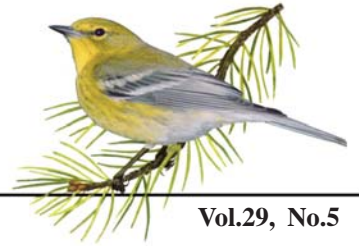


The Pine Warbler



May 2009

Vol.29, No.5

East Texas Nature

A Forest Giant

by Diane Cabiness, Texas Master Naturalist

*"Little by little an acorn said
As it slowly sank in its mossy bed,
I am improving every day
Hidden deep in the earth away.*

*Little by little each day it grew
Little by little it sipped the dew,
Downward it sent out a thread-like root
Up in the air sprang a tiny shoot.*

*Day after day and year after year
Little by little the leaves appear,
And the slender branches spread far and wide
Till the mighty oak is the forest's pride."*
- Author unknown

Outside our front door stands a majestic white oak, Quercus alba. Bob wants a paved driveway and I do not want a paved driveway. Luckily for now our finances prevent a paved driveway from being put in. I have watched several white oaks in different yards die because of construction too close to the trees due to compaction or cutting of the major roots.

A mature white oak tree is host to a variety of bird life. One year I had found a Cardinal's nest on one of the lower branches. Three young were finally hatched and flew off. Yesterday I was coming around the corner of the house and from out of the depths of the white oak a speeding bullet whizzed down

cont. on page 2

AUGUST POTLUCK! - Before you leave on vacation, be sure to mark your summer calendar so you don't forget the annual summer PWWS potluck. Katherine Coward has confirmed that we can enjoy our annual feast on Saturday, August 22. Details will be sent along later. Save your best Powerpoint pictures for showing the crowd!

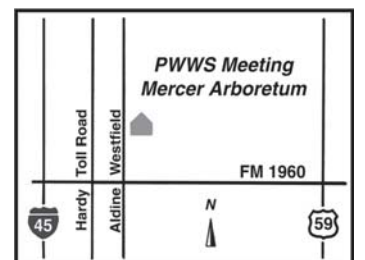
May Presentation Natural Wonders of Costa Rica Presented by Carlos Hernandez

We're in for a real treat for the May 19 program. Our own Carlos Hernandez will present a program on the natural wonders of Costa Rica (and probably some other places, too). Carlos has been a member of PWWS since 1985 and we look forward to his programs which are full of good humor.

He is well known for his excellent photography of birds and butterflies and also gives how-to photography lessons. Now that Carlos is retired, we have a tough time tracking him down, but we know where he'll be on May 19. Please join us for the last program of the year before the summer vacation. Carlos will give us an inspiring look into his travels to his native country. And we're bound to have some laughs as well.

Date: May 19
Time: Social 7:00 p.m.
Meeting: 7:30 p.m.

**Mercer
Arboretum
22307
Aldine-Westfield**





Heart Happenings

Earth Day 2009 included more events than ever before starting with a weekend of exhibits and activities at Discovery Green in downtown Houston. HEART didn't have a booth

there but it set the tone for more events to come. Next came a big week starting with The Woodlands on Saturday and both Saturday and Sunday at the Houston Zoo and the Migration Celebration at the San Bernard Wildlife Refuge in Brazoria County. Of course, everyone wants a table with information about the Kemp's ridley sea turtles and the nesting season.

Following that big weekend came the annual Earth Fair at Lone Star-College-North Harris. (Carole Frascella helped at the Zoo on the 19th and Farah Stockton came to the College as he has for so many years.) On the 22nd, the Houston Astros held a "green game" and we were represented by Deborah Wilson and her family who manned a table as thousands of people streamed in for the game. Deborah works with Carole Barr and is a devoted sea turtle patroller on West Beach on Galveston Island. Another weekend at Moody Gardens in Galveston finished the line of events, at least for handing out bookmarks to hundreds of people. The bookmarks feature the 866-TURTLE-5 number for reporting the sighting of sea turtles, tracks or hatchlings. Education is the key challenge to reach everyone who goes to the Gulf beaches and especially Texas beaches. All of these appearances would not be possible without volunteers including a group of Girl Scouts from the Tomball area who stepped up to take care of the Houston Zoo table when no one else was available.

On a disappointing note, the sea turtle facility of National Marine Fisheries in Galveston is still not open for tours and a promise of funds for re-building a rehab facility has not come through. From now on, it is a waiting game to see if Hurricane Ike has changed the Galveston and Bolivar beaches too much to suit the sea turtles looking for nesting sites. The area is certainly a lot different this year. We know they will nest somewhere as they have done for hundreds of years. We just hope it's on the Upper Texas Coast.

Years ago, Edward Humes, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, called Carole Allen (me) in Houston and asked what I had done and continued to do to save the Kemp's ridley sea turtles from extinction. After a long phone interview, weeks, months and years passed with no further contact. Frankly, I forgot all about it. A few weeks ago, I learned that Mr. Humes has published a book entitled *Eco Barons: The Dreamers, Schemers and Millionaires Who Are Saving our Planet*. Chapter 13 in the "Lone Wolves" section tells my story in "The Turtle Lady" chapter. (I'm either a dreamer or a schemer but not a millionaire.) Of course, the original turtle lady was the late Ila Loetscher of South Padre Island, Texas, who first endeared sea turtles to the hearts of the nation by appearing on Johnny Carson's television show. She traveled with a small green sea turtle complete with a tiny sombrero and serape and was a very big hit. Shortly after learning about the book, the Oprah Magazine

contacted me and has included a brief story in the April 2009 issue.

Both the book and the article imply that my work for sea turtles concluded years ago which is far from the truth. Vigilance and action for an endangered species never ends. Law enforcement in the Gulf of Mexico continues to be needed to make sure shrimp trawls have turtle excluder devices properly installed and working. The battle goes on to convince the state of Texas to declare a sanctuary in Texas waters to protect nesting Kemp's ridleys at the Padre Island National Seashore. The campaign to convince the US Fish and Wildlife Service to consider the upper Texas coast as critical habitat for the Kemp's ridleys continues along with the need for renourishing of beaches following the damage done by Hurricane Ike. The publicity is great only if it benefits sea turtle conservation.

oak from page 1

the driveway. The bullet in reality was a red-shouldered hawk. I expect the hawk was checking out the birds and squirrels at my feeders.

There are about 400 oak species in the world. The oak is the national tree of not only the US, but of England and Germany as well.

White oak trees are given this common name due to the relatively light color of their bark.

White oak grows under a wide variety of climatic conditions, and a great variety of soil types. I usually find it growing in sandy soils. This tree does not adapt well to environmental stresses, especially city conditions. It is a large, long-lived tree. Individual trees 150 feet high, 96 inches diameter and 600 years old have been recorded although that is not the norm. Usually white oaks reach 80 ft tall, with rounded crowns 80 ft. in width. White oak in the open has a short stocky bole with a wide spreading rugged crown. In the forest, white oaks develop a tall straight trunk with a compact crown. Plant this tree in full sun and in acidic soil, moist to dry soils. Good drainage is important. It is a slow grower. White oak trees mature into exceptional, ornamental shade trees usually displaying purplish-red fall color. When given sufficient room to grow, their crowns will dominate a landscape and provide an interesting branching pattern. Their "white" bark is scaly in appearance and grey in color which is quite attractive. They bear elegant acorns. In the spring white oak has rose-pink foliage. White oak is more resistant to diseases and insects than other oak trees.

Acorns are a valuable though inconsistent source of wildlife food. More than 180 different kinds of birds and mammals use oak acorns as food; among them are squirrels, blue jays, crows, redheaded woodpeckers, deer, turkey, quail, mice, chipmunks, ducks, and raccoons. Deer will browse white oak twigs and foliage usually in clear-cut less than 6 years old. (www.cirrusimage.com) Heavy acorn crops occur about every third year after tree becomes approximately 25 years old. The kernel is sweet. *next page*

May Field Trip
W Goodrich Jones State Forest
with Jennifer Backo
7:30 a.m., Saturday, May 9

Jones State Forest is famous as a significant site for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. We will look for this bird as well as other birds that make this forest their summer home such as Acadian Flycatcher, Black and White Warbler and Summer Tanager. We will meet in the parking lot near the office and walk to the area behind the office where there is one cluster of the Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. After looking for woodpeckers, we will explore along two other trails stopping in between for a picnic lunch. One of the trails is rough so wear sturdy shoes. Bring binoculars, rain gear, lunch and plenty of water. We hope that you will join us as we look for birds, butterflies and flowers.

Directions - The office for Jones State Forest is 1.1 miles west of I-45 on Fm.1488 on the north side of the road. The driveway to the larger parking lot is just west of the office and connects to it. We will meet in front of the office at 7:30a.m.. See you there!

If you need further information, contact Jennifer Backo at 281-351-8615 or jennb@hal-pc.org.

The wood is used for furniture, flooring, and specialty items such as wine and whiskey barrels. During colonial times white oak was used for shipbuilding.

White oak trees grow naturally from eastern Canada and the United States from Quebec and Ontario west to Minnesota, south to Texas, east to Florida, and north to Maine. It can grow as a shrub at 4,500 feet elevation in southern Appalachian Mountains and reaches maximum potential height on lower slopes of the Allegheny Mountains and bottomlands of the Ohio basin. The largest known white oak specimen had a circumference of 32 feet and grew in the Wye Oak State Park, Talbot County, Maryland. Sad to say it was destroyed during a storm on June 6, 2002. ([Field Guide to Native Oak Species of Eastern North America](#), Stein, Binion and Acciavatti, January 2003)

*"He that planteth a tree is
a servant of God
He provideth a kindness for
many generations
And faces that he hath not
seen shall bless him."*

- Henry Van Dyke

(Texas Forest Service booklet, 12/52)

Please consider sharing your nature experiences with Diane Cabiness at dianecabinessplants@consolidated.net.

Karen Stockton

Karen Stockton, beloved matriarch, teacher, and friend passed away on April 27th in the presence of her family. The day before, Karen collapsed while playing a recital for family and friends. She went out with her "boots on" sharing her passion for music, nature, and family with those she loved. Karen was passionate about living an active and meaningful life. She accomplished this through three decades of audio-visual programs that she produced and performed on various topics of historical, cultural, and environmental importance. A life-long teacher of music, Karen took great pride in her students' successes. Karen was an ardent environmentalist and enjoyed communing with Texas wetlands, Costa Rican rainforests, beaches at sunset and her own wooded property. She always had an ear to listen, a shoulder on which to cry, and was a source of wisdom and tranquility, especially for the grandchildren to whom she meant so much.

Karen is survived by her husband Farrar; mother Dorothy Kennedy; brother Robert; sons Petr Jon and Hans Jakob; daughters-in-law Janice and Sharon; and the joys of her life, grandchildren Mia, Jonas, Lily, and Fay.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Piney Woods Wildlife Society, P.O. Box 189, Spring, Texas 77383-0189.

Condolences may be sent to: hugahabi@swbell.net

A celebration of life will be held on May 17th, 3:00 p.m., at Cypress Creek Christian Church (The Forum), 6823 Cypresswood Drive, Spring, TX 77379. Those attending are asked to wear colorful clothing.



Lorna Felton

Lorna Felton, a Piney Woods Wildlife Society charter member, and one of the first 100 families to move to The Woodlands passed away on April 15 at the age of 88. Lorna helped guide the development of The Woodlands pushing for the creation of the Montgomery County Library and serving as founding director of the municipal utility district and also a charter member of The Woodlands Ecology Club. She participated in the annual Woodlands Christmas bird count. Lorna's contributions to the community earned her the distinction of a Woodlands Hometown Hero at the 25th anniversary celebration of the community in 2000. PWWS treasurer Jim Lacey credits her for recruiting him as a member of the club.

A Teague, Texas, native, she received a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas and a master's degree in public health from the University of Pittsburgh. Lorna worked as a chemist with Shell Oil in Houston and with the county health department in Pittsburgh, Penn.

Lorna was preceded in death by Jack Felton, her husband of 53 years who also attended PWWS meetings. She is survived by three nephews and a foster daughter, Anna Michalska Federici, of Stoke-on-Trent, England. Lorna asked that memorials be given to PWWS.

PWWS has been named by the families of Lorna Felton and Karen Stockton to receive memorials in their names. We are honored that both families have chosen the club for their memorials. At this time, we are considering the possibility of dedicating either a memorial paver or a bench at Mercer Arboretum. We believe this will be a lasting memorial for both Lorna and Karen who loved nature, wildlife and the beauty of a tranquil setting that Mercer Arboretum offers.



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

Piney Woods Wildlife Society Field Trips

W Goodrich Jones State Forest
Leader, Jennifer Backo
7:30 a.m., Saturday, May 9

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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 2nd Vice President.....Jean and Mike Drummond
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Numbers of Interest

Heart Hotline.....281444-6204



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

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

Publisher: Allison Marks
Publish1@copperheadfarms.net or
jdfagm@swbell.net
 P.O. Box 131776 Spring, TX 77393

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.