



# Chapter News

July 2026

**CONTENTS**  
Vol. 26 No. 7

President's Message .....1  
 Monthly Meeting.....2  
 Outreach Opportunities .....3  
 Volunteer Opportunities.....3  
 BCLS Programs.....4,5  
 Certifications .....6  
 Impact Data .....7  
 Pollinator Academy .....8,9  
 Rescue Story .....10  
 Monthly Beach Sweep.....11  
 Chapter Info & Links .....12

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Cradle of Texas Chapter

Texas A&M AgriLife  
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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.

## President's Message



**"The greatest good you can do for another does not just share your riches but to reveal to him his own."**

– Benjamin Disraeli

In just a few days, we will celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United States. It doesn't seem to be as important or popular as past celebrations. It's an important milestone and I hope you will celebrate it!

Do you remember the 200<sup>th</sup>, the Bicentennial that occurred in 1976? Tons of parades and events, Bicentennial quarters, "red, white and blue" was everywhere! But my favorite memory was meeting a special group of teenagers. I was 15 and had just finished the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This group of teenagers was traveling through the US, and they stopped in our town for a few days. They were from many different countries, and families would host the students in their homes. A Japanese student stayed at our house, and we had a great time showing her around our town, sharing food from our garden, and learning about her life back in Japan. The most "colorful" young man in the group was from France and somewhere in Texas he had purchased a black cowboy hat and he wore it proudly. Much like today's World Cup visitors, they were impressed with our friendliness, our culture, our freedoms, and in awe of the size of our country, our lands and natural areas.

What better way to celebrate our great nation than by educating others about what is special – our natural areas? Do we make the most of our opportunities to share our knowledge and love of our area? I have met visitors from Poland, Australia, Germany, Japan and from areas "closer to home" during our Open House events, and when volunteering at Brazos Bend State Park. Last week I spoke to a man who had immigrated Trinidad and was retired from the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York. He was walking at Delores Fenwick Park, and he wanted to know what we were doing at the park there. So, I launched into a discussion of native plants, pollinators and their relationships. We ended up talking about how special Brazoria County is and how much he and his family loved living in Texas. It only takes a moment to start a conversation. What conversation will you start during this special time in our nation? It only takes the willingness to share what you love about our home and our natural treasures.

**Our next meeting will be July 8<sup>th</sup>, at 6 pm at the AgriLife building.** Amber Zelmer of the Houston Zoo will share her presentation "The Mariana Crow Recovery Project." I know it will be an interesting and informative session. I hope you will join us! 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

# July Chapter Meeting

## The July 8<sup>th</sup> 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. Odd months are held in the evening. Even months are held in the morning.

5:30 – 6:00 pm	<b>Social Time and Refreshments</b>
6:00 – 6:15 am	<b>Welcome and Awards</b>
6:15 – 7:15 pm	<b>Speaker:</b> Amber Zelmer- Animal Nutrition Supervisor Houston Zoo <b>Topic:</b> “Fotten Aga- Snapshots of my time with the Mariana Crow Recovery Project”
7:15 – 8:00 pm	<b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>(Hours for Volunteer Service (VS) and Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting)</i>



Amber Zelmer has been working in the Zoo & Aquarium field for over 15 years. She began her full-time career at the Houston Zoo in 2009.



She has worked with a variety of animals, such as ambassador animals, hoofstock and birds, including critically endangered species like the Attwater's prairie chicken, Mariana crow and California condor. After 5 years away from Houston, working to hand rear birds in remote places, Amber is excited to be back in Texas and closer to family there. Amber is now the Animal Nutrition Supervisor at the Houston Zoo, though she continues to be involved in bird watching at every opportunity and is always looking for ways to support our feathered friends.

August Speaker: TBA

# Outreach Opportunities

**Sea Center Texas Kid's Camp** – 7/7-7/10, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm; contact [Jordan Keiffer](#)

**Sea Center Texas Shark Celebration** – 7/18, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm – contacts [Jordan Keiffer](#) and Ruby Lewis

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

# Volunteer Opportunities

**Beach Sweep** – Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> (weather permitting), 8:00 am – 10:00 am Quintana Beach – Location TBA  
Contact [Jimmy Salinas](#) 979-824-4008 or [Luanne Salinas](#)

**Alvin Resoft Park Plantings, Apple Snails and Fishing Line Removal** - TBD

**BCLS Summer Reading Club – Texas Reptiles** – Dates below ↓ contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

JUNE	JULY
4 <sup>th</sup> —West Pearland Library 10:30, 12:00, 2:00, 3:30	7 <sup>th</sup> Angleton Library, 12:00, 2:00, 4:00
9 <sup>th</sup> —Freeport Library 2:00, 4:00	8 <sup>th</sup> Lake Jackson Library, 12:00, 2:00, 4:00
15 <sup>th</sup> —West Columbia Library 2:00, 4:00	16 <sup>th</sup> Sweeny Library, 2:00
16 <sup>th</sup> —Alvin Library, 11:00, 2:00	21 <sup>st</sup> Manvel Library, 2:00, 4:00
18 <sup>th</sup> —Clute Library, 2:00, 4:00	23 <sup>rd</sup> Danbury Community Center, 11:00
24 <sup>th</sup> —Pearland Tom Reid Library 12:00, 2:00, 4:00	28 <sup>th</sup> Brazoria Heritage Foundation Gym, 2:00

## ONGOING:

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

**Camp Mohawk Pocket Prairie** – workdays TBA; contact [Dick Schaffhausen](#)

**Resoft Park Pollinator Gardens** – workdays TBA; contact [Kate Harris](#)

**DFNC Educational Pond and Native Garden Habitat Workdays** – August 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 am – 11:00 am, 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays and preceding Thursday; Contact [Kathy Pittman](#)

**Upcoming Construction Projects (TBA)** – contact [Oron Atkins](#)

## Citizen Science:

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

**Adopt-a-Loop for TMN** – self-directed; contact [Cris Tobola](#).

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

**Yellow-Legged Hornet Project (TBA)** – contact [Oron Atkins](#)

**June 16, 2026 – Alvin Library**

*Photos by Alyssa Corona and Angela Griffin*

Over the summer, COT members are volunteering for over 26 outreach sessions with the Brazoria County Library System. This year we are teaching on the ever-popular Texas Reptiles and also Ocean Trash. There is still time to sign to help for the July sessions. [See page 3.](#)



Anna Loonam, Regina Tippett



Liesa Glover



Kathy Pittman, Ruby Lewis



Jim Nance, Debbie Nance



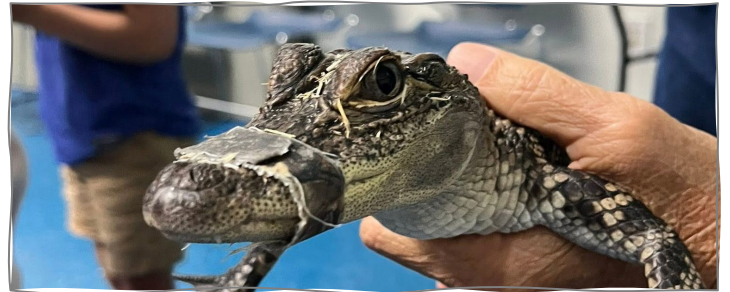
Angela Griffin, Regina Tippet



Kathy Pittman and Granddaughters



Lynne Ray



Kate Harris, Alyssa Corona

# Certifications June 2025

## Congratulations to all!

### Recertifications

Cynthia Grandjean  
Jodi Jung  
Brenda Martin  
Carolyn May-Monie  
Jo Myers  
Andy Smith

### Milestones

Herb Taylor  
250 Hours



May certifications recognized at the June meeting:



### **Recertifications**

Kathy Pittman; President, George Valadez, Patty Brinkmeyer, Amanda Smith, John Boetigger, Linda Sluis, Sheree Muzny, Karen Mosis



### **Milestones**

Kathy Pittman; President  
Donna Rich 250 hours  
Kate Harris 500 hours



2026 Pin  
Bobcat



# T-shirts are here!

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary T-shirts are in and will be distributed at the July Meeting. You will have another chance to pick them up at the August Meeting.

If you have not paid, please bring **exact cash or check**. We incur fees with each credit card sale.

If you missed out on the ordering, contact [Zeigler's](#) directly. They can still print one for you.

# Save the dates!

**September 8, 2026, 9:00 am**  
**County Commissioners' Court**  
 Honoring COT Chapter  
 Brazoria County Courthouse  
 Administration Bldg.  
 237 E Locust Street, Second Floor  
 Angleton, TX

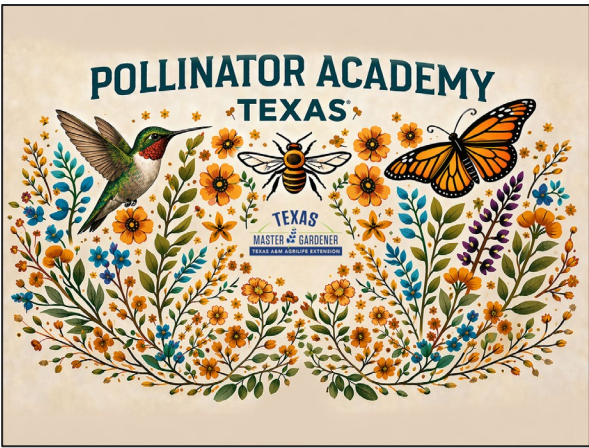


October 22 – 25, 2026

TMN-COT 2026 Impact Data		June*	YTD
Hours	VS	916	8,114
	AT	86	1,259
	Total	1,002	9,373
Impact Data	Adults	90	3,460
	Youth	90	13,013
	Total	180	16,473

\*will not be considered final until mid-August 2026

*Dave Brandes, Data Manager*



**June 27, 2026**

COT Members showed up in every capacity for the first Pollinator Academy; presented by Brazoria County Horticulture - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Master Naturalists Cradle of Texas Chapter and Brazoria County Master Gardeners.

Patty Brinkmeyer spoke on building pollinator habitat and had a booth showcasing her insect photography.

Kathy Pittman, Ed Barrios and Dick Schaffhausen manned the TMN booth and signed up pledges for Habitat Hero. Mickey Dufilho manned a very "batty" booth and Angela Griffin's booth was all about nocturnal pollinators.

Other members were doing duty as Master Gardeners and still others were participating as attendees!

Patty Brinkmeyer, Angela Griffin, Kathy Pittman, Dick Schaffhausen, Mickey Dufilho, Ed Barrios



Angela Griffin

Photos contributed by: Angela Griffin, Patty Brinkmeyer, Kimberly Mayer



Mickey Dufilho



Patty Brinkmeyer, Dick Schaffhausen, Ed Barrios, Mickey Dufilho



# Pollinator Academy



Kathy Pittman, Ed Barrios, Mickey Dufilho



David Skweres, Betty Skweres



Patty Brinkmeyer; Speaker



Nannette Daugherty, Barbara Whaley



Debbie Nance, Jim Nance

# DUCK, DUCK, . . . CHICKS? *A Rescue Story*

**Contributed by Angela Griffin**



On June 21<sup>st</sup> (Father's Day,) I was walking my dog Gus in the retention basin when we ran across a cardboard beer box. When I walked towards it (to throw it in the trash) we discovered it was filled with a bunch of newly hatched (at quick glance) ducks! I quickly called my wildlife rescue lifeline ([Victoria Kiechler West](#)) and made a plan.

I took Gus back home and grabbed the supplies to secure the ducks, my raincoat and boots and this time drove over to the park and a good thing because it started raining again! We had had ALOT of rain already that morning and the day before from the tropical storm that came through!

When I returned, one duckling that was not in the box had passed. I had spotted it earlier, too and it was by a nearby tree ( I believe a dog most likely had grabbed it before I discovered the box). Two had died in the short amount of time it took me to return with supplies.) I placed the ducks in a bin with a towel and tried to dry them somewhat and I also noticed that the littlest ones didn't look like ducks.

I drove back and brought them to my garage where I gently dried them, and hand warmed them and then proceeded to make rice socks (socks filled with rice warmed in the microwave). I put the most desperate ones as close to the warm socks as I could and left them for several hours. Some looked really bad and were so cool (temperature wise). The beer box actually had had a lot of water in it, so these babies were "freezing"!



When I returned to check on them they ALL were dry and fluffy and chirpy! Victoria came over to pick them up to take to the wildlife center the next morning! I was told I found them just in time or the rest would have passed from hypothermia. I rescued 5 Mallard ducklings and 7 Rhode Island Red chicks!!The duckling were being cared for at the wildlife center, and the chicks went to the Ag Barn where they will be given to people who want chicks.



# June Beach Sweep

**Contributed by Jimmy and Luanne Salinas**

Well this June Beach Sweep was epic!

We had 23 volunteers (Thank You So Much!) who showed up ready to make a difference in this little part of our coastal environment. There was plenty of trash left by fisherman and beach goers as the data above indicates. The mosquitos were out in full force but most of us were ready for them! Thanks again to Adam Valadez and his Quintana crew who always show up with breakfast kolaches and donuts!

If you recall, my Clean Swell App wasn't working last month, so I got together with the Ocean Conservancy people and they got it corrected!



Thank you for cleaning up with *Clean Swell!*

Here's a summary of your recent cleanup:

Date	June 01, 2026
Duration	1 hours 36 minutes
Number of People	17
Weight of Trash Picked Up	265.4 lbs

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
Secretary	Donna Rich, Angleton
Treasurer	Amanda Smith, Angleton
State Representative	David Skweres, Houston
Immediate Past President	Mickey Dufilho, Brazoria
Spring Training Director	Melanie Hollenshead, Brazoria
Fall Training Director	Barbara Whaley, Alvin
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	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Training Class Representative 2025	Betty Skweres, Houston
Training Class Representative 2025	Nannette Daugherty
Chapter Advisors	John O'Connell, AgriLife Extension Service Jordan Kieffer, TPWD Sea Center Texas
<b>Non-voting positions:</b>	
Chapter Librarian	Debbie Nance, Alvin
Data Manager	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson
Newsletter Editor	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Newsletter Contributors	Kathy Pittman, Dave Brandes, John Boettiger, Jimmy Salinas Luanne Salinas, Angela Griffin, Patty Brinkmeyer
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>
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 COT members [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 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 5:00 PM on Thursday before the last weekend of the month preceding the newsletter.

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.

