# The Pine Warbler

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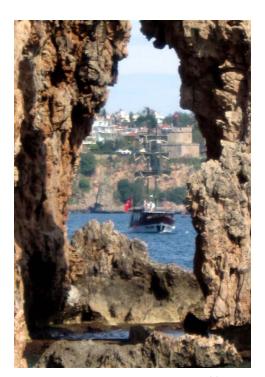
#### Notes:

## Welcome Home to the Beathards!

Mike Beathard's company decided to bring him and Margarita home cutting their assignment to Turkey short. They are now back in Kingwood and their furniture has arrived, too. Margarita commented that she is having a difficult time re-adjusting to being back in the US since their lives in Turkey were much more simple.

On the return trip, they toured Greece and Margarita wrote: "Our experience in Athens was like walking into the pages of a history book; ancient monuments rise in the heart of the city such as the Parthenon and Acropolis; the landmarks and works of art of one the world's oldest cities could be found throughout: by the metro station, on the boulevards, in parks and plazas."

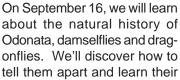
The last photos came after our May newsletter, but they are all so beautiful, we are including a few in our September issue. Hopefully, we'll see more in a future program! Welcome back, Beathards!



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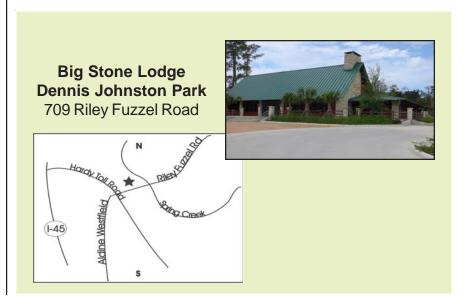
### First Fall Meeting is September 16th! Social 6:30pm, Program 7:00pm

Our program will be given by Al Barr, our favorite naturalist and environmental education teacher who has opened the door to the enjoyment of nature for thousands of students. Although retired from a classroom at Spring High School, Al can be found giving speeches and leading field trips at the Jesse Jones County Park on FM 1960 West. He has also served as PWWS president and board member.





different habitats. All is known for his great photography and as he points out the characteristics of these fascinating tiny creatures, we will also learn his camera techniques. Don't miss this excellent program!



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**Heart Happenings** 

News about the Kemp's ridleys is not good and really hard to believe. This information came from the Gladys Porter Zoo whose director, Pat Burchfield, has coordinated work with the Mexican government at the ridley nesting sites on the Mexican Gulf Coast.

#### "Abrupt Setback for the Recovery of the Critically Endangered Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle"

Carole Aller

The Kemp's ridley was the most endangered sea turtle in the world and was on the brink of extinction during the mid 1980's. It inhabits near shore waters throughout the Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic Coast of the U.S., and its primary nesting ground is a 40 km stretch of beach in the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico. Intense and long-term conservation efforts by a binational coalition of Mexican and U.S. federal, state, and nongovernmental organizations initiated a recovery of this species,

with nesting numbers gradually increasing from the late 1980's through 2009. In contrast to the continued recovery predicted by population models, the upward trend in nesting abruptly changed in 2010, and has been replaced by downward trends in several recent years. As examples, nesting numbers for 2013 and 2014 nesting seasons were approximately 25% and 45% (respectively) lower than nesting numbers in 2009. Potential factors that could be responsible for the loss of the upward recovery trend, and recent decline in nesting will be addressed in upcoming meetings of the Binational Kemp's Ridley Working Group, the Binational Kemp's Ridley Recovery Team, and at the Second International Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Symposium to be held in November 2014."

My editorial was published on August 9 which explains much about the trouble for the ridleys:

Are you ready to tell the Kemp's ridley sea turtle, the official sea turtle of Texas, goodbye? That's not a far-fetched notion. Their future is uncertain if the federal government continues to push them toward extinction. A little history lesson offers context for those not familiar with the ridleys' struggle. In the early 1980s, the Kemp's ridley sea turtle, often called the "Heartbreak Turtle," was very close to extinction with only a few hundred females nesting on the northeast Gulf Coast of Mexico and in Texas. Unwilling to allow this small sea turtle to join the passenger pigeon, the Carolina parakeet and many other species in extinction, the U.S. government began making efforts to save it.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1981 allocated money to the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, funding the zoo's support to the Mexican nesting beaches of the Kemp's ridleys. After that, 2,000 eggs were brought each year to the Padre Island National Seashore as a gift from the Mexican people. The eggs were incubated there and then hatchlings were moved to the Galveston sea turtle facility of the National Marine Fisheries Service facility, where they were raised for about 10 months. Hatchlings were then released into the Gulf. Public support quickly forced the Marine Fisheries Service to promulgate regulations that forced the shrimp industry to use turtle excluder devices to prevent sea turtles from drowning in shrimp trawls. The trawls were widely believed to have contributed to the turtles' decline.

The Bi-National Recovery Plan for the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle, originally agreed upon by the Fisheries Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service and Mexico's environment ministry in 1984, asked for a number of successful conservation practices to be continued until there is an average population of 40,000 nesters per season over a six-year period. The recovery plan includes a list of "Actions Needed," many of which had helped the Kemp's ridleys' population increase exponentially through 2009. They include common-sense recommendations that need to be continued, such as requiring shrimp fishermen to use turtle-excluder devices. Unfortunately, within the past few years, U.S. government agencies have withdrawn support for many of the policies that had set this endangered sea turtle on the path to recovery.



For instance, within the past few years, our government has stopped implementing the international agreement, as prescribed in the recovery plan's "Actions Needed," by cutting funding for the Mexican conservation program for the Kemp's ridleys. In 2015, no money will be given to bolster the opera-

tions of the nesting beaches in the state of Tamaulipas. The Bi-National Plan identified lack of funding as a threat to Kemp's ridley recovery.

The Recovery Plan states that "we anticipate that the Kemp's ridley will attain its down-listing criterion (hitting the goal allows reclassification of the turtle from an endangered species to threatened) of 10,000 nesting females in a season by 2021. Based on population growth rates of 19 percent per year, we anticipate that the Kemp's ridley could attain its delisting criterion (removal of the turtle from federal lists of endangered or threatened wildlife) of an average of 40,000 nesting females per season over a six-year period by 2024." Their future is no longer that rosy. Nesting, which ended last month, continues to decline in both Texas and Mexico, and no one seems to be looking for the reasons.

Unless the people of the United States demand a change in the policies of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Kemp's ridley will be on its way to extinction by 2024 instead of delisting from the Endangered Species List.

Since our government agencies are not keeping their word with Mexico or meeting their responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act, they are placing the endangered "heartbreak turtle" in jeopardy again.

#### East Texas Nature Superstar: Rock Rose

by Diane Cabiness, Texas Master Naturalist



"Every flower is a soul blossoming in nature."

-Gerald De Nerval

Wright rose, Rose-mallow or Rock Rose, *Pavonia lasiopetala* is a small perennial shrub bearing light green, velvety, heart-shaped leaves with many herbaceous stems coming from a

woody base. In East Texas Rock Rose usually obtains a height of 2 ½-3 ft.

This rock star is in the hibiscus family. The flowers are a deep rose pink which open in the morning and fade in the heat and sun of the afternoon from April to November. If planted where they receive shade from the afternoon sun in their natural habitat the flowers will not close and will flower throughout the year. Take a bow Rock Rose!

Rose-mallow comes from South, Central and West Texas. It can be found growing in shallow limestone and rocky woodlands, at the edges of thickets in woods. This tough, small shrub prefers full sun and well-drained soil, but will also tolerant dappled soil in West Texas.

In East Texas, Rock Rose seems to hold its compact shape better if given full sun...too much shade it develops "long legs". The rosy flowers appear on new wood. Frequent pruning, encourages compact growth and more flowers. In late winter cut back Rose-Mallow to the base to encourage bushy growth.

The one inch rose-like flowers attract bees, butterflies and some birds making it a shrub that has become a Texas superstar in many a gardener's eye. Consider using this easy plant instead of non-native Nandina and Dwarf Burford or Chinese Hollies.

Most fresh seeds will germinate within two-three weeks if planted in warm weather. Rock Rose is easily grown from 3-6" softwood tip cuttings taken May through July.

Semihardwood cuttings will also root, but they require more rooting hormone and are less reliable. Seedlings and cuttings respond to fertilizing. Established plants in your gardens do not need supplemental feeding, other than compost added to the soil on a yearly basis.

Several years ago I put a couple of small Rock Roses in one of our Church's gardens that is located by the road in direct sun all day. These compact plants are easily 3 feet across and about 2 ft. tall producing a breathtaking spectacle of flowers in mass daily throughout the growing season.

"Just living is not enough...one must have sunshine, freedom and a little flower." - Hans Christian Anderson

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

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- 1. www.aggie-horticulture.tame.edu
- 2. www.npsot.org/Trinity Forks
- 3. Wildflowers of Texas by Geyata Ajilvsgi, 1984
- 4. Texas Wildflowers: A Field Guide by Campbell and Lynn Loughmiller, 1984
- 5. How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest by Jill Nokes, 2001



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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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