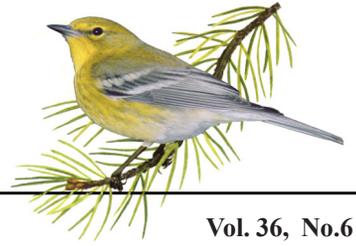


The Pine Warbler



September 2016

Vol. 36, No.6

Heart Happenings



You Can Save Sea Turtles!

From the Website of the Padre Island National Seashore: "Kemp's ridley is the most endangered species of sea turtle. The Kemp's ridley population underwent a devastating decline in the mid-1900's, primarily due to over-harvest of eggs and loss of juveniles and adults due to commercial fishing. Biologists did not know the location of the main Kemp's ridley nesting beach in Mexico until the early 1960's, when a film was discovered that showed an estimated 40,000 females nesting at Rancho Nuevo on one day. Biologists did not initiate protection efforts at Rancho Nuevo until the mid-1960s. Despite protection efforts by the Mexican government, the population continued to decline.

In 1978, the U.S. joined Mexico in efforts to try to save the species from extinction and recover the population. Multi-agency, international programs were developed, including an attempt to increase nesting by this indigenous species at Padre Island National Sea-



Kemp's ridley sea turtle at Padre Island National Seashore (NPS photo).

cont. on page 3

September Presentation Raptors Presented by Fred Peirce

Fred Peirce will give a presentation about hawks at 7 PM on Sept. 21. Fred will share his experiences with some of the 12 species of raptors that he has seen that migrate into the Houston area for the winter, including migrating broad-winged hawks. He will also discuss and illustrate some of the nesting red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks that he monitors year-round in a 15 square mile area and provide valuable insights into their biology.



*Red-shouldered hawk
(photo by Roy Woodward)*

Please join us on Wednesday September 21 at the Big Stone Lodge in Dennis Johnston Park, 709 Riley Fuzzel Road, Spring, TX, for a wonderful evening! Social time starts at 6:30 PM and the meeting starts at 7 PM.



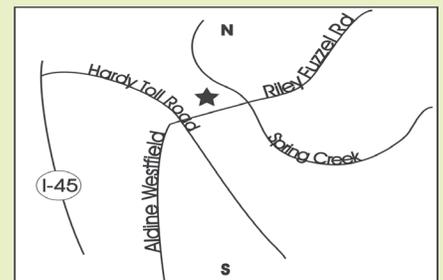
Big Stone Lodge - Dennis Johnston Park 709 Riley Fuzzel Road

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

**September 21
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.



shore to form a secondary nesting colony at a protected beach in the U.S., as a safeguard against extinction. Extensive conservation efforts have continued for Kemp's ridley in Mexico and the U.S., including the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Recovery Project conducted at Padre Island National Seashore. Due to years of conservation efforts, Kemp's ridley nesting is increasing in Mexico and the U.S. Nests documented and hatchlings released on the Texas coast were due to the efforts of several entities." **Piney Woods Wildlife Society and HEART (Help Endangered Animals-Ridley Turtles) are two of these entities.**

This past nesting season, 1986 Kemp's ridley nests were found on the Texas Coast. Hundreds of volunteers recruited and trained by the Turtle Restoration Network patrolled the Upper Texas Coast. Although it is easy to miss a nest or tracks, the volunteers did their best. Four nests were found at Surfside Beach, one at Quintana Beach, two at San Jose Island, another two at Matagorda Peninsula and six at Mustang Island. The balance was found at the Padre Island National Seashore, some on North Padre Island, and the rest at South Padre Island and Boca Chica Beach. One loggerhead nest was found on Bolivar Peninsula. At present all of the eggs that are found are hatched out at the Padre Island National Seashore, although pressure is growing to retain, hatch, and release hatchlings on the Upper Texas Coast.

More information is easy to find at <https://www.nps.gov/pais/learn/nature/2016-nesting-season.htm>



Kleb Woods Hummingbird Festival By Claire Moore



Photo courtesy Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce

Kleb Woods Nature Center in Tomball is holding their annual Hummingbird Festival on Saturday, September 10th, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. It is a great opportunity to see ruby-throated hummingbirds up close and personal as local expert Sumita Prasad captures and bands hummingbirds all day at the Kleb Woods Nature Center. Several interesting talks will be given

throughout the day. In addition, Mary Anne Weber from the Houston Audubon will have several raptors on display that can be photographed in a natural setting. See the poster at the end of this newsletter for all the information. Kleb Woods Nature Center is located at 20303 Draper Road at Mueschke Road.

Also, more hummingbird adventure! The 28th Annual HummerBird Celebration will be in Rockport Sept 15-18, 2016. The web sites for info are: <http://www.rockporthummingbird.com/> and [Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce - Welcome to Rockport-Fulton! The Charm of the Texas Coast](http://www.rockport-fulton.com/)

September MNW Horticulture Newsletter By Kathy Dodge

Watering: On St. Augustine and other lawns, **water well but less often.** Begin to reduce the amount of water applied as needed with shorter days and cooler nights ahead. Also, avoid watering in the evenings to prevent fungal diseases.

Hummingbirds: The little migrating hummingbirds can be found at your feeders and natural nectar sources now. Keep your feeders clean, filled, and in a shady area and this will encourage the tiny visitors.



Broad-tailed Hummingbird at a Trumpet Honeysuckle.
Photo: Roger Levien/Audubon Photography Awards.

Recipe for Nectar: Bring 4 cups of water to a boil, add 1 cup of granulated sugar and stir until dissolved. Allow liquid to cool, and then fill feeders. Keep excess liquid sealed in refrigerator. (Do not add red food coloring)

Natural nectar sources for hummingbirds: Turk's cap, hamellia or hummingbird plant, shrimp plant, firespike, salvia, lobelia (cardinal flower), Mexican oregano, pride of Barbados, and cigar plants. These are all hummer magnets.

Mulch, Mulch, Mulch: Mulching keeps plant roots cooler, weed seeds at bay and conserves water. Apply 3" deep around trees and shrubs. Add compost around annuals, herbs, and vegetables. Do not mound mulch against the base of a plant as this only invites insect and fungus to come in contact with the crown of plants.

Pests: Blast off sucking insects, such as aphids, mealybugs,

etc., with water and/or spray with insecticidal soap. Leaf miners are active on citrus. They will not kill your citrus, so leave alone or alternate treatments of spinosad and neem to keep them at bay.

Lawn Fungus: Insects such as chinch bugs and fungal diseases on lawns are two things to watch out for. For Brown Patch fungal disease, which is symmetrical brown circles in the grass, use a systemic lawn fungicide with Bayleton, Terrachlor, Banner or Benomyl, September - October. For gray leaf spot, which is a blotchy spot on the grass blade leaves, use fungicides with active ingredients like Daconil, Consan or Banner, July - September.

Owls in a Box By Roy Woodward

Recently, I was working in Canada and had dinner with two friends who are conducting owl research. Chuck Priestley is an expert on northern saw-whet owls and has conducted a nest box study near Edmonton for almost 10 years (Chuck's wife, Lisa, is also a biologist and they run Strix Ecological Consulting in Alberta). Bruce Colvin is an expert on barn owls and has been conducting nest box surveys in Ohio, and more recently New Jersey, for over 30 years. They had many amusing stories about checking their nest boxes, most regarding police officers and farmers who wonder what they're up to, and owls who refuse to cooperate when they annually check the boxes for eggs/young. Barn owls in particular will defend their box and Bruce has the scars to prove it; he testifies the owls can fly silently and has been whacked in the back of the head many times without warning.

I asked them why the owls use nest boxes instead of available natural nest cavities, such as hollow trees. They have found that even in areas with suitable nesting spots the owls will persistently use nest boxes because, when placed correctly and maintained, the boxes offer the very best housing available. Nest box programs have been very successful to increase breeding success for several bird species (blue bird, martin, and wood duck boxes are known to almost everyone). Incidentally, populations of northern saw-whet owls and common barn owls are generally not limited by lack of nesting locations, but by lack (and loss) of foraging habitat (a pair of barn owls and their young will consume over a 1,000 mice during a nesting season). Also of interest, barn owls are a rare species in Canada because, like most Texans, they don't like the cold.

However, an interesting dilemma exists with nest boxes. Some areas are saturated with nest boxes because local youth or conservation groups in search of service projects can easily construct and install the boxes; we've all seen rural areas with a nest box hung on every other fencepost. What is often needed more than more boxes is care and maintenance for the boxes that exist. The boxes need to be cleaned, ideally after every nesting season, or else they will become unusable or unhealthy for nesting. Also, wasps or other animals

may move into nest boxes and the birds can't force them out. Wooden boxes out in the open will only last a few years without repairs and rehangings. So, the next time you or your group are looking for a useful conservation project consider maintaining nest boxes; it's worthwhile and can be an adventure every time you open the lid on a box!



*Northern saw-whet owl
(Chuck Priestley photo)*



Common barn owl (photo courtesy The Barn Owl Center)



*Barn owl nest box
(courtesy The Hungry Owl Project)*



COMMISSIONER STEVE RADACK INVITES YOU TO

THE ANNUAL KLEB WOODS HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, SEPT. 10, 2016

9 a.m.—3 p.m.

Featuring as many as
100 Ruby-throated
Hummingbirds!

WHO:

Hummingbird expert **Sumita Prasad** will be capturing and banding hummingbirds throughout the day. In addition to seeing these feathered jewels close up, you may ask Sumita questions about their unique structure and amazing biology.

WHO ELSE:

Staff naturalist **Kendra Kocab** will present *A Closer Look at Nature*. This class is part of an ongoing series designed to give school-aged children a closer look at our natural world. Today's 20 minute presentation: *Hummingbird Biology* at **10 a.m.** and **1 p.m.**

ALSO:

Staff historian **Jim Wilson** will introduce visitors to our newest series. *A Closer at History* is designed for school-aged children. Each class investigates a historical topic. Today's presentation: *The Migratory Bird Treaty Act* at **11 a.m.** and **2 p.m.**

AND:

Houston Audubon Society Education Director **Mary Anne Weber** will display several live raptors to be photographed in a natural setting. She will field questions and show her raptors throughout the day.

WHAT:

Everything you want to know about hummingbirds — including identifying, attracting and gardening for hummingbirds. There will be games and activities for the whole family. There will be nature walks throughout the day. The Kleb House will be open for tours and the blacksmiths will be demonstrating in the barn.

WHERE:

Kleb Woods Nature Center, 20303 Draper Rd. at Mueschke Rd., Tomball 77377

<http://www.pct3.com/parks/kleb-park/>

WHEN:

Saturday, Sept. 10, 9am - 3pm

Admission is free. Patrons are encouraged to bring their own refreshments. Drinks and snacks will not be sold.

For additional information, call Kleb Woods Nature Center at (281) 357-5324.

