



Chapter News

The September 11 General Meeting will be a hybrid: attend in person at the Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service, 21017 County Road 171, Angleton, TX, or virtually via e-mail invite. Visitors and guests are welcome.

5:30 – 6:00 p.m.	Social Time and Refreshments (<u>Potluck Supper, in person</u>)
6:00 – 6:15 p.m.	Welcome, Awards and Outreach
6:15 – 7:15 p.m.	<p>Speaker: Alenka Cardenas, Wetland Outreach Coordinator at Bayou City Waterkeeper</p> <p>Advanced Training: "Exploring the 5 Critical Wetland Areas and Wetland Watch Hub Tools"</p> <p><i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i></p>
7:30 – 8:00 p.m.	<p>General Membership Meeting</p> <p><i>[Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting]</i></p>

President's Message

"Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel. - Socrates

Gosh, what a roller coaster of a summer! My heart goes out to everyone impacted by Hurricane Beryl. Not only were our homes and properties battered but also our beloved parks and wildlife refuges. Several in our area are still closed to the public but will hopefully reopen soon. **Many thanks to members who helped in clean-up efforts with our partner organizations.** You went "above and beyond," sometimes leaving your own clean-up activity to assist others.

Kudos as well to those dedicated volunteers who manned the Brazoria County Library Summer sessions and the Brazoria County Parks Dept. Nature Camp. Some members have been serving in these programs for years and your dedication is very much appreciated. My grandson, who is not an "outside" child and participated in Nature Camp, now asks me regularly when I'm taking him to the BCPD Archery sessions or when I'm taking him kayaking. He also gets his mom to send me pictures of "cool" insects and animals they come across in their apartment complex. I love his interest, even if he doesn't always like being outside in the heat and mosquitos!

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REMINDERS

GCBO Extreme Hummingbird Extravaganza – Saturday, September 14 & 21, 2024, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon; contact Ruby Lewis @ rubylewis77515@gmail.com.

Beach Sweep, Quintana Jetties – Monday, September 9 (weather permitting), 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.; contact Jimmy or Luanne Salinas.

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<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:

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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.

Cover photo shared by Lisa Myers 10/14/21

OUR SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER

Alenka Cardenas joined the Bayou City Waterkeeper organization as Wetland Outreach Coordinator in September 2023. She brings extensive expertise in wetland conservation and environmental justice with a Master of Arts in Public Policy from the University of Houston and a Bachelor of Science in Biology.

The presentation aims to equip Master Naturalists with the knowledge and tools necessary to support wetland conservation and engage in proactive environmental stewardship within their communities. Alenka will discuss the [5 Critical Wetland Areas](#) and demonstrate how to access the tools we've created on our [Wetland Watch Hub](#), including a [wetland mapper](#) and a [wetland watch survey](#). The mapper allows community members to visually locate wetlands and waterways in their vicinity, while the survey provides a way for community members to actively monitor wetlands in their area. You can also visit the website before the meeting and look at these links (<https://bayoucitywaterkeeper.org/>).

• Key features of the Wetland Watch Hub include:

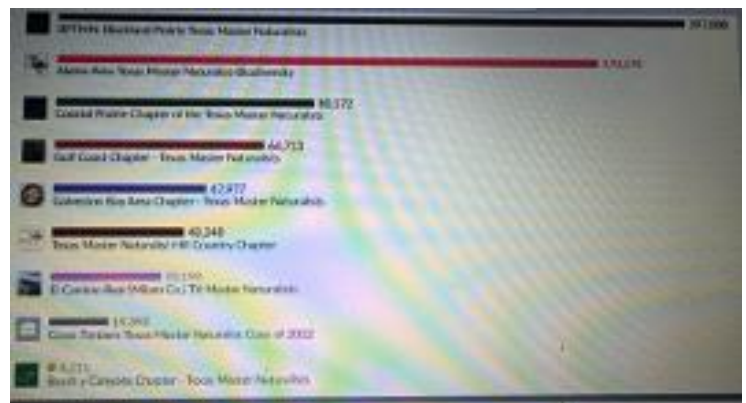
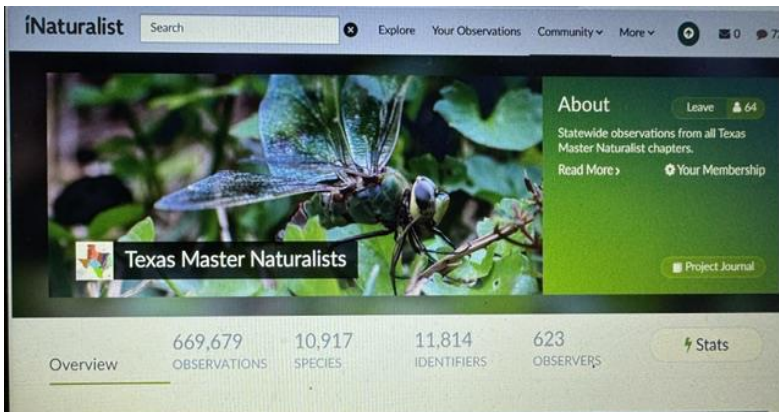
- Wetland Mapper: A tool that enables community members to visually locate wetlands and waterways in their vicinity, fostering greater awareness and understanding of local wetland ecosystems.
- Watch Survey: A participatory survey that allows community members to actively monitor and report on the condition of wetlands in their area, contributing to ongoing conservation efforts.

Don't forget the potluck supper at the next meeting. We're celebrating the 23rd anniversary of the beginning of our Chapter!!!

iNaturalist Project



As with other TMN chapters, Cradle of Texas has its own iNaturalist data collection project! Provide your iNaturalist ID to **Amanda Gabehart** (sylshessa@aol.com) and she will add you to the chapter project. This project will pull the data CoT members are already generating when we enter observations for other projects we are participating in. You can peruse our project page observations to see what our peers are doing. You can help with identifications if you wish. Also, fill in annotations if you can. Your participation will count as Field Research. Please contact Amanda with any questions.



Photos/screenshots above courtesy of Amanda Gabehart

(President's Message, continued from Page 1)

If we want to ensure our natural areas and their wild residents are preserved and protected for the future, we have to “light a fire” NOW, not just in the minds and hearts of our youngest residents but in the adults we meet as well. Otherwise, these resources may not be there for our youth to enjoy in their adult years. **Your volunteer service and education efforts are a means to lighting those fires.** If you’ve been doing one activity “forever,” consider stepping out of your comfort zone and learning another. Alternative activities help fill our naturalist knowledge gaps and allow us to be more well-rounded volunteers. For our newest members, there are ALL KINDS of volunteer opportunities to choose from. Don’t be afraid of taking something on that you’re unfamiliar with. We are all here to learn!

As I mentioned at our August Chapter meeting, please consider how you can be more involved with the leadership of our group. We all own our Chapter. The Board is filled with members who have served, in some cases, for several years. If you want to learn more about the management of our Chapter, come to a Board meeting. Your ideas and energy are needed to enhance and expand our programs!

The next few months will be FILLED with events. Get your calendars ready!!! Please take a look at our **Events Calendar** on the website and get in touch with the listed contact person to sign up. Ruby Lewis will also be sending emails with sign up information. Also on the horizon are our **Fall Field Day activities on October 9th at San Luis Pass County Park**. If you’d like to help out, please contact **Kristine Rivers and the AT Day Committee**.

Due to scheduling conflicts, the start of our Fall Training class will be moved to mid-October. Classroom sessions are held at the Angleton Library, with field trips at several locations across our area. Members who want a “refresher” are welcome to attend sessions (contact Melanie Hollenshead at theladyspath@hotmail.com to make sure there is space!) Check out the training schedule on our website. We will have another great group of interns – let’s make them feel welcome!

Please plan to attend our next Chapter meeting on Wednesday, September 11th at 5:30 pm. This will be the **23rd anniversary** of the beginning of our Chapter! We will have a potluck dinner so start digging out those yummy recipes and get your ingredient list together! BRING A FRIEND!!!

Thank you for all you do for our area, and see you soon, OUTSIDE!!!!
Kathy Pittman

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. - Clarissa Pinkola Estes



Get excited for our **Texas Master Naturalist 2024 Annual Meeting** – to be held **Thursday, October 24th through Sunday, October 27th** in San Marcos, Texas.

The Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for the Texas Master Naturalist volunteers from around the state to gather, participate in hands-on educational seminars, and receive all their Advanced Training requirements for the year in one weekend. It’s also an opportunity for program participants and supporters to network, share new ideas, and to learn from chapters in different regions of the state. <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2024-annual-meeting/>

Texas Master Naturalists Undertake Statewide Acoustic Bat Monitoring

Submitted by Mickey Dufilho

The Texas Master Naturalists have undertaken a Citizen Science Project to monitor the distribution of bats in Texas, with 2024 the pilot year of a six (6)-year project to determine the protocols and procedures to use acoustic monitors as indicators of bat species location and distribution. There are 47 species of bats in North American and Canada. Historically, Texas has reported 33 species of bats. No other state has bat fauna as rich as that of Texas.

The Texas Project is sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) and led by Craig Hensley from Texas Nature Trackers. The purpose of the project is to provide insight into the distribution of bats across the Texas landscape. This will provide a significant opportunity to fill in the data gaps in bat distribution. Data on the status and trends will inform managers and policymakers so they can manage bat populations effectively. Of the 33 bat species in Texas, 23 are classified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Historically, Brazoria County has reported 12 species of bats, six (6) of which are classified as SGCN.

This pilot year, our chapter deployed three (3) acoustic monitors at 13 locations throughout the county. We monitored 10 locations twice, two (2) locations three (3) times and one (1) location one time. The sample period was April 29 – June 28. We did a preliminary auto-ID analysis of the data with the software Kaleidoscope Pro. The software reported 18 bat species, nine (9) of which are not normally found in our county. (See preliminary data, Page 5.) We know the auto-ID function of the software can make errors on the identification due to many bats having similar echolocation call patterns. A certain percentage of the spectrographs of the echolocation calls will need to be verified by a manual technique. That manual verification will begin in September and is not expected to have a definitive report until December.

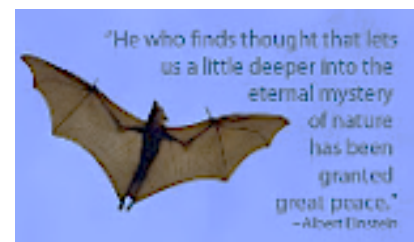
This pilot year established a baseline of procedures to create a sustainable and successful long-term project. We have 16 trained volunteers who can program and deploy the monitors, and we have four (4) trained data analysts.

Looking forward to next year, we will monitor the same 13 locations as this year. We also expect to receive additional acoustic monitors from TPWD, and we will need more deployment volunteers and locations. In addition, we will receive some very large monitors to be deployed and monitored at USFWS locations in the county.

By participating in this project, the Texas Master Naturalists have an opportunity to have a major impact on filling in the data gaps on the distribution of Texas bats, which will lead to better conservation outcomes for the species. Better outcomes for bats mean better economic benefits. Bats help farmers by consuming insect pests, which improves crop yields and reduces pesticide use. Nectar-feeding bats pollinate plants and fruit-eating bats disperse seeds in tropical forests. Spectacular bat flights generate ecotourism dollars. Bat research leads to scientific discoveries, inspiring technology, medicine, and art.



Photo courtesy of Mickey Dufilho



The Team!

Back row: Larry Peterson, Oron Atkins, Rose Wagner, Carol Jones, Angela Griffin, Robin Townsend, Ken Sluis


Front Row: Dick Schaffhausen, Mickey Dufilho, Kathy Pittman, Susan Conaty, Linda Sluis, Luanne Salinas and Jimmy Salinas.

Not Shown: Barbara Whaley, Janet Townsend, Bill Adriance, Hannah Beckett, John Boettiger

Celebrating Our Recertifications at the General Meeting!

Adelsperger, Barbara	Monnerat, Georgia
Conaty, Susan	Morris, Thomas
Cornell, Martin (Marty)	Mullins, Mike
Crawford, Tina	Myers, Elizabeth (Jo)
Glover, Anneliese	Myers, Herbert
Grandjean, Cynthia	Peltier, Pam
Harris, Kate	Purvis, Kathleen
Hicks, Jackie	Rivers, Lisa (Kristine)
Huxford, Phil	Salinas, Luanne
Johnson, Lorraine (Rainbo)	Schaffhausen, Richard
Kirby, Larry	Tobola, Crystal
Kirby, Vicki	Valadez, George
Martin, Brenda	Vincent, Cindy



Photo courtesy of Facebook 

IMPACT DATA REPORT – JUNE & JULY 2024 *

- Dave Brandes, Data Manager

	June 2024	July 2024	YTD
Hours:			
VT	1,618	333	9,755
AT	538	44	1,586
Total	2,156	377	11,341
Impact Data			
Adults	1,120	20	5,839
Youth	4,759	45	20,049
Total	5,879	65	25,888

* data not considered final until mid-September 2024



SAVE THE DATE!
2024 Fall Field Day

“Open to Interpretation”

San Luis Pass County Park
Wednesday, October 9, 2024
(in lieu of October Chapter Meeting)

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Lunch will be provided by the chapter

Brazoria County Bat Acoustic Monitoring Project

Preliminary Data from Kaleidoscope Pro – Auto ID

- Common year-around bats
 - American Perimyotis (Tricolored) – 6 sites (considered for listing - imperiled S2)
 - Brazilian Free-Tailed – 11 sites
 - Big Brown – 4 sites
 - Eastern Red – 9 sites (high mortality – wind turbines)
 - Seminole – 5 sites (vulnerable – S3)
 - Evening – 8 sites
- Common Migratory Bats
 - Hoary – 7 sites (vulnerable – S3; high mortality – wind turbines)
- Uncommon year-around bats
 - Northern Yellow – 7 sites (rare in Texas)
- Uncommon Migratory Bats
 - Silver-haired - 7 sites (high mortality - wind turbines)





Outreach Opportunities – Ruby Lewis

GCBO Xtreme Hummingbird Extravaganza (XHX) – Saturday, September 14 & 21, 2024, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon; contact Ruby Lewis @ rubyewis77515@ymail.com to volunteer at one of our booths; contact Celeste Silling (GCBO) at csilling@gcbo.org to volunteer in other areas.

Sea Center Texas Bull Red Run-A-Palooza and Youth Fishing – Saturday, September 28, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; contact Jordan Kieffer at jordan.kieffer@tpwd.texas.gov

KBR Kids Day at Tony Marron Park (808 North York, Houston, TX 77003) – Saturday, October 19, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Sea Center Texas Spooktacular – Sunday, October 20, 2024, 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC OUTREACH — Text, phone, or email Ruby at rbylewis77515@ymail.com; phone 979.583.7903.



2024
Diamondback
Rattlesnake

Volunteer Opportunities – Oron Atkins

NEW OPPORTUNITY: Joint Project with Brazoria County Master Gardeners and Delores Fenwick Nature Center (City of Pearland) – Thursday, August 29, Saturday, August 31 and Saturday, September 7, 2024, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon. Revitalization of Wildscape area – CHECK your e-mails for more details.

Kathy Pittman – 713-569-1665

pittmankw4@aol.com

Beach Sweep – Monday, September 9 (weather permitting), 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., Quintana Fishing Pier; contact Jimmy or Luanne Salinas (jimmy.salinas217@gmail.com; mshluh@gmail.com).

iNaturalist – Pollinator Bioblitz, October 11 – 27, 2024 - self directed. See email from Kathy Pittman and LISTServ, “Texas Pollinator BioBlitz” on FB or at tpwd.texas.gov

Exploration Green Workday – every Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; contact Christie Taylor.

Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project – self-directed.

Nurdle Beach Patrol – self-directed; contact Jace Turnell.

Brazoria County Comprehensive Spider Survey – self-directed; contact Melanie Hollenshead.

Adopt-a-Loop for TMN – self-directed; contact Debbie Nance.

The **NOMINATING COMMITTEE** is **SEEKING MEMBERS** for our Board Officer slots. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please contact **Mickey Dufilho** at dufilhos@Hotmail.com.

Committee Members: Jimmy and Luanne Salinas, Tara Lawrence, Barbara Whaley and Mickey Dufilho

Entomology Corner: Cynipid Wasps – They Have Some Gall!

by Barbara Whaley

Have you ever noticed those round, ball shaped growths on oak leaves? Or the fuzzy mosslike structures on rose stems? These are the results of a tiny parasitic wasp called a *gall wasp* or *cynipid*.

Galls are caused by the reaction of a plant to a specialized growth hormone exuded by the larva of these wasps. The adult wasp lays her eggs in the tissue of the host plant and when the larva hatches, it begins feeding on the plant. The larva gives off a substance that makes the tissue grow in an exaggerated way. This substance develops structures that are very different from the normal plant growth. The larva feeds on the cells of these modified plant parts.

If you cut open one of these galls during the period when the larva is feeding, you will find small grubs of the wasp crawling around inside. In some species, there is a single worm. In others, the one egg that the wasp has laid divides up into many larvae (10 – 20 offspring).

Many different galls can develop on the same kinds of plants. In addition to the large golf-ball sized gall on oak, there is a smaller oak gall that is called the *jumping oak gall*. These BB-sized galls easily fall off the plant and bounce around.

Some *rose galls* are the fuzzy, mossy type and some are the spiny, sticky type. These are galls that develop from a different kind of cynipid wasp. The spiny surface of spiny galls protects the wasp larva from predators. The mossy type is a camouflage mechanism.

Galls form an interesting relationship between insects and plants. Usually, the plant is not harmed a great deal, and the relationship helps the wasp carry on its life functions using the modified plant as food.

How do you treat wasp galls? These galls may cause some branches to die back, but it is unlikely they would kill a tree. Control of these insects is difficult. Due to their complicated life cycle, spraying with an insecticide is usually not effective and therefore, not recommended. Prune and destroy gall-infested twigs and branches. Burn or step on the galls to kill the developing larvae. Place gall remains in a tightly sealed baggie or trash bag and discard. Rake and destroy gall-infested fallen leaves.

Many oak galls are foraged by birds such as jays, nuthatches, titmouse, sapsuckers and many others. The bird drills into the gall in search of wasp larvae. Some birds even swallow galls whole.



Photos courtesy of Barbara Whaley

August Beach Sweep at Quintana Jetties

Message from Jimmy Salinas, one of the Project Coordinators: We had a great turnout for our August Beach Sweep, August 8, with a homeschool family that visited our booth during the Sea Center Texas "Shark Celebration" event, and a young lady friend who photographs the beach every morning before she goes to work. She and Luanne became friends with a common cause of preventing litter on Quintana Island.

Your cleanup makes a difference! Thank you for being part of a global community, identifying ocean trash and helping find solutions. Check out what others are cleaning and more ways to get involved at <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/icc/>.

(Reprint courtesy of OceanConservancy)

Included in the finds:

- 141 beverage cans
- 308 plastic bottles
- 89 glass bottles



Ocean Conservancy

Thank you for cleaning up with **Clean Swell!**

Here's a summary of your recent cleanup:

Date	August 08, 2024
Duration	1 hours 37 minutes
Number of People	12
Weight of Trash Picked Up	844.7 lbs
Group Name	Team Q
Distance Covered	0.4 Miles
Comments	



Photos of Clean Swell app data & participants courtesy of Jimmy & Luanne Salinas

Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

President	Kathy Pittman, Rosharon
Vice President/Programs	Jimmy Salinas, Freeport
Secretary	Kathy Purvis, Richwood
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Outreach Director	Ruby Lewis, Angleton
Hospitality Director	Rose Wagner, Sweeny
Communications Director	Larry Peterson, Manvel
Training Class Representative 2023	Marlon Nation, Pearland

Non-voting positions:

Chapter Librarian	Debbie Nance, Alvin
Data Manager	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson
Chapter Advisors	John O'Connell, AgriLIFE Extension Service Jordan Kieffer, TPWD Sea Center Texas

Newsletter Editor	Kathy Purvis, Richwood
Newsletter Contributors	Kathy Pittman, Dave Brandes, John Boettiger, Oron Atkins, Ruby Lewis, Dick Schaffhausen, Jimmy Salinas, Cris Tobala, Mickey Dufilho & Barbara Whaley

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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 or before the first day of the month by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is the 20th day of the month preceding issue. Send submissions by e-mail to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.