

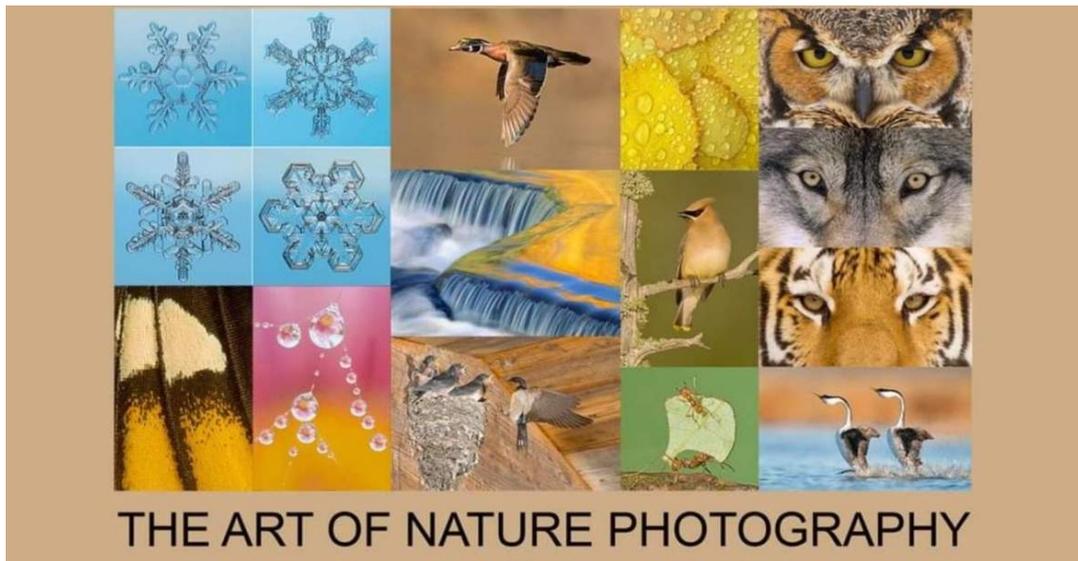
The Pine Warbler



PWWS Meeting will be Virtual on November 11, 2020 at 7PM

Bird Photography by Steve Gettle





The November Piney Woods Wildlife Society program will be virtual again this month — it will take place on Wednesday, Nov 11th, at 7 p.m. We aren't quite ready for "in person" meetings yet, but are working toward that.

Enjoy beautiful bird and nature photography by Steve Gettle. Steve believes that creating photographs of the birds of our world is a fun and challenging pursuit. Steve will show us his beautiful bird photos and share tips and tricks to take your bird photography to the next level. Attendees will learn how to effectively use fill-flash, how to use many different types of blinds, as well as how to build a backyard bird photography studio. Participants will learn why you don't need a \$12,000 lens to make a picture of a bird.

Steve Gettle has been photographing the natural world for over 30 years. He photographs the natural world because he loves it. Steve has been passionate about nature since he was a small child, and he is fortunate to have been able to build his life around nature and his photography. Steve's cameras have taken him around the world and shown him wondrous things that he could hardly have even dreamt of.

If you wish to attend this free virtual presentation, you have to register at this link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DvE8E689Qr6WukzYRACgtA Once you register, you will be emailed a link to the Zoom presentation from Gettle Photography. FYI, you will also get a reminder email from Gettle Photography 24 hours before the program. Look for that email and click the Zoom link there to join the program.



Western Grebs - Photo by Steve Gettle

Note from PWWS President

We do hope you can join us for our November virtual zoom meeting. Details in the newsletter above. Looks like a good one! Thanks again to Carlos for arranging this.

We will not have a meeting for December but do encourage all of you to volunteer for the Christmas Bird Count if you are able to do so. Details of the Count are in the Newsletter. Another reminder that your dues for 2020 will also pay for 2021. Email Jim Lacey if you have questions on this. His Email is jelaceyiii@gmail.com.

Some of our members and friends have had Covid-19. Our prayers and good thoughts are with you all. Let us all hope 2021 will be so much better than this awful year. Enjoy the Holidays in the best ways you can and hopefully we can give real in person hugs before long.

Kathy Coward, Your President

No matter what's going on in your life,
there is ALWAYS something to be

THANKFUL

for



THANKFUL



We Are Friends!
Happy Thanksgiving



Bald Eagles are nesting in Tomball

By Claire Moore



Bald Eagle - Photo by David Reynolds

Bald Eagles used to be difficult to find in our area, but their numbers are continuing to grow and they are getting more common. And now we have a pair that is easy to see (with binoculars) nesting in Tomball.

The following FaceBook group, created by Claire Moore in March 2020, has all kinds of information on the pair of bald eagles that are nesting in Tomball. They are present each year between late September and early May as they work hard to raise their eaglets. FYI, the eggs are usually laid sometime around late November, eaglets are born around Christmas time, and fledging around Easter.

The bald eagle nest in Tomball is located behind Target at FM2920 & Highway 249 (address 14302 FM 2920 Rd, Tomball, TX 77377). Please be respectful of the Target store and do not block the roadway behind Target because there are many delivery trucks that go in and out all the time. Also be respectful of the eagles and stay in the parking lot and don't attempt to hike closer to the nest as this can cause alarm to the parents.

If you are interested, please join the FaceBook group below and you will enjoy the information and photos from many local bird watchers and fantastic photographers who go out to follow the lives of our local eagles. [Please make sure and read & agree to the rules of the group before submitting your request to join.]

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EnjoyTomballEagles>



Photo by
Robert Thompson

Eagles Photo by Robert Thompson



© Sid Ehlert Photography



Bald Eagle - Photo by Claire Moore

© Robert Thompson

NEW TOMBALL RESIDENTS

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center



Bald Eagle - Photo by Keith Turpin

A pair of beautiful bald eagles are now calling Tomball, Texas, home and they've become quite the attraction. People are coming from miles around just to get a glimpse of them and to snap a photo. Should you decide to come and take a look, remember to keep your distance and do not disturb the birds in any way.

Bald eagles are protected by multiple federal laws that include the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Lacey Act as well as other state and municipal protections that may be in place. The Eagle Act was originally passed in 1940 and was amended in 1972, increasing civil penalties. The Act provides criminal penalties for persons who "take, possess,

sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, at any time or any manner, any bald eagle ... [or any golden eagle], alive or dead, or any part*, nest, or egg thereof." The Act defines "take" as "pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb."

"Disturb" means: "to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, 1) injury to an eagle, 2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or 3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior."

Here are some interesting facts about Bald Eagles:

- They have been our national symbol since 1782.
- They are almost always found near water.
- They live to be between 20 and 30 years old. The oldest recorded bald eagle was 38.
- Their wingspan is between 6 feet and 7.5 feet.
- Females are larger than males.
- They can see 4 to 7 times better than humans.
- They can see fish up to a mile away.
- They mate for life but should one of the pair die, the other will find another mate.
- They return to the same nest every year. They will make repairs and add additional twigs, grass, etc. each year. The nests average 2-4 feet deep and 4-5 feet wide. The largest nest on record weighed 2 tons!
- The female lays 1 to 3 eggs and both the male and female take turns sitting on the eggs. The first egg will hatch after 35 days of incubation. The next egg will hatch several days later.
- Sometimes the first eaglet to hatch will kill the younger one(s).
- By 3 weeks of age, the feet and beaks are nearly as large as an adult.
- Eaglets fledge between 8 and 14 weeks of age.
- It's not until 3 years of age that the head and tail begin to turn white. In the 4th year, the eagle gets its white head, tail and upper and undertail coverts.
- Eagles can swim—sort of. If they swoop down for a fish and it's too heavy, they will paddle to shore.

TWRC Wildlife Center asks that you respect all wildlife. With regard to the Tomball eagles, keep your distance, view with binoculars, keep the noise level down and report anyone harassing them or getting too close. They could be breaking a federal law.

www.twrcwildlifecenter.org

713-468-TWRC



CREATOR'S CANVAS-NATURE'S GARBAGE COLLECTORS/THE VULTURES OF COSTA RICA!

Photos By Wayne Easley



King Vultures near Pital, CR, Aug. 23, 2015 - Photo by Wayne Easley

In all of the Americas, there are only seven species of vultures. Here in Costa Rica, we have four of the seven. While some people suggest that the vultures are dirty, gross, or awful creatures, the birds are quite interesting and are actually an essential part of the eco-system. They feed primarily on dead and decaying animals. Just last week, I came across a whole flock of Black Vultures feeding on what looked like a dead dog on the side of the road. They were ripping the animal apart with their powerful hooked beaks. Let's begin our study with the most common vulture in Costa Rica, the Black Vulture.

1-The Black Vulture-There is hardly a town or village in the entire country that does not have its share of Black Vultures. They are mostly black with a white patch at the base of the primaries and have naked heads with a wrinkled appearance. They often ascend to great heights to scan for food since they lack the olfactory senses of some of the other vultures. Once they spot something dead, they descend to feed and that is when they congregate fighting and jostling in throngs at a large carcass or a village dump. They drive away the less common Turkey Vulture.

2-The Turkey Vulture-These birds have a bare red head and use a keen sense of smell to locate food. Keying on odor trails, the birds are able to locate dead animals that are hidden by vegetation. Since all vultures mate for life, the Turkey Vulture is most often seen in pairs. In Costa Rica, we have resident birds but in the spring and fall of the year, there are large spectacular flocks of migrant birds that generally are seen along the Caribbean Coast. Like other vultures in the Americas, the birds lack a syrinx which means they are pretty

much voiceless and communicate only through low grunts or hisses..

3-The Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture-This vulture is most often seen in the Cano Negro or Medio Queso area (both places are near Los Chiles on the border with Nicaragua) These birds closely resemble the Turkey Vulture but are smaller and have yellowish orange on the head. Immature birds can be difficult to identify correctly. The Lesser Yellow-heads frequent marshes and wooded margins of rivers that are seasonally flooded.. They often fly very low and feed mainly on dead fish, turtles and reptiles. Like other vultures, the female lays two creamy white eggs usually in a dead stump, a cave or in heavy vegetation. Both male and female birds share in the incubation duties.

4-The King Vulture-This spectacular vulture is the largest one in the country. It is usually solitary or hanging out with a mate and likes lowland forests. The black and white plumage sets the bird apart from the other vultures but the head is gaudily variegated with colors that rival the rainbow. There is a mix of orange, yellow, blue and black set against the black and white of the bird's body. When feeding on a dead animal the king vulture rules the roost, driving away the other vultures. The King Vulture is a bird worth seeing. Actually any of the American Vultures, soaring high overhead, are a delight to see. And we need to thank the vultures too, for helping clear out the dead animals.

I will leave you with some interesting facts I picked up in my studies of the vultures. A KETTLE is a circling flock of vultures high in the sky-like a boiling pot of water. A VENUE is a set of resting or roosting vultures while a WAKE is a flock of hungry vultures at a carcass. And I conclude with a short anecdote: This older couple was walking slowing along the beach one day when a kettle of vultures began circling overhead. As the man gazed at the sky, he said to his wife. "Honey, don't you think, we should be moving a little faster?."

PICTURES: Please use the images only for educational purposes. Thank you kindly, Wayne Easley/written on Oct. 6, 2020 in Costa Rica



Turkey Vulture up close at Rancho Oriente, CR, Jan. 31, 2017 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Black Vulture near Rancho Oriente, CR Mar. 6, 2017 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Black Vulture near La Canada, CR, Mar. 6, 2017 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Turkey Vulture, Catie, CR, Nov. 11, 2013 - Photo by Wayne Easley



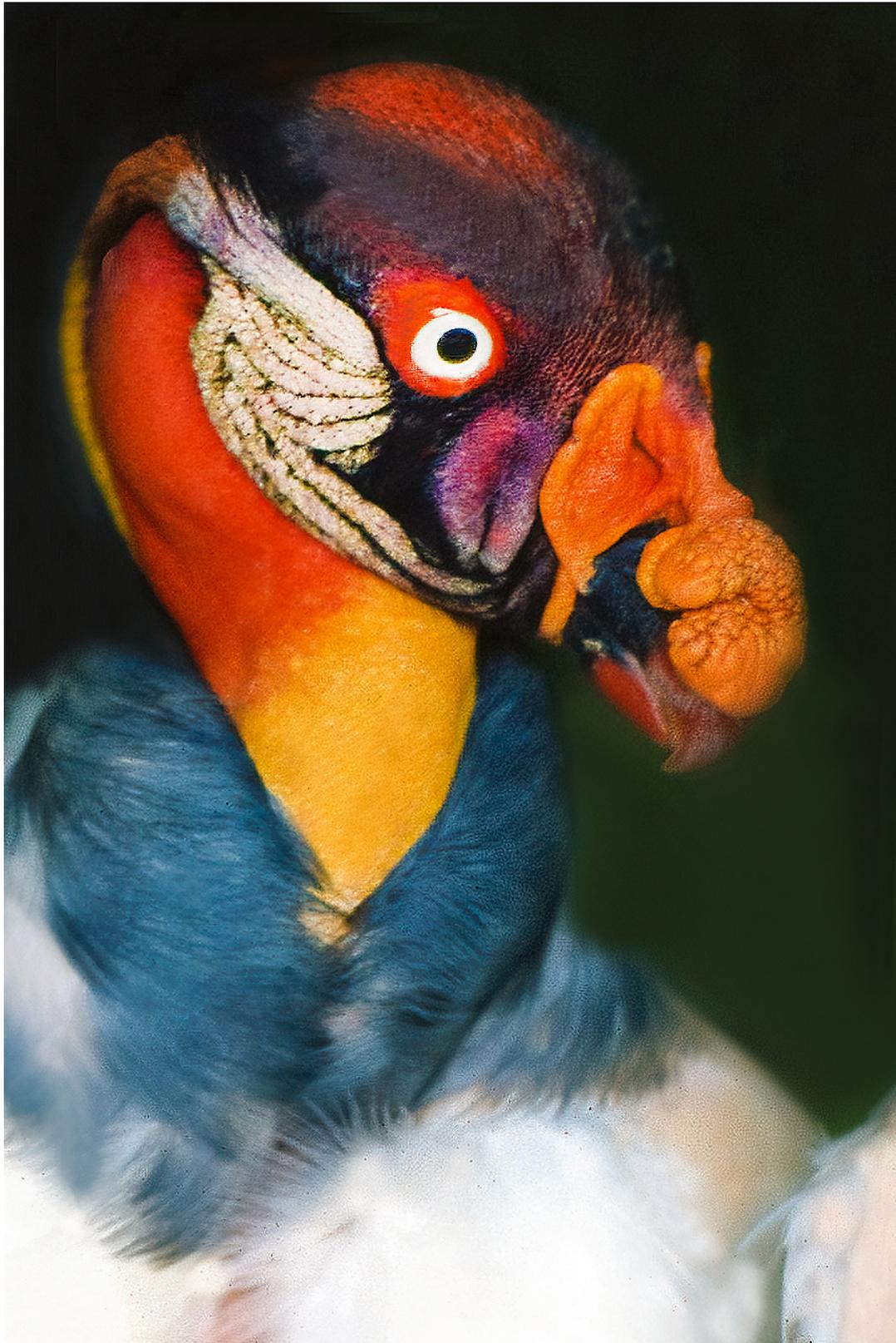
Turkey Vulture, Catie, CR, Nov. 11, 2013 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Turkey Vulture, Rancho Oriente, CR, Jan. 31, 2017 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Lesser Yellow-Headed Vulture, Medio Queso, CR. Nov. 2012 - Photo by Wayne Easley



King Vulture, date and place unknown - Photo by Wayne Easley

King Vulture
© **Steven Easley**



King Vulture - Thanks to my son Steven for the flight shot of the King Vulture.

Photos by Hugh Wedgeworth

BEST/NABA - Butterfly Count - We only had two Butterfly Counts

in 2020



Baytown Butterfly Count - 10-31-2020 - Sallie Sherman, Guy Michael, Diane & Hugh Wedgeworth Photo by Hugh Wedgeworth



Baytown Butterfly Count - Leader Sallie Sherman - Photo by Hugh Wedgeworth



Dorantes Longtail Urbanus dorantes - Trinity Butterfly Count - 10-24-2020 - Photo by Hugh Wedgeworth

Photo by David Ortega



Southern Pearly Eye *Enodia portlandia* - Trinity Butterfly Count - 10-24-2020 - Photo by David Ortega

Photos by Sandy Crystal



Whooping Cranes - They really are five feet tall. - Photo by Sandy Crystal



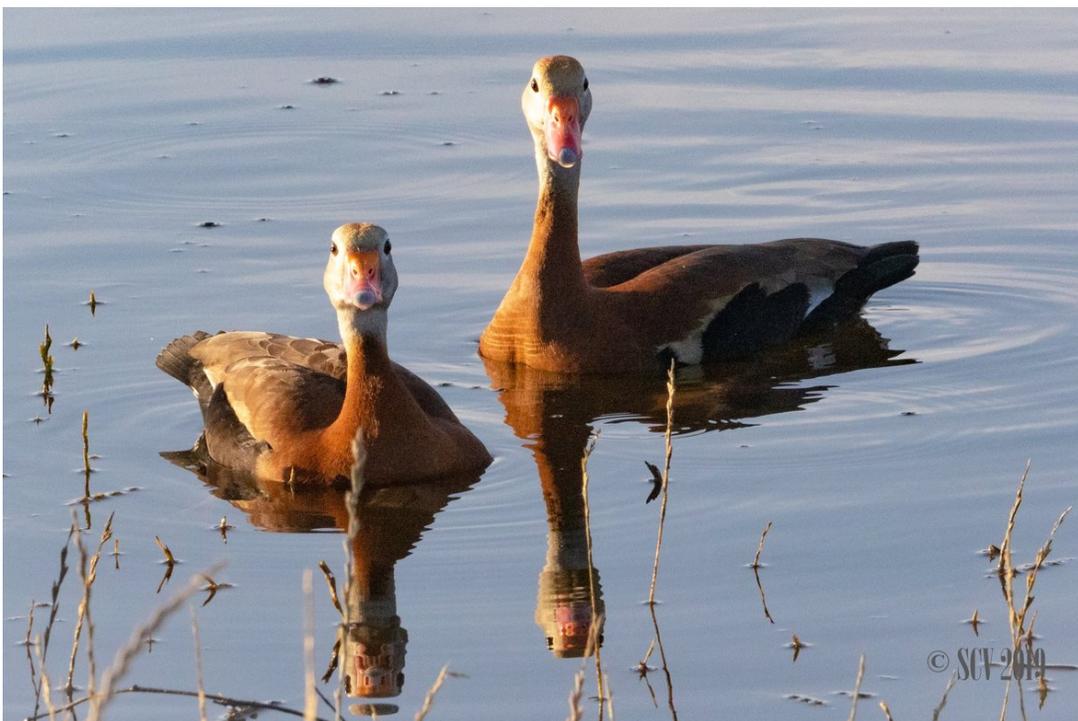
Common Loon - Texas City Dike March 2019 - Photo by Sandy Crystal



Great Egret - Photo by Sandy Crystal



Blue Jay getting ready to launch off oak branch perch! Backyard Clear Lake City (Houston) Texas - Photo by Sandy Crystal



Early morning greeters at Exploration Green walking trail - Black-bellied Whistling Ducks at Exploration Green Clear Lake City.- Photo by Sandy Crystal



Painted Skimmer Dragonfly - Photo by Sandy Crystal



Female Roseate Skimmer Dragonfly perched on Porterweed. Backyard Clear Lake City (Houston) Texas - Photo by Sandy Crystal



This intriguing bug awaiting discovery was twelve feet up on the palm tree trunk. Doing a reverse staircase, he would periodically move down and to the side. After 20 minutes, he was at eye level. The camera was smoking! This is a Resh Cicada. It is a male (he "sang" for me at the end of our photo session). In addition to his two compound eyes, he has three simple eyes (ocelli); the jewel-like ruby spots in the center. The inverted "V" is actually the letter Resh (mirror imaged), found in the Hebrew alphabet! - Photo by Sandy Crystal

Photos by Cat Trayer

Edinburg, TX. Lots of Mexican Fritillary caterpillars munching away on my Cuban Buttercup (*turnera ulmifolia*) in my yard. I had to go buy three more plants! The place where I bought them thought I was nuts to buy plants just so the caterpillars could eat them! Yup! I've been known to do that lots of times! I moved a couple dozen caterpillars into a caterpillar cage to raise and release. Most are in the last instar stage now or have formed chrysalids. There's gold and copper in them thar hills! Such a pretty metallic looking chrysalis.

Mexican Fritillary
(*Euptoieta hegesia*)
Chrysalis



Mexican Fritillary
(*Euptoieta hegesia*)
Chrysalis



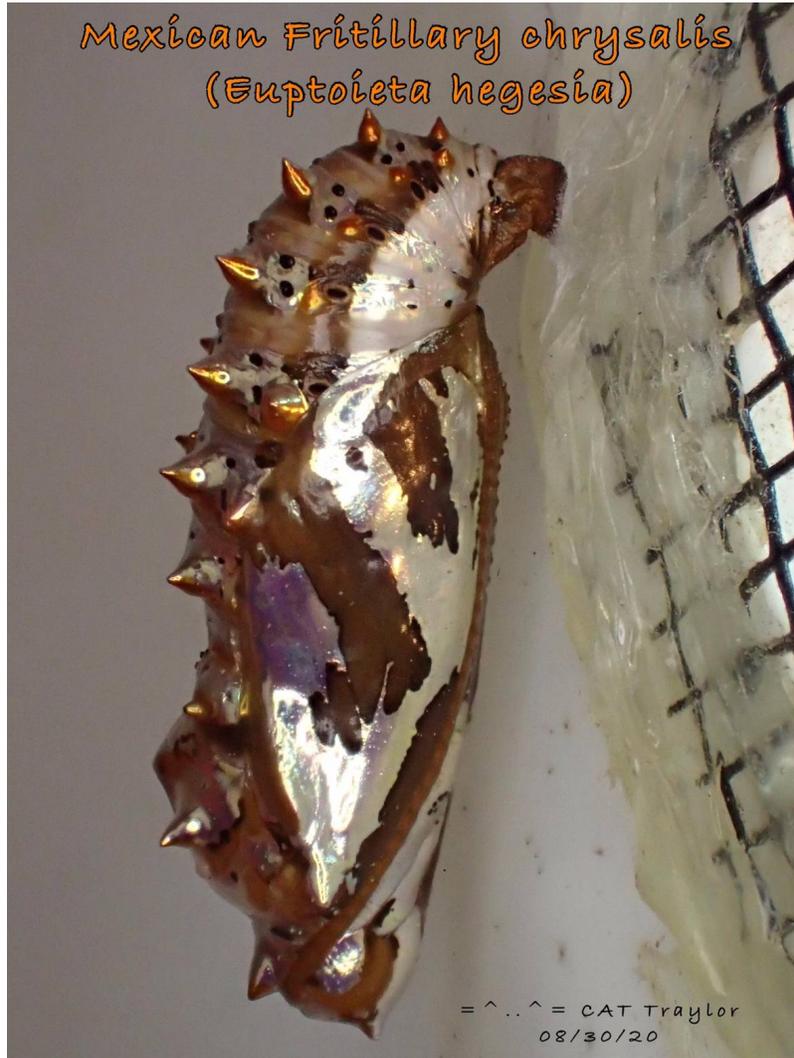
= ^ .. ^ = CAT Traylor
08/30/20

Mexican Fritillary
(*Euptoieta hegesia*)
Chrysalis



= ^..^ = CAT Traylor 08/30/20

Mexican Fritillary chrysalis
(*Euptoieta hegesia*)



Mexican Fritillary (Euptoieta hegesia) caterpillar - Photo by Cat Traylor



Group of Mexican Fritillaries - Photo by Cat Traylor



Adult Mexican Fritillary (Euptoieta hegesia) - Photo by Cat Traylor

Polydamas Swallowtails

10-25-20 Edinburg, TX. When butterflies compete!

A cluster of Polydamas Swallowtail eggs topped off with Pipevine Swallowtail eggs!



Polydamas Swallowtail and Pipevine eggs - Photo by Cat Traylor



Clutch of Polydamas Swallowtail caterpillars - Photo by Cat Traylor



Polydamas Swallowtail (Battus polydamas) Caterpillars - Photo by Cat Traylor



Polydamas Swallowtail (Battus polydamas) Caterpillars - Photo by Cat Traylor



Polydamas Swallowtail (Battus polydamas) - Caterpillars - Photo by Cat Traylor



Polydamas Swallowtail (Battus polydamas) larger instar caterpillar - Photo by Cat Traylor



Polydamas Swallowtail (Battus polydamas) Chrysalis - Photo by Cat Traylor



Polydamas Swallowtail (Battus polydamas) Adult Butterfly - Photo by Cat Traylor



Polydamas Swallowtail (Battus polydamas) Adult Butterflies - Photo by Cat Traylor



Caterpillar cages I made to raise in and then release the butterflies. - Photo by Cat Traylor

Photos by Bill Miller



A Wild Tamandua - Brazil - Photo by Bill Miller



Box Turtle - Photo by Bill Miller



This Orange-footed Scrubfowl looks like it's from a Japanese monster movie. Although it's only the size of a small chicken, it builds a giant mound (room-sized) to lay eggs in. See the video below. — at Cairns Botanic Gardens, Australia - Photo by Bill Miller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZBA0irVIRU>



American Dipper - This one just looks kind like of a drab robin, but the weird thing about it is, although it's in the songbird family, it makes its living underwater. It walks on the bottom of creeks, and dives into ponds.

See the video below. — at Banff National Park, Canada - Photo by Bill Miller

Don't miss this amazing video clip!

<https://www.audubon.org/news/a-dipper-dives>



Black Skimmer. This large, tern-like bird's lower bill is quite a bit longer than the upper. It flies very low over the water with its lower bill plowing into it...when the bill touches a fish, the bird snaps it up. See picture in comments for the bird in action at Quintana Beach County Park, Quintana, Texas - Photo by Bill Miller



This is a Rufous Hornero, again a not-flashy robin-looking bird. Their claim to fame is that they build giant mud nests that look like old school bread ovens. "Hornero" = "baker" in Spanish. In the part of Brazil we were in, any tree or windmill we saw was likely to have a couple of these nests in it.



Rufous Hornero's nest - Photo by Bill Miller

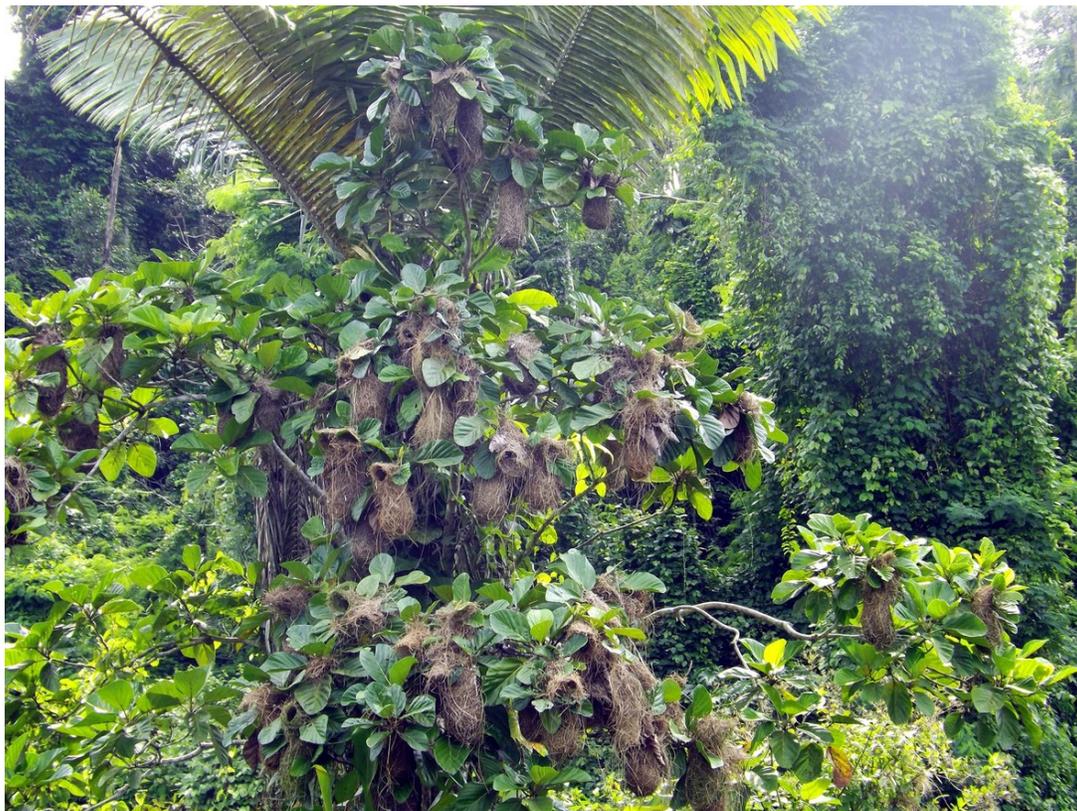


Strange birds continued... Southern Cassowary. Sue and I were camping in Mission Beach on the tropical east coast of Australia. We were there to look for cassowaries and other birds. This particular morning it was raining so we decided to do the laundry. As we stepped back out of the campground laundry room we encountered this cassowary. It must have been a young one because it lacked the horn on its head and the brightly colored neck wattles. But it was still as tall as Sue. We were nonplussed because cassowaries are dangerous...they have killed people from kicks with those gigantic clawed feet. But this one just walked out of the campground into the jungle. This may be why the picture isn't in very good focus... at Mission Beach Hideaway Holiday Village. - Photo by Bill Miller

<https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/.../be-cassowary-flyer...>



Odd bird living habits continued. Yellow-rumped Caicque. These birds weave a basket-shaped nest (you can see some beside him) and live in large colonies in Peru. - Photo by Bill Miller



Colony Tree of the Yellow-rumped Caicque - Photo by Bill Miller



Golden-fronted Woodpecker In the US, mostly only in Texas, also in a small part of Oklahoma. - Photo by Bill Miller



A Bearded Barbet from Cameroon - Photo by Bill Miller



Steller's Jay on a mossy cedar shingled roof.- Yoho National Park, Canada. Photo by Bill Miller



Eared Grebe. Watch out for the laser beam eyes Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, NV - Photo by Bill Miller



Sandhill Cranes in the sunset... — with Sue Peretti Miller and Banks Miller at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Bosque_del_Apache/

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge

Mule deer and fawn video credit: Walker/USFWS

Be ready for secretive wildlife crossing the road as you drive around the tour loop. After getting a long drink of water from the channel, this mule deer and her fawn changed direction and returned to the cottonwoods on the opposite side of the tour loop.

Video shows a mule deer emerge from brown sunflowers to cross the road. Behind her, a smaller mule deer emerges from the sunflowers to follow. Both deer disappear into the trees on the edge of the gravel road.

Photos by Randy Scott



Gulls at Port Aransas - Photo by Randy Scott

A collection of Gull photos from Port Aransas last week is below. There were two species and maybe more: Laughing Gull (prominent) and a much larger species. Did you know that the white bands on the tail or wing tips are significant and related to age in Gulls?



Porpoise photo from the Port Aransas North Jetty. Caught it perfectly with the high speed shutter. - Photo by Randy Scott



Ocola Skipper - Photo by Randy Scott



Fiery Skipper - Photo by Randy Scott



10-12 foot alligator sleeping. I could find no way to photograph the entire animal. Just its head 10-18-2020 -
Photo by Randy Scott.



Oyster Catcher in Port Aransas - 10-18-2020 - Photo by Randy Scott

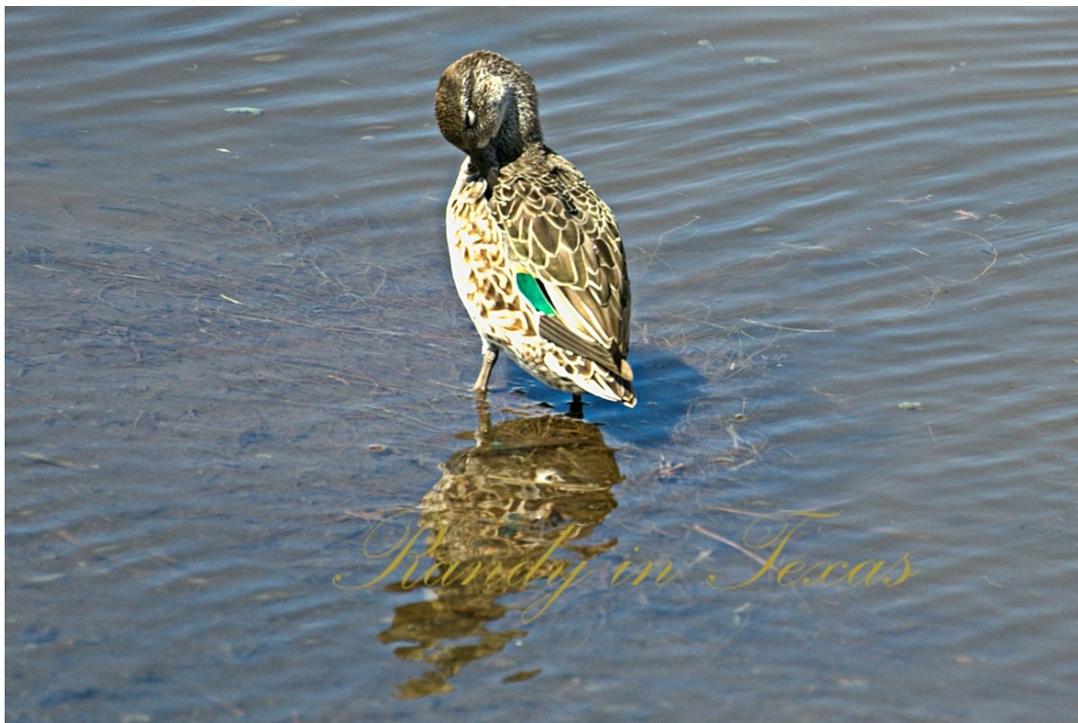


Photo by Randy Scott

In Port Aransas, we sighted this leucistic Common Gallinule in the marsh. The condition of leucism is lack of color in feathers, thought to be caused by insufficient melatonin of the producing cells. Compare lightness of coloration of the first photograph to the darkness of the same species. We researched this to see if it a condition of a juvenile and concluded that it is not. Last week's trip to Port Aransas. —



Photo by Randy Scott



Green-winged Teal photographed at Port Aransas on Oct 10, 2020. These ducks are relatively small and abundant on the Gulf Coast. - Photo by Randy Scott



Bettina with the Gulls - Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott

Photos by Jim Snyder

Butterflies of East Texas Pierids



Falcate Orangetip female dorsal, Green Branch Ridge, Brazos Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Falcate Orangetip female ventral, Green Branch Ridge, Brazos Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Falcate Orangetip male dorsal, Green Branch Ridge, Brazos Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Falcate Orangetip male ventral I, Green Branch Ridge, Brazos Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Cloudless Sulphur female ventral, Martin Dies, Jr. S.P., Jasper Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Cloudless Sulphur male, Lick Creek Park, College Station, Brazos Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Dainty Sulphur, Lick Creek Park, College Station, Brazos Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Little Yellow female, Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, San Jacinto Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Little Yellow female ventral (white form), Lick Creek Park, College Station, Brazos Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Little Yellow male ventral, FSR 111, Sabine N.F., Sabine Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Orange Sulphur female ventral, Green Branch Ridge, Brazos Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Orange Sulphur male, Osburn Rd., Sam Houston N.F., Montgomery Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Sleepy Orange female ventral, Barton Creek Greenbelt, Austin, Travis Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Sleepy Orange male ventral, Barton Creek Greenbelt, Austin, Travis Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Sleepy Orange mating pair, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin, Travis Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Southern Dogface male ventral, Lick Creek Park, College Station, Brazos Co., TX. Photo by Jim Snyder



Southern Dogface male ventral, Lick Creek Park, College Station, Brazos Co, TX. Photo by Jim Snyder

Yard Butterflies



Southern Broken-Dash on our American Beautyberry today 10-26-2020 Photo by Jim Snyder



A mating pair of Monarch butterflies in the yard today. 10-26-2020 Photo by Jim Snyder

Photo by Lucinda Valdez



Common Buckeye - Photo by Lucinda Valdez



Purple Coneflower - Photo by Lucinda Valdez

Birding Adventures & Photos by Hank Arnold



Green treefrog peering out - Photo by Hank Arnold



Roseatte Spoonbill - Photo by Hank Arnold



Roseatte Spoonbill - Photo by Hank Arnold

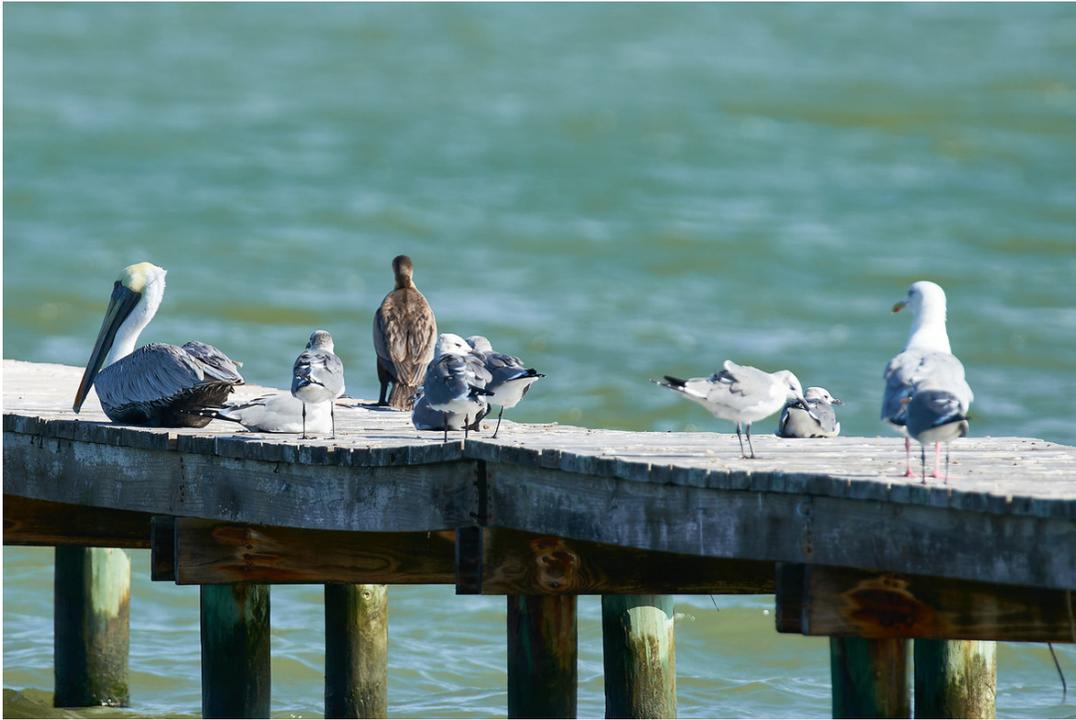


Photo by Hank Arnold



Burrowing Owl peeking out - Photo by Hank Arnold



Burrowing Owl - Photo by Hank Arnold



Burrowing Owl - Photo by Hank Arnold



Burrowing Owl - Photo by Hank Arnold



Belted Kingfisher - Photo by Hank Arnold



Juvenile Aplomado Falcon - Photo by Hank Arnold



Juvenile Aplomado Falcon - Photo by Hank Arnold



Juvenile Aplomado Falcon - Photo by Hank Arnold



Juvenile Aplomado Falcon - Photo by Hank Arnold



Juvenile Aplomado Falcon - Photo by Hank Arnold



Palamedes Swallowtail - Photo by Hank Arnold



Palamedes Swallowtail wing scales - Photo by Hank Arnold

Today is a special day.

This past Easter Sunday I promised that I was going to church with Ray Little as soon as we could, and assuming the creeks don't rise on the way to Aransas Pass, today is the day.

Reflecting upon where have come from, and where we are today, I decided to use as bird pictures, the best day birding I ever had with Ray Little.

There have been a lot of great days, a lot of great places.

The trick with Ray is, though, that it doesn't have to have billions of birds, and it doesn't even have to be a beautiful spot.

I treasure every time I've ever had the honor to go birding with him.

There will be future days when I forget some of the wisdom he has imparted to me, which I will regret.

There will also be days when I forget the times he had tricked me with Zone Tail Hawk sightings, planting Milkweed because it was actually "Hummingbird Weed", or an "English House Wren" (Sparrow) being a life bird.

I won't regret losing those memories so much.

Considering all those times, I have decided that our best day together was

February 26th, 2013.

We started the day somewhere in back-desert Arizona with today's Picture Of The Day.

It was just after sunrise, and it was some Red Tailed Hawk sitting on what as I recall was a trash dump.

I remember thinking what a sad start to the day it was, but I was wrong.

Not uncommon.

That was the first on the day of 2,185 of the most magical pictures I've ever taken.

We were wandering that day with a list of places Susan had picked out as being "Possibly Good", and one of them was a place named White Water Draw Wildlife Area.

When we arrived, Ray and I were having a fight about going to a doctor to look at the scrape to his face he had received during a fall a few days before. He had refused to go to the doctor then, and as it scabbed over it looked worse and worse, but with each passing day he felt better and better.

I had stolen a walking stick for him at one of our birding stops the day before, and as we argued he started yelling and waving the stick and I remember wishing I had stolen one that would have a little less inertia if used offensively.

I will try to remember to apologize again today in Aransas Pass for stealing the stick.

After we argued in the parking lot, he finally just turned and started walking towards the viewing platform, and I wondered how many new injuries he would sustain if I tackled him and wrestled him into the car for a trip to the hospital.

But, in the end, he was right, as he always is.

He made it through the day, through the trip, and back home, looking like shit but birding all the way.

For today's birding adventure I have started with the raw images out of the camera that day that started when I caught up with him on the viewing platform, roughly 9AM local time. They have been re-worked using 2020 technology, which is vastly superior to what I was packing for that trip.

I have used pictures from this day before, but when I looked at them again I was struck by the scale and grandeur of the experience.

One of many treasured memories...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/POD/20200927-White-Water-Draw/>

Also regarding my church companion for today, here is the write up for the Master Naturalist group about his visit to the Hawk Watch...

<https://midcoast-tmn.org/ray-little-hawkwatch/>

That brings us to today's flight adventure, which comes with it's own special story of treasured memories.

Here's the story about some new Corona Friends in California we haven't met yet :

Boy meets girl – in this case Ben Weis and Sheela...

Boy wins girl's heart...

Love happens...

They set out to experience the world, together.

Literally

They travel to Switzerland and embark on a multi-day trek around a famous set of mountains on the border with Italy named “Grand Combin”.

Here is the Wikipedia on the area...

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Combin

Now,

Let's back up a second and study the word “Trek”.

Like “Walk”

I don't know the exact route they took, but the shortest distance I can believe this happened short of sherpas and base camps would be 35 miles.

And folks, we're not talking quiet, flat, Texas caliches roads.

We're talking a heck of a lot of uppy/downy stuff.

And on top of that, they each carry on their back, for the entire journey, enough equipment, supplies, and housing to make a Hermit Crab proud.

So, back to our story...

The young lovers are experiencing one of the most breathtaking places on the planet, and this happens...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/MSFS2020-Master/Special/i-GrdsStL/A>

THAT, ladies and gentlemen, is an experience worth remembering, along with two of the places they visited along the way, carefully denoted in the video...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/MSFS2020-Master/POD/i-FZPmd6P/A>

New friends, new experiences

Now, this last part might only be interesting to me, but that's not my problem...

Ben sent me the video from the magical day late last night, and when I first watched it, there was some sort of Deja Vu about it.

So this morning I fired up Microsoft Flight Simulator, flew to a spot I remember, and deployed the "virtual drone".

Here is a video that starts with Ben's actual footage taken standing on the side of the mountain, and my recreation from Microsoft Flight Simulator.

Note the small village with the fork in the road, and the lake in the distance down that same sight line...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/MSFS2020-Master/Special/i-tJ6KvMS/A>

Obviously Ben was standing on the side of a hill, and to be able to see the lake I had to be 100 feet up, but I'll bet with a little effort I could re-create that exact view.

Amazing



POD : Bimodal Distributions
Nov 4 at 6:59 AM

Yesterday we snuck over to the beach park for a few minutes.

The birds that are there this time of year are not all that exciting, but they are nonetheless beautiful, in their own way.

In anticipation that folks might like something distracting to look at today, I also took some video of non-exciting birds doing non-exciting things...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/POD/20201104-Rockport/>

Today's flight is over Yellowstone National Park...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/MSFS2020-Master/POD/i-3sz3SkK>

When I went there as a kid, I was captivated by Old Faithful when I first saw it. I remember being amazed and skeptical that anyone could predict when it was going to go off again.

While the family was herded around from viewing location to viewing location, all I wanted to do was go back to Old Faithful for the next eruption. Not so much for the majesty of the event, which absolutely escaped me, but to see if there were any non-scheduled eruptions, which would prove I was right about such things in nature not living according to schedules.

Being a terrible kid, I remember being at some pit of bubbling mud and slowly drifting back in the crowd until my mother lost track of me, then sneaking back to Old Faithful.

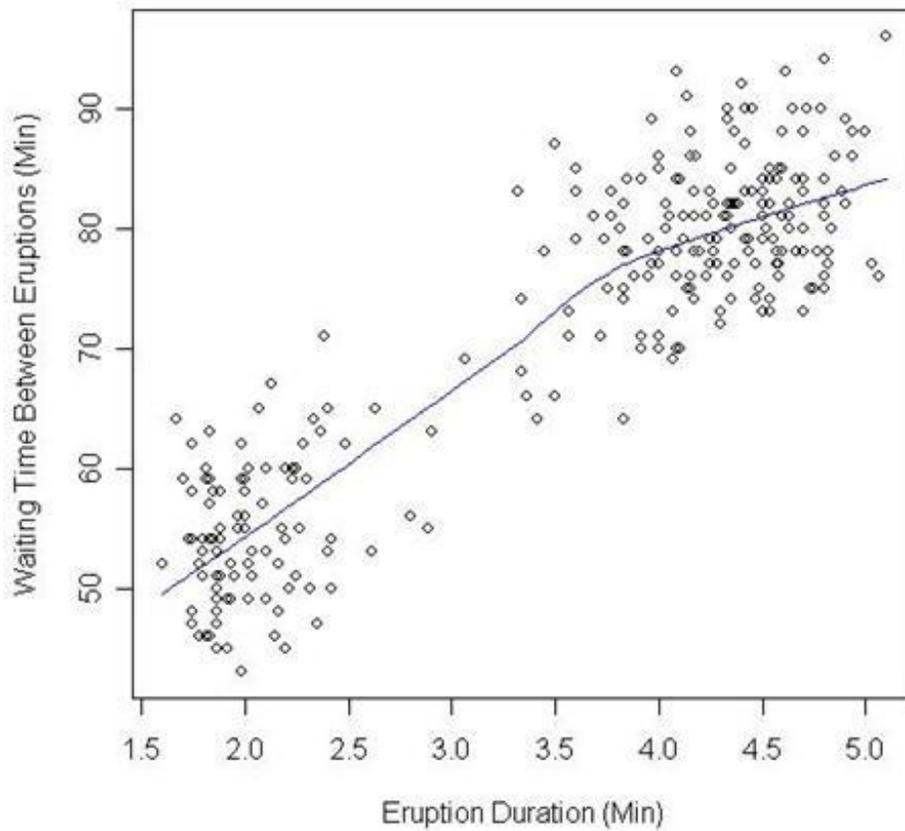
Thinking back, my father probably watched my entire escape, but knew where I was going and let me go. He probably also covered for me when mother counted chicks at the end of that particular unexciting mud pit.

When I got back to Old Faithful, a Park Ranger saw me sitting on one of the logs placed around for sitting, and came over to speak to me. He explained that the eruptions aren't exactly timed, but have some variation according to how much water there is down below. The longer a particular eruption is, the more water that comes out, and the longer it will be before the next eruption. He went on to explain that although there is that variation between eruptions, there is also a long term average that is stable enough for them to make tables with the predictions.

Looking back, I understand how important it was that the Ranger took the time to speak to me, but now I understand that he was probably on a sort of "Goal Keeper" duty station to make sure kids that have evaded parental authority don't try to throw something down the hole, or God forbid walk over and look down.

Also looking back, I come to the dual understanding now that the eruptions are a "bimodal" distribution because of the variation in available water...

Old Faithful Eruptions



And also that it kind of makes sense that Nancy wouldn't have anything to do with such a terminal geek.

Photos by Paul Gregg

Whirlwind Outing October 6, 2020



Marsh Wren - Photo by Paul Gregg

Yesterday (Tuesday, Oct. 6) I decided to head out to Sabine Woods, my favorite birding location in our area. I got there fairly early, parked, got my camera, sprayed insect repellent on me, and entered the woods. As I got deeper into the woods, I headed to one of the water drips and arrived accompanied by a swarm of mosquitoes! I beat a hasty retreat back to a fence and crossed onto the roadside. The blood suckers were less in number out near the pavement, so I started walking toward my car. The Marsh Wren (a new lifer for me) came across from the marsh and paused for a few photos. I wasn't sure at first which wren it was, but it definitely became my first "money shot" for the day. I went back to the car and saw movement in one of the trees just as one enters the woods from where we park. Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers and one or two Northern Parulas were working round and round the tree, so I just stood there (few mosquitoes at the moment) and took photos as they rotated around the leaves and branches. I decided to brush off the mosquitoes and walk around a little more. I got photos of a White-eyed Vireo (attached) and an Eastern Wood Pewee and an Acadian Flycatcher (photos not attached). Not seeing much more activity, I left the woods and drove down to an area where kayaks are launched. The Least Sandpiper was alone, at the edge of the water and seemed not to be bothered with my pointing my lens at it.

The next stop was Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. I drove around Shoveler Pond and again, there weren't a whole lot of birds to pose for photos. I did get a couple birds in flight shots and am fairly pleased with the Little Blue Heron shot as it honored me with a fly-by. One big alligator gave me a good photo, but I'm not attaching it to this e-mail.

My last stop for the day was at Smith Point Hawk Watch Tower in hopes of seeing some hawks during their migration. It was fairly late in the afternoon, and no hawks were seen. They have been having some really good numbers going through there, and they did have a good number that morning. They still had their hummingbird feeders up, and though hummingbird numbers have dwindled, a fair number came to the feeders. Imagine my surprise when the female Rufous Hummingbird flew in to the feeder. I got two really good shots of her and shortly after decided to head for home. The male Ruby-throated Hummingbird isn't a good photo, but it surely shows its gorget pretty well.

What a day. Though not seeing a great number of birds, I was still able to get some fairly good photos, in spite. I've been told swarms of mosquitoes are mostly non-biting males and only the females bite, so maybe I should have stayed longer at Sabine Woods. (Note to self: Go to Academy and buy that mosquito device that repels them for a distance of 10 feet for times like yesterday!) I will post more photos on my Facebook page (Paul Gregg Jr.) when I can.

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)



Little Blue Heron - Photo by Paul Gregg



Northern Parula - Photo by Paul Gregg



Northern Parula - Photo by Paul Gregg



Ruby-throated Hummingbird - Photo by Paul Gregg



Rufous Hummingbird - Photo by Paul Gregg



White Eyed Vireo - Photo by Paul Gregg



Blue Gray Gnatcatcher - Photo by Paul Gregg



Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher - Photo by Paul Gregg



Least Sandpiper - 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 send all new address changes and any corrections to cdmoore3@gmail.com (Claire Moore) and add PWWS to the subject line.
Thank you.

No matter how
stressed you are,
remember how
Blessed
you are.

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