



Chapter News

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Marsha Stephens is a long-time friend of Mickey Dufilho's and a founding member of the TMN Prairie Oaks Chapter. See "About the Author and Her Chapter" on Page 6.

Vultures are a subject that most folks consider less than appetizing, and perhaps they have a face only a mother could love. But there is more than meets the eye about these birds. As you probably know, they are an important part of the ecosystem, performing the essential duty of "recycling" animal remains.

The body of a dead animal is commonly referred to as "carion" or a "carcass." How do these birds go about finding that food supply? To understand that you first need to know about kinds of vultures. Locally, the two common species are the turkey vulture and the black vulture, both of which have virtually bald heads, which is believed to help in keeping the skin clean and healthy considering constant exposure to rotting material. Adult turkey vultures are distinguished by red skin on the head, and outer-wing feathers that are silvery. Adult black vultures have a grayish-black head, wings with silvery patches at the ends, and a short, square tail. When gliding, black vultures hold their wings nearly flat, while turkey vultures hold their wings in a slight "V" shape.

Now back to finding that fine cuisine; both turkey vultures and black vultures have extremely good vision that helps in locating carion. But, unlike most birds, turkey vultures also have an extremely good sense of smell. Experiments have shown that

turkey vultures can detect the odors of dead animals from several miles away, so using the combined senses of smell and sight makes them adept at finding food from high in the sky. In contrast, black vultures are much less sensitive to odors. To compensate, they often fly much closer to the ground when searching for food. Research has shown that black vultures have another clever means of locating carion; They hang out with turkey vultures and follow them when they locate a food source. With a few rare exceptions, turkey vultures do not eat live prey, but black vultures are known to sometimes supplement their diets by attacking small animals, including newborn cattle, sheep, and goats. This is not common because it requires a lot more energy than feasting on a meal that is not going anywhere. Black vultures also lack the agility on and near the ground to capture fast-moving prey.

Modern highways provide a constant supply of tempting roadkill, which benefits vultures in terms of a food source but presents the threat of fatal collisions with vehicles. Those collisions can result in serious damage to vehicles as well, so drivers are well advised to slow down and honk to warn off vultures at a carcass.



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By Marsha Stephens, reprinted with permission from the spring 2018 Prairie Oaks Chapter newsletter.

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<https://facebook.com/TMN.COT>

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The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by Texas A&M AgriLIFE Ext. Svce. and Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.

TMN programs serve all people without regard to socio-economic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Masthead photo by Charles Jesse Miller Jr. at BNWR.

Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
Chapter News – September 2021

SHOUTOUT!

Even if you otherwise have no use for Facebook, you HAVE to check out the fantastic posts Dick Schaffhausen (COT Facebook Coordinator), Kathy Pittman, and Angela Griffin are contributing.

Texas Master Naturalist Program—Cradle of Texas Chapter General Meeting and Advanced Training

Wednesday, September 8, 2021, 9 AM

at Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service, Angleton TX, and via email invite to Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service’s Microsoft Teams Meeting license

9:00 AM – 9:20 AM	Welcome; Meeting Participation Notes; Volunteer Report; Sue Heath with a brief report on the Winter Shrike Project
9:20 AM – 10:15 AM	Advanced Training Speaker: Deborah January-Bevers, J.D., President and CEO, Houston Wilderness Topic: “Texas Native ‘Super Trees’ and Their Benefit to the Environment” <i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>
10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	Nature Notes Speaker: Dick Schaffhausen Topic: “The Birds of Resoft County Park Rookery”
10:45 AM – 11:15 AM	General Membership Meeting <i>[Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>



**Deborah
January-Bevers**

Deborah January-Bevers has been involved with public policy around the Greater Houston region and the State of Texas for over 35 years, currently serving as President and CEO of Houston Wilderness (www.houstonwilderness.org).

She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center. She most recently helped create and is now implementing the eight-county Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan (www.gulfhoustonrcp.org) with three key goals for environmental resiliency, and a 25-mile Port of Houston TREES Program

targeting one million new native trees on riparian corridors along the Houston Ship Channel.

January-Bevers is lead author on Houston Wilderness’ Ecosystem Services Primer, 2nd Edition, A Six-Step Guide for Making Nature-Based Infrastructure Decisions based on the Benefits of Multiple Ecosystem Services, and Health, and Multisectoral Leadership: A Large-Scale Targeted Tree Planting Project Framework. Deborah speaks regularly at environmental conferences on the Greater Houston Region’s ecological assets and regional ecosystem services case studies.

MISSION STATEMENT—
Houston Wilderness works with a broad-based alliance of business, environmental and government interests to protect and promote the 10 diverse ecoregions of the 13+ county area around Houston, Galveston Bay, and the Gulf of Mexico, including coastal prairies, forests, wetlands, and waterways.



MEMBERSHIP DATA REPORT by Dave Brandes, Data Manager

Hours Totals YTD—31 August 2021

7909 Hours VT 1395 Hours AT

* August only: 646 VT and 41 AT Hours

Impact Data YTD—31 August 2021

3486 Adults 5417 Youth 8903 Total

At the August General Meeting, Membership Director John Boettiger recognized 12 members who had achieved volunteer-hour milestones in 2021 as of July 31. Members who were present are pictured with John (at far right): (from left) Kathy Pittman, Oron Atkins, Ruby Lewis, Rose Wagner, and Angela Griffin.

2021 Recertifications

Anne Bettinger



Photo by Dick Schaffhausen.



KIDS HAVE A REEL-Y GREAT TIME AT POMONA FISH CAMP By Lisa Myers

Mike Mullenweg, COT member and Brazoria County Parks Department's Program Director, was joined by Lisa Myers and Angela Griffin on July 31 at the Pomona community in Manvel for a morning of angler education and fishing. Despite the heat (and no fish caught), kids young and old had a wonderful experience. Photos by Pomona staff.



Contests and Awards Texas Master Naturalist 2021 Annual Meeting

October 21st-24th

Photo, Art & Media Contest

Howdy, Master Naturalists! The rules for the Media Contest have been posted! Check out the website link below for the full list of rules, and to submit your entries online!!

Registration is from September 1 through 30. Visit <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2021-photo-art-media-contest/>

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR ARTICLE Continued from page 1

Beyond their jobs as nature's garbage disposals, let us behold these creatures as they glide above. Who among us has not looked up with envy and awe at the sight of a soaring vulture rising effortlessly on the lift

created by warm air currents (thermals) to circle and sail? Though we know that they are just searching for their next meal, sometimes they really do seem to be simply enjoying the view.

COVID AND THE TMN 2021 ANNUAL MEETING

From the State Office as of August 27

As you know, we are building the meeting as a HYBRID event with both in-person and virtual attendee options available. We have every desire to safely host this meeting with those original intentions in mind. HOWEVER, we cannot be responsible event planners or leaders of our program without working through event considerations for current and projected COVID conditions in the Dallas-Fort Worth region and statewide. At this point in the event timeline, we are actively working down two avenues:

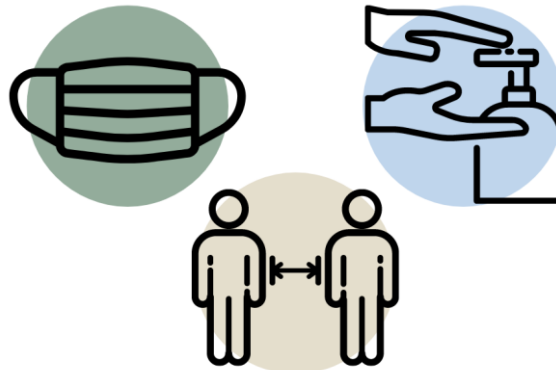
1. We are rolling out our **Safe Event Campaign**. Moving forward with the event under the current conditions, we must follow the health and safety guidelines from our agencies by providing and encouraging mask use, providing and encouraging hand sanitizing with stations set up throughout the facility, and planning the event with social distancing in place with spaced chairs and limited capacity in session rooms. We are also working alongside the Marriott hotel and their cleaning and safety protocols already in place to make sure that all guests have access to a clean experience. We have begun to share this campaign with social media graphics on our Facebook page. Along with the above safety practices, we will continue to work with the conference hotel and continue to monitor local conditions and health and safety regulations for the county location of the meeting.
2. We are actively planning out a series of **contingencies** for the Event. Having hosted the virtual annual meeting last year and with the virtual aspects of this year's meeting, we have already built the 2021 Annual Meeting platform with all the tools needed to host it in its entirety in a virtual fashion should it be required. If any changes are needed for the full meeting format or for individuals wishing to change their attendance type, we will make those adjustments at that time and will share the process with those already registered, via our listserv and through our social media accounts.

NOTE: If you have questions about the status of the Annual Meeting, look for information via:

- Messages via the email listserv
- Annual Meeting Webpage <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2021-annual-meeting/#covid-considerations>
- TMN Facebook page posts <https://www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistProgram>
- COT Chapter Board Members

COVID-19 Precautions

Texas Master Naturalist Program | 2021 Annual Meeting



Masks

Are strongly encouraged and will be provided. We will follow all mandates issued by Dallas County.



Social Distancing

Limited attendance will allow opportunity for social distancing during sessions, keynotes, and meals.



Sanitizing Stations

Hand sanitizer stations will be made available and we will ensure regular sanitation in common areas.



Enhanced Cleaning

Cleaning frequency has been increased, especially in high-traffic areas. All staff will wear PPE as needed.



Safe Meal Services

Limited attendance, masks and gloves by staff, and sanitizing stations provide protective measures during meal service.



Housekeeping

Hospital-grade disinfectants and wipes available in each room provide enhanced sanitation for each guest.

BRAZORIA MALL OUTREACH EVENT

By Lisa Myers

The Cradle of Texas Chapter and Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges members attended the Brazoria Mall, before-school-opening event on August 21, organized and overseen by Outreach Director Ruby Lewis. Helping her were Steve Baker, Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Georgia Monnerat, Lisa Myers, and Dick Schaffhausen. We interacted with 400-500 children and adults who were drawn to the reptiles.



Photos by
Dick
Schaffhausen

COT 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION TABLE DECORATION CONTEST RULES

By Chapter Host Rose Wagner and 20th Anniversary Committee

1. Members in good standing are eligible to adopt a round/banquet table to decorate
2. Theme should be nature related
3. Independent judges will select the winner
4. Prize is a marsh buggy ride at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge. Details to be coordinated with Jennifer Sanchez, Refuge Manager
5. Winner will select a total of 8 people for the ride
6. Gold tablecloths will be provided
7. First 15 to sign up will get a table
8. You must confirm by November 30 to ensure all tables have a centerpiece. Volunteers cannot cancel after that date except for an emergency
9. Decoration must be ready prior to the start of the event on December 8
10. Venue: First Presbyterian Church in Angleton.

Questions? Contact Rose Wagner hummer0533@gmail.com.
Good luck to all and let your imaginations go "wild"!



WHO SAYS CHUPACABRAS ARE A MYTH?

Submitted by Mel McKey

The images below were taken by a friend of Mel McKey's during the week of August 22 at the mouth of the Brazos River. The animal was about 70 yards away. What do you think? It's definitely not Bigfoot.



GUEST CONTRIBUTOR: ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND HER CHAPTER

Continued from Page 1

Marsha Stephens is a member and former New Class Training Director of the Prairie Oaks Chapter, which serves Erath, Palo Pinto, Hamilton and Comanche counties. During 2016-2017, she was part of a Local Coordinating Committee that founded the chapter, an effort initiated by two students at Tarleton State University (TSU). In 2018, the chapter and TSU created a special arrangement by which the chapter's training class is made available to TSU students as part of a three-credit hour course entitled, "Conservation Outreach and Interpretation."

Marsha developed the structure and content of this course and served as the course instructor during 2018-2021. The course provides students an opportunity to complete 40 initial training hours during the semester through attendance at chapter training classes and alongside members-in-training from the area. In addition to the TMN curriculum content, separate class sessions focus on principles and practice of interpretation, and outreach and volunteerism in natural resources conservation. The course is offered through the Department of Wildlife and Natural Resources at TSU, and most of the student enrollees are majors within that department.

In a former life, Marsha completed a Ph.D. in Biology from New Mexico State University; an M.S. in Biology

from University of Texas El Paso; a M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction and minor in Wildlife & Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University; and a B.S. in Secondary Education with teaching certifications in Biology and Earth Sciences from Lamar University.

She is retired from New Mexico State University, where she taught and conducted research in biology and mathematics and served as director of an environmental research center. Her research primarily focused on desert plants and animals, including studies of wolf spiders, prairie dogs, coyotes, ant populations and carrion communities. Raised on a ranch in Erath County, she left the area over 50 years ago and returned in 2013 to care for aging parents.

Marsha greatly enjoys writing articles for public outreach and the chapter newsletter, presenting programs for regional civic groups, and involvement with two local Christmas Bird Counts. More recently, she has spent most of her volunteer time maintaining a chapter-supported city pollinator garden and gathering and preparing native wildflower seeds for distribution at outreach events. She counts her TMN certification in 2011 with the Corpus Christi Chapter as a treasured badge of courage and her involvement with the program as a joy and an honor.

BRAZORIA COUNTY HISTORY: HENRY SMITH

By Neal McLain

If you have ever volunteered to help at the TMN-COT and Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges booths at Brazoria Heritage Festival in Brazoria, you were standing on Smith Street, named for Henry Smith. If you had walked around the corner, you would have seen a statue of Henry Smith.

So, who was Smith?

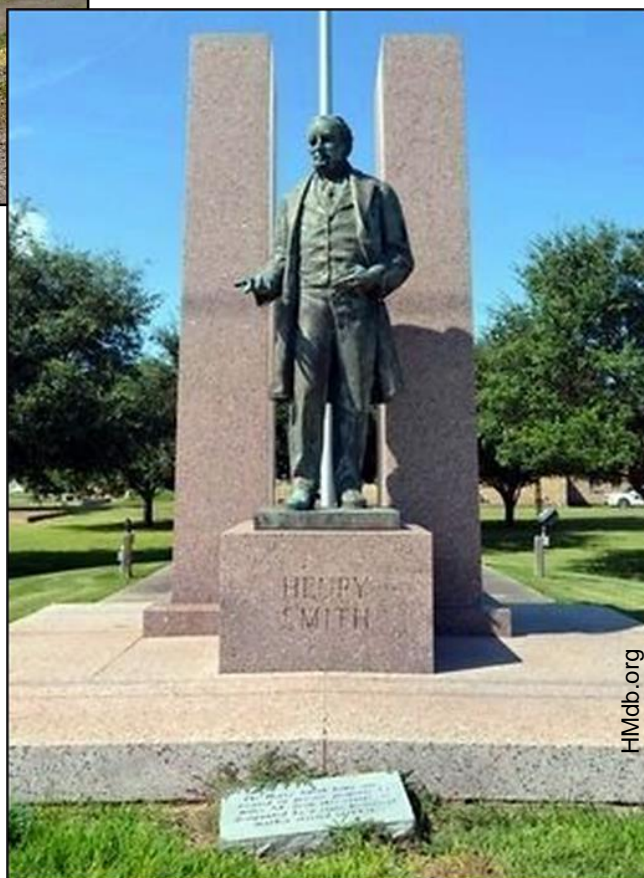
Wikipedia indicates that he was the first American governor of the independent State of Texas.

Before 1835, what is now Texas was part of the Mexican state of *Coahuila y Tejas*, a large state that overlapped the Rio Grand River, the present-day boundary between Mexico and Texas.

Smith was a leader in the "Independence Party" that advocated independence for the portion of *Coahuila y Tejas* north of the Rio Grand. This led to the *War of Texas Independence*, fought from October 1835 to April 1836 between Mexico and Texas colonists. It resulted in Texas independence from Mexico and the founding of the Republic of Texas in 1845.



Booths along Smith Street in Brazoria during Brazoria Heritage Day 2019



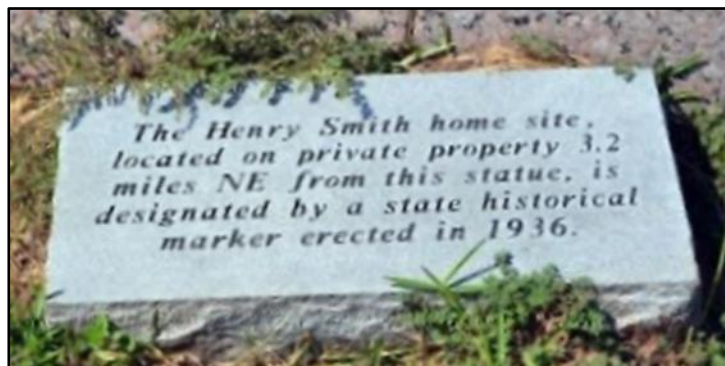
Statue of Governor Henry Smith facing Brooks Street (SH 36), Brazoria, Texas.



Portrait of Henry Smith.
State Preservation Board Caretakers
of the Texas Capitol

Plaque at foot of statue.

Wikipedia



HMdb.org

JUNE/JULY/AUGUST UPDATE ON HUDSON WOODS APPLE SNAILING

By David Heinicke

June 21 — Yet another full day at Hudson Woods doing battle with the Apple Snails. Today, Dick Schaffhausen, Oron Atkins, Georgia Monnerat and I, along with ACE interns Ethan and Will, paddled Smith Lake for about three hours. Four of us went to the east end of the lake for the first time in about a month, and all things considered, the number of eggs wasn't too bad. There's never been as many snails in that area as in the west end. We smashed lots of eggs and managed to collect a few adults. Georgia and Dick paddled the west end of the lake and loaded up on adults! By lunch time we had a total of 283 adult snails, most of which were collected by Dick.

While in the east end of the lake, we discovered another alligator nest with a very curious mother (see image) and a fledgling green heron on a nest (see image). Intern Ethan demonstrated how *not* to stand up in a kayak to look at a bird nest.

After lunch, three of us paddled Scobie Lake to maintain our every-other-week egg-smashing routine there. We seem to be holding our ground and keeping numbers very low on Scobie. We found about 130 egg cases and no adults.

Over the past several months, we have eliminated approximately 2,800 adult snails and way too many egg masses to count.

July 7 — Linda (Heinicke) and I paddled Scobie Lake today. We smashed about 120 egg masses and found three adult snails. That's about what we've been averaging there all summer, so I guess we are holding the populations steady. Scobie should be

good until I return from vacation the third week in July. Interns Will and Ethan will no doubt be hitting Smith Lake hard once this bad weather clears up. I did notice that someone, presumably Ethan and Will, cleaned out the snail-killing freezer. It looks great!

In other news... Some of you may have heard that apple snails have recently moved into Brazos Bend State Park from a subdivision lake that borders the park. Numbers are still very low in the park, and we have been smashing egg masses but have yet to find a live adult snail. The same week we discovered this evidence of apple snails, we also discovered a Limpkin in the park, and Limpkins LOVE to eat apple snails. This is the first confirmed Limpkin ever recorded in Texas! Currently, there are three confirmed (and maybe four) Limpkins going back and forth between Brazos Bend and the subdivision lake next door. This has been a huge event in the birder world. Several people have seen the birds breeding on multiple occasions, so we might end up with our own population of snail-eating Limpkins! Native to Florida, Limpkins started moving west a few years ago, possibly due to the introduction of apple snails. Florida has one species of native apple snail that Limpkins feed on. Maybe Snail Kites coming next??



Above: Alligator nest along tree-lined levee at Smith Lake.
Left: Fledgling Green Heron.
Far Left: ACE intern Will takes a dip.
Photos by David Heinicke.



Top: Hole in apple snail shell made by Limpkins; **Above:** Apple snail hinged door (operculum) torn open by Limpkins.

Continued on page 9

JUNE/JULY/AUGUST UPDATE ON HUDSON WOODS APPLE SNAILING

Continued

In the last couple of days, I have found 12 apple snail shells along the property line at Brazos Bend (remember, I have yet to find a live one) leading me to believe the Limpkins are much better snailers than I. Not to mention, they're willing to work seven days a week from sunup to sundown (except when they're sidetracked for breeding). In the coming years, this will be an interesting case study to follow: A native animal dramatically expands its range to take advantage of an exotic species. In the next few years, Limpkins might be everywhere there are apple snails. They certainly won't eliminate apple snails altogether, but with our continued efforts of eradication, natural mortality, native predators (otters, raccoons, alligators, etc.) along with Limpkins, maybe we'll stand a fighting chance!

July 31— In the past few weeks, while I was away, ACE interns Will and Ethan have been keeping the pressure on the apple snails. Today, Dick Schaffhausen, Kathy Pittman, and I paddled all of Scobie Lake and found only 66 egg masses in the whole lake! That's about half of what we found three weeks ago. We seem to have a pretty good handle on Scobie Lake and will continue to paddle it every two weeks to maintain low levels. We then paddled Smith Lake for about an hour, covering the launch site and up the west side to where the big Live Oak tree hangs over the water. We smashed lots of eggs and collected 34 adult snails. The numbers seem to be the same or slightly less than in June. I assume this is due to the efforts of Ethan and Will.

August 7— Dick Schaffhausen and I paddled Smith Lake on Saturday. We've been trying to coordinate efforts with the ACE interns to ensure the best coverage. Intern Ethan suggested we go to the east end of Smith Lake since it hadn't been covered in a couple of weeks, so we checked the entire east end and part of the levee in the main part of the lake. The east end had quite a few egg masses, but adults were very hard to find due to the large amount of duckweed and azolla on the surface of the water. Between the east end and the levee, we ended up with 103 adult snails and too many egg clusters to count.

August 13— Oron Atkins, three interns (Ethan, Will and Dylan) and I went snailing today. We had a great time, but the day proved to be bad luck for the snails. Since we hadn't been into Scobie Lake for two weeks, three of us covered it and were pleasantly surprised to find only 33 egg masses in the entire lake! That's 50% less than two weeks ago. We seem to have things well under control in Scobie and will continue go in there every two weeks to keep numbers low.

The rest of the morning we spent covering all of the west side of Smith Lake. Egg numbers there seem to be decreasing as well. Between volunteer efforts and great work from the interns, I think we are really making progress. On Saturday, we collected 256 adult snails. That puts us over 6,000 adult apple snails collected for the year.

Ethan, Will and the newest intern, Dylan, have been working hard collecting snails at Hudson Woods three or four times a week, keeping the snail freezer cleaned out, and coordinating efforts with me. Their hard work is greatly appreciated!

August 21— Dick Schaffhausen and I had another great day on the water. We paddled the west end of Smith Lake and the levee. There were noticeably fewer snail eggs than we had been seeing in the past. We collected 152 adult snails and smashed lots of eggs. We are starting to see lots of small adult snails about the size of a quarter. I assume these hatched earlier this year. Hopefully, by collecting these, we can put a dent in next year's large-adult population.

I know Saturdays don't work well with some of you. Starting in September, we'll go snailing on days other than Saturday.

August 27— We paddled Scobie Lake and found only 33 egg masses, which is exactly the number we found two weeks ago. We also found one adult. The only other thing of note was the presence of trash in the lake. I picked up several new soda cans, beer cans and Styrofoam cups that hadn't been there long. Seems Hudson Woods is getting some increased visitation by less-than-ideal visitors.

August 28— Dick Schaffhausen, Oron Atkins and I paddled Smith Lake on a beautiful morning with fog rising from the forest. In keeping with a tradition started by Jennifer Sanchez, Dick celebrated his birthday by snailing! Since availability of snail-shaped birthday cakes is somewhat limited (due to COVID, I assume), we did without. We covered the west side of the lake and the levee. The number of egg masses is still down compared to a few months ago. We are seeing lots of smaller and lighter-colored snails—presumably young from this year. A wood stork patiently watched as we hunted below it (see image). Today we collected 233 adults (many of Oron's snails were small...).



MEET COT'S 2021 FALL NEW MEMBER CLASS



Darrell Taylor is from Detroit, Michigan, and was stationed in Freeport/Surfside in 2011. He is a proud and highly decorated veteran and retiree after serving for over 20 years in the United States Coast Guard and served multiple tours of duty in the Middle East. Darrell is typically found with either his hands full of camera equipment or planning his next scuba diving trip. He recently achieved the rank of Dive Master. A LifeWaters adaptive scuba buddy, Darrell welcomes others to the world of recreational diving, especially those with disabilities. He is a member of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Lake Jackson Lion's Club, and a volunteer diver at Sea Center Texas.

Debbie Taylor grew up in Lake Jackson and recently retired after 30+ years in emergency medical and nursing. She has bachelor's degrees in occupational health and safety and nursing and certifications as a forensic nurse examiner and legal nurse consultant. Debbie taught medical students at both San Jacinto College and Brazosport College. Debbie is an avid traveler and especially enjoys weekend RV trips, cruises, and flying anywhere that involves scuba diving. She is both an Advanced Open Water diver and an independent adaptive diver. While Spinal Muscular Atrophy has slowed her down and

confined her to a walker or wheelchair, she hasn't stopped wanting to learn and do more. Debbie is a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Lake Jackson Lion's Club, and volunteers at Sea Center Texas. Darrell and Debbie live in Lake Jackson and are excited about this opportunity to become Texas Master Naturalists.



Gina Summers, a Texas native, currently resides in Manvel. She is a wife, mother of two, educator, nature enthusiast and servant of Christ. She has always had a passion for all things in nature, especially sustaining the various natural habitats we have as well as the broad-spectrum education that nature provides. These factors and interests have led her to the COT intern program. She hopes to obtain more knowledge and refine her skills in nature as well as create long-lasting habits to help sustain the Texas coast. As a home educator, her love for nature is one of her favorite things to teach. Gina believes you can only teach that by full submersion: Exploring under the trees, finding various creatures under rotten logs, chasing dragonflies, listening to birds, and identifying various animal tracks.



Hailey Bentley lives in Fresno. She is a veterinary technician, bartends, and hopes to eventually earn her DVM. Hailey grew up working with various rescues and nonprofit organizations where she assisted in wildlife relocation/rehabilitation as well as public education. She joined this year's intern class to get out of her comfort zone and further her knowledge of native wildlife and local conservation efforts.



Juli Martin Salzman is a music specialist at Northside Elementary School in Angleton. In addition to her arts background, she has an Education Specialist degree in STEM Leadership. Her interests include ornithology, Scouting, and canoeing.

Continued next page

MEET COT'S 2021 FALL NEW MEMBER CLASS



Lisa Martinez has lived in Clear Lake for many years. She is married to Hugo, who has joined this year's intern class after sitting in on the intro class! Lisa and Hugo have two sons in college, one working in Austin with an RTF degree from UT Austin, and the other a junior studying Visualization at Texas A&M. Lisa has a BFA and MA and has taught for 24 years (public, private, San Jacinto College North and South). She is State of Texas Certified in Life Science, Science 4-8, EC-6 Generalist, Art K-12. Lisa is also a Science Interventionist and Long-Term Science CCISD teacher. Lisa is on the Exploration Green Conservancy Advisory Board and is the Lead for Tree Nursery and Tree Plantings for Exploration Green.



Hugo Martinez lives in Clear Lake with his wonderful wife of 25 years, Lisa, also an intern.

They have two sons in college (see Lisa's bio). Hugo has been an engineer with NASA in Houston working on manned space flight for 33 years. He has a BSME from UT Austin and a MBA in Management from UHCL. Hugo's hobbies include working out, learning German (currently), driving on the track, and jogging. He also enjoys hiking, travel, and nature. He is currently occupied with his aging mother's welfare.



Matt Forster lives in Clear Lake with his two kids. He is the land steward coordinator for Exploration Green, where he is getting a hands-on education in planting natives and fighting invasive species. As a freelance writer, he has written a few travel and recreation guides, including hiking guides for the Houston area. Matt moved to Houston from Michigan three years ago. Long hikes introduced him to the area's diverse ecology, and he is excited to learn more.



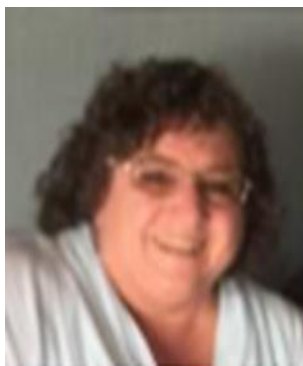
Mika Mendoza lives in Friendswood but grew up in Brazoria County. She loves kayaking, coffee, and being outdoors anywhere at any time. She would like to learn more about conservation, pollinators and Texas wildlife with the hope of sharing her knowledge with her grandkids and other children. She dreams of converting her property into a backyard habitat to share with others and maybe even host an after-school nature program one day.

Continued next page

MEET COT'S 2021 FALL NEW MEMBER CLASS



Patricia (Pat) Jeffreys was raised in Marble Falls. She has Associates degrees in Chemical Technology and Science in Bio, and a Bachelors in Technical Management. She worked for Dow as a chemical technician for 15 years. She also has experience as a massage therapist and as a hypnotherapist. Pat worked at Brazosport College for 16 years as the only tutor for all life sciences then started a department of super tutors for all sciences with 22 Rockstar Nerd students—her favorite job of all! She has been retired since October 2020. Pat has one son, two granddaughters, and three great-grandchildren. She loves to travel and once spent three weeks in Tibet. Her many interests include science fiction, cats, BBQ & Brie, crocheting, good rock and roll, opera, and skydiving! Right now, she's a proud COT intern!



Roxanne Walkowiak lives in Friendswood, Texas. She has been in Texas for four years and comes from northern California, although she was born in southern California. Roxanne worked on Navy ships for many years. She volunteered at the Rosie the Riveter National Park/The Red Oak Victory Ship, where she assisted women who worked in World War I. Her inspiration was working with the oldest park ranger. She currently attends school to become a park ranger. Roxanne has worked outdoors her whole career and is now looking forward to being outdoors in nature.



Sherri Matheson currently lives in Pearland with her parents in whose backyard she is designing and growing a small, urban, food forest. She completed her training as a Texas Master Gardener with Brazoria County in 2019 and was

certified in 2020. In addition to becoming a Master Naturalist, Sherri is interested in permaculture design, food forests, water harvesting, sustainable agriculture and reforestation. She loves the outdoors, road tripping, hiking, tent camping, National Parks, and Salsa dancing.



Tara Lawrence-Johnson and her husband, Seth, reside in Pearland. Tara is the Vice President of Operations for Aura Engineering. She holds two degrees from the University of Houston-Clear Lake, a bachelor's in literature and master's in environmental management. Tara serves on the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Swine Auction Committee where she and her fellow committee members work to raise money for youth education. Tara already considers herself an enthusiastic, amateur naturalist, so she is excited for the opportunity to take her knowledge to the next level and become a Texas Master Naturalist. After completing her training, Tara is looking forward to sharing her passion and knowledge of the natural world with her fellow Texans through volunteer opportunities.

LISTENING

By Sandy Carson Miller

About the Author

Sandy Carson Miller is a retired dentist and a longtime friend of Mickey Dufilho's. They met in San Antonio in the 1970s when Mickey was in graduate school, and Sandy was in dental school. Sandy became a Master Naturalist with the South Texas Chapter in Corpus Christi, has recently retired and moved to Spring Branch, and is now a member of the Lindheimer Chapter. She is not only a talented dentist but also an accomplished artist, passionate naturalist, mother to two wonderful young men, wife to husband Bob, and a loving human to Squire, to name a few of her talents. She writes lovely poetry that is inspiring and personal.



Amongst the trees
I hear rise and fall
A constant drone
Of the Cicadas' call

First to my right
Then across the road
Summer's song
Is being told

White-winged dove
Joins the fray
Lesser Goldfinch
Tweets away

Butterflies flit
Flower to flower
Nectars sweet
In afternoon shower

Squirrel appears
To steal some seed
Happy to continue
With its greed

Dog is sleeping
On the porch
Cardinal appears
Red as a torch

Summer days
Of lazy heat
Wind and clouds
Never miss a beat

Oh, to be
That child again
What I'd tell her
Would make her spin

Run and play
And be outside
Watch and listen
For the guide

Of God's great hand
In your life
Pay attention
Lessons once, not twice

All these creatures
Yours to save
Take not your lessons
To your grave

Tell the others
What you've seen
So that summers
Can stay green

Filled with birds
Insects and snakes
Their lives
Not for us to take

Plant trees and flowers
Nature's shelter and food
For the creatures
Do some good

Living beauty
Is for our eyes
But for the creatures
Keeps them alive

Leave only footprints
Or leave a legacy
Teach the others
To see what you see

Your life will end
But the Earth goes on
Leave it richer
Ever strong.

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- Instructions <https://txmn.org/tmncot/organization/email-lists/>
- Send messages to TMN-COT@googlegroups.com
- Message Archive <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail>
- All messages are sent immediately.

State Master Naturalist list

- Instructions <http://txmn.org/staying-connected/sign-up-for-tmn-listserv/>
- Subscribe listserv@listserv.tamu.edu
- All messages are held for moderation by the TMN State Coordinator.

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