



VisitCorpusChristiTX.org



Certified Wildlife Guide

Bay Fishing, Kayak Fishing, Fly Fishing, hunting, and birding....there is so much to do outdoors in Corpus Christi. So if you are headed in from out of town, you need to know who to go with to create that memorable experience. With so many guides to choose from, the Certified Wildlife Guide program was designed to offer a quality outdoor experience to visitors. The only program of its kind, the certification provides visitors with a well-rounded, educated, and locally saavy and safety conscience Certified Wildlife Guide who will leave the visitor with a unique experience understanding and appreciating the wildlife& habitat of the Corpus Christi area.

Each guide bearing the certification, completed coursework on customer service, guide training and a 10 part online course which educated and tested the guides on over 170 wildlife species identification, conservation and business planning in an effort to enhance your nature experience. The Corpus Christi CVB has over 50 Certified Wildlife Guides for you to choose from.



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**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wildlife Guide Certification Program, First of its Kind Announced in Corpus Christi.
50 Newly Certified Wildlife Guides will be marketed to Nature Tourists.

Corpus Christi, TX (Oct. 2011)– A total of 50 Wildlife Guides completed course work on Customer Service, Interpretive Guide Training and a 10 part Online Course which educates and tests the guides on Wildlife Species I.D. Conservation and Business Planning.

According to the recent Economic Impact Study of Corpus Christi Tourism, 40% of leisure travel visits to Corpus Christi are nature based. As part of the Corpus Christi CVB's ongoing Nature Tourism Initiative to inventory, catalogue, interpret, package and market these nature experiences, it became evident that visitors who paid for professional guide services needed to leave the area with a quality experience. After thorough research, the Corpus Christi CVB could not find a Wildlife Guide Certification program which focused on quality customer service, environmental issues, and wildlife identification, so they commissioned Miles Phillips with the Texas Agri LIFE Extension office to research and develop a certification course.

After 18 months of development, a classroom and online based curriculum was created to teach and test local guides.

Training emphasizes the importance of:

- ✓ Interpretation
- ✓ Conservation
- ✓ Business Skills
- ✓ Importance of quality equipment
- ✓ Understanding of tourism and creature comforts
- ✓ Awareness of local, state, and national resources
- ✓ Customer Service
- ✓ Knowledge of native wildlife & habitat
- ✓ Respect for the environment
- ✓ Need for insurance

The course was then tested through a pilot program with 8 local fishing and hunting guides before being offered as a course.

“This program will ensure a quality experience for our nature tourists and give Corpus Christi a marketing edge over other communities,” says Keith Arnold, CEO of the Corpus Christi CVB.

This provides the visitors with a well rounded, educated Certified Wildlife Guide, who will leave that experience understanding and appreciating the wildlife and habitat of Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend. Combined with classroom style Customer Service Training and Interpretive Guiding Skills this program is proving to be popular among the guides who make a living on the natural resources of the Coastal Bend. “I have been a hunting and fishing guide in South Texas for nearly four decades, and was amazed at what I learned. The type of training and professionalism derived from this course will surely set our community apart from other destinations,” said Chip Harmon, one of the newly certified guides.

A total of 50 guides completed the 10 part online curriculum which was developed to allow guides to study in between trips at times that were convenient to them without interfering with their business. In addition to the online component, guides spent one day of classroom training with specialized instructors reviewing marketing and customer service skills. Fishing guides were asked to supply additional documentation such as their Texas Parks & Wildlife Guide License, U.S. Coast Guard License and proof of liability insurance. This type of documentation clearly sets the guides who pass the course apart from others allowing themselves to be marketed to our visitors as “Certified Wildlife Guides”.

The Corpus Christi CVB will work with the newly certified guides to market their services and unique specializations to drive nature tourists to the area. To apply for the course, guides are asked to contact Michelle Horine at 361-881-1818.

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The Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau's mission is "to drive overnight visitor\$ to the Corpus Christi Area". For more information about the Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau or to plan your next trip to Corpus Christi, visit www.VisitCorpusChristiTX.org or call 1-800-678-6232.