

The Pine Warbler



February 2016

Vol. 36, No.2

PWWS Group Whooping Crane Tour

PWWS will be going together as a group on a Whooping Crane boat tour on the Wharf Cat on the morning of February 20, 2016, leaving out of Rockport / Fulton. Because of the early arrival requirements many attendees will be getting a hotel room locally for the night before. Information on local hotels is available at the Rockport Fulton web site <<http://rockportfulton.org>>. Kathy checked with the Wharf Cat folks and wrote: "I checked with the Wharf Cat; reservations don't need to be

made. When we get there that morning if we have 20 or more people they will need to give their money to one person (me) and then I will pay the group rate. If we have less than 20 then each person can pay. It would be good to have cash for the tickets."

If you are planning on going on the tour please email Kathy.
justforthebirds@sbcglobal.net.

February Presentation The Highlands and Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica Presented by Gloria and John Jones



Fiery-billed Aracari

White Face Capuchin



Green Violet Eared Hummingbird



Once again one of our favorite presenters, John and Gloria Jones will delight the membership with their great photography. The Jones visited Costa Rica in November 2015 with members of PWWS. The group visited the remote Osa Peninsula and the highlands of Costa Rica. The trip netted a total of 150 species, they added 34 species to their Costa Rica list and 10 of those were new to their world life list.

The Jones had been long time members of PWWS and they are famous for their amazing photography.



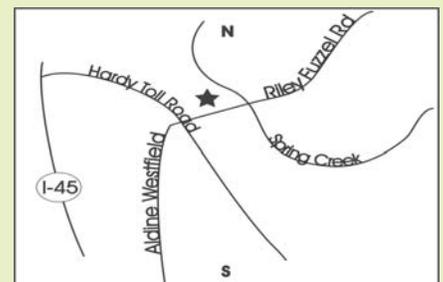
Big Stone Lodge - Dennis Johnston Park 709 Riley Fuzzel Road

PWWS meetings are held at the Big Stone Lodge at the new Dennis Johnston County Park at 709 Riley Fuzzel Road.

**February 17
Social 6:30pm**

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.



Heart Happenings

It has been almost five years since the tragic BP oil spill that left the Gulf of Mexico and countless individuals of many wildlife species coated with oil and doomed with years of contaminated environment. Everyone knew immediately that if there is any justice, BP and possibly its partners would have to spend big time bucks to try to make things right. First of all, the greatest tragedy is the death of 11 oil rig employees who never returned home and left families behind to fend for themselves. Hopefully, they will be provided for as generously as is possible. Money can never fill the void in the lives of the immediate and extended families. Next are those whose livelihood was taken away temporarily and some permanently. They have filed their claims and many have collected compensation.



The impact to the environment is not so easily addressed because impacts may not be manifest for many years or decades. No one really knows how many sea turtles died on the days following the spill or what oil and oil covered food will do to generations of sea turtles.

Although Texas beaches were spared heavy oil coating, some oil was found and traced to the spill. But juvenile Kemp's ridleys (probably the rarest species of sea turtle) were found on Mississippi beaches and elsewhere on the Gulf states, a fact noted by trustees making decisions about how environmental compensation funds would be allocated. After months and years of proposals, public hearings, and meetings, the Texas trustees have concluded that the Kemp's ridley population could be helped in several ways. In addition to funding research, the trustees will be recommending BP money be allocated for patrols for the upper Texas Coast. Texas A&M at Galveston will receive funding for vehicles, fuel, insurance, and other materials, and Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN) will receive funds for training for volunteers, supplies for them, and staff. No money was available for the last two years and TIRN worked with volunteers, many from the Master Naturalist program, to keep patrols going. Since there was no money for gasoline or vehicle repairs, volunteers walked many miles from Bolivar Peninsula to Surfside. Students from Texas A&M University also participated.

This is a beneficial start for programs that will provide us much needed data about our Texas turtle populations. HEART will continue to promote additional funding be made available for long-term programs.



Whooping Crane Update

A tragedy occurred in early January when two whooping cranes were shot by a hunter in east Texas (the teenager, an avid hunter, was caught and confessed). Other whooping cranes have been shot in the past two years in Louisiana and at the Aransas NWR. Besides illegal shooting the cranes continue to face threats from scarce habitat and inadequate habitat management, particularly water management.

In historic times whooping cranes were never very common, perhaps consisting of only a thousand or so breeding pairs in the early 1800s. The population declined to only 18 birds by the mid-1900s, all of which wintered in Texas and summered at Wood Buffalo National Park on the border of Alberta and Northwest Territory, Canada. Through habitat improvement projects and captive breeding the current world population is about 450 birds in the wild and 175 birds in captivity (fyi, there are 15 species of cranes in the world with 3 occurring in the U.S. (not counting captive escapees of other species); whooping cranes, sandhill crane (by far the most common and occurs in almost every state) and common crane, which is an occasional vagrant from Eurasia).

Besides the wild population that migrates between Aransas NWR and Wood Buffalo NP, there are two non-migratory wild populations of whooping cranes in Louisiana (about 44 birds, this is a recently established experimental population) and near Orlando, Florida (about 30 birds). The two whooping cranes that were shot in January were from the Louisiana population, which can roam freely along the Gulf coast. The Orlando population (at Kissimmee Prairie) has two components; a resident population and a 'migratory' population, which is led from a semi-captive location at the International Crane Foundation Center near Baraboo, Wisconsin, to Orlando by an ultra-light airplane each year. This 'migration' may take several weeks. From fledging the birds are trained to fly with the ultra-light, which will lead them north again in the spring. One reason for trying to establish this new population is to try and create additional groups of whooping cranes located in different areas so that they won't all be wiped out by one natural disaster.

The shooting is a very frustrating setback, but it will not stop the overall successful work of restoring whooping cranes to North America.

Plant of the Month Almond Verbena

Kathy Dodge, Master Gardener

Also called sweet almond verbena (*Aloysia virgata*), this is the most beneficial insect-attracting plant. The fragrance is wonderful.

LOCATION: It thrives in full sun but can adapt to partial shade. In the US, it grows from Missouri south and does particularly well in California and Texas. It is hardy in the southern areas of the UK and would be very successful in Australia.

Nature Lecture Series to be held Thursday, February 11, at 7:30 PM, at McCullough Junior High School, 3800 S. Panther Creek Dr., The Woodlands, TX, 77381, Held in the LGI Lecture Hall.

The lecture is free and Farrar is always interesting and entertaining!

- Kathy Coward went to see Judy Springer at the Kindred Rehab Center where she is recovering after surgery and delivered a Get Well Card from the PWWS members. Kathy said Judy was looking good but will be there for awhile.
- Remember to pay your 2016 Dues!!! See the Membership Form in this Newsletter.
- The Texas Wildlife & Woodland Expo and Spring Fling event is approaching on April 2, 2016, 10AM – 4PM at the Lone Star College Montgomery campus. The event is free and thousands attend each year to enjoy the educational and hands-of environmental activities. See www.expo.tamu.edu for more info.
- Please submit any articles you'd like considered for the PWWS Newsletter, The Pine Warbler, to Roy Woodward (rawoodwa@bechtel.com).

PWWS member, Judy Springer is now at Health South Rehab Hospital 18550 Hwy I 45 South- this is really at The Woodlands. She is on her way to walking and recovery , having a lot of physical therapy. You can give her a call on her cell at 281 352 9185. If you are able to visit , just give her a call first to make sure she is available and not at one of the therapy sessions.



Board of Directors

President.....Kathy Coward
 1st Vice President.....Roy Woodward
 2nd Vice President.....Claire Moore
 3rd Vice President.....Carlos Hernandez
 Secretary.....Carole Frascella
 Treasurer.....Jim Lacey
 Director.....Terry Wilson
 DirectorJudy Springer
 DirectorFarrar Stockton
 Past President.....Al Barr

Numbers of Interest

Heart Hotline..... 281 444-6204

The Pine Warbler is published monthly, September through May, by The Piney Woods Wildlife Society, Inc. and Copperhead Publishing.

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



Publisher: Copperhead Publishing
Publish1@copperheadfarms.net or jdfagm@swbell.net.
 P.O. Box 131776, The Woodlands, TX 77393

Please submit any articles you'd like considered for the PWWS Newsletter, The Pine Warbler, to Roy Woodward (rawoodwa@bechtel.com).

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

Visit: <http://pineywoodswildlifesociety.org>