

Vol. 34, No. 1



PWWS



### **Big Stone Lodge**

Party!

Christmas

PWWS meetings are held at the Big Stone Lodge at the new Dennis Johnston County Park at 709 Riley Fuzzel Road. It is located very close to the Nature Center where we have been meeting, but on the Harris County side of Spring Creek.

The directions to get there are much the same as to the Nature Center. 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 Dennis Johnston Park past Spring Creek and on the right. 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 left; or, 3. Take Aldine Westfield north from Mercer Arboretum until it turns into Riley Fuzzel. Turn right and watch for the Dennis Johnston Park on the left.

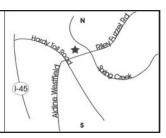


## **PWWS January 21st Program Costa Rica with Carlos Hernandez**

Carlos will bring us new photos and adventures from a recent trip to his homeland, Costa Rica. Everyone who has heard Carlos looks forward to his great photography and wonderful humor! Don't miss January 21 at the Big Stone Lodge.

> Date: January 21 Time: Social 6:30 p.m. Meeting 7:00 p.m.

**Big Stone Lodge** 709 Riley Fuzzel Road





### Heart Happenings

(This Blog) was written by Carole Allen and posted online at the invitation of the Endangered Species Coalition.

In 1906, Richard Kemp spotted a sea turtle on a Florida beach and later had the honor of adding his name to its identification. Years passed with little attention paid to the Kemp's ridley until June, 1947, when Andres Herrera made an amateur movie that documented, for the first time, an arribada (arrival) of Kemp's ridleys-some 42,000 females nesting in a single day at Rancho Nuevo, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Villagers excavated most of those nests, however, and harvested some 80 to 90 percent of the eggs that were laid. Decades later, though, the ridleys faced almost certain extinction; between 1978 and 1991, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) estimated that only 200 Kemp's ridleys were nesting annually.

My personal involvement with the ridleys began in 1982, when, as a volunteer, I took elementary school students to Galveston to see hatchlings being raised in a desperate attempt to save the species. The students organized HEART (Help Endangered Animals-Ridley Turtles) and began to work for the ridleys. Always my most powerful volunteers, students have written letters to legislators calling for turtle excluder device (TED) regulations and enforcement of laws protecting ridleys, and have pooled their nickels and dimes to buy food for hatchlings. Thousands of children have visited the Galveston facility, creating a higher level of public awareness about the killing of sea turtles-particularly by the shrimping industry.

As the Mexican government protected the ridleys' nesting beaches and next page officers in the Gulf of Mexico enforced TED regulations, populations of Kemp's ridleys began to grow. Things were looking good for the ridleys—so much so that the joint United States-Mexico recovery plan predicted a 19 percent population increase from 2010 to 2020 that would lead to a down-listing under the Endangered Species Act. But that was too good to be true.

Hundreds, maybe thousands, of ridleys were killed in the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Nest numbers dropped in Tamaulipas and Texas in 2010, and again in 2013. The NMFS has backed away from requiring TEDs on skimmer trawls, and Louisiana refuses to enforce TED regulations in their state waters, placing thousands of turtles in jeopardy. Sadly, each March and April, as shrimping activity increases along the Texas coast, dead adult female ridleys—the most valuable of all wash ashore. Why not declare a closure to shrimping for the nesting season?

Research confirms that ridleys are migrating and foraging along the Texas and Louisiana coasts. With the need for additional "safe zones" for nesting for the ridleys, the opposition of US Fish and Wildlife to allow the hatching of eggs and releasing of hatchlings where the nests are found on the Upper Texas Coast is unfortunate. Critical habitat is declared for other sea turtle species; why not Kemp's ridleys?

Although the Kemp's ridley population revived from near-extinction 25 years ago, it seems to be losing ground. Will we allow this to happen, or will we step up to enforce existing laws and put in place new ones where they are needed? If we don't demand action, nothing will be done.

## Anahuac Wildlife Refuge - 12/22/13

Photography by Steven Stones

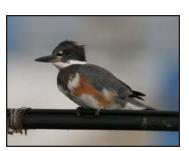


Dirty Eagle



Vermillion Flycatcher





**Belted Kingfisher** 



**Brown Pelican** 

## Adventures of the Beathards



From Margarita Padilla and Mike Beathard in Turkey!

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.... We experienced our first snowfall a couple of weeks ago – about 3 to 4 inches – and because the weather has been so frigid (single digits, which this Houston girl is not used to), it is still on the ground and iced over which makes it very slippery to walk on.

And after several of weeks of apartment hunting, not only did we find one that was suitable and within walking distance to the Bechtel office, but we have moved in! Things moved rather quickly last week. On the same day, we received notice that our furniture had arrived in Ankara and ready for delivery and also that our new landlord had accepted our terms and was ready to sign the lease. So, our furniture was delivered, unpacked and assemble on Thursday 12/12, we moved out of our hotel Friday morning and spent our first night in what is to become our new home for the next two years.

The Pine Warbler

We have now unpacked all the boxes, but not quite allocated everything. Bedrooms are not designed with closet space or a closet room; so we have turned a third bedroom into a closet area which we have furnished with a couple of wardrobes and shelving units.

#### HOME!!!!

Our neighborhood is very diverse; within a block or two from our apartment building there are several small groceries stores to choose from, fresh fish stands, bakeries with bread baked daily and desserts, a general store and a bazar that is held on Wednesday and Saturdays. There are also several restaurants and small sandwich and kebab shops. Slowly, but surely, we are getting to know our community. Though not a religious holiday celebrated in Turkey, Christmas is popular despite there being only a small number of Christians; some countries have adopted many of the secular aspects of the season such as gift-giving, decorations, holiday melodies and Christmas trees. And the public certainly follows the retail and shopping aspect of the season such as 'Black Friday' and the sales that precede Christmas; the malls in the area were just as busy as they would be in Kingwood around this time. Another reason why I think Ankara has adopted the holiday traditions is that there is a large expat community of European and Americans in the city.

Paul and Willy (The Beathard boys) will be spending Christmas in Denver; Willy is flying from Lubbock on Christmas Eve and will stay in Paul's new apartment (Paul was given a promotion and relocated to Denver in mid-October); they plan to enjoy several days of skiing and visiting with their cousins in Vail.



Mike and I have reservations at the nearby Marriott and will be enjoying a Christmas Eve dinner and Christmas Day brunch; next best thing to being home in Kingwood. Not sure about New Year's yet; we have to wait and see how it is celebrated in Turkey.

Wishing all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## East Texas Nature Toad Amour

by Diane Cabiness, Texas Master Naturalist

"A man should swallow a toad every morning to be sure of not meeting with anything more revolting in the day ahead." - Nicolas Chamfort

As I peeked out one early evening to see if the gully washer had stopped its insistent singing as it hit the pavement. I noticed movement near the edge of one of my gardens. Love was in the air this promising April twilight. Two Gulf Coast toads, Bufo valliceps were mating. These delightful critters keep me entertained as I go about my garden chores.

Gulf Coast Toads breed from March to September usually after heavy rains. The eggs are laid in long strings wrapped around vegetation in ponds and temporary bodies of water.

The male sings fluttering musical notes that sounds like a wooden rattle. The call lasts from 3 to 6 seconds and repeats every 1 to 4 seconds.

This critter reminds me of a Sumo wrestler. It is large by toad standards and can reach lengths of over 4 to 5 inches. The easiest way to identify this critter is to look for the dark lateral (side) stripe running the full length of the toad behind the eye. Another distinguishing characteristic is the deep valley found between the eyes. The color pattern is variable from dark to nearly all black while some may be greenish white, or even a gray-green.

Toads have enlarged glands called the paratoid glands on the side of the neck, one behind each eye. These glands secrete a viscous white poison that gets smeared in the mouth of any would-be predator, inflaming the mouth and throat and causing

nausea, irregular heartbeat, and, in extreme cases, death. Please keep toads away from Fido and Fluffy, who might pounce on and bite them. We should also take care and wash our hands after handling a toad before putting our hands to our mouth or eyes.



In my case I occasionally happen upon Gulf Coast Toads on the edge

of my wooded property as well as in my gardens. They can also be found in humid areas such as ditches, ponds and barrier beaches from Mississippi, Texas and Mexico. Reports have found them scattered in Arkansas.

This summer I was doing a little maintenance work around some stone steps. I picked up one large stone and low and behold was four Gulf Coast Toads snuggled in their hidey holes till dusk. I quickly cleaned out the crushed granite and encouraged these charming critters back to their sleeping spots. I have to admit if I were a toad I might like being in that location. At night the lights shine through my windows attracting insects by the score in the summer which suits these critters to the max.

References:

- 1. www.enature.com
- 2. www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/herps/amphibid/spe 3. www.herpsoftexas.org

"Every moment and every event of every man's life on earth plants something in his soul." - Thomas Merton

## Don't Forget - It's time to pay your dues!

# **Piney Woods Wildlife Society Membership Form**

Last Name(s):	First Nam	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* Additional Contribution \$ Total \$ *Per Household - Includes <i>The Pine Warbler newsletter via email</i> New Renewal Rejoining		Mail this form and check made payable to PWWS to: Piney Woods Wildlife Society P.O. Box 189 Spring, TX 77383-0189			



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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 within 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 all new address changes and any corrections to cdmoore3@gmail.com (Claire Moore) and add PWWS to the subject line. Thank you.

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