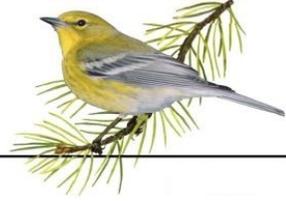


# The Pine Warbler



**PWWS January Meeting - Wednesday 15th**

**Program: "A South Texas Trip that leads to OODA"**

by Paul Gregg



*Hummingbird at Corpus Christi's Blucher Park - by Paul Gregg*

Please join the Piney Woods Wildlife Society for the January meeting. The presentation will be Wednesday, January 15th, 2020.

Back in the first week of October, Paul and Carol Gregg made sudden plans to head to Corpus Christi, then continue to South Texas to visit some birding locations. They only had 5 days, and two of them were spent on the road. Come and see what their whirlwind trip turned up and you will get to see a little bit of travel, some history, a bunch of birds, and a few sea turtles. You may be able to plan your own trip to OODA.

Hope you can join PWWS on Wednesday night, Jan 15th, for this talk by Paul. Come to the Big Stone Lodge at 6:30 p.m. for snacks and social time or by 7 p.m. for the start of the program. The lodge is located in Dennis Johnston County Park at 709 Riley Fuzzel Road just east of Old Town Spring.

### **Biography Highlights for Paul Gregg**

Paul Gregg is an avid, amateur photographer interested mostly in birds, wildlife, and travel/landscapes. He has given presentations to a number of wildlife and photography groups, but has also given basic photography lessons to Lone Star College's "Adult Lifelong Learning" classes.. He is retired from the Adult Probation Department of Harris Co., TX. Before that, he retired from a little over 29 years in the U. S. Air Force (active and reserve). He's married to Carol Anderson Gregg, who accompanies him on most of his photography outings. E-mail: paul.gregg@comcast.net



*Hummingbird at Corpus Christi Blucher Park - by Paul Gregg*



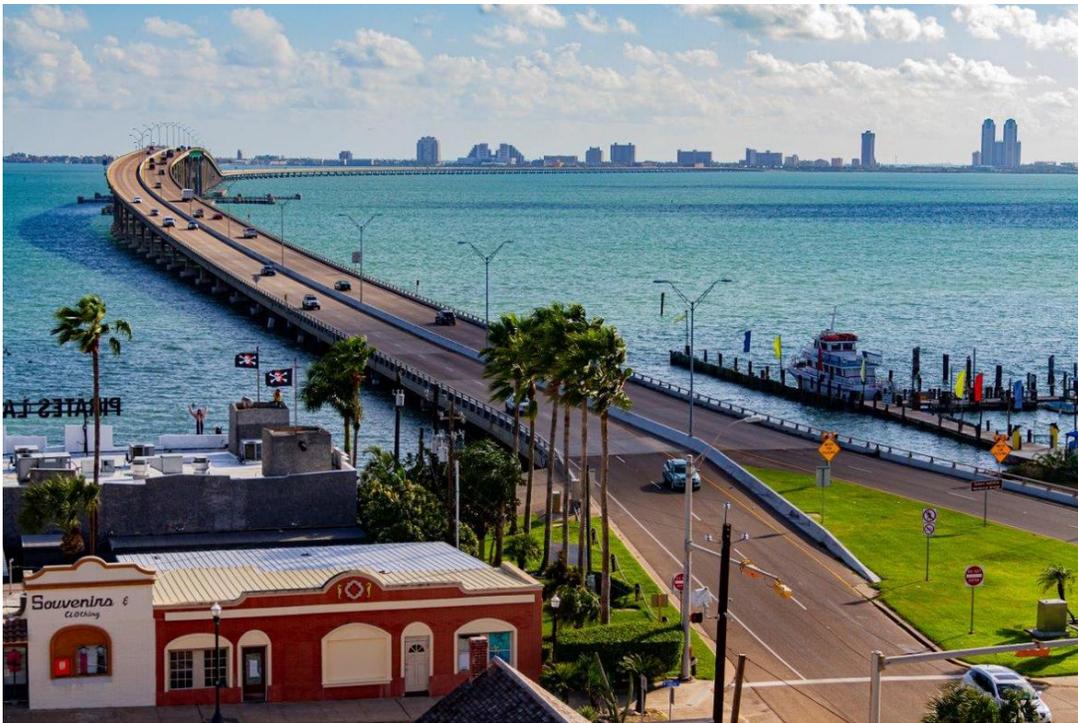
*Common Pauraque in Estero Llano Grande State Park - by Paul Gregg*



*Green Jay at Estero Llano Grande State Park - by Paul Gregg*



*Least Grebe at Estero Llano Grande State Park - by Paul Gregg*



*Port Isabel Lighthouse and Museum - by Paul Gregg*





*Pileated Woodpeckers seen by Woodlands Team - by JoJo Bradbury*

The 2019 Spring Creek Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is “in the books” with seven teams and many individuals out counting birds in the count circle (see map above). Over 70 people were either in the field or watching for birds coming into their feeders for at least the morning and some well into the afternoon on Saturday, December 14th.

This year's count garnered 103 different bird species – the highest ever for the PWWS sponsored Spring Creek CBC, which has been happening annually since 1986. The previous high species count was 98 in 2012, followed by several counts of 96 species in 2018, 2015, and 2014.

The number of individual birds counted this year (4,245) was about average compared to the last ten years, although down compared to the over 5,000 individuals counted both in 2018 and 2017.

We did have several species considered “rare” for our specific CBC and therefore required a rare bird documentation to be submitted. These included Blue-Winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Black-Crowned Night-Heron, Common Yellowthroat, and Eastern Towhee.

This data will be submitted to the national Audubon Society along with data from CBCs from all over the globe to be used by scientists to study trends in bird populations.

Big thanks go out to all the people who were able to help with this year's CBC! Please get out your 2020 calendars and save the date of Saturday, December 19th, for next year's Spring Creek CBC.

If you have any questions or want additional information, feel free to contact the compiler, Claire Moore, at [cdmoore3i@gmail.com](mailto:cdmoore3i@gmail.com).



*American White Pelicans seen by Woodlands Team - by JoJo Bradbury*



*Ruddy Duck seen by Woodlands Team - by JoJo Bradbury*



*Mercer Team - by Adrienne Paquette*



*Mottled Ducks seen by the Woodlands Team - by JoJo Bradbury*



*Hooks Group Birding on Property near Hooks Airport - by Rose Belzung Holmes*

## **Holiday Places to Bird and Photograph**

**by Jim Stevenson**

Some of you might be looking for places to go for birds and bird pictures over the holidays. More over, you might be wondering where the best place(s) might be. So...here are my thoughts, having done a lot of field work recently with clients. Believe me, it changes over time...

1. Right  
now,  
San  
Bernard  
NWR  
is  
the  
top  
destination,  
IMHO.  
I  
have  
prepared  
a

short  
PDF  
with  
birds  
I've  
shot  
there  
recently,  
but  
here  
is  
what  
it  
has:

a) Roving flocks of geese, including white-fronts and a Ross's ortwo (listen for the geese's high-pitched notes);

b) Many ducks in the big lake just before the sharp left turn ,including Gadwall, shoveler, all three teal and American Wigeon;

c) Neat songbirds along the boardwalk in the woods, past the port-o-lets, including Orange-crowned Warbler (and myrtles), [and amazingly one Wilson's and Northern Waterthrush], Ruby-crowned Kinglet, many Swamp Sparrows and a few Lincoln's, Soras in the water, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Phoebes everywhere and an Ash-throated Flycatcher, Carolina, Marsh and House Wrens, catbirds, Hermit Thrush, Blue-headed Vireo (maybe white-eyed?), gnatcatchers, RB Wdpkr and always a surprise or two.

d) The walk out to the dock behind the boardwalk (Bobcat Woods) can be productive. Sedge Wrens are common, issuing their metallic calls. I saw Palm Warbler and Vermilion Flycatcher there recently, Bald Eagles may be seen, female Ruddy Ducks and a Least Grebe are often right past the dock, harriers, red-tails and other hawks are over the high span of marshes and lakes and flocks of ducks often dot the air.

1. Anahuac  
NWR  
has  
been  
pretty  
good,  
with  
huge  
numbers

of  
geese, quite  
a  
few  
ducks  
and  
just  
a  
large  
number  
of  
birds  
to  
see.

2. Brazoria  
NWR  
has  
been  
uncharacteristically  
slow,  
but  
not  
a  
bad  
hour  
of  
birding  
on  
the  
loop  
road.

3. Rollover  
pass  
is  
closed,  
and  
Bolivar  
Flats  
& San  
Luis  
Pass  
should  
be  
birded  
at  
higher

tides,  
when  
birds  
are  
concentrated  
and  
offshore  
islands  
are  
underwater.

Enjoy your birding!



*Cinnamon Teal with Blue-winged Teal by Jim Stevenson*



*King Rail by Jim Stevenson*



*Long-billed Dowitcher by Jim Stevenson*



*Orange-crowned Warbler by Jim Stevenson*



*Redhead by Jim Stevenson*

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## **HEART Happenings**

**by Carol Allen**



*Sea Turtle Inc. Rehab Center - by Paul Gregg*

## **Rule aimed at saving more sea turtles from shrimp boats gets mixed response**

**A new federal rule aimed at protecting sea turtles from shrimping nets is getting mixed reactions from conservation groups.**

Read the entire article at the link below.

[https://www.nola.com/news/article\\_19c530fa-25c6-11ea-8127-2b708d56df38.html](https://www.nola.com/news/article_19c530fa-25c6-11ea-8127-2b708d56df38.html)

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## **Houston Zoo Lights**

**by Paul Gregg**

Dec 19, 2019 at 10:19 PM

Merry Christmas! -- And Happy New Year!

Carol and I finally went to the Houston Zoo Lights this evening and had a great time walking around the zoo, looking at and photographing many of the wonderful light displays. The Houston Zoo has done a fine job of capturing the imagination of both youngsters and us not-so-youngsters!

If you go: 1. Go early - just before sunset. If you go prior to sunset you can photograph some of the ducks at the pond AND you will be able to get in line early because the crowds gathered just after it got dark. We were able to walk in just as it got dark enough to start taking photos.

1. Camera settings

–

My ISO was set on “auto”, so most of my photos were taken at ISO 3200. The F stop was 7.1 and the shutter speed was 1/200. I did not use my flash.

2. Processing

–

Lightroom Classic was

my  
driver  
in  
my  
“digital  
darkroom”  
and  
I  
think  
it  
did  
okay  
though  
the  
ISO  
was  
3200.

### 3. Video

—  
If  
you  
take  
video  
with  
a  
cell  
phone  
and  
post  
it  
on  
Facebook,  
you  
might  
get  
a  
warning  
from  
Facebook  
saying:  
“Your  
video  
was  
blocked  
because  
it

may  
contain  
59  
seconds  
of  
music,  
audio  
or  
video  
that  
may  
belong  
to  
Permanent  
Claims.”  
When  
I  
checked  
the  
video  
on  
Facebook,  
part  
of  
the  
music  
in  
the  
background  
had  
been  
muted.  
Note:  
The  
Zoo  
had  
flashing  
lights,  
timed  
to  
Christmas  
music  
and  
other  
music,  
so

I  
guess  
one  
section  
triggered  
the  
Permanent  
Claims  
Nazis.

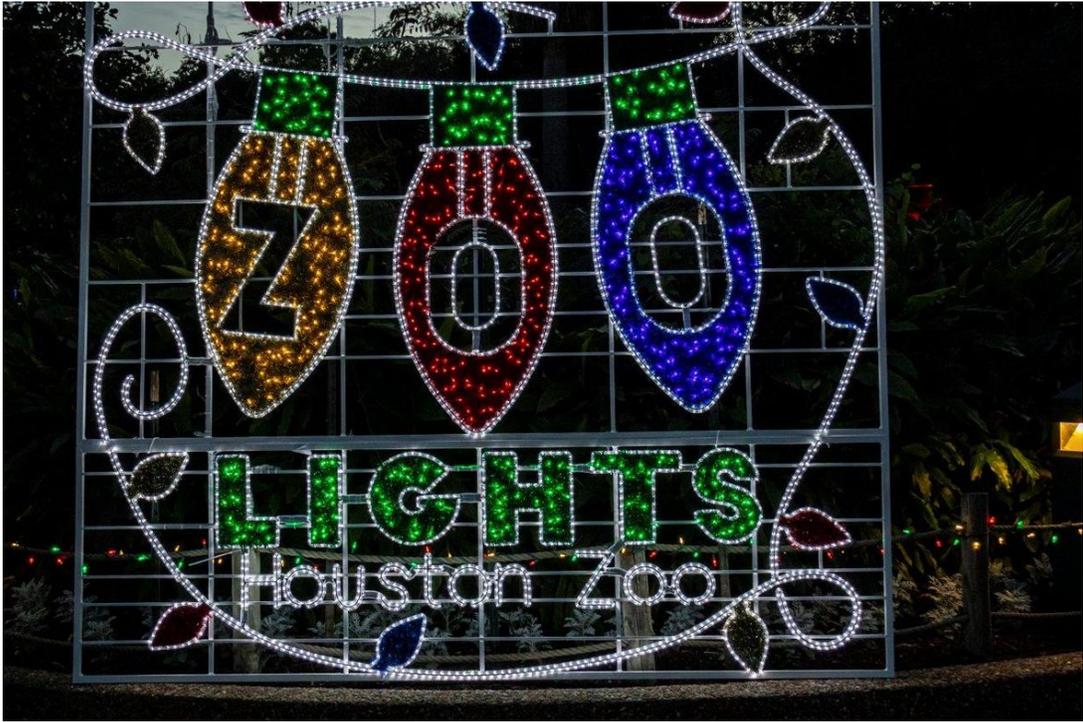
4. Crowds?

Don't  
worry  
about  
crowding.

Once  
you  
enter  
the  
area  
everyone  
scatters  
out  
pretty  
well.

It  
is  
fun  
to  
watch  
the  
children/parent  
interaction  
and  
listen  
to  
the  
exclamations  
of  
the  
children.

Enjoy! And remember the reason for the season is "Jesus".















## The Power of Volunteerism

by Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center



## The Power of Volunteerism

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

I often say that I'm working harder now as a volunteer president of a board of directors than I ever did as a paid employee. The hours are long, the work can be frustrating, and worrying about keeping our doors open is very stressful. But all it takes is for me to hold a tiny, helpless little opossum in my hand or witness the release of an animal back to the wild and I know why I do it. A sense of calm and purpose takes over and I feel great about what I'm doing.

People volunteer for a number of reasons. Some are retired and are looking for something meaningful to do. Some are students wanting to learn more about their chosen field of study. Some feel it's a way to pay it forward and some don't have a choice. They have to complete court-ordered community service.

I think we would all agree that helping others makes a person feel good but did you know that studies show there are health benefits from volunteering? According to Rodlescia Sneed, a public health research associate at Michigan State University who has studied the impacts of volunteering, "In my own work I've shown it's linked to improvements in factors like depressive symptoms, purpose in life, and feelings of optimism." It's also been shown to lower blood pressure and reduces the feelings of depression.

Here's a list of all the benefits of volunteering according to Non-Profit Hub:

- Boosts self-esteem
- Expands your connections - some people are just born with the "gift of gab" and

have no trouble talking to others. For those that tend to be shy, it's the perfect opportunity to make new friends with people who share the same interests.

- Makes you feel good
- Contributes to a longer life - volunteers encounter greater longevity and less frequency of heart disease. It can also slow the progress of Alzheimer's and other memory loss diseases.
- Gives purpose – as we age, we sometimes feel isolated but no matter who we are or what our age is, volunteering can give our lives new meaning.
- Combats stress – studies actually show the more you volunteer, the happier you become. Your body releases dopamine in the brain when you help others. This has a positive effect on how you feel.
- Sets a good example – as parents, our greatest hope is that our children grow up to be caring, giving adults. What better way to make that happen than to set a good example?
- Teaches new skills – we see it all the time. Volunteers are afraid to pick up a bird, a squirrel or opossum. With encouragement and instruction, they gain confidence and learn not only to pick them up but to feed them. You can see the pride on their faces!

Don't let fear stop you from volunteering. It's very much like starting a new job and for those of you who work, you know how stressful that can be. Every non-profit knows how valuable volunteers are. Volunteers provide their time, energies and talents to help non-profits fulfill their missions. Most non-profits have limited budgets and volunteers are the reason many non-profits are able to operate and keep the bills paid.

The most important thing to remember is to do what interests you. Do you like working with senior citizens? The homeless? Dogs and cats? If you volunteer somewhere and find it's not for you, keep looking until you find your passion.

If caring for injured, orphaned or displaced wildlife is of interest to you, please contact us. Maybe you don't want to handle animals but would like to recruit fellow volunteers, work in fundraising or design brochures. We have many different areas where you can offer your time and talents. Give Berri a call at 713.468.8972.

Make a New Year's resolution to volunteer. You'll be pleasantly surprised how this will add to your life!

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**Meticulously Scripted Christmas Picture**

by H.M. Arnold



*Photo by H. M. Arnold*

Dec 21, 2019 at 1:49 PM

H.M. Arnold [hmarnold@msn.com](mailto:hmarnold@msn.com)

To: Nancy Arnold [nejmk@msn.com](mailto:nejmk@msn.com)

I would like to say that I thought this through and staged the whole thing, but I didn't

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20191221-202-SHW>

We have a new regular visitor to our hummingbird feeder during the cold, and I'm thinkin it's a teenage Rufous male, but I'm not sure.

While I was waiting to get a picture good enough to be able to identify him, a commotion to my right caught my attention, and out comes an image of a pretty little bird with a red flower.

The picture of Tycho was two nights ago. He went outside with Nancy and immediately saw his nemesis, the Evil Possum.

It hilarious to watch their battles because Tycho knows he can't make it that high up the fence, and the possum...

Well, he plays “Possum”

They will sit they like that staring at each other until we finally drag Tycho back inside.

If the possum breaks his freeze, Tycho will start barking, so their arrangement is that they just sit there.

One night he caught Darth Possum as he was just climbing the iron pole to reach across to the hummingbird feeder in the middle of the yard. Tycho went to his duty station (sit and stare) and the Possum got caught hanging with his hindfeet on the pole and his front feet hanging on the feeder.

The poor thing was swinging across the gap and trying to play dead while swinging.

I finally felt sorry for him and hit him with a squirt of water from the hose.

This convinced him that we weren't going with his whole “Don't mind me, I'm just DEAD” offering, and his feet slipped off the pole so that he was just hanging from the feeder, which was now swinging wildly.

The whole distraction of the squirt, the slip off the pole, the swinging feeder and me laughing so hard broke Tycho's concentration, and he spun around barking.

That was enough for Mr. Possum, who dropped off the feeder and hit the ground in the middle of the yard with everything in 5th gear.

Tycho was then the one to freeze then as he contemplated his impending victory, possibly planning his subsequent parade around the yard with his new marsupial trophy.

Wasn't to be

Possums, when they want, are quite fast.

And smart

He didn't run for the gate, he took off for the nearest picket fence, which just happens to be possum wide, which is significantly smaller than Labrador Retriever wide.

He was off into the night with Tycho sticking his muzzle wedged through the fence trying to bark, but really only managing a sort of threatening “Brfff BRRFFF!!”.

No parade

Back on station the next night

It's a living

Merry Christmas!

Hank and Nancy

---

## Birding With Monica

by Hank Arnold

Dec 14, 2019 at 4:17 PM

H.M. Arnold [hmarnold@msn.com](mailto:hmarnold@msn.com)

To: Nancy Arnold [nejmk@msn.com](mailto:nejmk@msn.com), monicalramsey [monicalramsey@aol.com](mailto:monicalramsey@aol.com)

Ok, so here's the deal...

Anyone that has never seen a Harlan's Hawk, or hasn't seen one recently, needs to make friends with Monica.

On her first day of birding it took her about 45 minutes to conjure up a Harlan's Hawk.

On her second day of birding she was a little better at it and I hadn't been able to take my camera out of the bag before she's pointing up in the sky and saying "Oh, LOOK! There's another of those DARK hawks!"

I think I tore my camera bag

My thinkin is that I'm going to lure her to the beach to see if she has that same effect on fish. If so, I could knock back some serious bucks on some of the local fishing tournaments.

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20191214-Portland>

Beautiful Day

Lots of fun

Hank



## PATX CBC

**By Hank Arnold**

Dec 17, 2019 at 12:30 PM

H.M. Arnold [hmarnold@msn.com](mailto:hmarnold@msn.com)

Great day

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20191216-PATX-CBC>

Started off with a low fog, stayed hazy all day

Here are the mystery birds...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20191216-PATX-CBC-Mystery-Birds>

Anybody jump in with an opinion

Also dropped off a bunch of Monarch caterpillars to the place Julie Findley had

staked out.

Lots of milkweed, no visible caterpillars

Hank

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## Photo by Jim Snyder



*I saw this nice White-tailed buck on my walk this morning. 11-19-2019 College Station by Jim Snyder*

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## Photos by Randy Scott 12-25-2019



*Randy in Texas*

Pine Warbler male by Randy Scott



*Randy in Texas*

Pine Warbler female by Randy Scott



*Randy in Texas*  
Tufted Titmouse by Rsandy Scott



*Randy in Texas*  
Chipping Sparrow by Randy Scott

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## Photos by Bill Miller

Bill Miller is with Sue Peretti Miller and Banks Miller at The South 0.40.  
December 19, 2019 at 10:29 AM • Houston, TX

## TBT - Timberdoodle Christmas

In late December 2010 we started seeing lots of pencil-sized holes in the ground in the garden. We couldn't figure out what they were. Left by bugs emerging from the ground? Something poking holes in the ground? Whatever it was, was happening in the middle of the night. I went out looking a few times and discovered it was some sort of bird. I got a bad flash photo in the night.

The next day Banks found the bird in the yard. Turns out it was an American Woodcock aka Timberdoodle, a beautiful shorebird. Pretty shy because it is a game bird. It probes in the ground for worms with its bill, which is where the holes came from. The bird hung around until a few weeks after Christmas. No bird like that has been in the yard before or since.



*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*



*Timberdoodle - by Bill Miller*



*December 21, 2019 • This squirrel has decided that Sue's Hidden Ginger plant makes the best nesting material EVER. She's been back and forth all morning. Interesting to watch her wad it all up into a nice little bundle and carry it up the tree. — with Sue Peretti Miller at The South 0.40.*



*Phainopepla, Southern Arizona by Bill Miller*

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## **Photos by Sandy Crystal Vaughn**

November 10, 2019

When coming back from a quick trip to The Lower Rio Grande Valley this week, I made a stop in Victoria on my way back to Houston. I was blown away by the numerous peacocks and peahens casually hanging out on the grounds of the zoo and how approachable they were. Stupendous colors.



*Peacock at Texas Zoo in Victoria - Photo by Sandy Crystal Vaughn*



*Peacock - Photo by Sandy Crystal Vaughn*



*Leucistic - Photo by Sandy Crystal Vaughn*



*Peahen - by Sandy Crystal Vaughn*



## 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.

<b>Piney Woods Wildlife Membership Form</b>		
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:  <b>Piney Woods Wildlife Society</b> <b>P.O. Box 189</b> <b>Spring, TX 77383-0189</b>
*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](http://www.pineywoodswildlifesociety.org)

PWWS Facebook site is at <https://www.facebook.com/Piney-Woods-Wildlife-Society-125891867423250/>

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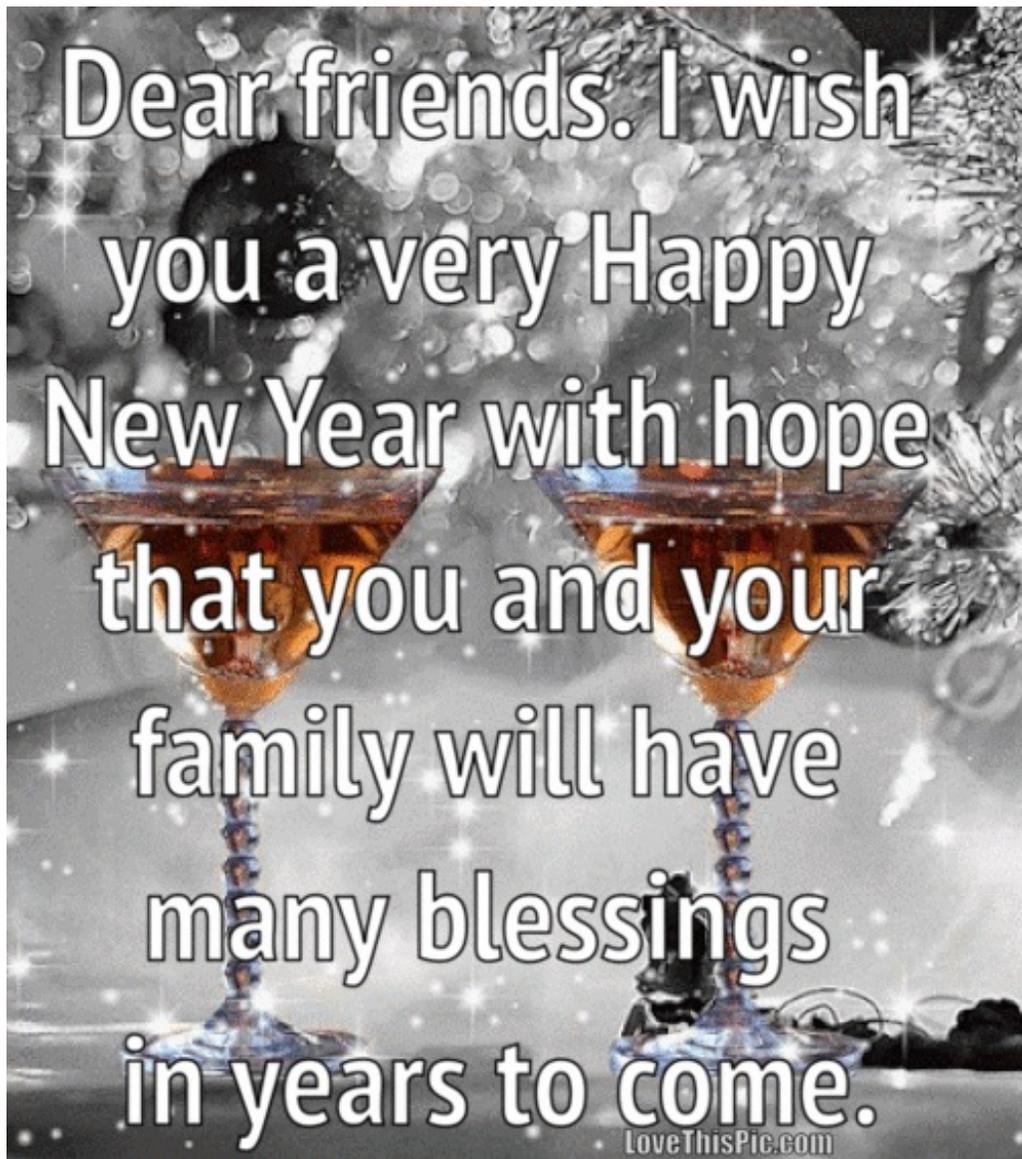
The Pine Warbler is published monthly, September through May, by the Piney Woods Wildlife Society, Inc.

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](mailto:justforthebirds@sbcglobal.net) or Diane Wedgeworth, Editor, [milanodi@yahoo.com](mailto:milanodi@yahoo.com)

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

---



Dear friends. I wish  
you a very Happy  
New Year with hope  
that you and your  
family will have  
many blessings  
in years to come.

LoveThisPic.com



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