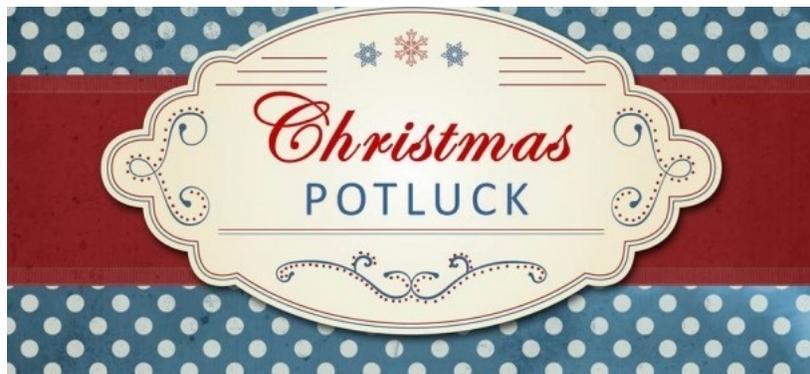
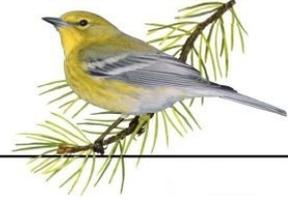


The Pine Warbler



December Potluck

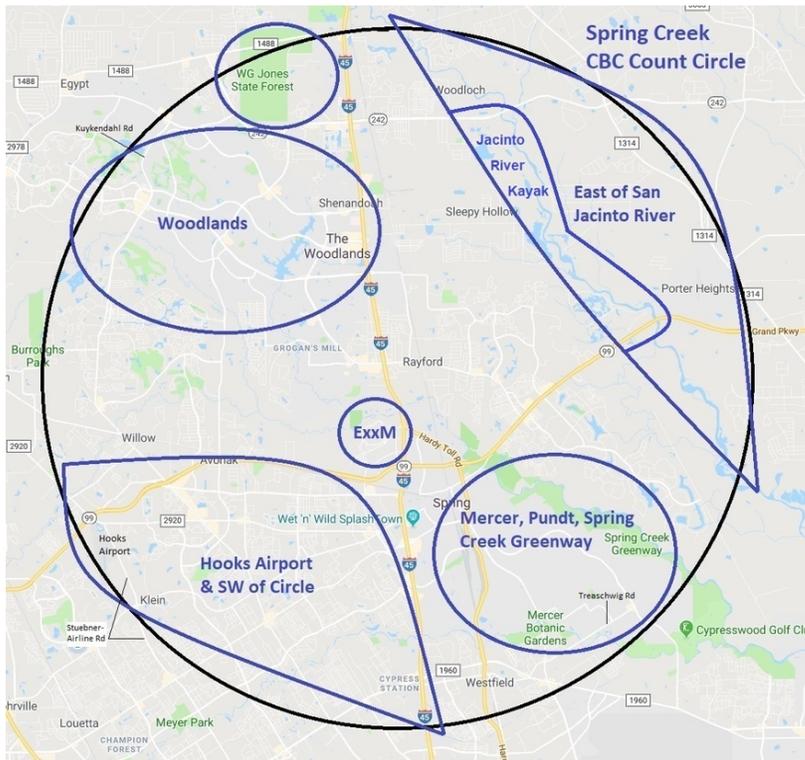
Wednesday, 12/11/19

December's Piney Woods meeting will be our annual Christmas Pot Luck! It will be held on Wednesday, December 11th. [Note: This is a change from the normal third Wednesday to the second Wednesday for December (only) to get further

away from the Christmas holiday when some people travel.] Please bring a dish to share and enjoy some holiday fellowship with other nature lovers. PWWS will provide plates, plastic ware, tea and water to drink.

Meet up on December 11th at the Big Stone Lodge at 6:30 p.m. The lodge is located in Dennis Johnston County Park at 709 Riley Fuzzel Road just east of Old Town Spring.





Spring Creek CBC on Saturday, December 14th

by Claire Moore

Piney Woods has been the proud sponsor of the Spring Creek CBC since 1986. If you will be around on Saturday 12/14, please plan to join PWWS to help survey the birds present in our Spring Creek Christmas Bird Count circle. Whether or not you count birds, please consider coming to the "Count Dinner" at 5:30 p.m. also on 12/14 to hear or share stories about the day's birding (see below for details).

Several teams of bird watchers will be out in the field on Saturday, December 14th, counting up all the birds that can be found in our 15 mile diameter CBC circle which is roughly centered at I45 at the Rayford Sawdust exit. If you're not able to go into the field and happen to live inside that circle, you can help out as a "feeder watcher" sending in your observations made on Saturday, December 14th, to be included in the official CBC results. Either way, go ahead and highlight that day on your calendars and let Claire know (via email at cdmoore3i@gmail.com) if you can help out in either capacity. Claire will give you more information on where and when the teams meet.

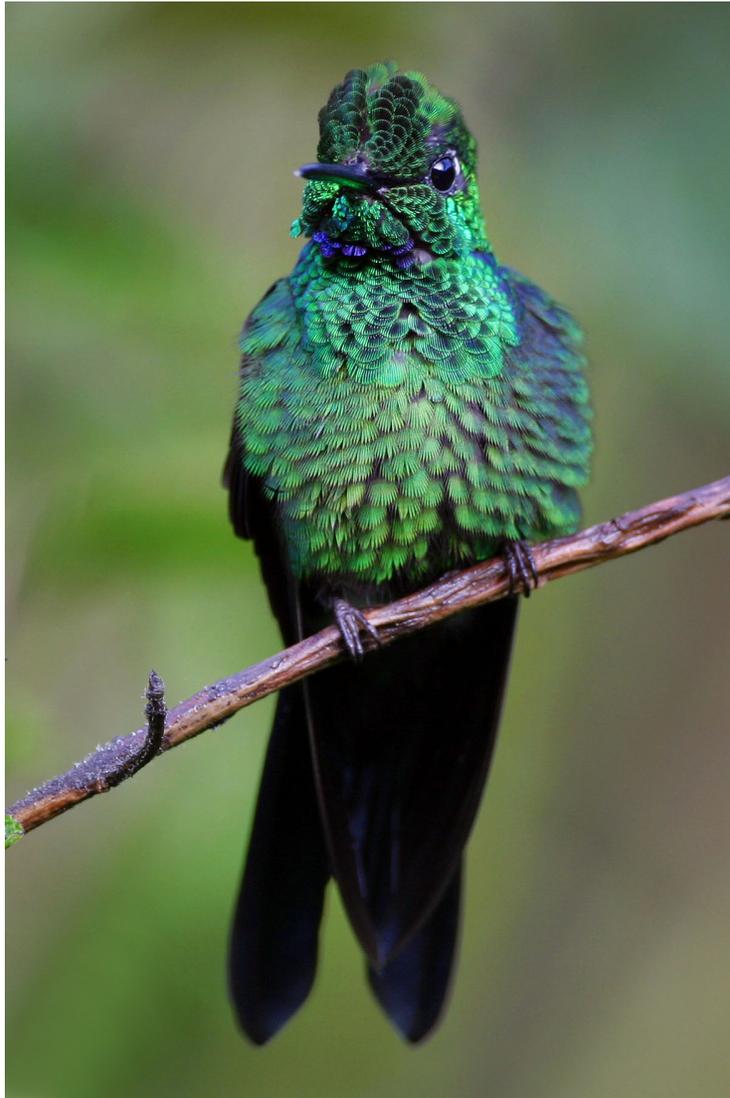
All are welcome to join in for the "Count Dinner" that same day (Saturday, Dec 14th) at 5:30 p.m. whether or not you bird. Join us to hear or share stories about the day counting birds. We plan on gathering at Las Flores Mexican Restaurant #3 located at 18525 Kuykendahl Spring, TX. Make sure to let Claire know by Dec 12th (via email at cdmoore3i@gmail.com) if you think you might be able to attend

so she can reserve a table big enough. The restaurant is located at the southwest corner of Kuykendahl & Louetta Rd right next to 24 Hour Fitness & across the street from Kroger. It is just 4 miles west of I45 on Louetta Rd.



Green-crowned Brilliant Hummingbird

by Wayne Easley at Rancho Naturalista, Costa Rica



Male Green-crowned Brilliant Hummingbird. Photo by by Wayne Easley

From: Wayne Easley easley57@yahoo.com

Date: Mon, Nov 25, 2019, 4:51 PM

Subject: HUMMINGBIRDS AT RANCHO NATURALISTA, COSTA RICA-PART 7/THE GREEN-CROWNED BRILLIANTS!

The Green-crowned Brilliant Hummingbird that frequents my back yard [at Rancho Naturalista in Costa Rica] is one of my favorites. They are sometimes called Green-fronted Hummingbirds. A rather large robust hummer, its sheer size means it has to perch when feeding from my nectar feeders. The male is an emerald or bronzy green with a small violet blue stick pin on the throat. The blue can be seen only at certain angles and is lacking in the female. Both male and female birds have a white spot behind the eye. The female has a short white malar mark that separates her from other hummers. The birds have a sleek look to themselves and possess a long straight beak. The tail is blue-black and has a v-shape.

Ranging from the foothills and lower mountains of Costa Rica (mainly on the Caribbean side of the country) to Western Ecuador, Green-crowned Brilliants are magnificent hummers. They can be seen perched at nectar feeders but also spend a lot of time visiting flowers. They are reported to visit hundreds of tubular blossoms in a day's time making them valuable pollinators of plants. They are often seen perched on large clumps of airplants along river banks where they defend vigorously their domain. Their flight is fast and darting and often they end up fighting with other hummers of the area. It is thought there is some altitudinal migration between the wet and dry seasons. Hats off to the very impressive Green-crowned Brilliant Hummingbirds. They are real winners. Seeing a gorgeous male Green-crowned Brilliant with that violet blue bowtie makes you want to break out the camera with that long lens on it.



Green-crown defending fighting with a Green-breasted Mango. Photo by by Wayne Easley



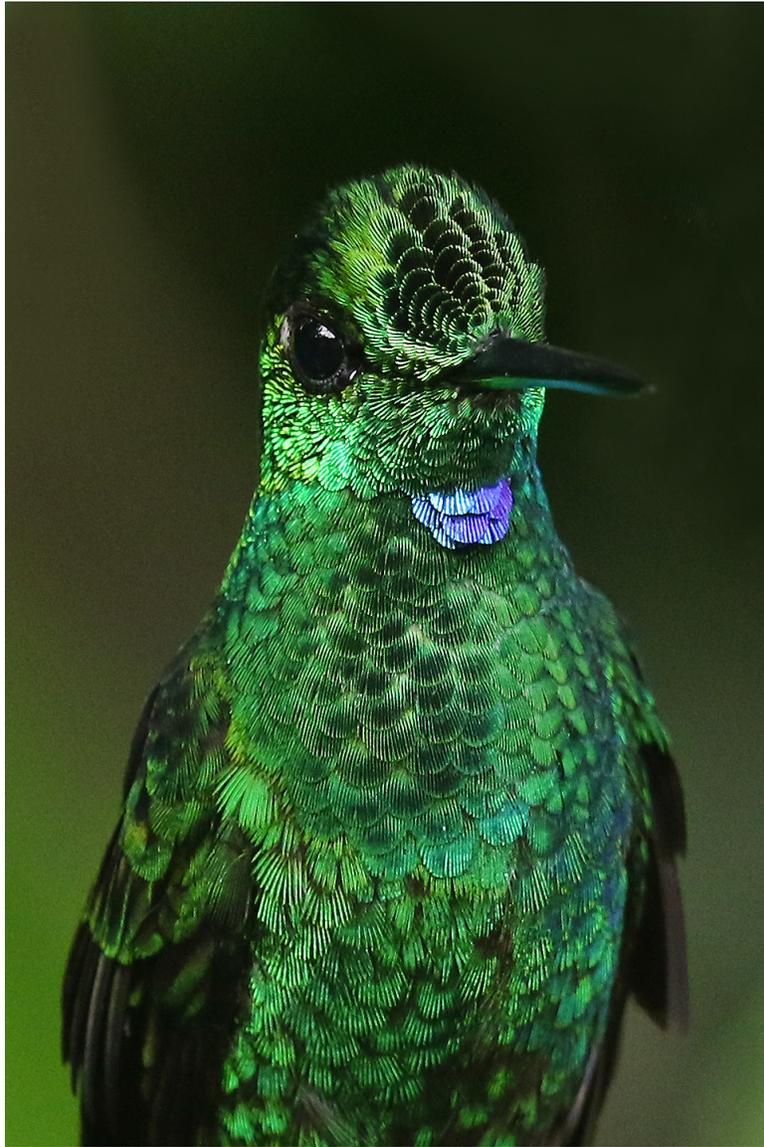
Male Green-crowned Brilliant Hummingbird. Photo by by Wayne Easley



Male Green-crowned Brilliant Hummingbird. Photo by by Wayne Easley



A male Green-crown stretching its wings. Photo by by Wayne Easley



Close up of male bird. Photo by Wayne Easley



A male Green-crown stretching its tail feathers. Photo by by Wayne Easley



A male Green-crown showing the violet-blue "stick pin". Photo by by Wayne Easley

The Wildlife Drummers

by Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center



Red-Headed Woodpecker - Photo by Cheryl Conley

THE WILDLIFE DRUMMERS

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

Is it a red-headed woodpecker or a red-bellied woodpecker? One would think that the names are self-explanatory, right? One has a red head and one has a red belly. Both birds have red feathers on their heads so you might hear people tell you they saw a red-headed woodpecker when in fact it was a red-bellied woodpecker that they saw. A red-bellied woodpecker was named for an area on the lower front that is actually a light pinkish-rosy color—not really red. The top and back of the male’s head is red. Females lack the red crown but do have a red patch on the nape of the neck. Red-headed woodpeckers have a solid red head, neck and the top of the breast.

Both red-bellied and red-headed woodpeckers are year-round residents in our area with the red-bellied being the most common. They eat insects, acorns, other types of nuts, berries, fruit, seeds, and will also eat sap from trees, mice, and nestlings (baby birds). They like to store food in cracks and crevices of trees.

Woodpeckers like to use their beaks to “drum” on hollow limbs, utility poles, gutters or the siding of your house. This “drumming” is used to attract and communicate with potential mates, to communicate a food source to its mate or can be a call for help at the nest. They can drum up to twenty times a second.

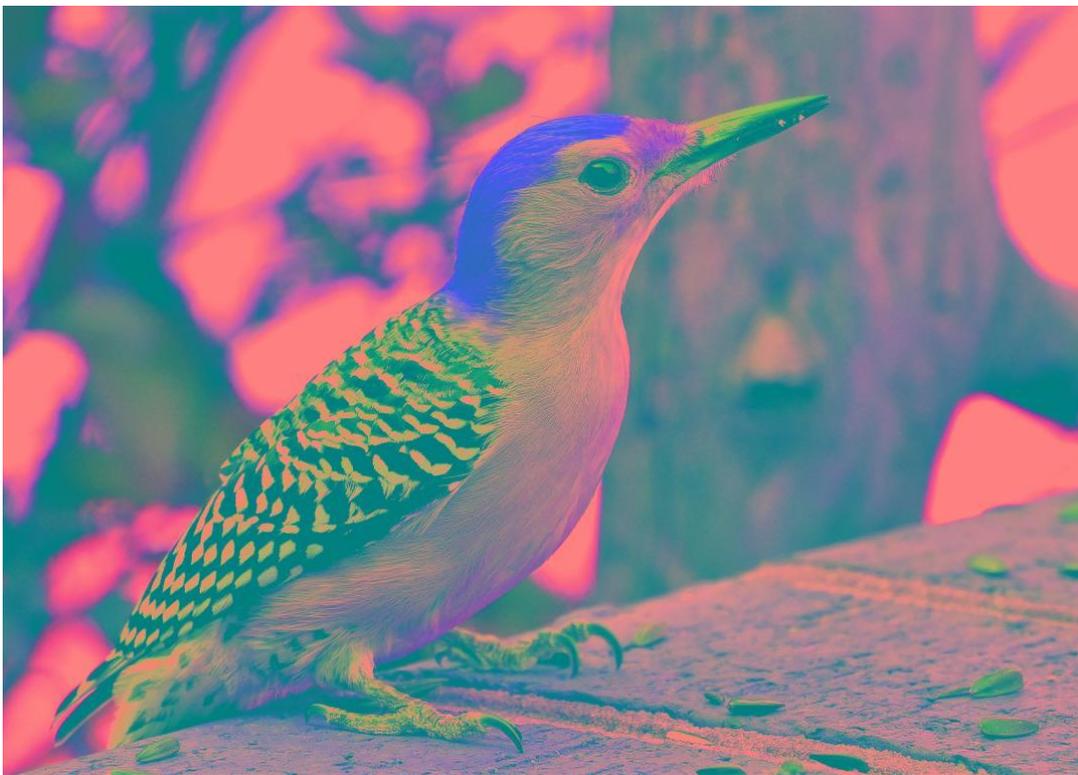
The red-bellied female will lay up to five eggs. One egg is laid each day. Babies are fed by both parents for up to four weeks. Once they fledge, Mom and Dad will

continue to look after them for another six or more weeks. The red-headed female will lay between four and seven eggs. Both parents feed the babies. What's unique about the red-bellies is that they can have two broods in the same season. They may still be caring for their fledglings while attempting to have their second brood.

Some interesting facts about woodpeckers are:

- Woodpeckers have stiff feathers near the nostrils that prevent small pieces of wood from getting into the nostril.
- They have extremely sharp claws for hanging on trees. There are four toes on each foot and the arrangement of the toes is called "zygodactyl." The first and fourth toes are pointed backwards, the second and third face forward.
- The tail of the woodpecker has spikes that dig into tree trunks and helps to keep the bird anchored.
- Woodpeckers have extraordinarily long tongues. There is a barb at the tip for catching insects and grubs.

Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation Coalition (TWRC) is celebrating 40 years serving the greater Houston area. Thank you to all of our supporters and those that care about wildlife as much as we do. If you have questions or would like to volunteer, call 713.468.8972.



Red-Bellied Woodpecker - Photo by Cheryl Conley

Beautiful Birds Photos from Hank

by H.M. Arnold



White-tailed Hawk. Photo by H. M. Arnold

Birding With Monica

November 2019

H.M. Arnold hmarnold@msn.com

We had the honor of escorting Miss Monica to San Leon (near Texas City) on a family history adventure, and somehow got “lost” and ended up at Brazos Bend.

We had taken her around briefly on Saturday up to Lamar, so this was really the second day of her birding life.

She did well.

For more bird photos from the birding trip with Monica:

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20191117-Birding-With-Monica>

Brazos Bend after the first freeze is “stark” to be polite, but there are lots of vultures moving through and still some of the locals.

Nancy was pointing out some bird in a tree in the distance, and Monica asked “What’s that a little higher and to the left, with the white head?”

Yup. Bald Eagle.

My fault there is no photographic evidence because it flew away while they were

coming to get me.

Along the way up and back we must have seen 100 hawks.

The pictures of the White Tail were taken just outside Brazos Bend. That's the farthest north I've ever seen a White Tailed Hawk.

I was lucky to get any pictures at all of the white hawk with patagial marks, because I was mesmerized by its beauty.

There are probably 5000 pictures of hawks in different pieces of computer equipment around here that I've taken in different parts of the country over the years, but I've never seen one like that.

I've put more pictures of it for anyone interested into a separate folder, named "Kriders Hawk", but I didn't give in to that identification until this morning when I finally gave up trying to figure out what it was.

For more bird photos of the Kriders Hawks:

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20191117-Kriders-Hawk>

The closest raptor I can think of in terms of colors would be a Snowy Owl, but if there is anything to that it probably breaks several Texas laws from the 1800's.

While I was taking the pictures I was thinking he had recently been on the losing end of fight with squirt guns full of Clorox.

I hate to go with Kriders, because that will get Ray Little all stirred up.

I have known since MY first day of birding that Ray Little knows more about birds than I do, but he thinks that every bird that isn't primarily covered with dark feathers is a Kriders hawk. It's so bad that every year when he and I do Christmas Bird Counts together I have to avoid getting too close to any farm houses that might have chickens, or else we'll get into fisticuffs about what to record.

Anyone that has further observations or suggestions about that hawk is encouraged to speak up.

There are also some blurry pictures that look to me to be another Harlan's Hawk north of Bay City. Clouds had moved in and the sun was going down, but that's what it looks like to me.

There is another folder for pictures I took during our trip on Saturday with Monica to Lamar. An Osprey flew right over me and landed on a post in perfect light about 20 yards away. I may never get pictures with more detail of an Osprey.

For more bird photos from Lamar of Ospreys:

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20191116-Lamar-Osprey>

So let's think about this for a second...

In Monica's first weekend birding, she saw...

1. Whooping Cranes
2. Harlan's Hawk
3. Kreider's Hawk
4. Bald Eagle (in Texas)
5. Sandhill Cranes

There are a lot of people that have been at birding for years that don't have all 5 of those birds on their life list, and Monica covers them all right up front.

Yeah, she did well.



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks in flight. Photo by H. M. Arnold

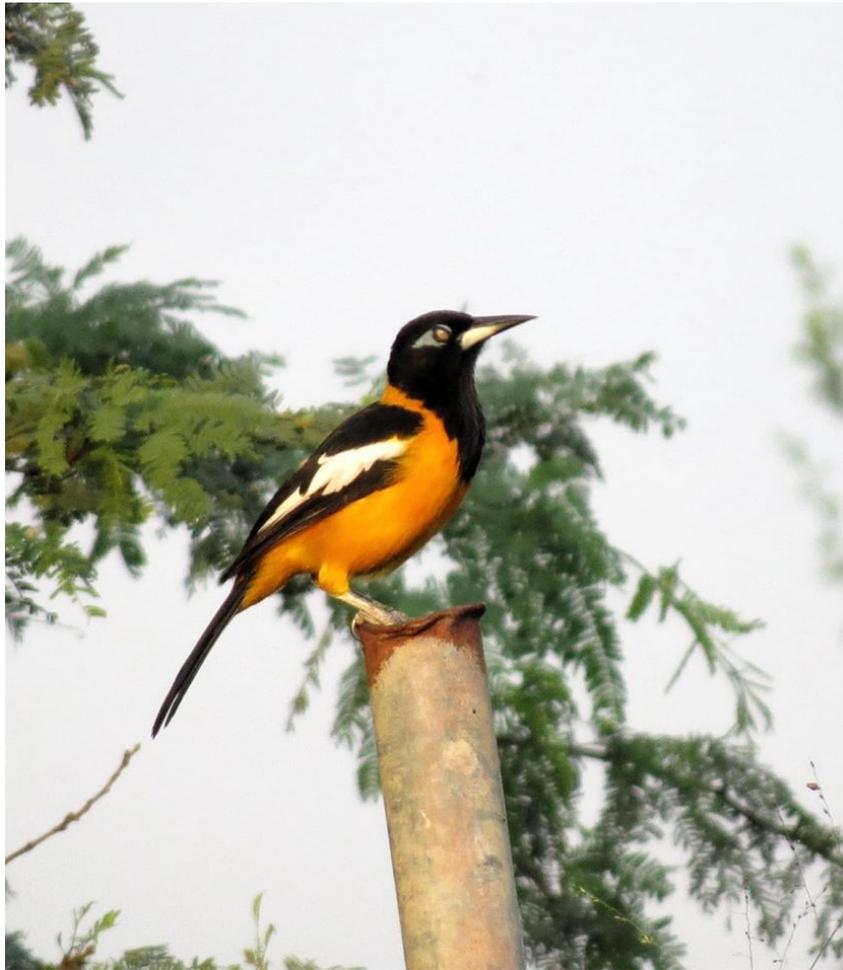


Osprey. Photo by H. M. Arnold

Photos by Bill Miller



Green Mango Hummingbird - 11-8-2019 - Puerto Rico at El Yunque National Forest - Photo by Bill Miller



A couple of these Venezuelan Troupials (large, colorful orioles) live near our b&b and greet us each morning. — with Sue Peretti Miller in Sabana Grande, Puerto Rico 11-12-2019 - Photo by Bill Miller



Spent much of the day hiking in the dry coastal forest. There were swarms of butterflies early in the day. This is one of the best ones. — with Sue Peretti Miller at Bosque Seco de Guanica, Guanica PR. - Photo by Bill Miller



Red-legged Thrush - A tropical relative of our robin - Puerto Rico - Photo by Bill Miller

Photos by Sandy Crystal Vaughn

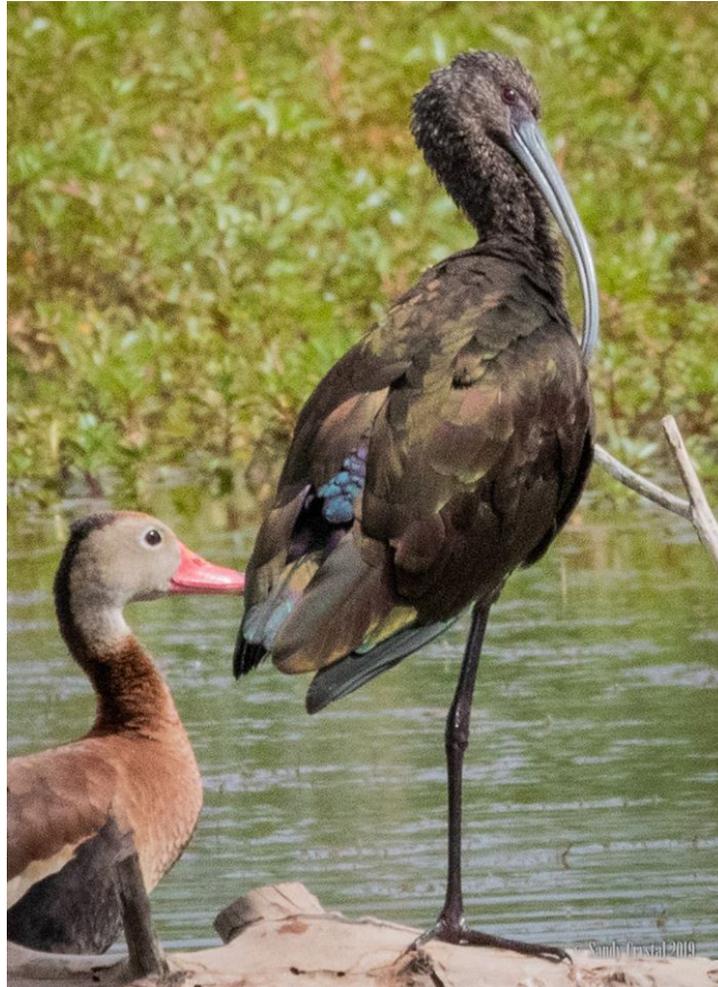


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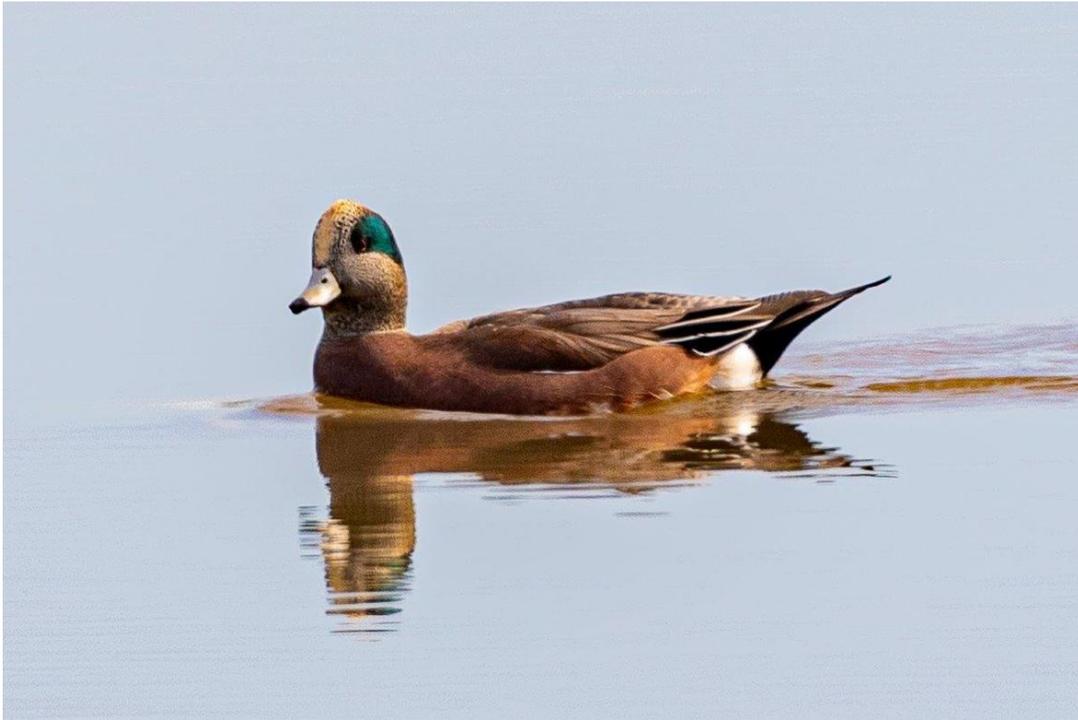
Green Jay - Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park - Photo by Sandy Crystal Vaughn



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White-facæd Ibis - Estero Llano Grande State Park - Photo by Sandy Crystal Vaughn



American Wigeon - Photo by Paul Gregg

Paul Rushing Park and Katy Prairie back roads November 17, 2019

by Paul Gregg

Greetings!

I was told of a park I didn't know about and am happy to share it with you. The name of the park is: Paul D. Rushing Park. Address: 9114 Katy Hockley Rd., Katy, TX 77493.

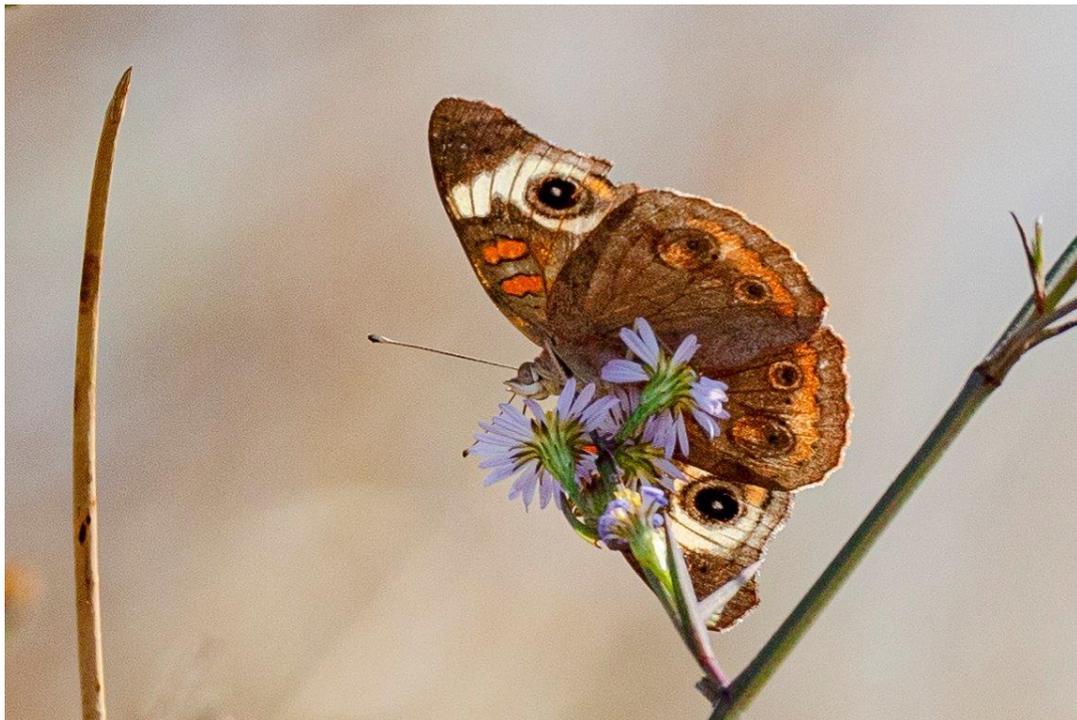
Go here for more info: <http://www.pct3.com/Parks/Paul-D-Rushing-Park> If you should decide to go birding out on the Katy Prairie, this park is definitely a place to check out.

Carol and I went there on Saturday afternoon and it was an awesome day to be out in nature. There are some interconnected lakes that would be magnets for ducks and other water birds. Their paths are wide and paved and there are a number of bird blinds. Birds weren't very abundant, and were people shy. The American Wigeon was a lifer for me. Though I may have seen one before, my life list book did not have a check, so I'm counting it as a new bird for me. The American Wigeon was the most abundant bird on the ponds, though some others were too far away to get a decent photo and identify. The small butterfly is a beauty and is called Common Buckeye. The Great Egret was stalking at the edge of the water. We also saw some red-tailed hawks, white faced ibis, killdeer, a

great blue heron, pied-billed grebe, and crows. The photo of the sparrow was all I was able to get of it when it came up and perched momentarily in the open. I'm guessing it is a Savannah Sparrow, but would appreciate it if any of my more advanced birders would weigh in on the identity.

We love to drive down roads on the Katy Prairie, especially in the winter. We sometimes will take a few hours and drive up and down those roads doing our "hawk count" to see how many hawks we can see that day, as well as look for other birds. So yesterday after we left the park, we drove on some roads, slowly zig-zagging toward Hempstead. As we drove down one tree lined road, we came upon maybe a dozen vultures (both turkey and black vultures). We slowed down and saw a Crested Caracara among the vultures. I pulled as far as I could to the side of the road, got out of the car, wanting to photograph the Caracara. Well, we were pleasantly surprised that there were two of them. After getting a few photos of one, I went to where the other one was and it called to its mate. The mate called back and flew to where the mate was. They both posed and I was surprised they didn't fly away sooner. You will see splotches where leaves were blowing around them and between me and them, but for the most part, I'm pleased to have been able to get their chests and heads together fairly nice.

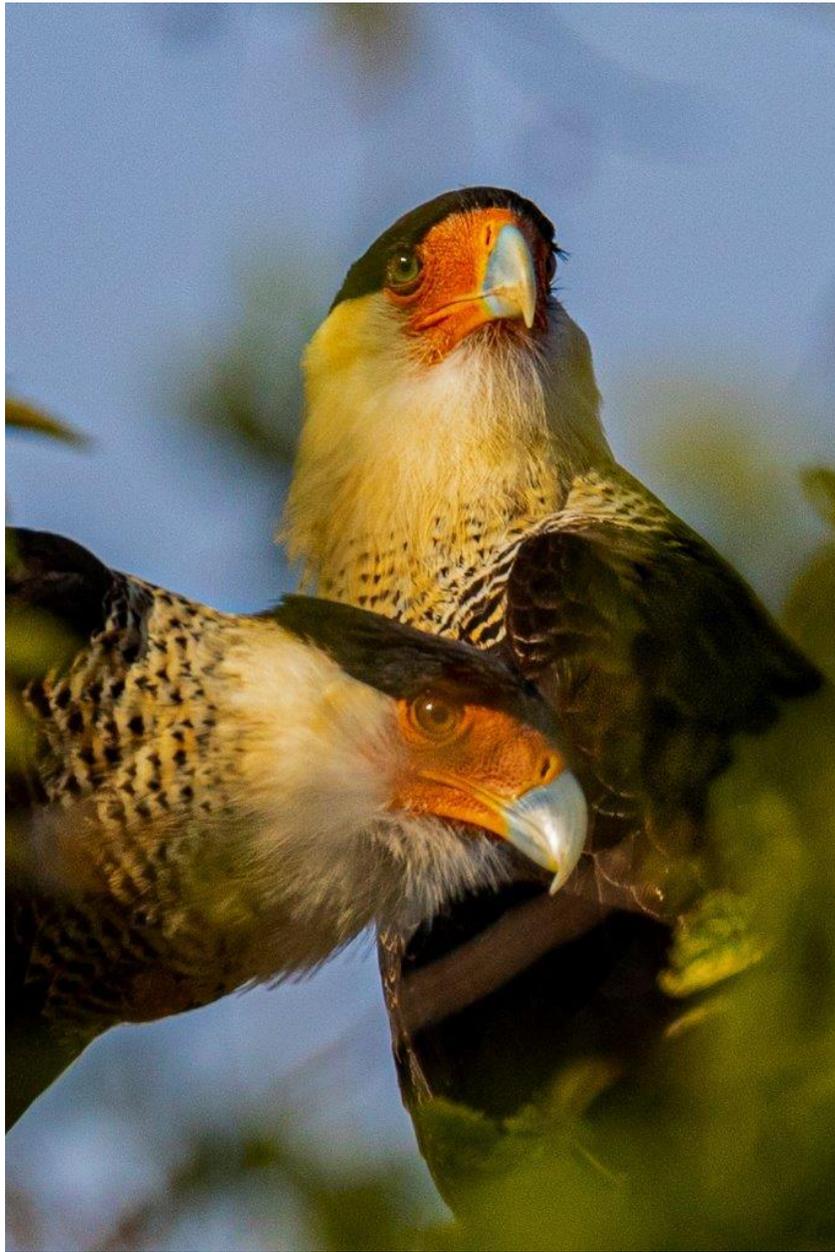
Enjoy,
Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)



Common Buckeye - Photo by Paul Gregg



Crested Caracara - Photo by Paul Gregg



Crested Caracara - Photo by Paul Gregg



Crested Caracara - Photo by Paul Gregg



Great Egret - Photo by Paul Gregg



Sparrow unidentified - Photo by Paul Gregg



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.

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 on Rayford Rd. At Grand Parkway (99), turn right on the Grand Parkway frontage road. Go 2 miles (staying on the frontage road) watching for the Johnston Park sign on your right just before you get to the Hardy Toll Road overpass; or,
2. Take Louetta Road east from I45 to where it deadends into Aldine-Westfield. Turn left on Aldine-Westfield until it deadends into Riley Fuzzel Road. Turn right onto Riley Fuzzel Road and go only 0.5 miles to the park entrance on your left just after passing under Hardy Toll Road; or,
3. Take Aldine-Westfield north from Mercer Arboretum until it deadends into Riley Fuzzel Road. Turn right onto Riley Fuzzel Road and go only 0.5 miles to the park entrance on your left just after passing under Hardy Toll Road.

Piney Woods Wildlife Membership Form		
Last Name(s):	First Name of Member(s):	
Street Address:	City:	State and Zip:
Home Phone No:	Work Phone No:	Email Address(s):
Pine Warbler will be delivered by E-mail Only		
Annual Membership Fee \$15.00* Additional Contribution \$ _____ Total \$ _____		Mail this form and check made payable to PWWS to: Piney Woods Wildlife Society P.O. Box 189 Spring, TX 77383-0189
*Per Household – Includes <i>The Pine Warbler</i> newsletter New _____ Renewal _____ Rejoining _____		

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Please join us!

PWWS web site is www.pineywoodswildlifesociety.org

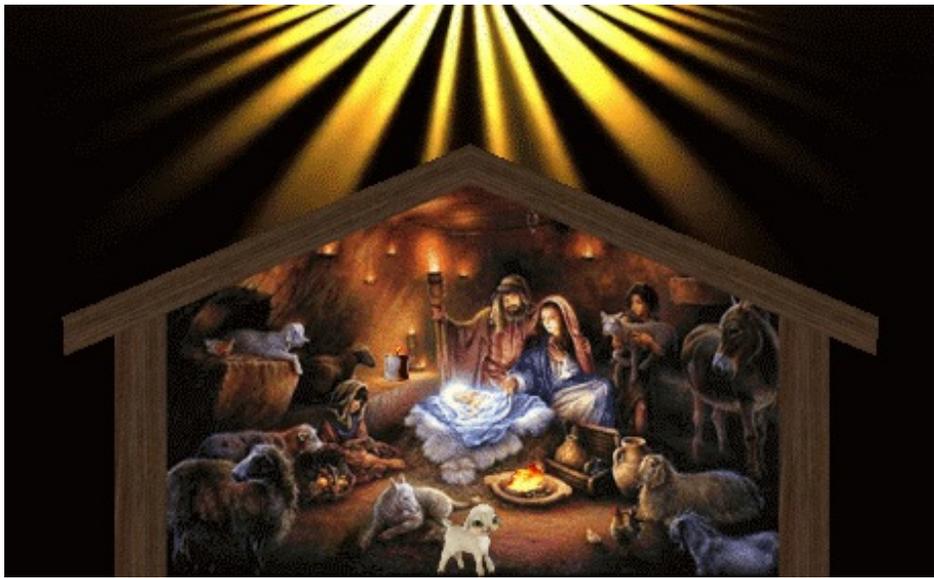
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The Pine Warbler is published monthly, September through May, by the Piney Woods Wildlife Society, Inc.

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

Please submit any articles you'd like considered for the PWWS Newsletter. The Pine Warbler, to our President, Kathy Coward, justforthebirds@sbcglobal.net or Diane Wedgeworth, Editor, milanodi@yahoo.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.





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