

# The Pine Warbler



September 2009  
East Texas Nature

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## Capture the Moment

by Diane Cabiness, Texas Master Naturalist

*"Nature is man's teacher. She unfolds her treasures to his search, unseals his eye, illumines his mind, and purifies his heart; an influence breathes from all the sights and sounds of her existence."*

- Alfred Billings Street

So often when we think of the beauty of nature we picture grand scenes with high mountains, acres of wildflowers, sunsets, rainbows etc. But do you notice the bits and pieces that are Nature too? Do you delight in seeing the first, single flower of each season or looking across your landscape during the winter to admire the bareness of your shrubs and trees.

For me one memorable moment was coming upon a pillbug being attacked by an ant. The pillbug rolled up into a ball and the ant tried so hard to find a weak spot to attack this critter. I watched as the ant raced around and around the rolled up crustacean. I could only imagine how frustrated the ant was becoming. Finally the ant gave up and went off in one direction. The now-safe pillbug unrolled itself and proceeded in his slow but steady pace in the opposite direction. Would I have noticed this scene of survival when I used to be office bound in my 20s? Probably not.

Another day while walking along when out of the corner of my eye I saw an oak leaf whirling slowly downward as if falling from the Heavens. I stopped mesmerized by the moment ...the undulating movement of the oak leaf on its downward spiral landing finally on top of the welcoming earth.

I am sure each one of you can also relate to me many moments grand and small that you have captured in your mind or on camera. Occasionally you will find you need to have a memento ...a reminder of a special time that belonged just to you.

Here are a few suggestions on how to display these precious windows of your excursion out of doors.

Collect a number of fallen branches on seasonal hikes. Look for ones about 2 to 3 feet long. Arrange in a vase and place it

in a hallway, foyer or on a counter. Recently I used Winged Elm branches in a ceramic vase. During the Christmas season dress up the branches by hanging small cards with holiday wishes written on one side of the card. Use ribbon scraps to hang the cards from the branches. Your children or grandkids can use watercolors or colored pencils to decorate the other side of the card using an outdoor theme. Even adult friends and family who visit might enjoy this activity.

Another idea while out on a walk gather sprigs from pine or fir trees, fallen bark from pine trees, or yaupon berries and leaves from the woods and yard. Display the native treasures in glass jars on your mantle or table.

And when you tire of your little treasures recycle them by putting them back outside or in your compost pile. These

*cont. on page 3*

## September Presentation The Bluebird Lady of the Woodlands Presented by Linda Crum

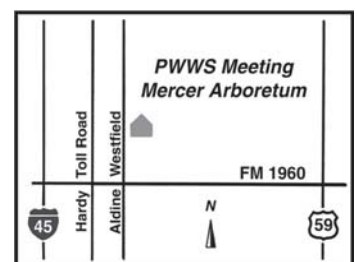
The first program of the fall will be a wonderful presentation by The Bluebird Lady of The Woodlands. Master Gardener Linda Crum has made many presentations in the area about the beautiful bluebirds we would all like to welcome to our yards. She will share information about installing nestboxes for bluebirds and other small cavity nesting birds as well as monitoring them and preventing predation.

Linda represents the Texas Bluebird Society and will make a special "One Nestbox" offer at the meeting which provides a free nestbox with the purchase of a \$15 Texas Bluebird Society membership.

Let's all start the fall program series learning about bluebirds on September 15 at Mercer Arboretum. See you there!

Date: September 15  
Time: Social 7:00 p.m.  
Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Mercer  
Arboretum  
22307  
Aldine-Westfield



The milkweed pods are breaking,  
And the bits of silken down  
Float off upon the autumn breeze  
Across the meadows brown. - C. Cavendish





## Heart Happenings

In spite of Hurricane Ike's damage to the upper Texas coast, a record was set for nestings along the entire coast. Nests totaling 197 were found with only 1 on Bolivar Peninsula as compared to 6 last year and 3 on Galveston Island as compared to 6 last year. However, it looks like the turtles moved to the west where the beaches were better. One nester crawled across the road to the west of San Luis Pass, couldn't find a decent place for a nest and was lucky enough to crawl back and survive the traffic.

The Sea Turtle Restoration Project has sponsored a toll-free number for reporting sea turtles, nests, tracks and hatchlings in Texas for six years. This service proved invaluable on July 26. Tourists walking on Quintana Beach west of Freeport saw 20 to 30 tiny hatchlings scrambling for the water. They remembered a number seen on beach signs, bookmarks and brochures and called 866-TURTLE-5. They were able to reach Shane Kassoon of the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the San Bernard Wildlife Refuge not far away. He rushed to the scene and was able to find the nest where the hatchlings had emerged. It turned out to be the 196th Kemp's ridley sea turtle nest for 2009 breaking last year's record of 195 nests. This is the greatest number of nests since records were begun in the early 80s. The 866 number made a big difference!

For those who like to see just were the turtles were, go to this website: <http://www.seaturtles.org/article.php?id=1358> and you'll find a map marking the location of the nests.

Unfortunately a tragic event marred the end of the nesting season. Two large Kemp's ridley sea turtles were found dead in a shrimp trawl July 25 floating near the Bolivar Ferry jetty just off the Bolivar Peninsula near Galveston. NOAA Special Agent Matt Clark is investigating the deaths. A violation of the Endangered Species Act can result in a fine up to \$50,000 and a year in jail. Shrimping in Texas waters was re-instated on July 15 after the annual state and federal closure. Boats immediately enter Texas waters from Louisiana and other Gulf states.

We suspect the turtles were caught illegally and the net cut away to avoid detection. A number of people made donations so we can offer \$500 for information leading to the person or persons responsible for the deaths of the sea turtles. Special Agent Clark stated that a loose net can be hazardous to navigation as well as sea life and the owner should have notified Texas Parks and Wildlife or the U.S. Coast Guard.

Anyone with information should call the NOAA hotline 800-853-1964, the HEART/STRP hotline 281-444-6204 or 866-TURTLE-5.



## Adventures of the Rolling Stones

The Steven Stones family took a major birding trip at the end of May flying to Boston and then on to Bar Harbor, Maine, for a wonderful cool week! Spencer, age 3, took his first flight with sister, Abigail. (And Grambo Allen was there, too.) Included in the itinerary was a whale-watching trip. Not only did we see at least three fin back whales but a Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Arctic Tern, Shearwater, Northern Fulmar, Puffins, Black Guillemot and Loons. The Acadia National Park was one of the highlights of the trip and we spent many hours traveling its scenic roads. We were able to see nesting Peregrine Falcons being carefully guarded by the Park Service and one evening we saw a porcupine! If you visit the National Park, be sure to have strawberry jam and popovers at the Jordan Pond Restaurant.



Spencer and Abigail enjoyed the Oceanarium with its lobster museum, marsh tour and lobster hatchery. They were able to handle starfish and all manner of sea crea-



tures. Of course, we found a wonderful bird sanctuary just off a busy road in Ellsworth, Maine. *Birdsacre* is a nature center and wildlife refuge dedicated to the memory of ornithologist Cordelia Stanwood. The volunteers care for a number of owls in large cages who

were either being treated for injuries or were permanent residents.

Having become used to 65 degree mornings and 70 degree days, it was quite a shock getting off the plane at Bush with the temperature in the upper 90s.





Abigail and Spencer are at the Oceanarium getting ready to hold some slimy thing.

Gary Clark, and professional wildlife photographer, Kathy Adams Clark at the program, **Squirrels of The Woodlands**, on Thursday, October 8, 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by Community Associations of The Woodlands, the free program will be held in the L.G.I. Lecture Hall at McCullough Jr. High, 3800 S. Panther Creek Dr.

For information on these programs call 281.210.3900 or visit [www.thewoodlandsassociations.org/site/environment/](http://www.thewoodlandsassociations.org/site/environment/)

capture the moment from page 1

simple activities will encourage you to skip the superstore for new, seasonal decorations this year, saving you money while capturing the moment.

*"I thank you God for this most amazing day, for the leaping greenly spirits of trees, and for the blue dream of sky and for everything which is natural, which is infinite, which is yes."*

- E.E. Cummings

Please share your nature experiences with me at [dianecabinessplants@consolidated.net](mailto:dianecabinessplants@consolidated.net)

### Environmental Services Department Community Associations of The Woodlands Programs

Greg Grant—renowned horticulturalist, native plant pioneer, gardening author—shares gardening wit and wisdom on Thursday, September 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the presentation, **Gardening for the Birds and the Bees: Saving the World One Garden at a Time**. Sponsored by Community Associations of The Woodlands, the free program will be held in the L.G.I. Lecture Hall at McCullough Jr. High, 3800 S. Panther Creek Dr.

Offering sage tips for yard and garden, Woodlands Landscaping Solutions spotlights water-wise, earth-friendly methods with booths, demonstrations, pond tours and a native plant sale on Saturday, September 26 from 9 a.m. to noon at 8203 Millennium Forest Dr. Debuting the garden's rainwater harvesting and drip-irrigation system, highlights also include habitat gardening; how-to care for gardening tools; and a vintage rose sale. The hands-on, **how-to gardening event** is a free program of Community Associations of The Woodlands.

Squirrels, squirrels everywhere! Get a close-up view of the creature's eccentric antics with award-winning nature writer,

### DANGER TO BIRDING HABITAT AND THE WETLANDS!

The Corps of Engineers has been asked by the Harris County Toll Road Authority to review their proposal to build the Grand Parkway between I-10 and US 290 in Harris County. As you know, this will involve the destruction of huge areas of wetlands, birding habitat and acreage needed by wildlife of all types. The following watersheds are included in the proposed project: Bear Creek, Mason Creek, South Mayde Creek, Langham Creek, and Cypress Creek.

The Sierra Club is putting together a fact sheet and they are asking everyone interested to make comments against this proposal. Comments must be in by September 18, 2009. There will probably be a public hearing, too. To view all associated documents, go to <http://www.swg.usace.army.mil/reg/pn.asp> and find the listing under August 18. You can send questions to Brandt Mannchen of the Sierra Club: [brandtshnfbt@juno.com](mailto:brandtshnfbt@juno.com).

COMMENTS SHOULD GO TO THE FOLLOW ADDRESS  
BEFORE SEPTEMBER 18:

Mr. Sam J. Watson  
Regulatory Branch, CESWG-PE-RB  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
P.O. Box 1229  
Galveston, Texas 77553-1229



### 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. Contact Al Barr, president.



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

**Piney Woods Wildlife Society Field Trips  
 coming soon!**



Visit: <http://pineywoodswildlifesociety.org>

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**Numbers of Interest**

Heart Hotline.....281444-6204



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**The deadline for submissions is the 25<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:drummond@thedrummonds.com) and add PWWS to the subject line. Thank you.**