The Pine Warbler



March, 2015

Notes:

Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge by Paul Gregg

















Farrar Stockton will present our March 17 program about the life cycle of several local butterflies and local moth species plus the Monarch winter migration to Mexico.

Farrar has been a member of PWWS since 1983 and has volunteered to serve on the PWWS Board, the Outdoor Nature Club, and BEST (Butterfly Enthusiasts of South East Texas) for many years. He retired from Chase in 2002 after 27 years of service and now works part time at the Museum of Natural Science helping with the permanent butterfly and beetle collection. Farrar's main interests are family and friends, nature, and watching Houston's sporting events. (The charming lady in the Monarch photo is our good friend and PWWS member Adele Bennett.)



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Big Stone Lodge Dennis Johnston Park 709 Riley Fuzzel Road

Don't Miss the Photography Exhibit at the Houston Museum of Natural Science and Bird-watching at the Zoo!





Domestic Swan Goose



Black Bellied Whistling Duck

Ringed Neck Duck(s)









Paul Gregg reminds us not to miss the "Wildlife Photographer of the Year" exhibit at the Houston Museum of Natural Science featuring 100 awe-inspiring images, from fascinating animal behavior to breathtaking wild landscapes, "*Wildlife Photographer of the Year* "harnesses the power of photography to promote the discovery, understanding and responsible enjoyment of the natural world." This exhibition will be on display from January 30 to May 31, 2015.

So, what about the attached photos "outside" the zoo? After Paul and Carol went to the museum, they decided to take advantage of such a beautiful day (can we say, "Indian Summer") and go to the zoo. Paul writes: "While walking toward the zoo entrance, we couldn't help but watch how busy the wildlife was around the Hermann Park Lake. Parents and grandparents were escorting youngsters around the edges of the lake giving the tots bread crumbs and other feed to throw to the pigeons and ducks. We sat on pigeon-poop-free concrete steps and watched the action as hundreds of pigeons would flock near almost anyone who was thought to be a food source. People were floating around the lake in foot-peddle boats; joggers were running on pathways; outdoor tables were filled with people eating hamburgers and fries. A highlight for me was when I looked out on the lake and saw a nutria swimming in our direction. Another one followed it and they had a little tussle right in front of us. One's nose had a red spot on it, maybe a nip from letting the other nutria get too close. In one photo you can almost see how long their teeth are.

The domestic swan geese would challenge people who got too near them, and one young man survived a bite on his shoe

from a charging goose. We think the black-bellied whistling ducks are pretty and the park has a good population of them. I don't usually photograph pigeons, but some got so close and the sunlight was causing their plumage to really put their iridescence on display. One photo of ring-necked ducks shows them in the water in a "V" formation. It seemed one was calling their meeting to order, but can you identify the feathered individual who crashed their meeting?"

Friends of Texas Wildlife's New Bald Eagle Flight Cage Submitted by Claire Moore

Friends of Texas Wildlife (FTWL) is a group of trained and permitted volunteers who provide care for injured, displaced and orphaned wildlife in Montgomery and counties east, north & west of Harris County. FTWL supports the rehabilitation of native Texas wildlife and promotes co-existence of wildlife and people through education.



Young Greater Roadrunner



Young Red-Tailed Hawk





Fledgling Barred Owls

The exciting news for this year is that FTWL has just broken ground for a flight cage long enough to rehab bald eagles. They have raised well over half of the money needed to build this 100 foot long flight cage. The other flight cages that they have are big enough to rehab owls and hawks, but this much larger flight cage is required if bald eagles are to be reconditioned for release. Prior to this, the closest flight cage big enough for bald eagles was located in Bellville. Last year, over ten bald eagles were taken in at FTWL, but all of them had to be transferred to Bellville for reconditioning once the initial care stage was passed. FTWL is excited to be able to add to their facilities and care for these large raptors all the way through flight reconditioning and release. If you wish to help with that continued fund raising effort, please visit http://www.ftwl.org/ and click the "please donate" link for information on how to help.

FTWL is the only wildlife rescue group based in Montgomery County with rehabbers permitted by U.S. Fish & Wildlife and Texas Parks & Wildlife Departments. They receive no money from either of these organizations. Their ability to care for the thousands of animals we receive each year depends is entirely dependent on donations, membership, and money raised at their fundraisers. And all of that money goes back into the local community.

Many of the animals FTWL receives are malnourished, sick or morbidly injured requiring immediate veterinary care to survive. Rehabbers provide care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Rehabbers frequently pay for care and vet bills out of their own pockets. During 2006, seven rehabbers cared for more than 875 animals; in 2007, approximately 1000 animals were cared for; and in 2011 we cared for almost 2000 animals.

Friends of Texas Wildlife is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; 100% of all donations support native Texas wildlife and are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. In addition to caring for wildlife, FTWL offers educational and awareness programs free of charge to local organizations, schools and clubs. More information about native Texas Wildlife, what can be done to preserve and sustain their environment, and how to assist and protect Texas wildlife can be requested by sending an email to: info@ftwl.org.

March MNW Horticulture News By Kathy Dodge

March is one of the busiest gardening months of the year and it is finally here after a very chilly, wet winter! March weather can be very fickle - it could still freeze since average last freeze is around March 12, and yet it still could be very balmy and pleasant most of the month. Freezing weather mainly affects the timing of planting coldsensitive plants, like tomatoes or begonias. If you decide to take chances with tender plants, be prepared to give them a protective covering.

PLANTING - March is a great month to plant almost every kind of landscape plant. The sooner you plant, the quicker the plant will start getting established. This is important if the plants are to do well through the hot, stressful summer. Nurseries are receiving weekly shipments of fresh nursery stock, and this is prime to buy and plant! The following are only some of your many choices:

FOR SUNNY AREAS: Amaryllis, antique roses, beebalm, blackeyed susan, blue daze, bulbine, butterfly bush, bush daisy, butterflyweed, canna, cassia, cat whiskers, celosia, cestrum, chrysanthemum, coneflower, cosmos, cuphea, daylily, duranta, hamelia, gaura, lantana, lion's tail, lycoris, Mexican mint marigold, nandina, oleander, pride of Barbados, purslane, salvia, scaevola, skullcap, spirea, yarrow, yellow bells (esperanza), zinnia.

FOR PARTIAL SHADE AREAS: American beautyberry, agapanthus, blood lily, coral bean, coreopsis, crinum, four o'clocks, hibiscus (hardy and tropical), hydrangea, Louisiana iris, melampodium, mock orange, penstemon, pentas, plumbago, porterweed, scabiosa, shrimp plants, summer phlox, yesterday-today-and-tomorrow.

FOR SHADY AREAS: Abutilon, banana shrub, Barbados cherry, begonia, caladium, calla lily, clerodendrum, coleus, columbine, firespike, gingers (all!), hosta, impatiens, jacobina, mahonia, narcissus, nicotiana, oakleaf hydrangea, Persian shield, pigeonberry, torenia, Turk's cap, viburnums.

Caladium bulbs require warm soil temperatures, and setting them out in early spring can cause them to rot. Go ahead and purchase them as soon as they are available, but wait until the soil temperature reaches 70 degrees F to plant them.

LAWNS(- Control winter weeds by starting your regular mowing regime. Get your mower blade sharpened now before the spring repair rush. If you decide to scalp your lawn, wait until all danger of freezing is over. If you do scalp, turn that huge amount of clippings into a fine soil amendment by composting it rather than filling up the landfill with it.

If you missed applying a pre-emergent weed preventer in February and you had a summer weed problem in your lawn last year (such as grass burs), then go ahead and make an application now. You may have missed a portion of the weeds that germinate in early spring (like crabgrass), but will still control the many other types that can germinate anytime during the warm part of the year.

Wait to fertilize your St. Augustine or Bermuda lawn until April, or after you have mowed actively growing grass (not weeds) twice.

PRUNING - Pruning of evergreen and summer flowering trees and shrubs should be completed this month. But, prune spring flowering shrubs (forsythia, quince, azaleas, spirea, etc) only after they finish blooming, if needed. Hydrangeas also bloom on prior year's growth, so prune after they bloom.

FERTILIZING - After camellias and azaleas finish blooming, fertilize them with 2 to 3 pounds of azalea-camellia fertilizer per 100 square feet of bed area.

Begin fertilizing roses every 4 to 6 weeks from now until September. You also need to begin a spray program for controlling blackspot on roses. Uncontrolled blackspot will defoliate most hybrid tea, grandiflora and floribunda roses, causing them to decline in vigor.

Fertilize vegetables about a month after growth starts with nitrogen fertilizer.

Fruit and pecan trees should be fertilized this month with nitrogen applied in the area beneath the ends of the branches, never against the trunk. Shrubs and annual flowerbeds can be fertilized with a complete, balanced fertilizer. Slow-release formulations, though slightly more expensive, feed your plants over a longer period of time. Often the same type of fertilizer recommended for use on the lawn can be used in the landscape.

Watch out for aphids that rapidly build up on tender new growth. They can be controlled with a sharp stream of water, insecticidal soap or other insecticides (be sure to read the product label to determine whether the infested plants are included on the label).

Happy Gardening and Enjoy Yourself in Your Gardens!



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Firespike

The Firespike is a plant which solves the problem of most landscapers who have a shady area in which very few plants will grow, much less bloom. Firespike will not only grow



in the shade but plants will provide a magnificent display of practically glow-in-the-dark red bloom spikes which attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

Firespike (Odontonema strictum) is a shade loving, tender perennial with deep green, glossy leaves. It will be grown for its beautiful foliage in the spring and summer. This beautiful foliage provides a startling contrast to its fire-red late season blooms. Its brilliant spikes of deep red flowers in late summer and fall are cherished by hummingbirds and butterflies. It is one of the most versatile plants and definitely the best blooming plants for shade conditions.

WANTED: NEW VICE-PRESIDENT FOR PUBLICITY!

After an unknown number of years, Carole Allen is stepping aside from the Vice-President role. It's a fun job so give it some thought! Carole will continue writing HEART HAPPENINGS but a new officer with new ideas and new energy is needed!

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The deadline for submissions is the 25th 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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