

The Pine Warbler



Piney Woods Wildlife Society Newsletter - January 2021



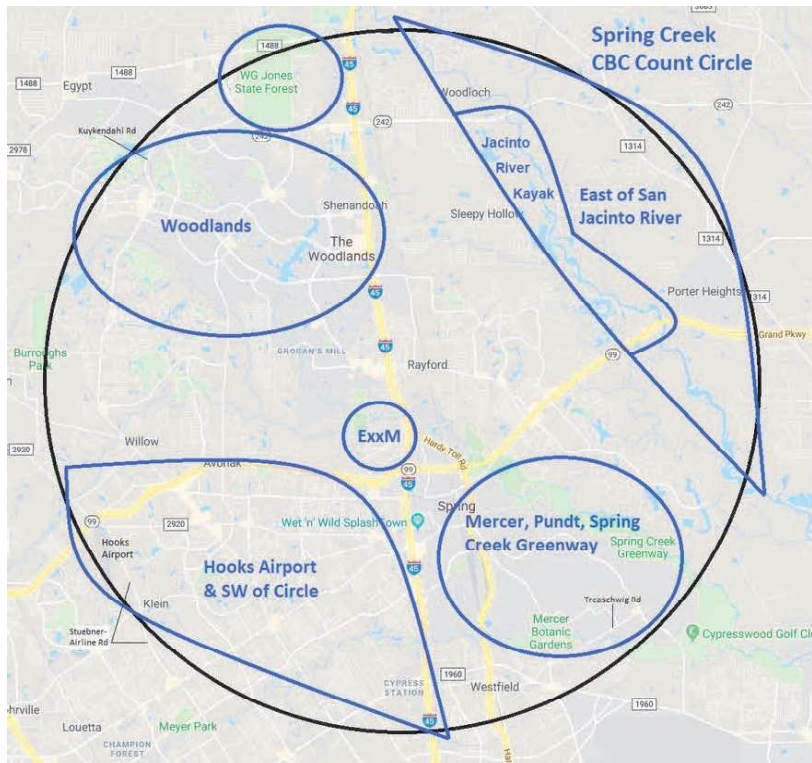


Creekside Woodlands Team at Spring Creek CBC - Photo by John Black

January PWWS Meeting - Virtual on Wednesday, January 20th, at 7 p.m.

"Stories from Spring Creek CBC"

The January PWWS meeting will take place virtually via Zoom on Wednesday, January 20th, at 7 p.m. Join us to hear about the latest Spring Creek Christmas Bird Count. We'll have stories from the day from Claire Moore, Al Barr, David Henderson, JoJo Bradbury, Rob Comstock as well as Kendra Kocab and Megan Ahlgren. Email Claire Moore at cdmoore3i@gmail.com to register and she'll send you a link to the meeting.



Spring Creek Christmas Bird Count Circle & approximate team locations

Spring Creek CBC Consolidated Report

By Claire Moore

This year's Spring Creek Christmas Bird Count is a wrap! Thanks to everyone that help -- both in the field and watching their feeders. Even with the rain, we managed to have a record year (as far as number of species is concerned) with 106 species seen on Saturday, Dec 19th. Over the years (from 1987 to 2019), our number of species have ranged from a high of 103 to a low of 74 with our count usually in the 80s or 90s. Now we have a new high for the count this year: 106!! The number of individual birds counted this year (6,071) was in line with the most recent years.

Save the date for next year's Spring Creek CBC: Saturday, Dec 18th, 2021.

We had a much higher number of feeder watchers this year because of Covid & folks wanting to stay distant. This got us more feeder birds including Rufous Hummingbirds and Dark-eyed Juncos.

Our most numerous birds for the count were Red-winged Blackbirds, Double-crested Cormorants as well as our ever present winter birds: Yellow-rumped Warblers & American Robins.

The birds seen by the most different CBC'ers were Northern Cardinal, Carolina

Chickadee, Caroline Wren, Northern Mockingbird and Blue Jay.

We're thankful for the following sightings by just ONE team or feeder watcher.
We were so close to missing these birds:

Seen only by Gene Prejean:

- * American Wigeon
- * Northern Shoveler
- * American White Pelican
- * Black-crowned Night-heron

Seen only by JoJo Bradbury's team:

- * Little Blue Heron
- * Osprey
- * American Coot
- * Greater Yellowlegs
- * Brown Creeper

Seen only by Claire Moore's team:

- * Laughing Gull
- * Eurasian Collared-Dove
- * Tree Swallow
- * Gray Catbird
- * Eastern Meadowlark
- * Brown-headed Cowbird

Seen only by Kendra Kocab & Megan Ahlgren:

- * Marsh Wren
- * Common Yellowthroat
- * Fox Sparrow
- * Purple Finch

Seen only by Al Barr's team:

- * Barred Owl
- * Red-headed Woodpecker

Seen only by David Henderson:

- * American Woodcock
- * Field Sparrow

Seen only by Gary Clark & Kathy Adams Clark:

- * White-breasted Nuthatch

Seen only by Krien VerBerkmoes' team:

* Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Seen only by Kathleen Hunsdorfi:

* Yellow-crowned Night-heron

Seen only by one Feeder Watcher:

* Sharp-shinned Hawk

* Barn Owl

* Dark-eyed Junco

* Vesper Sparrow

And these birds are commonly seen on our count, but missed this year:

* Spotted Sandpiper

* Least Sandpiper

* Great Horned Owl

* Golden-crowned Kinglet

* Brown Thrasher

David Henderson was unable to bird by kayak this year because of the recent rains making the take in & out spots too difficult to negotiate.

Kathleen Hunsdorfi covered a record 88 miles of birding by car all over the northeast side of the circle. Wow!

ExxonMobil could not hold their Christmas Bird Count this year because of Covid restrictions on their campus.

The Woodlands had a large group that started at Creekside (pictured above) and mostly broke up when the rains started. But JoJo hung in their and visited the remaining spots to report on the birds present.

The Mercer & Hooks teams managed to bird in between rain showers.

The Jones State Forest team was only two folks, but they did find the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker and a few other birds before rains shut them down.

For those of you that want to dig into the details, please email Claire Moore at cdmoore3i@gmail.com and she can send you the electronic version of the count results.

Thanks again to everyone that helped out on the count. We got it wrapped up for another year.

-- Claire



Red-Breasted Nuthatch (female) -- photo by Greg Kelleher at his back yard feeders.



Note from PWWS President

Happy New Year 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.

Details of our January meeting are in this newsletter. February onward for a few months will probably be virtual. We will let you know details each month in the Newsletter.

Our hearts go out to those affected by Covid 19 and other tragedies this year.

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

The GREAT FISHERMAN

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center



Osprey - Photo by Cheryl Conley

When one mentions raptors, there are a few species that people are very familiar with like owls, eagles and hawks. The osprey, however, isn't a familiar species to most people even though it is one of the most widespread raptors in the world. They are found on every continent except Antarctica.

Like all raptors, the osprey is a large bird with a hooked beak and sharp talons, both of which are used to catch their prey and tear it apart to eat.

About 99% of the osprey's diet is made up of fish so it only makes sense that they nest near water along the coasts and large lakes. Occasionally they can be seen along rivers. They build their nests at the tops of dead trees, buoys, chimneys, and even atop power poles. Like the bald eagle, they use the same nest year after year but can be seen making minor repairs each spring.

They are amazing to watch as they glide over water looking for a fish. Sometimes they plunge so forcefully into the water that they are totally submerged. After catching a fish, they arrange the fish so it faces upright with the head forward.

The osprey is a great fisherman, successfully catching a fish one out of 4 tries. They have a much higher success rate than it's relatives like the eagle. Sometimes eagles watch and when an osprey catches a fish, the eagle will attack the osprey causing it to drop the fish. Easy meal for the eagle! Benjamin Franklin said in 1784 that "bald eagles are too lazy to fish for himself.....and does not get his living honestly." True then, true today.

Ospreys generally mate for life but they will find a new partner should their partner die or disappear during spring migration.

If you'd like to watch an osprey nest, there are many online. The Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey has an osprey cam that you can watch here: <http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/education/ospreycam/>. In the New Jersey area, nest building begins in early April and eggs are laid from mid-April to early May. You can watch the eggs hatch and observe Mom and Dad caring for the babies. It's interesting and educational.

TWRC Wildlife Center is a 501(c)(3) organization located in the Spring Branch area of Houston. Since 1979, we have been committed to providing quality emergency care and rehabilitation for injured, ill, orphaned and displaced wildlife. We are proud to be making a difference for the wildlife in our area. www.twrcwildlifecenter.org

Heart Happenings

by Carole Allen



Ridley Sea Turtle

The big story with sea turtles now is Kemp's Ridleys getting too cold in water too far north on the east coast and being "stunned." The word is hypothermic. There are a lot of good people who volunteer and pick them up. They are either treated there or flown south. Many are rehabbed in the south including Galveston before release. They are sometimes found along the Texas coast needing help. So far this year, there has not been a cold stunning crisis here.

Happy New Year!

CREATOR'S CANVAS-HUMMINBIRDS IN MY BACK YARD-PART 2

THE WHITE-NECKED JACOBINS!

Photos By Wayne Easley



Jacobin, white-necked at casa rancho, cr., dec. 2017 R - Photo by Wayne Easley

The most common hummingbird in my back yard here in Costa Rica is the White-necked Jacobin. They are called Jacobins because the colors of the male bird resemble the attire worn by a French political party during the French Revolution. Male White-necked Jacobins have a striking body pattern of blue and white with a white nape. The females look nothing like the adult males but have a mix of blue and green in the body with heavy scaling on the breast. Male birds, when feeding, often sit up territories and defend their areas by fanning out their all white tails which is an awesome display of natural beauty.

As is common with other hummingbirds, the female White-necked Jacobin builds a cup nest that is almost always sheltered by over-hanging leaves. That protects the nest during tropical rains. The small cup is bound together by spider webbing which expands as the fledglings grow older. Just think of a house-builder that could do that with family homes; the family gets bigger and so does the home. The nest is often placed on the top surface of a leaf such as a palm frond. After a couple of weeks incubating the two eggs, the young hatch; they are blind, immobile and with no down on them. The young remain in the nest for another couple of weeks and are fed a daily diet of spiders and small insects. The nest is said to be so compact that the mother bird can leave her chicks for long periods of time even on the coldest nights. I hope you enjoy these spectacular hummingbirds.

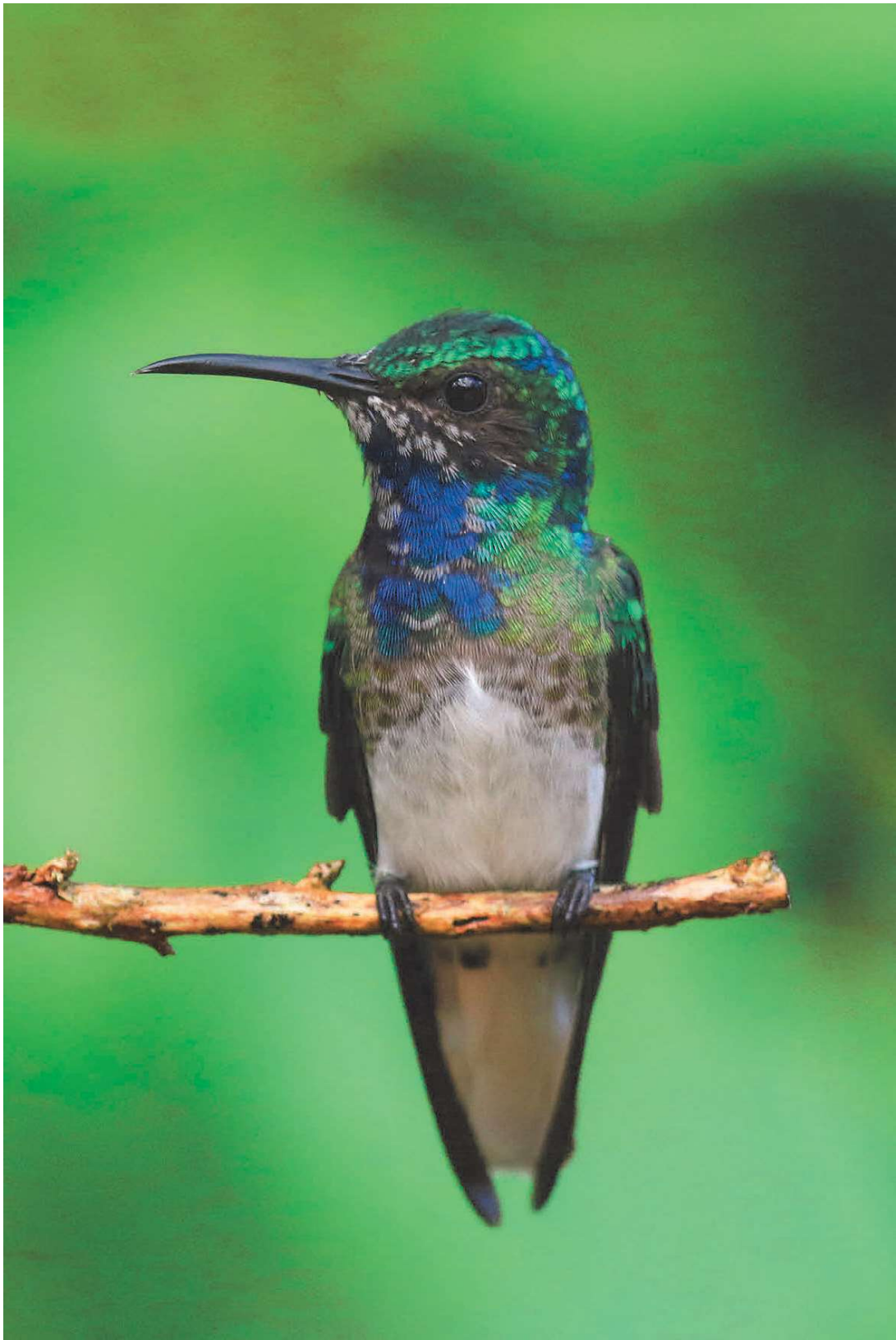
Wayne Easley/written on Nov. 15, 2020 in Costa Rica

PICTURES: PLEASE USE THE ATTACHED PICTURES ONLY FOR

EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.



female in flight, White-necked Jacobin - Photo by Wayne, Easley



white-necked Jacobin casa rancho, costa rica, oct.24-19 R - Photo by Wayne Easley



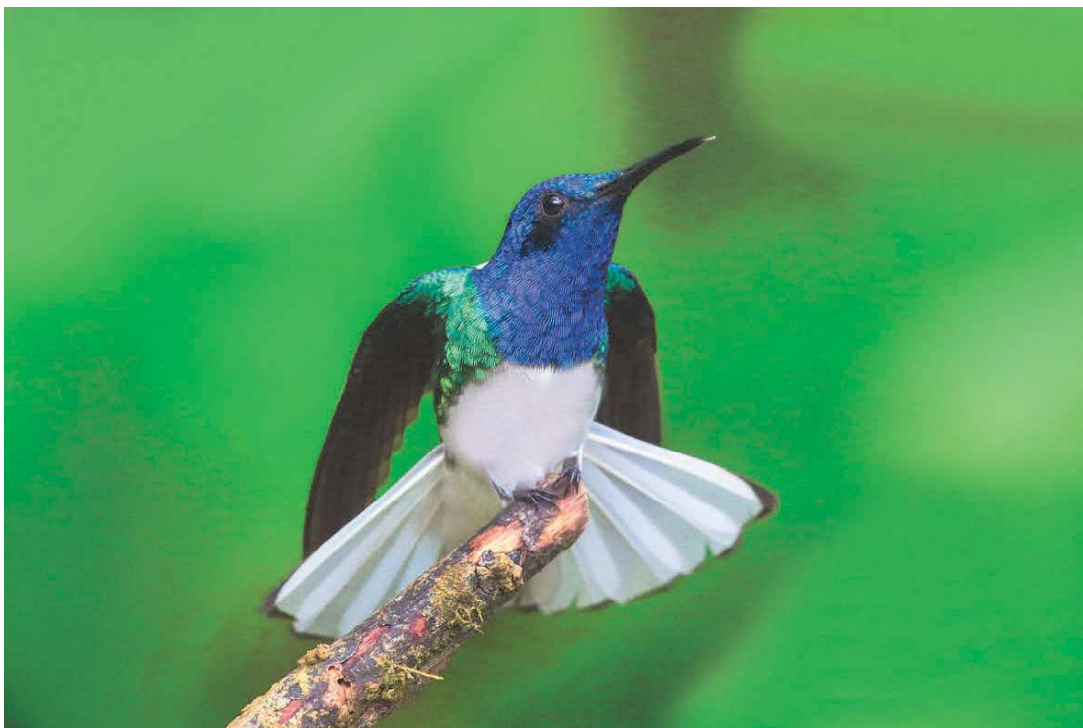
White-necked Jacobin - Photo by Wayne Easley



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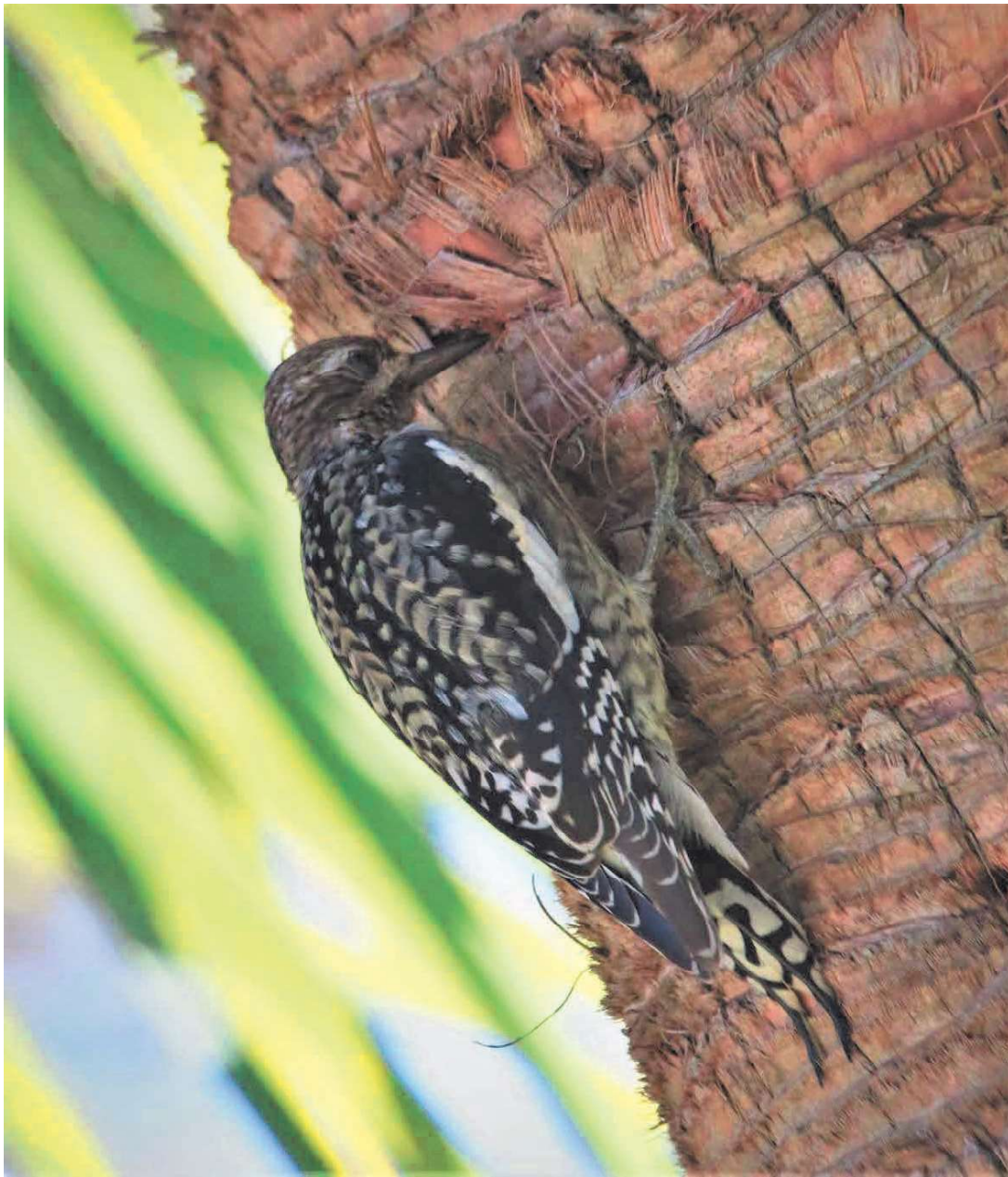


white-necked Jacobin - Photo by Wayne Easley

Photos by Sandy Crystal



Just because I am nondescript, does not mean I can not find a distinctive setting and strike a pose! Orange-crowned warbler. Backyard Clear Lake City (Houston) Texas - Photo by Sandy Crystal



Juvenile Yellow-bellied Sapsucker drilling a new hole in the palm tree! Backyard Clear Lake City (Houston) Texas 12-27-2020 - Photo by Sandy Crystal



Adult male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (11-26-2020) - Photo by Sandy Crystal

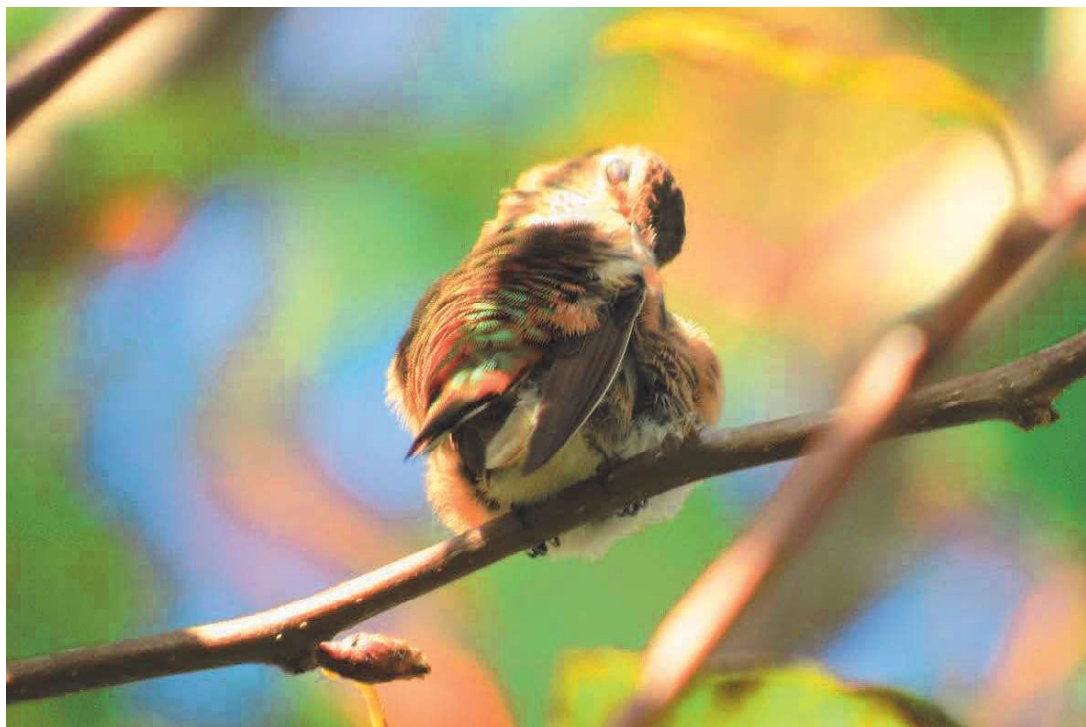
Photos by Bill Miller



We have Rufous Hummingbirds living in our yard this winter. Thought this cold front might move them along, but not so far. 12-15-2020 - Photo by Bill Miller



Rufous hummingbird - Photo by Bill Miller



Rufous hummingbird - Photo by Bill Miller



Snowy egrets in a tree at Baytown Nature Center - Photo by Bill Miller



Merganser on beautiful water - Baytown Nature Center Dec 8, 2020 - Photo by Bill Miller



An unruly crowd blocks the trail. Roseate Spoonbills, Great Egrets, White Ibis, Snowy Egrets - Photo by Bill Miller



I got too close - Baytown Nature Center - Photo by Bill Miller

Photos by Randy Scott

The Cold Moon of December

I stepped out on the porch and ran back in to get my camera. December 30, 2020



Glorious full moon of December 2020, otherwise known as the Cold Moon. It wasn't quite dark yet. - Photo by Randy Scott



Moon crept up into the sky until it could be seen through a hole in the skyline. - Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott



The Cold Moon of December stood out clearly as it rose. - Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott



The moon became the background lighting up the tree limbs in the foreground. - Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott

Galapagos Island 2019

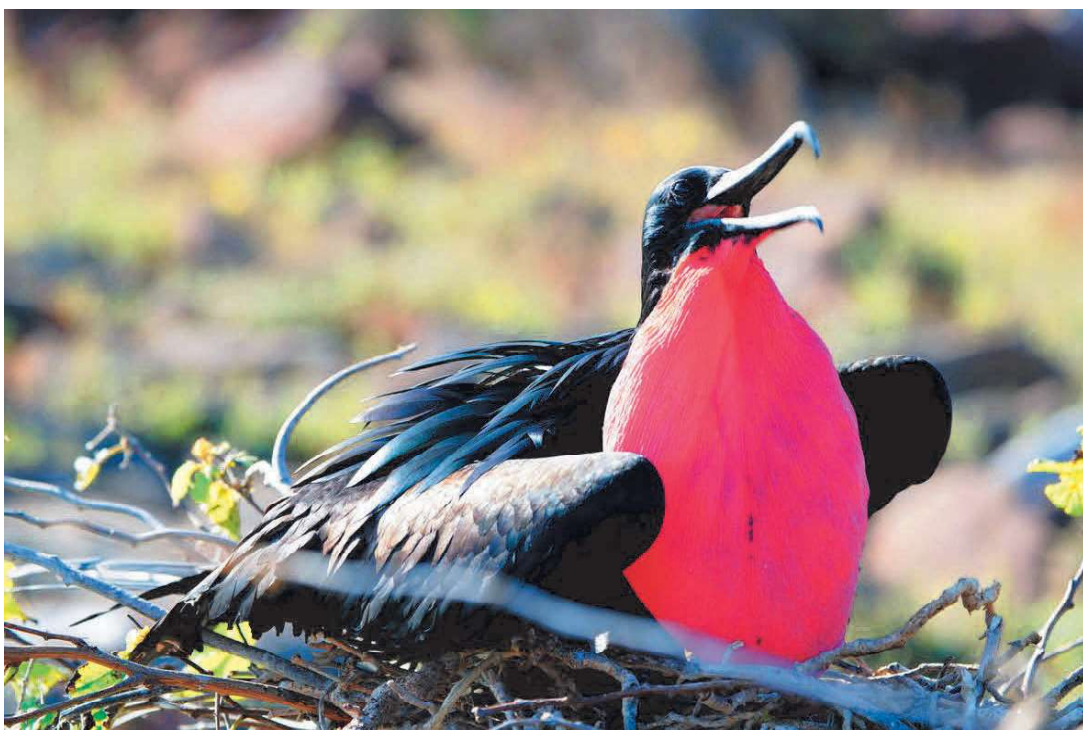
Photos by Jim Snyder

My friends Jim and Denise Snyder share their trip to Galapagos Island 2019





Darwin Lake and Tagus Cove, Isla Isabela, Galápagos, Ecuador 29-May-2019 - Photo by Jim Snyder



Magnificent Frigatebird male, Isla Seymour Norte, Galápagos, Ecuador 26-May-2019 - Photo by Jim Snyder



Magnificent Frigatebird male, Isla Seymour Norte, Galápagos, Ecuador 26-May-2019 - Photo by Jim Snyder



Magnificent Frigatebird immature male, Isla Seymour Norte, Galápagos, Ecuador 26-May-2019 - Photo by Jim Snyder



Magnificent Frigatebird and chick, Isla Seymour Norte, Galápagos, Ecuador 26-May-2019 - Photo by Jim Snyder



Great Frigatebird and chick, Isla Seymour Norte, Galápagos, Ecuador 26-May-2019 - Photo by Jim Snyder



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):
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Pine Warbler will be delivered by E-mail Only		
Annual Membership Fee \$15.00*		Mail this form and check made payable to PWWS to:
Additional Contribution \$ _____		
Total \$ _____		
*Per Household – Includes <i>The Pine Warbler</i> newsletter		
New _____ Renewal _____ Rejoining _____		Piney Woods Wildlife Society P.O. Box 189 Spring, TX 77383-0189

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Please join us!

PWWS web site is www.pineywoodswildlifesociety.org

PWWS Facebook site is at <https://www.facebook.com/Piney-Woods-Wildlife-Society-125891867423250/>

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

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

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.





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