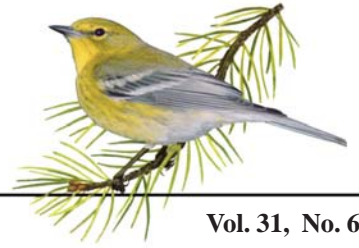


# The Pine Warbler



September 2011

Vol. 31, No. 6

## PWWS Potluck!



## A Great Program for the First PWWS Meeting Tuesday, September 20!



The first regular fall meeting of the Piney Woods Wildlife Society on September 20 will feature a presentation by Frank Farese, a very talented photographer who says you must learn to love birds to be good at photographing them. His website is a testament to his enjoyment of people, birds and dogs, too (<http://birder.smugmug.com/>). Frank's photography background began with black and white photos and slides when he was in high school. He writes about enjoying sanctuaries, state parks, wildlife refuges and the coast with Kleb Woods Nature Preserve being his favorite spot.

## News Note:

Field Trip Coordinator Sheena Abernathy is leaving Jesse Jones County Park for a new challenge. On August 22, she began a full-time position as Assistant Professor of Biology at the College of the Mainland in Texas City. This first semester Sheena will be teaching freshman biology 1, which covers cells and human anatomy/physiology and hopes to teach freshman biology 2 in future semesters as it covers plants and animals. Sheena says the college offers a much more flexible schedule and will allow her to work from home some.

## Don't Forget! Piney Woods Wildlife Society Has Moved!

McArthur and the Montgomery County Commissioners, the Piney Woods Wildlife Society began holding its monthly meetings at the new Spring Creek Greenway Nature Center last January. The Nature Center is located at 1300 Riley Fuzzel Road near Spring. It is a beautiful facility with exhibits, photography by President Al Barr and a great big kitchen for coffee and snacks which are served at 7 p.m. before the 7:30 p.m. Meeting begins. There is no charge and everyone is invited.

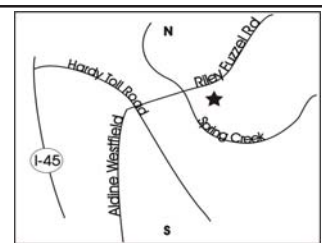
Directions to the Nature Center are as follows: Aldine-Westfield turns into Riley Fuzzel Road just northeast of Spring so there are several ways to get there. 1. Take the Rayford/Sawdust exit and go East (right) on Rayford Rd. It dead ends at Riley Fuzzel, then turn South (right) and drive to the Center. or, 2. take Spring-Cypress east to Aldine Westfield through Olde Town Spring, turn left and then on to Riley Fuzzel for a short distance and turn right; or, 3. Take Aldine Westfield north from Mercer Arboretum until it turns into Riley Fuzzel. Turn right, go under the freeway and over the bridge. Watch for a sign on the right (lighted at night) and a concrete driveway. The building is not visible from the road but club members can count on security as the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department is also housed there. (If you still have a question about the location, call Al at 281-443-6629).



Frank is the CEO of SIG Southwest, Inc. and when not in the office he focuses on portrait, event and nature photography. Don't miss this chance to meet Frank and enjoy his wonderful photography.

**Date:** September 20  
**Time:** Social 7:00 p.m.  
**Meeting:** 7:30 p.m.

**Spring Creek Greenway  
Nature Center**  
1300 Riley Fuzzel Road





## Heart Happenings

The nesting season for the Kemp's ridleys on the Texas coast turned out quite well with 199 nests. There were also four green turtle nests found. The Upper Texas Coast was not forgotten by the ridleys with 15 nests on Galveston Island, the most ever. No nests were found on Bolivar Island where dunes have not been repaired.

A July 19 article in the Houston Chronicle refers to the Mexican nesting numbers as disappointing: "The increase in Texas is overshadowed by the disappointing number of nests found near the central nesting ground at Rancho Nuevo in Mexico's Tamaulipas state. The increase failed to match the previous record, leaving scientists worried about the turtle's long-term prospects. Scientists counted between 18,000 and 20,000 nests near Rancho Nuevo, up from the 13,000 counted last year. The count is still below the record 22,000 recorded in 2009, said Pat Burchfield, U.S. field group coordinator with the binational Kemp's ridley project."

The Texas Sea Grant program will now be under the direction of Dr. Pam Plotkin who concentrated on sea turtle work while a graduate student at Texas A&M University. Just as many government programs are facing major cuts, so is the National Sea Grant program. The Texas program is important to sea turtle conservation as it has provided funding for the patrols for the last three years. They also print and distribute thousands of the kids' coloring books about sea turtles and TEDs. "Texas Sea Grant awards about \$800,000 annually in grants to the best marine researchers at accredited colleges and universities in the state. Its outreach component comprises the extension service, which has six county marine resource or coastal community development agents and six specialists in marine-related fields (TED training), and the Marine Information Service, which is Texas Sea Grant's communications arm." If you want to speak up for the value of Sea Grant, just go to the internet sites of Senators Hutchison and Cornyn. (<http://hutchison.senate.gov/> and <http://cornyn.senate.gov/>)

On a personal note, I was able to visit the Georgia Sea Turtle Center this summer with the Stones family. It is an incredible facility on



*Dr. Terry Norton and staff helping a ridley get well*

Jekyll Island where sea turtle fans can actually watch lead veterinarian Terry Norton treating injured turtles, tour and sponsor rehabilitation for turtles getting well in huge tanks and buy just about anything in the way of sea turtle souvenirs. Thousands of people visit the Center which is operated primarily with donations and sales. The city of Galveston could do the same.

Although they received a copy of the documentary, "The



Heartbreak Turtle Today," almost a year ago, Channel 8 has still not scheduled it for showing. Please take a minute and call KUHT-TV and ask for the documentary to be scheduled. Call 713-748-8888. Thank you!

*Following the turtles from the parking lot to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center!*

### FIELD TRIPS FOR 2011-2012

Field Trip Coordinator Sheena Abernathy has arranged for field trips for our entire year so planning can be done ahead.

#### **Thursday, October 6, Brazos Bend Field Trip**

In response to requests for a field trip during the week, Piney Woods members can enjoy a trip to the Brazos Bend State Park on Thursday, October 6. Park Volunteer Bill Godley will lead the trip in this great field trip. See more complete details in this issue.

#### **Saturday, February 4, 2012**

##### **Rockport, TX Whooping Crane Boat Tour**

The popular boat tour not only focuses on birds, but also includes information on the history of whooping cranes, geography, and history of the area. The Wharf Cat has an upper and lower deck for viewing, an indoor cabin with restrooms, and a concessions counter (cash only). Mark this on the 2012 things to do!

#### **Saturday, April 28, 2012 Quintana**

On Saturday, April 28, Piney Woods members will head down to Quintana to try their luck at finding some migrating birds. The island of Quintana is located between the mouth of the Old Brazos River and the New Brazos River on the Texas Gulf coast. Quintana is home to the Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary, owned by the Town of Quintana and the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. The sanctuary has trails, ponds, and benches that allow easy access and close viewing of migratory birds. You won't want to miss this trip. Details will follow in 2012.

*cont. on page 4*

## Sage Advice

by Diane Cabiness, Texas Master Naturalist

*"There is no season such delight can bring,  
as summer, autumn, winter, and the spring."  
- William Browne*

"William Browne did not live in Phoenix, Arizona (or in the summer in Texas). Walking out the front door on my way to the garden, I plunge into a heat so physical that it threatens to grab me by the throat and throw me back into the house. The broiled gravel in the front yard seems to flinch like kernels about to explode in the popcorn popper. The concrete in the driveway is doing its Chernobyl imitation and will radiate heat for hours after sunset." (In a Desert Garden: "Love and Death Among the Insects" by John Alcock)

So what are we fragile humans to do when faced with a job that keeps us deskbound for 8 to 12 hours daily or we find that exercising in the unbearable heat our summers are made of in Texas is impossible. First according to some experts, exercising for one hour a day does not make up for sitting all day at a desk. Sitting time counts against you regardless of other activity. Sitting too much increases the risk of dying by 64% and increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer and breast cancer. The following are some practical solutions to sitting too much: Stand and pace. Get up and stretch 3xs an hour. Walk and talk. Get a standing desk. Wear comfortable shoes. Fidget—not the same as standing but it is better than maintaining the same position for long periods. Sit on an exercise ball unless you are like me, clumsy and will end up on the floor.

(virginiahopkins@virginiahopkinshealthwatch.com)

Now that you are home, have eaten a light, healthy supper it is time to move the body. You can get that house work done...egads or go outside and play in the dirt after it cools down...mulch, handwater, weeding, pruning and planting perennials are some of the options. But it is too hot you say to plant. Consider one of our very drought tolerant shrubs *Leucophyllum frutescens*, Texas Sage, Barometer Bush, or Cenizo. This Texas native is from the shrublands on limestone slopes in the Chihuahuan Desert of Texas, New Mexico, and northern Mexico. It is now used quite a bit in Florida and Southeast Asia, where it flowers very well in steamy tropical weather.

*Leucophyllum frutescens* "Green Cloud" is an evergreen to semi-evergreen selection that produces a medium dark green leaf and large pinkish- purplish flowers and does well around here if you give it what it needs in the landscape. Water initially after planting it in lean soil than keep the soil dry and tip prune to keep the foliage dense and compact. Poorly drained soil will cause root rot. Texas Sage is a medium to fast grower and makes a great candidate for full sun and drought conditions. Consider using this shrub in a large container or along the driveway hedge 6-8ft height to 5ft wide or as a specimen. It is hardy to 10 degrees F and is best not to apply water or fertilizer to the shrub in the fall or winter to increase hardiness of

the shrub. Green Cloud is a clone that is trademarked by Texas A&M University.



I planted Green Cloud Sage about 4 or 5 years ago in about 5 hours of direct sun on a mound of sandy loam-clay soil that had a huge pile of concrete that was left over from the construction of our home. Most of the time I forget it is even there. I certainly do not spend precious water on it. It has thrived and was absolutely splendid for about 2-3 weeks this June and July covered with purple flowers and loads of bumblebees despite the unbearable temperatures. The flowers have spotted throats and a typical foxglove family character. The flowers appear after summer rains, sometimes covering the plants with purple to white flowers depending on the selection. Irrigation seems to bring on flowering. But remember let the area dry out well before irrigating again. ([www.floridata.com/ref/1/leuc\\_fru.cfm](http://www.floridata.com/ref/1/leuc_fru.cfm)) It is not uncommon during wet seasons and cold weather for the plant to drop leaves and thin out.

I have a small herd of white tailed deer that I occasionally see in my woods and know that these mammals will venture into my backyard to find what they can to nibble on. A young Texas Sage may be eaten by animals such as rabbits and deer. An older, more established plant or one that is grown hard (not watered and fertilized heavily) will be less likely to get eaten. My Texas Sage has not been nibbled on it since it has been in the ground.

Another desirable characteristic it does not seem to attract insect pests.

The genus name, *Leucophyllum*, refers to the grayish white leaves, and the species name, *frutescens*, designates the plant's shrubby habit. The Spanish vernacular name, Cenizo, is much used in the Southwest and means "ash-like" with referenceto the pale leaves. In Texas it is used along the highways for culvert and hedge plantings. It is used by the Mexican Indians for the treatment of chills and fever (Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of the Southwest by Robert A. Vines).

You will find Texas Sage a tough dude! If you find your newest, exotic or hybrid plant from Walmart is not doing what has been promised consider *Leucophyllum frutescens*. It will go through drought (writing this in July) like a champ, tolerates freezes, high winds, salt spray, hungry deer and Texas oppressive sauna like heat all the while performing like the star it is in our fair state.

*"I think that if ever a mortal heard the voice of God  
it would be in a garden at the cool of the day."*

- F. Frankfort Moore, A Garden of Peace

Please share your nature experiences with me at [dianecabinessplants@consolidated.net](mailto:dianecabinessplants@consolidated.net)

## A Weekday Field Trip!

### Thursday, Oct. 6, 2011 (Time: 8:30 a.m.) – Brazos Bend State Park

Piney Woods members will have a great time during the October field trip to Brazos Bend State Park. Members will have a guided tour of the park with park volunteer Bill Godley. With bird checklist of more than 300 species, 21 species of amphibians and reptiles, 17 species of mammals and 39 species of dragon flies, there is plenty to enjoy on this trip! This 5000 acre park has approximately 35 miles of hiking trails that wind through habitats such as the Brazos River, numerous lakes, and swales and depressions that often become marshes during heavy rainfall. Camping is available at Brazos Bend State Park for those interested, but get your reservations early as space fills up quickly!

**Directions:** We will be meeting at the Park Headquarters by 8:30 a.m. If you plan to carpooling/caravanning with other members, please see the information below for the meeting time in north Houston. Driving time to the park is approximately one-hour from downtown Houston. Take Highway 59 South to the Crabb River Road exit. Turn left on Crabb River Rd, then bear left onto FM 762. Follow FM 762 to the park. (You may also take State Highway 288 south to FM 1462 West.) Follow FM 1462 to FM 762 North. All routes are marked with brown signs to guide you. The address of the park is 21901 FM 762 Needville, TX 77461. The park does have an entrance fee of \$5.(See information below.) Members with a State Park Pass can gain access at no charge, along with everyone in their vehicle.

**Carpooling/Caravanning:** Members wishing to carpool or caravan will need to meet at Gander Mountain parking lot on the southeast side of the intersection of Cypresswood and I-45 no later than 6:30 a.m.

PWWS members must sign up with field trip coordinator, Sheena Abernathy, by Friday, September 30, 2011 to attend the Brazos Bend field trip. Sign-ups can be made during the September meeting or by email ([sheena.abernathy@gmail.com](mailto:sheena.abernathy@gmail.com) <<http://sheena.abernathy@gmail.com>> ). In addition, there will be a \$10 field trip fee collected to cover Brazos Bend State Park entrance fee and as a donation to the Brazos Bend State Park in lieu of payment to the tour guide.

For additional information on Brazos Bend State Park, visit the parks website at: [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/brazos\\_bend/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/brazos_bend/)

A bird checklist for Brazos Bend State Park can be found at: [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd\\_bk\\_p4504\\_0110b.pdf](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_bk_p4504_0110b.pdf)

Maps of Brazos Bend State Park can be located at:  
Trails: [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/park\\_maps/pwd\\_mp\\_p4504\\_0110w.pdf](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/park_maps/pwd_mp_p4504_0110w.pdf)

## A WEEKDAY FIELD TRIP!

Thursday, Oct. 6, 2011 (Time: 8:30 a.m.)  
Brazos Bend State Park



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## Numbers of Interest

Heart Hotline.....281 444-6204



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For membership information write to us at P.O. Box 189, Spring Texas 77383-0189. Annual Dues: \$15.00 per household.

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**The deadline for submissions is the 25<sup>th</sup> of the previous month, earlier if possible. Always add "PWWS" in the subject line. All emails will be responded to with in 3 days. If you do not receive a response please call 832 717-3276. All articles are subject to approval by the PWWS Board.**

**Please send new address changes and corrections to Mike Drummond at [drummond@thedrummonds.com](mailto:drummond@thedrummonds.com) and add PWWS to the subject line. Thank you.**

**Visit: <http://pineywoodswildlifesociety.org>**