

The Pine Warbler



**Piney Woods Wildlife Society September 2022
Newsletter**



**“Behind the Scenes at Mercer Botanic Gardens:
Herbarium, Native Plant Programs and More”**

**Suzanne Chapman, former Botanical Collections Curator
& Anita Tiller, M.S., Botanist Mercer Botanical Gardens**

The September program for PWWS will be hybrid (in-person and via Zoom) on Tuesday, September 20th, at 7 p.m. (snacks & social time at 6:30 p.m). Latest

rules for bringing snacks : Any food brought to the meeting has to be made by a commercial kitchen such as a bakery, grocery store, etc. You are still not allowed to bring homemade items. Items do not have to be individually wrapped now. Items brought by members are welcome.

Anita Tiller & Suzanne Chapman will give a talk entitled "Behind the Scenes at Mercer Botanic Gardens: Herbarium, Native Plant Programs and More".

PWWS is planning for the September program to be in a Hybrid format -- we will have BOTH an in-person meeting at Dennis Johnston's Big Stone Lodge AND we will have a Zoom virtual option as well for those who cannot join in person. If possible, please join us in person at 6:30 p.m. for social time or at 7 p.m. for the meeting.

The Big Stone Lodge is located in Dennis Johnston County Park at 709 Riley Fuzzel Road, Spring, Texas 77373. If you prefer to join in via Zoom, you can email Claire Moore at cdmoore3i@gmail.com for the link or you can wait for the meeting reminder email that you should receive the day before the meeting (if you currently receive the PWWS newsletters).

Mercer Botanic Gardens and Arboretum established by Harris County (HC) Precinct 4 in 1974 as a 14.5-acre garden, grew to over 400 acres of gardens, natural areas, and facilities. In 2022, following the redistricting of HC, Mercer Botanic Gardens joined Precinct 3. Mercer Botanic Gardens, located in Humble, TX, and its research facility, the Mercer Botanical Center, located in Spring, TX, are separated by Cypress Creek along the east side of Aldine Westfield Rd. Mercer remains a favorite destination and offers a wide variety of public educational programs. Mercer's collections are accessible to citizen scientists, students, artists, and researchers and benefit from an active volunteer program. Resources include botanical illustrations, a reference library, and ~50,000 herbarium specimens received as a long-term loan from the Spring Branch ISD's Robert A. Vines Environmental Science Center. An NSF grant award to the Texas Oklahoma Regional Consortium of Herbaria will fund the imaging of the herbarium collections. Mercer's over 5,000 library holdings include the personal botanical reference library from the prominent Houston-metro area plant taxonomist, the late Dr. Larry Brown. Ongoing botanical reference book donations include those from world-renowned botanist, Dr. Peter Raven, Emeritus Director of Missouri Botanical Garden, and Dr. Pat Duncan Raven, former director of Mercer Botanic Gardens.

Mercer's display, research, and seed bank collections are integrated with the Global Genome Initiative-Gardens, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, and global tree conservation programs. The Endangered Species and Native

Plant Garden, a popular outdoor classroom, hosts natural history programs and training for citizen scientists, including the Native Plant Society of Texas Landscaping Certification program. As a participating institution for the Center for Plant Conservation, Mercer maintains a seed bank and conservation nursery for the National Collection of Endangered Plants. Mercer also manages the offsite HC Prairie Dawn Preserve in HC Precinct 1, a unique urban pocket prairie that shelters naturally occurring populations of rare endemic prairie plant species. Donations and grants from generous individuals and organizations help support Mercer Botanic Gardens' internship programs.

Chapman Bio:

Suzanne Chapman is recently retired from Mercer Botanic Gardens from the position of Botanical Collections Curator, where she focused on working with volunteers at the Mercer Botanical Center on conservation and garden projects. She managed inventories of plants in the gardens and the updating of records including the herbarium and botanical art collections. She participated in all efforts at offsite rare plant sites including planting, monitoring, seed collecting and invasive removal! Over her time at Mercer, she was Horticulturist, Greenhouse Manager and Volunteer Coordinator. As a volunteer she worked with the Millennium Seed Bank Project on surveys and collecting in East Texas. She also volunteered for many years at the John Fairey Garden where she also began her horticultural career. Suzanne frequently presented plant and garden programs and wrote a bi-weekly 'Ask the Gardener' news column for the Tribune newspaper. She continues to contribute as a volunteer to Mercer.



Suzzanne Chapman former Botanical Collections Curator Mercer Botanic Gardens

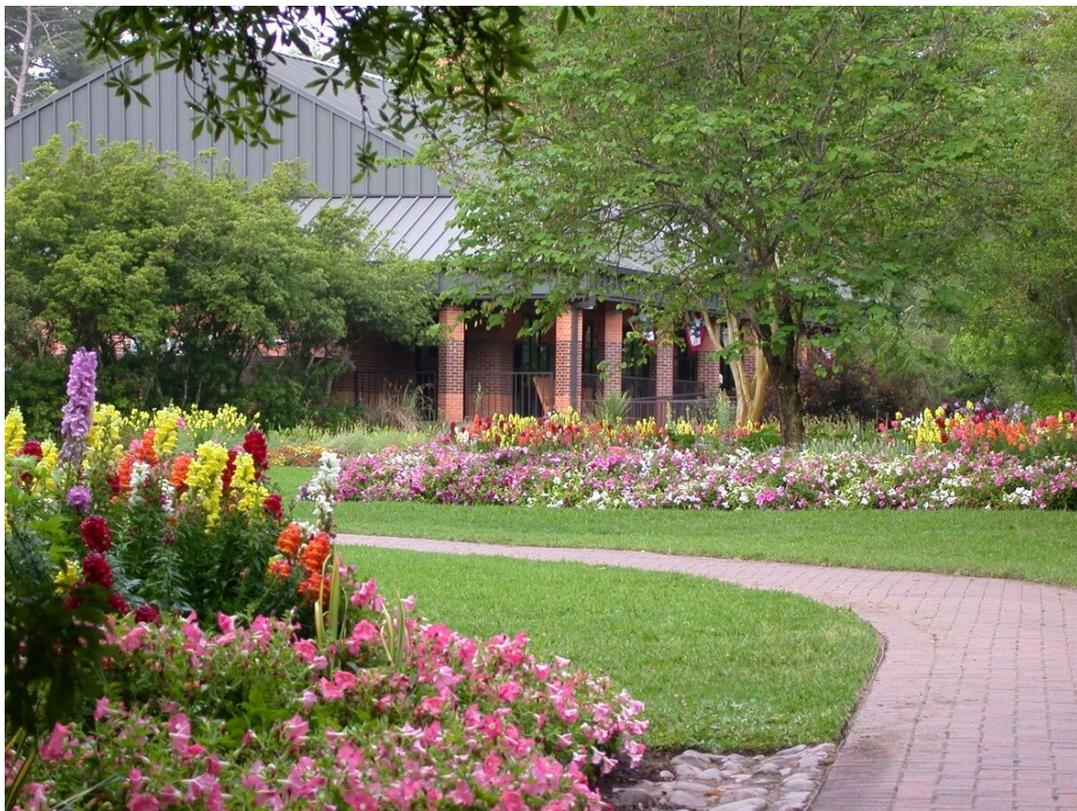
Tiller Bio:

Anita Tiller serves as botanist and conservation manager for Mercer Botanic Gardens, Harris County since December of 2000. Anita directs operations for Mercer's herbarium, botanical library, illustration collections and databases; a seed bank, labs, and nursery for the Center for Plant Conservation National Collection of Endangered Plants; garden sign shop; endangered and native plant display garden; and off-site conservation sites. Anita coordinates plant conservation efforts in east Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast with governmental and NGOs. Prior to joining Mercer, her training included terrestrial and aquatic vegetation mapping, avian and mammalian ecology, and limnological monitoring in FL and AL for university and federal government grants. Anita worked 13 years as a scientist and manager for clinical and research labs at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at Univ. of FL, and Baylor College of Medicine, Houston. She teaches botany, taxonomy, and plant conservation for local, state, and national organizations. Anita received a B.S. in biology and an Environmental Science Certificate from the Univ. of AL, and a M.S. in Botany from the Univ. of FL. A Texas Master Naturalist - Heartwood Chapter member, and life-long naturalist, Tiller promotes environmentally sound gardening practices. Her backyard "refuge" reflects her love for wildlife and gardening within a tropical ambiance.



Anita Tiller, M.S., Botanist Mercer Botanic Gardens, Harris County, Precinct 3

Our website is <https://www.pct3.com/MBG>



Mercer Botanic Gardens



Note from PWWS President

Hope you all had a good summer and, if not, the fall is coming so hang in there.

It will be great to see as many of you as possible at our Sep. meeting. (Remember we changed our meeting days and meet on Tuesdays now.) We target meeting on the third Tuesday of the month when possible. Check the Newsletter, web site or your email for up to date information on dates.

We will try to Zoom the meeting in addition to our in person meeting. Please let me or any of the board know if you like the Zoom and want it to continue because we are considering changing to in-person meetings only.

Looking forward to some great programs for this last part of the year and hope you can join us.

Stay healthy and good birding to all,
Kathy, Your President

PWWS Board Members Needed

Calling all volunteers! The search is on for some volunteers to take on several roles on the Board of Piney Woods Wildlife Society. The roles needing filling include Treasurer and Program Chair. The Treasurer tracks incoming and outgoing money to the charity and files needed paperwork for our 501c3 organization. The Program Chair role works to get presenters for the monthly meetings. That role could be taken on by a committee of folks...?

If you might be interested or have any questions, please email our president, Kathy Coward, at justforthebirds@sbcglobal.net or call her at 281-288-9019.

Last Chance for Purple Martin Roost Excitement!

by **Claire Moore**



© **Greg Lavaty**
Male and female Purple Martin - Photo by Greg Lavaty

Your time is almost up if you want to see hundreds of thousands of Purple Martins coming into a half dozen oak trees to roost for the evenings. September is the last month that the purple martins will still be in Texas before they migrate south to Brazil, so don't wait any longer!

The Houston Audubon is hosting free "watch parties" on September evenings on Sunday the 4th, Sunday the 18th and Saturday the 24th. The parties happen at sundown and last until the purple martins have all settled into their roost trees.

Get all the details at the HAS web site

<https://houstonaudubon.org/programs/all-age-groups/purple-martins.html>

Make sure and double check a few days before the actual event date to confirm the location & time at the web site above because Purple Martins will change roost locations if they are having problems with predators or harassment.

It's a great spectacle as you can see from looking at Paul Gregg's description and pictures in his article below.

Hope you can make it! Bring a chair and an umbrella with you.



Purple Martin Communal Roost, Aug. 16, 2022

By Paul Gregg



Purple Martins August 16, 2022 - Photo by Paul Gregg



Purple Martins August 16, 2022 - Photo by Paul Gregg

On Tuesday the 16th, a few minutes before sunset, we visited the Willowbrook area, near the Costco parking lot to observe the Purple Martin communal roost that is happening at sunset nightly from the middle of July through the end of September. The Houston Audubon has some watch parties you may want to join, but any night you go, you will be able to watch maybe 250,000 or more Purple Martins as they return to their chosen nightly roost. They have been feeding on insects during the day and are fattening up for their crossing of the

Gulf of Mexico on their way to their winter habitat in Brazil. Arriving before sunset, parking away from the trees, you can look high and see them starting to arrive; then in a few minutes their numbers will grow and the mass of birds will circle the trees looking for limbs to roost on. The cacophony of their calls and noise of the multitude will have you watching agape as the noise continues until almost all have found their roost for the night. Once in a while a limb will break from the weight of those choosing to roost on it. What a wonderful miracle of migration that can even be seen on radar! I placed a stitched video on Facebook. Check it out, below.

For my video, go here :https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6wEQ1iSa74&ab_channel=PaulGreggJr

For more information about purple martins, go here:
<https://houstonaudubon.org/programs/all-age-groups/purple-martins.html>

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)

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Gen. 1:20: And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.



Purple Martins August 16, 2022 - Photo by Paul Gregg



Purple Martins August 16 - Photo by Paul Gregg



Purple Martins August 16, 2022 - Photo by Paul Gregg



Purple Martins August 16, 2022 - Photo by Paul Gregg



Purple Martins August 16, 2022 - Photo by Paul Gregg

Heart Happening

By Carole Allen

Turtle News Update

Kemp Ridley Sea Turtle nest found Galveston Island

A Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle nest was found May 19, 2022 at Galveston Island State Park. This is the first nest found at the park since 2012.

The nest contained more than one hundred eggs laid by a Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle — one of the most endangered sea turtle species in the world.

https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/energy-environment/2022/05/23/425599/endangered-sea-turtle-nest-found-at-galveston-island-state-park-for-the-first-time-in-a-decade/?fbclid=IwAR2HzO3iXQReLXQZkb_F8wTPZItOlMcV_Ff5O8Ea-PLT8c0pcruM0VAHKU



Kemp Ridley Sea Turtle

From: Tirn carole@tirn.net
Date: August 17, 2022 at 1:16:39 PM CDT
To: "Shaver, Donna J" Donna_Shaver@nps.gov
Subject: Re: Texas Nest Update

Looks like a great year compared to many others!
Congratulations to you and your dedication!

Carole

On Aug 17, 2022, at 12:36 PM, Shaver, Donna J Donna_Shaver@nps.gov

wrote:

Sea turtle nesting has slowed on the Texas coast. The following sea turtle nests were recorded on the Texas coast from August 15-17 :

On 17 August, 1 green turtle nest on North Padre Island at Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS).

On 16 August, 3 green nests including, 2 on North Padre Island (1 north of PAIS, 1 at PAIS) and 1 on South Padre Island.

On 15 August, 2 green nests, including 1 on North Padre Island and 1 on South Padre Island.

Total numbers of sea turtle nests documented this year, by species and area, have been updated below.

KEMP'S RIDLEY TURTLE

So far this year, 283 nests have been confirmed on the Texas coast including (north to south in state):

3 Bolivar Peninsula

4 Galveston Island

4 Brazoria County, N. of Surfside

0 Surfside Beach

1 Quintana Beach

0 Bryan Beach

0 Brazoria County, N. of Sargent Beach

0 Sargent Beach

4 Matagorda Peninsula

1 Magnolia Beach

0 Matagorda Island

8 San Jose Island

14 Mustang Island

148 North Padre Island, including 132 at PAIS

78 South Padre Island

18 Boca Chica Beach

LOGGERHEAD TURTLE

So far this year, 3 nests have been confirmed on the Texas coast, including (north to south in state):

1 Brazoria County, N. of Surfside

1 North Padre Island, including 1 at PAIS

1 Boca Chica Beach

GREEN TURTLE

So far this year, 27 nests have been confirmed on the Texas coast, including (north to south in state):

1 Mustang Island

22 North Padre Island, including 14 at PAIS

4 South Padre Island

Data presented are preliminary and subject to change with detection of additional nests and change of species identification when hatchlings are examined.

Do not cite or quote without permission. Contact Donna Shaver for background and updates.

Updates regarding nesting are also posted at the Padre Island National Seashore website: www.nps.gov/pais

<https://www.nps.gov/pais>

Donna J. Shaver, Ph.D.

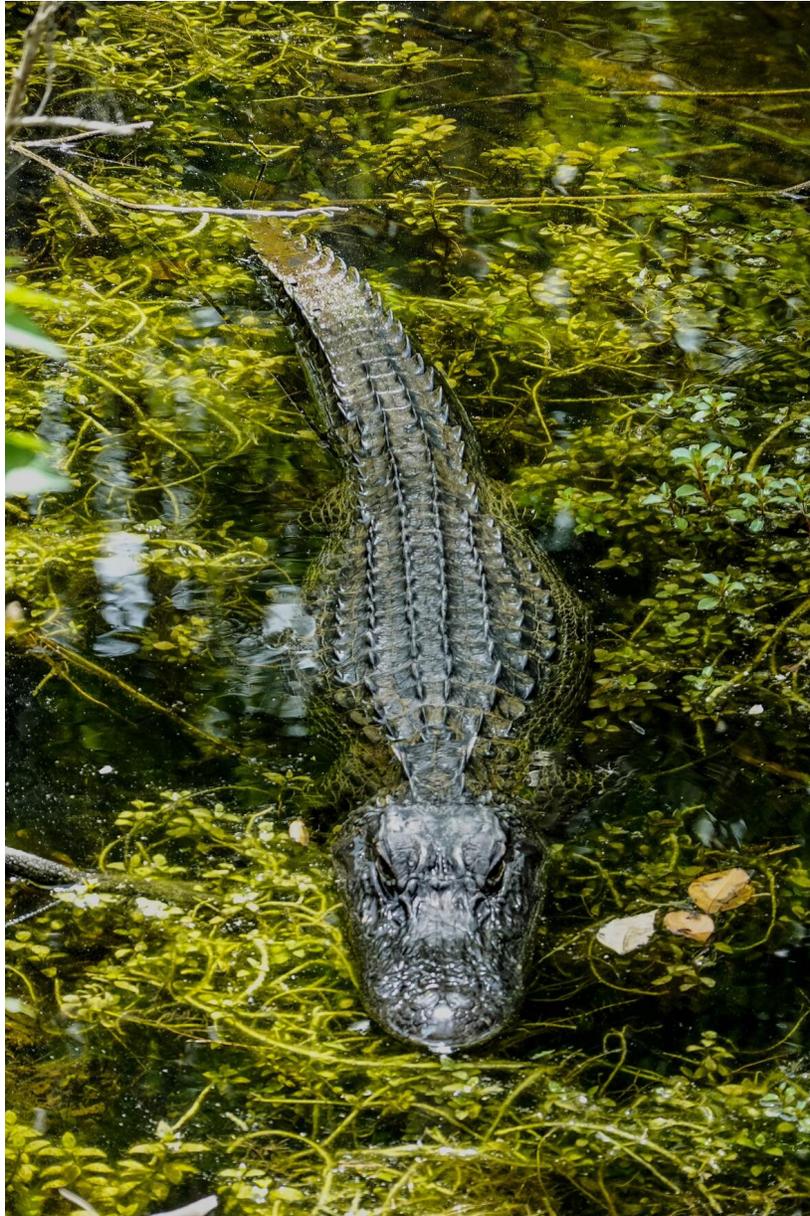
Chief, Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery, National Park Service,
Padre Island National Seashore

Texas Coordinator, Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network

So, how did you do? If you didn't get them all right, don't feel bad. I learned a few new things just putting the questions together. Now get out there and enjoy the birds!

AN OLDIE BUT A GOODIE

by Cheryl Conley



Alligator - Photo by Cheryl Conley

No one that I know of thinks that alligators are cute although I'm sure there are many alligator fans out there. They're certainly not an animal you want to cuddle with or sleep with. You have to give them credit, however, for being an animal that has survived for as long as the alligator has. One source said they have

been on earth for 200 million years. Another source said 84 million years and yet another one said 37 million years. We'll never know for sure but whatever their age, they're old! They lived at the same time as dinosaurs and their appearance has changed very little since then. The alligators we see and hear about in our area are American alligators and are significantly larger than their counterparts, the Chinese alligators that live in Asia.

Alligators are carnivores. Young alligators begin eating as soon as they hatch. They eat snails, insects, worms and fish. Adults will eat anything they can take down including deer and even bears. They can leap 5 feet into the air to catch birds. Sad to say but they will also eat small family pets if given the opportunity.

Depending on who you ask, alligators are either at the top of the food chain or near the top. Loss of habitat and being killed for their skin are the biggest threats.

FAST FACTS ABOUT ALLIGATORS

• Texas Parks and Wildlife Department estimates that about 400,000 to 500,000 alligators live within the state.

- Alligators live in fresh water.
- They can run for short spurts at speeds exceeding 30 miles per hour. They have also been known to climb fences and ladders.
- Alligators are the largest reptile in North America. Adult females can reach nearly 8.5 feet long while males can grow to 11.5 feet. They can live to be 50 years old.
- Alligators normally only attack humans that are in what an alligator considers "his" territory or if they feel threatened. They will also attack to protect their young.
- In Texas, the mating season is March through May; clutch size is 20 to 50 eggs; gestation takes 60-65 days. During mating season, males fight each other for females and territory. The sex of the young is determined at birth depending on the outside temperature. Lower temperatures produce females with higher temperatures producing males.
- Mom alligators protect their young for up to two years. During the first few months of life, baby alligators often fall prey to raccoons, bobcats, and sometimes other alligators.

- Alligators have up to 80 teeth and if teeth are lost, they will grow back. It is estimated that an alligator will lose up to 2,000 teeth during their lifetime.
- Alligators use their muscular tails to propel them through the water and for defense.
- People often mistake crocodiles for alligators and vice versa. Crocodiles are larger and have a more pointed snout and are only found on the southern tip of Florida.
- The alligator nostrils are upright which allows them to breathe while swimming underwater. Often times the nostrils are all that can be seen when they're in the water.
- s
- The skin on the back serves as armor. The spikes are called scutes and make the skin very hard to penetrate.
- Under these Texas statutes, no person may take, sell, purchase, or possess an alligator, an alligator egg, or any part of an alligator without a permit.

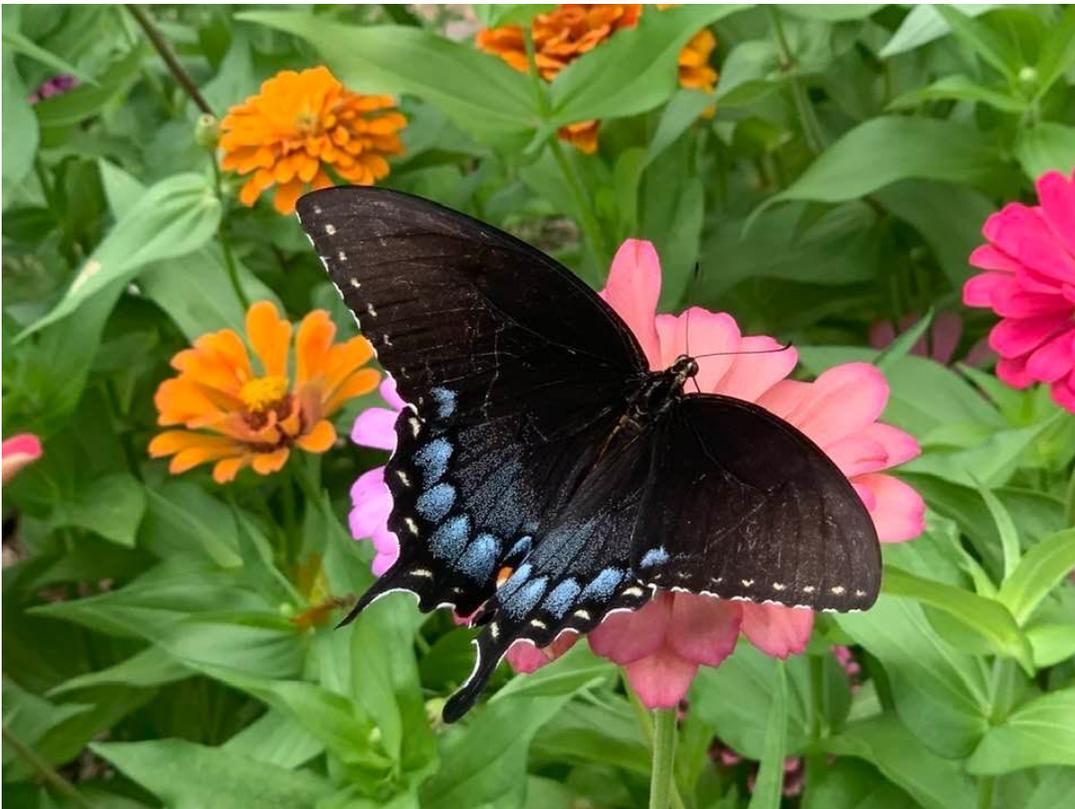
If you see an alligator, here are some safety tips:

- Don't kill, harass, feed or try to move it. It is against the law. Contact Texas Parks and Wildlife for other authorities for assistance in moving a nuisance alligator.
- If the alligator hisses, you're too close. Slowly move away.
- If you live near lakes or streams, keep your pets and children away from the water's edge.
- Don't swim in lakes and streams at night when alligators are most active.
- Most importantly, use common sense. These are wild animals!

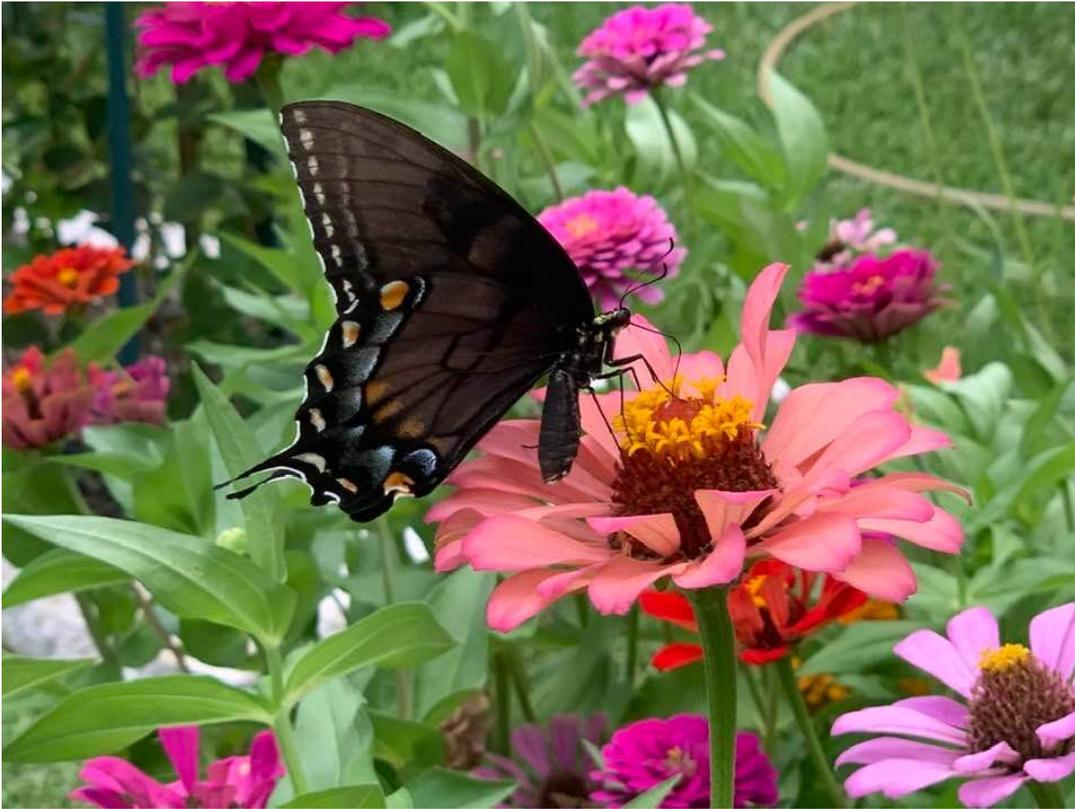
Photos by Jim Snyder



A female Pipevine Swallowtail took a break from the heat and decided to rest on some sweet basil in the shade. I was able to capture it with a macro lens and flash. 8-9-22 - Photo by Jim Snyder



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (dark form) - Photo by Jim Snyder



A stunning female Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (dark form) paid us a visit today (8-3-22) - Photo by Jim Snyder!

Photos by Lucinda Valdes



Giant Swallowtail - Photo by Lucinda Valdes



Queen - Photo by Lucinda Valdes

Photo by Randy Scott



Swans in Copenhagen, Denmark. The babies (darker birds) threatened me with a hiss when I approached. These are big birds. Photo by Randy Scott



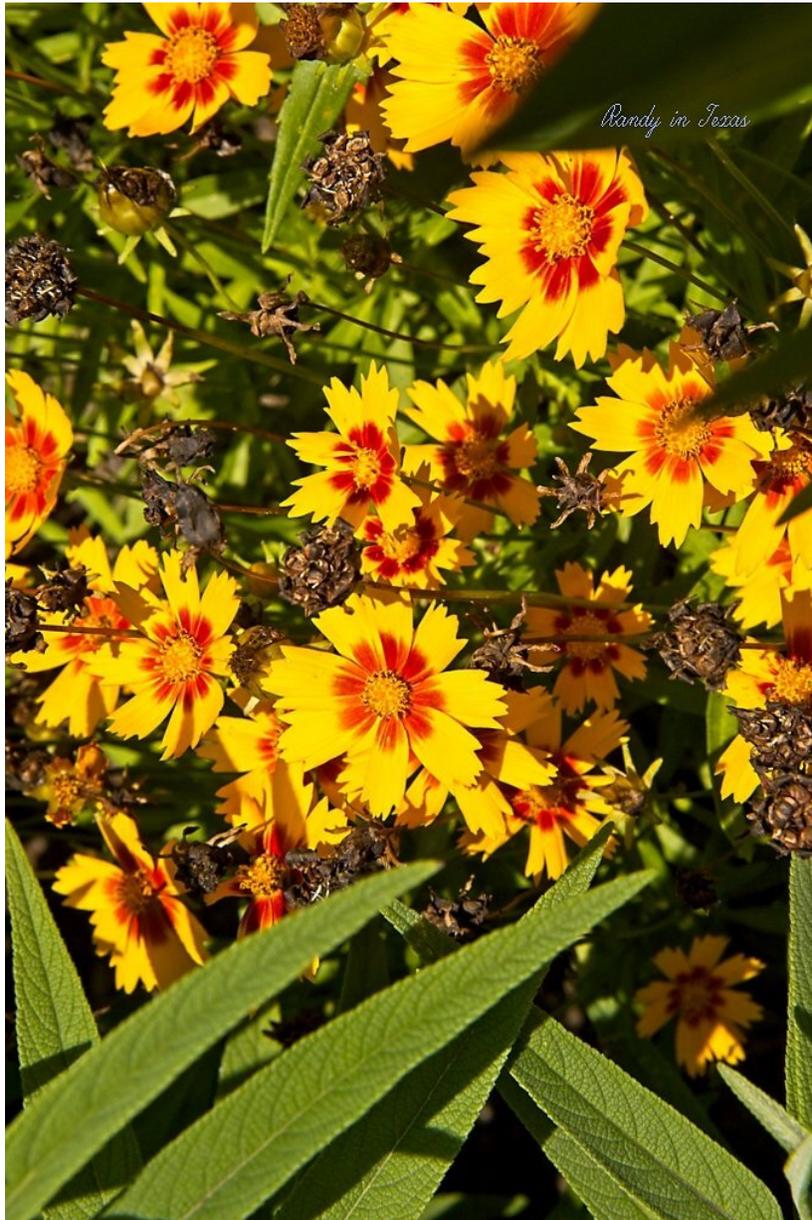
Photo by Randy Scott



Russelia equisetiformis. Firecracker plant - Photo by Randy Scott



Tropical Passionvine (vie) 6-26-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



Coreopsis - Photo by Randy Scott



Hirta - Black eyed Susan - Photo by Randy Scott



Bluebirds on the Fountain either fussing at each other or juvenile begging for food. The latter I believe. In my backyard of Conroe. - Photo by Randy Scott



Orchard Oriole male juvenile first-year, still visiting us in Conroe Tx. Perched on top of a small pine behind our home. He just watched the other birds come to our feeders. Sorry guy, you have to go to the side yard for your kind of food. 7-29-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



Ruby Throat outside my study. These hummingbirds are consistently guarding and fighting at a feeder I have outside the window. When the light is right, the males are a spectacular sight. Conroe - Photo by Randy Scott

Galveston Tree Sculpture Tour - Aug. 15, 2022

Photos by Paul Gregg



Blue Heron on rocky waterfall - Photo by Paul Gregg

Hello!

We decided to get with our dear friend Penny and visit another of Galveston's famous palaces. On the way down we found it was open only for special occasions. So, we decided to take a circuit in the residential section to view and photograph the "Tree Sculpture Tour". We went to the Galveston Welcome Center <https://www.galveston.com/trip-planning/visitorscenter/> to get their map of directions to the tour. Here's a link to the map:

<https://www.laurenceedwardssculpture.com/galveston-tree-sculptures-map/>

When Hurricane Ike submerged the Island in 2008, some 50,000 trees died. Three sculpture carvers worked on some of the trees to create beautiful and sometimes humorous carvings. We followed the map and found most of the trees and I took photos. I've included 8 photos to share with you. The weather

was pretty warm (read HOT), but we enjoyed walking and also viewing many of the houses around the area. Some sculptures are well preserved, and some are not. After coming home, downloading the photos, and looking at the map, we discovered we missed a few! So we'll have to return to Galveston soon and photograph what we missed.

One explanation for the "Birds of Galveston" carving is that there are 17 birds included in that one sculpture. I haven't included all of them, but it was fun walking around the tree to see how many we could count. When the weather is cooler and you are up for a good walk, get down there and enjoy the picturesque Galveston residential area and the tree sculptures.

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)

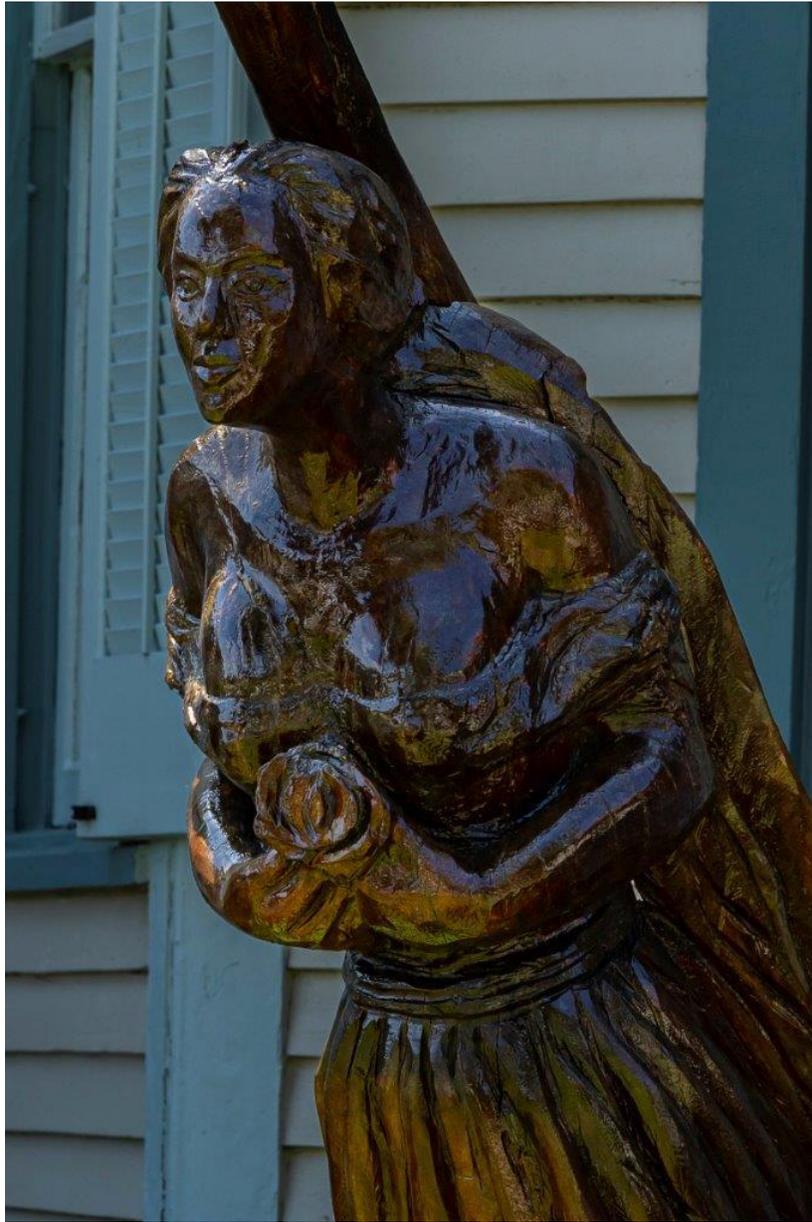
"I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." Thomas Jefferson



Birds of Galveston - Photo by Paul Gregg



Birds of Galveston - Photo by Paul Gregg



Elissa figurehead - Photo by Paul Gregg



Mermaid - Photo by Paul Gregg





Olla Mermaid - Photo by Paul Gregg



Peace - Photo by Paul Gregg

Mercer Arboretum - Aug. 1, 2022

Photos by Paul Gregg



Red-tailed Hawks - Photo by Paul Gregg

Just because it's HOT IN TEXAS. It doesn't mean you cannot get out for two or three hours!

One of the park employees at Mercer Botanic Gardens told us of some hawks that seemed to be making [Mercer Botanic Gardens](#) their habitat. He wasn't sure which hawk species they belonged to, but he had their sound on his phone. I brought up my Merlin (free phone app for birding) and started the sound ID and it came up "Red-tailed Hawk". He mentioned they were most vocal and visible early in the morning around 8:30a.m., then again late in the afternoon. So Carol and I went there Monday, August 1st and enjoyed about 3 hours of walking the property and even came across one of my Paul's Peeps photographer friend who was there looking birds to photograph. We joined him to continue our walk in the woods, and as we were walking the pipeline road, the hawks launched themselves from a tall pine tree and circled around us about 3 times. (We had seen them flying high and sounding off earlier, but they were too high to photograph.) At first, I thought the smaller one was a Krider's variation, but upon more evaluation, we concluded it is a juvenile flying with an adult who might be its mother. The smaller of the two was the most vocal, sounding out almost continually as it flew in circles. I took over 100 photos and processed a few that turned out okay.

Mercer is a park with a great variety of subjects for photographers and nature lovers. Of course there are birds. On the trail in the woods, were some polk weed plants with berries on them. We found immature American Robins attacking the plants, devouring the berries. In the attached photo of the plant,

can you find all 5 or 6 robins in the photo? Flowering plants on the property attract butterflies and Pipevine Swallowtail butterflies were the most abundant. We heard a couple hummingbirds, and I saw one high in a tree, but didn't get to photograph it. Dragonflies are near most water areas on the property. The Eastern Pondhawk posed nicely. The pond near the entrance has some beautiful Waterlilies to photograph.

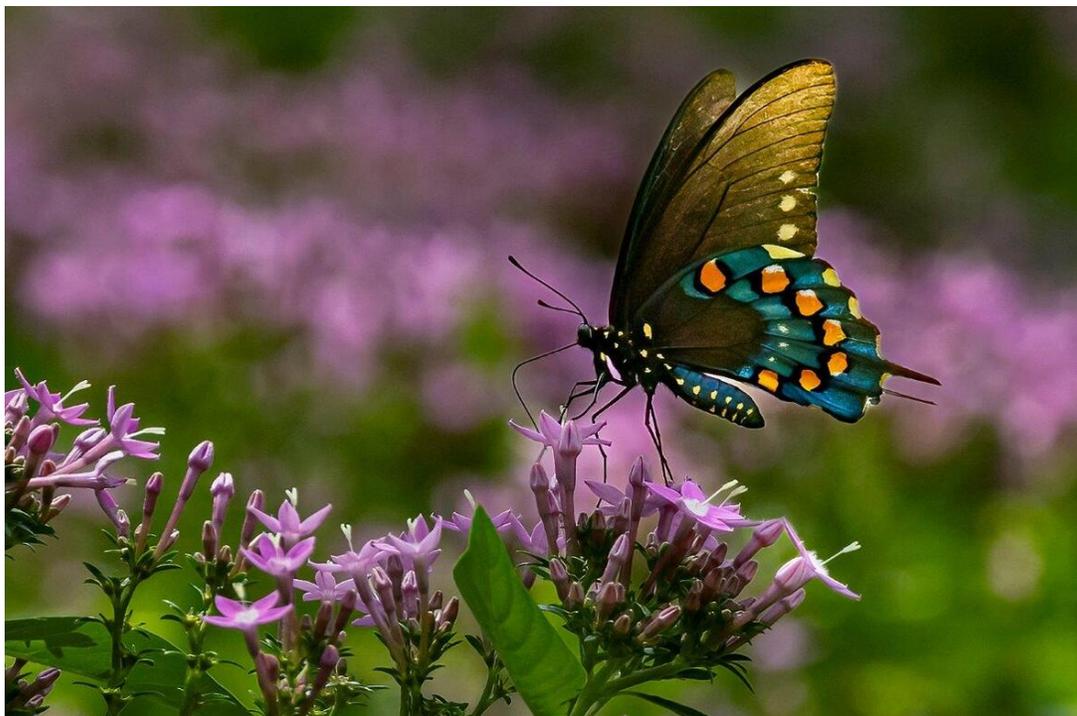
Recommendation: Go early. The gate opens at 8:00a.m. If you are there for the hawks, go to the east woody area and listen for them to call out and watch for them to circle the area. For flowers and butterflies, August is fine, but hot. For the most varieties of butterflies and flowers, my best experience there has been around mid-September. Carol and I will be leading a bird count walk beginning again the 4th Thursday of September. For more information, and to sign up for our walk, check their Facebook page. I'll also host and present "Birding 101" on August 27th.

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)

(H) 281.441.9083; (Cell) 281.536.2304

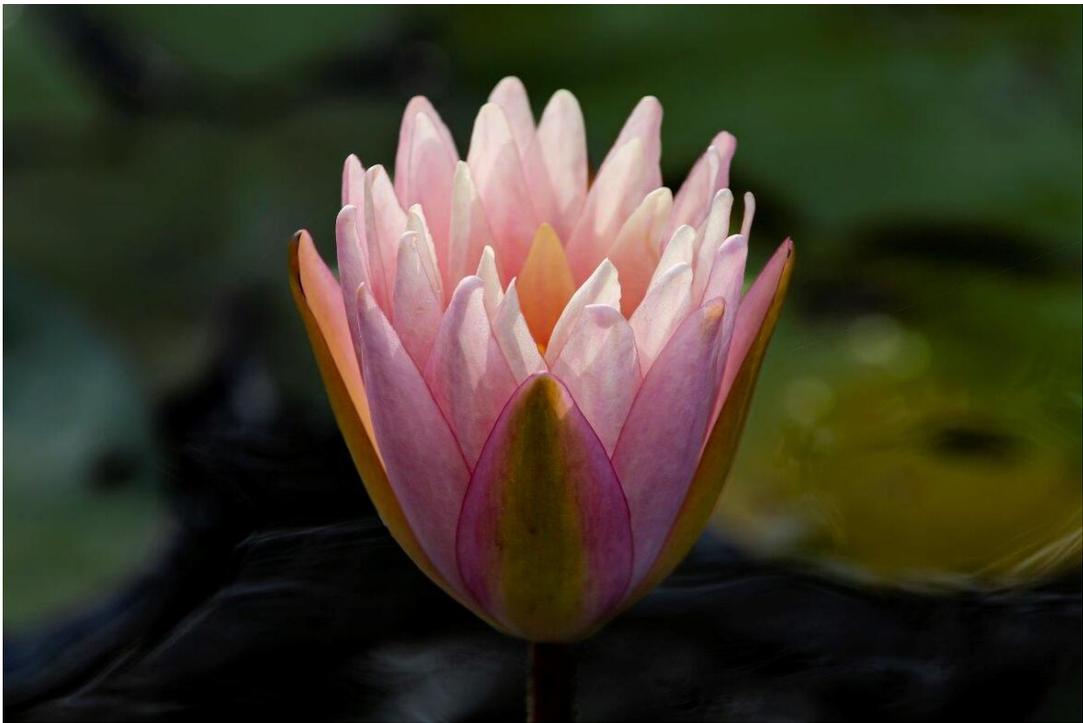
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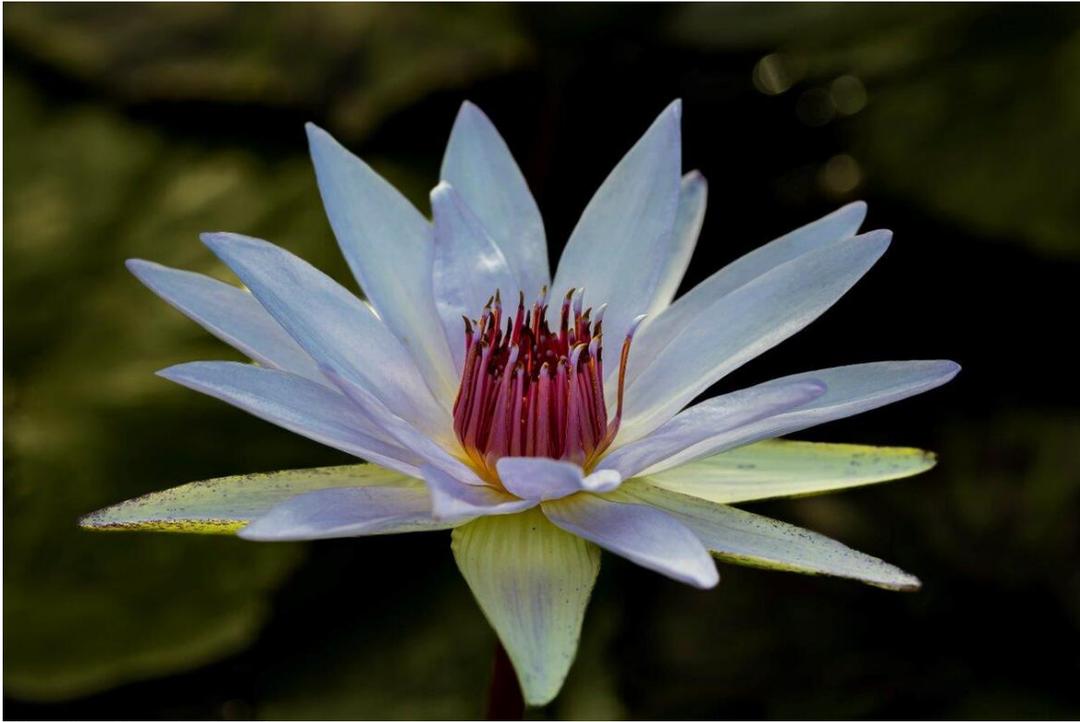
Pipevine Swallowtail - Photo by Paul Gregg



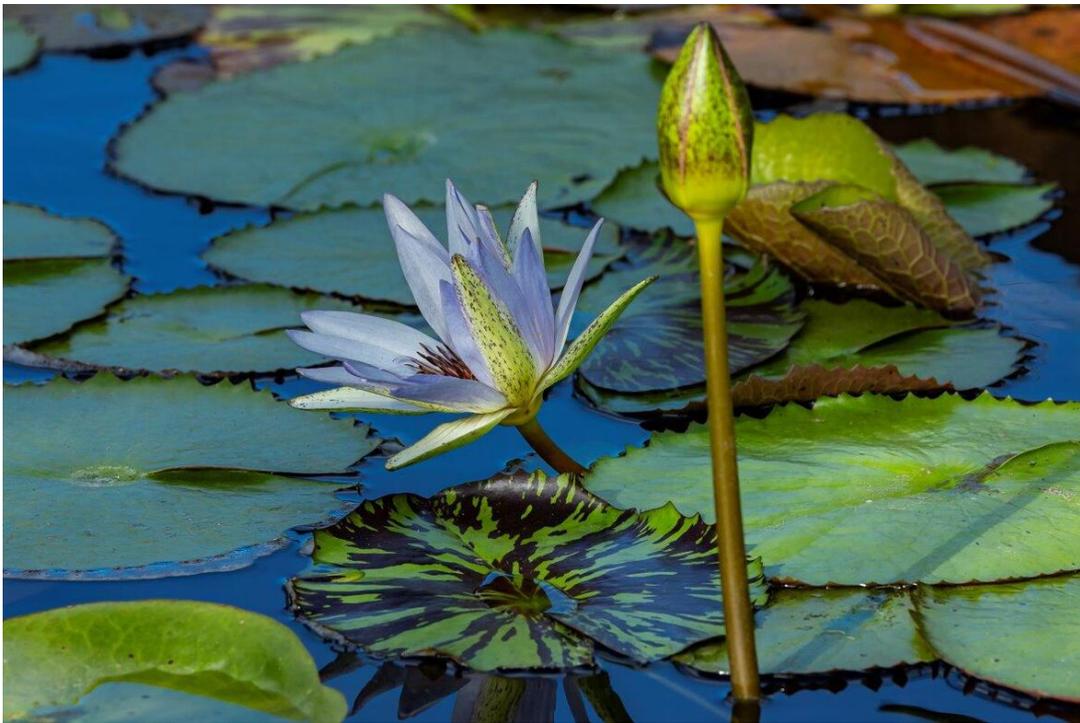
Pipevine Swallowtail - Photo by Paul Gregg



Waterlily - Photo by Paul Gregg



Waterlily - Photo by Paul Gregg



Waterlily - Photo by Paul Gregg



Eastern Pondhawk - Photo by Paul Gregg



American Robin - Photo by Paul Gregg



American Robin - Photo by Paul Gregg



Red-Tailed Hawk - Photo by Paul Gregg



Red-Tailed Hawk - Photo by Paul Gregg

Anahuac NWR - May 6, 2022 - Set 1

Photos by Paul Gregg



Red-winged Blackbird - Photo by Paul Gregg

Hello!

Phew! Catching up is a challenge. My visit to Anahuac NWR on May 6 was a productive day for birds. I've just finished the migrants that were near the water drip there. I processed 39 and decided to send 10, leaving a few out. Maybe I'll send more of the "left outs" toward the end of August! Ha!

I guess the Red-winged Blackbird isn't really one for the "migration" group, but the rest are pretty much pass through birds headed north. Some may have settled somewhere in Texas, but I would think the rest are somewhere between the middle of the U. S. and Canada by now and are building nests, mating, and raising the next generation of their species.

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo showed up late in the afternoon and I thought it was going to come to the drip, but it played hide-and-seek with me. The Black and White Warbler showed up a few times. The color of the day was "yellow" because the Yellow Warblers came and went by the numbers. I could send a whole e-mail with only that species. I was very pleased to see the Bay-breasted and Magnolia Warblers make an appearance. The Eastern Kingbird kept its distance. The Black-throated Green Warblers that showed up could rival the Yellow ones in number.

I may have mentioned in a previous email about years ago at Sabine Woods I saw my first Wilson's Warbler and I had not seen another until this season. This year I saw them at Sabine Woods and at Anahuac. The joy of seeing the Wilson's really made my day. Now I'll begin processing photos taken around Shoveler Pond at Anahuac. I'll not rush, though. I promised not to overload your email folder!

Enjoy,

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)

Gen. 1:20: And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo - Photo by Paul Gregg



Black and White Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Yellow Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Bay-breasted Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Eastern Kingbird - Photo by Paul Gregg



Wilson's Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Wilson's Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Black-throated Green Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Magnolia Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg

Anahuac NWR - May 6, 2022 - Set 2

Photos by Paul Gregg



King Rail - Photo by Paul Gregg

Keeping cool in the Texas heat? My plan is to work on spring migration photos I've been keeping on the back burner! Most of my bird photos for the next

couple months will be from inside our back door, through the glass!

Anahuac NWR has drained Shoveler Pond to get rid of invasive plants. However, there is water that parallels the road as one drives around Shoveler Pond. Alligators are congregating near the water and someone posted counting 99+ alligators as they drove the circuit around Shoveler Pond. I've included a photo of one of the American Alligators I took on May 6.

Birds also tend to gather near the water. I had left the water drip and decided to drive around Shoveler Pond to see what birds might be there. The photos were taken in the nice late afternoon light from 5:30 to 6:30p.m. The Black-necked Stilt was one of the first birds I observed and photographed, giving me a chance to get a flight photo or two. I noticed a posting of Facebook recently where someone got photos of the stilts with small chicks and I was tempted to return while they were still small. I was surprised by some other birds that showed up. The Least Bittern gave me some great looks and I got a poor flight shot as it took off. I took a number of photos of the Lesser Yellowlegs as it was at water's edge.

I had some wonderful surprises in some birds I've not seen before at Anahuac. The Least Sandpiper, and Spotted Sandpiper were a treat to photograph. But the biggest surprise was the appearance of the King Rail pair! I was driving slowly on the western side of the pond, window down and looking for birds. I heard what I initially thought was a Clapper Rail that I've seen before at Anahuac. They sounded so loud and close, I parked, got out, and waited. First one showed up at the edge of the reeds, then the mate joined it. They then moved along the edge of the reeds and I took photos as I walked parallel to them. My books and iBird "Photo Sleuth" identified them as King Rail and that definitely made the late afternoon drive worth it. I'd surely like to know if they have nested and produced young there. Maybe I should fight the heat of summer and take a drive around Shoveler Pond.

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)

"Everyone likes birds. What wild creature is more accessible to our eyes and ears, as close to us and everyone in the world, as universal as a bird." —David Attenborough



King Rail - Photo by Paul Gregg



Least Bittern - Photo by Paul Gregg



Least Bittern - Photo by Paul Gregg



Least Sandpiper - Photo by Paul Gregg



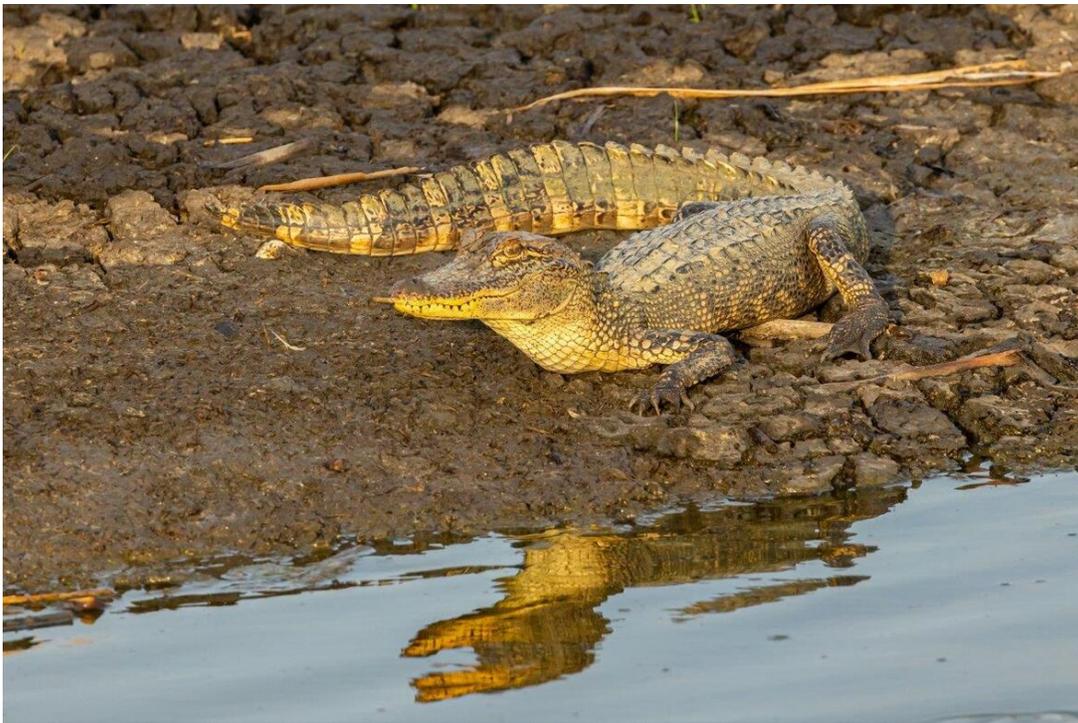
Lesser Yellowlegs - Photo by Paul Greggs



Black-necked Stilt - Photo by Paul Gregg



Black-necked Stilts - Photo by Paul Gregg



American Alligator - 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*	Mail this form and check made payable to PWWS to:	
Additional Contribution \$ _____	Piney Woods Wildlife Society	
Total \$ _____	P.O. Box 189	
*Per Household – Includes <i>The Pine Warbler</i> newsletter	Spring, TX 77383-0189	
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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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