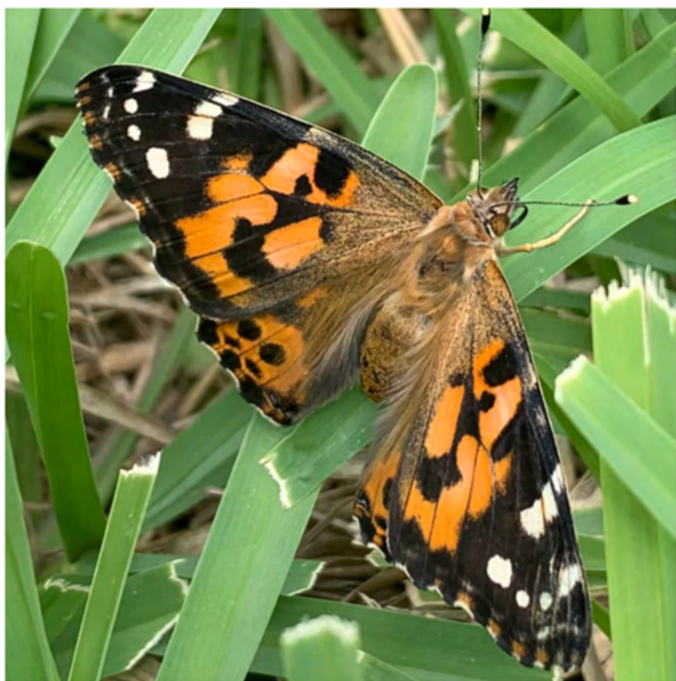
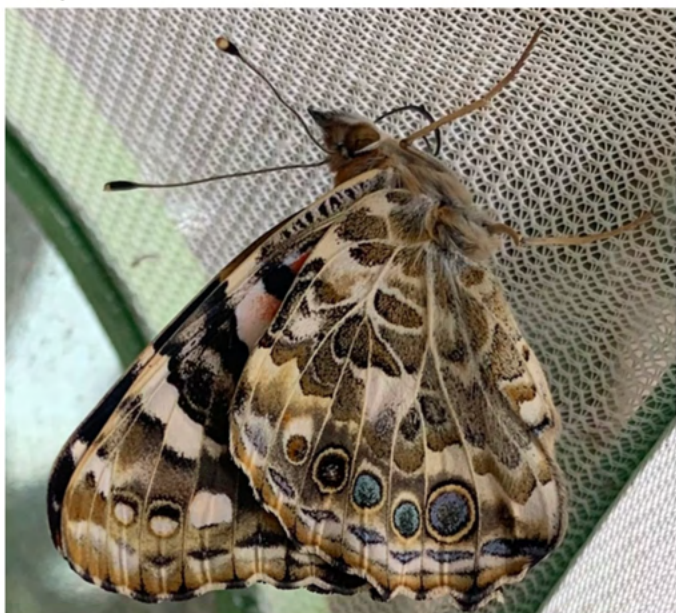
by Jammie Regier

Ciao Bella Painted Lady, your journey to my little backyard sanctuary was a unique one indeed.

At first, I thought I was going to volunteer for TMN at the Home & Garden Show to build an arts & crafts butterfly, not a real one! You can imagine my surprise when I saw all of the caterpillars, food, and supplies Holly had at the table.

Holly had us adults & kids alike super excited to build up our tiny cup with food & a caterpillar 🐛 along with instructions to take home. Teaching kids & adults about the stunning transformation of caterpillar to butterfly is an important conservation tool & effort.

I'm so happy I was able to be apart of Holly's workshop, and to observe the metamorphous of this beautiful Painted Lady who's now exploring her new home in my backyard.



Building Butterflies, Building Connections

by Holly Ahern

September 12 - 14, 2025. The South Texas Chapter made a big impact at this year's Corpus Christi Home & Garden Show with our in-booth "Build a Butterfly" Make 'N Take workshops. Kids and parents jumped in, carefully transferring live butterfly larva and starting their own up-close journey through the life cycle of a butterfly. Our outreach volunteers worked side by side assisting participants placing their larva into their new habitats as they witnessed science in action.

The weekend was a success thanks to our South Texas chapter outreach volunteers, who spent hours working one-on-one with children and adults. Their patience, enthusiasm, and knowledge created a meaningful learning experience for all. (special thanks to Rick Martin, for fluttering around the convention center promoting our workshops!)

Thank you again to our dedicated Texas Master Naturalist outreach volunteers who helped make it all happen and connect with over 10 new membership recruits, over 680 adults, over 265 children, and 82 people BUILT A BUTTERFLY!



Rick and Nada Martin

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Building Butterflies, Building Connections

by Holly Ahern (continued)



Child & mom transferring their larva into its new home.



Ann Flanagan

Photos of the Home and Garden Show Butterfly Make-and-Take

by Cherie Heimann



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Photos of the Home and Garden Show Butterfly Make-and-Take

by Cherie Heimann (continued)



Banshee

by Jammie Regier

The Barn Owl (Her name is Banshee) is an ambassador who I got to learn about at Hazel Bazemore - Hawk Watch celebration.



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Sea Beans

by Cherie Heimann

Sea beans are seeds and fruit of plants that have been carried by rivers and streams to the ocean.

They travel on the waves and currents of the seas around the world. Sea beans may travel for many years and visit many shores before finding a new home on a sand dune, in a rock crevice or in an eagle-eyed beachcomber's pocket.

Like seashells, sea beans can be used to make jewelry and decorate containers. They can be used in games or to adorn your bookshelves. Some collectors love to just show them off. And, if you are feeling especially adventurous, they can be propagated!

Some of you may have seen our Sea Bean Bingo on our outreach table. These are just a fraction of the thousands of different beans to be found. While playing Sea Bean Bingo I have been asked, "What plants do they come from?" and "Where do they grow?" Not knowing the answers I decided to find out.

Here's what I learned. I hope you find it as interesting as I did.

Until next time,

C*25



Hamburger Bean aka Horse Eye

Mucuna gigantea

Tropical and Subtropical Forests Around the World



Entada Gigas

Largest pod of the legume family up to 15 ft
Caribbean and Western Atlantic



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Sea Beans (continued)



Sea Coconut aka golf ball
Manicaria saccifera
Swampy and Estuarine Areas



Almond aka Sea Almond
Terminalia catappa
E Indies, Africa, Australia



Manchineel Hippomane aka Beach Apple Mancinella
Very poisonous tree
Tropical Americas



Sea Purse
Dioclea reflexa
Tropical Africa



Water Hickory aka Bitter Pecan
Carya aquatica
Southern US clay flats near rivers & streams



Bitternut Hickory
Carya cordiformis
Eastern US near Canada

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Sea Beans (continued)



Sea Pearl & Nicker Nut Pride of Barbados plant
Caesalpinia sp
Caribbean, Peru, SE Mexico



Walnut aka Tropical Walnut
Juglans Neotropica
Threatened by habitat loss
Columbia, Peru, Equator



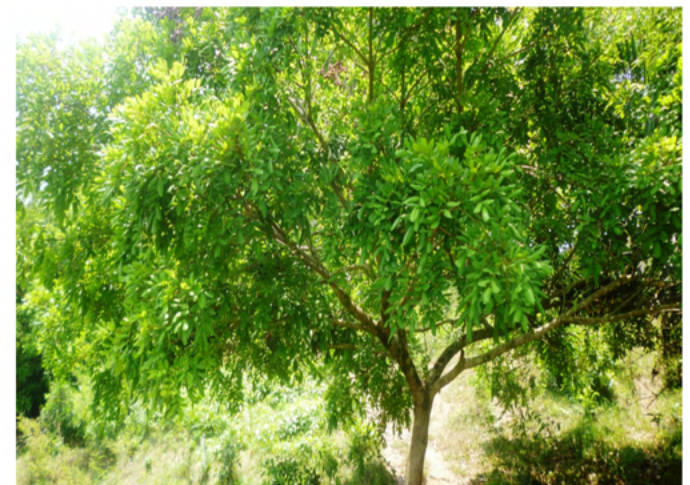
Prickly Palm
Acrocomia sp
S. America



Blister Pod
Saccoglottis Amazonica
Lower Amazon River



Starnut Palm
Astrocaryum Aculeatum
S. America & Trinidad



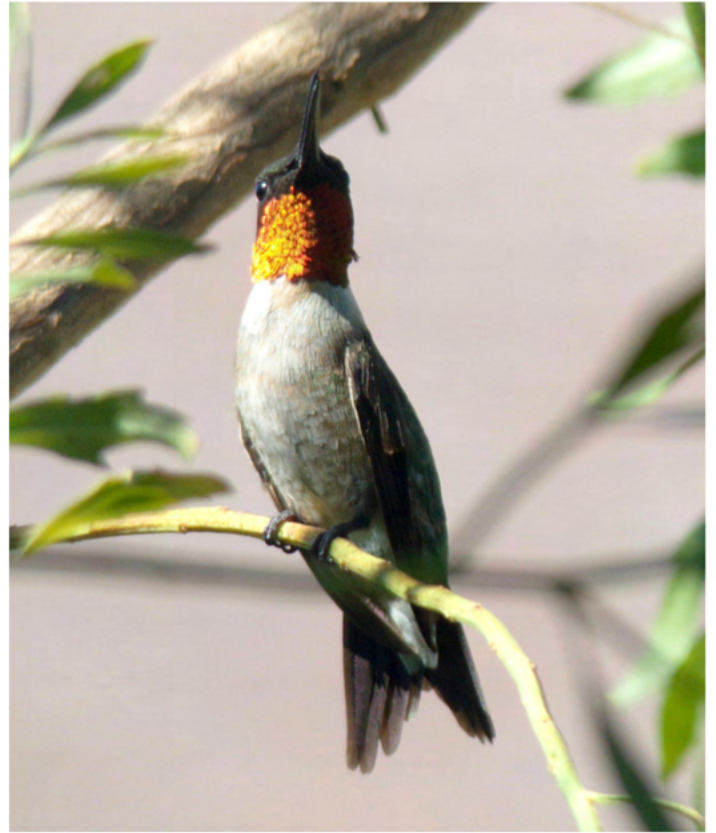
Brain Bean aka Brainfruit
Andria Geleottiana
Southern Mexico

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Ruby Red Throat Hummingbird

by Jammie Regier

The Ruby Red Throat Hummingbird is a male who spent some time in my backyard this month during migration. I'm near Oso Bay Wetlands. I took these pictures from my dining table....I have no idea how they came out so stunning through a window. I even got a picture with his eyes closed as he was getting some beauty rest in the Groundsel Tree (Pollinator) that the birds planted for me.



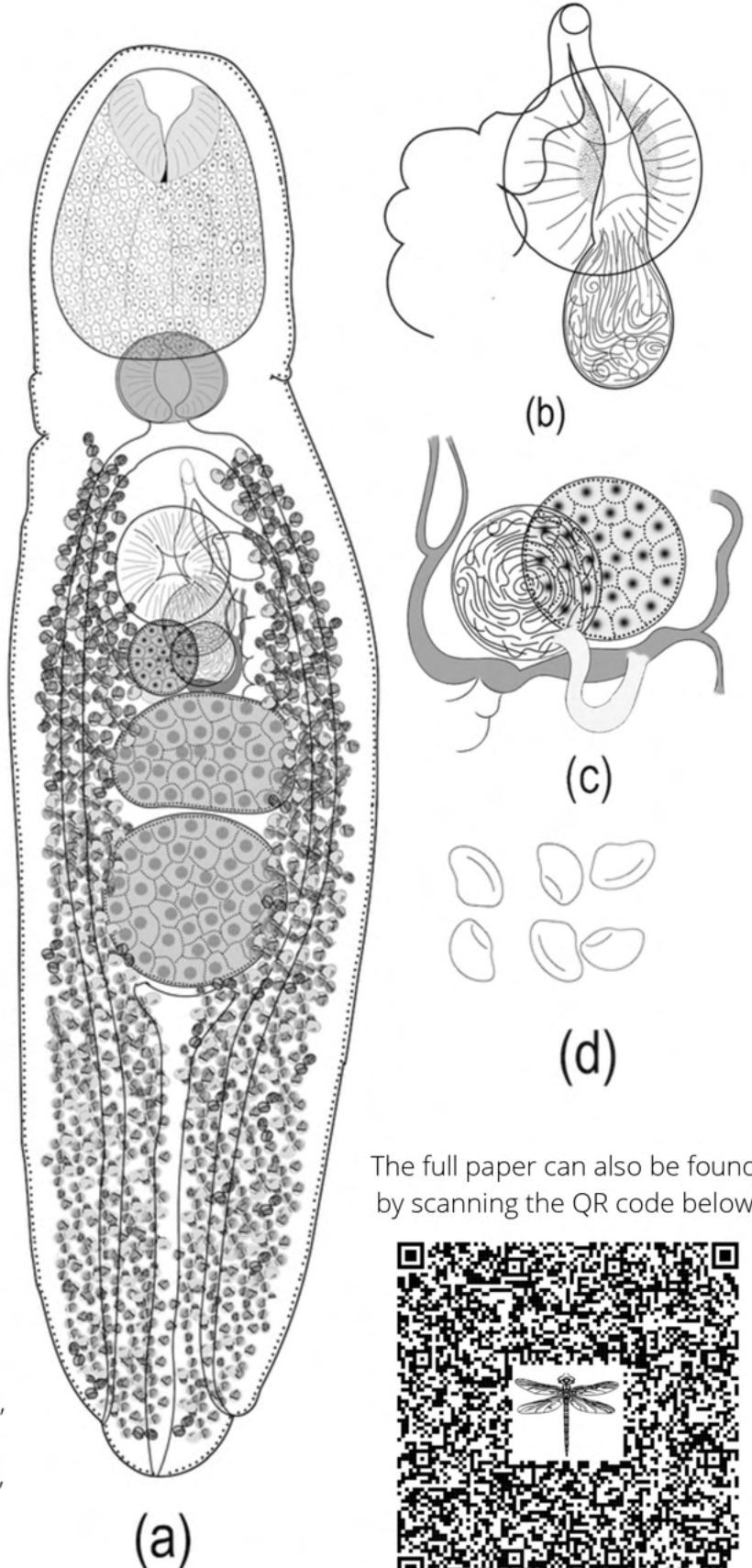
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More Flukes of Nature

By Chuck Blend

In our latest paper, we discuss the taxonomy of two parasitic fluke genera, *Sphincterostomum* and *Lobatotrema*. Both genera are similar, and we used morphology, molecular DNA sequence information, and various statistical/analytical techniques to differentiate both taxa. For *Lobatotrema* we restricted the genus to only 2 species: *L. aniferum* and a new species we describe in the paper, *L. droneni* (this is the species in the illustration provided for our newsletter this month). We also consider *Sphincterostomum* to include 2 species as well: *S. acollum* and *S. nikolaevi*. A third species, *S. mediterraneae*, is problematic and will be addressed in a future paper. The key taxonomic features we found most informative for distinguishing both genera include the nature of the oral sucker (i.e., does it have a large sphincter, hence, *Sphincterostomum* or 'sphincter mouth'), oral sucker shape, the nature of the sphincter itself (U- or V-shaped) and its glandular / muscular components, and the testes position. We also address the geographic distribution of members of the subfamily Schistorchiinae in the Indo-West Pacific of which both genera are members, and we muse on the phylogenetic relationships between members of this subfamily and its close neighbor, Megaperinae.

For more information, go to Google Scholar and look up: Karar, Y.F.M., Blend, C.K., and Mansour, A. (2025). Re-evaluation of the taxonomic status of taxa recognized within the expanded concept of *Sphincterostomum* Oshmarin, Mamaev & Parukhin, 1961 and the related *Lobatotrema* Manter, 1963 (Digenea: Megaperidae). *Journal of Helminthology*, 99, e104, 1–31.



The full paper can also be found by scanning the QR code below:



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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.

With the recent rain in Wilson County, our stock tank finally has water again, drawing in plenty of visitors. I set a trail camera near the water and was rewarded with a parade of familiar critters.

First up was our old friend, the Coyote. When I arrived at the gate, I couldn't help but notice an Acme truck leaving after dropping off a package—so I'll be exercising extra caution while wandering out there!

Two white-tailed bucks were also frequent visitors to the tank. It's clear the rut hasn't started yet: they're still in velvet, and they're getting along just fine, hanging out together instead of sparring.

Then came the raccoons—the life of the party. They may look cute and cuddly, but from personal experience, I can tell you that when food or trash is involved, their tempers can flare. And of course, what's a feeder party without some white-tailed “crashers”? The deer eventually won the standoff, though the raccoons didn't seem too pleased about it.

On a recent trip to the North Bay Sanctuary, I startled what I believe was a red-shouldered hawk clutching a rat in its talons. He'd just emerged from the brush, likely fresh from the hunt. It was a thrilling sight—one that would've been even better through binoculars or a camera lens. Lesson learned: never leave home without your optics and camera at the ready!



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AT Opportunity

Saturday, October 4



Presented by the CC Astronomical Society's President, Billy Becket

Science Thursday

Multiple Dates

Science Thursday will be starting soon. The dates are listed below. Presentations run from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM, after the library closes. Come check out what Texas A&M - Corpus Christi Department of Life Science is doing. Ages 15+ are welcome.



Blucher Bunch

Every Monday & Thursday

New Summer Hours!



Volunteer Opportunity

Any Time!



The Naturalist

Volunteer Opportunity

Saturday, October 4



Blucher Bunch

Every Monday & Thursday

New Summer Hours!



Volunteer Opportunity

Oct 18th - Limited Spots Available



Home and Garden Show Stats:

10 New membership recruit sign ups

681 Adults visited our outreach tables

267 Children visited our outreach tables

82 Children built a butterfly!



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Who Did What in September

by Cindy Frank

(total volunteer hours for month = 1218.75)

(total people seen for month = 824 adults + 363 youth)

ARK-PO – Kathy Cima, Brad Stockman

ARK-RM – Kathy Cima, Brad Stockman

Blucher Park-RM – Bibi Dalrymple, Sharon Heilman, Sue Barley, Florence Tissot

CC Museum-PO – Chuck Blend

CC Museum-RM – Chuck Blend, Christy Blend

Citizen Science-FR – Cindy Frank, Neesy Tompkins, Cindy Hannifen

Community Presentations-DO – Randy Bissell

Community Service-TG – Bibi Dalrymple, Steve Cook

ComPartServ-PO – Cindy Frank, Jessica Hernandez, Cherie Heimann, Carol Singleton, Holly Ahern, Bibi Dalrymple, Randy Bissell, Adel Casiano, Claude Smith, Suzanne Smith, Rick Martin, Nada Martin, Aracely Negrete, Hannah Upton, Chad Huckabee, Pat Clements, Josie Gunter, Elaine Tiller, Ann Flanagan, Jammie Regier, Katie Heuermann, John Wilkins

Egery Flats-RM – Lillian Gasca

Flour Bluff-PO – Cindy Frank, Janice Knezek, Chad Huckabee, Bill Beaman

Flour Bluff-RM – Cindy Frank, Jennifer Pshigoda, Chad Huckabee, Liz Abel, Janice Knezek, Rick Martin, Nada Martin, Debbie Plowman, Kathy Cima, Brad Stockman, Ingeborg Holt

Lake CCSP-PO – Mike Wenzel

Lake CCSP-RM – Josie Gunter

Mustang Island SP-PO – Bill Beaman, Denise Beaman

Mustang Island SP-RM – Rick Martin, Nada Martin, Debbie Plowman

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

OBWPNC-PO – Gerry Vahle, Phil Woods, Liz Abel

PINS-PO – Monica Garcia

PINS-RM – Claude Smith, Suzanne Smith, Kathy Cima, Brad Stockman, Chirstina Lee, Toni Briscoe, Elaine Tiller

Port A Nature Preserve-PO – Cindy Frank, Phil Woods

Port A Nature Preserve-RM – Michele Connolly, Cindy Frank

Public CleanUp-RM – Michele Connolly, Jay Gray, Patti Baker, Kathy Cima, Brad Stockman, Hope Warne, Cindy Frank, Pat Clark, Cornelia Gates, Hannah Upton, Jim Butcher, Erica Salinas, Stephen Warne, Bibi Dalrymple, Ingeborg Holt

STBGNC-OT – Ric Garces

STBGNC-RM – Adel Casiano, Carol Singleton, Pat Clements, Grace Lopez

TSA-RM – Patti Baker

TSC-RM – Patti Baker

UTMSI-PO – Jenny Dailey, Ann Flanagan, Cindy Frank, Kathy Cima, Brad Stockman

WWF-FR – Randy Bissell



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.
