

Thank you, Texas Master Naturalist!

Article by Carolyn Cardile, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

In August my husband, Paul, and I had the opportunity to stay with our daughter on the Pacific coast of western Costa Rica for two weeks. My activities there reminded me of some of the experiences and surprises I had while living in Texas over the years.

My first experience as a Texas transplant happened in January 1963 when I got off a plane in Houston after my father was transferred from Philadelphia to work on the Apollo project. Three generations of our family moved to Texas to join him. They drove, but I got to fly so that I could start the semester at the University of Texas on time. I boarded the plane in zero-degree weather and snow on the ground. When I landed, I got my first surprise. It was 85 degrees! I was overwhelmed by the heat and humidity!

When my father dropped me off at the Austin campus a few days later, I found myself living on the third floor with two roommates and no air conditioning. Everything was different- the climate, the way the girls dressed, the food, the music, and the Texas accent.

Over the years, I've lived in northeastern, eastern, and central Texas and traveled through West Texas. I thought I knew a lot about my adopted state until we moved to the Rio Grande Valley. I was not prepared for the climate, plants, or wildlife here. Thanks to our Rio Grande Valley Texas Master Naturalist chapter, I have learned a great deal about our unique Rio Grande Valley environment, especially its birds.



Author and husband in Costa Rica