



Chapter News

August 2026

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Cradle of Texas Chapter

Texas A&M AgriLife
Brazoria County Office
21017 County Road 171
Angleton, TX 77515-8903
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Cover photo: Gray Hairstreak
Patty Brinkmeyer

President's Message



"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." – Pablo Picasso

I recently sang at the funeral of my longtime friend, Frank. Of my father's generation, Frank and his wife had "adopted" my parents when they moved to Houston in 2008. After my dad passed, Eva and Frank made sure that my mom was involved in the senior's group and the Knights of Columbus happenings at our church. They were a special couple.

During the eulogy, our pastor shared his final conversation with Frank as he lay in hospice care, just before his passing. Frank said that he wasn't afraid of dying, but of the idea that his life had not had a purpose. That really hit me hard. This was a man that was involved with his children and grandchildren, with his church and with his community. He had a wonderful career with NASA. I cannot imagine how he felt that his life might not have mattered.

It is my sincerest hope and wish that you know that, as Master Naturalists, we ALL HAVE A PURPOSE! Something you say or do may be the ONE THING that plants a spark in the heart and mind of a future botanist, park ranger, veterinarian, gardener, or park enthusiast. If we can teach people to appreciate and love the wild places, then we can protect those areas for future generations. Sometimes we may get discouraged at the pace of "urbanization" around us here in Brazoria County, but I truly believe we can make a difference. I hope you believe it as well. Thank you to each and every member for what you do to promote our precious natural areas.

Our next meeting will be August 12th, at 9 am at the AgriLife building. John Boettiger, Membership Director, and Jessica Chase, Brazoria County Ag Agent, will present the latest information on the New World Screwworm. Bring your questions – livestock AND pets can be affected by this pest. I hope you will join us 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

August Chapter Meeting

The August 12th 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.

8:30 – 9:00 am	Social Time and Refreshments
9:00 – 9:15 am	Welcome and Awards
9:15 – 10:15 am	Speakers: John Boettiger; TMN-COT Jessica Chase; Agricultural/Natural Resources, AgriLife Ext. Topic: Texas; An Update on New World Screwworms An update on where Texas is at on New World Screwworm cases, treatments, and control options.
10:15 – 11:00 am	General Membership Meeting (Hours for Volunteer Service (VS) and Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting)



John Boettiger

I grew up on my family's cattle and horse ranch north of San Antonio. My personal interests focus on white-tailed deer in the Central & SE regions of Texas. I have access to several large ranches (totaling over 30,000 acres) for game camera and first-hand viewing. In the 1950's and 1960's I successfully treated our cattle, horses and goats for various screwworm infestations.



Jessica Chase

I have worked for AgriLife Extension as an Agriculture Agent for 11 years. My entire life I have been involved in agriculture. I grew up raising sheep, growing hay and later working on a sheep and cattle dairy, working with beef cattle. I love being a part of the agricultural industry.



Suspect Screwworm?
Here's what to do:

INSPECT.
Check your pets and livestock for draining or enlarging wounds and signs of discomfort.

REPORT.
Immediately report any suspicious wounds, maggots, or infestations to your state animal health official or USDA area veterinarian.

PROTECT.
If you hear of or see anything you think could be NWS, we want to know about it.



September Speaker: Amy Nowlin – Oyster Gardening

Outreach Opportunities

GCBO Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza (XHX) – Saturdays, September 12 & 19, 8:00 am – Noon

XHX volunteers can man the nature store, help run the activities and booths, sell tickets, and more! We also need help setting up on Friday, 11th; contact [Celeste Silling](#) w/GCBO or [Ruby Lewis](#) to volunteer at the TMN Booth.

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

Volunteer Opportunities

Beach Sweep – Tuesday, August 11th and Monday, September 7th (weather permitting), 8:00 am – 10:00 am
Quintana Beach – Location TBA. Contact [Jimmy Salinas](#) 979-824-4008 or [Luanne Salinas](#)

Quintana Beach Clean-up SPLASH – Saturday, August 29, 8:00 am – noon; contact [Celeste Silling](#) w/GCBO

Alvin Resoft Park Plantings, Apple Snails and Fishing Line Removal – TBD after nesting season.

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 – Every Thursday, and 3rd Saturdays of the month 8:00 am – 11:00 am, 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](#)

Fall Intern Training – Tell a Friend!

September 19th – December 9th, 2026

[REGISTRATION LINK AND SCHEDULE](#)

Certifications July 2026

Congratulations to all!

Initial Certifications

Rebecca Blaylock
Ronald McLaughlin

Recertifications

Scott Brown	Rainbo Johnson
Kimberly Calhoun	Nicole Lochmann
Jerry Eppner	Georgia Monnerat
Brian Hanson	Larry Curtner



Milestones

Dennis Charleton
500 Hours

Liesa Glover
500 Hours

Jim Nance
1000 Hours

June certifications recognized at the July meeting:



2026 Pin
Bobcat

Recertifications

Kathy Pittman; President, Jo Myers, Cynthia Grandjean, John Boettiger; Membership Director

Sea Turtle Fever



Contributed by Barbara Whaley
TMN-COT Chapter

I have a very serious condition. It is called Sea Turtle Fever. I am obsessed with sea turtles. For the past three years, I have been volunteering with Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research (GCSTR). I do weekly sea turtle nest patrols during the nesting season, April 1 through July 15. where I drive a UTV from beach access #3 on Follet's Island to Surfside Beach and back. I am a member of the Rescue and Recovery Team and have participated in cold stunned patrols; I am on the Outreach and Marine Debris Team, and I also transport sea turtle nests with eggs. The eggs are transported to Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS), NPS Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery for incubation and release.

When I transport, I meet another person in Port Lavaca, halfway point, and she brings the eggs to the incubation facility. This year, I have also added overnight hatchling releases to my obsession. To participate in hatchling releases, there is an extra level of training through PAIS that must be taken in order to volunteer for the National Park Service. I took the training so that I could possibly help with public releases. I was very surprised and excited to receive an email in May asking if I would be able to participate on a weekly basis for overnight hatchling releases for the months of June and July and maybe, some days in August. Of course I was! I drive down to North Padre Island on Tuesday morning for my 7:00 pm to 1:00 am shift and drive back home on Wednesday. I have grown to love the area with its natural beauty and undeveloped shoreline and sand dunes reaching for the sky. However, there is a level of creepiness to driving on the beach in the middle of the night. Luckily, I am not alone and always have a partner. There's something new every time I go, some of it adding to the creepiness and some of it adding to the pristine beauty. All of it a joy when seeing the hatchlings head for the water to live their best sea turtle lives. There are two areas where we release the hatchlings. One area is right next to the Headquarters where we drive on a dirt road between the dunes and drive down about a mile. This area is not accessible by cars and the only other access to this part of the beach is from Malaquite Beach about a mile down. If there were people on the beach, they would have to walk quite a bit to get there, so it is very remote. One night during a full moon, I saw a deer standing in the dunes, some shining eyes running down the beach and into the dunes, maybe a coyote, and two great egrets standing in the surf which was especially creepy because at first they looked like people in the moonlight. It's a little tricky releasing at this area because there are sandbars and sometimes the hatchlings will be washed back after a wave and we have to retrieve them and make sure they go back into the water.



Continued...

Sea Turtle Fever

When we drive the babies down to be released, you can hear them scratching in the container anxiously. Once we get them out of the vehicle and on the sand, they are crawling all over each other to get out so you would think that they would run for the water when placed on the sand. But no, they sit for awhile and wonder where they are. Some will start walking towards the water and others will follow. We usually have to prompt them to start moving and sometimes, if it is really dark, someone stands in the surf with a flashlight at their waist to mimic the moon. This whole process can take several hours depending on how many we are releasing. It is very cute to watch their little flippers as they move down the beach and very exciting when they get into the water and swim furiously away. Once we think we have them all in the water, we have to patrol the area to make sure there aren't any washbacks. We can only use a **red light** flashlight until all of the hatchlings enter the water so as not to confuse them. We also have to watch for ghost crabs who come out of their little holes for a tasty treat and they are pretty determined. I'm happy to say that we have not lost one to a ghost crab during my shifts. One day, after my night shift, I helped with a sunrise release. It was so amazing to see how many visitors come to watch, we had about 1,500 people that day. We arrive at the beach at 5:45 am to get ready and the visitors are already showing up. There are several stations where help is needed. One is where several people are holding a net in the air, following the hatchlings into the water so that seagulls do not grab them on their short journey. I was at the flag waving station, in the surf waving the flag to scare seagulls away if they get close. This was very nerve wracking, but fun and I'm happy to say that I was very successful at my duties. My sea turtle volunteering is almost over for the season, it's been a lot of fun but now time to rest!((??))



Night release using red light

IN MEMORIAM

Roy Edward Morgan, Jr.



Roy passed on July 10, 2026. He was in the COT Class of 2004. In addition to his over 5000 hours spent volunteering with COT, he also gave 1000's of hours to the Sea Center Texas, Brazosport Museum of Natural Science, Master Gardeners, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue, and Tax Aide.

He served as Training Director with the Cradle of Texas Chapter and was the go-to guy speaking on Ichthyology. Roy was also part of the cooking crew for years at our "Hog Wild" celebrations and the Christmas Bird Count every December.

He was a world traveler, going on trips with a tight knit group of fellow Master Naturalists. (Wine tasting may have been involved). Roy will be greatly missed by many.

[Obituary](#)



Roy Morgan, with Chapter President, Kathy Pittman in June 2023 celebrating 5000 service hours with COT.

TMN-COT 2026 Impact Data		July*	YTD
Hours	VS	800	9,301
	AT	77	1,377
	Total	877	10,678
Impact Data	Adults	156	3,878
	Youth	811	14,942
	Total	967	18,820

*will not be considered final until mid-September 2026

Dave Brandes, Data Manager

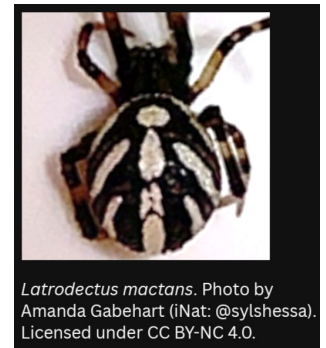


“I am a fan of the little crawly things”

Contributed by Amanda Gabehart
TMN-COT Chapter

... and I use iNaturalist almost daily to compile my discoveries. I enjoy scrolling through the observations of iNat users around me and try to help with identifications and relevant annotations when I can. Confirming identifications for some species can be really tough, though. I am confident that I can correctly ID a bird, but if it's not a spoonbill or some other distinctly-colored or shaped variety, then I'm likely guessing as to what it is. Another ID that can be hard to come by is for spiders because spider hatchlings (slings) and juveniles do not always have the same colors and patterning as their adult versions.

I was recently notified that a new guide has been created for immature widow spiders. One of my iNaturalist spider observations was included in the visual library and hopefully this guide will help me as well as others recognize another small piece of the world around them. The [spider guide](#) is one of a few projects I have been able to make a contribution (albeit small) and I hope it's not the last. Two years ago, an illustrator credited a photo of mine as a specimen model for a book she was working on for cicadas of North America.



Latrodectus mactans. Photo by Amanda Gabehart (iNat: @sylshessa). Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.



[Sweet Potato Weevil](#)
Cylas formicarius

Three years ago, a geneticist with the USDA reached out to me hoping I would help collect sweet potato weevils for a population genetics study on these agricultural pests. The materials and methods for collection were all prescribed by this researcher, so I just had to set up the trap and then send him the specimens, but he let me keep the equipment afterwards. Cradle of Texas is currently using his donated pitfall traps for our survey of the potential presence of yellow-legged hornets in Brazoria.



[Bledius fortis](#)

Some of the observations I have made over the years have expanded the known territories of certain species. I was recently informed that a beetle I had photographed (*Bledius fortis*) is the only known photo of a living specimen of that species.

iNaturalist is more than a repository for our life lists and pretty things we saw on the trail. It is an opportunity to connect with strangers who have similar interests and play a role in strengthening a knowledge base.

 **iNaturalist** @sylshessa



October 22 – 25, 2026
Waco Convention Center

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.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Save the dates!

October 14, 2026, 9 am
Fall Field Day for AT
"Hike & Seek"
Brazos Bend State Park
21901 FM 762
Needville, TX

September 8, 2026, 9 am
County Commissioner Court Proclamation
Kathy Pittman will make a brief announcement thanking the Court for their support of TMN-COT over the years and providing information about our chapter's impact during its history. Please show support and attend wearing your 25th Anniversary shirts.

November 14, 2026, Noon – 2 pm
25th Anniversary Luncheon
BCPD Event Center
41871 State Highway 288
Angleton, TX



Welcome to our new
Chapter Advisor
from TPWD Sea Center Texas

Morgan Degner

Our gratitude to outgoing Advisor, **Jordan Kieffer**, TPWD Sea Center Texas, for her years of service to the Cradle of Texas Chapter!

July Beach Sweep

Contributed by Jimmy and Luanne Salinas

The heat was stifling for the July beach sweep. Last month it was mosquitoes. We had 27 brave volunteers who plowed through the hot conditions to help make a difference on Quintana Beach. We decided to shorten the time frame (I got a heat advisory on my phone at 8:48 am) that convinced us to cut it short. We finished up around 9:30 am, and still had 6 or 7 bags of trash, plus some interesting items (see pics). We all stayed hydrated. Thank You, Adam and the City of Quintana, for providing the drinks and breakfast that kept us safe!

Our next "Sweep" will be August 11th. At the Quintana Jetties Parking area. Hoping for a norther! Until then thanks to all who continue to support this worthwhile effort, and enjoy the beauty of nature, hopefully Fall is right around the corner!



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

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Website	https://txmn.org/tmncot/
Facebook	http://facebook.com/TMN-COT
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/tmncot.brazoria
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 COT members 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 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. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.

