

The Pine Warbler



January 2009

Vol.29, No.1

East Texas Nature

What is That Smell?

by Diane Cabiness,
Texas Master Naturalist

"Cares melt when you kneel in your garden."—Anonymous



Brush by the foliage of Copper Canyon Daisy, *Tagetes lemmonii* and one is assaulted with a distinctive, pungent fragrance that either you will like or you will not like. What is that smell? A hint of camphor certainly not lemony as I have heard its fragrance described in the past, definitely medicine like. I bought quite a few plants recently for a landscape job and noticed that the back of my truck was pretty packed. I suggested that I put the 2 copper canyon daisies inside the cab with me. The grower looked at me funny and said "You do not want to do that". Wisely I decided to listen to my friend.

Tagetes lemmonii is not a daisy but is related to the common garden marigold. This deer resistant plant occurs naturally in mountain canyons between 4000 ft and 8000 ft above sea level in northern Mexico and southern Arizona.

continued on page 4

January Presentation South Georgia Island Presented by John and Gloria Jones

South Georgia, a British overseas territory, is located in the Southern Ocean in one of the most remote regions on earth. The climate is dominated by the effect of the Antarctic continent some 1,000 miles to the south. Therefore, permanent ice and glaciers cover more than half its area. Only those with a deep love of nature would even consider going there.

The small island is strikingly beautiful in sunlight with rugged ice-covered peaks rising from the sea, along with stunning blue glacier ice, all reflected in the emerald water of the bays. But the mood can quickly change to a sunless scene, with dark low-hanging clouds hiding the peaks and glaciers, and the bay waters dark and gray from the reflected sky. Add gale force southern winds and survival becomes the main consideration. Under any condition, a visit to this remote wildlife sanctuary is not easily forgotten. The tales of the extraordinary concentrations of wildlife enticed us to visit South Georgia.

When most people think of birds in Antarctica and the cold islands of the Southern Ocean, the first one that usually comes to mind is the penguin, and rightly so. Of the seventeen penguin species that occur in the world, four make South Georgia their home — the King, Macaroni, Gentoo and Chinstrap.

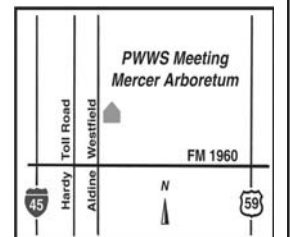
Seabirds on South Georgia

next page



King Penguin appears to be dancing with joy after returning from the sea.

Date: December 20
Time: Social 7:00 p.m.
Meeting 7:30 p.m.
Place: Mercer Arboretum
22307 Aldine-Westfield



Be always at war with your vices,
at peace with your neighbors,
and let each new year find you a better man. ~Benjamin Franklin



Presentation from page 1

for the most part, belong to a group called *tubenoses* because their nostrils form a tube at the base of their bill. These include albatross, petrel, storm-petrel, prion, shearwater, and fulmar. Seabirds. What a perfect name for this group because they feed almost exclusively in the seas, are completely at home there, and normally, only return to land for breeding. Each summer, several million of these birds return to the cliffs and mountain slopes of South Georgia to nest and raise their young.

January Field Trip Sheldon Lake State Park

January 24, 2009

Start the New Year right! Join us for a field trip to Sheldon Lake State Park on January 24th. The park has a large reservoir, over 600 acres of cropland to provide food for migratory birds, a prairie, and a marshland and nature study area. We should find wintering flocks of ducks on the lake and many wintering sparrows such as Leconte's on the prairie.



We will have Damien Carey as our leader. Damien is very knowledgeable about all of Sheldon's birds and will meet us at the Visitor Center at 8a.m.

Bring lunch and be prepared for lots of walking over easy terrain. Bring your binoculars, a scope if you have one and plenty of water. The cope is useful at the lake.

Directions:

Sheldon Lake is on the Northeast side of Houston. It is reached by taking the Sam Houston Parkway east to Garrett Road. Continue east on Garrett for about half a mile and turn right on Fauna. This becomes Pineland which ends in about three miles at Business 90. Turn left onto Business

90 for about one mile and you will see the sign for Sheldon Lake State Park on the left. Turn left across the railroad tracks and continue until you come to Headquarters.

- submitted by
Jennifer Backo



Heart Happenings

The first month of a New Year is a good time to thank everyone who helps make the Piney Woods

Wildlife Society such a fine organization. Hats off to everyone who has served as a president or held any office. That includes a whole bunch of folks. And another round of thanks for everyone who has served on committees or led a field trip, too. More thanks to every person who has provided a program, written or mailed the newsletter or served refreshments. I believe that will cover the entire membership. A special note to all the writers who provide interesting articles and photos to the newsletter, past and present. A round of applause and thanks to Allison Marks who came on the scene to assemble and edit the Pine Warbler. She managed to get us all through the rough days after Hurricane Ike that none of us will soon forget. And thanks to those who pay their dues and show up for meetings! I know that has to include everyone else I may have missed before.

The Piney Woods Wildlife Society is a very successful organization because it is a wonderful group of people interested in nature in all its aspects. Everyone may not be interested in sea turtles but they listen courteously to all the breaking news as the nesting season begins. (And I always appreciate that!)

In case you missed the Thanksgiving issue of the Houston Chronicle, here is my letter to President George W. Bush asking that he honor his father, George H. W. Bush, in a rather unusual but very appropriate way. Here it is:

November 24, 2008

Dear President Bush:

Thanksgiving is here and I'm sure you are thankful for your wonderful family. I would like to suggest a way you could thank your father for his courage and leadership.

When President George H. W. Bush was in Washington, he faced many complex problems as all presidents do. One that was particularly troubling involved the deaths of thousands of sea turtles drowning in shrimp trawls and the need for the shrimp industry to install turtle excluder devices (TED) in their nets. (The TED provides an escape hatch for smaller species which included the Kemp's ridley sea turtle, critically endangered and struggling to survive.)

After years of efforts to get shrimpers to use TEDs voluntarily, the Commerce Department issued regulations to require their use on May 1, 1989. Numerous protests were held including a blockade of the Houston Ship Channel by shrimp boats. Then Com-

merce Secretary Robert Mosbacher tried to intervene on behalf of the shrimp industry but finally withdrew in the face of scientific findings and unrelenting public pressure. Shrimp boat captains were ordered to start using TEDs.

Of course, your father was dealing with many other serious issues such as protecting the Panama Canal and overthrowing the corrupt regime of General Manuel Noriega. He rallied the support of the United Nations, the American people, and Congress and sent 425,000 American troops to the Middle East to rout the Army of Iraq's Saddam Hussein. And, in addition, the TED issue was settled while President Bush was in the White House. As a result, thousands of sea turtles now swim freely in the Gulf of Mexico and in U.S. coastal waters. The conservation community remembers his tenure with gratitude.



Kemp's Ridley Turtle, (*Lepidochelys kempii*) Photo courtesy of NOAA

As you know, back in Houston and retired from politics, your parents continue their careers dedicated to education, service and philanthropy. He and former president Bill Clinton raised millions for tsunami victims and those struggling to overcome damage caused by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike. They attend fundraisers for good causes on a regular basis when they aren't visiting the Bush Library at College Station.

My suggestion for you will be an unforgettable Thanksgiving tribute to your father. After all, without the implementation of TEDs on shrimp trawls when he was in the White House, this small Gulf of Mexico sea turtle would probably be extinct by now or very close to it. Please establish the George H.W. Bush Marine National Monument at the Padre Island National Seashore where the endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle is nesting with greater numbers every year.

The Padre Island National Seashore is unique as the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier island in the world with 149 species of fish and 380 species of birds. The island is rich in history having been occupied by four different nations and is now making international scientific history as more and more Kemp's ridley sea turtles go there to nest each year. (Last year of 195 nests found on the Texas coast, 93 of them were found at the National Seashore.)

What a fitting tribute it would be for your father for you to recognize the courage and leadership he showed to prevent the extinction of a marine animal that is part of the Texas natural heritage. The Padre Island National Seashore website describes the island as "70 miles of sand-and-shell beaches, picturesque windswept dunes, seemingly endless grasslands, tidal flats teeming with life, and warm near shore waters."

Declaring the Bush Marine National Monument at the Padre Island National Seashore, where history continues to be made with the recovery of an endangered sea turtle, would honor both you and your father.

Happy Thanksgiving,
Carole H. Allen, Gulf Office Director
Sea Turtle Restoration Project
P. O. Box 681231 Houston, Texas 77268-1231

Education Chair Needed

PWWS needs a new education chairperson, someone with energy, enthusiasm, and resourcefulness. The challenge is how to "hook" more people into protecting our environment. Karen Stockton, present chair, has presented hundreds of live nature concerts for many years now – but she is Road Wary... Won't you consider creative ways through which the general public (children especially) can be reached? Karen will gladly assist the new chair; she just doesn't want the chairmanship herself. Contact Al Barr, president; or Karen (281 444-0343).

copper from page 1

Copper Canyon daisy is also known as Mt. Lemmon marigold and mountain marigold. John Gill Lemmon and his wife Sara discovered this plant in southeastern Arizona in the 1800's. "J.G. Lemmon began botanizing while recuperating in California after his release from a Confederate prisoner-of-war camp in Georgia. He discovered many new plants on the West Coast and later in southern Arizona. After he married at the age of 48, all the Lemmon plant collections were labeled "J.G. Lemmon and wife." It is said that Mt. Lemmon near Tucson is named after Sara Plummer Lemmon, the first white woman to set foot on that mountain "(Bill Ward, Boerne Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas). The famous Harvard University botanist, Asa Gray, named the plant after the couple.

Copper canyon daisy is an evergreen sub-shrub with a sprawling form that can grow up to 3-4ft high to 4-6 ft wide. This perennial will flower best in full sun but light shade is OK. This shrubby plant is drought tolerant needs good drainage, grows in thin soils, and is generally a tough plant. Water regularly until the plant has gotten established in your garden, after that watering can be minimum with no fertilizing in the future. This shrubby daisy like plant has delicate filigree like foliage. The flower heads are almost 2 inches across, with bright yellow-gold rays and darker yellow discs. The flowers can be so thick that they hide the leaves, producing a stunning mound of solid golden-yellow. The fall is when it starts flowering in east Texas. If weather allows, Copper Canyon daisy will continue blooming through the winter and into spring. If our winters are cold enough—mid to high 20s it can freeze back in part or to the ground but will come back.

Bees and butterflies dine upon the nectar of Copper Canyon daisy. Lizards will roam through their branches while toads will spend hot afternoons cooling off under those luxurious branches.

Eros is desire. In Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis explained that it is not the same thing as the "quiet love" that keeps a marriage going, but it is often "the explosion that started it." Gardening for the beginner is like that in a way. During the early stages, any pretty "face" can get your attention and you may find you have to purchase that plant you spotted in a garden shop or plant event without having read the fine print on the tag. Just as in a good marriage when your spouse does something wonderful in your eyes and you find your heart beating with immense joy being near them, so will it be in your garden.

Then there are the bargain shoppers who brought home plants that had been assigned to the trash heap and lavished lovingly, precious time with these orphans. More times than not there will be success and a new star will flourish in their garden. Wildlife cares little whether you are an impulse buyer or a conservative buyer with a landscape plan, only that the plants feed and shelter them. Although the critters that visit your wildscape do not know about human love they will by their presence show their thanks. And for those of us who love the out of doors this will be sufficient.

Whether or not you buy a specimen Copper Canyon Daisy at a nursery or a bargain battered plant, be sure to plant in well-drained soil with lots of hot sun and you will be in for a treat. On jobs I like to plant Copper Canyon daisy along paths in the landscape, as well as at the perimeter of flower beds so that the homeowner can get a whiff of the fragrance as they stroll by. Copper Canyon Daisy makes a terrific companion plant to other fall bloomers such as Aster patens and Salvia greggi. I have it planted by my driveway just inside the gate and at this time of the year I am greeted with copious amounts of cheerful yellow flowers to brighten my day. This plants tolerance to high heat and xeric situations has gotten it included in the Plants for Texas program. This program means it was grown and tested in Texas to perform for Texas gardeners. If you give Tagetes lemmonii a try my wish for you is that you find yourself falling in love with yet another plant for all seasons.

"Though an old man, I am but a young gardener."—Thomas Jefferson

Please share your nature experiences with me at dianecabinessplants@consolidated.net
Happy New Year to you all.





©John Jones

Blue-headed Vireo, (*Vireo solitarius*)

SEA TURTLE SATURDAY 2009

Saturday,
February 28, 2009

Brown Education Center Auditorium
Houston Zoo

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

For more information

contact:

rrommel@houstonzoo.org



2009 PWWS Dues are Due January 1 Please renew your membership today

Membership dues for 2009 are due on January 1 so please take a few moments to fill out the enclosed renewal form, write your check, and return them to:

Piney Woods Wildlife Society
P.O. Box 189
Spring, TX 77383-0189

Also, donations to the Piney Woods Wildlife Society are always welcomed and appreciated.

Members who joined in the last quarter of 2008 are paid up through 2009.

Piney Woods Wildlife Society Membership Form

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



Piney Woods Wildlife Society
 P.O. Box 189
 Spring, Texas 77383-0189

Piney Woods Wildlife Society Field Trips

Sheldon Lake State Park

January 24, 2009 - Leader Damien Carey

Bird Walks with Al Barr - 2nd Saturday of every month through May, 2009. 8:30-10:30 at Mercer Arboretum. All that participants need to bring is some binoculars and mosquito repellent if it is needed.

Visit: <http://pineywoodswildlifesociety.org>

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Numbers of Interest

Heart Hotline.....281444-6204



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

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The deadline for submissions is the 25th of the previous month, earlier if possible. Always add "PWWS" in the subject line. All emails will be resonded to with in 3 days. If you do not recieve a response please call 832 717-3276. All articles are subject to approval by the PWWS Board.

Please send new address changes and corrections to Mike Drummond at drummond@thedrummonds.com and add PWWS to the subject line. Thank you.