



Chapter News

June 2025

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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 by Patty Brinkmeyer

President's Message



Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.
~Proverbs 22:6

While many families are planning their summer vacations and using their time to rest and relax, we Master Naturalists™ are gearing up for another busy summer of camps and Library programs. This is the time of year when we target our message to the children of the area. Have you considered how to adjust your message for this younger audience?

Do you use the same words and examples that you use with their parents and other adults, or do you bring your message and presentation “down to their level,” both physically and verbally? Do you talk “to” your audience or “with” your audience? How well do you listen to what they have to share? Do you correct a misstatement, or does it really matter that they mistake a damselfly for a dragonfly? Do you offer corrections gently? Do you give “I don’t know” as an answer, or do you feel we have to know all the answers? Do you ever consider what is truly important in our interactions – that we make a connection and make the other person, child or adult, feel like we listened to them and that we understood each other?

Over the past several months, I’ve had the opportunity to lead school hikes, volunteer at the USFWS Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP), and also to visit with homeschool and other groups as I was working on the wildscape area at Delores Fenwick Nature Center. I have noticed that many times, the kids just want to tell YOU what they have seen, and they are so excited that THEY found a tadpole or minnow or whatever aquatic insect they have scooped out of the pond.

Continued on page 2...

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

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

The older kids might remember that they caught a water scorpion, or that a water boatman bug carried a bubble around underwater in order to breathe, but the younger ones may only recall that one of the bugs they caught swam on its back (a backswimmer). Sometimes, I let the kids make up their own names, based on what they observe about the insect or plant. We laugh together and visit together, and maybe someday, we will meet again, and they will remember what we shared. What matters is that we teach them to care about the natural world around them.

My experience has been that children pay attention when the information “makes sense” to them, and getting on their level makes a difference in the lives of our young neighbors. Some days you may be the only truly kind voice they experience or the only person who listens to them. Think about that the next time you are volunteering at a youth event. I know it will change your experience for the better!

Please plan to attend our June 11th Chapter meeting at 9 am, social time at 8:30 am. Our presenter will be Dr. Michelle Zapp Sluis who will speak on research techniques used to understand migratory patterns of various species. I hope to see you at AgriLife, 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

Save the Date!

**Texas Master Naturalist 2025 Annual Meeting
Thursday, October 16th through Sunday,
October 19th College Station, 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.



June Chapter Meeting

The June 14th 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.

8:30 – 9:00 am	Social Time and Refreshments
9:00 – 9:15 am	Welcome and Awards
9:15 – 10:15 am	Speaker: Dr. Michelle Sluis Advanced Training: Gulf Research Institute for Highly Migratory Species This presentation will focus on the different research techniques GRIHMS utilizes to understand the migration pathways and drivers of movement for various highly migratory species in the Gulf.
10:15 – 11:00 am	General Membership Meeting (Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting)



Dr. Michelle Zapp Sluis is a Research Scientist for the Gulf Research Institute for Highly Migratory Species (GRIHMS) at Texas A&M University at Galveston. She received her bachelor of science degree in Marine Biology at Texas A&M University at Galveston and her doctorate degree in Oceanography and Coastal Sciences from Louisiana State University.

The majority of Michelle's work has centered on using otolith chemistry to estimate population connectivity and stock structure of different ecologically and economically important marine fish. In addition to these natural tags, she has assisted in deploying acoustic and satellite tags to investigate the movement and habitat preference of coastal and offshore fishes.

GRIHMS was founded in 2022, in which time Michelle was brought on to apply her research skills to a variety of projects to understand dispersive behaviors and habitat requirements of highly migratory species in the Gulf.

michellesluis@gmail.com

Outreach Opportunities

BCLS Summer Reading Club – June 17, 18, 19, 20, 24 & 25. July 2, 3, 7 & 8. See TMN-COT [volunteer calendar](#) for locations and times – contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

Camp Mohawk Nature Camp – June 9 thru 13, 9 AM to 12 PM – contact: [Ruby Lewis](#)

Public Outreach Director - Text, phone, or email [Ruby Lewis](#); ph. 979-583-7903

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

Brazoria County Library System

SUMMER READING CLUB

Volunteers needed to introduce kids to the world of *Texas Reptiles* and *Sea & Shore*.

A rewarding experience for kids and volunteers alike. Master Naturalists will be presenting a display with live animals, snakes, and alligators as well as items from the Gulf Coast Sea & Shore during the events.

Check with Ruby for details on a specific event or date.

Approved for up to eight(8) hours of VT + Travel Time
(1/2 hr setup, 2 hrs per session, 1 hr Lunch, 1/2 hr cleanup)



Volunteer Opportunities

Beach Sweep – Tuesday, June 10th, Monday, July 7th (weather permitting), 8:00 am – 10:00 am, Quintana Jetty; contact Jimmy or Luanne Salinas (jimmy.salinas217@gmail.com; msluhu@gmail.com)

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

Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project – self-directed; [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 [Cris Tobola](#).

DFNC Educational Pond and Native Garden Habitat Workdays – 3rd Saturdays and preceding Thursday – contact [Kathy Pittman](#)

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

Time to Restore Project – self-directed; contact [Kathy Pittman](#)

Insect Insights

The Cockroach

By Marlon Nation

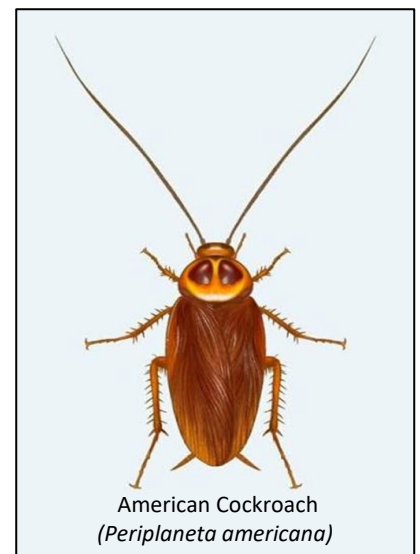


"All of Her Chips Were Down"

Many years ago, during my pre-teen years, and well before my Master Naturalist days, I was passing time in our garage doing nothing special, waiting for dinner. My younger sister had grabbed a snack, a bag of her favorite potato chips and joined me, asking, "What are you doing?" I huffed and retorted, "nothing," irritated that she had come out and interrupted my "nothingness." As I tinkered around, I noticed some movement out of the corner of my eye. The details grow dimmer as the years go by, but I remember turning my head slowly, only to see an intrepid but wayward intruder. It was reddish-brown, with two dark circles near its head and about 2 inches long. It was stationary, but more than halfway up the wall, near the ceiling, curiously sampling the environment with its inquisitive antenna. I said, "Whoa, look at that thing!!" My sister looked up, expressed some repugnance, but wisely and cautiously stepped back.

The "Hero" in me went into a visceral attack mode. With great excitement, I hurriedly, grabbed a step ladder and secured an old can of "Hot Shot" bug spray. Cautiously, I stepped up, moved into position intent on giving this trespasser an overwhelming taste of "liquid demise". Once in range, and with an abundance of juvenile unawareness, I unleashed a torrent of spray. It was waaaaay too much, but a direct hit. And for one celebratory moment, I really did feel like a conquering hero. I proudly said to myself, "Yeah, that'll do it." Suddenly, I watched this thing curiously curl its long antennae, boldly flex its wings, and take flight. "Oh - My - God!!!" It was airborne! Instantly my confidence turned into full on panic. I was still on the ladder and unable to retreat. It seemed to be coming straight for me for its revenge. As it advanced, I closed my eyes, ducked, and prayed. I truly believe I heard its fluttering wings as it passed me by.

Seconds later, my sister let out an "ear-splitting" scream. Unfortunately, or amusingly -- depending on one's perspective, the intruder had landed on her neck, and she was freaking out!!! Wildly running in circles, with her potato chips flying all over the garage. She was frantically slapping her back, screaming, "Get it off!!!, Get it off!! Before I could reach her, she had knocked the creature to the floor. Where after a couple of twitches, it came to its ultimate end-- predictably on its back. Hearing the commotion, my dad rushed into the garage yelling, "Hey!! What's going on out here?!!!" I looked at my disheveled, angry sister, then glanced down at her chips and the deceased intruder on the floor-- and after an awkward moment, while desperately trying to suppress my laughter, I said, "Geeze, I didn't know those things could fly!!"



Our innocent invader was a (*Periplaneta americana*) aka, American Cockroach. Detestable to many but surprisingly attractive to some. Certainly, I had seen them before, but never thought they were more than pests. Although common in the state of Texas, they are not native. Despite their name, they are an invasive species, native to Africa and the Middle East. Usually found out of doors, in sewers, trees or along the outside of buildings -- where I suspect most would prefer, they remain.

Continued...

According to TERMINIX, the pest control company, “Cockroaches are some of the most resilient and adaptable insects on the planet.” They have been the subject of folklore and myth where it’s been said that they would be among the only things living after a nuclear blast, or they can survive with a severed head. The truth is that they would not survive a direct nuclear blast (nothing would), but they can withstand ten times the radiation of human beings. Amazingly, as presented in Scientific Magazine, “Entomologist, Christopher Tipping at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown Pa., has decapitated American cockroaches “very carefully under microscopes, and notes, “We sealed the wound with dental wax, to prevent them from drying out. A couple lasted for several weeks in a jar.” So, bizarre as it seems, this is more than myth.

As a Naturalist, who believes that everything has a purpose and is connected to everything else, I often ask, “What role does this play in nature? According to the American Museum of Natural History, in a presentation entitled, “For Your Consideration: The Incredible...Roach, “You need roaches in your life. No, not the few pest species you might see scurrying across the floor (or maybe on your neck) but some of their underrated cousins. Cockroaches are amazingly diverse... and they’re crucial contributors to ecosystems worldwide,” says Megan Wilson, Ph.D. They provide some benefit by aerating soil, serving as a food source for other organisms such as birds, and some amphibians such as salamanders. They have also been used in medical research for some of their disease resisting characteristics.

However, most are concerned with if not defeat, certainly control of these ubiquitous pests. According to Mrs. Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M, Extension Program Specialist, in an article entitled, “Cockroach Biology and Management,” “Baits, vacuums, dusts, total-release aerosol, and sprays are effective. However, “If you use sprays or bugs bombs, follow the directions carefully and remove or cover all dishes, cookware and utensils and avoid over-application.” To amplify her point, unfortunately a close relative of mine lost about 30 tropical fish due to a well - intentioned but careless application of bug spray-- above an aquarium. Intuitive as it may seem, instructions are important, (even for a pre-teen). For the most efficient control, particular attention should be paid to harborage, moisture, access points, the proper administration of insecticides, and the availability of food sources. “Cockroaches are omnivorous scavengers and will consume any organic food source available to them.” I’m not sure of their appetite for potato chips but my guess is that they would find them satisfying.

With the benefit of age, 20/20 hindsight and better understanding, I realize that the natural world is a gift. Chop, chop, chop, spray, spray, spray and stomp, stomp, stomp is not always the best solution to a problem that is often nothing more than a nuisance. For me when I know better, I try to do better. And I expect the next time I have a similar encounter; I’ll handle it differently. I’m sure my sister would also.

REFERENCES

AgriLIFE Extension Publication, E-359 5/12, “Cockroach Biology and Management, Wizzie Brown, Michael Merchant and Roger E. Gold

American Museum of Natural History, “For Your Consideration... The Incredible Roach”, PBS Digital Studios, 2024.

Scientific Magazine, “What are Cockroaches Attracted to Inside? ORKIN



Get Those Kids Outdoors!

Contributed by Cynthia Grandjean

Today, more parents are embracing a parenting philosophy of more “green time” by getting outdoors to learn together. As Master Naturalists we can support families by providing ideas and simple tools to facilitate exploration.

Recently I gave my granddaughter Bryn, age 2, a kids’ backyard bug discovery kit. My son Cole reported back that Bryn absolutely loved it!

Shared outdoor experiences nurture deeper family bonds, create fun memories, and teach children to care for and protect our natural resources. Take them outdoors, even if it’s just in the backyard. Your grandchild might just have the next exciting discovery in his or her bug box!



Impact Data May 2025*

		May	YTD
Hours	VT	939	6,226
	AT	122	1,225
	Total	1,061	7,451

Impact Data	Adults	88	2,504
	Youth	26	7,931
	Total	114	10,435

*will not be considered final until mid-July 2025

Dave Brandes, Data Manager



Congratulations To the Spring Intern Class of 2025!



Kathy Pittman, Nathan Corona, Barbara Whaley



Kathy Pittman, Alyssa Corona, Barbara Whaley



Photos by Dick Schaffhausen

On May 28, graduation ceremonies were held for our newest Cradle of Texas Members. Welcome to all!



Kathy Pittman, Betty Skweres, Barbara Whaley



Kathy Pittman, Kevin Shebek, Barbara Whaley



Kathy Pittman, Emily Howard, Barbara Whaley



Kathy Pittman, David Skweres, Barbara Whaley



Kathy Pittman, Gene Taylor, Barbara Whaley



Kathy Pittman, Matt Adams, Barbara Whaley

Certifications May 2025

Congratulations to all!

Recertifications

Mel McKey
Sherry Muzny
Jimmy Salinas
Luanne Salinas
Kenneth Sluis
Linda Sluis
Andy Smith
Rose Wagner



2025 Pin
Roadrunner

John Boettiger, Membership Director

Initial Certifications

Emily Howard
Kevin Shebek
Herbert Taylor

Milestones



Regina Tippet
2500 Hours!

April awards at the May General Meeting:



Recertifications:

Marlon Nation, *President*; Kathy Pittman, Susan Conaty, Liesa Glover, Donna Rich, Patty Brinkmeyer, Herb Myers



Initial Certifications:

Amanda Smith, Tara Lawrence-Johnson, *President*; Kathy Pittman



2500 Hour Milestone:

Liesa Glover, *President*; Kathy Pittman

May Beach Sweep

What a great turn out we had in May! In fact, we were honored to have some of the fine citizens of Quintana join us, and they brought breakfast tacos and donuts which energized the whole group! Thank you, Adam!!!

Adam Valadez (Councilman for Quintana), who participated, was super appreciative of all the efforts we have taken to help them minimize the trash and debris in this area of Quintana Beach. It was a great day, though a little windy, but it didn't stop us from making this area look great! After offloading numerous trash bags at the Quintana Park roll off boxes, we adjourned to El Toro to celebrate Cinco De Mayo!

Next Beach Sweep will be **Tuesday, June 10th**, (Luanne and I will be in Wyoming until the 9th) So mark your calendar!! Thanks to all who showed up to lend a hand and share a concern for our Texas Coastline.

Blessings

Jimmy and Luanne



Thank you for cleaning up with
Clean Swell!

Here's a summary of your recent cleanup:

Date	May 05, 2025
Duration	2 hours 23 minutes
Number of People	10
Weight of Trash Picked Up	235.058 lbs
Group Name	Team Q



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 Ocean Conservancy)

Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

President	Kathy Pittman, Rosharon
Vice President/Programs	Jimmy Salinas, Freeport
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Training Class Representative 2025	Betty Skweres, Houston

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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, Luanne Salinas, Patty Brinkmeyer, Marlon Nation, Cynthia Grandjean, Richard Schaffhausen

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

Texas 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 the weekend following the monthly Board Meeting (first Wednesday of each month) by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is the day after the monthly Board meeting. Send submissions by e-mail to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.

