

# Chapter News

November 2024

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Vol. 24 No. 11

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

Cover photo shared by Patty Brinkmeyer

## President's Message



"I cannot endure to waste anything so precious as autumnal sunshine by staying in the house."

— **Nathaniel Hawthorne**

**Finally, it feels like fall has arrived!** I had to shake the dust off my jacket this morning when I walked my dog. He seemed to have more spring in his step in the cool air. The early morning sun takes a different hue and paints everything in its golden light. I like to think its my favorite time of year, until we get to

next spring and it becomes my favorite time!

Fall also means the start of education sessions at the Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP) at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge, sponsored by USFW and the Friends of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuges. This program is in its 30<sup>th</sup> year, and YOU are one of the reasons for its success! Thank you to all those who volunteer there. It's a great way to get outside, engage with students who need to understand what makes BNWR so unique and important to our area. When that email comes out from Lee Gaston for volunteers, please consider how you can help.

Ruby has been BUSY with outdoor festivals the past two months. Next up, the Chapter has been invited to participate in the REI/Pearland Parks and Recreation "Outdoors for All" event on Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10:30 am to 2 pm, at Independence Park in Pearland. It's a great opportunity for us to interact with those in the northern part of the county who may not be aware of all our county has to offer. Pearland has been a rapidly growing area for some time, and I am excited that we are creating more opportunities to volunteer in that area. Please let Ruby or me know if you would like to volunteer at this event.

Another "up north" project involves revitalizing the wildscape area at Delores Fenwick Nature Center in Pearland. This is a joint project with the Brazoria County Master Gardeners Association. We have been clearing invasive vegetation, laying pea gravel, thinning and transplanting water plants, and watching all the birds during our break times. Next on the task list is to install metal edging around the area. Please consider coming out and helping when we get that scheduled. Hopefully it will rain soon which will make the installation much easier.

Continued on page 3...

# November Chapter Meeting

**The November 13 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.

<b>5:30 – 6:00 pm</b>	<b>Social Time and Refreshments</b>
<b>6:00 – 6:15 pm</b>	<b>Welcome and Awards</b>
<b>6:15 – 7:15 pm</b>	<b>Speaker:</b> Ron Weeks <b>Advanced Training:</b> Using eBird and Merlin The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology developed eBird in 2002 as an online tool for recording bird sightings and providing researchers with ways of accessing real-time data on bird distribution and abundance. They have since developed Merlin bird identification software which uses AI to match bird photographs and recordings to known photographs and recordings. Both of these tools will be introduced to the audience during the presentation along with some creative ways the on-line tools can be used. The audience is invited to download both apps to their smartphones should they wish to follow along during the presentation. This can be done by going to the App Store either for iOS or Android phones and typing in “eBird by Cornell Lab of Ornithology” and “Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Lab”. <i>(Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting)</i>
<b>7:30 – 8:00 pm</b>	<b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>(Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting)</i>



Ron Weeks lives in Lake Jackson, TX with his wife of 35 years, Irenna Garapetian. Ron is a past president of the Texas Ornithological Society, a former member of the Texas Bird Records Committee, and a current advisory board member of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. He has been a sub-regional editor for North American Birds, a Christmas Bird Count compiler, and an eBird reviewer for many years. Ron has co-authored two books about Texas birds, A Birder’s Guide to the Texas Coast and Birdlife of Houston, Galveston and the Upper Texas Coast. He also enjoys planning Texas Big Days having organized teams that set the national record of 258 species in 2001 and the fossil fuel free (bike and foot only) national record of 193 species in 2015.

And his most recent obsession has been studying the migration by recording nocturnal migrants flying over his yard. Ron recently retired from the Dow Chemical Company in Freeport, TX to spend more time birding, working out, and supporting local ministry work.

(President's Message, continued from page 1)

The Chapter has also participated in Farmers Markets and speaking engagements in the Pearland/ Manvel/Brookside Village area. If you would be interested in organizing events in the northern part of the county, please contact me at [pittmakw4@aol.com](mailto:pittmakw4@aol.com)

**THANK YOU to Kristine Rivers and the AT Day Committee** for a wonderful day at San Luis Pass County Park. The weather was great, and a great time was had by all. Kristine will be gearing up to plan the Spring AT Day. If you would like to help out, please contact Kristine at [kristine@birdingforfun.com](mailto:kristine@birdingforfun.com)

**Please plan to attend our next Chapter meeting on Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. Social time is at 5:30 pm.** The Nominating Committee will be presenting its slate of officers for next year, as well as taking nominations from the floor. Elections will be held at the December meeting. I hope to see you there, and BRING A FRIEND!!!

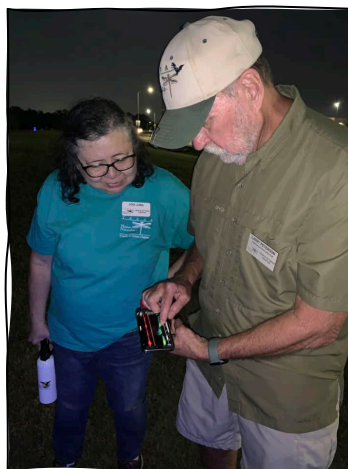
Thank you for all you do for our area, and see you soon, OUTSIDE!!!!

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

## Field Research

On the evening of October 15<sup>th</sup>, a small group gathered across from the [Delores Fenwick Nature Center](#) for a black light night supporting the City of Pearland's Fall Bat's & Blooms Bioblitz. Our Communications Director, Larry F. Peterson arrived with his bat monitor to capture the calls of bats in the area. According to Larry "bat echolocation calls triggered almost 100 (91) recordings at last night's event. 21 were automatically identified by the recording software. Most of the bats identified were Mexican Free-tailed bats (13), as we expected since we were close to the Fite Street Bridge Colony in Pearland. There were 5 identified recordings of Silver-haired bats (*Lasiyonycteris noctivagans*) and 3 recordings of Hoary bats (*Lasiurus cinereus*)." Additionally, our crew made several hundred observations of various species for the Bioblitz. One member even spotted the comet faintly in the evening sky. It was a productive and fun evening!



Photos courtesy of Angela Griffin and Amanda Gabehart.

# Outreach



Cradle of Texas Volunteers participated in GCBO's XHX over 2 weekends in September. It was a great turnout, great weather, and lots of hummers!





Photos courtesy of Patty Brinkmeyer

# Outreach Opportunities

**Trunk or Treat** - October 26, First Presbyterian Church, Angleton 10 am – 1 pm; contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

**Stephen F. Austin Statue, Stephen F. Austin Birthday** - School field day. November 1<sup>st</sup>, 9 am – 2 pm; contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

**Outdoors For All** - Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>, Independence Park, Pearland 8:30 am to 2 pm; contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

**Special Olympics + Sea Center Texas Fishing Competition** – November 9<sup>th</sup>, 8 am – 1 pm; contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

**DEEP - BNWR 10/22, 24 & 29, 11/5, 7 & 14**, 8 AM to 2:30 PM – contact [Lee Gaston](#)

**Public Outreach Director** - Text, phone, or email [Ruby Lewis](#); ph. 979.583.7903

**TMN-COT Calendar** <https://txmn.org/tmncot/events>

# Volunteer Opportunities

**Storm Debris Clean-up:** Brazoria County Wildlife Refuge, Brazos Woods Preserve, and Hanson Park. Dates and times TBA; contact [Oron Atkins](#)

**DFNC Educational Pond and Native Garden Habitat Workdays** – contact [Kathy Pittman](#)

**Beach Sweep** – Monday, November 4 (weather permitting), 8:00 am – 10:00 am, Quintana Jetty; contact Jimmy or Luanne Salinas ([jimmy.salinas217@gmail.com](mailto:jimmy.salinas217@gmail.com); [msluhu@gmail.com](mailto:msluhu@gmail.com))

**Exploration Green Workday** – every Wednesday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm; contact [Christie Taylor](#)

**Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project** – self-directed; Cleanup of Brazoria County public beaches or other public places and recording data to the CleanSwell app. Contact partner [Brazoria County Parks](#)

**Nurdle Beach Patrol** – self-directed; <https://www.nurdlepatrol.org/app/>

**Brazoria County Comprehensive Spider Survey** – self-directed; contact [Melanie Hollenshead](#)

**Adopt-a-Loop for TMN** – self-directed; contact [Debbie Nance](#)

**TMN-COT iNaturalist Data Collection Project**; contact [Amanda Gabehart](#)

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](mailto:dufilhos@hotmail.com)

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

## Still need AT?

[Click Here](#)  
to access past presentations

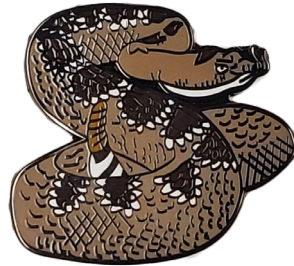
For advanced training!  
Note: Only 2024 presentations will count towards AT For 2024.

# Certifications

**Congratulations to all!**

## Initial Certifications

Sarah Castillo  
Emily Matula  
Donna Rich  
Betty Taylor



2024 Pin

*John Boettiger, Membership Director*

## Recertifications

Patty Brinkmeyer  
Kimberly Calhoun  
Mel McKey  
Ken Sluis  
Linda Sluis

# Impact Data

		Sept. 2024	YTD
Hours*	VT	772.06	11,583.53
	AT	99.15	1,853.89
	Total	821.21	13,437.42
Impact Data*	Adults	410	6,739
	Youth	810	22,319
	Total	1,220	29,058

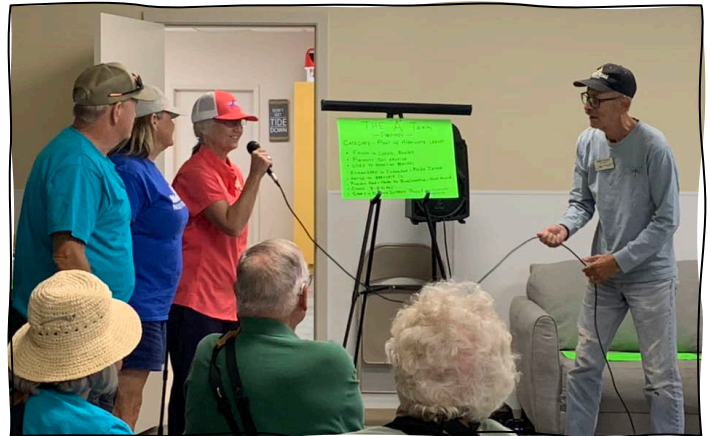
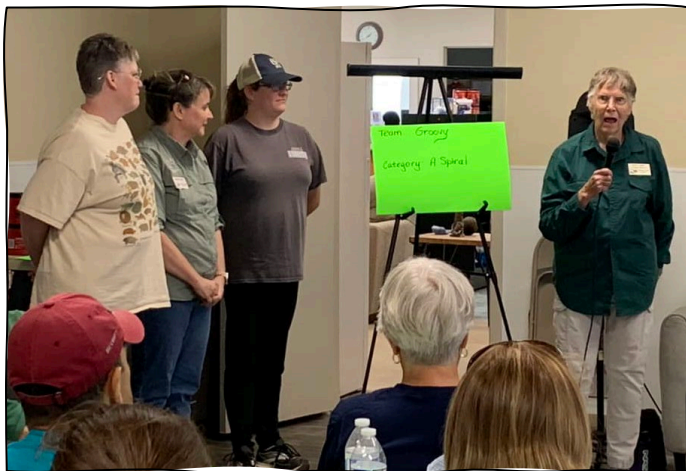
\*will not be considered final until mid-November 2024

*Dave Brandes, Data Manager*

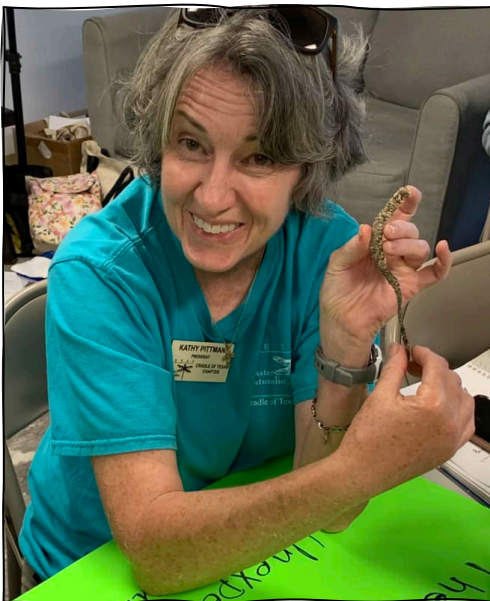
# Fall Field Day

The brainchild of past president, Kristine Rivers, the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Field Day was themed "Open to Interpretation". Jim Calvert opened with some family history of Follett's Island. Chapter members then embarked on a nature scavenger hunt. The teams of 4 then each presented on one of their finds. Thanks to the Fall Field Day committee: Kristine Rivers, Mickey Dufilho, Rose Wagner, Angela Griffin, Jimmy & Luanne Salinas, and Kathy Pittman.

*Photos courtesy of Angela Griffin*







# Entomology Corner

By Barbara Whaley

## **Yellow Garden Spider – Scientific Name: *Argiope aurantia*/Class: Arachnida**

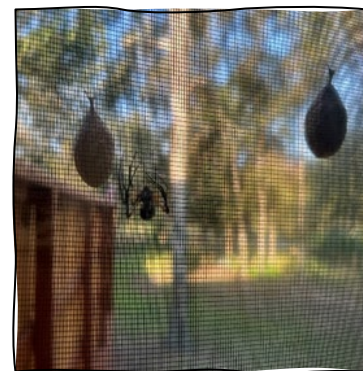
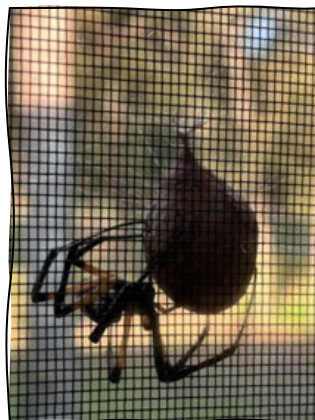
*Argiope aurantia* is a species of spider, commonly known as the yellow garden spider, black and yellow garden spider, golden garden spider, writing spider, zigzag spider, zipper spider, corn spider.

Yellow garden spiders are large, orb-weaving arachnids, meaning they spin a circular web. The orb weavers have an additional claw to help them spin their complex webs. In females, the top side of the abdomen is black with symmetrical patches of bright yellow. The legs are reddish brown at the base and black toward the tips. Males are smaller with brownish legs and less yellow coloration on their abdomens. Females average 0.75 to 1.1 inches in body length, which is up to three times larger than the males.

These spiders produce venom that is harmless to humans, but immobilizes prey like flies, bees and other flying insects that are caught in the web. The web contains a highly visible zigzagging X-shaped pattern called a stabilimentum. The spider may eat and re-spin its web each night.

After mating, the female deposits one or more egg sacs on her web. Offspring hatch in late summer or autumn. If they are in an area with a cold winter, the young spiders may remain in the egg sac in a dormant state and emerge in the spring. Egg cases are heavily parasitized by wasps and flies. On average, the garden spider lives for about one year. Females usually die in the first hard frost after mating. If temperatures prevent this, females may live several years, but males usually die after mating.

My neighbor told me she had a yellow garden spider spinning a web on her bathroom window screen. She described how she was very large one day, then much smaller the next time she looked at it. Then she noticed the egg sac that the spider firmly attached to the screen. A week later, she sent me a picture of the spider making another egg sac and attaching it near the first sac. See pictures below:



# October Beach Sweep

Well, what a difference a month can make! The weather for our October Beach Sweep was awesome and of course the trash abundance was par for the course.

We had some help from our neighbor in Freeport. Thank you, Stephanie Bass for coming out to help. In addition, we had the County Parks people help us dispose of a home dumpster full of trash that was "parked" on the jetty walkway!

Nature did not disappoint as some of the pics will show and we had a great time. Since Quintana Park remains closed, the shore and seabirds are taking advantage of a remote beach for staging and loafing. Be a good time to brush up on your identifications.

*Blessings,  
Jimmy & Luanne*



TOP TEN	QTY
1. Plastic bottles	190
2. Beverage cans	135
3. Other waste	106
4. Grocery bags	82
5. Line, nets, etc.	60
6. Paper cups	41
7. Plastic bottle caps	33
8. Glass bottles	24
9. Plastic lids	21
10. Food Wrappers	21





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

**Here's a summary of your recent cleanup:**

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Date	October 07, 2024
Duration	2 hours 10 minutes
Number of People	5
Weight of Trash Picked Up	118.9 lbs
Group Name	Team Q
Distance Covered	0.5 Miles

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)

## 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
Training 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
Hospitality Director	Rose Wagner, Sweeny
Communications Director	Larry Peterson, Manvel
Training Class Representative 2023	Marlon Nation, Pearland

Chapter Advisors	John O'Connell, AgriLife Extension Service Jordan Kieffer, TPWD Sea Center Texas
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**Non-voting positions:**

Chapter Librarian	Debbie Nance, Alvin
Data Manager	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson

Newsletter Editor	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Newsletter Contributors	Kathy Pittman, Dave Brandes, John Boettiger, Oron Atkins, Ruby Lewis, Jimmy Salinas, Patty Brinkmeyer, Angela Griffin, Barbara Whaley, Amanda Gabehart

Website	<a href="https://txmn.org/tmncot/">https://txmn.org/tmncot/</a>
Facebook	<a href="http://facebook.com/TMN-COT">http://facebook.com/TMN-COT</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/tmncot">https://twitter.com/tmncot</a>
E-mail Listserv	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail">http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail</a>

## Texas 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.



*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 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month preceding issue. Send submissions by e-mail to *Chapter News* Editor at [news@tmn-cot.org](mailto:news@tmn-cot.org). Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.

