



MAY 2022

# Chapter News

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*"When purple finches sing and soar...  
With vernal gladness running o'er—  
When joys like these salute the sense...  
Then waiting long hath recompense,  
And all the world is glad with May."*

~John Burroughs

April was SUCH a busy month, and it certainly blew by—LITERALLY! I'm still trying to figure out where that month went. A HUGE THANK YOU to all who were able to volunteer somewhere, somehow during Volunteer Month. May looks to be almost as busy, so plan to take some time to appreciate and enjoy the month before it's over.

Please join me in congratulating JIM CALVERT, who has been awarded the Distinguished Volunteer Award for 2022 by the Texans for State Parks organization. Jim was recognized for his many years of work at Brazos Bend State Park eradicating invasive Chinese tallow trees. Way to go Jim; you deserve it.

I also want to thank new member PAT JEFFREYS for stepping up to the challenge and offering to fill in as Interim Secretary for the Chapter. Pat is a member of our 2021 Intern Class and a joy to be around. She has jumped in with both feet and her notebook! I look forward to working with her.

Be sure to check your email and Facebook page for details on our May 11<sup>th</sup> afternoon field trip to Nash Prairie. This will be in lieu of our regular General Meet-

ing. Susan Conaty will be our guide for the walk. I have never been to Nash, and I am eager to experience this gem in person.

Carpooling is strongly encouraged, so please coordinate with other members who live near you.

For some of us with vegetable gardens, May is a time of cultivating, pruning, and harvesting. We should consider how the same applies to our TMN activities. We take the time to *cultivate* a love a nature, we gently *prune* away misconceptions about wildlife and native areas, and we hope to *harvest* a new "crop" of youth and adults who will become better stewards of the natural areas of Brazoria County. We may not see results overnight, and sometimes we have failures and get discouraged, but if we persist and keep up our efforts, we will ultimately see a reward.

We have NUMEROUS Outreach opportunities coming up: Ruby Lewis will certainly keep us busy. While several DEEP sessions were cancelled in April, there will be one more on Tuesday May 17<sup>th</sup>. Camp Mohawk also needs volunteers for the camp program in June; contact Mike Mullenweg. And the Summer Library programs are BACK IN PERSON for June. Contact Ruby if you would like to help, and



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*Kathy Pittman is the president of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. She can be reached at [pittman@tmn-cot.org](mailto:pittman@tmn-cot.org).*

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The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by Texas A&M AgriLIFE Ext. Svce. & Texas Parks and Wildlife TMN programs serve all people without regard to socio-economic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Masthead photo by Susan Conaty.

Texas Master Naturalist Program  
Cradle of Texas Chapter  
Chapter News – May 2022

## NOTICES

- David Heinicke needs "snail busters" to help collect apple snails at Hudson Woods. Contact: [heinicke07@gmail.com](mailto:heinicke07@gmail.com)
- Send your best spring migration images to [news@tmn-cot.org](mailto:news@tmn-cot.org)

## Texas Master Naturalist Program—Cradle of Texas Chapter Field Trip and Advanced Training

**Wednesday, May 11, 2022, 5:00 PM**

at **Nash Prairie**, intersection of CR 25 and CR 255 near West Columbia, Brazoria County

<b>4:30 PM</b>	<b>Park at West Columbia Civic Center (512 E Brazos Ave, West Columbia, TX 77486) and carpool to the prairie in small groups (arrange in advance)</b>
<b>5:00 PM ~6:30 PM</b>	<b>Advanced Training</b> <b>Speaker:</b> Susan Conaty <b>Topic:</b> “An Evening on the Nash Prairie,” an informal walk and talk at this local treasure <i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>

The **Nash Prairie** is a Gulf Coast Tallgrass Prairie remnant in the Columbia Bottomlands of Brazoria County, Texas. Over 300 plant species have been identified on the site; three are listed in the *Rare Plants of Texas* by Poole, Car, and Price.

Once a hay meadow on the Kittie Nash Groce Ranch, the property was purchased from the King Ranch Estate by The Nature Conservancy in January 2011. The Nash Prairie Preserve consists of approximately 450 acres: Nash Prairie (250 acres); Mowotony Prairie (90 acres); and a grazed and row crop buffer zone (100 acres).

### IMPORTANT NOTES FOR ATTENDEES

- The Nash Prairie is located at the intersection of CR 25 and CR 255 near West Columbia in Brazoria County. You can access a Google map at <https://goo.gl/maps/NLbDjJehu5KcS6ix6>
- **We recommend parking at the West Columbia Civic Center (512 E Brazos Ave, West Columbia, TX 77486) at 4:30pm and carpooling to the prairie in small groups.** Please make carpooling plans in advance!
- Carpool drivers: there is extremely limited road-side parking along CR 255; park as far off the road as you can and all on the south side of the road to allow the neighbors safe passage down the road with trailers and trucks
- The Nature Conservancy manages the preserve for biodiversity of flora and fauna, which requires periodic disturbance through prescribed fire and haying. It also requires management of invasive non-native species, which mainly occupy the service roads and edges, road ditches of the property, and the row and grazed buffer zones. Because of this there are some guidelines required before entering the property:
  - To prevent spreading invasive species, be sure you wear closed-toe shoes that are free from seeds and mud that might have invasive species of seeds from other properties.
  - Do not enter the property by way of the ditch that lines the property; instead, enter on the service roads to avoid spreading invasive seed from the ditch into the Prairie. This is true also along the service roads – find a space clear of invasive grasses and enter the prairie from that point
  - Invasive species to avoid are Windmill Grass, Johnsongrass, Vasey Grass, and Angleton Bluestem
- There are no bathroom facilities on the property
- Bring plenty of water and carry it with you
- Bring insect repellent. There may be ticks and/or chiggers
- Wear a hat, sunglasses, and/or sunscreen – there is little shade on the prairie
- You may wish to bring a walking stick, as we will be walking along uneven ground in high grass
- Do not approach or harass any wildlife you encounter, such as nesting birds and snakes
- Maintain proper social distancing during the event
- Please do not litter. Pack out what you pack in.

## MEMBERSHIP DATA REPORT by Dave Brandes, Data Manager

Congratulations to those achieving recertification and milestones as of April 30, 2021.

### Initial Certifications

Hugo Martinez      Roxanne Walkowiak

### 2022 Recertifications

James Calvert      Don Sabathier  
 Mickey Dufilho      Chris Kneupper  
 Jackie Hicks      Andy Smith  
 Rainbo Johnson      Bob Whitmarsh

### 250 Hours Milestone

Brenda Martin

### 500 Hours Milestone

Jim Nance

### 1000 Hours Milestone

Mary Schwartz

### Hours Totals YTD—April 30, 2022

3,816 Hours VT    882 Hours AT

\* April only: 940 VT and 95 AT Hours

### Impact Data YTD—April 30, 2022

2,581 Adults    11,771 Youth    14,352 Total



At the April General Meeting, Vice President Kristine Rivers recognized 15 members who recertified and Melanie Hollenshead, who achieved 1000 volunteer hours.

## JIM CALVERT NAMED 2022 DISTINGUISHED VOLUNTEER AT TEXANS FOR STATE PARKS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

From Texans for State Parks Facebook Page



Jim Calvert, above right

Jim Calvert has spent his full 15 years with [Brazos Bend State Park] walking every inch of the 5000 acres that encompass it, spraying and killing Chinese tallow trees throughout the property. This is very hard work, ...off trail into the deep parts of the woods, mud, swamps, and on hot, humid days.

Most people who try to join Jim in helping with this task end up not going again. It's exhausting work and makes for some long days. Despite that, Jim has dedicated 15 years of volunteer time to it and has made an incredible difference for the park and its ecosystems. Without Jim, we would be overtaken by this invasive species or having to find alternative ways to get rid of it. In 2021, Jim completed the final acreage of land in the park.

Jim has now covered all 5000 acres of Brazos... But the work never ends. He must start all over again taking out new growth. Brazos Bend recently acquired an additional 300 acres, and Jim has already started surveying for tallow trees and spraying them. He's an incredible and truly dedicated volunteer.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 1

check out the events calendar on the Chapter website. The link is <https://txmn.org/tmncot/events/>.

Be sure to register for the next TMN Tuesday session to be held at noon on Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. The link is: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays/>, where you can select the date. This month's speaker is Richard Heilbrun from TPWD, who will present "Crossing the Finish Line – Recovering America's Wildlife Act." All TMN Tuesday sessions are recorded and can be viewed afterwards for AT credit. June's TMN Tuesday (date TBD) will be with Commander Kjell (pronounced "Cheh") Lindgren, our TMN in space. The State office is currently soliciting members' questions, which will be reviewed and

forwarded to Kjell via the NASA Astronaut Office. The survey link on the State website where members can submit questions is:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TMNinSpace>

Thank you all for your support of our Chapter and its endeavors. Your efforts are instrumental in preserving our resources for the future.

See you outside!!

Kathy Pittman

*"Among the changing months, May stands confest the sweetest, and in fairest colors dressed."*

~James Thomson

## MEMBERS "JAWBONING" AT APRIL GENERAL MEETING

In lieu of a featured speaker, Kristine Rivers led COT members attending the April General Meeting in a skull identification lab. It quickly became apparent that many of us had forgotten our TMN intern training...



Clockwise from far left: Jo Myers, Herb Myers, Oron Atkins, Mickey Dufilho; Bill Ahlstrom, a meeting guest, Ruby Lewis, Linda Sluis, Ken Sluis; Mary Schwartz, Angela Griffin, Mel McKey; Jimmy Salinas, Luanne Salinas, Mike Mullenweg



## BUSY MEMBERS



Luanne and Jimmy Salinas, pictured left, far right, led a small but motivated crew for the **April Beach Sweep** at Quintana Beach jetty. Angela Griffin and friends of the Salinas' also attended.



At the **Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge's Dow Woods Open House** on April 23, Oron Atkins (top right) cooked hot dogs, Pat Jeffries showed a hognose snake, Ed Barrios let visitors touch an alligator, and Melanie Hollenshead introduced visitors to a king snake.



Last month's activities also included a fun and informative **wildflower walk** at the kayak launch on the bay side of Follets Island. Coordinated by Dick Schaffhausen and led by Susan Conaty, a dozen COT members and friends learned about what was blooming in the area. This was the second monthly walk for COT members led by Susan.

*Continued next page*

## BUSY MEMBERS Continued

**ADDITIONAL FISHING PIERS BUILT AT CANNAN BEND RECREATION AREA**--On April 19, Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Project Manager Oron Atkins began the installation of four additional fishing piers at Cannan Bend. Refuge employees Jim, David and Alan along with volunteers George Valadez, Tom Taroni and Oron began installing the required 6x6" support posts. Jim operated the excavator used to "push in" the posts, and at day's end, the group had completed installation of 18 posts (for three of four piers).

On April 20, the same team installed the remaining six posts for fishing pier #4 at the base of the peninsula. Beginning with this pier, the crew finished it out by installing all the substructure, hardware bolting, decking, floor, and mid- and top rails. They also began installing substructure for the pier.

The construction team for April 21 included refuge staff David and Alan, and volunteers David Heinicke, George and Oron. They completed two more piers and would have finished the fourth but ran short on materials.

On April 22, refuge staff David Grizzle (his day off), and George and Oron (their days off) completed construction of the last of the four piers in this phase of the project. Yet to do and to be performed by refuge staff is to add fill material at the entrance to each pier to make a smooth transition to grade.



Left: Oron Atkins and George Valadez positioning support posts for one of the fishing piers. Below: Refuge staff with volunteers Tom Taroni and George Valadez admire their work.



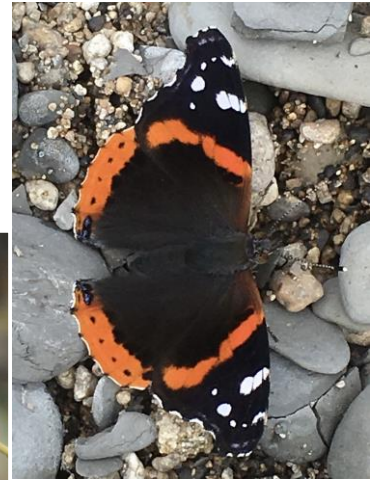
Photos by Oron Atkins

## BROKEN-WINGED, YET STILL BEAUTIFUL, BUTTERFLIES

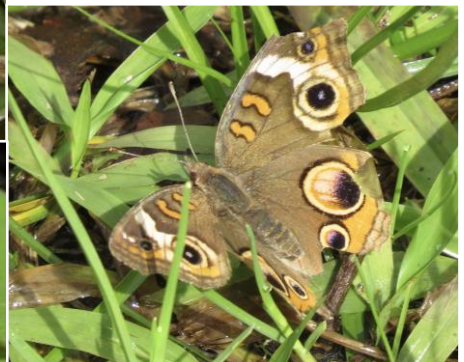
By Deb Nance

To me, a butterfly is amazing. You see this little creature, usually only an inch or two in length (30-60 mm), weighting only .017-.019 ounces (.5-.55 grams) and from its perch, it slowly unfolds its wings—wow. A little spot of perfection.

But sometimes the wings are opened, and you see this butterfly has had its struggles. Sometimes the damage is small (see images below).



Sometimes you wonder how the butterfly has managed to keep flying at all. Still, each butterfly is beautiful (see images below).



## SOMEONE WORTH KNOWING ABOUT: JOHNEY POLLAN\*

By Neal McLain

Johnney Pollan is a Texas Archeological Steward for Brazoria County. In this capacity he represents the Texas Historical Commission.

Pollan has been a member of the Texas Archeological Society since 1981. In this capacity he served as arrangements coordinator ("camp boss") for two TAS field schools held at the Lake Jackson Plantation site.

He presently serves as the Curator of Archeology for the Brazosport Museum of Natural Science. He is a charter member of the Brazosport Archaeological Society and currently serves as its treasurer.

Pollan holds a BS Degree in Engineering Science from Trinity University and worked as an engineer at the Dow Chemical Company for 31 years. His interest in archeology began as a youth when his cousin, famed San Antonio stoneware potter Harding Black, would tell stories of the Witte Museum's digs in the lower Pecos River in the late 1930's.

Pollan has been our guest speaker in the past. He has covered such topics as the field work at the Lake Jackson Plantation and the archaeological investigation of *La Belle*, a historic ship that sank in Matagorda Bay in the late 1600s. For over three centuries the wreckage of *La Belle* lay forgotten until it was discovered by a team of state archaeologists in 1995.

Pollan regularly teaches the archaeology segment of our training class.



Johnney Pollan

**Right:** Johnney Pollan standing amidst the ruins of the sugar house at Lake Jackson Plantation..

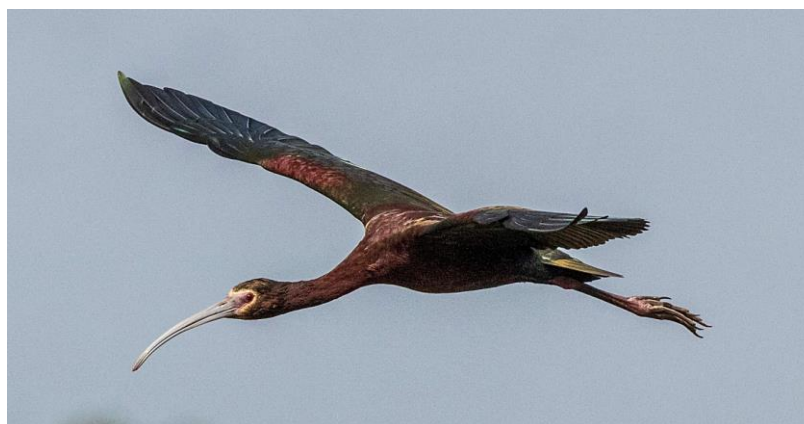
**Below:** Roger Allen and Johnney Pollan at Lake Jackson Plantation, Class of 2013 Intern Training field trip, February 2013.



\* Note: Johnney passed away on April 4.

## WHITE-FACED IBIS AT ALLIGATOR MARSH HUNTING AREA, BRAZORIA NWR

By Ed Barrios





## HUDSON WOODS APPLE SNAILING

By David Heinicke [heinicke07@gmail.com](mailto:heinicke07@gmail.com)

**March 30, 2022**—After a pre-season trip a couple of weeks ago, we are ready to kick off the Apple Snail 2022 season! Richard Schaffhausen and I went out on March 6 to survey the situation and found a few snails and a bunch of eggs. I've since been out to service boats and clean and organize the equipment and supplies, and we should be ready to get back on a schedule of about once a week for the next few months. I haven't heard if we'll be getting another batch of young, energetic ACE interns, but we can hope for the best! Contact me if you are interested in snailing.

**April 4**—Georgia Monnerat and I went to Hudson Woods this morning to seek and destroy apple snails. The cloudy day made it hard to see snails, and low water levels made it hard to access some areas. We were lucky last summer as a good amount of rain kept water levels high for the summer, making it easy to get around in kayaks. If water levels continue to drop, we are going to have to rethink our approach. We spent about three hours on Smith Lake and covered the west and south sides and the levee: Lots of eggs, but they seemed to be "clumped" in certain areas, not spread out evenly. Not sure if this is due to early season, slow egg laying or fewer snails. Most of the adult snails were in the algae mats and submerged vegetation. We ended up collecting 140 adults. After lunch, I paddled Scobie and found 150 egg masses and no adults. That's more eggs than we typically find there, but it has been a month since our last hunt at Scobie.

**April 15**—Georgia, Richard and I had another successful snailing trip. With all the windy days, the water clarity in Smith Lake is poor, and cloudy skies made it difficult to see snails under the water. With that in mind, we headed to the far east end of Smith Lake where we don't usually see many snails but always find lots of eggs to smash. The three of us spent three hours smashing eggs and finding a few adults and covered all the east end. Water levels continue to drop, making it nearly impossible to reach some areas. By lunch time, we collected 70 adult snails. After lunch, I paddled Scobie Lake and found about 100 egg masses and no adults. We hope to have a couple interns by mid-May and will continue to do our best to keep pressure on the snails.

In other news, it's really beginning to look and feel like spring out there. We found Common Gallinule and Green Heron nests, basking water snakes (Broad-Banded and Mississippi Green), Roseate Spoonbills feeding and lots of alligators that didn't seem the least bit concerned with us. As Richard always says, "Another great day to be on the water."



From top:  
Dick Schaffhausen and Georgia Monnerat; alligator near kayak; roseate spoonbills; water snakes; waterfowl eggs.



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## HUDSON WOODS APPLE SNAILING

Continued

**April 22, 2022**—On Friday, Richard Schaffhausen and I paddled Smith Lake. As expected, the water was murky, the winds blowing, the water level lower, but we still had a good day. We covered the west side and most of the levee. There were more egg masses than seen our last trip but probably fewer than last year at this time (I think). After three hours collecting adults and smashing eggs, we paddled back with 151 adult snails.

I'm planning another trip on Friday, April 29. If the weather cooperates, we'll probably do Smith Lake in the morning and an option for Scobie Lake in the afternoon. If you'd like to join me on any trip, please let me know. We start at 9 a.m.

Also, please feel free to pass on this invitation to any Master Naturalists or Friends members or others who might be interested. We're always looking for more snail busters!

**April 29**—This morning I was joined by Georgia and Oron for a morning of snail busting. The rain we got this week maintained the water level but really didn't help much. Water was still low, and the snails were still active. Lots of new eggs everywhere ready for smashing. With three of us, we covered most of the west end of Smith Lake. After three hours, we ended up with 154 adult snails, about the same as last week. After lunch I paddled Scoby Lake and found no adults but

smashed about 150 egg masses, also about the same as two weeks ago.

**May 6**—Much to the displeasure of the apple snails, Ethan Davis has rejoined the snail team! Ethan has returned as an ACE intern again concentrating mostly on eradication of exotic species on the refuge, including apple snails and tallow trees. Ethan will be joined by another intern in early June. I'm sure we'll be seeing both regularly on the water at Hudson Woods.

With Ethan's return, I was forced to relinquish my status as "Snail King." It won't surprise anyone that he outdid me today. Together, we collected 203 adult snails in three hours on Smith Lake. We covered the west bank and levee area. Water levels continue to drop making getting into and out of the lake more difficult. The south end of the lake is not accessible at all by kayak at this point. After lunch, I paddled Scoby Lake and found only about 100 egg cases. This is down from last week.

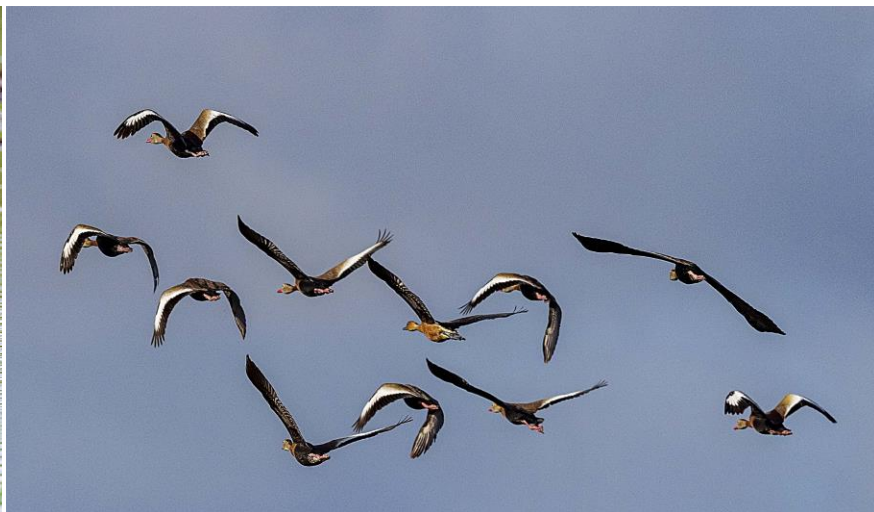
As I mentioned before, I'll be out of town for the rest of May but plan to restart as soon as I return. Ethan may organize some snailing trips while I'm gone, so watch for an email from him. If you want to contact him directly, his email is [DEthan636465@gmail.com](mailto:DEthan636465@gmail.com).

Until then, stay cool, wish for rain and get outside and enjoy your local park or wildlife refuge!  
Chief Snail Buster, David Heinicke

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## WHISTLING DUCKS

By Ed Barrios



## SEASIDE DRAGONLET—*Erythrodiplax Berenice* (Drury, 1773)

By Lisa Myers

*Editor's note: This article is the result of David Heinicke's pointing out this interesting animal during the April Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge's walk in Alligator Marsh Hunting Area, part of the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge that is only open during hunting season.*

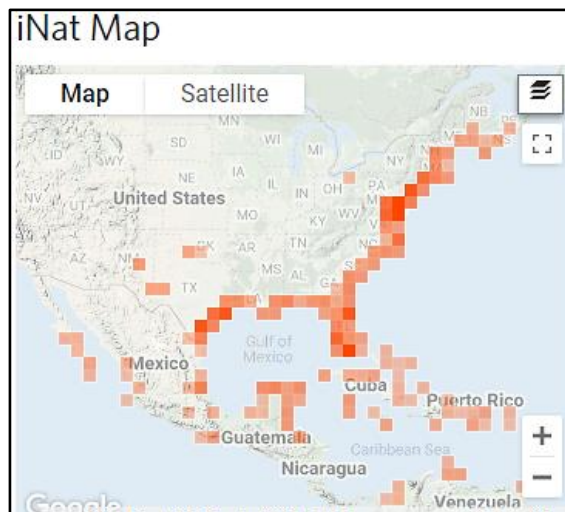
The Seaside Dragonlet, found mainly in salt marshes of the eastern United States and along the Gulf Coast, is unique among dragonflies of the western hemisphere in that it can breed in seawater. Often, seaside dragonlets are the only dragonfly in that habitat and are the only true marine odonate. Although small and subtly colored, they perch conspicuously on shrubs and marsh grasses, sometimes in great numbers, and they'll often return to the same perch after buzzing out to take a gnat or mosquito from the air.

The species exhibits strong sexual dimorphism, or variation between the sexes. Males are primarily dark, while females are bright and variable with spangled patterns of black and yellow (see image above right). While other dragonflies may sometimes appear in coastal habitats, hunting insects over dunes and marshes, no other species is as tied to the coast as the dragonlet—they spend their whole life-cycle here and rarely occur inland.

Female dragonlets typically deposit eggs within the algal mats of warm, shallow marsh pools. Larval dragonlets then spend their first weeks there, and it is in this habitat that the greatest stressors occur. Odonates' freshwater requirements arise from larval development, for most young cannot survive high concentrations of salt in the water. The reason seems to be larvae's hemolymph osmotic pressure, which increases with salinity and will kill them if it gets too high. The larvae of seaside dragonlets; however, regulate their internal homeostasis in a unique manner: They can maintain constant pressure between their internal and external environments even when salinity climbs to extreme heights. Dragonlet larvae succumb to a spike in pressure only in seawater at 300% ambient salinity, a remarkable resilience. Thus, they can truly be considered a marine odonate as a result and are the only dragonfly *in the world* known to possess this ability (The Bruce Museum Science Department).



Photo of female dragonlet by Ed Barrios.



## Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

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Speakers Bureau Coordinator	Kristine Rivers
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Coordinator	Kristine Rivers
Data Manager	Dave Brandes

Chapter Advisors	John O’Connell, AgriLIFE Extension Service Paul Cason, Sea Center Texas
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Newsletter Editor	Lisa Myers, Lake Jackson
Newsletter Contributors	Dave Brandes, David Heinicke, Kristine Rivers, Kathy Pittman, Oron Atkins Neal McLain, Dick Schaffhausen

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E-mail Listserv	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail">http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail</a>



## Master Naturalist Email Lists

### **TMN-COT Chapter list**

- Instructions <https://txmn.org/tmncot/organization/email-lists/>
- Send messages to [TMN-COT@googlegroups.com](mailto: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](mailto:listserv@listserv.tamu.edu)
- All messages are held for moderation by the TMN State Coordinator.

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