



FEBRUARY 2023

Chapter News—in brief

UPCOMING GENERAL MEETING

The February 8 meeting will be a hybrid. You can attend in person or virtually at **Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service, Angleton TX, or via email invite.**

8:30 – 9:00 AM	Social Time and Refreshments (in person)
9:00 – 9:15 AM	Welcome, Awards, Outreach
9:15 – 10:15 AM	Advanced Training Speakers: Mary Schwartz, TMN-COT Member Topic: “Bald Eagles: From Bobbleheads to Beauties” <i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>
10:15 – 11:00 AM	General Membership Meeting <i>[Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>



Mary Schwartz

Mary Schwartz retired from Dow Chemical Company in 2017 and is a member of the COT new member class of 2018. As a Master Naturalist, she is involved with animal rescue, and teaching birding, pond life and terrestrial bugs as part of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge-run Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP) at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. In 2021, she joined the board of directors of Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges to continue supporting the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

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

Website <https://txmn.org/tmncot/>

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The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

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

Masthead image by Jessee Henslee in Brazoria County.

REMINDER

- Please pay your annual member dues by the deadline, March 31
- TAKE THE MEMBER SURVEY! See email from John O'Connell on Feb. 3
- The previously-announced Bonus AT Day has been moved to May 20

Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
Chapter News – February 2023



MEMBERSHIP DATA REPORT by Dave Brandes, Data Manager

2023 Recertifications

Amanda Gabehart

250 Hours Milestone Award

Malcolm Mosis

500 Hours Milestone Award

Barbara Yoder

1000 Hours Milestone Award

Kathy Pittman

2500 Hours Milestone Award

Kim Richardson

Hours Totals YTD—31 January 2023

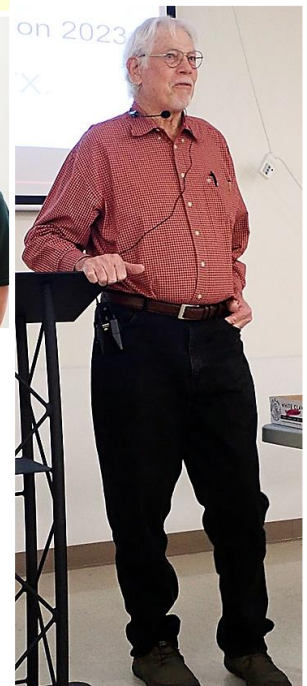
1,043 Hours VT 58 Hours AT

Impact Data YTD—31 January 2023

129 Adults 104 Youth 233 Total

* Data for 2022 will be finalized 45 days after December 31, 2022.

Presented at the January 11 General Membership Meeting: Lisa Myers was recognized by John Boettiger and Kathy Pittman for achieving 4,000 volunteer hours—the President's Call to Service Award (below left at center). Also recognized were Phil Huxford (pictured below center), Ruby Lewis, Carolyn May-Monie, Tom Morris, Ken Sluis, and Linda Sluis (not present in person) for recertifying for 2022. Mel McKay's presentation on shells (below right) was enthusiastically received. Photos by Dick Schaffhausen.



MIGRATION CELEBRATION...SAVE THE DATES!

- **Kickoff Lunch Fundraiser:** Saturday, April 22, 11 AM to 2 PM; Pickup or stay; Birds of Prey program; Photo Contest Winners; Raffle; <https://www.migrationcelebration.org/>
- **Migration Celebration Event:** Saturday, April 29 and 30, 11 AM to 4 PM; contact lisalmyers@gmail.com to volunteer.

SOME UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

SEE THE COT CALENDAR AT <https://txmn.org/tmncot/events/> FOR ALL OPPORTUNITIES AND DETAILS

- **Exploration Green Workday**—Every Wednesday, 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM; contact Christie Taylor
- **Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project**—Self directed
- **Beach Sweep**—2/6, 8 AM to 10 AM at Quintana Fishing Pier – contacts Jimmy/Luanne Salinas
- **BCPD Trail Workday at Hanson Park**—Third Thursday, 8 AM to 12 PM – contact Mike Mullenweg mikem@brazoria-county.com
- **Pearland Parks & Recreation Natural Resources Workday**—First Thursday, Location TBA, 8 AM to 11 AM
- **Nurdle Beach Patrol**—Self directed; contact Jace Turnell
- **Brazoria County Comprehensive Spider Survey**—Self directed and as announced; contact Melanie Hollinshead
- **Adopt a Loop for TMN**—self directed; contact Debbie Nance
- **Boardwalk Maintenance & Construction**—(Current project at San Bernard Oak Trail at SBNWR); contact Oron Atkins

PUBLIC OUTREACH—Ruby Lewis rubylewis77515@ymail.com

- **Family Fishing Day at Lakeside Park, Angleton**—February 25, 8 AM to 2 PM, 1234 Enchanted Oake Drive; contact Harbria Gardner
- **DEEP at BNWR Discovery Center**—2/28, 3/2, 3/7, 3/9, 3/21, 3/23, 3/28, 3/30, 4/4, 8:30 AM to 2 PM; contact Ed Barrios ed77566@comcast.net
- **FOBWR Spring Break Open House at BNWR Discovery Center**—March 11 to March 19, 11 AM to 4 PM
- **Sea Center Texas Nature Day**—March 25, 10 AM to 3 PM

The **January Beach Sweep** crew met at Quintana Beach County Park jetty on January 9. Coordinators Jimmy and Luanne Salinas and three others managed to clear the area of a lot of old fishing line and packaging, various food and drink packaging, plastics, clothing, shoes and toys.

Pictured at right are Jimmy Salinas, Kathy Pittman, Angela Griffin, Luanne Salinas, and Barbara Yoder. Photo by Jimmy Salinas.



PROJECTS AND MORE TO CONSIDER!

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory's

Spring Fling



Volunteers for the Quintana Neotropic Bird Sanctuary host station in Quintana are needed from April 9 to May 8. Bird expertise not required. Info at:

<https://tinyurl.com/GCBO-SpringFling2023>

New Member Class Begins February 18

The next session for TMN-COT interns begins Saturday, February 18, from 9 AM to 3 PM in the Angleton AgriLIFE Extension Service auditorium.

Please spread the word: There is still time to register (\$150 fee) via:

<https://txmn.org/tmncot/training/intern-training/>



Class volunteers are also needed!

Contact Melanie Hollenshead,
theladyspath@hotmail.com



2023
City Nature
Challenge

White-tailed Kite

APRIL 28-MAY 1, 2023

JOIN THE NATIONAL CHAMPION HOUSTON-GALVESTON TEAM!

FREE! PARTICIPATE AT HOME, SCHOOL, LOCAL PARK, OR BEACH
GREAT FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES - 400+ GLOBAL CITIES PARTICIPATE



REGIONAL COORDINATORS

The Nature Conservancy
Texas

THE HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

HOUSTON AUDUBON

GALVESTON BAY FOUNDATION

STATE & INTERNATIONAL COORDINATORS

NATURE TRACKERS

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE IS ORGANIZED BY

CALIFORNIA SCIENCE OF SCIENCES

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

SEARCH 'TEXAS CITY NATURE CHALLENGE'

With a **Cash** prize
Photo Credits: Susanne Simpson, Jaime Gonzalez, MattandJody & Design: Queen Gail via Canva.com

BOOK REVIEW OF HERITAGE BOOK STUDY—REVIEW OF *EAGER: THE SURPRISING, SECRET LIFE OF BEAVERS AND WHY THEY MATTER* BY MADELEINE K. BARNES

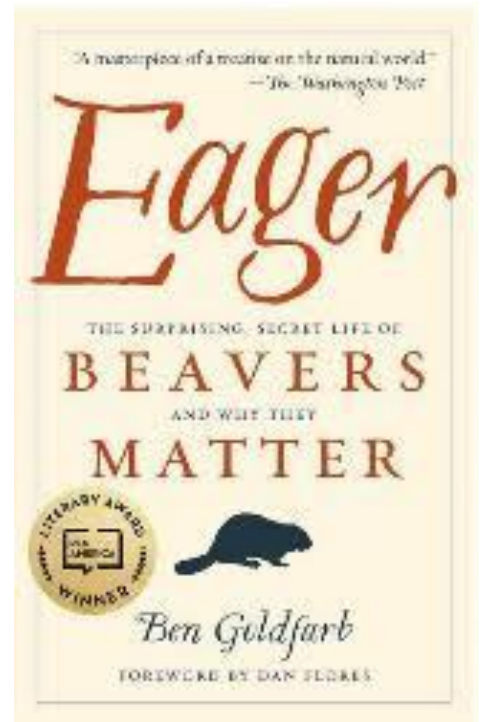
Printed with permission of the reviewer, Madeleine K. Barnes of TMN Galveston Bay Area Chapter for its Heritage Book Study group

Are you aware that beavers are not a protected species in Texas, so it is legal to kill a beaver if it is considered a pest to a landowner? Maybe you are not aware that beavers are in Texas, including East Texas. Maybe you would like to know more about these amazing dam-building ecosystem engineers.

Ben Goldfarb, an environmental journalist, covers wildlife management and conservation biology. He is the winner of the 2019 PEN/EO Wilson Award for Literary Science Writing for this book. Goldfarb has a Master of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and his writings have appeared in numerous publications.

The North American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) was once found in virtually all aquatic ecosystems in North America, from the Arctic tundra to the deserts in northern Mexico. They are thought to have been on this continent some seven million years since crossing the Bering Strait. According to Goldfarb, they were here as a geological force in their ponded world of “castrocene” before European settlement and trapping. In their exploratory journal accounts, Lewis and Clark and others noted beaver numbers and their amazing impacts. Environmental history changed due to subsequent human intervention and onslaught. Beavers have disappeared from most of the landscape, leaving dire consequences: dried up wetlands, erosion, and loss of habitat. Goldfarb notes, “Conservation biologists refer often to the notion of ‘shifting baselines syndrome,’ a form of long-term amnesia that causes each successive generation to accept its own degraded ecology as normal.”

What is so important about beavers and why should we care? Let's start with carbon capture. You will be interested in the amount of carbon that can be found fixed in the bottoms of beaver ponds. Beavers, by their actions, double fish survival, clean polluted water (denitrification), increase water retention, especially during drought, and prevent fires and nutrient and sediment runoff. Goldfarb states, “Beavers have a well-documented ability to abate, absorb and attenuate floods on a vast scale.” They are considered a keystone species in the riverine environment. You may be familiar with the statement of “build it and they will come.” Well, when beavers build their ponds and re-water an area, they create havens. Diverse life forms, large and tiny, plant and animal, abound in the swampy meadows and slower streams beavers create.



Goldfarb's writing covers a broad spectrum of detail about beavers including many examples of beaver re-introduction and re-wilding and the people and scientists involved. He covers the facts, issues, and opinions of the people who live in those areas, discusses the science and practical applications of technology, and addresses misconceptions and impacts, both human and non-human. His style of writing is easy to understand, very descriptive, and includes humorous anecdotes. Goldfarb poses a framework for the larger conservation issue: How we can learn to live and thrive together, allowing “beavers to do the work” in restoring critical wetlands and habitat. This is an excellent book to add to your list.

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Master Naturalist Email Lists

TMN-COT Chapter list

- 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.

Chapter News is published monthly on Monday before the General Meeting by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is 5:00 PM on Thursday before the General Meeting. Send submissions by email to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.