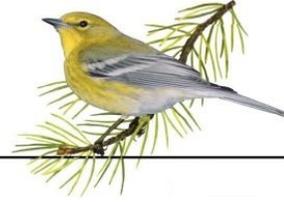


The Pine Warbler



Piney Woods Wildlife Society Newsletter - Dec 2020

No December PWWS Meeting



Note from PWWS President

Warmest Holiday greetings to all of you, This definitely will be a different time for us all but I do hope we can cherish and celebrate our loved ones and the things

we can be thankful for. One thing I am thankful for is the wonderful friends I have met through the years with Piney Woods and the appreciation it has given me of nature's wonders.

At this time we are planning for our January and February meetings to be virtual and we will let you know about these as soon as possible.

Our hearts go out to those affected by Covid 19 and other tragedies this year. 2021 can not come soon enough. Looking forward to a new and interesting year for us all and to the time we can meet and enjoy each other's company in person and give all of you a big hug.

Kathy, Your President

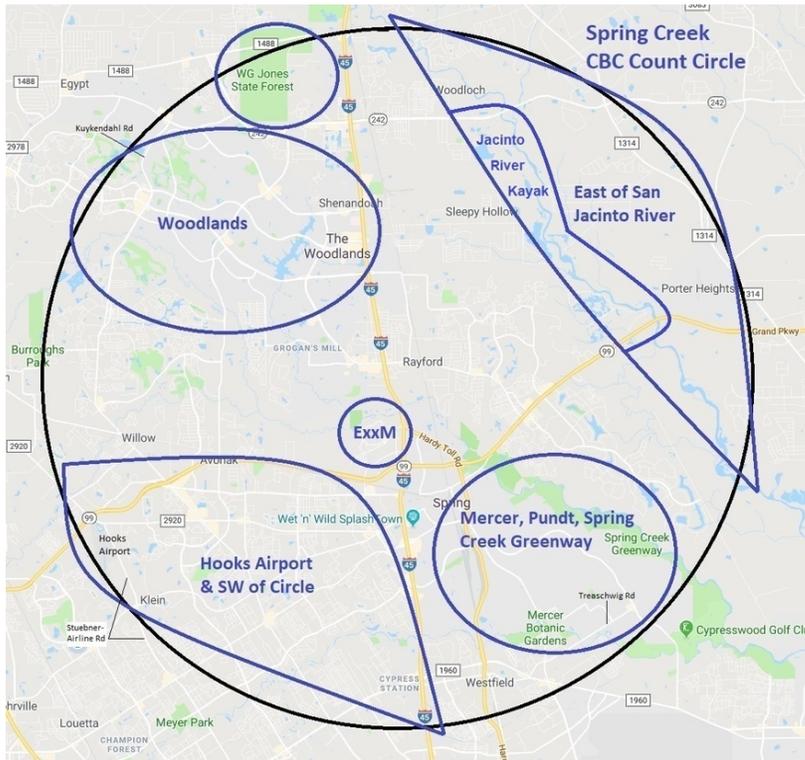




Spring Creek CBC with Covid Precautions

on Saturday, December 19th

By Claire Moore



Piney Woods has been the proud sponsor of the Spring Creek CBC since 1986. If you will be around on Saturday 12/19, please consider joining with PWWS to help survey the birds present in our Spring Creek Christmas Bird Count circle. Because of the pandemic, Covid precautions will be in place including social distancing, masks (when we can't social distance), and very limited carpooling.

Several teams of bird watchers will be out in the field on Saturday, December 19th, 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. If you're not able to go into the field and happen to live inside that circle (see map), please consider helping out as a "feeder watcher" so that your observations made on Saturday, December 19th, can 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 and in which capacity. Because of Covid precautions, Audubon asks that we not have a count dinner.

The field team options are as follows:

- * **Mercer, Pundt & Greenway** led by Al Barr - owling at 4:30 a.m. and birding at 8 a.m. beginning at Mercer's west lot
- * **Woodlands** led by JoJo Bradbury - birding at 7 a.m. meeting at Creekside Park West
- * **Jones State Forest** led by Krien VerBerkmoes - birding at 7 a.m.
- * **Southwest area of CBC** area led by Claire Moore & Damien Carey - birding at 7 a.m. meeting at Hooks Airport

* **Create your own area** - if you have some favorite spots within the CBC circle (see map), contact Claire to let her know what areas you'd like to bird on 12/19

Make sure to let Claire know before Dec 19th (via email at cdmoore3i@gmail.com) if you think you might be able to help with the count. Any and all assistance is appreciated!

If the idea of helping with CBCs interests you, there are many others throughout Southeast Texas, as well as all over Texas, the USA & the globe. You can find information about CBCs in Texas at Houston Audubon's web site:

<https://houstonaudubon.org/birding/christmas-bird-counts/> Or, you can see all CBC circles throughout the Western Hemisphere at Audubon's web site where you can zoom into the state you are interested in and click on the circle to get information: <https://audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ac275eeb01434cedb1c5dcd0fd3fc7b4>



IT'S JUST DUCKY

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center



Mallards - Photo by Cheryl Conley

Unless you suffer from ornithophobia (a fear of birds) or anatidaephobia (the fear that you are being watched by a duck), you probably enjoy watching ducks. It's a way to get us outside to enjoy nature, it's free and it's year-round. Besides, they're cute, especially the babies. It's so touching to see ducklings paddling like crazy to keep up with Mom. How do they know which duck is Mom? Before they hatch, ducklings hear their mother from inside the shell and then, when they hatch, they know who their mother is.

You'll likely see several different species of ducks in our area but here are two species that are very common.

MUSCOVY DUCKS

You will more than likely see Muscovy ducks in area ponds and lakes. The males have fleshy red caruncles (warty bumps) on the face and at the base of the bill. Females have smaller caruncles or have none at all.

Muscovies are not native except in three Texas counties near the Mexican border. With the exception of these three counties, Muscovy ducks are considered invasive which means they can take over habitats, can stress the natural ecosystems and even eradicate native plants and animals. They are prolific breeders and it doesn't take long for their populations to increase dramatically driving away native species.

Feral Muscovy ducks have become a real problem for many neighborhoods in and around the Houston area. They wander into yards and leave their waste droppings everywhere including sidewalks, porches, driveways, patios, on cars and even in pools. They can destroy landscaping while foraging for food. They can be a hazard for drivers as they waddle across neighborhood streets. Some report that the ducks are aggressive.

In November of 2019, controversy arose in Pearland when city officials gave the go-ahead for residents to legally kill Muscovy ducks on their own property. They had become a nuisance and many homeowners were complaining.

On the other hand, some are happy to have Muscovies around. They eat algae and weeds in ponds, flies, roaches, ants, spiders, small fishes, reptiles and slugs. They also eat mosquitos. For this reason, they are very valuable in keeping unwanted insect populations down. They are “dabbling” ducks which means they float and tip themselves forward, butts up in the air, to grab insects, small fish, etc.

MALLARDS

Mallard ducks are the most common ducks in North America. The male duck has a bright green head, yellow beak, a light-colored body and dark brown chest. The female is much less colorful and is light brown with dark brown mottling from the neck down.

Mallards begin pairing up in the fall but courtship can extend into early spring. Generally speaking, they are monogamous. I say “generally” because males will engage in “forced copulations.” Several males will chase a female and then forcefully mate with her.

Mallards are omnivores with 2/3 of their diet consisting of plant matter and 1/3 animal protein. They eat small fish, snails, moths, flies, bugs, grass, seeds, grains and fruits. They are dabbling ducks, too, just like the Muscovy.

- Ducks eat gravel, small stones and sand. However, it's not because they're hungry. The rocks are stored in the gizzard and help break down food.
- Ducks have a field of vision of 340 degrees and can see up close and far away simultaneously. They also see in color.
- Ducks have no blood vessels or nerves in their feet so their feet don't feel the cold in icy waters.
- Ducks normally don't fly over 4,000 feet in the air when they migrate. However, they have the capability of flying much higher. A jet once struck a Mallard at 21,000 feet! This is the highest recorded flight of any duck.

- Preening is a method used to clean the feathers of dirt, dust and parasites. When they preen, they also spread a waxy oil on their feathers making them waterproof.
- Male ducks are drakes; females are hens and babies are ducklings.

Before you grab that loaf of bread to go feed the ducks, please choose a healthier option. Bread has little nutritional value. This applies to popcorn, chips, crackers, donuts and cereal as well. Ducks can fill up on these and not eat more nutritional foods. Uneaten bread can get moldy and cause ducks to get sick. It can also add to algae growth affecting water quality. Ducklings can get “angel wing” by eating too much bread. This is a condition causing the wings to point out and making it impossible for the ducks to fly. So, what are healthy alternatives to bread? Peas, cut up grapes, corn, rice, and cut up lettuce and other greens. Dry dog and cat food are good, too.

Many city parks and subdivision ponds and lakes forbid the feeding of ducks so make sure you check.

TWRC Wildlife Center is your source for information on Texas wildlife. Have questions? Call us, email us or check our website.

713.468.TWRC

info@twrcwildlifecenter.org

www.twrcwildlifecenter.org



Muscovy Ducks - Photo by Cheryl Conley

**CREATOR'S CANVAS-HUMMINGBIRDS IN MY BACK
YARD/THE GREEN-BREASTED MANGOS!**

Photos By Wayne Easley



Green-breasted Mango female - Photo by Wayne Easley

Most hummingbirds love to fight. They spent a lot of time defending their neck-of-the-woods. The beautiful Green-breasted Mangos are no exception to that strategy. And when they are feuding with another mango or doing battle with a White-necked Jacobin (another hummer) they flash those brilliant colors.. The mix of colors of the mango, especially when they fan out their tails is a work of

beauty. While it is not rainbow quality, it is pretty close.

The Green-breasted Mango is a fairly large hummer. The male is glittering green with a purplish black stripe on its chest. The tail which is magenta to wine colored flares open as a threat to other hummers to maintain their distance. The female has a blackish green stripe on her white chest while the immature birds are a wild mix of several colors (check out the young in the attached photos)

Like other hummers, mangos take a lot of sugar water. The mangos augment their diet with insects which often are caught in mid-air or at times stolen from spider webs. When not taking nectar, mangos spend a lot of time high up in the trees. At first thought, one would think that mangos would nest way up on the highest limbs of the trees, but most of the mango nests we have seen have been on utility wires. Like other hummers, the female is totally in charge of her little family. She builds the nest, lays the eggs, incubates them and seeks food for the two chicks. It reminds me a lot of Proverbs 31 where it talks about the virtuoso woman. "She (the virtuoso woman) looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness." Pro. 31:27

Wayne Easley/written on Nov. 9, 2020 in Costa Rica

PICTURES; WE ARE HAPPY WHEN YOU USE OUR PHOTOS FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. BUT WE ARE EVEN HAPPIER WHEN YOU MAKE CONTACT WITH US. THANK YOU,

1-2-female Green-breasted Mangos.

3-male mango hanging in mid-air.

4-7-male mangos defending themselves The flared tails make them look larger.

8-9-immature mangos displaying those wild colors on the way to become adults.

10-a beautiful male mango.



Green-breasted Mango female at casa rancho, Costa Rica, Dec 2018 - Photo by Wayne, Easley



Green-breasted Mango male, casa rancho, Costa Rica Sept 27-15 R - Photo by Wayne Easley



Green-breasted Mango male - Costa Rica, Dec 4, 2018 R - Photo by Wayne Easley



Green-breasted Mango male, Casa Rancho sept. 14-19 R - Photo by Wayne Easley



Green-breasted Mango male at Casa Rancho, Costa Rica, Oct. 29,16 R - Photo by Wayne Easley



Green-breasted mango Casa Rancho , CR, Oct. 29, 2016 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Green-breasted Mango immature at Casa Rancho, Costa Rica, Sept 28-19 R - Photo by Wayne Easley



Green-breasted Mango immature, Casa Rancho Sept.28 -19 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Green-breasted Mango male Casa Rancho Oct 11-15 R - Photo by Wayne Easley

Photos by Sandy Crystal



A very pleasant bird surprise at the fountain and a first for the backyard! Hermit Thrush. Clear Lake City (Houston) Texas Nov 9, 2020 - Photo by Sandy Crystal



Hermit Thrush - Photo by Sandy Crystal

Photos by Bill Miller





Chicks dig coffee. (from our trip to Cuba) - Photo by Bill Miller



Scarlet-headed blackbird in Brazil - Photo by Bill Miller





Looks like politics was the subject at dinner today - Photo by Bill Miller



North Texas sunset looks like a rocket launch Nov. 25, 2020 - Photo by Bill Miller



Texas Christmas Cactus - Photo by Bill Miller

Photos by Randy Scott



We just got back from the Texas Hill country. We wanted a place to visit that spectacular with Fall colors and where we got plenty of outdoor exercise and was remote from the virus. We got everything and more. Examples of wildlife and scenery near Lost Maples State Park. Altogether, I have processed 295 photos as memories and for sharing. Green water is for real at Garner State park, which we also visited Nov. 2020. - Photo by Randy Scott



At Garner was a Bird Blind, where dozens of these Field Sparrows were feeding.- Photo by Randy Scott



River dam water overflow in Garner State Park - Photo by Randy Scott



On the Rio Frio at Garner State Park. Cypress Trees along the bank.- Photo by Randy Scott



Black Vultures at the county park of Kerrville - Photo by Randy Scott



Queen Butterfly at Garner nature center - Photo by Randy Scott



At the cabins where we stayed, Medina Highpoint Resort. They have hiking trails in the hills above the cabins and wildlife below. Some challenging trails on their property. I hiked to the top for some incredible scenery - Photo by Randy Scott



At Garner, Yellow Rumped Warblers were plentiful in some places near the river's edge. - 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. —



Garner State Park, where the water was crystal clear and the fish were protected in the roots of the Cypress trees along the shore. - Photo by Randy Scott



8 Pointer at the lodge we stayed at, near our our cabin. He had a family nearby and was one of two families. The other buck was a 6-pointer. Looks like Deer season near with damage on the fur, maybe from a fight. - Photo by Randy Scott



One can mistake these for rocks on the trails at Lost Maples. We hiked for several miles in the canyons there. - Photo by Randy Scott



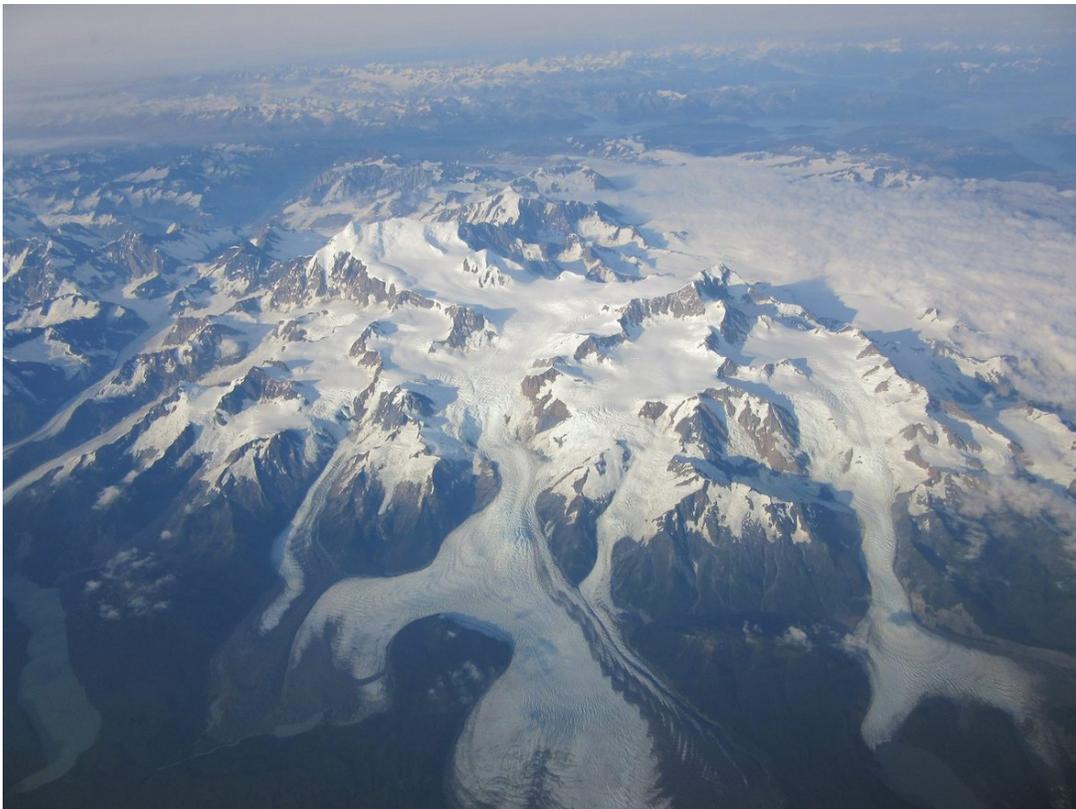
Off Hwy 16, the Longhorns almost seemed to be fake. - Photo by Randy Scott

Alaska Trip 2015

Photos by Jim Snyder



Santa Claus House North Pole Alaska



Alaska from the air - Photo by Jim Snyder



Alaska from the air - Photo by Jim Snyder



Fireweed - Photo by Jim Snyder



Alaska Lynx - Photo by Jim Snyder



Bear Glacier - Photo by Jim Snyder



Holgate Glacier - Photo by Jim Snyder



Trumpeter Swans, Talkeetna, AK - Photo by Jim Snyder



I made it to Denali!



My cabin in Kantishna. — in Kantishna, Alaska.- Photo by Jim Snyder



Reflection Pond - Photo by Jim Snyder



Moose — at Denali National Park and Preserve - Photo by Jim Snyder



Ptarmigan - Photo by Jim Snyder



Grizzly Bear — at Denali National Park and Preserve - Photo by Jim Snyder



Denali, "The Great One", made an appearance on my last day in the park! — at Denali National Park and Preserve - Photo by Jim Snyder



The Alaska Pipeline - Photo by Jim Snyder



Moose Antler Arch — in Downtown Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska - Photo by Jim Snyder



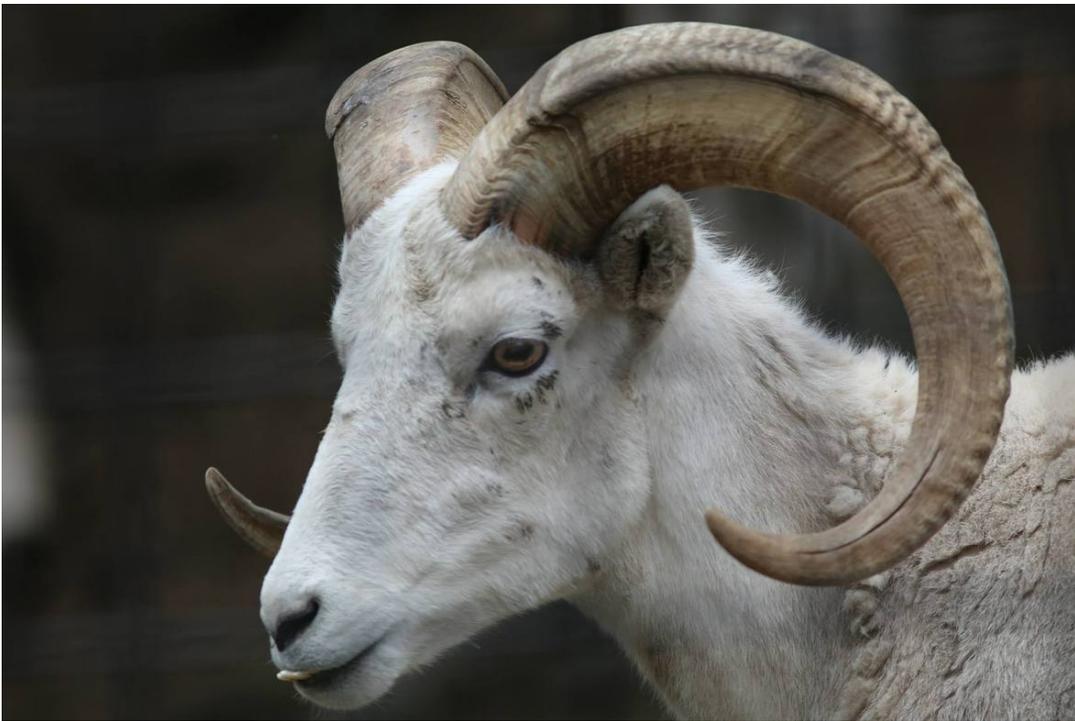
The Golden Heart City — in Fairbanks, Alaska. - Photo by Jim Snyder



Denise and I drove the entire 1,422 miles of the Alaska Highway in 1995 from Mile 0 in Dawson Creek, BC to Mile 1422 here in Delta Junction, AK. — at The End Of The Alaska Highway! - Photo by Jim Snyder



Fall has arrived in Alaska. Overlooking the Matanuska River along the Glenn Highway. — at Matanuska Glacier. - Photo by Jim Snyder



Dall Sheep Ram - Photo by Jim Snyder



Mountain goat buck at Chugach State Park, Anchorage, AK - Photo by Jim Snyder



Muskox Bull at the Musk Ox Farm Palmer, AK - Photo by Jim Snyder



2.5 ton boulder of jade. Jade is the state gemstone of Alaska. — at Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau. - Photo by Jim Snyder



Denise and I so fell in love with this place that we named our dog Kenai after it. — at Kenai Peninsula. - Photo by Jim Snyder



Grizzly Bear - Photo by Jim Snyder



Black Bear at Chugach State Park, Anchorage, AK - Photo by Jim Snyder



Stellar Sea Lions - Kenai Fjords National Park, Seward, AK - Photo by Jim Snyder



First of five Silver Salmon I caught today at Resurrection Bay in Seward, AK -

Photo by Jim Snyder



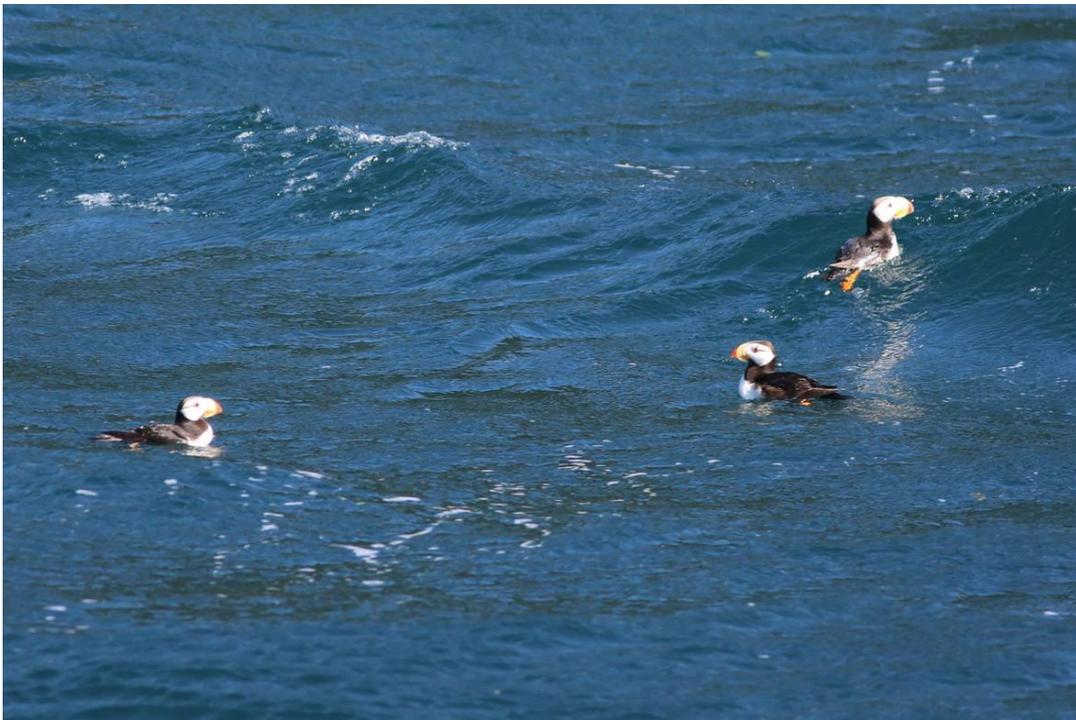
Exit Glacier - Photo by Jim Snyder



Seward Harbor and Mount Marathon. Every July 4th elite runners from around the world race to the top of Mount Marathon and back starting from the downtown Seward. The men's record time is 38 minutes! - Photo by Jim Snyder



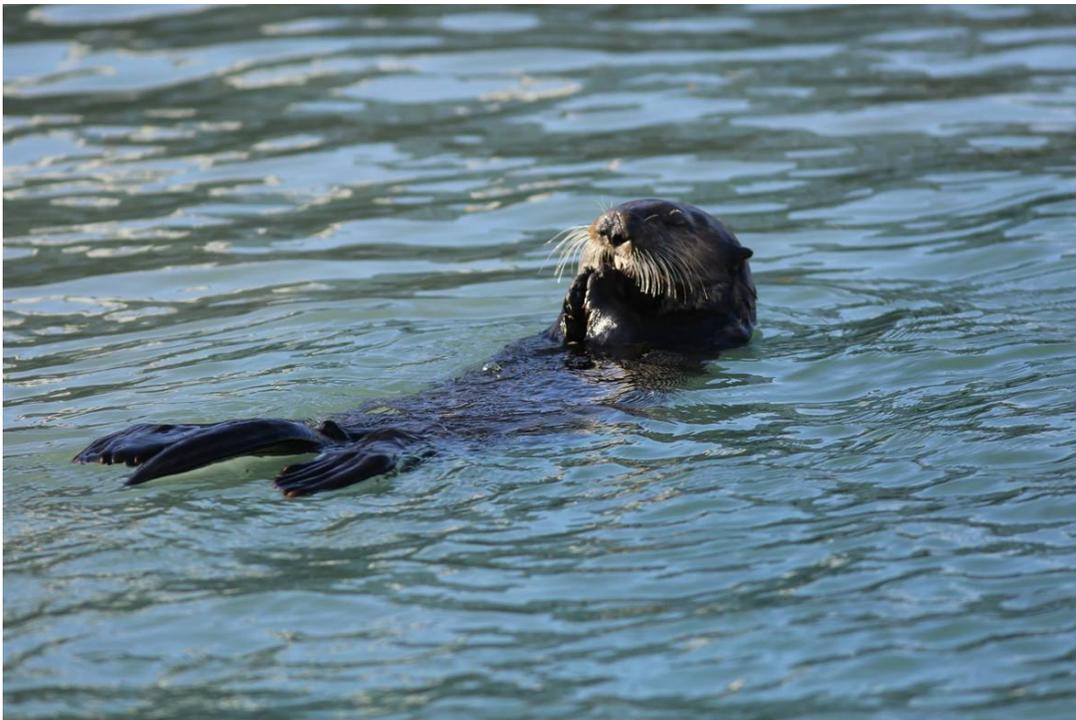
Rugged Alaskan coastline at Alalik Peninsula, AK - Photo by Jim Snyder



Puffins - Photo by Jim Snyder



Humpback whale taking a dive - Kenai Fjords National Park, Seward, AK - Photo by Jim Snyder



Sea Otter at Kenai Fjords National Park, Seward, AK - Photo by Jim Snyder



Caribu - Photo by Jim Snyder



Reindeer at LARS - Robert G. White Large Animal Research Station.- Photo by Jim Snyder

Birding Adventures & Photos by Hank Arnold
Silently Training Visiting Photographers



Whooping Crane - Photo by Hank Arnold

Sunday Nov 8, 2020 is Whooping Crane migration day, which means pictures taken aboard the Skimmer up at the refuge and installment 4 out of 5 for the stopover flights.

For pictures I've chosen a trip from late last year, which will give me one more early this year for next weeks adventure.

Coming back into Fulton Harbor at the end of this trip gave me the opportunity to take some Cormorant eye color images, like this one...



Cormorant - Photo by Hank Arnold

Under normal circumstances they are not God's most beautiful work, but when the sun hits those eyes just right, that captivating blue just grabs you.

I make a fool of myself at the end of every trip, because there are always lots of Cormorants, and the sun is high in the sky.

By the end of these Skimmer trips, all the photographers aboard have watched me silently taking pictures of every bird in sight, never talking to anyone (because I can't hear what they say), while most of them are focused only on Whooping Cranes. As a matter of fact, when we're pulled up near a Whooping Crane, I get out of the way to let the mere mortals get some pictures. Which also confuses them.

It probably doesn't help that at some point in the trip the deck hand sits in my lap and gives me a kiss.

When we get back to Fulton, however, they KNOW I'm crazy because while they are busy putting everything away, I'm getting ready, on the wrong side of the boat, for pictures that are obviously more important to me than anything having to do with Whooping Cranes.

Then they see me pointing that huge lens towards the ugly Cormorants and they start backing away like I might have rabies or something.

The final act in this play is when they see the beautiful blue I'm concentrating on for the first time in their lives, and start furiously getting their cameras back out.

This was also the trip with the ever-so-magical Whooping Crane flyby, with the 100 or so images put together into a single video clip.

Ray taught me to look for a certain "lean" which means they're bout to take off, and when I saw it, I rested against the side of the boat in anticipation of a long photo shoot, and the camera did the rest.

When it took off I was expecting it to fly away from us, so when it turned towards us, I knew it was going to be special.

After it flew right past us, Tommy came on the boat's loudspeaker and said "WOW! Hank had BETTER NOT have missed that!"

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20191227-Skimmer/>

Since several of you have been on my pictures list for years, you might have already seen these. If so, any complaints you might have will end up in the "Then why the hell haven't you invited me to go birding so I would have more pictures?" department, so don't go there.

Here are Tom Stehn's thoughts for the week...

Whooping cranes occasionally get blown far off course by cross winds. When radio-tracking the whoopers in the 1980s, one set of radioed cranes after a day of migrating were actually farther from Wood Buffalo National Park than when they had started that morning due to 30+ mph winds that had blown them way east. The cranes realized their dilemma and did an hour of flap-flying due west at sunset when the winds were lighter to make a course correction.

Don't ever doubt the navigation ability of the cranes. When they leave Aransas in the spring, they disappear over the horizon at a bearing of approximately 332 degrees (northwest), right on course for Wood Buffalo. They presumably navigate by a combination of visual landmarks, clues from the sun and stars, maybe magnetic fields, that all give them an innate sense of direction.

Hazards to whooping cranes during migration include collisions with power lines, shootings, predation, and encounters with contaminants and diseases. A rising threat is the relatively recent construction of waste pits in the tar sands region near Ft. McMurray, Canada located right on the migration route.

In 2006, a family group of cranes was photographed on the Platte River with stained chests that looked like they had waded into an oily, waste pit. They made it to Aransas and seemed to do fine throughout the winter, though must have been harmed by ingesting some of that material as they preened their feathers.

Tens of thousands of wind turbines are being built in the migration corridor of the whooping cranes. Although cranes seem to have a good ability to avoid these hazards, the presence of the wind farms results in taking away stopover habitat that the cranes otherwise might have used.

When the cranes leave Wood Buffalo NP in the fall, they generally have a two-day flight across the boreal forest. When they reach the agricultural regions of Saskatchewan and Alberta, they have a long staging period, often spending up to 6 weeks there roosting in wetlands and feeding in barley and winter wheat stubble to gain nutrition for the long migration flight to Texas. Upon leaving Canada, the migration across the U.S. can be quite rapid, taking less than 2 weeks to cover 1,700 miles. The first whoopers get to Aransas usually around mid-October and the last stragglers may not arrive until late December. However, a large number of cranes always seem to arrive November 4-7 depending on when a strong cold front reaches the Texas coast.

Today's stopover flight is around Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in central Kansas...

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

Full disclosure, the pictures included have nothing to do with Kansas. They were all taken down here. Its a great lens, but Kansas is a little far away.



Bimodal Distributions

by Hank Arnold

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.

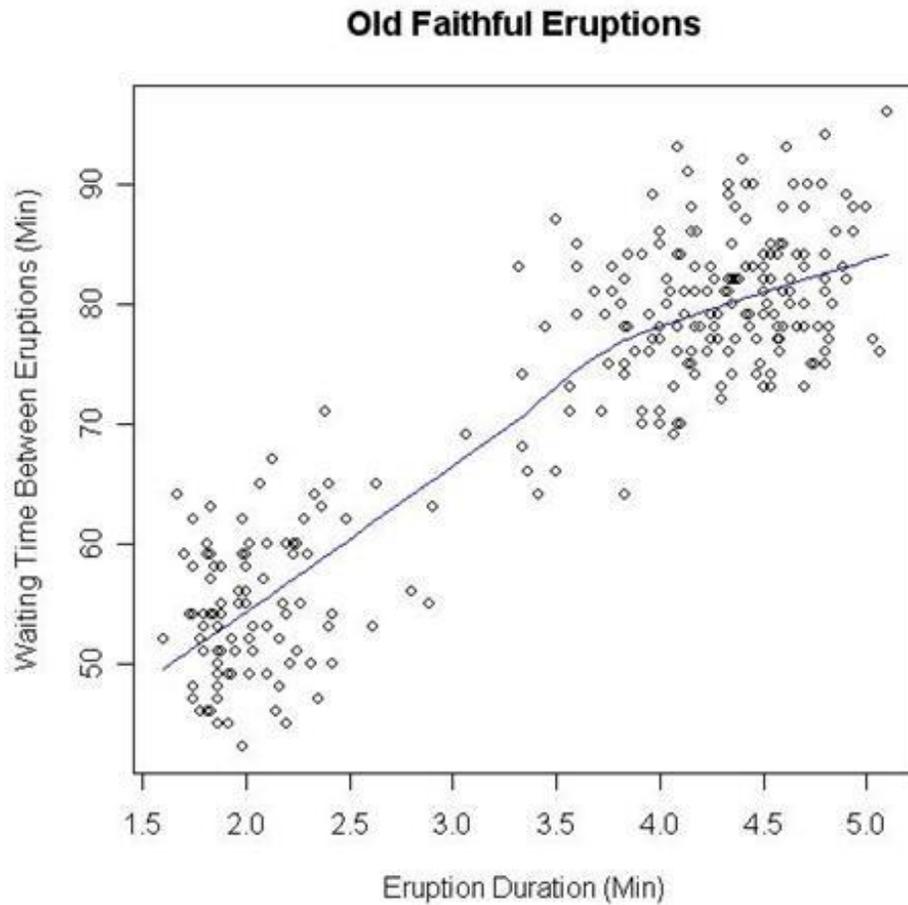
Thinking back, my father probably watched my entire escape, but knew where I was going and let me go. He probably also covered for me when mother counted chicks at the end of that particular unexciting mud pit.

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...



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



Whooping Crane adult & juvenile - Photo by Hank Arnold



Tricolor Heron - Photo by Hank Arnold

Stopover at Salt Plains

Photos by Hank Arnold

Today is Sunday, and the last of our stopover flights before the Whooping Cranes make it here from Wood Buffalo.

The place for today is Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma.

You might have noticed that last week for the pictures in the video I concentrated on Whooping Cranes in flight. This week I'm including pictures of Whooping Cranes on the ground, especially juveniles, but not eating things like crabs or Wolfberries, which I'm thinking they probably don't have in Oklahoma.

The pictures added in for today's flight come from several different Skimmer trips over the years, but mostly for this trip in December 2018 that I've been saving for a special day...

Some of these pictures I sent to friends back then, but most are pictures that haven't ever been shared.

It was a good day, so there are a lot of them.

What was special about the day was that there was a spot on the eastern side of the canal where a family was very near the shore, and didn't mind at all when Tommy pulled up.

I think that's the closest I've ever been to a juvenile Whooping Crane, and the camera was in a very good mood.

The only problem was that we were so close I couldn't get all 3 birds into one image, hence the Picture Of The Day

Another special sight was two Great Blues doing a Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers scene...



Great Blues - Photo by Hank Arnold

And a Curlew taking out a small crab

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/POD/2020115-Skimmer-20191209/>

Here are the last of Tom Stehn's thoughts on the migration

In contrast to the fall migration's staging period, the spring migration proceeds rapidly as the adult cranes come into breeding condition and are "anxious" to get to the nesting grounds. First departure dates from Aransas may be as early as mid-March, but are normally between March 25 and April 15, with the last birds usually leaving by May 1. The spring migration is usually completed in 2-4 weeks, more rapidly than the reverse trip in the fall, as there is no known spring staging area. Experienced pairs arrive at WBNP in late April and begin nest construction, sometimes arriving in the Park with some ponds still frozen. A family group may arrive together on the nesting grounds, but the youngster from the previous year soon separates from its parents. However, the chick from the previous year may split off in the spring migration, and sometimes stays behind at Aransas as its parents start the migration.

Whooping cranes are generally very wary in migration, selecting stopover sights that are far from roads.

Thus, a lot of the cranes are never sighted by anyone during the migration.

Tom also sent map showing the places where cranes were sighted and recorded through 1999...

So let's contemplate for a second, before today's Salt Plains flight, the world from the eyes of a juvenile Whooping Crane...

We have lived, hopefully, a happy life up in Wood Buffalo, with three or more squares a day with room service. For the past few weeks, every time we stand up, the ground is significantly farther away than it was when we sat down.

Then we learn this whole flight thing, and that has to be fun.

The parents do some practice family formation flying to get us used to sticking together, and eventually flying is starting to seem like work.

All of a sudden one day, Daddy give the "lean" signal that we're all taking off together, only this time, we don't go back home.

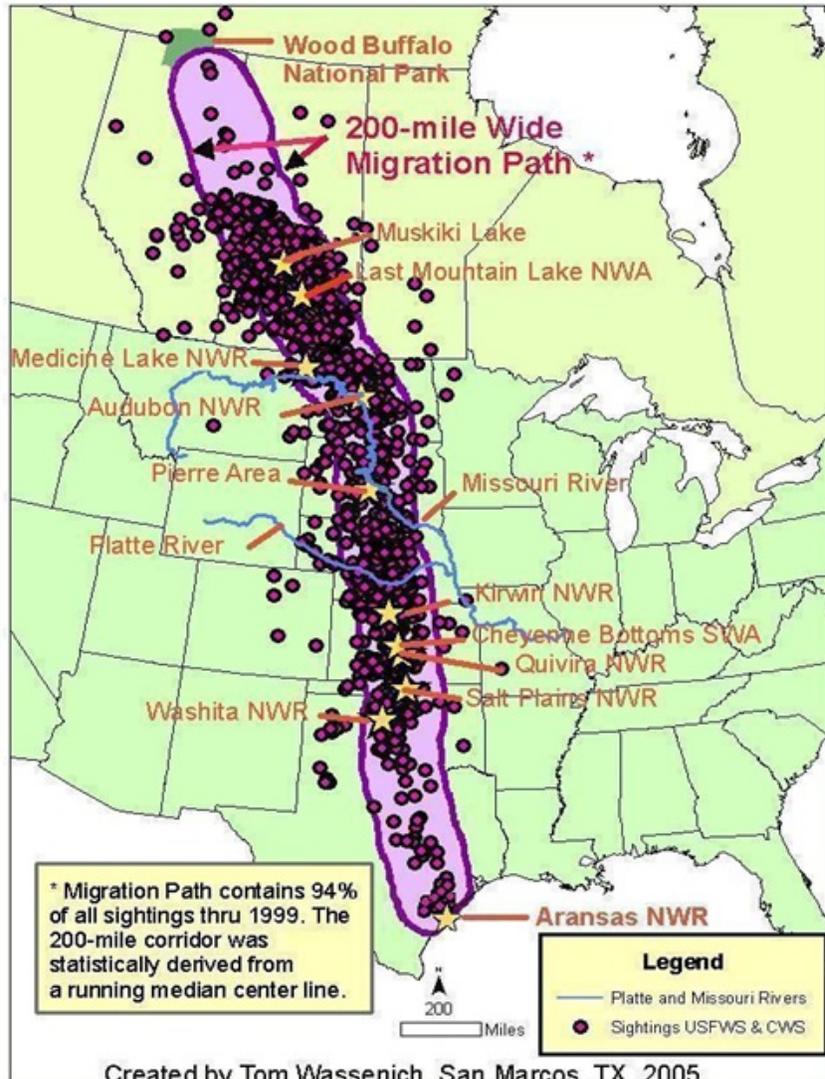
I'm not sure how to calculate equivalent human years, but if we use six Whooping Crane months equal to one human year, that would put the Lobstick pair in their 60's, which seems rational.

What starts to go off the whole "Rational" track is that for a 3 month old Whooping Crane to up and fly to Texas would then be similar to a 6 month old child walking from Rockport to Houston.

And Mommy and Daddy can't carry you, you're doing it all yourself.

So that's where I'm going to leave our juveniles this week – tourists in Oklahoma, probably tired as hell...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/MSFS2020-Master/POD/i-vWcj4jK/A>



Created by Tom Wassenich, San Marcos, TX, 2005



Curlew taking out a small crab - Photo by Hank Arnold

Whirlwind Outing October 6, 2020

It's Teal day at Cattail Marsh

Photos by Paul Gregg



Green-winged Teal - Photo by Paul Gregg

Howdy!

On Monday, Nov. 16, Carol and I drove over to Cattail Marsh, near Beaumont (<https://www.beaumontcvb.com/things-to-do/cattail-marsh>). We walked out on the boardwalk and saw Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal in the water. Many were hyper and would dunk themselves, then come up in a display of flapping and displaying their wings, showing off their colors. The lighting was right for photographing their displays and allowed for higher shutter speed. Males and females would get in on the action and a couple friends from the Golden Triangle Audubon Society were there firing off photos as fast as they could. There was one Cinnamon Teal that showed up and just floated around, late in the afternoon.

Of course there were lots of other birds there. The beautiful Northern Pintail was posing as it swam around. I had one photo of the pintail near a teal and had not realized how much larger the pintail is than the teals. The Tricolored Heron is supposedly the Marsh's ambassador that welcomes visitors to the Marsh, and it posed with no concern about folks watching it from the boardwalk.

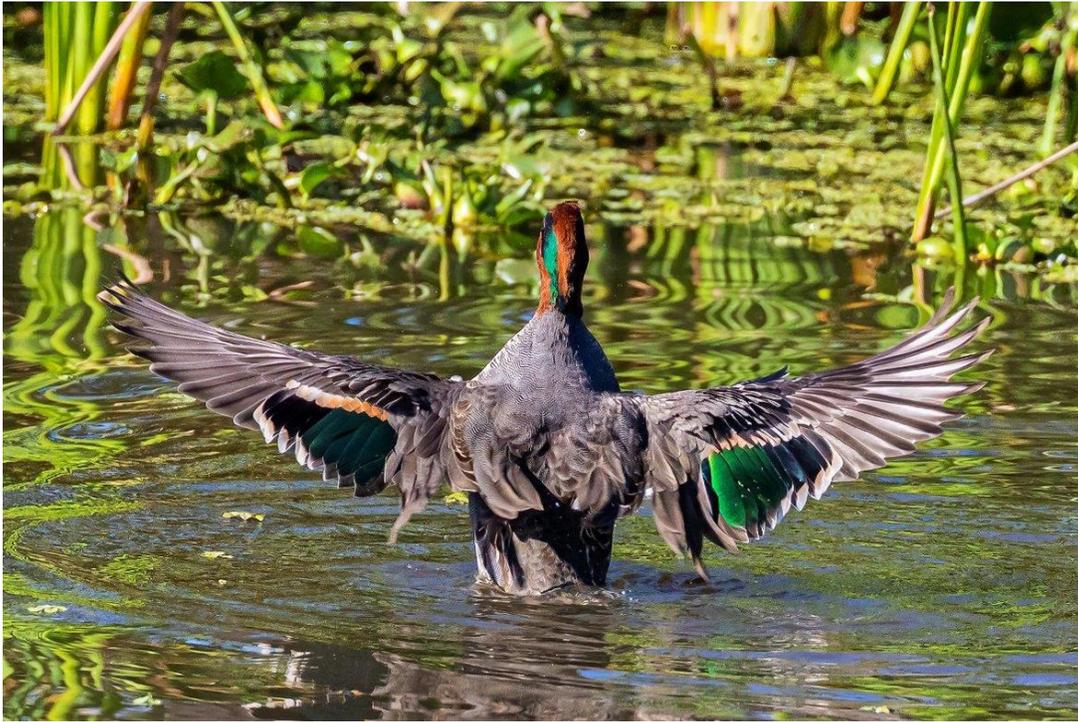
We walked to the northern lake where we saw the two resident bald eagles (we were too far away for a decent photo) as they came to perch in a tall pine tree. On the lake were maybe a couple thousand birds of different species. We could see Northern Shovelers, teals, and I got a poor photo of a Bufflehead. Carol thought she saw a Goldeneye through the binoculars. Our friend, Harlan indicated he saw Hooded Mergansers, but the birds were so far away, I couldn't see them.

The White Ibis, Savannah Sparrow, and the White-faced Ibis were along our route to the north pond.

As the day wore on and the sun was soon to set, we had to plan our return to home. As the weather has turned nice and cool and the sun is out, I think we need to get out a few more times, SOONER THAN LATER! If you want to get out and see lots of winter visitors, get to Cattail Marsh and take your binoculars and camera!

Enjoy,

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)



Green-winged Teal - Photo by Paul Gregg



Northern Pintail - Photo by Paul Gregg



Savannah Sparrow - Photo by Paul Gregg



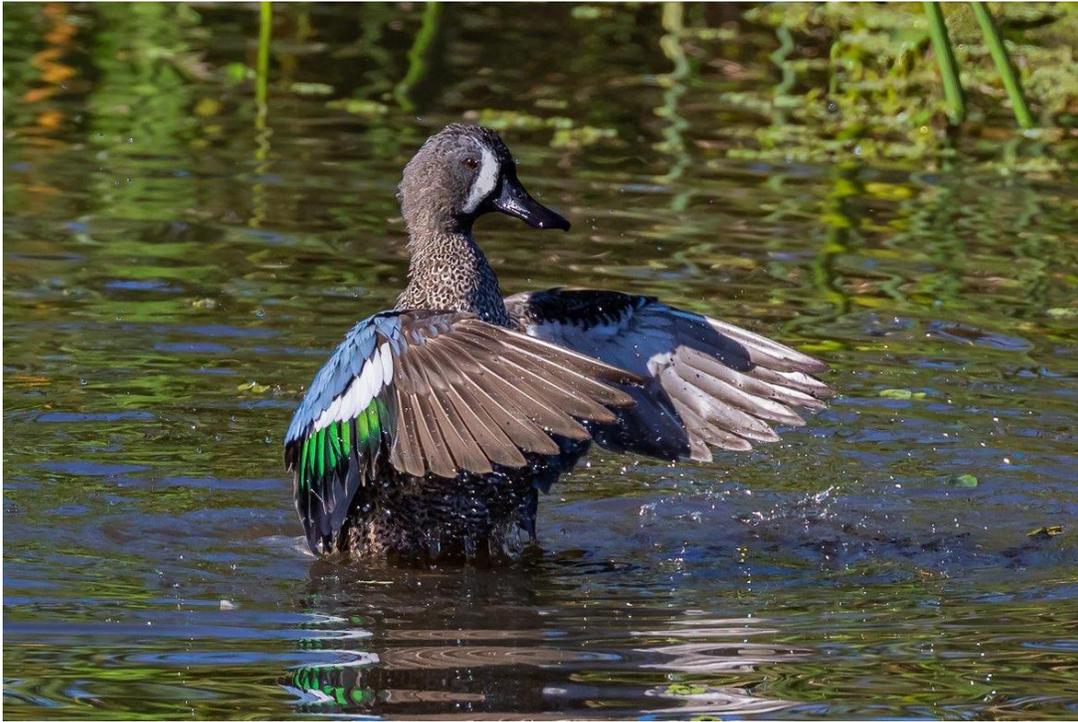
Tricolored Heron - Photo by Paul Gregg



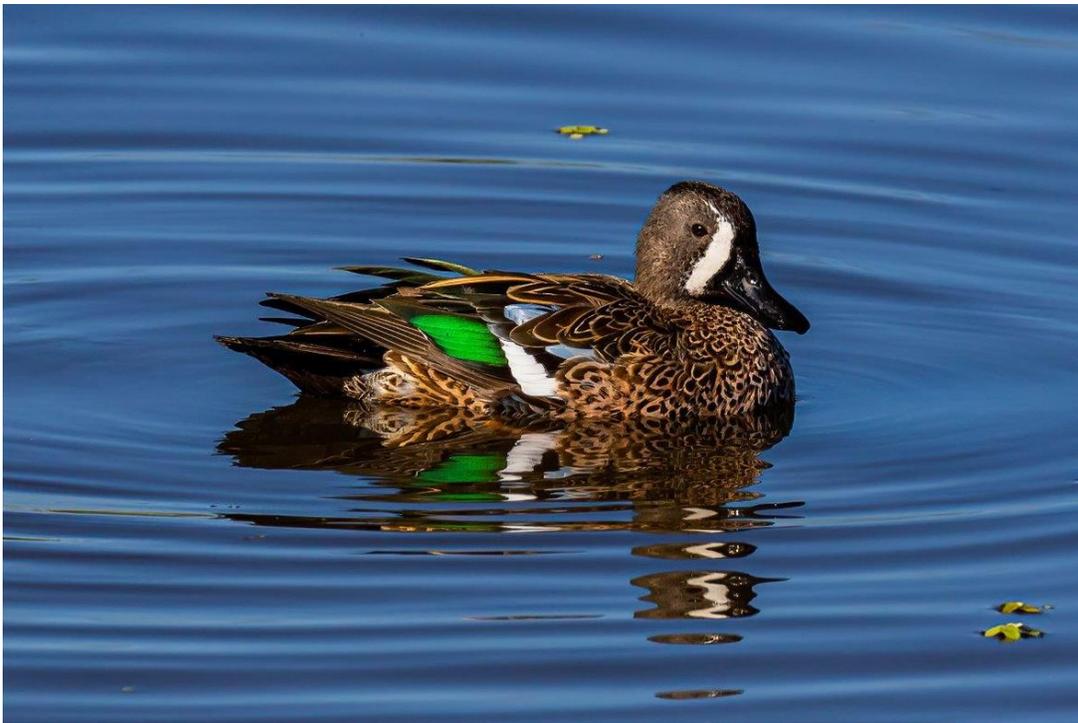
White Ibis - Photo by Paul Gregg



White-faced Ibis - Photo by Paul Gregg



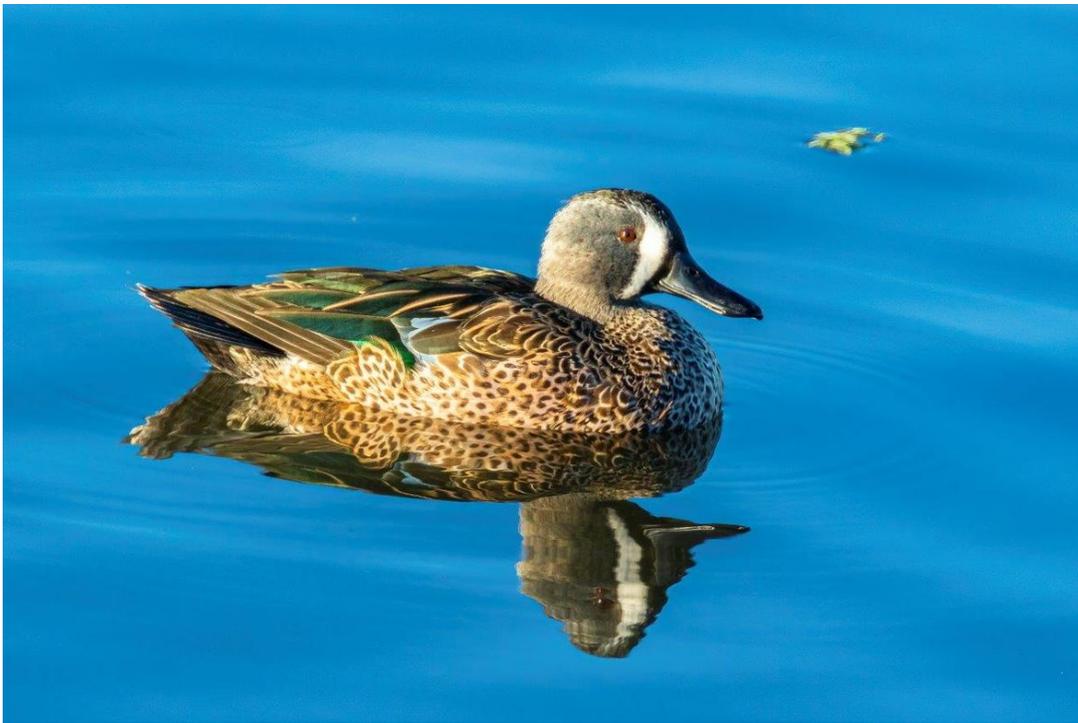
Blue-winged Teal - Photo by Paul Gregg



Blue-winged Teal - Photo by Paul Gregg



Blue-winged Teal - Photo by Paul Gregg



Blue-winged Teal - Photo by Paul Gregg



Cinnamon Teal - 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 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.

Warmth of joy,
glow of prosperity,
sparkle of happiness...
may you be
blessed with all these
& more!

Happy
Hanukkah!





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