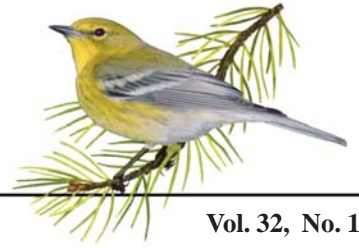


The Pine Warbler



January 2012

Vol. 32, No. 1

Spring Creek Nature Center programs!

The Spring Creek Nature Center is offering a number of new workshops in 2012. Registration is required for attendance at these workshops and trainings. The new workshop series for 2012 will provide information about six different groups called the Top Tens - trees, birds, etc. Nature Center Manager Teri MacArthur will provide information if you e-mail her at teri.macarthur@mctx.org or call 281-364-4225.

Here is the schedule for the Top Ten workshops, plus other presentations. These are free events, but require registration because some have limited spaces allotted.

JANUARY

- 4 - Illustrator Bruce Cunningham presentation at 6pm
- 14 - Birding Walk with Al Barr from 7:30am to about 9am
- 14 - TOP TEN TREES and Plants of our area from 10am to noon
- 24 - The Annotated Forest: Nature Journaling with Teri MacArthur from 9am to noon

FEBRUARY

- 2 - Hiking local trails with author Keith Stelter from 9:30am to noon
- 4 - Managing Your Land for Wildlife (Texas Parks & Wildlife workshop) from 8:30am to 3:30pm. \$25 Fee to attend. Call for more details and a registration form. Limited Seating.
- 7 - Learning about tree identification with Al Barr from 9:30am to noon
- 11 - Birding Walk with Al Barr from 7:30am to about 9am
- 11 - TOP TEN BIRDS of our area from 10am to noon
- 14 - I Love Mushrooms with Teri MacArthur from 9:30am to noon
- 23 - Creating a Garden for Butterflies by Tom Hollowell from 9:30am to noon
- 25 - Invasive Pests and Plants of our area and Monitoring Programs for them from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Limited Seating, Lunch reservation requires a fee. Call for more details and registration form.

MARCH

- 8 - A Walk through Local Nature with Teri MacArthur
cont. on page 2

PWWS January Program

Texas Reptiles and Amphibians

Rachel Rommel, Houston Zoo

As the Conservation Programs Manager of the Houston Zoo's Department of Conservation, Rachel Rommel travels around the world many times each year. An ambassador for the endangered Houston Toad, Rachel will describe her work with Texas reptiles and amphibians in addition to her work in other parts of the world at our January meeting.

A friend of the Kemp's ridley sea turtles, Rachel has many interesting stories about her travels around the world to help endangered animals. When she visited Zimbabwe, Rachel assisted in the implementation of a new conservation education program called "Kids for Science" at the Painted Dog Conservation Iganyana Bush Camp. Here local children are taught conservation concepts, an understanding of ecological relationships, the value of biodiversity, an appreciation of painted dogs and the role they play in ecosystems, and the need for an emotional attachment to the beauty and complexity of nature.

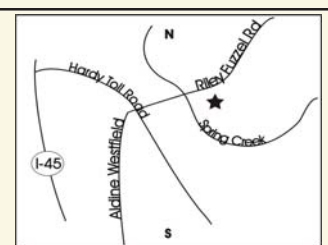
You can read more about Rachel at <http://houstonzooblogs.org/wildconservation/category/series/rachel-and-cullen-in-africa/> Don't miss this great program by a charming adventurer!



Rachel Rommel on the right in Zimbabwe!

Date: January 17
Time: Social 7:00 p.m.
Meeting: 7:30 p.m.

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





Heart Happenings

The Summit conference about the Gulf of Mexico I (Carole Allen) attended in December here in Houston was inspiring.

The Harte Research Institute of Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi brought in state, government and conservation organizations to discuss not only the oil spill but the many other environmental problems of the Gulf of Mexico. Mrs. Laura Bush gave a wonderful talk and discussed her interest in the environment and her support of President Bush's declaring a number of National Monuments to protect huge areas of the ocean before he left office. The need for cooperation between government agencies and the public was emphasized and there seemed to be a genuine willingness to **admit past mistakes and start again. Let's hope so.**

ROLLOVER PASS AND SEA TURTLES!

Many of you are familiar with Rollover Pass, located on Bolivar Peninsula and the erosion problems on the adjacent shoreline. The Texas General Land Office is suggesting closing Rollover Pass but replacing it with concrete fishing piers which they call "appropriate and feasible." That's nice for the fishermen, but no one thinks about the hundreds of sea turtles caught on hook and line in this area. If hooks are left imbedded in turtles' mouths and throats, they die slowly and painfully. Some fishermen cut their heads off to get their hooks back. **WHO EVER BUILDS AND OWNS THE PIER SHOULD PAY FOR TRANSPORTING SEA TURTLES FOR TREATMENT AND REMOVAL OF HOOKS.** There must be education of fishermen to point out the need for treatment of sea turtles that are caught

AND money must be made available for treating injured sea turtles. That money should come from the people who own the pier! (Our own Carole Frascella suggests the area should be a wildlife habitat with no fishing allowed.)

If you want to speak up for funding for injured sea turtles at Rollover Pass, see their website at www.glo.texas.gov/coastal. We have until January 8 to make comments, so please hurry if you want to stand up for the sea turtles!

Whooping Crane Field Trip!

Saturday, February 4, 2012

Join Piney Woods Wildlife Society for our February field trip to Rockport, Texas, to see the magnificent Whooping Cranes. These beautiful birds have made an amazing comeback from just 16 individuals in the 1940s to over 200!

What is the best way to see these five-foot tall birds? Why, by boat, of course! Members of Piney Woods will take a four-hour boat tour on the Wharf Cat to spot these astonishing birds, along with many, many other birds. The 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). **Directions:** The Wharf Cat tour meets at Rockport Harbor at 9:30 a.m. for the 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. boat tour. Rockport Harbor is located at 320 Navigation Cir, Rockport, TX 78382-2777. The cost for the boat tour is \$43 for Adults, \$40 for Seniors (group rates for 20 or more people - \$41 for Adults, \$38 for Seniors). Money is due the day of the trip.

Places to stay:

Piney Woods Wildlife Society Membership Form

Last Name(s):		First Name of Members(s):	
Street Address:		City:	State and Zip:
Home Phone No:	Work Phone No:	Email Address(s):	
Annual Membership Fee \$15.00*		Mail this form and check made payable to PWWS to: Piney Woods Wildlife Society P.O. Box 189 Spring, TX 77383-0189	
Additional Contribution \$ _____			
Total \$ _____			
*Per Household - Includes <i>The Pine Warbler</i> newsletter			
New <input type="checkbox"/>	Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>	Rejoining <input type="checkbox"/>	

Weeds are easier to get out of a garden when they are small. Learn to identify them at that young stage. Walk around your "kingdom" with a few garden tools in hand which will make it easier to tackle the occasional weed that has popped up overnight. A well weeded garden means your flowers will have more nutrients and water to help them flourish.

What is a weed? Simply it is a plant you do not want in your garden. One of the plants that come to mind is Yankee Weed or Rosin weed. I have gone to several yards that had this perennial in it and had the sad task to inform the client that the plant they were cultivating is considered a weed. Before it flowers it does look quite handsome resplendent in ferny leaves.

Eupatorium compositifolium is an upright, mainly single-stemmed perennial in the Sunflower family. It is a warm season herbaceous plant that grows 1 to 4 feet tall. The roots send up stems growing in colonies. You can usually find Yankee Weed abundant in overgrazed pastures and disturbed areas of sandy to sandy loam Pineywoods. The leaves are divided into segments. This shallow rooted plant competes with desirable forage species in pastures and generally is not consumed by cattle and horses. As a result, little desirable forage grows in pastures dominated by Yankee Weed. The seed are sometimes eaten by a few songbirds, but is rarely used except for protective cover.

Back to the weeding issue, once you have a garden weeded stay on top of it. Do not let these uninvited visitors go to seed. Nature hates a vacuum. Seeds arrive by air, by water runoff, and in bird droppings. Each weed plant can produce hundreds, even thousands of seeds. There is an old saying that applies to this garden problem, "One year's seeding means seven years' weeding. The safest way to deal with troublesome weeds that may multiply from roots or seeds is to put them in the trash or head over to Nature's Way Resources to recycle for a few bucks unless your compost pile reaches the desired temperature from 140 to 160 degrees.

As you have already figured out a few weeds will not destroy your garden. If you overplant with hanging bushy perennials or groundcovers, weeds will not be as noticeable or as prolific. If you do not know the weed is there it will be easier to coexist with the occasional unwanted plant.

I know weeding is a chore. Try looking at weeding in the garden in a different way. Consider how you pick up a potato with one hand and a paring knife with the other hand and carefully the skin is peeled off while humming a catchy melody or thinking about the schedule for the day. Next the black spoiled spots are cut out. With a quick swipe of the hand the peelings and rotten pieces fall into the compost can where they will end up outside in the compost bin. Weeding can be as therapeutic as peeling a potato in the kitchen. That is how weeding is for me.

Two or three inches of weed free mulch such as weed free pine straw, pine bark or grass clippings work well. Mulching will block weeds' access to light and air.

It is acceptable to cover the soil with black plastic to kill existing weeds and stop seeds from germinating. Do not leave the black plastic in place for more than a month or two. The soil needs air and water to remain healthy.

Landscape timbers, metal edging and stone can be used as edging between lawn and garden areas to prevent grass from encroaching into the garden.

"A weed is no more than a flower in disguise." - James Russell Lowell, 'The Growth of A Legend', 1847

Like the Emperor in Hans Christian Andersen's story, The Emperor's New Clothes, who had to face facts about his supposedly new clothes so we have to face facts when we look at our out-of-control garden and see it with eyes that are open to the truth. Ignoring the weeds will not make them go away. When it is no longer a peaceful oasis, it is time to get down on bended knee in your garden, and with some sweat and tears (praying helps or hiring a crew of professionals) you will again see a bit of Heaven on Earth emerge from the chaos. When you are addicted to flowers of all shapes and colors (one of my friends admits to this affliction who will remain anonymous) for "plant avarice" to emerge it needs a garden spot that does not look like a briar patch.

"May all your weeds be wildflowers". Author Unknown

1. www.plantea.com
2. www.hgtv.com
3. www.gardenforever.com
4. www.thegardenhelper.com
5. www.essmextension.tamu.edu
6. www.dowagro.com

Please share your nature experiences with me at dianecabinessplants@consolidated.net



PWWS 2012
dues are due soon! Just complete
the renewal form in the newsletter
and bring it with you!

