

May PWWS Program by Carlos Hernandez

Piney Woods Wildlife Society <Cdmoore3i@gmail.com>
To: Claire Moore <cdmoore3@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 30, 2023 at 9:58 PM

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The Pine Warbler



May PWWS Program by Carlos Hernandez

"Traveling Europe in the Winter"

Tuesday, May 16, 2023



Photo by Carlos Hernandez

For the May program for Piney Woods, we are happy to have Carlos Hernandez back to present "Traveling Europe in the Winter". The program takes place on Tuesday, May 16th, at 6:30 p.m. with social time at 6 p.m.

His topic will be centered around his European trip during the winter season. Benefits of traveling during the winter is the absence of tourists and pick pockets. Highlights include traveling light with the new mirrorless cameras and a couple of lenses as well. Places visited: Le Mont St. Michel in Normandy, the Hallmark movie city of Brugge, the friendly cities of Lisbon and Porto in Portugal. And of course, the city of lights: Paris.

The May program for PWWS will be ONLY in-person and takes place on Tuesday, May 16th, at 6:30 p.m. (snacks & social time at 6:00 p.m.) at Dennis Johnston's Big Stone Lodge located in Dennis Johnston County Park at 709 Riley Fuzzel Road, Spring, Texas 77373.

[FYI, the Piney Woods board decided beginning with February 2023 that we are going back to in-person meetings only.]

Latest rules for bringing snacks: If you wish to bring some store bought items for snack time, you are welcome to do so. Items no longer must be individually wrapped. However, we are still not allowed to bring homemade items to the Big Stone Lodge (unfortunately).



Photo by Carlos Hernandez



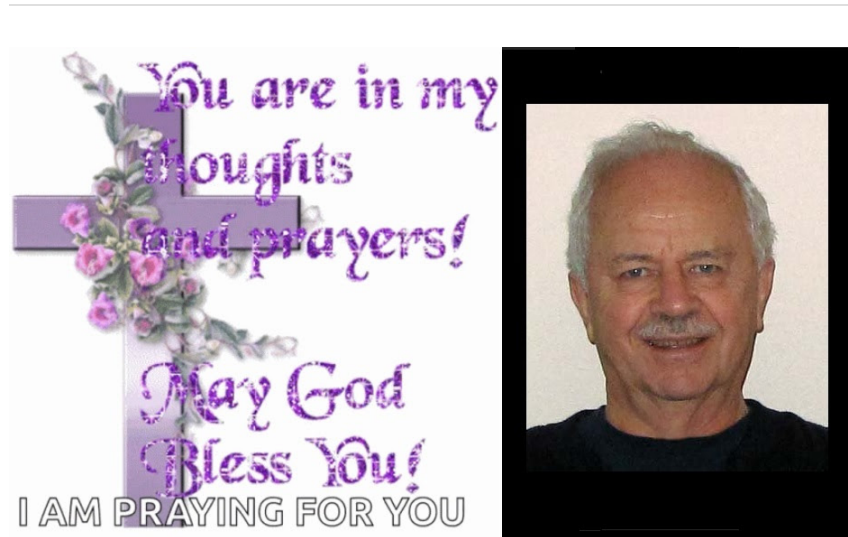
Note from PWWS President

Spring is here and we have been lucky with the weather. Also have been enjoying a wonderful Spring migration.

Hope to see you at our May meeting, the last before we break for the summer. Should be interesting and always a lot of fun when Carlos Hernandez gives us a presentation.

Take care all and enjoy the summer.

Kathy, Your President



Jim Lacey needs prayers

We are sad to inform you that our Treasurer and friend Jim Lacey has had a brain injury. Jim suffered a brain stroke and is now in memory care at The Village in the Woodlands. Both he and his wife Elsa are in assisted living at The Village at the Woodlands.

If you would like to send a card, please send it to them in care of their son.

Michael Lacey
42 North Brokenfern
Spring, Texas 77380

Farrar Stockton will be taking over Treasurer duties for the remainder of the year while we search for a replacement for Jim. If you would be willing to volunteer in this capacity, please email our President at justforthebirds@sbcglobal.net.



Tomball Eaglets Have Fledged!

by Claire Moore



Tomball eagle fledgling exercising over nest. - Photo by James Benton

The Tomball bald eagles have successfully fledged two eaglets again this year! Follow all the news and beautiful photos on the Facebook page "Enjoy the Tomball Bald Eagles".

The family should be around the nest for a few more weeks before disappearing for the summer, but don't wait long if you want to see them in person. We don't know for sure if they migrate north for the summer or just spend their time away from the nest nearer to their favorite hunting area and are therefore less visible to us...? The adults will return to the nest in September to start renovations in preparation for laying eggs in November.

You can get all the information about where to see the nest on the Facebook page mentioned above.



Tomball eagle fledgling flying around near the nest. Photo by James Benton



Adult Tomball eagle inbound with lunch - possibly a nestling night-heron. Photo by David Reynolds



Tomball adult eagle delivering lunch. Fledglings will fly in momentarily. Photo by David Reynolds



Both Tomball eagle fledglings at the nest with one adult after lunching. Photo by David Reynolds



Tomball eagle fledgling flying near nest. Photo by James Benton



Both Tomball eagle fledglings with one adult at the nest. Photo by David Reynolds



Bald Eagle flying by David Reynolds



LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH

By Cheryl Conley, Board of Directors Lake Creek Greenway



ASP MOTH - Photo by Cheryl Conley

When we see something little, cute, and fluffy, our first instinct is to pet it or pick it up. But you want to steer clear of this little fella. It's the asp caterpillar also known as the Toxic Toupee also known as the puss caterpillar. Lots of names for such a little thing. They are more formally known as the Texas southern flannel moth *Megalopyge opercularis*. They are only about an inch to an inch and a half long, are tear-drop shaped, are covered in a thick coat of tan to grayish white hairs and are most active at night. The head and legs aren't visible from the top. They are one of the most toxic caterpillars in North America and can be found on the east coast from New Jersey to Florida and as far west as Texas.

The life cycle of the asp is egg to larva (caterpillar) to pupa to adult. The first stage of the life cycle is the egg. Eggs are laid by adult females in rows or clusters on twigs or leaves and are covered in hairs. A tiny caterpillar grows inside the egg. As the larvae (caterpillar) grow, they become more hairy. Once they hatch, their main job is to eat and grow. During this time, they will shed their skin 4 or 5 times. When fully grown, it stops eating and spins a cocoon as a protective cover for the pupa. The cocoons are very tough and often remain on the twig long after the moth has emerged. The life cycle is now complete and it starts again when the female lays eggs.

Beneath the soft hair are tiny venom-filled spines and when brushed against the skin, they produce a very painful sting. Some describe the pain as excruciating. The pain can radiate throughout the entire body. In some, the sting can also cause nausea, headache and abdominal pain. What should you do if you get stung?

- Put tape over the wound and quickly pull it off to remove any spikes.
- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Apply an ice pack which will help numb the pain.
- You can take antihistamines to help with pain and swelling.
- For more severe symptoms, see a physician.

Before touching any insect or animal, make sure you've done your homework.
Sometimes looks are deceiving!

Heart Happening

By Carole Allen

From: "Shaver, Donna J"

Date: April 11, 2023 at 7:41:51 PM CDT

Subject: Texas Nest Update

Good News!

Today, the first Kemp's Ridley nest was found on the Texas coast during 2023, on South Padre Island.

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



Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle - Texas Parks & Wildlife Photo



National Butterfly Center - Mission, Texas

Congratulations! Luciano Guerra on your grant to do Texas Horned Lizard research

I've known about this exciting news for a couple of weeks now but I've been waiting to announce it until after I received the official notification and this story came out in today's Monitor newspaper, I've been awarded a grant to do Texas Horned Lizard research by the Horned Lizard Conservation Society. Working with "Horny Toads" is something I have been wanting to do for a while now and this grant will help make it possible for me to do so.

My project will involve doing a Texas Horned Lizard population survey at the National Butterfly Center's recently acquired 350 acre nature preserve named Pixie Preserve. I'm currently working on getting a state permit to handle Horned Lizards so that I'll be able to document each sighting by measuring, weighing, sexing and photographing individual Horned Lizards for identification purposes. Hopefully this will happen soon so that I can start the field work I've been looking forward to doing.

By the way, I'm going to have a Horned Lizard information booth at the National Butterfly Center's Earth Day event this coming Saturday. This will include a Horned Lizard game I've created called Hungry, Hungry Horny Toads. So why not come on out to the NBC and bring the kids, or grandkids, along so they can be among the first ever to play this game that will surely be sweeping the nation soon.



Courtesy photo by Luciano Guerra for National Butterfly Center

National Butterfly Center employee awarded Horned Lizard conservation grant

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

Luciano Guerra, outreach and education coordinator at the National Butterfly Center in Mission, has been awarded a Wilson Seay Stout 2023 Horned Lizard Conservation Society grant for a population survey and photographic study of this species at the North American Butterfly Association's latest land acquisition, Pixie Preserve.

In his regular duties at the center, Guerra documents the wildlife present for posterity and public education.

An award-winning conservation photographer, Guerra not only uses his images to teach others about photography, but also about the special creatures and features of the Rio Grande Valley, many of which are disappearing as the landscape is artificially altered.

The Texas Horned Lizard, which is listed as Threatened by the state of Texas, is one of these.

"I remember being fascinated by 'horny toads' as a child," states Guerra. "When I was growing up here, they were so plentiful we could find and play with them. The idea that one day they might

vanish from most of the Valley is something that never occurred to my friends and me."

With this grant from the Horned Lizard Conservation Society, Guerra will get to search for and interact with Horned Lizards, again, in furtherance of the goal of protecting them for future generations.

"Realistically, I know they will never be as abundant as they once were," adds Guerra, "But if I can play a small part in reversing the trend that has resulted in such a drastic decline over the past thirty-plus years, I will feel that I have accomplished something worthwhile."

At Pixie Preserve, 350 acres of habitat remains in permanent conservation easement for the Horned Lizard, along with lots of Harvester Ants, their preferred food. However, rapid residential development, heavy commercial traffic and substantial population increase in rural Hidalgo County jeopardize the health and safety of these miniature relatives of long-lost dinosaurs. For this reason, locating and observing them is the first step toward directly impacting their

survival.

"Knowing how many Horned Lizard inhabit the Preserve and where they are more prevalent is critical to establishing a baseline for continued study of the species," said Marianna Treviño-Wright, executive director of the National Butterfly Center. "The data Luciano and his collaborators gather and record may be used to support future scientific research and repopulation efforts, including captive breeding and release programs, such as the one at the San Antonio Zoo."

Other species surveys and scientific research conducted at the Center and the Preserve have involved mosquitoes, native bees, Rio Grande Coot, Grey Hawk, Monarchs and flea beetles.

To learn more about the National Butterfly Center, and how you can join us and support our good work, visit www.nationalbutterflycenter.org or call (956) 583-4300. Your annual membership or charitable gift/bequest impacts the beauty of our community and helps preserve the biologically diverse, natural treasures of deep South Texas.

POWER OF PURSE-HER-VERENCE

Come spend Labor Day Weekend (September 1 – 4, 2023) with us at the National Butterfly Center as we host our first ever mothing festival. Yes, it's Mega Moth and If you travel to the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas for this inaugural event, you may reasonably expect to see mega moths, such as the White-lined Sphinx (a "hummingbird" moth) and the Black Witch, or "bat" moth, which is the largest moth in the continental United States, with a wingspan of up to 7 inches. An additional 2,000 or so species of all sizes, including many micromoths with wingspans less than 20 millimeters, call the Lower Rio Grande Valley region home. And given the unique location of the Center, there is always a chance of observing a new county, Texas, or even US, record. For more information, visit our website:

<https://megamoth.org>



Photo credit National Butterfly Center

Nest Building at the National Butterfly Center

There's been a lot of nest building going on at the National Butterfly Center lately. This includes the Altamira/Audubon's hybrid nest and a Great Kiskadee nest. It's always fascinating to watch birds build their nests.











Photos by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Check out the breeding plumage on this Little Blue Heron! 04202023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Little Blue Heron launching from perch 04202023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Little Blue Heron foraging 04202023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Neotropic Cormorants with baby 04202023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Roseate Spoonbill 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Anhinga 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



American White Pelican 04202023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Cattle Egret in high breeding plumage. 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Great Egret 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn





White Ibis in breeding plumage; editing surprise was that was not mud on the bill! 04202023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Egyptian Geese. Parent and older baby. 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Security for the park! Knob on top of beak says White Chinese Goose. Can not find a pic of this bird with a dewlap. Please share official name if you know 041623 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



9 Older baby Egyptian Geese; editing surprise was the amberwing dragonfly down in the lower right hand corner! - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Male Mallard 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Mallard babies 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



A crested duck. If you know the official name, please share 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Female and Male Wood Ducks 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Female Wood Duck 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Wood Duck - 04162023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



*Female Wood Duck constantly checking on her babies in the nest box! Resoft County Park in Alvin, Texas.
04142023 - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn*



Female and Male Blue-wing Teals - Photo by Sandy-Crystal Vaughn



Sandylands Butterfly Count - 4-23-2023

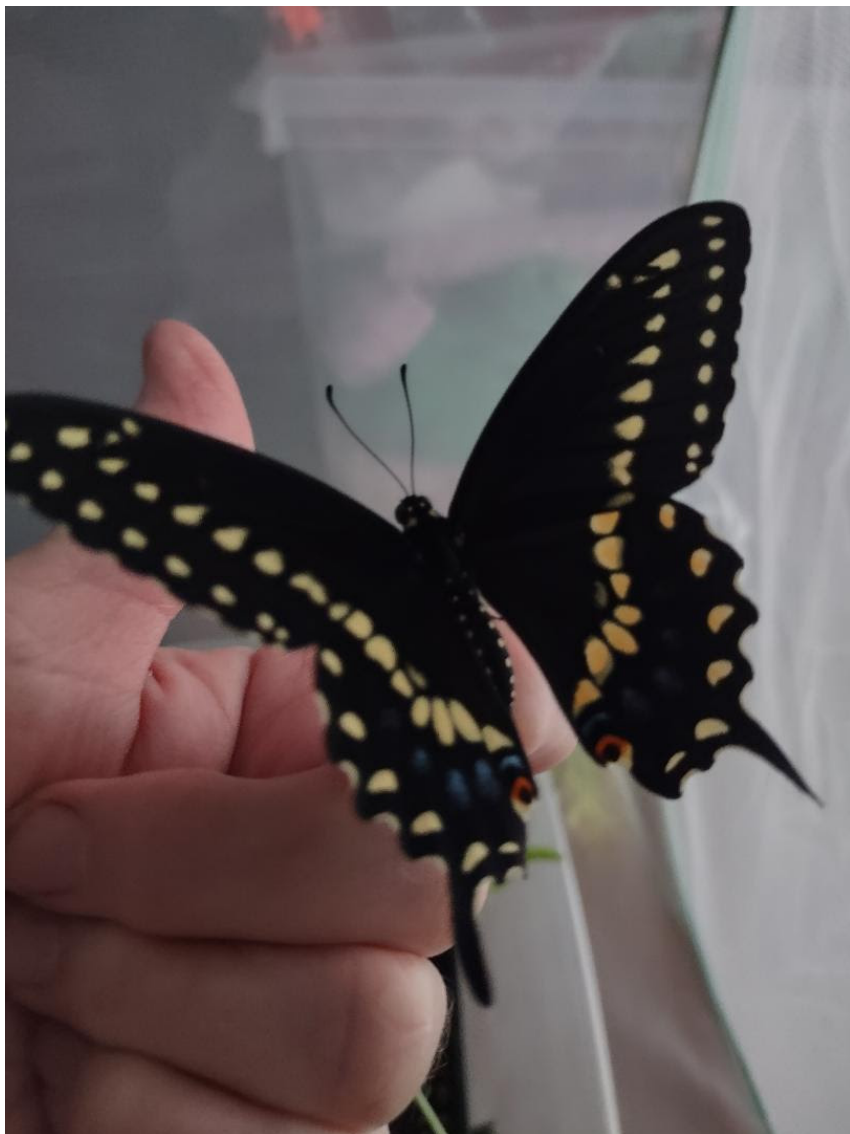
Photos by Diane Wedgeworth



Roy E. Larson Nature Preserve



Dainty Sulphur - Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



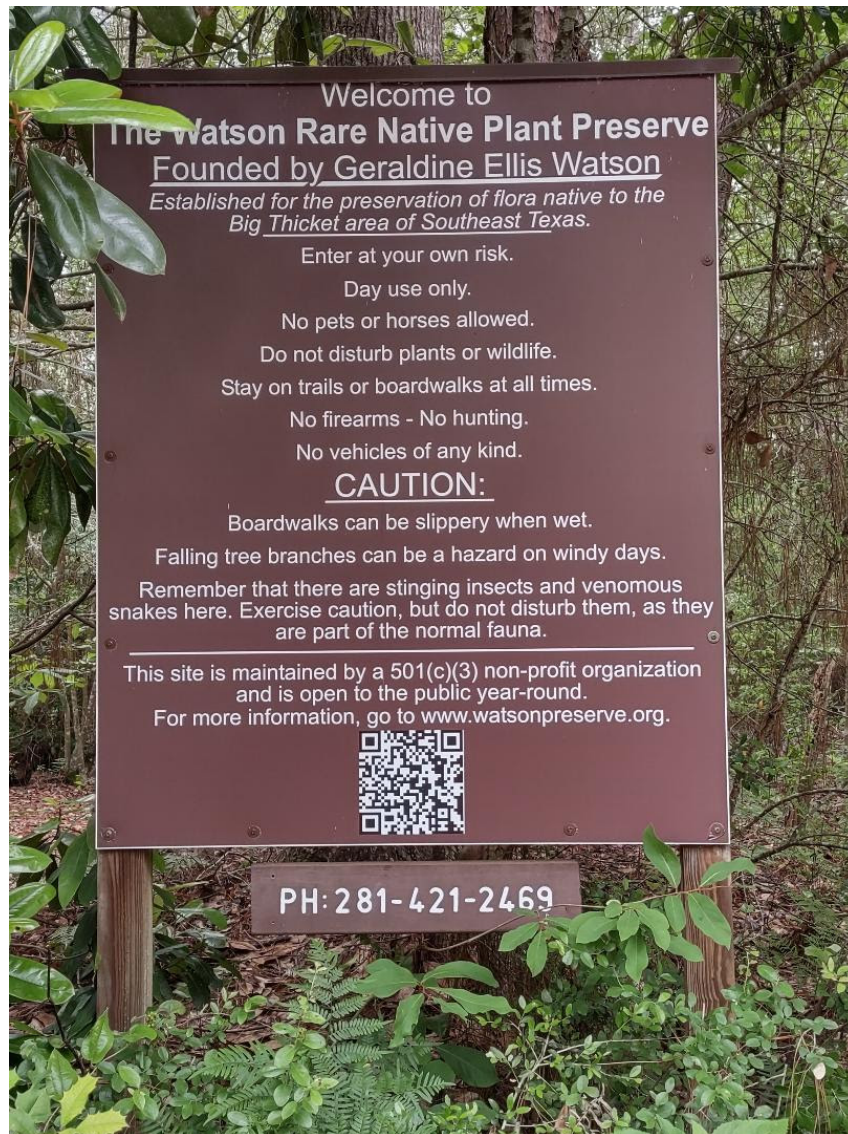


Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



Piney Woods Iris - Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



Larkspur - Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



Asclepias, Tuberosa - Watson Rare Native Plant Preserve - Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



Native orchid - Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



Sundew, a carnivorous plant at Watson Rare Native Plant Preserve - Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



Texas Thistle - Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



Pitcher Plant, a carnivorous plant at Watson Rare Native Plant Preserve - Photo by Diane Wedgeworth



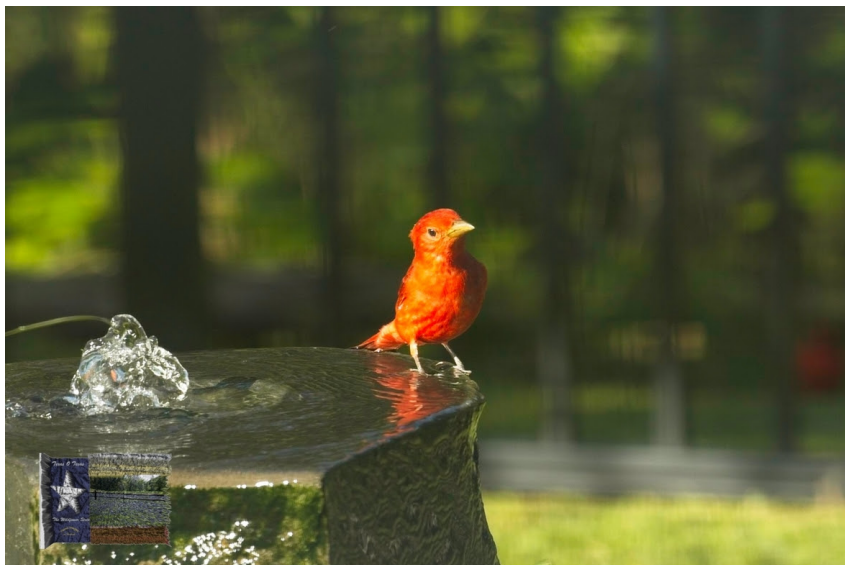
Photos by Randy Scott



Indigo Bunting in our Conroe backyard. We have 6 or 7 now that we are seeing regularly, primarily on the ground but also in the trees and fence. They are small and love grains, 4-21-2023 - Photo by Randy Scott - Photo by Randy Scott



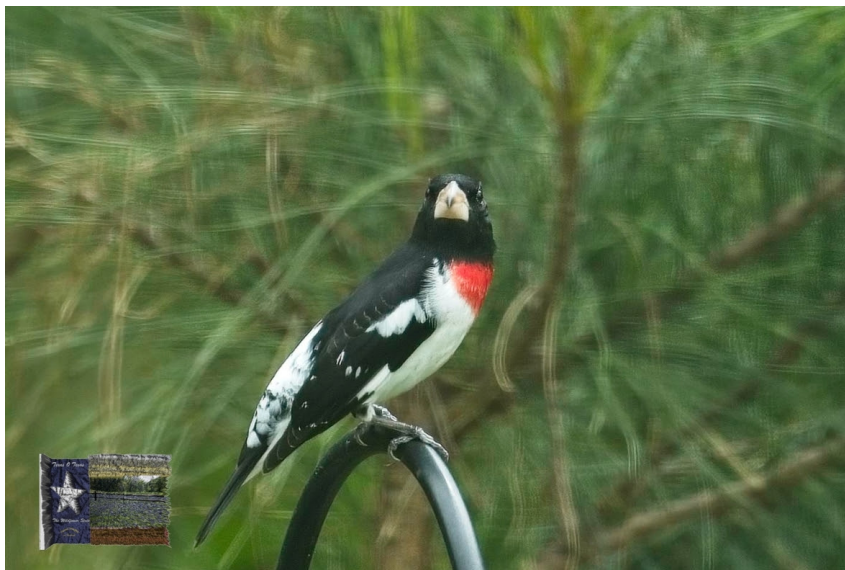
Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Photo by Bettina G. Scott



Little guy was a surprise when two days ago he came and went, just to take a bath. Summer Tanager male in our backyard in Conroe.- Photo by Randy Scott



Our first male Ruby-throated Hummer this Spring, 4-5-2023. - Photo by Randy Scott



Rose-breasted Grosbeak male in our backyard this week. Have had sightings off and on this week.- Photo by Randy Scott



.We are well into the Spring Migration and it is wonderful to have so much color in the yard. Buntings, Grosbeaks and two species of Orioles have eaten about 24 oranges in 3 days, so far, in our back yard. They continues to eat them. The Buntings have been eating seeds. The Grosbeaks eat everything they can find including blocked seeds in a suet feeder, flat feeders having various seeds in standard off-the-shelf

inexpensive Walmart bags, and oranges. Both the Grosbeaks and Orioles are loving Grape Jelly in two feeders. Birds are constantly moving in the backyard, presenting a show of colors. - Photo by Randy Scott



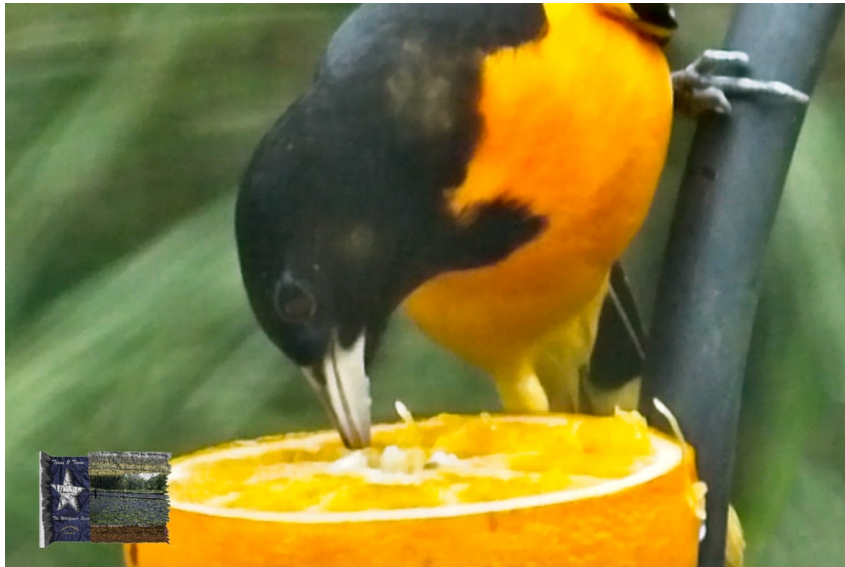
This time of the year, almost anything out there in the bird migration paths. The last few days, here in Conroe, we have been privileged to see an Indigo Bunting and a Baltimore Oriole in our Conroe backyard. This male Oriole has been here two days now. The Bunting has been here for four days. Generally, we put out half oranges to initially attract them and add jelly in a container on a flat feeder as soon as they show up in the Fall AND in the Spring. This strategy works! We use Grape Jelly in the feeder, 4-18-2023 - Photo by Randy Scott - Photo by Randy Scott



An interesting find on the reservoir on Kuykendahl in The Woodlands this week. We believe this to be a molting immature Little Blue Heron. It appears they nested on the reservoir and had about three little ones, which were feeding with this one, 4-25-2023- Photo by Randy Scott



We decided to take a break yesterday from the migrant birds in our backyard and go see some water birds nearby. This is the result - a Green Heron flew to a tree very nearby and posed for me at Lakeside Park in The Woodlands, 4-23-2023 - Photo by Randy Scott



Male Baltimore Oriole in our oranges, put out especially for them. He and his mate were here three days in a row this week but have moved on towards their summer home.- Photo by Randy Scott



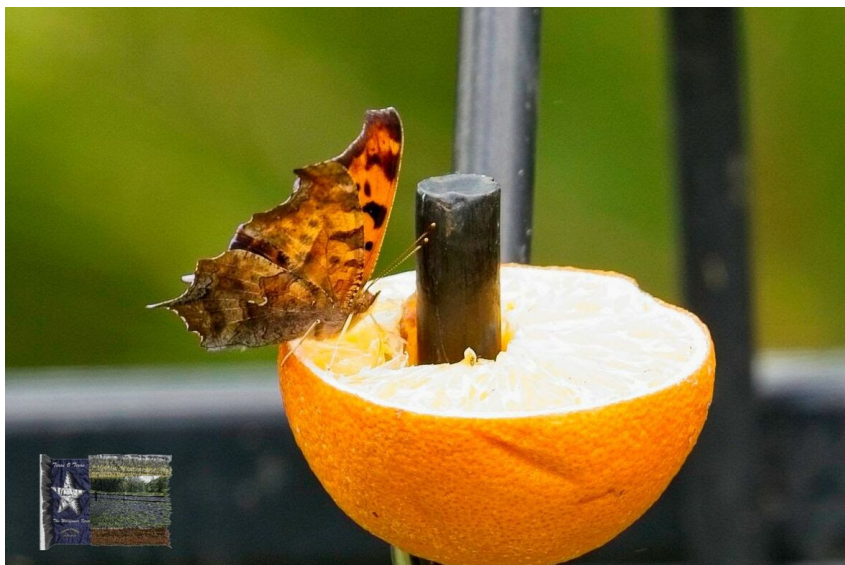
Photo by Bettina G. Scott



This past week, we have seen this Indigo Bunting eating seeds on the ground in our backyard. He gets lost in the St Augustine grass, as short as it is, and somewhat hidden by his brownish feathers. But the sun brings out the true colors as are shown here, 4-15-2023 Photo by Randy Scott



Indigo Bunting. Photo by Randy Scott



While waiting for the Orioles, this one species of butterfly keeps showing up. It is an Eastern Comma Butterfly. This time of the year, we see these all around our Conroe home and neighborhood, 4-16-2023 - Photo by Randy Scott



A Pine Warbler in a Pine this past week behind my home in Conroe. Would you ever expect this bird elsewhere? LOL 4-16-2023 - Photo by Randy Scott



Photos by Bill Miller



Rose-breasted Grosbeak stopping by during migration. 04262023 - Photo by Bill Miller



Texas Wildflowers 04232023 - Photo by Bill Miller



Our resident Eastern Bluebirds are starting their second clutch of eggs April 22, 2023 - Photo by Bill Miller



Primrose, salvia, milkweed April 22, 2023 - Photo by Bill Miller



Coreopsis, mistflower, verbena, April 22, 2023 - Photo by Bill Miller



I've picked a couple of peppers already. Tomatoes in a couple weeks. April 22, 2023 - Photo by Bill Miller



There are a ridiculous number of Swallowtail butterfly chrysalises on the house this spring. This is the largest group but looking at the sunny side, I gave up counting at 20. April 22, 2023 - Photo by Bill Miller



A different Swallowtail butterfly caterpillar chomping down on fennel. April 22, 2023 - Photo by Bill Miller



It seems like an exceptional year for the magnolia tree blooms. Not only our tree, but ones throughout the city are covered in blooms. April 10, 2023 - Photo by Bill Miller



Magnolia Tree - Photo by Bill Miller



Photos by Jim Snyder



Our first of the year Checkered White on Yellow Butterfly Bush in our yard today. (4-26-2023) This has been an infrequent visitor over the years - Photo by Jim Snyder



The first Monarch butterfly emerged from one of the 30 chrysalises that I have today. (4-27-2023) - Photo by Jim Snyder



Lyside Sulphur in the butterfly garden today! This is only the second individual of this species that I have seen in our yard in 10 years. It was nectaring on duranta. If you plant it, they will come! College Station, TX- Photo by Jim Snyder



*First of the season Silver-spotted Skipper in the butterfly garden on Lavender Porterweed today, (4-18-2023)
- Photo by Jim Snyder*



First of the season Orange Sulphur in the wildflower garden today, 4-19-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder



Butterfly bush and salvia - Photo by Jim Snyder



My yard in College Station, TX - Photo by Jim Snyder



Photo by Jim Snyder



Photo by Jim Snyder



Photo by Jim Snyder



Photo by Jim Snyder



Fire Ants were killing one of our Yukon Gold potato plants so I had to dig it up. Look what I found! Photo by Jim Snyder



First of the season Painted Lady in the butterfly garden today, 4-16-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder



Barrington Plantation State Historic Site, 4-16-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder



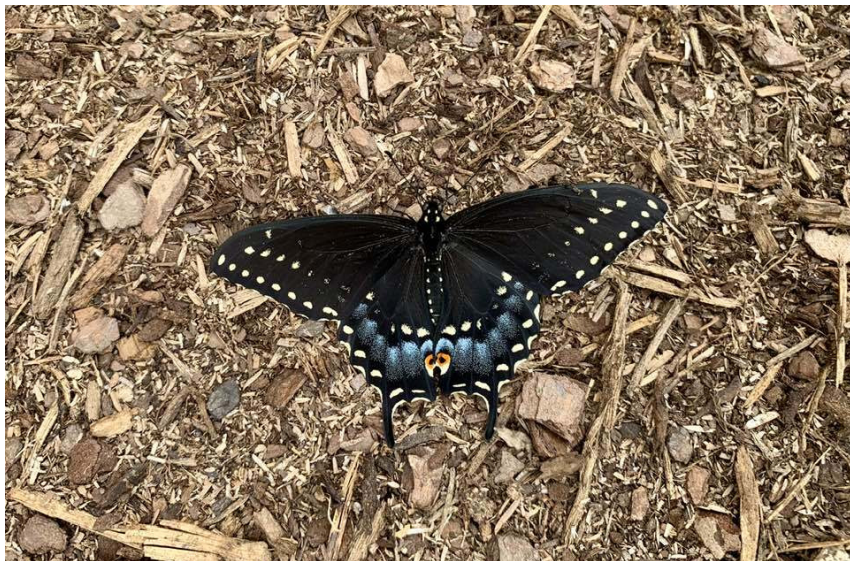
Today's special butterfly: Little Wood-Satyr, nectaring on butterfly bush. This is the first time I have seen this species in the yard and it's yard butterfly #87, 4-12-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder



A fresh Question Mark visited my butterfly garden today, 4-11, 2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder



A first of the season Red Admiral paid me a visit in the yard today, 4-11, 2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder



I just released a female Eastern Black Swallowtail that had overwintered as a chrysalis! 4-2-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder



Texas Greeneyes 4-23-2023 Roy E. Larsen Sanctuary - Photo by Jim Snyder



Yellow Wild Indigo - Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary - Photo by Jim Snyder



Pitcher Plant, a carnivorous plant at Watson Rare Native Plant Preserve



CREATOR'S CANVAS-BIRDS THAT WOULD RATHER RUN THAN TO FLY

THE GREATER ROADRUNNER!

By Wayne Easley



roadrunner, sunning, hereford, az., feb., of 2023 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley

I watched a Greater Roadrunner as he ran past my yard and sat down on the concrete fence over toward my neighbor's place. It was early Feb. and we had experienced quite a snow storm during the night. My son and I had just moved into a small suburb of Sierra Vista, Arizona which is situated smack dab in the middle of the Chihuahuan Desert, an area of creosote, mesquite and literally hundreds of kinds of cactus. Even without the snow fall, it can get pretty cold in the desert during the winter months and that Roadrunner was hoping to get warm. I watched as it sat with its back to the sun. Slowly it opened its dusky brown feathers on its back and began to take in the sunshine. Greater Roadrunners are fairly common here and while it may be hard to believe. they do practice a sort of torpor during the colder nights. Torpor slows down their body functions so they can survive these colder periods. And then, when they do get some sunshine, they love to sunbath in order to get warm. Greater Roadrunners are part of the Cuckoo Family which has 7 members worldwide with only two of them being Roadrunners. The Greater Roadrunner (the Lesser lives further south) is at home pretty much in the SW part of the United States and in parts of Mexico.

Greater Roadrunners can reach up to two feet in length. They have strong legs, a sturdy bill, a white tipped tail and a bushy black to blue crest. Their bodies are mostly gray with white specks which helps them to blend in with their desert surroundings. Since water is scarce in the desert, they get most of their liquids from their diet which consists of small mammals, reptiles, diminutive birds along with eggs and fledglings they encounter. They are one of the few birds that can kill a rattlesnake and eat it. Their method of killing a rattlesnake is quite unique; they are so quick that one bird will distract the snake while the other looks for a chance to bounce on its head, killing the poisonous snake by smashing it against a nearby rock. They seem to suffer no consequences in ingesting the poison from snakes. As we mentioned in the title, they seldom fly, preferring to run. In running, they keep low to the ground and use their tail as a rudder. It is suggested that they can run about as fast as a human being. Courtship is quite comical with the male bowing to the female, dragging its wings along the ground and sometimes presenting the female with some sort of food. The nest is usually from 3 to 10 feet up in a desert bush or often in some kind of cactus. The nest is made of sticks and may contain a shed snakeskin in it. By the way, both male and female birds have four toes, two point forward and two extend backward. This means that the track of a roadrunner is like an X in the sand so NO one knows for sure which way the bird was going. Early Indian groups in the Southwest deserts of the US were fascinated with this bird.

Greater Roadrunners do not migrate. Generally they live alone except during the nesting season. The numbers for the Greater Roadrunner are doing pretty good but they do suffer some from habitat loss (a lot of building is taking place in the deserts) and there are those who enjoy killing them. Let's do what we can to keep the roadrunner around. They are incredible birds and add color and excitement to the desert.

Wayne Easley/written April 3, 2023/Sierra Vista, Arizona!

Pictures: May be used for educational purposes only.

1-6-It was early Feb. and we had an unusual snowfall here in the SW Desert near Sierra Vista, Arizona. A surprised Roadrunner camped out on the concrete wall between our house and the neighbor's. His attempts to get warm were successful. What a bird.

7-Finally after getting some sunshine, he lounged a bit longer on the edge of the wall.

8-Road runner with raised crest that is bluish-black in color. It may signal that danger is imminent. They also have a special gland in front of the eyes to help eliminate salt from their bodies. And it appears, roadrunners have ways of keeping cool in the desert when the heat is turned up. Pretty amazing!



roadrunner sunning in yard at hereford, az., in feb., 2023 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



roadrunner, in yard at hereford, az., in feb., 2023 RD- Photo by Wayne Easley



roadrunner, sunbathing for warmth, hereford, az., feb - Photo by Wayne Easley



roadrunner bewildered by the snow, hereford, az., in feb., of 2023 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



roadrunner in the snow, hereford, az., in feb., 2023 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



roadrunner in yard at hereford, az., in feb., of 2023 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



roadrunner, near hereford, az., jan. 27, 2023 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley



roadrunner, date and place unsure RD - Photo by Wayne Easley

CREATOR'S CANVASS-Part 1

The True Woodpeckers

Photos by Wayne Easley



Woodpecker Downey - Photo by Wayne Easley

There are somewhere between 180 and 200 species of woodpeckers in the world. Living on all the major continents of the world (absent from Australia and New Guinea), most of them are heavily associated with trees. Most woodpeckers spend their time probing the bark of tree trunks searching for insects or their larva which is often located under the bark of a tree. Some woodpeckers such as the Gila Woodpecker and the Gilded Flicker of the Southwestern deserts of North America use cactus in much the same way that other woodpeckers use trees. Usually equipped with two toes that face forward and two toes (three-toed woodpeckers are an exception) that face backward, they are able to hang on to the tree trunks. At times, they can detect the presence of insects by listening for sounds inside the tree which gives them the

idea of where to drill holes. Long sticky tongues help them to extract their food from the tree itself. Drilling holes in looking for food or for making a hole for nesting, woodpeckers use strong beaks and stiff tails to keep their balance on the tree trunks. They also have specialized muscles that help to protect their brains from all of that constant drumming and drilling. Frequent rests also help the woodpecker to cool down a bit. Woodpeckers usually fly using rapid wing beats following by long glides. Several species of woodpeckers have become extinct: the world's largest woodpecker, the Imperial of Mexico and the Ivory-billed of Cuba and the SE part of the United States are most likely gone forever. Let's do all we can to keep all of the rest of them with us.

The drumming of woodpeckers is used in courtship, territorial disputes and when danger presents itself. Most woodpeckers drill their own holes, either in a tree trunk or in the case of some desert woodpeckers in cactus. Since many other species of birds use woodpecker cavities for their nests, there is heavy competition for woodpecker holes. Generally two to five eggs are laid and both parents help with incubating and feeding the young. During the nights, even in the desert areas, most woodpeckers spend their time in the nesting cavities. Since, woodpeckers eat so many insects that could cause damage to trees, it is felt that woodpeckers help to guard the health of our forests. "Hats off to woodpeckers for helping us with that. Our next article, Part 2 of this series will cover the flickers, sapsuckers, and woodpeckers that tend to feed on ants and termites. Please stay tuned.

Wayne Easley/written on April 24, 2023/Sierra Vista, Arizona!

PICTURES; CAN BE USED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

1-The Downy Woodpecker, our smallest woodpecker with a very short bill.

2-The Hairy Woodpecker, similar to the Downy but much larger and much stronger.

3-Red-headed Woodpecker, adult is unmistakable, with red head and striking white rump and secondaries.

4-Red-bellied Woodpecker, note barred back, and red nape.

5-Lewis's Woodpecker, fairly large long-winged woodpecker with pink belly and pale gray collar unique.

6-Ladder-backed Woodpecker, a wee bit larger than the Downy but range is more western.

7-Acorn Woodpecker, a striking black and white woodpecker that stores acorns in dead trees and telephone poles.

8-Arizona Woodpecker, a bit smaller than the Hairy, our only brown and white woodpecker.

9-Gila Woodpeckers, a desert woodpecker that often builds a nest in the Organ Pipe or Saguaro Cactus.

10-Pileated Woodpecker, large size with long neck; the size of a crow.

11-Magellanic Woodpecker of Southern Chile, largest woodpecker in South America. Seen on trip to Chile in Nov. of 2018.



Hairy Woodpecker - Photo by Wayne Easley



Red-headed Woodpecker - Photo by Wayne Easley



Red-bellied Woodpecker - Photo by Wayne Easley



Lewis's Woodpecker - Photo by Wayne Easley



Ladder-backed Woodpecker - Photo by Wayne Easley



Acorn Woodpecker - Photo by Wayne Easley



Arizona Woodpecker - Photo by Wayne Easley



Gila Woodpeckers - Photo by Wayne Easley



Pileated Woodpecker - Photo by Wayne Easley





Sabine Woods area - April 24, 2023 - Warblers

Photos by Paul Gregg



Black and White Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg

Happy April Birding!

This email begins my backlog of birding trips lately. My emails are going to be going backwards chronologically for the predictable future. I've gone birding 4 of the last six days. On all the days, we saw good numbers and variety. Some

days were hindered a bit by wind and weather, but they were still good days. Today's list contains birds in the WARBLER family. Some photos were taken in low light and I had to spend extra time processing. I took a lot of ID photos, but they weren't worth processing. But the count for me for the day was 15 Warblers and 18 other species. It was a really good day for me. I also have 4 short videos I will be processing and will give links to them in a future email.

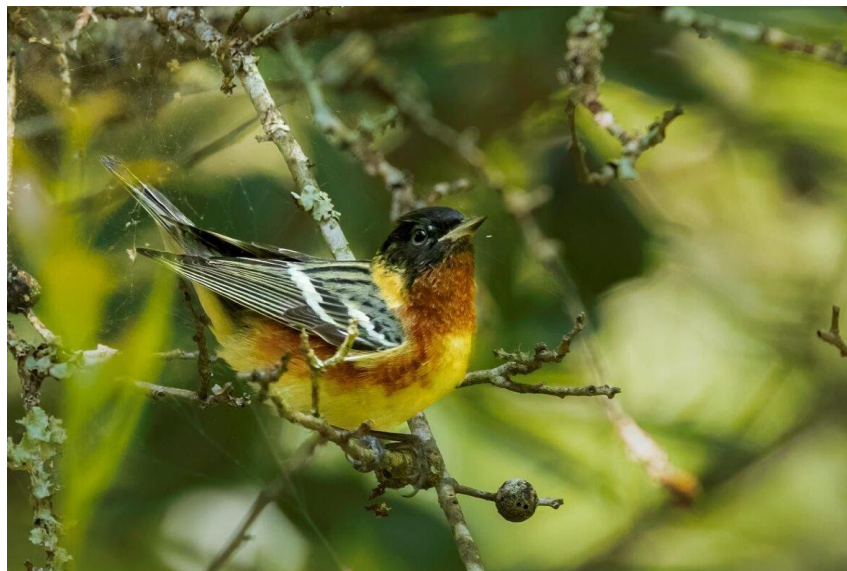
The 3 Bay-breasted Warbler photos show an adult male, immature male, and what I call a "framed immature male". Framing in photography is where the subject appears in a "frame" in the photo. The framed bird is almost in a heart shaped frame, which I thought was interesting from a composition perspective. The Black and White, American Redstart male, Yellow, Kentucky, and Worm-eating Warblers all came at various times to RuthAnn's water drip within the east side of the woods. On prior days not many birds came to the water drips much because there was so much standing water from heavy rains that had pelted the area recently. If birders didn't bring waterproof boots, their shoes and feet were going to get wet when they walked the trails.

The Magnolia, American Redstart female, and Chestnut-sided Warblers were at the edge of the road toward the end of Hwy 87. Trees by the road contained a lot of birds that mostly stay in the darker area away from the road. These came in and out of the vegetation and I was able to get a few decent poses. Some Hooded Warblers (photos not included) were flitting in and out of the woods. A cuckoo flew past, in and out of the woods, but I couldn't tell if it was yellow or black-billed. Two Swallow-tailed Kites flew over and past me before I could get my camera up to take a photo. I think I walked more than a half mile up and down the road, looking for birds.

I've included a poor photo of a Blackburnian Warbler to just let you know a future email or two might include better Blackburnian photos.

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)



Bay-breasted Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Chestnut-sided Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Bay-breasted Warbler- Photo by Paul Gregg



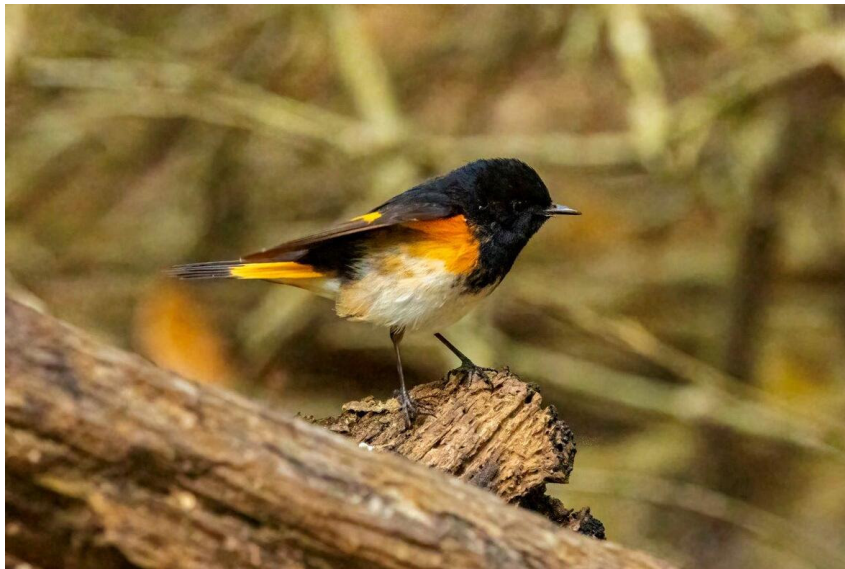
Bay-breasted Warbler- Photo by Paul Gregg



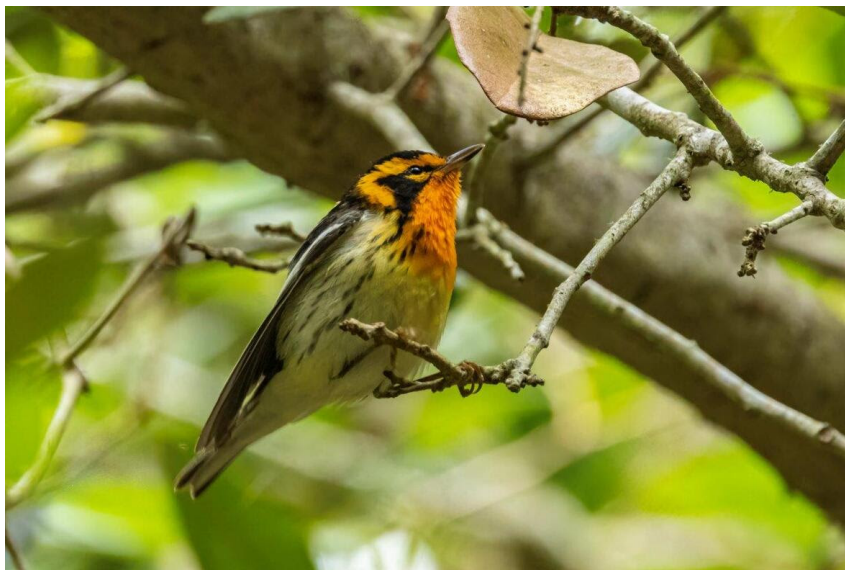
American Redstart female - Photo by Paul Gregg



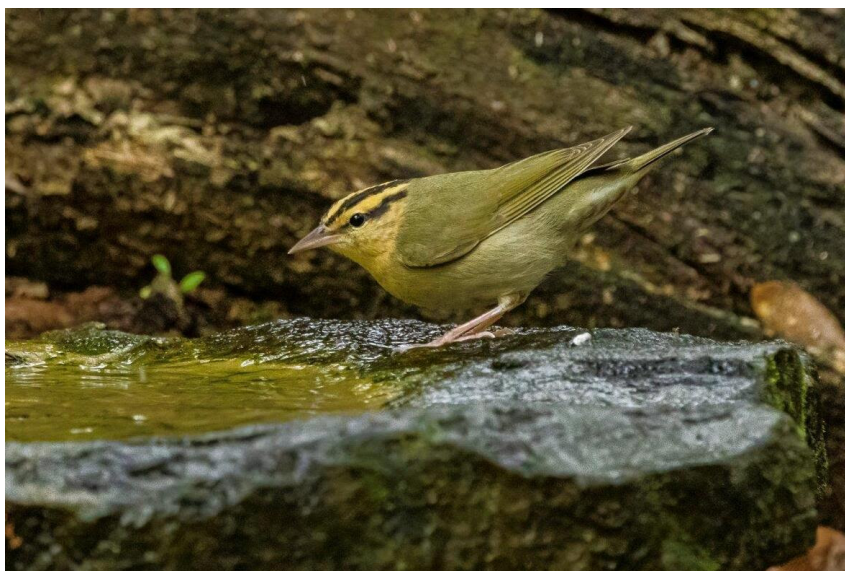
Magnolia Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



American Redstart - Photo by Paul Gregg



Blackburnian Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Worm-eating Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Yellow Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Kentucky Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg

Sabine Pass Area - April 10, 2023

Photos by Paul Gregg



White-eyed Vireo - Photo by Paul Gregg

Howdy!

The 2023 spring migration is kicking in! The attached photos were from my visit to the Sabine Pass area on the 10th of April. Most photos were taken in Sabine Woods, and some others were taken at Texas Point, and along the drive between Sabine Woods and the end of Highway 87 at McFadden NWR.

The clouds were heavy and lighting was not the best during the time I was there. However, sufficient light was okay to get some fairly decent photos.

The White-eyed Vireo was along Hwy 87 where you can park near the end of 87 and walk along the road and look for birds in the vegetation. A few birds were seen, but too flighty to get a standstill or two. The vireo posed nicely and was puffed up (it wasn't very cold) and it might be the cutest of the photos included.

As I was driving back toward Sabine Woods, I passed the Peregrine Falcon, turned around and slowly drove up to where it was perched on a crossbeam. When I stopped the car, it gave me the fierce look for a few seconds and then took off, giving me an opportunity to catch a few BIFs (bird in flight) of it.

It was late afternoon, and I was getting ready to head home and decided to make one more stop at Texas Point. I walked around a bit and as I emerged from the trees, I saw the Merlin, perched high and looking for an evening meal of any small birds that might have come close. An earlier stop at Texas Point gave me looks at the Scarlet Tanager and the Swainson's Warbler.

Sabine Woods gave me views and photos of about 18 more birds, but I cannot send photos of all of them with this email. The Yellow Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler and Summer Tanager female were among those 18 others. I sincerely could send 2 more of my emails, but for now will just send one. The Prothonotary Warblers were active and many and I could send a whole email filled with good poses.

Next week friends are coming down from Colorado and Dallas, and I believe we will be spending some serious time in the Sabine Pass area. I'm sincerely hoping to process photos and send them out sooner this year.

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)



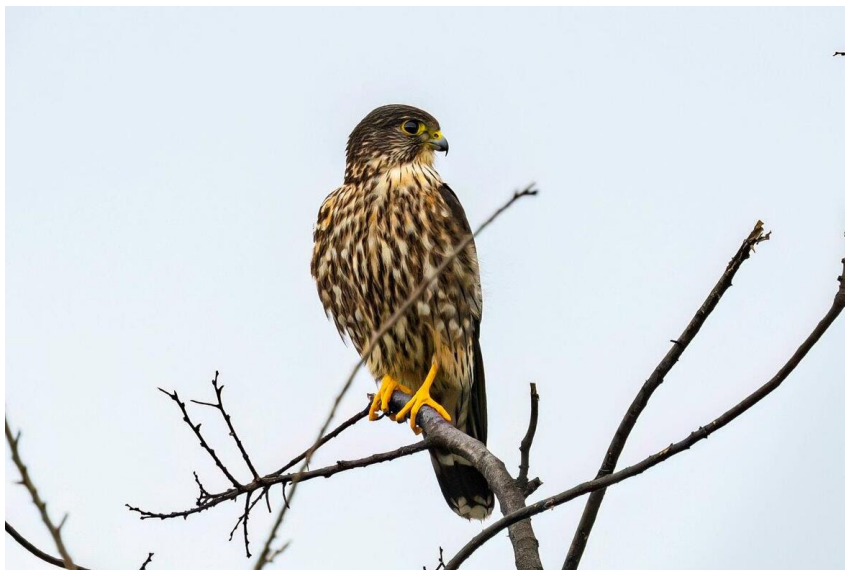
Swainsons Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Peregrine Falcon- Photo by Paul Gregg



Peregrine Falcon - Photo by Paul Gregg



Merlin - Photo by Paul Gregg



Scarlet Tanager - Photo by Paul Gregg



Yellow Warbler- Photo by Paul Gregg



Prothonotary Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



Summer Tanager female - Photo by Paul Gregg



All At Once April 12, 2023

Photos by Hank Arnold

It's been cloudy, windy, and cold for what seems like several weeks now, but yesterday, all at once, the wind died, the sun came out, and spring settled down on Rockport Texas.

My momma didn't raise no fool

I went birding and flew the drone over the north Island in Little Bay.

I'm still working the drone pictures, and I took some video, so I'll share those tomorrow, but it was quite a day for the big camera...

First, the hummingbirds are moving through in force. They aren't as thick as the fall migration when they check in for a week or so, but we probably have 20 or so at any given time.



Rudy-throated Hummingbird - Photo by Hank Arnold

Mornings when they first wake up and evenings when they're getting ready for bed are the busiest times. During those periods everybody lines up nicely and shares. If we have too many birds for the number of stations, we put out more feeders.

It's all peace and harmony.

The rest of the day, though, the males fly frantic zig-zag patterns chasing each other around while the females just sit and slurp.

My thinking on this is that when males first come in from the south and find how good our cooking is, they immediately go into "defend the homestead" mode. They then keep that up for two hours or so, at which time they are exhausted and hungry, so they settle down and go into all-you-can-eat chinese buffet mode until nightfall. The next morning, they wake up, tank up, and head north.

The sad news is that they probably go to the next set of feeders a few miles up the coast and start fighting again.

The babes just slurp.

Down at the beach park, there are fancy colored beaks everywhere

Some flying...



Tri-colored Heron - Photo by Hank Arnold



White morph of the Reddish Egret - Photo by Hank Arnold

Some just showing off...



Great Egret - Photo by Hank Arnold

The big event for us was than Nancy found the Sooty Tern that's been visiting for the past few years...



Sooty Tern - Photo by Hank Arnold

There has always been just one, but he is an optimistic soul.

The nesting surveys show several sites with regular Sooty Terns down in the lower Laguna Madre, but every year up here we only see this guy.

I'm now convinced it's a male, because he's getting pretty "friendly".

He sidled up to a Laughing Gull and probably started whispering sweet nothings into her ear, but she obviously doesn't speak tern and pecked him away...



Sooty tern (left), Laughing Gull (right) - Photo by Hank Arnold

He feels like his steady 5 year commitment to their relationship was bound to be worth something, but she pretty obviously didn't agree.

And folks, Laughing Gull girls are a pretty "friendly" group.

Maybe next year

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20230411-Rockport-Beach-Park/>

Foo Foo Birds - 4-25-2023

Photos by Hank Arnold

As "Family Dog", Tycho has several duties. The first is to alert us to any visitors in case the doorbell doesn't work. The second is to keep us safe from any invasions from Mars, a point on which his record is spotless.

Probably the most important duty of his, though, is keeping the Mulberry crop safe from squirrels.

It is a quest that he takes very seriously, quietly and secretively hiding behind the front door before we open it, ready to charge out barking when the bugle sounds.

At his appearance, squirrels bolt in every direction, each to be seen off appropriately in the chaos of battle.

Trust me folks, no squirrels will ever be harmed in the filming of this movie, because even if he does get a good interception line on one, he slows up a little to allow it to make it to the fence and safety.

I try to remember each time the mayhem subsides to thank him for his service with a good back scratching.

The reason for all this effort, of course, is so that when the Foo Foo birds come through, there will be Mulberries for them to enjoy, assisting them on their journeys back north.

Yesterday was that day, all at once.



Scarlet Tanager - Photo by Hank Arnold



Painted Bunting - Photo by Hank Arnold



Gray Catbird - Photo by Hank Arnold

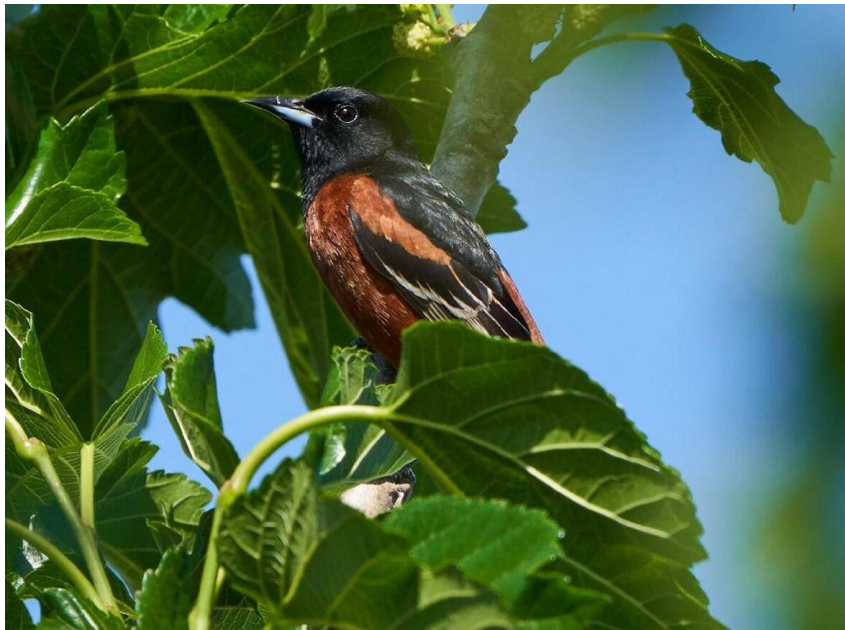


Indigo Bunting - Photo by Hank Arnold

As with every year, there are a lot of birds that we think we recognize..



Baltimore Oriole - Photo by Hank Arnold



Orchard Oriole - Photo by Hank Arnold

There are a bunch we have no idea about (and aren't taking any concrete steps to learn)...



Female Rose-breasted Grosbeak - Photo by Hank Arnold



Tennessee Warbler - Photo by Hank Arnold

Nan has now moved back to civilization, so I'm thinking of asking her to have a Zoom with us to go over the different species some evening soon. She's very good at going over the field marks, which is why I haven't learned anything about birds since she left in 2017. If you're interested in joining in, let me know.

Besides the Mulberry pictures, there were a few pictures from me getting lost and ending up over in the beach park.

Any time I feel like I might get lost (in a town with 2 roads), I take the camera...

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20230424-202-SHW/>

Anniversary Birding

Photos by Hank Arnold

Yesterday was our anniversary, so we went birding to the Rockport Beach Park.

Now...

I know a lot of you are going to say I should have taken her on a trip to Paris or something, but they don't have near as many birds there and we wouldn't have recognized their French calls anyway.

Here in Rockport, though, the Skimmers are gathering to nest in the inland sand area...



Black Skimmers - Photo by Hank Arnold

The wind was still up yesterday, so most of them were just hunkered down trying to keep from rolling away downwind.

The North Island is certainly in full nesting swing...



Photo by Hank Arnold

Its kind of hard to tell because of the distance, but this next picture shows, in addition to the Ibis on the left and the (pink) Reddish Egret on the right, 5 Black Crowned Night Herons doing what they do best this time of year, group sulking in the cactus...



Photo by Hank Arnold

We're going to get Tommy Hanover to take us around for some close viewing when the wind dies if anyone would like to sign up to go along.

It's only about a 100 yard boat ride.

The terns certainly got the memo about nesting. There are several hundred, all facing into the wind...



Photo by Hank Arnold

Mostly Royal Terns, but some Sandwich...



Photo by Hank Arnold

And some others I don't recognize and am too lazy to look up...



Photo by Hank Arnold

Probably Forrester's

There is a lot of love out there on the sand...



Photo by Hank Arnold

Including some activities that could cause me to loose my PG rating...



Photo by Hank Arnold

You have to admit that's got to be an added degree of difficulty with wings in 25 knots of wind.

On the way home we stopped at some White Ibis digging in the grass.



White Ibis - Photo by Hank Arnold

If you look closely at the pictures in the link you'll see one tossing what looks like a seed of some kind and another plucking up a juicy roach.

Then back home we stopped to photograph our neighbors seed feeder, including this very enterprising male sticking his head in to peruse what's on offer...



House Sparrow - Photo by Hank Arnold

All in all a good day, and I'm lucky my lovely bride has put up with me for 19 years.

Maybe Paris next year

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20230404-Rockport-Beach-Park/>

Unknown Skimmer Trip

Photos by Hank Arnold

Tommy invited me to go out on a scheduled trip aboard the tour boat “Skimmer”.

Being clueless, I didn’t know if it was a late Whooping Crane trip or an early Rookery trip, but I didn’t care.

Turns out it was both...



Whooping Crane - Photo by Hank Arnold



White morph Reddish Egret - Photo by Hank Arnold

There were several families of cranes along the waterway, doubtless preparing for the long journey north.

It was VERY windy.

So windy I was surprised that Tommy went out.

Maybe 30mph, definitely more than 25, where I would have needed a second reef in our sail.

When Tommy tried to nudge up on the shore for close looks at the Whoopers, the wind would whip the boat around and make it more of a “bounce” than a “nudge”. When we did that the birds started walking resolutely away from the shore.

I felt like yelling out “DAMN, TOMMY, YOU'RE SCARING ALL OF US!!!”

We also saw at least two of what Tommy called as Lesser Black Backed Gulls...



Lesser Black-backed Gull - Photo by Hank Arnold

And what I'm thinking might be the White-Morph Great Blue Heron if it weren't for the slight tinge of green around the eyes...



Possible White-Morph Great Blue Heron or Great Egret - Photo by Hank Arnold

It might just be a Great Egret with a colorful bill.

We came upon a Black Vulture sitting right beside the water, and after a few seconds noticed this guy sneaking up...



Coyote - Photo by Hank Arnold

For some reason I got several interesting detailed pictures of bird feet...

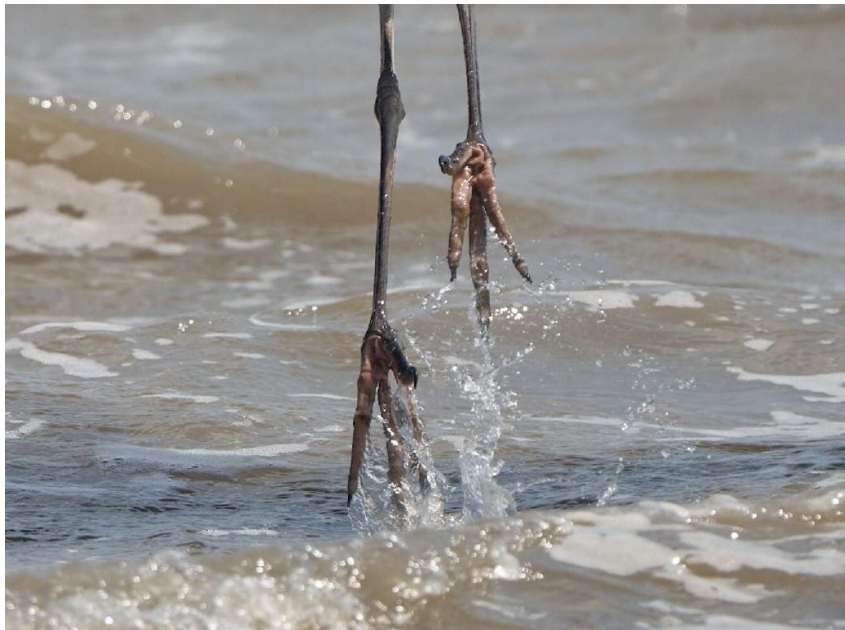


Photo by Hank Arnold

Lots of oyster wear on those Keds.

The highlight of the day, though, was this little guy...



American Oystercatcher and chick - Photo by Hank Arnold

He is not long out of the nest, and walked like he didn't understand the whole thing about bending his knees.

For the first time ever for me, a lady brought what she probably claimed was a service dog.

A little terrier of some sort that was terrified the whole time. I never saw it get out of her lap and the lady could never get up to see the birds.

They were both miserable the whole time.

The trip back upwind was rough, but I had a great time, though.



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 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.



