



## GINTC WINTER TEXAN NATURE ACTIVITIES 2018

### **Birding 101 @ Moody Gardens**

January 6, Saturday, 9am – noon, Free

Presenter: Greg Whittaker

Where: Moody Gardens – Aquarium Pompano Room

We will start out in a classroom setting with a short introductory level presentation on birdwatching. We will then do a walking tour of the Moody Gardens outdoor property areas that are generally loaded with wintering birds. No extreme terrain, but weather dependent, so dress appropriately for a couple hours outside. Binoculars and bird ID books are suggested, but not required – come as you are and appreciate what nature has to offer.

### **Moody Gardens Peek Behind the Scenes – Property Operations Tour**

January 10, Wednesday, 10:30am - noon, Free

Presenters: Greg Whittaker and Education Staff

Where: Moody Gardens Visitor Center

This 1.5 hour tour will take participants around to various buildings and attractions at Moody Gardens to show a bit of what goes on behind the scenes to support the visitor experience. From the theaters to the animal and museum exhibits there are many moving pieces that support the 240 acre complex. We will begin with a short walk through the Visitor Center and Discovery Pyramid before beginning a bus tour of some of the satellite facilities. We will also talk about the history of Moody Gardens during this tour. There will be some outdoor walking so dress accordingly.

### **Brewing 101 – A Natural Pairing**

January 11, Thursday, 4:30pm-6ish, free (seawall parking required)

Leader: Greg Whittaker

Where: Jimmy's on the Pier, 9001 Seawall

No RSVP needed – 409.683.4101 for questions

Informal birdwatching opportunity and discussion in a setting that lends itself to enjoying nature with a beverage of choice. Come visit with a transplanted northerner that has been enjoying Galveston's diverse bird-life, and tasty beer for many years. Conversation and bird viewing will concentrate on pelicans, cormorants and the various shore birds that commonly use the nearshore habitats. There will be a sunset migration to Galveston Island Brewing, 8423 Stewart Rd for additional bird, beer and Island life discussions and brewery tour for those interested.

### **There's a Coral Reef Where?**

January 16, Tuesday, 1:30 – 3:30pm, Free

Presenter: Kelly Drinnen, Sanctuary Outreach Specialist, NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

Discover the coral reefs of Texas! Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary is a little known gem in the Gulf of Mexico and home to some of the healthiest coral reefs in the entire Caribbean region. Join us to find out how they were discovered, why they are doing so well, and how we work to manage this precious natural resource. A hands-on activity will help bring the reef to life.

### **Turtle Barn Tour**

January 17, Wednesday, 10am – 11am, Free

Presenter: Susan Lewis

Where: NOAA Fisheries Galveston Lab (Directions given when you make your reservation.)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.789.8125 or [info@gintc.org](mailto:info@gintc.org)

If you've ever been interested in touring our one of a kind sea turtle facility here on Galveston Island, you probably already know that the tours fill up very quickly. Don't miss out on this tour scheduled specifically for our Winter Texans. Reservations are REQUIRED. Call 409.789.8125 or email [info@gintc.org](mailto:info@gintc.org) if you want to be added to our guest list. We can have up to 20 people in this group and you cannot take the tour without making a reservation prior to January 17. When you make your reservation, you will be given a map as to where to meet for the tour.

Tour of the National Marine Fisheries Galveston Protected Species Branch: the only facility in the world which raises captive sea turtles turtle for research. The primary focus of the research is to try to find ways to modify commercial fishing equipment so that it does not impact sea turtles. All, but one of the seven species of sea turtles are threatened or endangered--two critically. Five of those seven frequent the Gulf of Mexico. There are approximately 60 sea turtles housed at the facility.

### **Beginning Birding by Birding for Fun**

January 17, Wednesday, 1:30 – 2:30pm, Free

Presenter: Kristine Rivers of Birding For Fun

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

Are you one of the millions of people who enjoy watching birds, and would like to learn more about birding? If so, join us for this workshop where you'll find out about what to wear and what to bring with you, learn about some of the amazing birds that are common in our area, and get some tips for distinguishing between similar species.

### **How to Choose Binoculars & Field Guides for Birding**

January 17, Wednesday, 3 – 4pm, Free

Presenter: Kristine Rivers of Birding For Fun

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

Excited about birding, but not sure where to start? This workshop will give you insight into how to select the binoculars and field guides that are right for you, and give you a chance to test out different kinds of binoculars on the spot.

### **Bring the Bag!**

January 18, Thursday, 10am-noon, Free

Presenter: Joanie Steinhaus, Turtle Island Restoration Network

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

Galveston residents and visitors are encouraged to reduce their consumption of single-use plastic bags in order to create a safer, healthier, and cleaner environment. Bring a t-shirt to this presentation to make your own reusable bag and learn ways you may become involved in this community driven campaign. Each year more than 380 billion bags are used in the United States, with less than 5% of these bags being recycled. They are harmful to the environment, dangerous to wildlife and take years to decompose. Using a reusable bag will save over 27,000 single-use plastic bags in your lifetime!

### **Native Plant Talk**

January 18, Thursday, 2 – 3pm, Free

Presenter: Debra Pence

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

Join Texas Master Naturalist Debra Pence for a class focused on creating a pollinator/nature habitat in your own backyard. We will focus on plants native to Texas but you will be able to apply the methods wherever you live.

### **Galveston County Audubon Group (GCAG)/Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council (GINTC) Birding Presentation**

January 18, Thursday, 7pm, Free

Presenter: David Hanson

Where: Rosenberg Library, 2310 Sealy, No RSVP necessary

Our local Audubon Group and GINTC welcome Winter Texans and residents to attend the monthly presentation. David Hanson will present Birding Magee Marsh. The program begins at 7pm. Doors open at 6:30pm and everyone is encouraged to come early to share about recent outings and sightings.

### **Galveston County Audubon Group/GINTC Birding Field Trip**

January 20, Saturday, 8:30am – noon, Free

Leaders: Greg Whittaker, Alice Anne O'Donell

Where: Moody Gardens south Aquarium Parking lot – small lot immediately south of the blue pyramid, call 409.789.8125 for information, No RSVP necessary

Our local Galveston County Audubon Group welcomes Winter Texans to participate in our monthly field trip. We will meet at in the Moody Gardens south Aquarium parking lot and give everyone the game plan for the trip. We can consolidate into carpools and we will have narration broadcast on an fm radio channel for caravan options.

### **Understanding Your Birding Field Guide**

January 24, Wednesday, 1:30 – 2:30pm, Free

Presenter: Kristine Rivers of Birding For Fun

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

Crest, crown, speculum, undertail coverts, supercilium - seriously? Don't let the terminology in your field guide confuse you! We'll help you make sense of what everything means, in easy to understand language, using photos of birds in our area as examples.

### **Using Your Birding Field Guide**

January 24, Wednesday, 3 – 4pm, Free

Presenter: Kristine Rivers of Birding For Fun

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

When you're just starting out, using your field guide to try to identify a bird in the field can be a little difficult! We'll help you narrow down where to look in your field guide, and talk about different identification methods using size and shape, behavior and habitat clues. Then you'll have a chance to practice your identification skills, so be sure to bring your field guide with you!

### **Chasing Coral: An Exposure Labs Production – Film & Talk**

January 24, Wednesday, 6pm, Free

Where: Rosenberg Library, 2310 Sealy, No RSVP necessary

From the director of Chasing Ice comes an epic adventure to capture our changing oceans. Coral reefs around the world are vanishing at an unprecedented rate. A team of divers, photographers and scientists set out on a thrilling ocean adventure to discover why and to reveal the underwater mystery to the world.

After the film, there will also be one or two local experts to talk about coral reefs and the issues they are facing locally at Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.

### **Brewing 201 – A Day at the Beach**

January 25, Thursday, 4:30pm-6ish, free

Leader: Greg Whittaker

Where: Woody's Beach Bar, 11149 Termini San Luis Pass Rd

No RSVP needed – 409.683.4101 for questions

Informal birdwatching opportunity and discussion in a setting that lends itself to enjoying nature with a beverage of choice. Come visit with a transplanted northerner that has been enjoying Galveston's diverse bird-life, and tasty beer for many years. Conversation and bird viewing will concentrate on gulls, terns and beach habitat shore birds that are likely to be viewed from the scenic deck. There will be a sunset migration to Galveston Island Brewing, 8423 Stewart Rd for additional bird, beer and Island life discussions and brewery tour for those interested.

### **Urban Birding – Nature in Our Midst**

January 27, Saturday, 8:30am-noon, Free

Leader: Greg Whittaker

Where: Kempner Park, 2704 Avenue O

No RSVP needed

This excursion focusses on hotspots within the more urban areas of Galveston to emphasize the value of natural spaces. We'll start out at Kempner Park located at 2704 Avenue O where we'll walk the park in search of any birds that may be present. This is not a particularly "birdy" location for winter birds, but it is a good place to start off our trip. We'll then travel a bit west to the Cedar Lawn neighborhood located between 45<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> streets between Avenue L and Avenue N. Depending on the weather, we may make a stop, park and walk a few of the neighborhood streets to look at the lush Oak habitat. We then will focus on the pockets of nature along the industrialized north shoreline of the island with stops at the ponds under the 51<sup>st</sup> street bridge at Harborside Drive and then head east via old Postoffice street and finish up at the Pier 21 harbor setting. We will have narration broadcast on an fm radio channel for caravan birding along the way.

### **Moody Gardens Peek Behind the Scenes – Horticulture**

January 31, Thursday, 10:30am - noon, Free

Presenters: Donita Brannon

Where: Moody Gardens Production Greenhouses on Skymaster Road (1<sup>st</sup> turn at base of Jones Drive Bridge) building on right after you pass Water Treatment Plant

This 1.5 hour interactive presentation will showcase the horticulture operations around Moody Gardens. The greenhouse tour will allow guests to see how diverse the landscape and formal planting needs are across the property. Discussion on the history of Moody **Gardens** and some of the unique programs that the horticulture department has **grown** over time as well as a propagation demonstration showing different techniques used to produce the plants we use.

### **Micro-plastics in Our Ocean**

February 6, Tuesday, 10am-noon, Free

Presenter: Theresa Morris, Turtle Island Restoration Network

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

Microplastics in our ocean are an issue for marine wildlife and potential impacts on humans are not fully understood. Microplastics are plastic debris smaller than 5mm and estimates suggest up to 236,000 metric tons exist in worldwide oceans. Turtle Island Restoration Network is participating in a project that stretches across the Gulf of Mexico to determine the amount of microplastics in our beach sand and water.

This presentation will include current information and research on this issue as well as possible methods for turning this problem into a solution. Come learn how your actions can result in positive change for our environment.

### **Turtle Talk**

February 6, Tuesday, 1:30 – 3:30pm, Free

Presenter: Joanie Steinhaus, Turtle Island Restoration Network

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

You'll learn that five of the seven species of sea turtles that exist worldwide visit the Gulf of Mexico. The highly endangered Kemp's Ridley nests on Texas beaches. Learn about these ancient reptiles, the serious threats they face and actions you can take to help them. The presentation will include an update on the current status of the Kemp's Ridley, the rarest sea turtle and the world's most critically endangered.

### **Moody Gardens Peek Behind the Scenes – Animal Care**

February 7, Wednesday, 10:30am - noon, Free

Presenter: Life Science & Exhibit Operations team

Where: Moody Gardens Visitor Center

This 1.5 hour interactive presentation will showcase the work that takes place behind the scenes to take care of a diverse collection of unique animals. Unlike previous years' programs, this is designed as a walking tour of the back of house areas where animal care activities take place. We'll begin in the Visitor Center for a brief orientation of the proposed activities. We'll then begin looking at the animal care operations within the Rainforest, Aquarium, and Life Support areas. This will be a walking tour that will include gentle incline ramps and stairs.

### **Brewing 301 – de Crane, de Crane!**

February 8, Thursday, 4:30pm-6ish, free

Leader: Greg Whittaker

Where: Tin Cup's Caddy Shack, 9020 Stewart Rd

No RSVP needed – 409.683.4101 for questions

Informal birdwatching opportunity and discussion in a setting that lends itself to enjoying nature with a beverage of choice. Come visit with a transplanted northerner that has been enjoying Galveston's diverse bird-life, and tasty beer for many years. Conversation and bird viewing will concentrate on Sandhill Cranes and various other species that are likely to be viewed from the scenic deck. There will be a sunset migration to Galveston Island Brewing, 8423 Stewart Rd for additional bird, beer and Island life discussions and brewery tour for those interested.

### **Monarch Butterflies – Each One Counts**

February 12, Monday, 10 – 11am, Free

Presenter: Cindy Price, Author & Naturalist

Where: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Campus, 4700 Broadway, (enter lobby and go left following the signs to OLLI)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.763.5604 or email [msierpin@utmb.edu](mailto:msierpin@utmb.edu)

Attendees will enjoy Price's presentation which includes the Monarchs' natural history, North American conservation status, current migration map, and the importance of the "Texas Funnel" and the I-35 milkweed restoration project.

Cindy writes and films the nature photography for The Urban Naturalist series of books available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). She also writes the nature column for Life is Good magazine. Cindy is a long-time resident of the Texas Gulf Coast and is a member of the Galveston Ornithological Society and the Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council. She received her Master Naturalist training from the Houston Arboretum. She is an avid gardener and has been raising Monarch butterflies for over 20 years.

### **Turtle Barn Tour**

February 14, Wednesday, 10am – 11am, Free

Presenter: Susan Lewis

Where: NOAA Fisheries Galveston Lab (Directions given when you make your reservation.)

**RSVP Required:** Phone 409.789.8125 or [info@gintc.org](mailto:info@gintc.org)

If you've ever been interested in touring our one of a kind sea turtle facility here on Galveston Island, you probably already know that the tours fill up very quickly. Don't miss out on this tour scheduled specifically for our Winter Texans. Reservations are REQUIRED. Call 409.789.8125 or email [info@gintc.org](mailto:info@gintc.org) if you want to be added to our guest list. We can have up to 20 people in this group and you cannot take the tour without making a reservation prior to February 14. When you make your reservation, you will be given a map as to where to meet for the tour.

Tour of the National Marine Fisheries Galveston Protected Species Branch: the only facility in the world which raises captive sea turtles turtle for research. The primary focus of the research is to try to find ways to modify commercial fishing equipment so that it does not impact sea turtles. All, but one of the seven species of sea turtles are threatened or endangered--two critically. Five of those seven frequent the Gulf of Mexico. There are approximately 60 sea turtles housed at the facility.

### **Galveston County Audubon Group (GCAG)/Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council (GINTC) Birding Presentation**

February 15, Thursday, 7pm, Free

Presenter: Sarah Flournoy of Houston Audubon

Where: Rosenberg Library, 2310 Sealy, No RSVP necessary

Our local Audubon Group and GINTC welcome Winter Texans and residents to attend the monthly presentation. Sarah Flournoy will present Making Galveston a More Bird Friendly Community. The program begins at 7pm. Doors open at 6:30pm and everyone is encouraged to come early to share about recent outings and sightings.

### **Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council's Sea Turtle Saturday**

February 17, Saturday, 8:00am – noon

Details TBA. For more info, call 409.789.8125

As the 2018 Kemp's ridley sea turtle nesting season approaches, you'll want to make plans to attend this event presented by GINTC to learn about and celebrate the sea turtle. You will also find out how you can become involved in helping preserve this extremely endangered species.

**Galveston County Audubon Group/GINTC Birding Field Trip**

February 17, Saturday, 8:30am – noon, Free

Leader: Alice Anne O'Donell

Where: El Franco Lee Park, 9400 Hall Rd, Houston, call 409.789.8125 for information, No RSVP needed

Our local Galveston County Audubon Group welcomes Winter Texans to participate in our monthly field trip. We will meet at El Franco Lee Park in Houston and give everyone the game plan for the trip. We can consolidate into carpools and we will have narration broadcast on an fm radio channel for caravan options.

**Moody Gardens Peek Behind the Scenes – Conservation**

February 21, Wednesday, 10:30am – Noon, Free

Presenters: Greg Whittaker, Animal Husbandry Manager – Moody Gardens

Where: Moody Gardens Visitor Center

This 1.5 hour interactive presentation will showcase the conservation work that goes on outside the pyramid walls. Emphasis on both local and International initiatives that directly relate to our animal collection. As an AZA accredited facility, Moody Gardens Life Science and Exhibit Operations department provides the highest level of animal care and well-being while creating personal connections between our guests and our conservation, education and research efforts. If you've ever wondered how captive animal care relates to wildlife conservation, this is the perfect opportunity to pull back the curtain and see what goes on behind the scenes.

**Brewding 401 – Final Exam**

February 24, Saturday, 9am- 2ish, free

Leader: Greg Whittaker

Where: Moody Gardens South Aquarium Parking Lot

No RSVP needed – 409.683.4101 for questions

This “advanced” outing will be a culmination of the previous 3 offerings with a more adventuresome excursion starting at Moody Gardens. The projected driving route will take us south to the Seawall, west to 7.5 mile road, north to Stewart, then back east to eventually end up at Galveston Island Brewing, 8423 Stewart Rd. We will have narration capabilities so that those that are caravanning can listen in on an fm radio station to hear birds identified en route. Depending on time, interest and weather, we can stop off at any or all of the previous focal locations for birding and/or refreshing discussion. Perhaps a diversion north on 99<sup>th</sup> street to cruise the ponds at Evia and surrounding fields. Ultimately, we hope to arrive at the last stop in time for the 1pm brewery tour.