



JULY 2023

Chapter News

President's Message

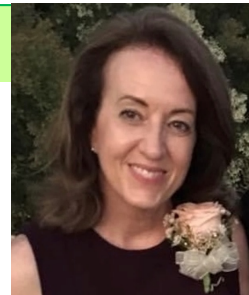
"A traveler without observation is a bird without wings." — Moslih Eddin Saadi

Summer is typically "downtime" for our family. It's just too hot for much to grow in the garden except a few vegetables, and mowing the yard gets boring quickly. This year, we traveled to Michigan to gather with my husband's family over the Fourth of July holiday. It was great to see the in-laws and cousins, and we once again had four generations present. The weather was MUCH cooler and it was nice to just "chill" with our family.

As I always find myself doing when we travel, I started comparing and contrasting what I saw around the area with what I knew from our area. The trees, the wildflowers, the birds, the terrain. I saw monarch butterflies and caterpillars on milkweed very different from what we have here. As we stopped to take pictures along the 45th Parallel, the midpoint between the Equator and the North Pole, it hit me that I never considered what a butterfly would use as its host plant in other parts of the country. We can be focused on what we do in our area without learning what may happen elsewhere. If you have the opportunity to travel over the next few months, take time to observe the area as a Naturalist and not just as a tourist!

Another observation I made was in personal interactions with those around me. At our hotel, there is a very nice waitress that has been there for many years, and we see her every time we stay there. She loves to converse with the customers at each table. How she remembers details with each family is beyond me! As we would share small talk, I realized how important it is to also listen - really listen. As Naturalists, when we are at an outreach event, we may do A LOT of talking. It can get old, monotonous. Then, we encounter a child that wants to talk non-stop and maybe we get a little annoyed. Please consider that perhaps, at that moment, this child just needs a little attention. Maybe they don't have many adults in their life that truly interact with them. Take a moment to listen to their comments or story, before steering the conversation back to what we are presenting. It could make a difference in that child's day to know that someone, YOU, simply listened to them.

(continued on Page 2)



CONTENTS

Vol. 23 No. 6

Page 1	President's Message
Page 2	Upcoming General Meeting
Page 3	Membership Data
Page 4	President's Call to Service Award Intern Graduation
Page 5	Quintana Beach Sweep; Quintana Beach Fish Kill
Page 6	Remembering Bill Ahlstrom
Page 7	Some Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities



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

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

Chapter News is published by Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Contact us at:

Texas A&M AgriLIFE
Brazoria County Office
21017 County Road 171
Angleton, TX 77515-8903
979-864-1558 (Angleton)
979-388-1558 (Brazosport)
281-756-1558 (Alvin)
979-388-1566 (Fax)

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 Charles Jesse Miller Jr in Oyster Creek.

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

REMINDERS

- The Annual Meeting will be held Oct. 12-15 at the McAllen Convention Center. Hotel registration is open and meeting registration opens in August. Anyone interested in sharing a ride should contact Kathy Pittman.
- TMN is hosting a storytelling project about its members and volunteer efforts in celebration of our 25th anniversary. For more information, go to <https://txmn.tamu.edu/25th-anniversary-storytelling-project/#storytelling>.

President's Message (continued from Page 1)

On a sad note, our former president, Bill Ahlstrom, passed away on June 21st. A resident of Angleton, Bill joined the Chapter in 2015, and held several Board positions, serving as President in 2020. Bill was an avid fisherman and birder. In his professional life, he worked as a Biomedical Engineer, specializing in pacemaker technology. A Celebration of Bill's life was held on June 28th, and you may read Bill's obituary [here](#). Please keep Bill and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Our BCLS Summer Programs are in full swing! The sessions that I have seen have been PACKED, and Ruby Lewis, our Outreach Director, may still need some help! Please consider covering a session or two this month! Contact Ruby at rubylewis77515@ymail.com if you can help out.

Summertime also means it's time to consider serving on the Board of Directors for the Chapter. We will be forming a Nominating committee shortly and need YOUR help! If you have an interest in learning about any of the Director positions or about any of the Officer positions, please contact me at president@tmn-cot.org.

Please make plans to attend the 2023 Texas Master Naturalist™ Program Annual Meeting, to be held from Thursday October 12th to Sunday October 15th. The meeting will be held in McAllen, Texas. There are also field sessions on Wednesday. Participants will be joining in observing a Solar Eclipse on Saturday October 11th. The schedules, pricing and hotel info have been posted on the State website. We will arrange carpooling for those interested in attending but are concerned with driving on their own. I hope you will plan on making the trip!

Please join us at the next General Meeting on Wednesday July 12th, starting with social time at 5:30 pm and our meeting at 6 pm. We're having an "Ice Cream Social", so bring a friend to join in the fun! Our speaker this month will be Sarah Weller, Senior Manager, International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Ocean Conservancy. Our August program will feature Paige Breon, Nesting Program Manager at the Gulf Center for Research Management Texas A&M University. If you are not able to join in person, we will share a meeting link a day or two before the meeting.

Stay cool, and see you outside!!!

Kathy Pittman

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." — Marcel Proust



The upcoming General Meeting on July 12 * will be a hybrid: Attend in person at Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service, Angleton, TX, or virtually via e-mail invite.

* The comment period has passed and we will vote on whether to ratify the updates to the Chapter Operating Handbook at this meeting.

5:30 PM – 6:00 PM	Social Time and Refreshments (in person)
6:00 PM – 6:15 PM	Welcome and Volunteer Report
6:15 PM – 7:15 PM	Advanced Training Speaker: Sarah Weller, Senior Manager, International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Topic: Community Science & Data Collection through the International Coastal Cleanup (Virtual Presentation) (Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting)
7:30 – 8:00 PM	General Membership Meeting [Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting]



Ocean Conservancy. "Charting a Course to Plastic Free Beaches". Facebook, July 3, 2023.

Sarah Weller has served on the International Coastal Cleanup team under Ocean Conservancy's Trash Free Seas Program® for nine years. She lives in northern Virginia and is based out of Ocean Conservancy's headquarters in Washington D.C.

Sarah has the pleasure of working with a phenomenal network of coastal and waterway cleanup organizers worldwide, along with passionate educators and individuals who take action on the issue of plastic pollution in their own communities. She manages the creation and distribution of education and outreach materials for science-based solutions and maintains the organization's cleanup data collection tools. She's had the honor of representing the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) at both national and international marine debris convenings.



MEMBERSHIP DATA REPORT

by Dave Brandes, Data Manager

2023 Recertifications for May & June

Dennis Charleton
Marty Cornell
Mickey Dufilho
Angela Griffin
Kate Harris
Jackie Hicks
Chris Kneupper
Pam Lewis
Brenda Martin
Mel McKey
Georgia Monnerat
Roy Morgan

Herbert Myers
Jim Nance
Kristine Rivers
Donald Sabathier
Jimmy Salinas
Luanne Salinas
Kenneth Sluis
Linda Sluis
Warren Smith
Janet Townsend
George Valadez

Hours Totals YTD—as of 30 June 2023

9,101 Hours VT 1,337 Hours AT

Impact Data YTD—as of 30 June 2023

3,784 Adults 14,500 Youth

*June only: VT 988; AT 129

250 Hours Milestone Award

Kathy Purvis



5000 HOURS!

Chris Kneupper
& Roy Morgan



PRESIDENT'S CALL TO SERVICE AWARD!
CONGRATULATIONS to Lisa Myers!

4,000 Hours!

Lisa has been the Editor of our Chapter News since her first issue in April 2017. Thanks to her diligence and hard work, we have a large collection of newsletters and archived files of past projects and activities. All these materials tell the story of the Texas Master Naturalist™ - Cradle of Texas Chapter. We will miss Lisa, but she and her husband are going to enjoy many moments with their precious grandson. We bid her farewell but look forward to return visits down the road. Thanks for your dedication and many years of service!



INTERNS NO MORE ... CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW GRADUATES!



Barbara Whaley



Marlon Nation



Pam Penn



Chad Davenport



Brian Hanson



Juli Martin



Kim Calhoun

Not pictured
Cris (Crystal)
Tobola

QUINTANA BEACH SWEEP JUNE 8



The Beach Sweep team had extra help with clean-up on June 8. Karen Eaker (pictured below with Jimmy and Luanne Salinas) is a Master Naturalist with the North Texas Chapter. She and her husband Lloyd were here from Dallas to celebrate their anniversary at Quintana Park. They heard about the beach sweep and volunteered to help, then joined the group for lunch at Sweet T's Diner. Thank you to our visiting volunteers!



QUINTANA BEACH FISH KILL

(Virtual presentation, "Nature Notes – Quintana Beach Fish Kill" by Patty Brinkmeyer), at the June General Meeting *

Patty Brinkmeyer, one of our Chapter members and Manager of Quintana Beach County Park, presented her 6/09/23 observations of the recent "fish kill" at the pedestrian park with hard head catfish and others floating offshore. She alerted the Texas Parks and Wildlife Kills and Spills Team, then proceeded down the beach with another employee, Krissy, finding higher concentrations of fish, predominately Gulf Menhaden, including a shark and stingrays at Bryan Beach. Driving farther down the beach, they found a "long mat of floating dead fish", "thousands of fish rolling in the surf as far as we (they) could see". She shared photos and live video footage of their sightings. Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) confirmed the event was caused by low concentrations of dissolved oxygen, a "natural occurrence" resulting from weather, water temperature and other conditions that worked together to reduce dissolved oxygen levels in the water required by aquatic life to breathe. The dead fish were removed in a three-day operation by TPW workers using front-end loaders and buried in the sand dunes.



Photos courtesy of Patty Brinkmeyer, Quintana Beach County Park



* Brian Frazier, Director of County Parks with Texas Parks and Wildlife, addressed the General Meeting to further explain the fish kill at Quintana and answered questions. He described the event as the result of "a perfect storm" where conditions came together to drop the dissolved oxygen levels in the water.

REMEMBERING BILL AHLSTROM



William Edwin "Bill" Ahlstrom, Jr., age 72, passed away on June 21, 2023. Bill was the son of the late William Edwin Ahlstrom, Sr., and Isabelle Doris Hunt, who survives him. Bill was a proud Marine, having served from 1969 to 1972, specializing in engineering. Following his service, he led a distinguished career as a Biomedical Engineer, with groundbreaking work in pacemaker technology which advanced the field, impacting countless lives.

An Angleton resident for the last 40 years, Bill was an active member of his community. He served as a board member of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Brazoria County and the Parks and Recreation Department. He also held several positions, including President and Vice President, on the board of the Texas Master Naturalist-Cradle of Texas chapter.

His love for the outdoors shone through his hobbies, which included birding, offshore fishing, and shelling at Texas beaches. An avid lover of nature and animals, his legacy lives on in the lives he touched and in the natural world he cherished. He was a dedicated traveler and a treasure trove of dad jokes, always ready to share a laugh with those around him. Bill will be remembered for his quirky personality, intelligence, love, and exceptional grandparenting. He is survived by his loving wife, Monica Berry; his daughters Aimee Ahlstrom, April Ahlstrom, and Stephanie Berry (Joe); his son Christopher Berry (Crystal); and his grandchildren Ethan, Kira, Rhiannon, Gabrielle, Bo, Everly & Marcel. He is also survived by his brother Gary (Amy). Donations can be made in Bill's memory to the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO.org).

Adaptation of obituary reprinted by permission of the family and Palms Funeral Home, Angleton, TX

From Kathy Pittman, President – "Bill was president of the Chapter in 2020. He was very involved with the development of parks in our area and an active birder. I remember Bill joining my intern class on our ornithology field trip to Quintana in 2019 and he was so helpful in identifying many shore birds.



"Shrike Force One", the 2020 GCBO Shrike Survey Team – Bill, the mentor, sharing his birding skills and coaching Kyle and Kathy Purvis. He was always on the "lookout" for a Cara Cara, his wife's favorite bird.



President Bill Ahlstrom during the "CoVid Pandemic" July 2020

From Lisa Myers – "I am so glad that I shared host duties with Bill one day at this year's GCBO Spring Fling. Although he was obviously not feeling great, he animatedly discussed birds with visitors, and we had a chance to catch up after not seeing each other for a long time. What a lovely man."

From Jimmy Salinas – "I was fortunate enough to be the "mentor" for Bill and members of his class during their project. I believe it was 2017. Their project was assessing trash accumulations on Sargent Beach (precursor to 'Beach Sweep?'). At any rate, Bill would use his time in the field with his other project participants to observe birds. He located a pair of burrowing owls on the beach (back dunes) of all places! He was such an avid and knowledgeable birder, and he was outstanding as President of our Chapter. Loved his sense of humor, wit and perspective on life."



From John O'Connell, AgriLIFE Extension Service – "In addition to being a birder, Certified Master Naturalist, Extension supporter, Bill enjoyed fishing and was a huge help to me in producing a video on how to measure fish properly."



SOME UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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

- Exploration Green Workday - Every Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.; contact Christie Taylor
- Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project - Self-directed
- Beach Sweep - (See Calendar for dates), 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. at Quintana Fishing Pier; contacts Jimmy/Luanne Salinas
- 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 – Bobcat Trail; contact Oron Atkins

PUBLIC OUTREACH - Ruby Lewis rubylewis77515@ymail.com

- BCLS Summer Reading Club – July 13, 18, 19 & 26; contact Ruby Lewis via e-mail at rubylewis77515@ymail.com
- Sea Center Shark Celebration – July 15

Patrols for nesting sea turtles this season are about to close. Those who are interested in participating during the next season will be required to take two (2) training classes. Volunteers should contact Roland Davis to sign up.



Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

President	Kathy Pittman, Rosharon
Vice President/Programs	Jimmy Salinas, Freeport
Secretary	Kathy Purvis, Richwood
Treasurer	Donald Sabathier, Pearland
State Representative	Connie Stolte, Palacios
Immediate Past President	Mickey Dufilho, Brazoria
New Class Director	Melanie Hollenshead, Brazoria
Membership Director	John Boettiger, Lake Jackson
Advanced Training Director	Kristine Rivers, Manvel
Volunteer Service Director	Oron Atkins, Lake Jackson
Outreach Director	Ruby Lewis, Angleton
Chapter Host	Rose Wagner, Sweeny
Communications Director	Larry Peterson, Manvel
Class of 2022 Representative	Kate Harris, Alvin

Non-voting positions:	
Chapter Librarian	Debbie Nance, Alvin
Speakers Bureau Coordinator	Kristine Rivers, Manvel
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Coordinator	Kristine Rivers, Manvel
Data Manager	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson
Social Committee Coordinator	Mickey Dufilho

Chapter Advisors	John O'Connell, AgriLIFE Extension Service Jordan Kieffer, TPWD Sea Center Texas
------------------	---

Newsletter Editor	Kathy Purvis, Richwood
Newsletter Contributors	Dave Brandes, Oron Atkins, Dick Schaffhausen, Debbie Nance, Charles Jesse Miller Jr, Melanie Hollenshead, Amanda Gabehart

Website	https://txmn.org/tmncot/
Facebook	http://facebook.com/TMN-COT
Twitter	https://twitter.com/tmncot
E-mail Listserv	http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail



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.