

# The Pine Warbler



Piney Woods Wildlife Society February Newsletter



Please accept  
this heart  
of mine, —  
ten thousand  
joys it will be  
to greet you  
my loving  
**Valentine.**

**February 21, 2023 Program**

**Birding the Lower Rio Grand Valley**

**By Paul Gregg**



*Bird Nerds - Photo by Paul Gregg*

Description: In November 2022, Paul and Carol Gregg joined 3 friends from Colorado and they went to various locations in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) area to search for birds. Birding the Rio Grande Valley is claimed to be where the Lone Star State's birding is at its best. The area is a major migration corridor and an excellent location for tropical species extending their range beyond Mexico. Paul will show photos of various birds they found during the 4 or 5 days they were there.

The February program for PWWS will be in-person only, on Tuesday, February 21 at 6:30 p.m. (snacks & social time at 6:00 p.m.) at Dennis Johnston's Park, Big Stone Lodge at 709 Riley Fuzzel Road, Spring, Texas 77373.

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!

Paul Gregg is an avid, amateur photographer interested mostly in birds, wildlife, and travel/landscapes. He has given presentations to a number of wildlife and photography groups, but has also given basic photography lessons to Lone Star

College's "Adult Lifelong Learning" classes.. He is retired from the Adult Probation Department of Harris Co., TX. Before that, he retired from a little over 29 years in the U. S. Air Force (active and reserve). He's married to Carol Anderson Gregg, who accompanies him on most of his photography outings.

We hope to see you there!



*Harris's Hawk - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Clay-colored Thrush - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Green Jay - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Aplomado Falcon - Photo by Paul Gregg*

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## **Note from PWWS President**

It certainly has been a crazy weather month. Hope you made it through ok. Our birds seem to have made it through fine, eating well and looking for nesting sights.

I am really looking forward to Paul Gregg's presentation on Birding the Rio Grande Valley. His wonderful pictures should give us an uplift and cheer us up for Spring to come. Hope to see you at the meeting.

Kathy, Your President

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## **Bald Eagle Chick Now in Tomball Nest**

By Claire Moore



*Mother Bald Eagle on nest. Photo by David Reynolds*

As of January 17th, we definitely have a bald eagle chick in the Tomball nest located behind the Target at 14302 Farm to Market 2920 just west of Highway 249! We are hoping a second chick has hatched, but are waiting until their heads are visible above the edge of the nest to know for sure.

Go to this link <https://fb.watch/ifJ-JyRdAC/> to see photos and a video where you can see the mother eagle moving her head back and forth feeding the chick. Join our Facebook page ("Enjoy the Tomball Bald Eagles") to keep up with all the latest happenings and get info on exactly which tree they are nesting in.

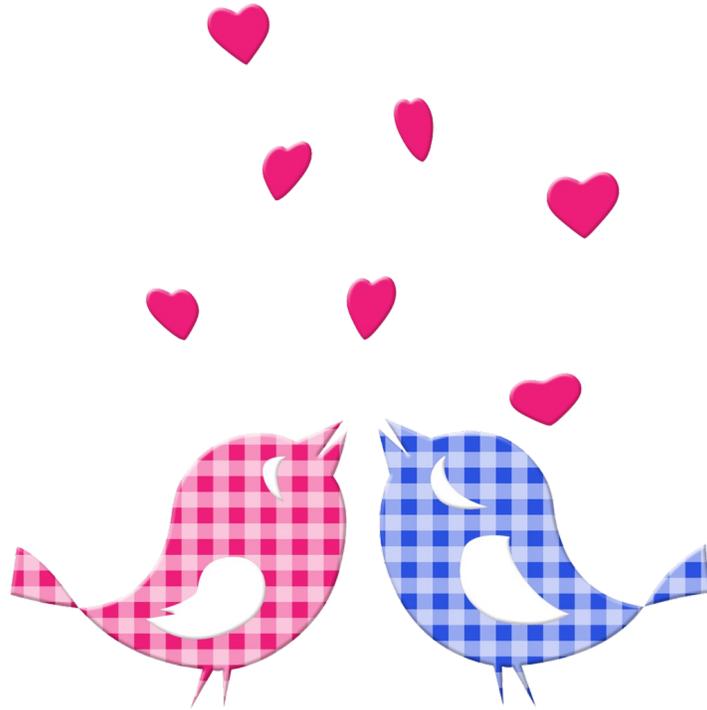
Make sure and plan to come out to see the eagles -- especially in March and April when the juvenile(s) will be exercising their wings and are easily visible in and around the nest (with binoculars).



*Father Bald Eagle inbound with lunch. Photo by David Reynolds*



*Mother feeding chick & proud father standing by. Photo by David Reynolds*



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## **AVOID A STICKY SITUATION**

**By Cheryl Conley - Lake Creek Preserve Board of Directors**



*Bird stuck in glue trap - Photo by Cheryl Conley*

Household pests are a way of life in our area. Treating your home for roaches

and other insects is an expense you just accept if you want to live in the great state of Texas. Many people also have to deal with mice and rats. Everyone is at risk of a rodent infestation no matter how clean your home is.

There are a lot of options when it comes to ridding your home of rats and mice. The one that is the most inhumane is the glue trap and I encourage readers to find an alternative method.

Advertisers of glue traps sell their products by telling you they are clean, non-toxic and easy to use. What they don't tell you is that the animal doesn't die immediately. The animal suffers for days and eventually dies of starvation, dehydration, suffocation or mere exhaustion. Animals may rip off their own skin or fur trying to escape. They may fracture limbs or even chew them off in an attempt to get free. It's days of suffering.

Another problem with glue traps is that often times unintended animals fall victim to them. If placed outside or in garages or warehouses, birds, snakes, opossums, raccoons, and squirrels can get stuck to them. If this happens, call a wildlife center or rehabilitator. Do NOT try to free the animal yourself. This can cause more harm than good. You will need to take the animal with the glue trap attached to their location. The Houston area has three wildlife organizations that can assist you: the Wildlife Center of Texas, TWRC and Friends of Texas Wildlife. If a domestic animal should get stuck, follow these instructions:

1. Get  
your  
supplies  
together.  
You'll  
need  
a  
pair  
of  
gloves,  
baby  
oil  
or  
cooking  
oil,  
some  
tissues,  
and  
a  
damp  
cloth.
2. Cover  
the  
animal's

head.  
This  
helps  
to  
keep  
them  
calm.

3. With  
gloves  
on,  
massage  
a  
small  
amount  
of  
oil  
near  
where  
the  
animal  
is  
stuck.  
Continue  
to  
massage  
the  
area  
while  
gently  
working  
to  
free  
the  
animal.  
Use  
additional  
oil  
as  
needed.

4. Once  
the  
animal  
is  
free,  
use  
the  
tissues  
to  
cover  
the  
glue

so  
the  
animal  
doesn't  
get  
stuck  
again.

5. Use  
the  
damp  
cloth  
to  
remove  
any  
oil  
that  
is  
on  
the  
animal.

Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, England, Iceland, Ireland, New Zealand, two states and one territory in Australia, and four Indian states have banned the use of glue traps. Many companies like Target, CVS, Walgreens, and Dollar Tree have prohibited the sale of them.

Do your part to end the use of glue traps. If you see glue traps being used, contact those responsible and explain how inhumane they are. If you see them being sold in stores, help educate store management. Share this video from PETA with friends, family and on social media. <https://youtu.be/PUSfxvbpHM5>

Let's put an end to the use of inhumane glue traps!

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## **National Butterfly Center - Mission, Texas - 1-20-2023**

**Photos by Luciano Guerra**

The Carolina Satyr is not at all showy or flashy, and the fact that they're so small in addition to the fact that they spend most of their time at, or slightly above, ground level makes it very easy to walk right by one without even noticing it's there. However, taking the time and making the effort to get down at their level, as Luciano did recently, is about the only way of getting photos such as these.

So the next time you're out butterflying, don't forget to keep an eye out for the less conspicuous species that you may have completely missed before. Who knows, you could very well be rewarded with an opportunity to take photos such as these. #ComeOnDown <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpGjgGBC--0>



*Carolina Satyr - Photo by Luciano Guerra*



*Carolina Satyr - Photo by Luciano Guerra*



 NATIONAL Butterfly CENTER  
*Carolina Satyr - Photo by Luciano Guerra*



 NATIONAL Butterfly CENTER  
*Empress Leilia - Photo by Luciano Guerra*



*Red Rim - 1-19-2023 - Photo by Luciano Guerra*

Photos of a male Large Orange Sulphur doing his best to get the attention of a female by fluttering all around her. However, she seems to be a lot more interested in the the Mexican Flame Vine blooms than she is in anything he's doing. #hardtoget



*Large Orange Sulphur - Photo by Luciano Guerra*



*Large Orange Sulphur - Photo by Luciano Guerra*



*Large Orange Sulphur - Photo by Luciano Guerra*



*Large Orange Sulphur - Photo by Luciano Guerra*

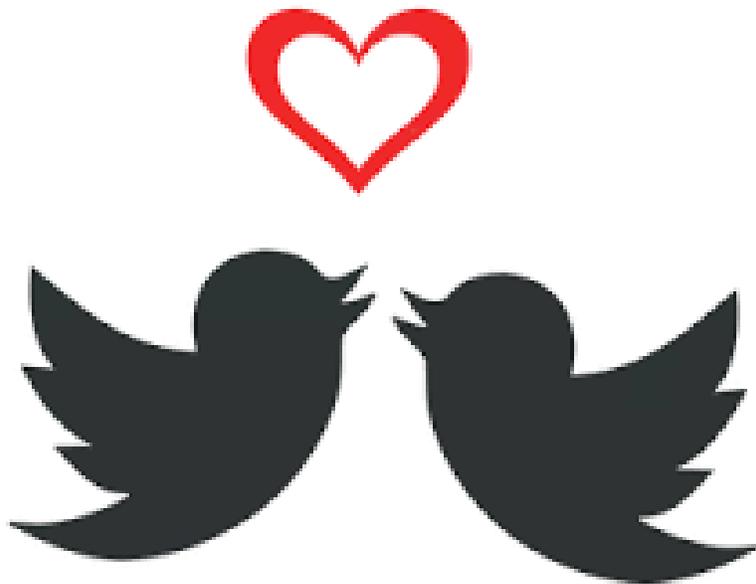
The Pipevine Swallowtail was just one of 110 species of butterflies recorded by Texas Butterfly Festival attendees last year. While not especially rare across the southern United States, Pipevines can be quite challenging to photograph due to the fact that, like most Swallowtails, they seldom sit still or stop flapping their wings for more than a second or two at a time. Add to that the challenge of capturing their brilliant iridescent blue color, that's dependent on the angle of light, and capturing photos such as these can be quite a rewarding experience.

Speaking of rewarding experiences, the 2023 Texas Butterfly Festival kicks off Nov. 4 and runs through Nov. 7. So be sure to save those dates and start making plans now to attend. You'll be glad you did. For more information, visit our website at: [www.TexasButterflyFestival.com](http://www.TexasButterflyFestival.com)



*Pipevine Swallowtail - Photo by Luciano Guerra*

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**Photos by Bill Miller**



*Anna's Hummingbird at Ventura Botanical Trails.- Photo by Bill Miller*



*Point Lobos - San Francisco, CA - Big Sur Coastline State Park - Photo by Bill Miller*



*Photo by Bill Miller*



*While hiking in one of the state parks, met a couple of Wild Turkeys on the trail. - Photo by Bill Miller*



*Two different blue jays at different elevations - Pinnacles National Park - Photo by Bill Miller*





*Monarch butterflies roosting in large numbers - Pismo Beach Monarch Grove.- Photo by Sue Miller*



*Pismo Beach Monarch Grove. - Photo by Sue Miller*



*Pismo Beach Monarch Grove. - Photo by Sue Miller*



*Fort Ord Trails - Hiking around the former Fort Ord and visiting the Aquarium in Monterey. - Photo by Bill Miller*



*At Fort Ord Trails. - Photo by Bill Miller*



*At Fort Ord Trails. - Photo by Bill Miller*



*We saw large pods of these Risso's Dolphins. - Photo by Bill Miller*



*Gray Whale blowing -This was our 3rd try to go whale-watching on this trip. In Oxnard the weather was bad. In Morro Bay, not enough customers. Finally, in Monterey Bay! Photo by Bill Miller*



*Gray Whale sounding - Photo by Bill Miller*



*We also saw another Monarch roost in Pacific Grove - Photo by Bill Miller*



*Sea otter cleaning his feet - Photo by Bill Miller*



*Elephant Seals - on our way to Hearst Castle, ran across a couple of thugs having a fight on the beach. - Photo by Bill Miller*



*This elephant seal pup was just born - the gulls are eating the placenta. - Photo by Bill Miller*



*Surf on the jetty at sunset - Photo by Bill Miller*

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**Photos by Randy Scott**



*Randy in Texas*

*This medium sized bird is a female White-throated Sparrow, I think. Winter birds residing here in Southeast Texas can often be confusing to identify. I chose to take this for definition with noise. My apology. We have loads of this species along with one other Sparrow species every year. My backyard in Conroe Tx.. - Photo*

by Randy Scott



*Randy in Texas*

*Gold Finches in our Conroe backyard. They feed and fly in a flock. Very interesting bird species that eats small seeds (including millet) and will come close the house to feed but as a flock they will fly when alarmed. They are plentiful in January and February.-. Photo by Randy Scott*



*Randy in Texas*

*Photographed this past weekend near Austwell, Texas. American Kestrel is colorful and is plentiful in Texas. They are small to medium in size and when driving around backroads, you will usually see them on telephone or electric lines watching for food. They eat small birds in the winter, like Sparrows, or small rodents and insects. One can identify them by their flying habits, with their hovering over their prey and diving to catch them. - Photo by Randy Scott*



*We counted 35 birds on the ground on stones this morning. At least 50 birds total were on ground (not in this photo), consisting of sparrows, Cardinals, doves, and Gold Finches.- 1-29-2023 - Photo by Randy Scott*

Walking along a road in Conroe, this Black Vulture was sharing a meal with a peer vulture. They appear to be beautiful in flight with their sharp colors on their "bald" head and white feathers on their wings. They can be misunderstood and serve us and the environment by eating up dead things that are left behind by the other animals and birds that get to their food first. They serve as a garbage disposal in the wild. They are interesting birds that have beauty from a distance but which are snarled at by humans. You would think that the bacteria such as botulism and anthrax would harm them but their very strong stomach acids

actually process these bacteria for their health. Black Vultures are found in 2/3 of the eastern part of Texas but the more "ugly" Turkey Vulture is found in west and central Texas. Their populations continue to be sustained throughout the state. There are actually three species of carrion eating birds in Texas; this being one of them. They are related to hawks.



*Turkey Vulture - 1-29-2023 - Photo by Randy Scott*



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## CREATOR'S CANVAS/THE SPLENDID DAGGERWING BUTTERFLIES!

By Wayne Easley



*butterfly, many-banded daggerwing near peñibaje, cr., august of 2017 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*

The world of nature in Costa Rica was literally right outside of my front door. There was an endless array of birds, animals, beetles, bugs and those dandy daggerwing butterflies. Daggerwings are some of the most spectacular of all butterflies. Brightly colored on the top side, they look much like a dead leaf when they are resting with their wings closed. That means they blend in with their surroundings and can stay alive a little longer. Actually, the average life span of a butterfly is only a month or so. Of course, there are exceptions to that rule especially with those species that travel long distances to escape the cold of winter.

In doing this report, I was surprised to find so little information about the daggerwings. They are known for their bright colors and get their names from those two long dagger-like tails. In Costa Rica, we had only a half dozen or so of these spectacular insects, but it was like finding a pot of gold when one was discovered. Some of the daggerwings like to live high in the canopy, while others spend a lot of time on moist banks of a tropical stream. Like other butterflies, daggerwings go through a complete metamorphosis of four stages. They begin as a tiny egg, carefully placed by the female on the larval food plant.

In Costa Rica, it appears that they are fond of different kinds of fig trees. After a few days, the egg will hatch into a caterpillar which is made for eating. They gorge themselves with their favorite food and then, find a quiet place to wrap themselves in a chrysalis (for moths it is called a cocoon) where their bodies go through a complete transformation. In a couple of weeks or less, the adult butterfly emerges equipped with wings and the desire to take in nectar, water or fruit juices. For this, they are equipped with a straw-like appendage called a proboscis which they use to take in those liquids. As adults, they do not eat solid food. Upon becoming adults, they do have an urge to mate which allows the species to continue.

If you are a butterfly enthusiast, you can find daggerwings in Mexico, as well as Central and South America. But if you are staying in the United States, you can find only the Ruddy Daggerwing in two places; South Florida or South Texas. No matter where you find a daggerwing, it is a butterfly worth knowing and be sure to have your camera handy.

Wayne Easley/written on Dec. 14, 2022 in Hereford, Arizona.

PICTURES CAN BE USED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.

1-Many-banded Daggerwing, brown with black stripes.

2-3-Purple-stained Daggerwing, a gorgeous creature.

4-5-6-Waiter Daggerwing, note in 6, that with the wings closed the butterfly looks totally different.

7-Pale Daggerwing.

8-9-Ruddy Daggerwing, the only one likely seen in the United States.

10-11-Glossy or Sunset Daggerwing.

12-Dappled or Merops Daggerwing.



*Purple-stained daggerwing near hicotea, cr. mar., 29-2015 RD- Photo by Wayne Easley*



*Purple-stained daggerwing near pejibaye, cr., apr. 2015 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*waiter daggerwing silent mt., cr. mar san antonio, cr., mar of 2016 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*waiter daggerwing silent mt. road, cr.. march of 2014 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*daggerwing, waiter on silent mountain road, cr., march 15, 2014 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*pale daggerwing near hicotea, cr. oct., 2016 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*daggerwing, ruddy on tuis valley road, cr., august of 2018 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*ruddy daggerwing on la marta rd., cr. oct., 31, 2014 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*daggerwing, sunset near pejibaye, cr., april of 2015 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*daggerwing near pejibaye, costa rica april 4-15 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*dappled daggerwing silent mt. road, cr., 10-28-14 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*

## **CREATOR'S CANVAS-THE HERONS AND EGRETS- PART 6/NIGHT HERONS!**

**By Wayne Easley**



*night heron, black-crowned tuis valley road, cr., july 1, 2015 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*

The Night herons are medium sized herons that feed primarily at night or in the mornings or evenings. There are actually seven species in the world but this article will share information on the two most common to us in the Western World. They are the Black-crowned Night heron and the Yellow-crowned Night heron. The Black-crowned is the most common of the night herons but the Yellow-crowned, much more secretive than the Black-crowned, is fairly common in the SE part of the United States.

These herons have short necks, and are short-legged as well which gives them a rather stocky look. Their colors are quite somber, mostly light gray or pale brown and for both the Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned, they have a black crown. When not feeding, they tend to rest in trees or bushes generally fairly high up in the trees. Both species have long white plumes that play a prominent part in securing a mate. Often times they will nest with other herons and egrets and at times, will care for the young of other herons and egrets that have lost their parents. The nests are made of sticks and quite often are placed over standing water. From three to eight eggs are usually laid.

Both of our species feed on small fish, frogs, water insects and the Yellow-crowned is very fond of crabs. In fact, people in the Southeastern part of the United States have nick-named them, "The Crab Eaters." Their favorite method of hunting is to walk slowly or simply stand stock-still in the water, allowing the food to come to them. When food comes in range, they will spear it with their beaks and then give the food a good shaking to make sure it is dead. Young birds tend to be yellowish-brown and have white flecks over their bodies. In the

new year of 2023, I hope you will have the opportunity to get better acquainted with our night herons. Good birding!

Wayne Easley/written on Jan. 1, 2023/Hereford, Arizona.

PICTURES: WE ENCOURAGE THE USE OF OUR PICTURES FOR EDUCATIONAL USES.

1-Black-crowned Night heron on Tuis Valley Road near Platanillo, Costa Rica.

2-4-Black-crowned Night herons at nest at Catie Research Center, Costa Rica near Turrialba.

5-Black-crowned Night heron showing prominent plumes.

6-Black-crowned Night heron immature bird.

7-8-Yellow-crowned Night herons on Texas Coast.



*FNight herons, black-crowned at nest at catie research ctr., cr., may of 2015 RD- Photo by Wayne Easley*



*night heron, black-crowned at nest with two young, catie research ctr., cr., in april of 2015 RD- Photo by Wayne Easley*



*night herons, black-crowned immature at catie research ctr., cr., may of 2015 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*night heron, black-crowned near harvey, nd., may of 2009 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*night heron, black-crowned immature near lone tree reserve, nd., 9-2-2011 RD- Photo by Wayne Easley*



*night heron, yellow-crowned at texas coast, texas in april of 2014 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*night heron, yellow-crowned up close on texas coast in april of 2017 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*

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**Cattail Marsh - Jan. 19, 2023**

**By Paul Gregg**



*Sundog - Photo by Paul Gregg*

On Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023, Carol and I drove over to Cattail Marsh near Beaumont. I was scheduled to give a presentation about our 2011 trip to Iceland to the Golden Triangle Audubon Society meeting that night. We arrived at the marsh around 2 p.m. and walked 4 miles around, looking for birds to photograph. Though there was not a great variety, there were a few birds present. The Song Sparrow was the first to pose. After we got home and I was processing photos, I checked my life list book and found that I had not posted one before, so I'm counting it as a life bird. There were a good number of Savannah Sparrows flitting in and out of the marsh reeds. An Eastern Phoebe stopped long enough for a photo.

A few Glossy and White-faced Ibis were present. I did a search on their differences and the main ID for them is that the White-faced Ibis has an orange eye and the Glossy Ibis has a dark eye. Bald Eagles have a nest just north of "Cell 1" which is a deeper lake of water than the other cells in the marsh. We were walking on the levee just south of Cell 1 and Carol saw one of the eagles coming back to their nest and I took a decent distant shot, heavily cropping it for sharing. Then a Double-crested Cormorant did a fly-by and I got a BIF (bird in flight) shot.

Birds on Cell 1 tend to be diving ducks, I'm told. There were some groups pretty far off and I took photos of some of them. The Ruddy Duck and Ring-necked Ducks were identified readily with my iBird app on my phone. But the Scaups were sort of grouped together and after using iBird and a book to identify the Greater Scaup photo, I'm definitely open to someone correcting me and letting

me know if it is a Lesser Scaup.

Before we left, we went back to the boardwalk and a Sora (photo not included) was directly under me at the boardwalk. I wasn't able to get a good photo, but enjoyed watching it foraging around. Carol also saw a Common Yellowthroat (no photo) but I didn't get sight of it.

Prior to sunset, we were treated with a Sundog (or sun dog), also called parhelion which is a refraction of sunlight by ice crystals.

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)



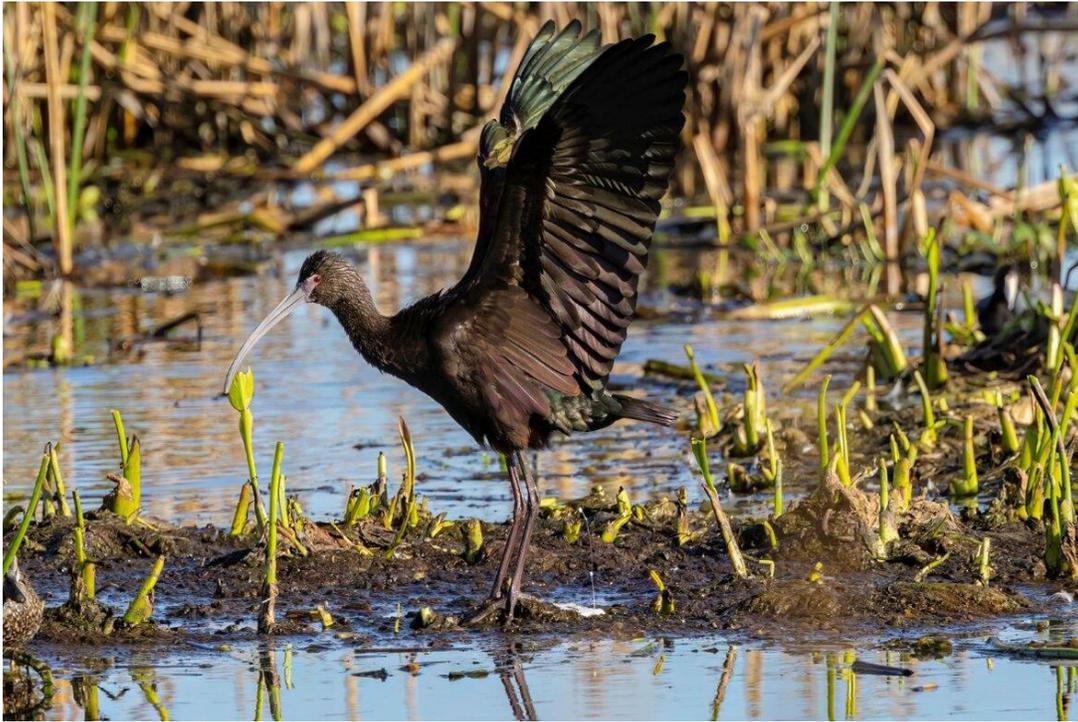
*Song Sparrow - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Glossy Ibis and Common Gallinule - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Savannah Sparrow - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*White-faced Ibis - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Eastern Phoebe - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Greater Scaup - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Ruddy Duck - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Ring-necked Ducks - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Bald Eagle - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Double-crested Cormorant - Photo by Paul Gregg*

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*My*



*Valentine*

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**Stars**

Photos by Hank Arnold -1-5-23 at 6:19AM



*Sunrise - Photo by Hank Arnold*

I think it was the stars that got me.

Might have been the moon,

A clear, crisp night with a gentle breeze.

Welcome relief from the days of pre-dawn fog we've had.

I was so distracted by the stars on our bike ride in the darkness that I almost fell over several times.

Stars I knew

Stars I didn't

Stars that seemed as bright and clear as car headlights.

All set against a moon that was almost completely full.

When Tycho wakes up, he wants to go down along the water on Fulton Beach Road to handle his business, properly mark his territory, get a sniff of who's been around. The only way I can keep up is on a bike.

Today this all came about at 4AM.

Off to the east there was just the slightest hint of a rising dim light.

The promise of a coming glorious day.

It would be a great day to be up at the Big Tree in Lamar as the cranes flew over just before the sun comes up.

The first whisper of their arrival is the honking coming from the north.

Next is the strong, graceful stokes just visible in the distant gathering light.

But there was a problem...

Two of us were all over this plan to go birding and ready to go, but there are three on our team.

When Tycho and I came back inside, he jumped up on the bed, I started the coffee, then I turned on the light in the bathroom.

Subtle hints that we had something important to discuss for the sunrise.

The only thing sticking out of the covers was her head, with her face all scrunched up on the pillow.

If a woman is beautiful then, she is truly beautiful.

Even scrunched, Nancy is the most beautiful woman in the world.

I put my hand on her shoulder and gave it a very gentle rub.

It was a very dainty, ladylike grunt, to be sure, but just a grunt, nonetheless.

When I came back with a cup of coffee for her, Tycho knew things were getting serious. Lying up against her as he was, every wag of his tail was slapping her on the leg.

WhapWhapWhapWhap!!

Another ladylike grunt.

Still scrunched.

I touched her shoulder again, and got an extended grunt, just the slightest hint of a cognizant groan.

That's real progress.

Then she smelled the coffee...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20230104-Lamar-Sunrise/>

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## **Eeling Lamar**

### **Photos by Hank Arnold**

We were bored yesterday afternoon, so we did what any self respecting birders would do...

Packed up the puppies and went to Lamar.

I've seen both Sandhill and Whooping cranes sitting down in tall grass before, but yesterday took that plan to new heights...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

It was like everyone took chill pills and sat down for a very slow party.

There was also a family of Whoopers with a banded colt just north from the Big Tree along the beach. That spot is a somewhat rare sighting.

One of them picked up a clam, and promptly swallowed it whole...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

That kind of clam has a pretty thin shell, and Tom Stehn shared with us last year his experiences with the kinds of clams Whooping Cranes swallow.

Just after that, the other adult came up with an 18 inch eel...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

He REALLY didn't want to swallow that sucker without significant preparation. He took it over to the beach and went on a 2 minute spree of twisting, shaking, and chomping, interspersed with several drops on the sand and washes in shallow pools.

This entire sequence was watched in great detail by the colt...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

I was waiting for the adult to finally let the little guy have it, but alas, that was not to be.

After several minutes of tenderizing that eel, the adult flipped it up in the air and swallowed it head first.

I suppose either there is an age limit for little Whoopers to eat eels, similar to adults drinking alcohol, or the adult has decided that youngster needs to take a more active role in his own upkeep.

Coincidentally, today I noticed this about a slightly larger eel washing up on the gulf side on Mustang Island...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ou66SCFnXTs&ab\\_channel=KSAT12](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ou66SCFnXTs&ab_channel=KSAT12)

I'm sure that would have made that adult Whooper happy, but the tenderizing process would have been a spectator sport for the ages.

Here are the other images from yesterday...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20230126-Lamar-PM/>

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**Port Aransas Birding Center**

## Photos by Hank Arnold

The Parks and Recreation Dept over in Port Aransas asked me to fly the drone over a section of Charlies Pasture I to map the extent of a recent grass burn.

Everything went well.

Since there are now a family of Whooping Cranes with twins in Charlies Pasture, I thought it might be polite to invite someone from The International Crane Foundation to come observe.

Really I didn't want anyone to say I was harassing the cranes in any way.

Turns out pretty much everyone from ICF came over, including Liz Smith (now semi retired), the new Director, one Carter Couch, and two newly added environmental team members.

When Colleen Simpson and Rae Mooney from the city also came over, there was quite a crowd, but I didn't crash anything.

Thank goodness.

After all the flying was done, Nancy and I invited everyone to go out to lunch at Miss K's, and we spent almost two hours catching up on new news and old friends.

It was especially nice to see Liz again, because we had heard she had some sudden and severe medical issue that caused her to leave ICF, and we didn't know anything about what happened.

She describes it as a "near death" heart attack, but after some recovery time she seems fine and has resumed some light ICF duties, which include free lunches.

I learned a lot from the various conversations, and of course threw out many whacky ideas for problems.

Talk wandered around to the high number of twins around this winter, and how difficult it is to know the number because unless they are banded, you never know if a family you saw at place "A" yesterday was a different family than the one you see in place "B" today.

Liz recommended a group effort where as many interested people with boats go

out one the same day to places we have seen twins before, and count them all at once.

My hope is that Professor Stehn adds his thoughts based upon a kazillion years of studying them. and possibly even his attendance to this op.

Then the conversation shifted to the question of how many Whooping Cranes are on St. Joes Island, as nobody of the birding persuasion studies them regularly.

Fishermen tell me all the time how many they see.

I have suggested a whacky drone operation to see if we can get an idea by flying in sections just over the inland coast of the island, with the camera pointed back towards the gulf.

I'm thinking a large white bird will show up in the fancy 41 megapixel images at ranges of up to a mile, which will cover most of the island.

I plan to do some image testing with a large yellow dog that's probably about the same visual cross-section as a Whooping Crane.

After lunch we went over to the Birding Center, which has had significant recent revisions with money finally collected from the various Hurricane Harvey funds.

Besides the fancy new walkway and gazebo that runs along the fence to the reclamation plant...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

There is a new boardwalk in roughly the same location as the old one, possibly going a little further out.

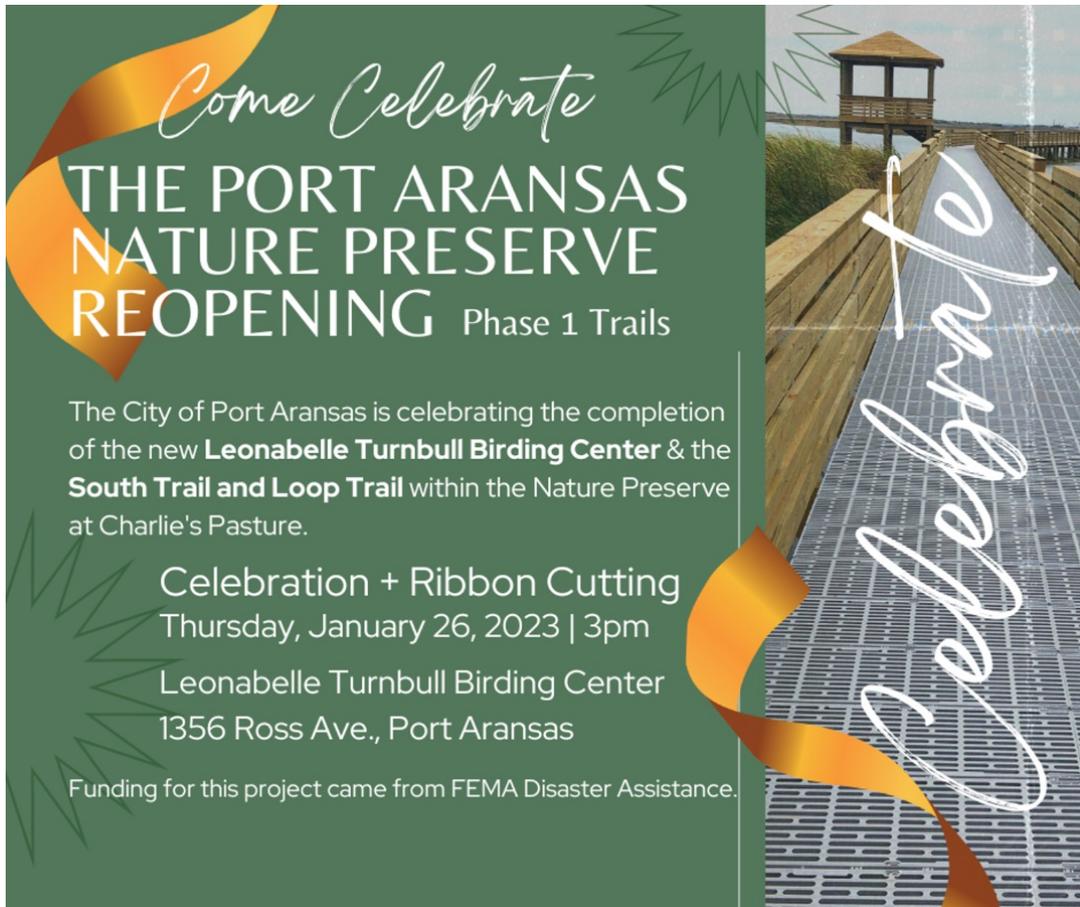
The new viewing tower on that boardwalk where the old one was also has a cover...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

I had not been following these developments, but we've been invited to the

ribbon cutting ceremony for the new walkway...



*Come Celebrate*  
**THE PORT ARANSAS  
NATURE PRESERVE  
REOPENING** Phase 1 Trails

The City of Port Aransas is celebrating the completion of the new **Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center** & the **South Trail and Loop Trail** within the Nature Preserve at Charlie's Pasture.

**Celebration + Ribbon Cutting**  
Thursday, January 26, 2023 | 3pm  
Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center  
1356 Ross Ave., Port Aransas

Funding for this project came from FEMA Disaster Assistance.

*Photo by Hank Arnold*

They even put a nice bench for old farts with heavy cameras to sit out at the very end.

I have spent many happy hours out there over the years, taking pictures and contemplating complex computer problems.

I hope to spend more now.

The Birding Center is White Pelican Central, with swarms enjoying the sun...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

Bathing in the fresh water...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

With more coming in all the time...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

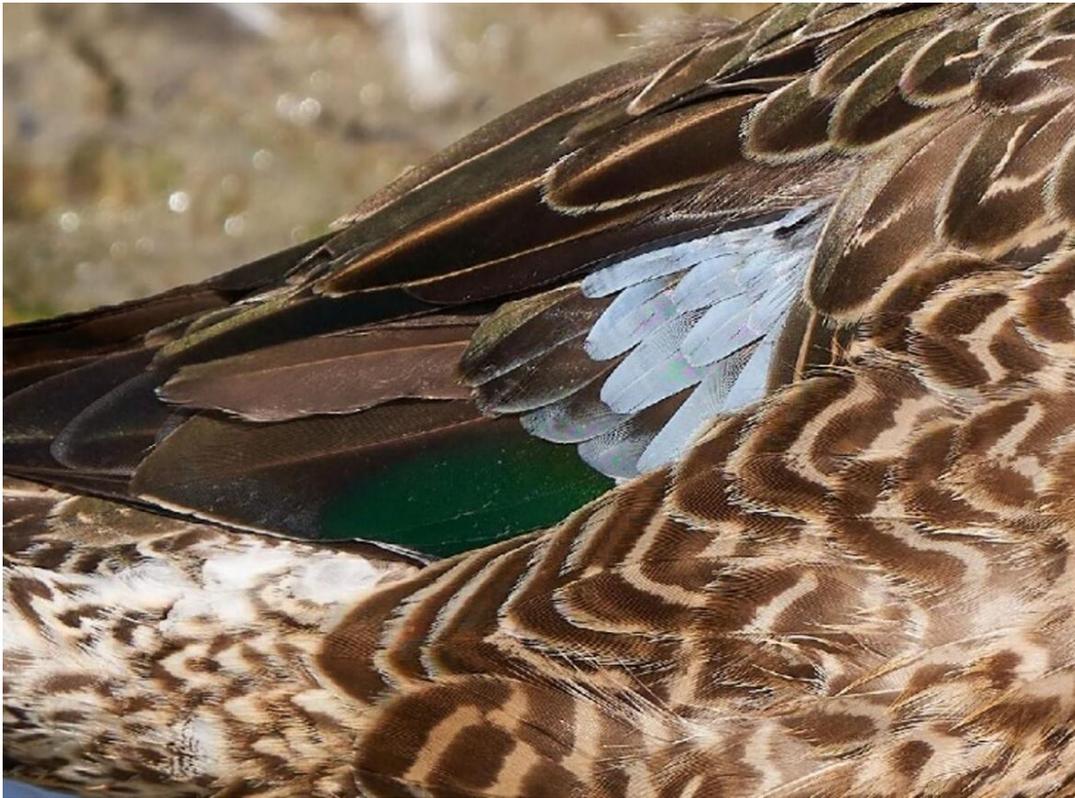
The light was so good that I went up and down the new boardwalk taking high rez images of...

Coot feet...

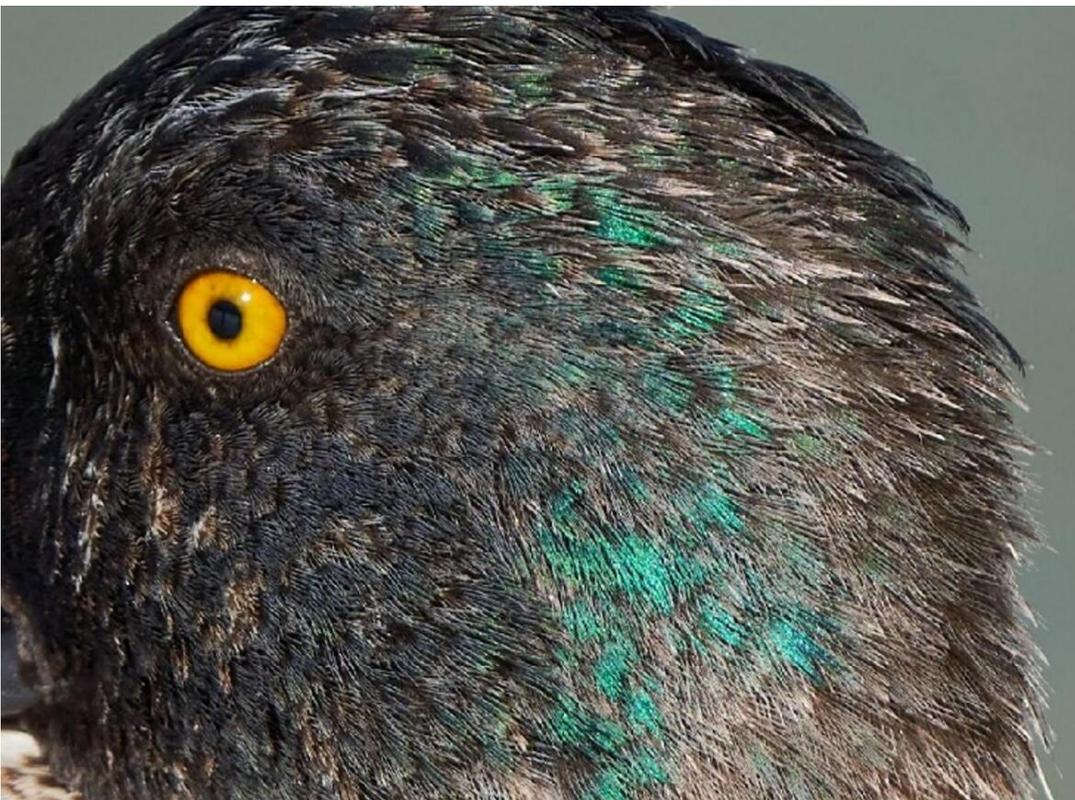


*Photo by Hank Arnold*

And various duck details...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*



In one of the Shoveler pictures we noticed what appears to be a system of hairs

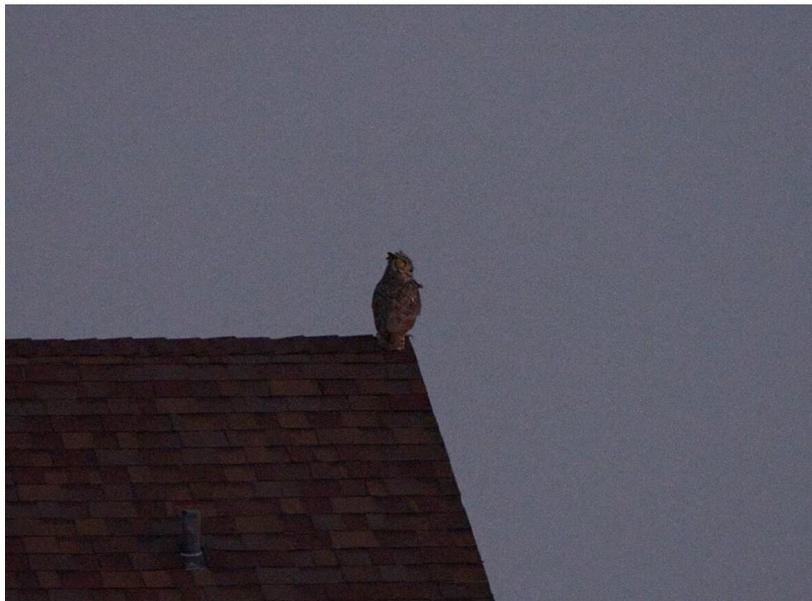
for filtering water and mud like the baleen on a whale...



Makes sense, I've just never seen it before.

All in all we had a very enjoyable day

This, by the way, is not from Port A...



It's an image of our Sailhouse Ghost taken just as the sun was setting.

Here are the other pictures on the day...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20230119-PATX/>

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## 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.

<b>Piney Woods Wildlife Membership Form</b>		
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:  <b>Piney Woods Wildlife Society</b> <b>P.O. Box 189</b> <b>Spring, TX 77383-0189</b>
*Per Household – Includes <i>The Pine Warbler</i> newsletter New _____ Renewal _____ Rejoining _____		

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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](mailto:justforthebirds@sbcglobal.net) or Diane Wedgeworth, Editor, [milanodi@yahoo.com](mailto:milanodi@yahoo.com)

Please send all new address changes and any corrections to [cdmoore3@gmail.com](mailto:cdmoore3@gmail.com) (Claire Moore) and add PWWS to the subject line. Thank you.

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