

The Pine Warbler



Piney Woods Wildlife Society March 2022 Newsletter

California Program

By Kendra Kocab



Kendra Kocab at Yosemite National Park in California

The March program for PWWS will be in-person (and via Zoom) on Wednesday, March 16th, at 7 p.m. (snacks & social time at 6:30 p.m.). Kendra Kocab will talk about her nearly 3-week long birding trip to California. We will learn about the places she visited, birds she saw, and tips she has when planning your trip to the Golden State.

Kendra Kocab is a naturalist at Kleb Woods Nature Preserve and John Paul Landing Environmental Education Center in Cypress. She serves on the board of the Texas Ornithological Society, is the co-compiler for the Cypress Creek Christmas Bird Count, and helps coordinate the Red-vented Bulbul Survey.

Please join us for this presentation on Wednesday, March 16, at 7 p.m. or come early at 6:30 p.m. for snacks. This meeting will be in-person (as well as via Zoom) at the Big Stone Lodge located in Dennis Johnston County Park at 709 Riley Fuzzel Road, Spring, Texas 77373. If you wish 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 get PWWS newsletters).

PWWS has decided that the March 16th program will 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 not comfortable being in groups yet. So, if you are ready to attend in-person, please join us at 6:30 p.m. for social time or at 7 p.m. for the meeting. The Covid rules at the Lodge do not allow anyone to bring in pot luck dishes yet. We are only allowed to serve commercially pre-packaged foods and sealed drinks. So, DO NOT BRING those scrumptious desserts and appetizers just yet! We'll let you know when that is allowed.



Photo of Wrentit in California by Kendra Kocab

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.

Note from PWWS President

President's note

All systems are go for an in person meeting for March 16. We will also Zoom. Do hope as many of you as possible will be there or Zoom with us. Things are looking up and the birds are singing.

Kathy, your President

TWO EAGLETS in Tomball!!

By Claire Moore



Finally photographic proof of TWO Bald eaglet hatchlings - Photo by David Illanne

Well, we finally got photo evidence of what we have suspected for a week or two in "our" bald eagle's nest in Tomball. We have TWO eaglet hatchlings!! This nest is in some pine trees behind the Target in Tomball at FM2920 & Highway 249 (address 14302 FM 2920 Rd, Tomball, TX 77377).

Join the "Enjoy the Tomball Bald Eagles" Facebook group to keep up with all the latest news and find out how to locate the nest.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EnjoyTomballEagles>

As always: Please be respectful of Target and do not block the roadway behind the store because there are many delivery trucks that go in and out all the time. Please park in the marked parking spots behind the store. Also be respectful of the eagles and stay in the grass between the store & the chain link fence.



Mamma Bald Eagle and one chick - Photo by David Illanne



Proud papa eagle flyover - Photo by David Illanne

Carol Allen

From HEART♥



The cold winter weather is very hard on sea turtles especially greens and Kemp's ridleys. Numbers are going up every day and anyone finding a sea turtle on the beach or floating in shallow water should call 1-800-TURTLE5.

Extreme cold weather on the north coastline will result in more coldstunned sea turtles that must be brought in for treatment either where they are found or brought south for help.

So far this winter, 439 cold stunned sea turtles have been recorded in Texas. Daily totals are reported below.

On 6 February 2022, 53 cold stunned turtles were located in Texas. This includes 4 from Mustang Island/Aransas Pass, 45 from the Upper Laguna Madre, and 4 from the Lower Laguna Madre. All were green turtles, 46 were located alive and 7 were located dead.

On 7 February 2022, 1 cold stunned green sea turtle was located in Texas, dead in the Upper Laguna Madre.

The remaining cold stunned turtles recorded in Texas this year were all green turtles, including 315 found from 4-5 February and 70 found from 17-25 January.

From HEART ♥



Kemp's ridley sea turtles Padre Island nps.gov

Mountain Lion November Program Recording

Are you interested in the current status of Mountain Lions in Texas and what you can do to help them? If so, there is a very interesting talk by the founder of Texas Native Cats, Monica Morrison, available at the following link.

<https://youtu.be/GmB5GxN1qzw>

The <https://texasnativecats.org/> web site has all types of Education and Outreach information about the five species of native cats in Texas: jaguar, mountain lion, bobcat, ocelot, and jaguarundi.

THE ELUSIVE FELINE

By Cheryl Conley



Bobcat - Photo by Cheryl Conley

Because I live in the suburbs just north of Houston, I feel fortunate to be able to observe many native species of wildlife. One of my favorites is the bobcat. I've only seen one and it took me a minute to realize exactly what was running across my backyard. When I finally realized what it was, he was long gone. Bobcats are elusive and nocturnal so I was lucky to see one.

Bobcats are North America's most common wildcat. There are actually two subspecies of bobcats in Texas. The desert bobcat is found in the west and northwest part of Texas and the Texas bobcat is found in the rest of the state. They're almost identical and the general public would never be able to tell the difference. Both are about twice the size of a housecat and measure twenty-five to thirty inches long and stand fifteen to twenty inches tall at the shoulder. Females generally weigh around twenty pounds and males weigh about twenty-six pounds.

Bobcats are named for their short stubby tails and are part of the lynx family. They have black stripes on their forelegs, back legs and on their "bobbed" tails. They are solitary animals and territorial although some male territories will overlap. Female territories are exclusive. Breeding season in Texas begins in February and this is the only time males and females are together. Litters range from two to seven but two is the most common. The babies are walking at about a month old and they are weaned at about two months old. They stay with Mom until fall and then they're on their own.

Bobcats have excellent eyesight. In bright sunlight, the pupils close and become thin vertical slits which keeps out the light. At night, the pupils open wide which allows the maximum amount of light to enter. The eyes are protected vertically with an eyelid and horizontally with a covering called a nictitating membrane. It

is connected to the corner of the eye and sits below the eyelid. It moves from side to side.

Bobcats are carnivores and prefer to eat rodents and rabbits but have been known to eat mice, squirrels and even deer.

If you've ever seen a domestic cat before it "attacks" a toy, you've seen it stop, crouch down and remain perfectly still. Sometimes it will creep slowly towards the target and then pounce. Bobcats do the same. Bobcats are so quiet they often catch their prey off guard and can jump up to ten feet.

In the wild, bobcats live about seven to twelve years but in captivity they live between twenty and twenty-five years.

When seen in the wild, bobcats are sometimes mistaken for domestic cats. As a matter of fact, when working at a wildlife center, we had someone bring us a bobcat thinking it was an orphaned domestic cat. Thankfully, we were able to take care of the baby until it could be released back to the wild.

Photos by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn

**Favorite images from the Great Backyard Bird Count
2/21/2022. Backyard Clear Lake City (Houston) Texas**



A gray and drizzly day, 2/26/2022 but, then, a bright spot! Yellow-throated Warbler. Backyard Clear Lake City (Houston) TexasHouston, Texas - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn

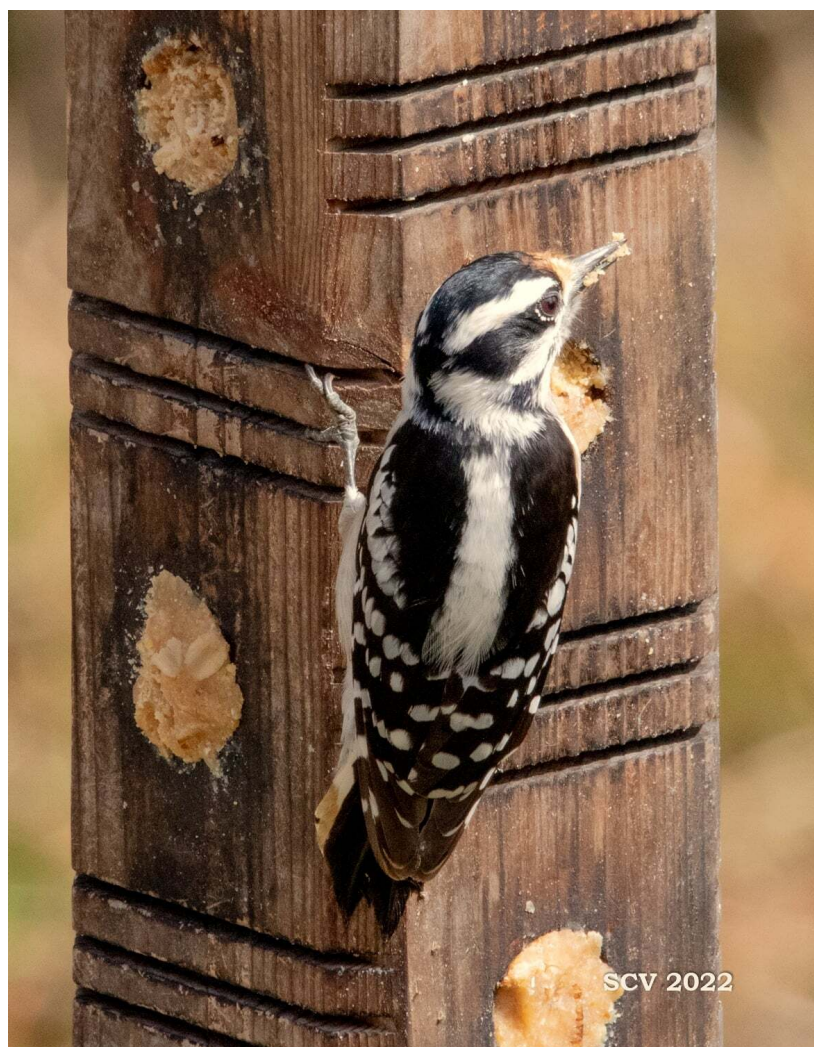


Yellow-throated Warbler. Backyard Clear Lake City (Houston) Texas - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



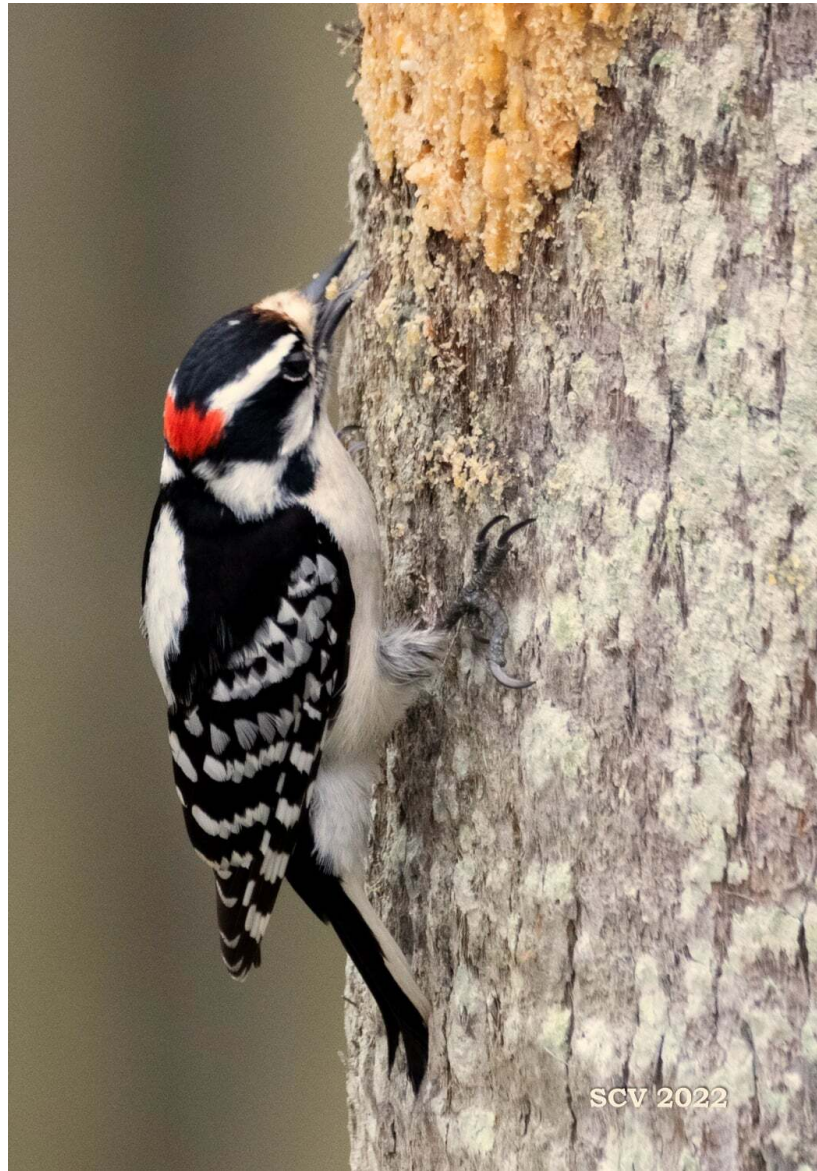
SCV 2022

Yellow-throated Warbler. Backyard Clear Lake City (Houston) Texas - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn

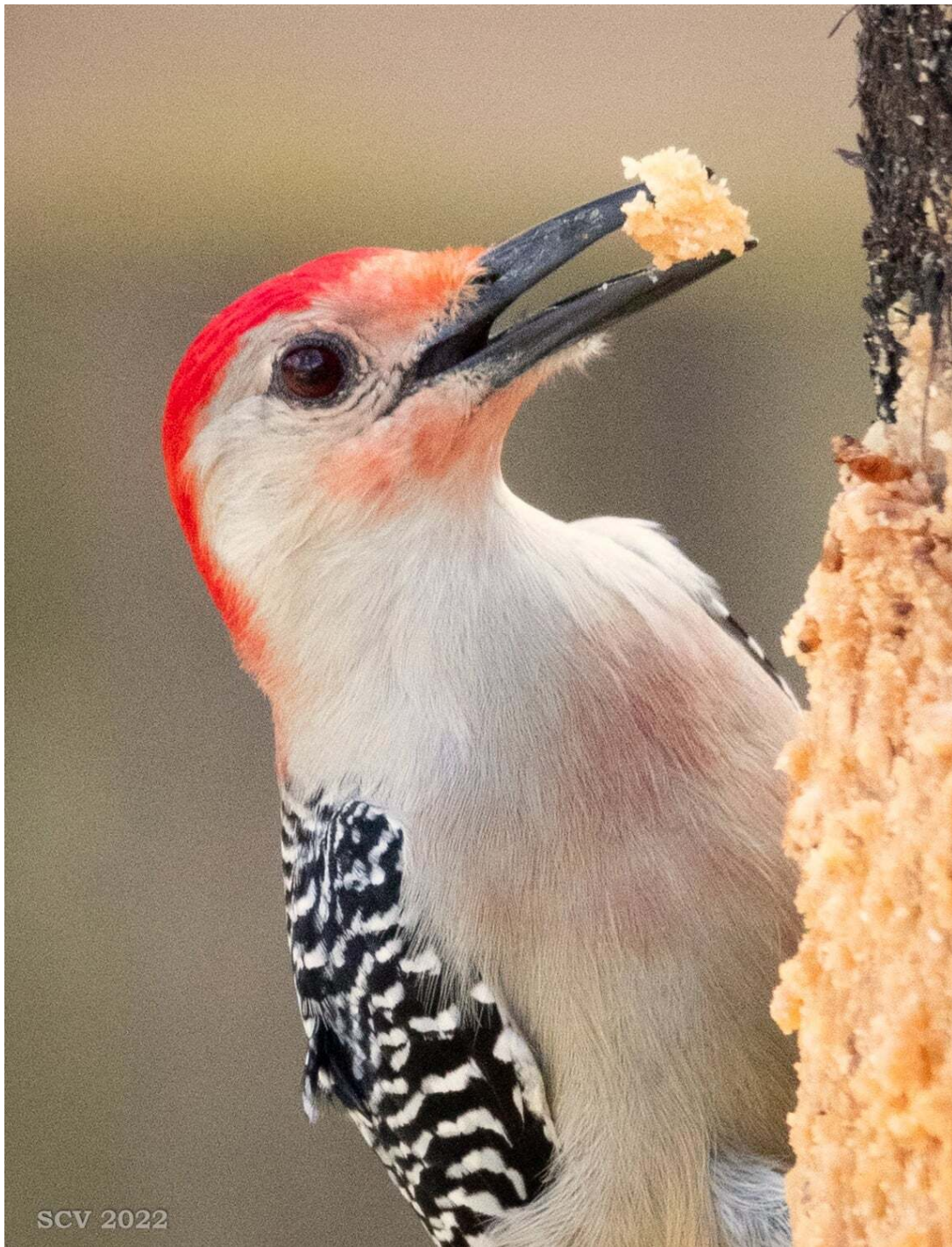


SCV 2022

Female Downy Woodpecker - Photo By Sandy-Crystal Vaughn

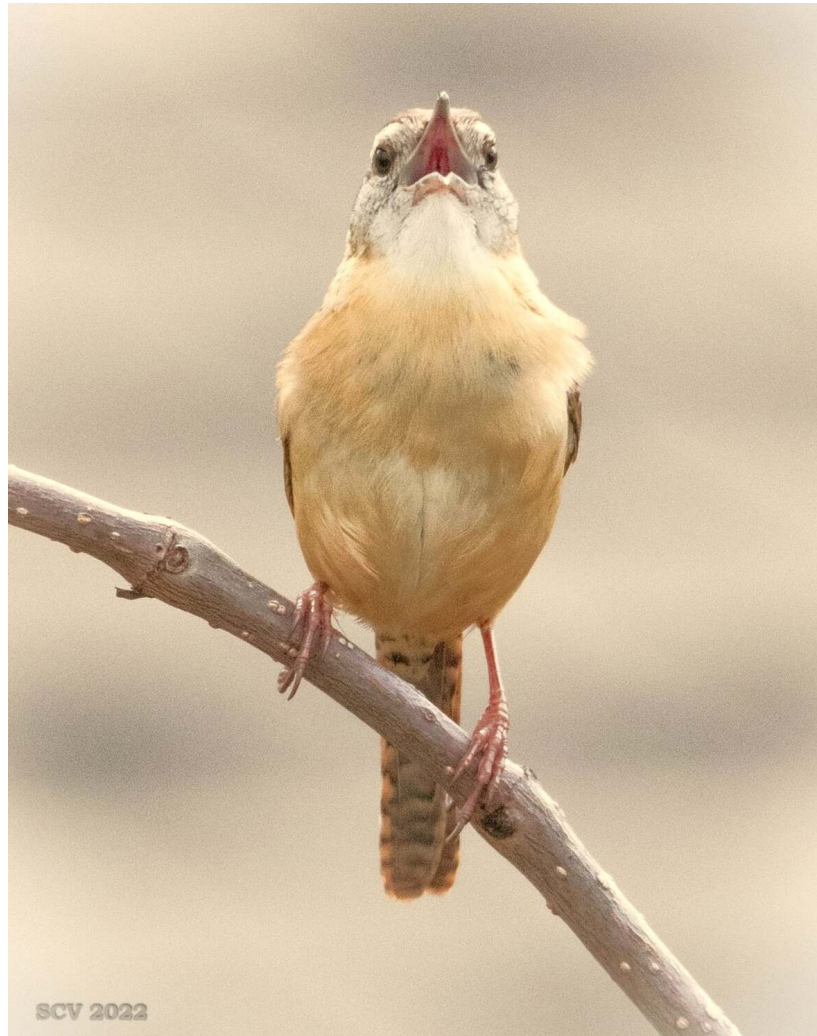


Male Downy Woodpecker - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



SCV 2022

Male Red bellied Woodpecker with order to go! - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Male Carolina Wren singing his heart out - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Orange-crowned Warbler - Backyard Clear Lake City (Houston) Texas - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



American Goldfinches eating sunflower seed hearts - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



American Goldfinch - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn

CREATOR'S CANVAS/INTERESTING FLIES OF COSTA RICA!

Photos by Wayne Easley



The Hammer-headed Fly at Crahuita, Costa Rica in Jun2 2014. Note location of the eyes.- Photo by Wayne Easley

Not sure exactly who said it, but one fellow wrote about the fly, "God made the fly and then forgot to tell us why?" Upon seeing a fly, many of us quickly run for the nearest flyswatter. And why not? It is thought that there are upwards to 150,000 different kinds of flies in the world. And many of them are down-right annoying. A fly buzzing around our heads when we are trying to sleep in the early hours of the morning can be frustrating. Other flies climb all over fecal matter or urine and then want to cozy up to us. Some want our blood. That is revolting. It is suggested that flies can transmit over 65 different diseases to human beings. Problems such as malaria, yellow fever, sleeping sickness, cholera, meningitis, dengue fever, river blindness and diarrhea are prevalent, along with a host of other problems caused by insects that make up the Diptera Group of insects. I was stung once in Mexico by the Human Bot Fly which laid three eggs into my arm. It was a new experience for me and not very much fun.

Flies begin by laying eggs that pass through a complete metamorphosis of four distinct stages: the egg is followed by the larva, then the pupae and the adult. Since some female flies can lay from 75-150 eggs and the life cycle can be less than one week of time, we have a problem. Despite our lack of love for so many

the world's flies, my camera and I discovered some pretty incredible flies in Costa Rica. Not only are some of them downright beautiful, but some are a real help to human beings. Some flies help to pollinate plants and flowers. Some flies eat other insects that may harm us, while others during the larval stage feed on aphids that plague some of our food crops. Other flies exhibit a riot of colors that may rival the rainbow. One of these is the Hammer-headed Fly that we found and photographed south of Limon on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica. In back of our motel, we encountered a forest that was full of photographic opportunities. This is where we found the Hammer-headed Fly.

This weird fly was about a half inch long. Like all flies, it had a pair of flight wings and another set of wings that are extremely tiny. They are located along the thorax and are called halteres. The halteres are used for balance when the insect is flying. But the amazing thing about the Hammer-headed Fly was that the eyes were located on two appendages that grow out from the head, putting them way apart from each other. And the creature's eyes are at the very tip. Undoubtedly, they are related to the Stalk-eyed Flies that are found mainly in Asia and Africa (there are only two known species of Stalk-eyes in the Americas). At the time we had no idea what we were seeing. Studies revealed that the Hammer-headed Fly (the Stalk-eyed Flies probably do the same thing) once it has hatched, gulps in a lot of air. It then blows the air out of its mouth so violently that the appendages grow out which pushes the eyes and optic nerves at a distance from each other. It is very strange indeed. Please take time to locate the Hammer-headed Fly in the picture gallery that is attached. There are other flies there that are worth seeing. Please enjoy,

Wayne Easley/written on Feb. 13, 2022/Harvey, North Dakota

All pictures of flies were taken in Costa Rica. Feel welcome to use the images for educational purposes.

- 1-The Hammer-headed Fly. Note location of the eyes.
- 2-A pair of flies mating.
- 3-A flower fly showing colors.
- 4-Fly that molests cattle. Note that sword-like snout.
- 5-An ant that appears to be feeding on a fly.
- 6-A Long-legged Fly, sometimes called a Stilt-legged Fly.
- 7-A rather large fly. Note the eyes.
- 8-Probably a fly that takes nectar from flowers.
- 9-Seen on La Mina Road but only once.
- 10-Another example of a Long-legged Fly.
- 11-Rather large fly. No idea what it is.
- 13-Incredible eyes. Built in binoculars?



A pair of flies mating at Casa Rancho, Costa Rica Dec. 2018 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly on Tuis Valley Road, April 2015 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly at Casa Rancho, C.R. - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly in trap on Tuis Valley Road, FEB 2014 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly Stilted-legged on Tuis Valley Road FEB 2014 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly, La Mina Road, C.R. 2017 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly, entrance Road to Casa Rancho C.R. May 2020 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly, La Mina Road, C.R. June 2014 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly, on La Mina Road, 2014 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly, Selva Bonnanito C.R., OCT 2015 - Photo by Wayne Easley



Fly on La Mina Road, JAN 2016 - Photo by Wayne Easley

Sheldon Lake State Park - Feb. 8 and 9, 2022

By Paul Gregg



Ruby-crowned Kinglet - Photo by Paul Gregg

Welcome to Sheldon Lake State Park.

Almost daily from back in July 2021, I've received eBird-alert notices that Limpkins have been seen at Sheldon Lake State Park, northeast of Houston, just off Beltway 8. They are mostly seen in the swampy area near the parking lot on Garrett Road (for folks in the Houston area who want to add a Limpkin to their bird life list). Observers can also see a good variety of other birds around the area. It appears many of the birds are used to people driving into the parking lot and grabbing their fishing poles and spending some time trying to catch a fish. I wonder if those who are fishing are curious about the number of binoculars and camera toting folks who are looking for a bird that is out of its range from its normal area of the Gulf coast of Florida. You can see the relative size of the limpkin in relation to the Common Gallinule in the photo. Limpkins are larger than an Ibis and smaller than a Great Blue Heron. Their main diet is apple snails that are an invasive species to the State of Texas. Another location in the area for Limpkins is Brazos Bend State Park. In two photos you can see the Limpkin with an apple snail, getting ready to break into the shell and have lunch.

The Anhinga had been swimming and chasing fish to spear them and have its own lunch. After swimming and submerging to catch fish, the Anhinga will perch with its wings out to dry in the sunlight. This one posed nicely for us and though I've photographed Anhingas before, this is the first time I've noticed their eye being so orange. I guess I expected their eyes to be blue/aqua like cormorants. There were a couple Black-crowned Night-Herons there also and I'm wondering if they might nest in the area in the upcoming weeks. (Numbers of other wading birds were in that area also, many just a little too far off for good photos. I am wondering if some are going to make the area a rookery.)

If you drive east on Garrett Road, you will come to the entrance of Sheldon Lake State Park. Drive on in and park. Get out and stroll down clear, wide trails and look for birds, and maybe an alligator or two. We saw the Eastern Phoebe out in the open, and it would perch for a moment, then launch itself out, grab an insect, and return to the perch. On the back side of the park, we watched the frenetic behavior and sound of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet and one perched for a heartbeat in a bit of sunlight, allowing me to capture the photo of it with some of its ruby crown showing. Sheldon Lake State Park in late spring and summer will have nesting Yellow-crowned Night-Herons in the area.

Hopefully we will get out more often this spring and find more birds to photograph as we enjoy God's beautiful, variety of creatures!

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)



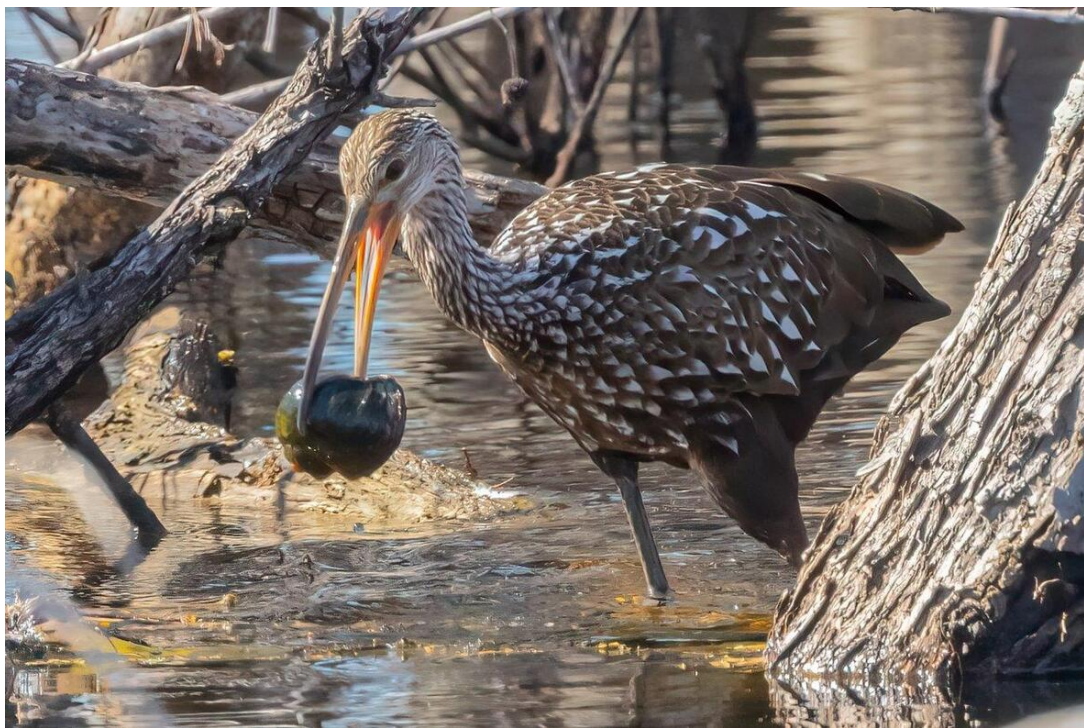
Anhinga - Photo by Paul Gregg



Anhinga - Photo by Paul Gregg



Limpkin - Photo by Paul Gregg



Limpkin - Photo by Paul Gregg



Apple Snail - Photo by Paul Gregg



Black-Crowned Night Heron - Photo by Paul Gregg



Eastern Phoebe - Photo by Paul Gregg

Photos & Links by Hank Arnold

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20191217-Juv-Night-Herons/>



Juvenile Night Heron - Photo by Hank Arnold

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20200810-TCHE-Feeding-Zoom/>





<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/Wildlife/Ms-Crabby/>

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20201227-Aquarium/>



<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/PATX-20161101/>



Roseate Spoonbill - Photo by Hank Arnold



Roseate Spoonbill - Photo by Hank Arnold

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20190328-Reddish-Egrets/>



Reddish Egrets - Photo by Hank Arnold



Reddish Egret - Photo by Hank Arnold

Photos by Bill Miller



Female Summer Tanager - Photo by Bill Miller



The yard was alive with small birds this morning. The Eastern Bluebirds busily nest-building, chickadees, woodpeckers, goldfinches. Even a Summer Tanager and best of all, a Blue-headed Vireo, which I had never photographed and is also new to the yard. Blue Bird 2-12-2022 - Photo by Bill Miller



Eastern Bluebird - 2-12-2022 - Photo by Bill Miller



Members of a flock of goldfinches enjoying a bath in the pond. 2-15-2022 - Photo by Bill Miller



Goldfinches - Photo by Bill Miller



Photo by Bill Miller



Blue-headed Vireo - 2-12-2022 - Photo by Bill Miller

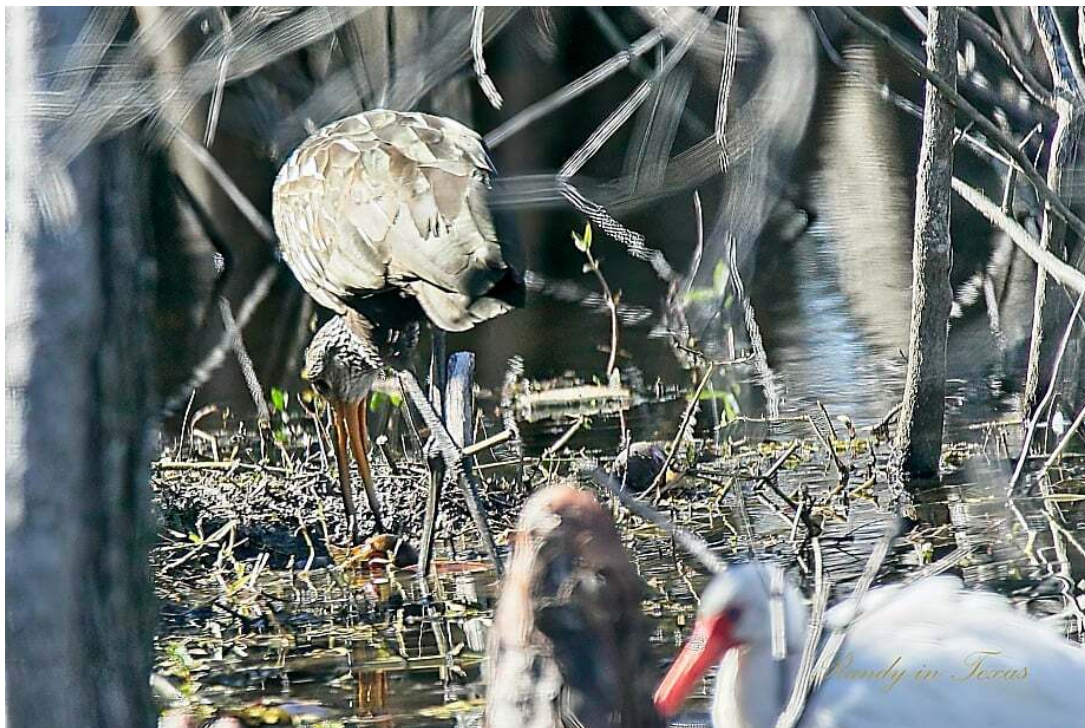
Photos by Randy Scott



Lincoln's Sparrow in my backyard 2-18-2022 in Conroe. We have three species of sparrows, all in the yard at the same time every day now. Only a handful of these are in the feeders or on the ground at any given time. IDs are tough for sparrows, but we shall try. #landbirds - Photo by Randy Scott



Chipping Sparrow in our backyard. 2-22-2022 One of three sparrow species visiting our yard now. Chipping Sparrows come here for the winter. They seemed a little late this year but finally got here at least a month ago. They love to feed on the ground, in the St Augustine grass. I sow seeds there for sparrows and American Goldfinches each morning. If you say this is only a sparrow, you are correct. It is the most populous sparrow in N America. Its range goes all the way up to Alaska. Some people (especially in cities) think the House Sparrow is most prevalent, but these birds love to team up in the wild country in massive flocks and outnumber the common city ("House sparrows"). The Chipping Sparrows migrate up north for the summer and nest there, leaving Texas in early Spring. They won't be around here much longer. We miss them when they leave.



Rare bird of Texas - Limpkin found and photographed at Sheldon Lake 2-11-2022 SP near Houston. Two (probably mated) reside now in these marshlands and are readily seen by fishermen and kayakers in the immediate area of the SP. There are two or three locations now in the state where they are found. They have followed the growth of the Apple Snail (*Pomacea*) as it has infiltrated Texas marsh waters. A pair have found a place to feed on these snails as far north as in Grayson County on the border of Oklahoma. This bird species has been working up the coast from the Yucatan Peninsula for several years, following the presence of these invasive snails. Apparently, these particular birds are two of the first (summer 2021) to arrive in

Texas. I went with my wife and a friend searching for these birds two days ago. Neither of us had seen one before) This photo shows this bird feeding on one of these snails. #waterbirds - Photo by Randy Scott



Here is another but side view of the Limpkin 2-11-2022 we watched foraging in the swamp of Harris County a couple of days ago. Wing span is 30 inches and it stands 25 inches tall. #waterbirds - Photo by Randy Scott



Aninga and his shadow in Harris County, Texas. We went with a friend out to Sheldon Reservoir and this bird really did give us a show. This species can be found with other waders on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. They fish along with egrets and other waders. Its name comes from a Brazilian word meaning "snake bird". It is known for its swimming capability. He can go underwater and swim. He fishes by spearing them. He is similar to a Cormorant in stature. #Waterbirds 2-10-2022 - Photo by Randy Scott



Bald Eagle - Photo by Randy Scott



Bald Eagle - Photo by Randy Scott



Bald Eagle - Photo by Randy Scott



Bald Eagle - Photo by Randy Scott



Guess what showed up at the feeders this week? A male American Goldfinch dressed for breeding. Spring WILL get here soon! - 2-23-2022 - Photo by Randy Scott



Resident Downy Woodpecker at feeder in backyard yesterday, 2-26-2022, alongside of a breeding Male Pine Warbler in Conroe. The warbler is a loner and frequent visitor, while the woodpecker is only an occasional visitor. We love color and will soon start seeing a lot of it in the neotropics from the Yucatan and northern S American countries and Central American countries in their Spring migration. It is super great to live on the edge of a forest visited by so many species of birds. This compares the sizes of these two birds. Not a whole lot of difference. #landbirds- Photo by Randy Scott



Photo by Randy Scott



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* 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 join us!

PWWS web site is www.pineywoodswildlifesociety.org

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

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

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

Please submit any articles you'd like considered for the PWWS Newsletter. The Pine Warbler, to our President, Kathy Coward, justforthebirds@sbcglobal.net or Diane Wedgeworth, Editor, milanodi@yahoo.com

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

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