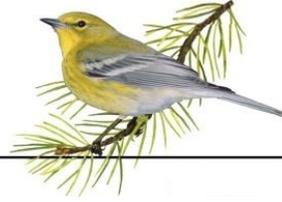


The
Pine Warbler



Piney Woods Wildlife Society October 2022 Newsletter



October Program: "Bats of East Texas"

By Diana Foss

Since most people associate October with spooky animals, like spiders and bats, we'll be talking Bats of East Texas for the PWWS program on October 18. Are bats blind? How much does a bat weigh? Why are bats good for the environment? We'll also cover bat biology and behavior of the eleven species found locally. We'll explore Waugh Drive bat colony and research projects the Houston Bat Team is conducting, as well as the latest news about the Huntsville colony of Mexican free-tailed bats. We'll end with best places to observe bats.



The 'bats in brick cubbies' are bats inside the Huntsville warehouse. Photo Credit: Dianne Odegard

Diana Foss is a Urban Biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife. She has a bachelor's degree in Wildlife & Fisheries Science from Texas A&M. She has worked as a Wildlife Biologist in the Urban Wildlife Program at Texas Parks and Wildlife for 20 years. She also currently coordinates the "Houston Bat Team", a group of community volunteers dedicated to education and research about bats. These volunteers give educational programs, weekly "Bat Chats" at Waugh Drive Bridge, and monitor bat populations in the greater Houston area. Also, Diana is a member of Texas Bat Working Group.

The October program for PWWS will be hybrid (in-person and via Zoom) on Tuesday, October 18th, at 6:30 p.m. (snacks & social time at 6:00 p.m.) at Dennis Johnston's Big Stone Lodge. We'd prefer to have you join us in person,

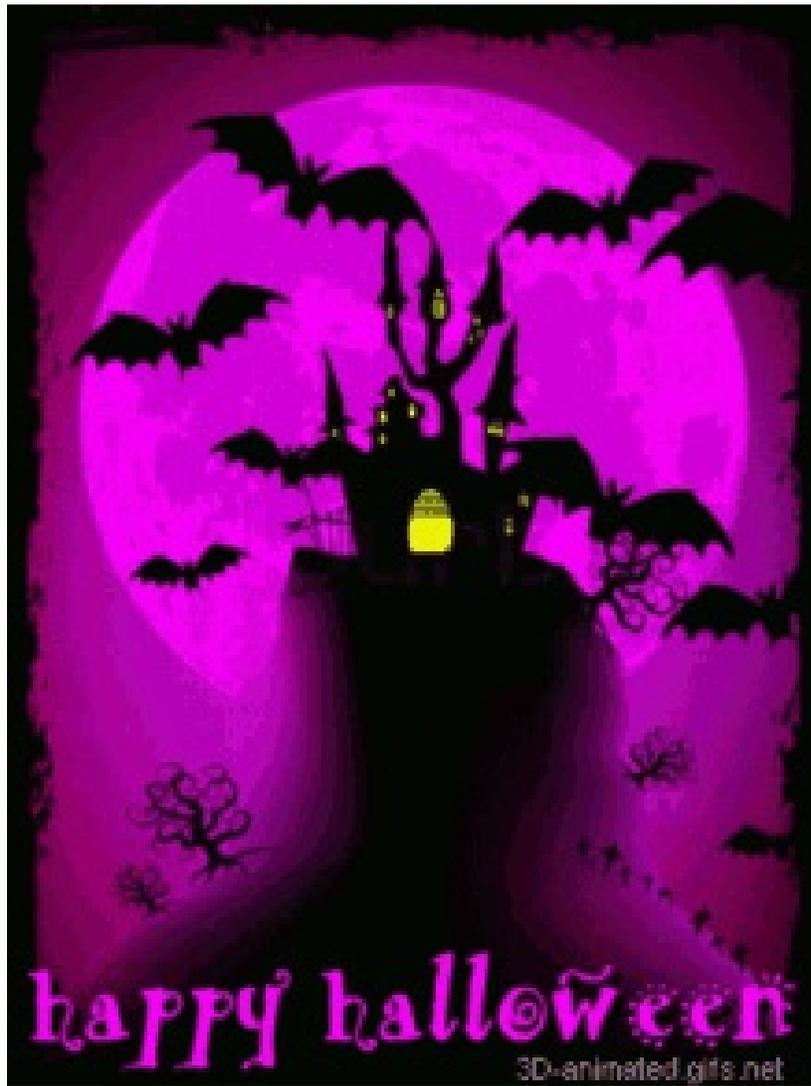
though.

Latest rules for bringing snacks: We are still not allowed to bring homemade items to the Big Stone Lodge (unfortunately) for social time. However, store bought items brought by members are welcome and NO LONGER have to be individually wrapped now. Yeah!

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).



Close up of a Mexican free-tailed bat. Photo by TPWD



Note from PWWS President

Sure has been hectic for all of us. Most environmental groups are having a hard time with membership and attendance. Please help our group stay alive. Your actual attendance or Zoom attendance will sure be appreciated. For the rest of the year we are meeting on Tuesdays, so mark your calendars please, in addition to the Newsletter we also send out an email reminder. Our meetings are still at Dennis Johnston Park at the Lodge and please note that the program now starts earlier at 6:30 pm (and social time at 6:00pm). Programs are for one hour.

Sure looking forward to our fall birds coming in and the cooler weather.

Stay healthy and happy,
Your President, Kathy

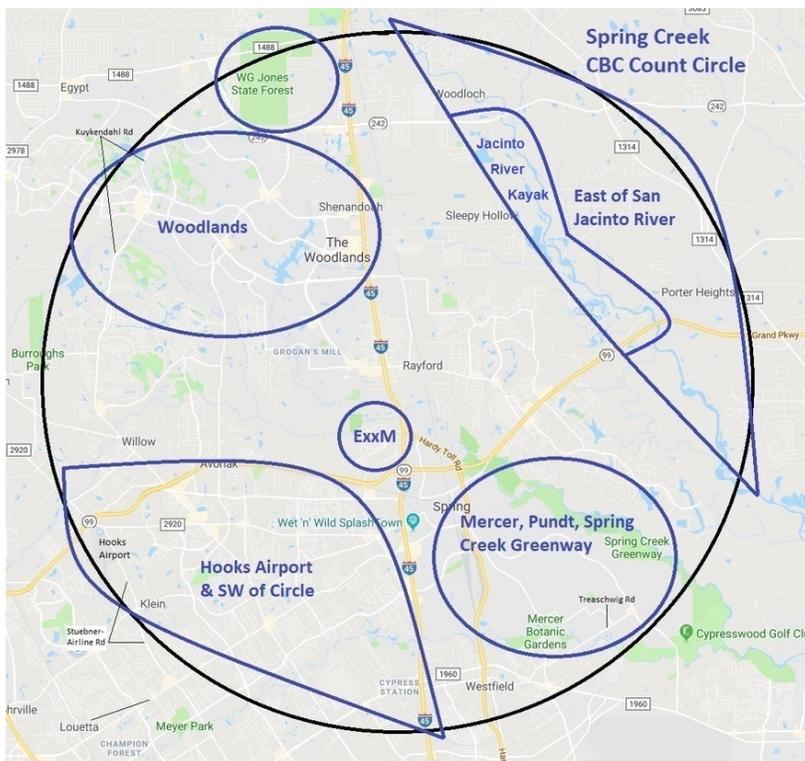
PWWS Board Members Needed

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.

Help Needed for Christmas Bird Count Including Hummingbird Sightings

By Claire Moore



We are getting closer and closer to Christmas Bird Count (CBC) time. Our Spring Creek CBC this year will be held on Saturday, December 17th. There are two ways to help -- join one of five teams birding in the count circle or you can count birds at your feeders (if you live in the circle).

One bird we always need help locating is our wintering hummingbirds, like the Rufous Hummingbird. So, I'm reaching out to our membership to see if anyone knows of a yard located in the count circle (see map) where someone might be seeing some winter hummingbirds. If so, please send me their contact information so I can see if they are available to be a "feeder watcher" for our CBC on Saturday, December 17th.

Please email me at cdmoore3i@gmail.com if you might be interested in helping in either way with our CBC or know of someone who might be interested in being a "feeder watcher". We need lots of eyes out there looking for birds!

Also, there are MANY other CBCs near the Houston area and in other locations throughout Texas. The Houston Audubon has a nice web site with information on all the CBCs available to us. Have a look and go to other CBCs and explore birds in other areas.

<https://houstonaudubon.org/birding/christmas-bird-counts/>

Heart Happening

By Carole Allen



Kemp Ridley Sea Turtle Padre Island National Seashore (US National Park Service)

From: "Shaver, Donna J" Donna_Shaver@nps.gov

Date: September 26, 2022 at 1:34:18 PM CDT

To: Undisclosed recipients.;

Subject: Texas Nest Update

Sea turtle nests confirmed on the Texas coast recently include:

On 21 September, 1 new green turtle nest was located on South Padre Island. During late August, 1 previously laid loggerhead nest was located on Matagorda Peninsula.

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, 284 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

15 Mustang Island

148 North Padre Island, including 132 at PAIS

78 South Padre Island

18 Boca Chica Beach

LOGGERHEAD TURTLE

So far this year, 6 nests have been confirmed on the Texas coast, including (north to south in state):

1 Brazoria County, N. of Surfside

1 Matagorda Peninsula

2 North Padre Island, including 2 at PAIS

1 South Padre Island

1 Boca Chica Beach

GREEN TURTLE

So far this year, 35 nests have been confirmed on the Texas coast, including (north to south in state):

1 Mustang Island

28 North Padre Island, including 20 at PAIS

6 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: <http://www.nps.gov/pais>



Kemp Ridley Sea Turtle

GOING, GOING, GONE

By Cheryl Conley



Red Wolf - Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia

In the wildlife world, no one wants to hear about endangered or extinct animals. Sadly, animals are being added to these lists now more than ever and mostly because of us.

What is an endangered species? It can be a plant or an animal that is considered at risk of extinction. A plant or animal can be listed at a state level, federal level and international level. In other words, there can be an animal that is considered extinct in Texas but not in other areas of the country. Looking at animals in Texas, there are 45 on the endangered species list. You can view the list at <https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/fids/202001043-2.pdf>

When an animal goes extinct it means every single animal in that species has died. So what causes an animal to go extinct? Habitat destruction, invasive species, overexploitation, illegal wildlife trade, pollution and climate change put the survival of species at risk but according to the World Wildlife Fund, human actions alone account for the extinction of 869 species in the last 500 years. A sad example of an animal going extinct by the actions of humans is the Dusky Seaside Sparrow. In 1963 in an effort to control the mosquito population around the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, NASA decided to flood an area of marshland around Merritt Island in eastern Florida. This area happened to be one of the last areas populated by the Dusky Seaside Sparrow. When the area was flooded it destroyed the sparrows' breeding ground. The construction of a highway around the St. Johns River also contributed to habitat loss. The bird struggled to survive but by 1979 only 5 birds remained and they were all male. The species was declared extinct in 1990.

But occasionally there's good news. Let me tell you about the red wolf. The wolves once roamed the Southeastern US but their populations dwindled due to habitat loss by humans and hybridization with coyotes. They were declared extinct in the wild in Texas in 1980. Along came wildlife biologist Ron Wooten, a resident of Galveston. In 2008 a pack of what he thought were coyotes snatched his dog. He was able to track the group but it was too late for his dog. His flashlight picked up red coloring on the muzzle of one of the animals and he was fascinated. He posted a message on Facebook and asked to be notified if anyone in the area saw the pack. He got a response and rushed over with his camera. Looking at the photos, he saw that they had overly long legs, sharply pointed snouts, and unusually broad heads. The body looked slightly out of proportion. He did some research on red wolves and was convinced the animals were either a red wolf-coyote hybrid or maybe even an actual red wolf. He began looking on roadsides to see if he could find any dead ones. He got lucky and found a couple of dead animals. He removed some skin from each one and froze it. He tried for years to get scientists and biologists to take an interest. Finally, in 2016, someone listened. He contacted researchers at Princeton University and requested genetic testing. "I regularly receive this kind of inquiry, but something about Wooten's email stood out," says Bridgett von Holdt, an assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Princeton. "His enthusiasm and dedication struck me, along with some very intriguing

photographs of the canines. They looked particularly interesting and I felt it was worth a second look."

DNA from the skin samples was compared to the DNA from coyotes, gray wolves, red wolves, and eastern wolves. Although mostly coyote, it turns out that nearly 30% of the genetic makeup of the samples was from the red wolf. Under the Gulf Coast Canine Project, the animals are now being fitted with GPS collars and wildlife cameras to track movements. Both fecal and tissue samples are being collected as well. For more information on this project, go to gulfcoastcanineproject.org.

Here are just a few things you can do to help save endangered species and their habitats.

- Put up bird feeders and provide bird houses and baths.
- Plant a pollinator garden.
- Avoid using herbicides and pesticides. Try to use only environmentally-friendly products.
- Don't dump out old paint, oil or chemicals. Look for places in your community where you can safely dispose of these items.
- Recycle. Buy sustainable products.
- Speak up and support measures to help animals and their habitats.
- Follow and support conservation and environmental organizations.

Most importantly, learn to live in harmony with our furry and feathered friends. Let's work to make sure endangered doesn't turn into extinct.

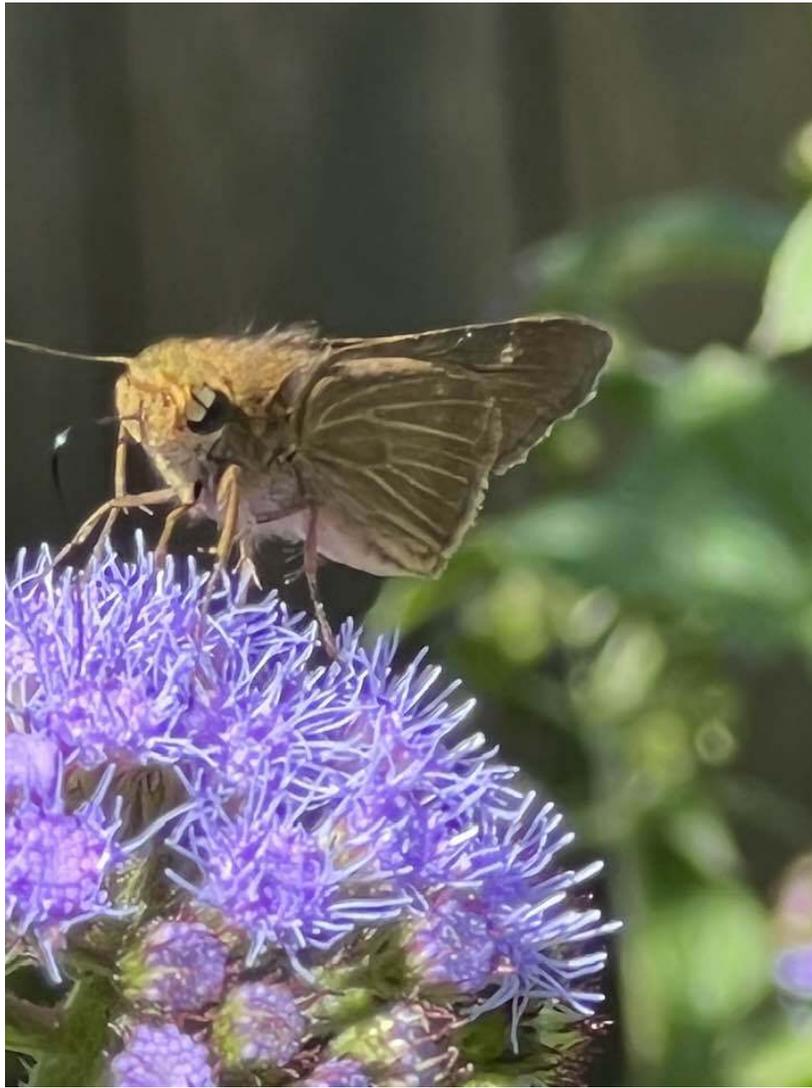
Photos by Lucinda Valdes



9-25-22 Despite a bite out of the wing, common buckeye is still vibrant and beautiful... - Photo by Lucinda Valdes



Fiery Skipper - Photo by Lucinda Valdes



A little cutie, ocola skipper flitted about... Photo by Lucinda Valdes



One of two gulf fritillaries flirting in the garden - Photo by Lucinda Valdes



Top or dorsal view of same gulf fritillary. - Photo by Lucinda Valdes

National Butterfly Center

Photos by Luciano Guerra



Eastern Screech Owl giving me the evil eye. 9-12-22 - Photo by Luciano Guerra



Photo by Luciano Guerra



Photo by Luciano Guerra



Photo by Luciano Guerra



Photo by Luciano Guerra



Photo by Luciano Guerra



Photo by Luciano Guerra

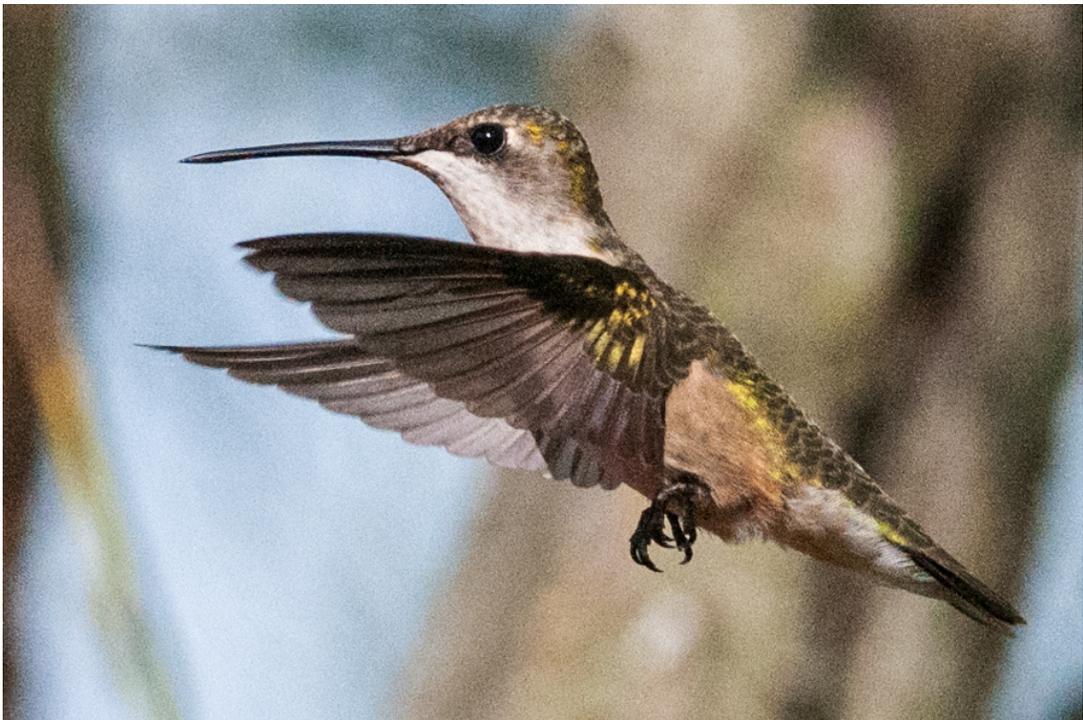


Photo by Luciano Guerra



9-5-22 - Photo by Luciano Guerra



Buff-bellied Hummingbird in flight. 9-12-22 - Photo by Luciano Guerra



Buff-bellied Hummingbird in flight. 9-12-22 - Photo by Luciano Guerra



Buff-bellied Hummingbird in flight. 9-12-22 - Photo by Luciano Guerra



9-12-22 - Photo by Luciano Guerra



Bold Jumping Spider checking out an even smaller spider on the bottom of a hummingbird feeder. 9-12-22 - Photo by Luciano Guerra



Bold Jumping Spider 9-12-22 - Photo by Luciano Guerra

Landscape Solutions The Woodlands Texas - 9-24-2022

Photos by Diane Wedgeworth





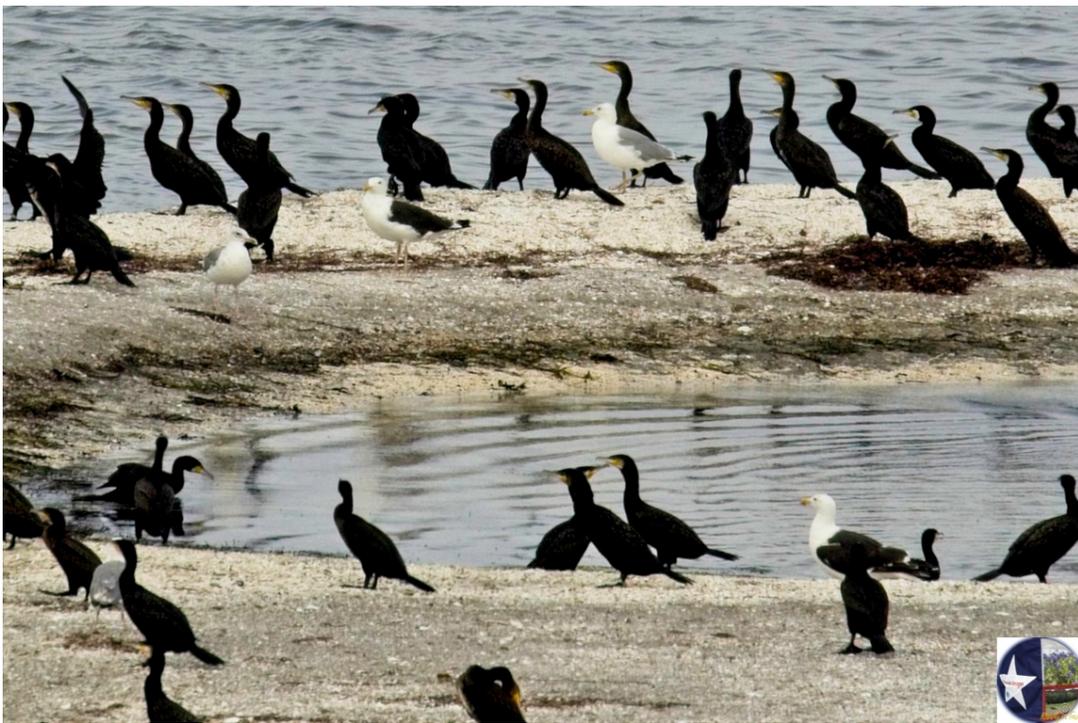








Photo by Randy Scott



Small island exist in the fjords, hosting flocks of birds.(9-24-2022) - Photo by Randy Scott



Wildflowers at a residence along the fjord. - Photo by Randy Scott



Stream coming from the glaciers and rainfall in the mountains. - Photo by Randy Scott



Our Viking ship at port in a fjord, being visited by a seagull trying to find dinner. - Photo by Randy Scott



Modern gun protecting the fort and entrance to the Oslo waters. - Photo by Randy Scott



Not all of the streams were filled with water. Apparently no recent rain here or glacier ran dry.- Photo by Randy Scott



Scenery changes from place to place on any given fjord.9-24-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



9-24-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



9-24-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



9-24-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



Such a grand scene in Norway - 9-24-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



Waterfall hitting the rocks before splashing into the fjord. - 9-24-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



Waterfall near fjord - 9-24-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



Water fall feeding the fjord 9-24-22 - Photo by Randy Scott



"pet goat" on the fjord. It is fed daily by a tourist boat captain. - Photo by Randy Scott



Sheep on a farm as viewed from the fjord - Photo by Randy Scott

CREATOR'S CANVAS-MOTHS/LITTLE KNOWN SMALL MOTHS OF COSTA RICA!

Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth at casa rancho, cr., mid-april of 2019 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley

While living for almost eight years in Costa Rica, I was blown away by the

bizarre shapes and sizes of its moths. But the thing that really caught my attention was the vivid and often dazzling colors of the tiny ones. Those little fellows were mostly nocturnal and are attracted to mercury vapor lights that light up the night sky. Realizing that, one of the first things I did when I moved into my house there was to put in a mercury vapor light setup with a white sheet behind it. And it was located just off my back porch. The light was left on during the entire night and every morning, for me, it was like a treasure hunt. There were tons of beetles and bugs along with other things of interest but what captured my attention mostly were the brightly colored small moths. Little known and for many, at least, with names that can be very elusive. It is thought that night moths use the light of the moon to orient their flight at night. They have to vibrate to get going while those diurnal or day-flying moths use the heat of the sun to get moving. It is estimated there are well over 150,000 different kinds of moths in the world, and I think that a lot of them live in Costa Rica. I would guess with that many around that most of them are tiny, one inch or less in length. And please keep in mind that not all of them are brightly colored. There are those that are quite drab as well. And remember too that almost all adult moths are harmless. Just be careful with some of the caterpillars that can sting you.

Checking the little moths in the morning usually began around five o'clock. That is when the sun came up. Armed with several bottles to capture the moths for photography, I was very careful to handle the moths with care. All moths, including the little one, are covered with thousands of loosely attached scales. It is the scales that give the moths their colors. Following each photographic session, each and every moth was returned to the wild. Occasionally, I would encounter large spectacular moth on the white sheet or on the nearby walls of my porch, but the colors on many of the little ones made my day. And these are the little guys that are out and about at night and few people ever see them. Some of them are decked out like miniature kings and queens. It made me wonder why so many of them were brightly colored. Do the brilliant colors help the little ones navigate the night better? Do their rich colors aid in any way with the mating process? More studies need to be done. In the meantime, we marvel at a Designer God who clothes many of the diminutive moths with such attractive colors. Please enjoy,

Wayne Easley/written on Aug. 21, 2022/ Harvey, North Dakota

PICTURES; CAN BE USED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.



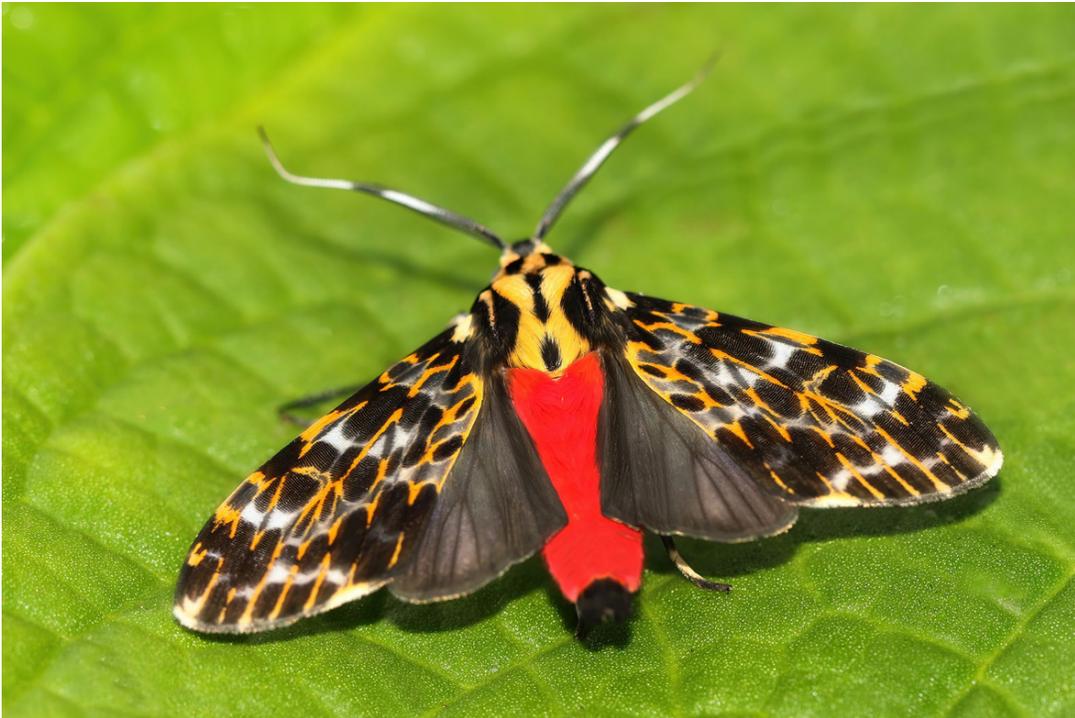
Moth closeup at casa rancho, cr., april of 2019 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth at casa rancho, cr 5-23-19 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



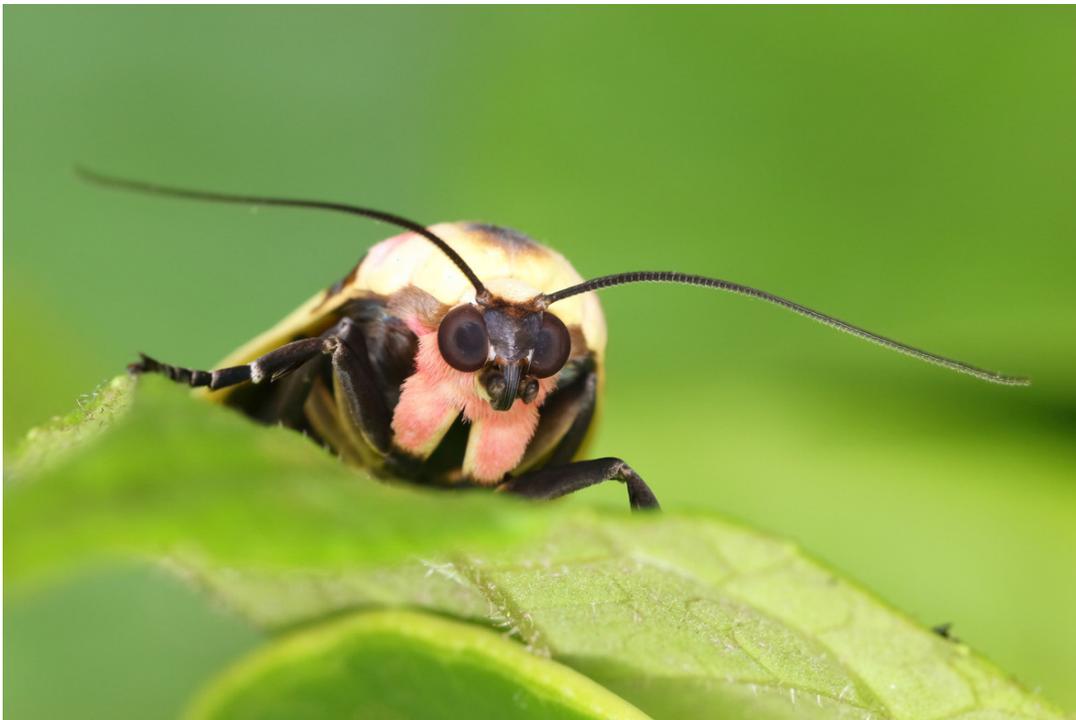
Moth, casa rancho, cr., august of 2018 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, at bug light casa rancho, cr., RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, casa rancho, cr., august of 2016 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, casa rancho, cr., nov. of 2017 RD Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, casa rancho, cr., dec. of 2016 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, Walker's casa rancho, cr., nov. of 2017 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, Walker's casa rancho, cr., RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, casa rancho ,cr sept. 3, 2019 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, casa rancho, cr., jan. 2019 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, casa rancho, cr., may 27, 2019 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



Moth, casa rancho, cr., nov. of 2017 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley

CREATOR'S CANVAS-PART 2/SMALL DAY-FLYING MOTHS OF COSTA RICA!

Photos by Wayne Easley



Moth day fly, hummingbird at casa rancho, cr., date unsure RD.jpg919kB - Photo by Wayne Easley

It is surprising how many people think of moths as night-creatures that are

dingy and dull but the truth of the matter is that many small moths are out and about in daylight hours. Often times, they are mistaken for small butterflies but one should take a close look at the antennae which is most often long and feathery in the moth. Day flying moths can be found in fields and along side country roads that are often packed with flowers. In Costa Rica day flying moths are extremely common. Some of these moths wear every color in the rainbow and some have an eerie resemblance to wasps or hornets. This is called mimicry and gives the harmless moth an added protection from those creatures that would do them harm. While they do not have jaws or a stinging apparatus, they seem to be saying, "Stay away from me because I might have to sting you and you don't want that." There is also a moth that looks for all the world like a small hummingbird. It is appropriately called, the Hummingbird Moth. Hummingbird Moths were always in my yard when I lived in Costa Rica and many tourists were surprised to learn they were actually moths.

Since there are way more moths than butterflies, one has to wonder how do moths, large or small, benefit us? Let's take a look. First of all, moths are a huge part of the food chain for many other creatures in our world. They provide food for a host of mammals, birds and bats as well as a lot of other things such as frogs and reptiles. Secondly, they are prolific pollinators for many plants and flowers. That helps keep our vegetable and flower gardens productive for us. They also provide a valuable indicator of how well the environment is doing. They give us clues as to how to best control the use of pesticides and herbicides. The life cycle of moths as well as butterflies is a great lesson that every child should learn at some stage of his or her life. All moths and butterflies for that matter begin as a simple egg which hatches into a very ugly caterpillar most of the time. This caterpillar looks nothing like the adult moth or butterfly but will pass through a third stage: cocoons for moths and chrysalis for butterflies. Lying dormant in this enclosed environment, after several days it will hatch into an adult moth or butterfly. That completes the metamorphosis from egg to adult (4 stages) which is one of nature's most inspiring moments. And finally, there are lots of people, armed with field guides and cameras, who love to travel the world looking for exciting things to photograph. Some of them are looking for gorgeous moths and butterflies. That benefits travel in all of its different aspects. Please enjoy the picture gallery of day-flying moths that I was able to find and photograph in Costa Rica.

Wayne Easley/written on Sept. 7, 2022/Harvey North Dakota

PICTURES: CAN BE USED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. SORRY BUT I DO NOT KNOW THE NAMES OF MANY OF THEM.

1-The Hummingbird Moth, looking for all the world like a small hummingbird. It

is very active in the daytime.

2-12-These are all day-flying moths, some of which are wasp or hornet mimics.



moth, la mina rd., cr., date unsure RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



moth, la mina rd., cr., date unsure RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



moth, wasp mimic casa rancho, cr., date unsure RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



moth, wasp mimic day flying near catie, cr., date unsure RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



moth, wasp mimic near jurai, cr., in august of 2019 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



moth, wasp mimic near juria, cr., in late Aug., of 2019 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



moth, wasp mimic near juria, cr., in late Aug., of 2019 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



moth, wasp mimic near la suiza, cr., nov. 2016 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



moth, wasp mimic, casa rancho, cr., in may of 2015 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



moth, wasp; mimic near turalba, cr., august of 2018 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley

Photos By Bill Miller



House Finches eating the sunflowers outside the kitchen window in late afternoon sun, Houston, TX. 9-8-22 - Photo by Bill Miller



9-24-22 - Galveston, TX - Photo by Bill Miller



3 Dolphins, 9-24-22 - Galveston, TX - Photo by Bill Miller



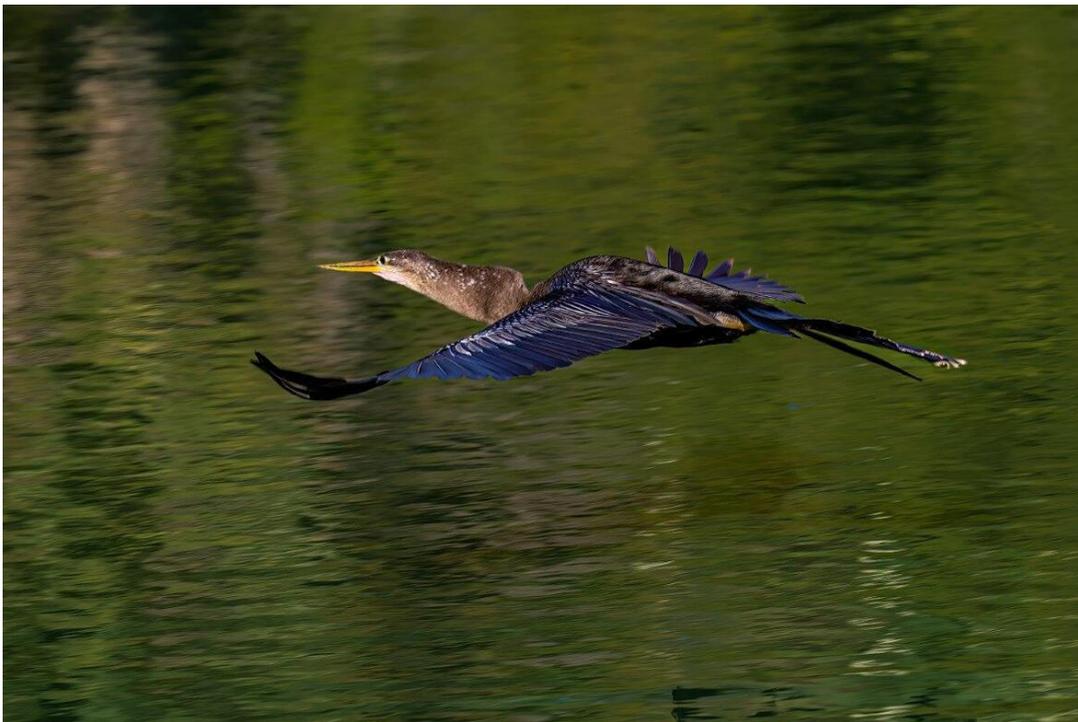
9-24-22 - Galveston, TX - Photo by Bill Miller



9-24-22 - Galveston, TX - Photo by Bill Miller

Florida Visit - Sept. 20-26, 2022

Photos by Paul Gregg



Aninga - Photo by Paul Gregg

I visited family in Florida, Sept. 20-26, prior to Hurricane Ian, spending time at the beach, trying to catch fish in the surf and enjoying shore birds

as they came and went. The Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, and Sanderling have spent their summer in the Arctic regions of Alaska and Canada, but visit southern climes during the winter. The Willet spent its summer in central and south Canada and in the fall and winter is found on southern beaches. One Willet was particularly interested in me and my son as we fished the surf off of Indialantic, Florida. It would come as close as maybe 5 feet from us and bob its head. The Anhinga family was at Bird Island Park, near Jacksonville Beach, Florida. The pond there has what appeared to be an Anhinga rookery. The adult and 3 offspring showed some interesting action to photograph. I think the youngsters were trying to get a parent to feed them. (PS: I returned home prior to the Hurricane's devastation and am thankful my children and their families are okay.)

Paul Gregg



Ruddy Turnstone - Photo by Paul Gregg



Black-bellied Plover - Photo by Paul Greg



Black-bellied Plover - Photo by Paul Greg



Willet - Photo by Paul Gregg



Sanderling - Photo by Paul Gregg



Sanderling - Photo by Paul Gregg



Sanderling - Photo by Paul Gregg



Sanderling - Photo by Paul Gregg



Anhinga with chicks on nest - Photo by Paul Gregg

Anahuac NWR - April 21, 2022

Photos by Paul Gregg



Eastern Kingbird.- Photo by Paul Gregg

Howdy!

It is time to work on a backlog of birding visits, mostly during the month of April. I'll try not to overload your email box, but I do have some pretty good photos and experience to share with you. Birding this spring was a challenge on many days. Photographers tend to say, "the wind is NOT your friend" and that is a pretty truthful saying. I can think of maybe 5 days since around the first of the year when the wind was NOT blowing hard, mostly from the south. I share an idea that birds leaving the Yucatan were riding the wind and bypassing the Texas coast. Sometimes an incoming front slowed them down, and we would have a good day, but we didn't have great fallouts like last year. Predictions of good birding days are definitely not settled science. Still, the general rule of thumb is the best week of spring migration birding is the week in which the 20th of April falls. (These photos were taken on April 21.)

The re-worked water drip at the Jackson woodlot (from a map of Anahuac NWR) is a great location when birds are in the area. There's a nicely constructed bird blind and the drip is within reach of your camera lens (at least 300mm). After visiting the location 3 or 4 times this spring, this location has bumped Laffite's Cove to #3 on my favorite birding locations. (I may expand on my reasoning in another e-mail.) The trail behind the bird blind is great for walking and looking into the wooded area for birds, and one can even look eastward for flying birds across the open area.

On this day, the included birds are the Eastern Kingbird, heavily cropped, but

showing off. Also the Orchard Oriole was pretty far away, but the crop made it worth showing on a computer. The Yellow Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Veery, Ovenbird, Summer Tanager were all close to the water drip. Though I have a good photo of the Northern Waterthrush on the drip, a better photo shows it near the edge of the pond to the right of the drip. I'll complete processing a couple other stops at Anahuac NWR, and will send them out in the next 3 or 4 days.

Enjoy,

Paul Gregg



Yellow Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Indigo Bunting - Photo by Paul Gregg



Ovenbird - Photo by Paul Gregg



Veery - Photo by Paul Gregg



Orchard Oriole - Photo by Paul Gregg



Summer Tanager - Photo by Paul Gregg



Northern Waterthrush - Photo by Paul Gregg

Anahuac NWR - April 22, 2022

Photos by Paul Gregg



Orchard Oriole (imm. male) - Photo by Paul Gregg

Well. . .procrastinator that I am, I hope to catch up a bit on spring migration photos in the next couple weeks. With the heat of summer keeping us inside most of the time, and if you are not caring for the Texas summer heat also, then why not just enjoy some of the photos from April and early May.

Birds at the Anahuac NWR water drip were active and diverse on April 22. The Orchard Oriole (immature male), may have been mistaken for another of the oriole species. The Brown Thrasher was stalking insects on the ground. I took a number of photos of many birds at or near the drip, including the White-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Summer Tanager, and Lincoln's Sparrow. A couple highlights were the face-off between the Gray Catbird and the Summer Tanager and the Tanager with the wasp. The Eastern Wood Pewee posed nicely and as I was leaving Anahuac, the Common Nighthawk was near the welcome center, on a tree limb.

The Tanager and wasp drama was interesting to watch and photograph. The tanager would whack the wasp on the limb, and finally I heard the crunch of the wasp's head. Then the tanager took the wings off and further readied the wasp body for swallowing it. I think I took around 40 photos of the action. Tanagers love bees and wasps, obviously.

Enjoy,

Paul Gregg



Brown Thrasher - Photo by Paul Gregg



White-eyed Vireo - Photo by Paul Gregg



Summer Tanager and a wasp - Photo by Paul Gregg



Common Nighthawk - Photo by Paul Gregg



Eastern Wood Pewee - Photo by Paul Gregg



Yellow Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Summer Tanager - Photo by Paul Gregg



Catbird Tanager faceoff - Photo by Paul Gregg



Lincoln's Sparrow - Photo by Paul Gregg

Ray Little's 99th Birthday

Photos & Videos by Hank Arnold

Happy Birthday Ray, from all your friends at Piney Woods Wildlife Society, (friends of Hank Arnold) We hope you had a wonderful birthday! We wanted to thank you for all you do for our birds, especially the Brown Pelicans. Birthday Blessings!





Well, I went back over to visit Mr. Little yesterday, this time with my fancy stolen camera.

It really does work quite well.

I set it up, hit "RECORD" and then stopped it 3 hours later. What I didn't notice until later was that somewhere along the line he kicked the tripod and moved it a little off center, but we'll put it down as "artistic license".

I have tried several times over the years to come up with a way to give him the ability to make phone calls, but none of them worked out.

He always wanted to be the one dialing, which didn't work. To hook up headphones we would have to either take out his hearing aids or put headphones on over them, neither of which would he have anything to do with.

I decided to try some new ones yesterday that I was able to hook up to MY phone, whereby we didn't need to make any changes to the connection between his phone and his hearing aids.

I had Nan pre-warned that we might give it a try.

In the beginning of this video, he hears someone speaking to his left, and thinks someone is there. Watch what happens when he finally understands what's

going on, then he describes his birthday party...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220924-Rays-99th-Birthday/i-X2wsq6Z/A>

They talked for 20 minutes.

It was great.

So now we have another option for interacting with our National Treasure. If you're interested in scheduling a call, send me an email and we'll set something up.

You have to talk very slow and scream into your phone, but it is a workable social discourse.

We then proceeded to record over 2 hours of birthday greeting responses.

If you decide to watch any of these, you're going to have the urge to turn me in to "People For The Ethical Treatment Of Old Coots" because he looks so tired.

Every time I told him I thought we should stop he got mad. He would drink water in between some messages, but that's it.

I finally just told him I had to go home.

Here is his story about Brown Pelicans...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220924-Rays-99th-Birthday/i-zFjCngZ/A>

Here is the video birthday greeting from Audubon and his response...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220924-Rays-99th-Birthday/i-V4ZhLM7/A>

We finished responses to everyone that contacted me via email yesterday, and I have sent each to them.

His Facebook page is still collecting greetings, somewhere near 70 I think. I don't know if we'll be able to send a response to each, but he says he wants to.

Confession / 60 Second Vacation

After having so much trouble trying to record Ray on his 99th birthday (camera

overheated, battery died, other operator errors), I came home, got mad, and decided I was going to buy a new little camera to use for such things.

Like all the other 99th birthday parties I promise to record on the future.

It then struck me that I had just recently researched such a beast as a wedding present for a friend who performs up in Austin. I was thinking they (they both perform) could use it to record their shows because of the high sound quality.

It THEN struck me that I had ordered it, and that it had come in here in Rockport and that I'll bet Nancy hadn't yet wrapped it and sent it off, nuptial speaking.

About 60 seconds later it was sitting outside with the hummingbirds....

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/Zoom-Q2n/i-QSXKZPK/A>

By about 9:15 today it's going to be recording Ray with the outgoing messages I promised for his birthday, but was unable to deliver.

So..

Is that stealing?

The replacement camera is being delivered to her today in Austin, and I now know it needs a hefty little Micro SD card, which I didn't know before. Hers will be delivered in Austin tomorrow.

So it's like 48 hour stealing, with SD interest.

Temporary Theft

A Momentary Misdemeanor

But it does record nice video and great sound

THANKS JENN!!!

Short Dorsey story...

I was working with a law firm on a case involving thousands of clients. I had 15 or so young male legal assistants working for me, and there wasn't ANYTHING we couldn't accomplish.

Great team

Only, as you can imagine, it was a tad messy as none of us had any filing, cleaning, or quite honestly basic human hygiene background.

I hired 4 very intelligent high school seniors of the female persuasion to come in and help us get things straightened out.

It gives a new meaning to the term “Cleans like a White Tornado”.

After they were finished with the team area, the law firm office manager was so pleased that she dragged me out of my office (kicking and screaming) and sent in the “Gang Of 4”.

About 2 hours later, I think it was Jenn Dorsey that came in and said...

“The good news is that we’re about half way done cleaning your office. The BAD news is that the dumpster outside is full”.

Unique Celestial Alignment (in our yard)

Yesterday was a truly beautiful day in Rockport.

The temperature in the 80’s, there was a pleasant north wind, and most of the mosquitos from the steady rain we had several weeks ago have given up the ghost.

One would think that a nice north wind would cause our Ruby-Throated visitors to decide to move on, and after a good breakfast, it seems like quite a few did.

But not all

One thing I noticed about the ones that remained was that there were VERY few adult males.

As in, we had 5 or six birds constantly, but a male only every half hour or so.

Logic dictates that the males lead the way south to be the first to get to the choice blossom areas to stake out as territories.

So, as you can imagine, when a very studly looking male came in and sat on a branch of the Pride of Barbados plant, in the perfect natural light of a cloudless South Texas day, I thought, “DAMN! I wish I had my camera”.

He was the James Dean of the Ruby-Throat world.

Magnificent.

After a few seconds, he flew away and I contemplated visions of great pictures, never to be had.

Then...

He came back and perched on exactly the same branch,

Folks...

MY mama didn't raise no fool.

I had my camera, my chair, and my coffee set up in under 2 minutes.

Along with my helpers, two dogs and a cat that follow me everywhere.

Note to self – The dogs aren't so bad, but don't invite to cat to hummingbird photo shoots.

While I was able to take some pictures of other birds in the yard (on the other side of the fence from the cat), James Dean didn't come back to his branch.

The object of the game for Ruby-Throats is to bulk up for the long migration still left, and some have done a VERY good job with the whole "bulk-up" part.



I'm not sure that one could fly to HEB, let alone Mexico.

There was also this sight I've never seen before...



No tail feathers.

Here's what one is supposed to look like...



Don't know what happened.

Maybe the cat does

Here is another look...



Didn't seem to have any trouble flying or feeding.

After a few minutes, both dogs found places in the shade for naps, and the cat tired of sitting next to me, and wandered off.

I got all set up...

Then the sun, moon, animals, and equipment all lined up...



Then I prompted him, "Give me SASSY!!!"



It was the perfect setup.

After about 100 pictures, he flew off, and I sat back had a sip of coffee, patting myself on the back.

(that happens a lot since the new lens came in)

About that time I realized he might come back yet again, so I set up the camera for 120 frames a second (super slow motion), made a few other adjustments, pointed towards the branch, and pushed "record".

Although I had my monopod, taking video with a 600mm lens is a very shaky affair.

It's like holding a scope in your bare hands, only there is a permanent record of it.

I had to figure out how to breath without moving the camera, and at one point something bit me on the leg, probably a fly or a hold out mosquito, but I kept everything pointing at that branch.

The folks at the BBC would have been very proud of me.

Then he came back, like an actor hitting his mark...

(It's a video, so hit PLAY, which is the triangle icon in the middle of the screen,

the little rectangle on the lower right cause sit to play in full screen)

Things to watch for are:

In good light, just a few degrees of angle to the sun is all it takes to go from black-looking gorget (throat feathers) to a blazing Ruby display.

Watch how difficult it is for a hummingbird to scratch his head. He has to unjoint his shoulder, move his wing out of the way, then lift his leg up above his wing, do his scratch thing, then move his wing again and rotate his leg back underneath the wing to the starting position.

Lots of tongue action. Keep in mind this is $\frac{1}{4}$ normal speed.

When he's rubbing his beak on the stem of the branch, he's cleaning it.

I used a video stabilization software to cut down on the movement of me breathing. It worked very well, but on occasion you can see a slight twisting of the background. That's the corrected movement of me tilting forward and backwards as I breathe.

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220928-202-SHW/i-58sjJH7/A>

I was blessed to be given that opportunity.

Perhaps that bird likes my cooking and has decided to spend the winter with us.

If so, Sir James will be welcome.

The Coming Hummingbird Spectacular

Photos by Hank Arnold

Well...

We needed the rain

And we got what we needed, and then some.

It rained for pretty near a week solid. Never that hard, but a good rain that spruced everything up nicely.

I tried several times to get positioned correctly for a rainbow picture, and this was the best I got, over at the airport in Corpus...



Photo by Hank Arnold

Then Karan put that to shame picking up the dogs at Sandy Oaks...



Photo by Hank Arnold



Several days in I saw a very rare sighting of a local fox, out in the open... - Photo by Hank Arnold

It can't be good for him to out like that, but didn't have any apparent visible damage.

The rain has also brought the mosquitoes, and every time I swat one it makes me feel a little better that the hummingbirds eat them, and they're gearing up for a magical migration.

Me swatting one every now and then is well worth them having plenty of food for the trip.

I still sit in the yard hoping to get a glimpse of the leucistic bird that visited this time of year in 2020...



Photo by Hank Arnold

But so far no luck.

I had some time to sit outside yesterday, and the sun came out.

We have enough birds now that it's difficult for any one bird to guard even a single feeder. When they first come in they try for a while, but soon give up from exhaustion.

Mornings and evenings are the heavy times, and we probably have 25 birds or so spread around the yard.

Every now and then I happen to get a pictures of a hummer sticking his tongue out, but yesterday that process went into overdrive...



Photo by Hank Arnold

And I suppose because of the wet weather, we had at least one visitor still wearing breakfast...



Photo by Hank Arnold

9-11-2022 - Here are the rest of the pictures...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220910-202-SHW/>

We're looking forward to the cool weather and winter birds, but first we get to see the hummingbird spectacular, that will probably start this week.

We always have a dual problem of not enough places to hang feeders and nighttime raids by squirrels, possums, and ants. This year we'll be testing my PVC pole setups that apparently solve both problems at once.

We'll shift into making multiple nectar batches every day, and we have ingredients stocked up in the pantry.

This time of year I always get ideas about using the high-speed video camera, so that will probably start soon.

If you don't like hummingbird pictures and video, you'd better set my email address to spam.

Out of the clear blue sky (not really) I got a text from Ray the other day. After his fall he couldn't hold or use his phone for several months, but now he's back in business. I'm looking forward to being able to schedule visits again

SloMo Hummer Video by Hank Arnold

9-13-2022 - Just a 2 minute Hummingbird fix...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220912-202-SHW/>

It will take me some time to remember how to shoot these videos.

New Arrivals

Photos by Hank Arnold

We had our first Monarch Butterflies in several months yesterday, with the first being a female laying eggs...

9-24-2022 - I've already been asked by folks that don't live around these parts for an idea of what the milkweed situation is...

Pretty much everything green in these pictures that isn't grass is milkweed, and I put circles around the hard earned native species.

The red circles represent 3 to 4 years of growth, with the blue circle being some volunteer stuff we found in a field nearby a few weeks ago.

All the rest is tropical milkweed.

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220924-Milkweed/>

We have spent several times more effort on the native stuff than the tropical stuff, but the Monarchs like them both about the same.

There are also several places around our housing development that we have snuck in tropical stuff, most of it is doing fine and has taken care of itself. There are several other places where residents have taken up the cause and planter their own.

We are a Monarch Friendly development.

The young man that does the landscaping for the entire development is now a good friend, but our relationship was on the rocks for a few years until he learned which weeds were intended and which were not.

Now whenever I see him with his herbicide sprayer I stop, roll down the window, yell "MURDERER!!!!", then screech off



Monarch butterfly - Photo by Hank Arnold

After all the rain we've had lately our milkweed has really run rampant.

More than I can remember for some time.

But every time I think we have enough, it never is.

We'll have bare stalks soon, then we'll cut it down for the winter.

We've been slowly selecting plants away from the tropical red flowers to the tropical yellow flowers over the past few years. I can't really put my finger on why I like it better, but I do. The caterpillars eat everything though, so to them it doesn't matter.

We've been collecting native Zizotes plants, and for the first time actually have some healthy versions in the garden. I'll be watching to see how our six legged patrons like it.

We still have quite a few hummingbirds, but it doesn't seem to be as many as in past years.

That can't be good.

In today's pictures is an image of one that shows what looks like some battle damage to his lower bill...



Photo by Hank Arnold

I'm not a hummer vet, but it looks like the lower tip has broken off and then healed up with some soft edges.

Perhaps it will grow back?

He doesn't seem to have learned his "No Jousting" lesson, because he was sitting on that branch yesterday to get a good diving start on his next victim.

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220923-202-SHW-Monarch-1/>

There is a school of thought that says that we shouldn't be planting any non-native milkweed because it causes to Monarchs not to pass though, but instead stay in one place with the food source.

I do hear the tune, but its not a song I'll be singing.

Truth be told, I have planted every species I could find, buy or steal for several years, and the only proof there is of all that effort is several areas of Tropical, both red and yellow.

All the other species have died, including the ones planted in our garden, with

irrigation and the occasional loving glance.

There is no way in hell that well meaning humans can make up for the loss of natural milkweed habitat we have caused using native species.

So...

Taken to its logical conclusion, the plan to not plant native milkweed to replace what used to be here for thousands of years means that its better for the Monarchs to arrive to find no plants that will support their eggs, caterpillars, chrysalis(s?) and offspring.

That's something along the lines of "It's better to have 10 Monarchs hatch from an area that are going to all migrate through, than it is to have 200 Monarchs hatch, of which some don't."

If we go to stalks this fall it will probably mean 200 healthy eclosers, whereas if we only had our hard-earned Zizotes I would be surprised if we could support 10.

Not my favorite song at all.

If anyone has a different explanation for the theory, I really would be anxious to hear it.

I still don't think Monarchs in Rockport are migrators anyway, but I would do the same thing if I lived in the migration corridor.

We're going to Ray's 99th birthday party today. He'll be glad to hear about our new arrivals and the amount of milkweed we have in stock.

FW: The Two Most Important Traits For A Happy Birder

Photos by Hank Arnold

I'll start off today's morning 9-16-2022, offering with a brief reporting of this week's sightings in our yard.

Hummingbird population is building nicely – we probably have between 50 and 100 birds relying on our feeders in a 50 yard radius. So many that nobody can guard anything for long. Lots of instances of multiple birds sharing the same feeder. Kind of a chaotic peace and harmony thing.

Lots of nice birds at our seed feeder. We have to make sure we have peanuts available in the seed bowl or we get some pretty dirty looks from the Titmice (Titmouses?). For those of you unfamiliar with what a dirty look from a Titmouse looks like, I happen to have one in stock...



Photo by Hank Arnold

Our resident Northern Cardinal family seems to be getting their feathers back, and they are looking very handsome. We helped raise at least one juvenile this year, possibly two.

Here are the most recent pictures...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220914-202-SHW-1/>

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220914-202-SHW-2/>

Now on to today's lesson...

If you think about what a fleeting glance of this bird looks like from 20 yards away, without binoculars, what would you see?



Photo by Hank Arnold

Hmmm...

Kind of a gray looking bird with a yellow beak?

Well...

A Pyrrhuloxia is a gray looking bird with a yellow beak, and we had one a few hundred yards from here a few years ago that I was able to get pictures good enough for everyone to positively ID.

That brings us to our first happy birder trait...

Optimism.

Sometimes, abject, unbridled, irrational optimism.

If you haven't seen one in a few years, the exact shade of yellow might escape you. In the shade like that, the body has a hint of gray.

It's the "exact shade" and "hint" parts that gets us.

Pyrrhuloxia

What a great bird to see in your yard. That sighting alone makes sitting for hours, dripping a horrible mixture of sweat and mosquito spray...

All worthwhile.

Happy birder.

That brings us to our second happy birder trait.

Lying

For most of us it's just to ourselves, but its still lying.

“Obviously that flash of beak was OBVIOUSLY yellow, on an OBVIOUSLY gray bird with a tuft on his head”

“Obvious”?

That's the lie part.

It's also a large portion of the happy part

Mexican Eagle

Photos by Hank Arnold

10-1-22 - Today's high resolution bird is a Crested CaraCara.



Crested CaraCara. - Photo by Hank Arnold

Most of the birds I have ever learned to ID have come from Ray, and he always calls them “Mexican Eagles”.

I was driving through the SW part of Rockport when I saw one on a phone pole.

Not that odd, but while I was watching him, he pushed off and flew low through some trees and houses, which I did find a little odd, so I snuck over in the direction he took off in.

About a block away, I came upon a dumpster behind a local restaurant, where I found the entire family...



Family of Crested Caracara. - Photo by Hank Arnold

You guessed it...

Mexican Restaurant

It was a good chance to study the differences between adults and juveniles, with Junior's beak lacking the vivid blue color, but his face having a pink, almost purple shade...



Crested CaraCara.- Photo by Hank Arnold

The squirrel feeder we put up to prevent the baby squirrels crossing out in the open to get to the Mulberry tree is working...



Photo by Hank Arnold

We named one of the young squirrels “Nate”, short for “Natural Selection”, after he slowly pranced across the concrete street, out in the open, for all the world to see.

It took both dogs a few seconds to believe their good fortune, and by the time both dogs were up and running towards him, he had pranced across the opening, into the milkweed, on to safety through the fence.

Our dogs wouldn't know what to do with him if they did catch him, but I still fear for Nate's long-term survival, as we have Red-Shouldered Hawks, Great Horned Owls, and a Micro-Panther about...



Photo by Hank Arnold



Photo by Hank Arnold

A few days ago they had one of the adults “cornered” up in the Mulberry tree, but it wasn’t the least bit alarmed by all the jumping and barking. When he was ready to leave, he jumped out of the tree, bounded off Tycho’s head, and flittered across the driveway before the dogs could even get rolling.

No respect

Dani likes to sit and watch them eating at their new feeder up on the top of the fence..

To her, having the feeder there is like watching Netflix.

I finally got some pictures of a hummer at the “Ferris Wheel” feeder that Evil gave us last Christmas. It’s a FooFoo Feeder that’s pretty difficult to clean, and since it has metal parts, it’s not going to last long down here in the salt environment. It was very nice of her to try to help the cause, though.

The hummingbirds are definitely thinning out, now, although we still have 10 or so active at any one time.

In today’s images is another 120 fps video that runs a little over 3 minutes.. It shows several more neck scratches.

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220930-Rockport/>

I’m going to miss them when they’re gone.



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.

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

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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.



HAPPY HALLOWEEN



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