

# *The Pine Warbler*



## **December PWWS Program**

### **“Making a SPLASh: Bird Conservationists Addressing the Threat of Plastic Pollution”**

**by Chloe Dannenfelser from American Bird Conservancy**



For the December program for Piney Woods, American Bird Conservancy's Chloe Dannenfelser will give a presentation on Tuesday, December 12th, 2023, entitled “Making a SPLASh: Bird Conservationists Addressing the Threat of Plastic Pollution”. The program begins at 6:30 p.m., social time at 6 p.m.

Chloe is the Texas Coastal Outreach Coordinator for American Bird Conservancy and oversees the outreach efforts of the SPLASh program (Stopping Plastics and Litter Along Shorelines). Chloe earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University and previously worked as a sea turtle researcher and extension program assistant. Chloe loves being outside and getting others excited about the coast

and all the wildlife that lives there.

American Bird Conservancy is dedicated to conserving wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. With an emphasis on achieving results and working in partnership, we take on the greatest problems facing birds today.

The December PWWS program for PWWS will be ONLY in-person and takes place on Tuesday, Dec 12th, at 6:30 p.m. (snacks & social time at 6:00 p.m.) at Dennis Johnston's Big Stone Lodge. [We have decided beginning with February 2023 that we are going back to in-person meetings only.] Please join us at the Big Stone Lodge located in Dennis Johnston County Park 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.



*Barred Owl by Trey Morris*





*Brown Pelican at Ocotal Beach - Costa Rica by Chloe Dannenfelser*



## **Note from PWWS President**

Happy Holidays to all of you! Hope you can attend our December meeting. Should be fun and informative. Still need volunteers for leadership of the group

so that we can keep the Society going. We will have a board meeting in January and let you know our situation. Let us all enjoy this wonderful season and bless you all.

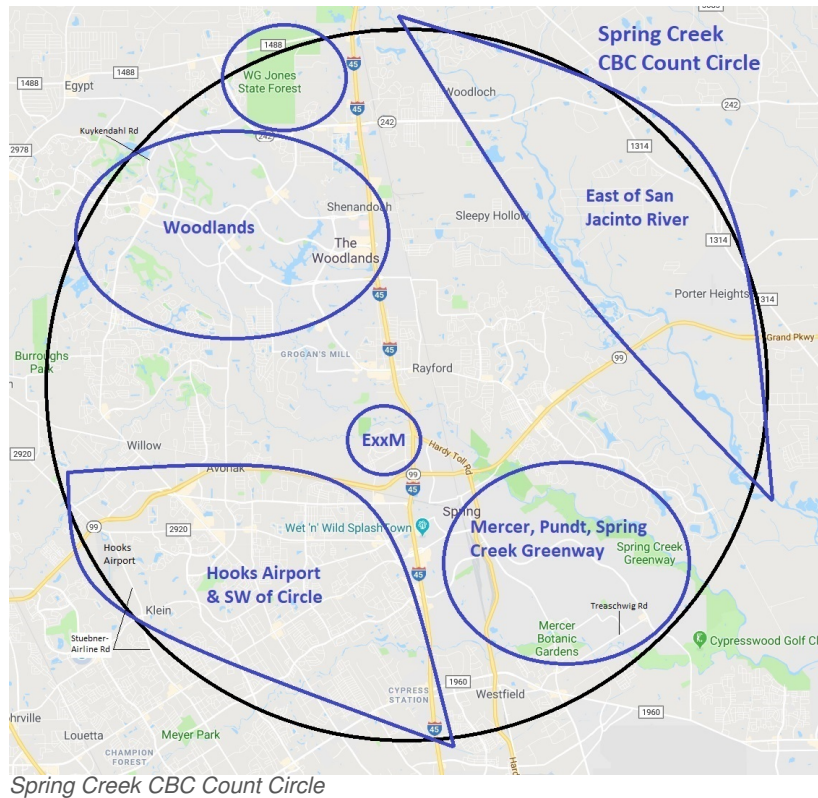
Kathy, Your President



**SAVE THE DATE! Saturday, December 16th, 2023**

**by Claire Moore**





If you will be around on Saturday 12/16, please plan to join PWWS to help survey the birds present in our Spring Creek Christmas Bird Count circle. Several teams of bird watchers will be out in the field on Saturday, December 16th, counting up all the birds that can be found in our 15 mile diameter CBC circle which is roughly centered at I45 at the Rayford Sawdust exit.

If you're not able to go into the field and happen to live inside the count circle above, you can help out immensely as a "feeder watcher" sending in your observations made on Saturday, December 16th, to be included in the official CBC results.

Regardless, go ahead and highlight that day on your calendars and let Claire know (via email at [cdmoore3i@gmail.com](mailto:cdmoore3i@gmail.com)) if you can help out in either capacity.

FYI, we are not planning on having a "count dinner" this year, but that should return next year in 2024.

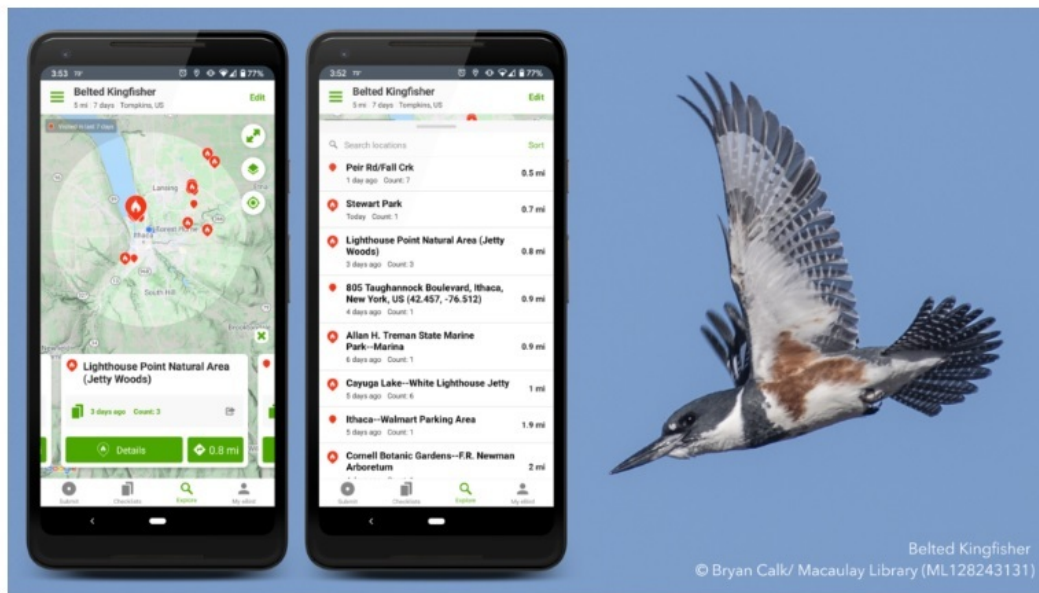
Please try and join other Christmas Bird Counts, too. Get all the information at the Houston Audubon Society's web site at [this link](#). There are many CBCs to choose from in the Greater Houston area as well as all over Southeast Texas.

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**Using eBird App to Explore Nearby Birds**

by Claire Moore

## Explore species on eBird Mobile



I highly recommend installing the (free) eBird app on your Android or Apple phone. It's a great tool to have at your disposal when traveling and want to know what birds or birding hot spots are nearby.

Information on how to install the app & use the app is here:

<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000957940-enter-sightings-with-ebird-mobile>

Information on how to use the app to "Explore" nearby birds is at this link along with a video: <https://ebird.org/news/explore-species-on-ebird-mobile>

Basically, you go to the "Explore" option in eBird, then you use "Edit" to set your radius, time period and Targets options. Then, just click on the map to see hot spots in the radius you specified. The "Targets" are birds that you haven't seen yet (according to all your bird sightings documented at eBird.org). This is VERY useful for folks looking to see new birds that they haven't seen before!

Try it! You'll love it!





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## BE MORE LIKE RUDOLPH

By Cheryl Conley, Lake Creek Nature Preserve Board of Directors



When Santa needs help guiding his sleigh, who does he turn to? Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer, of course. How else would he get gifts to all the boys and girls all over the world? Without a doubt, Rudolph is the most famous reindeer of all but other than his nose, what do we really know about him?

Rudolph was “born” in 1939. Robert May, a copywriter for Montgomery Ward, was asked to write a Christmas story in the form of a booklet to be given away

to customers. Often taunted as a child himself, he decided to write about a reindeer ostracized by the other reindeer for a physical deformity, a glowing red nose. May struggled for a name for the reindeer and considered Rollo and Reginald before deciding on Rudolph. As he developed the story, he tested it out on his 4-year-old daughter. His boss, however, wasn't nearly as excited about the story as his daughter. After all, aren't red noses associated with people who drink a lot? That was unacceptable. May stuck to his guns and to prove that a reindeer with a red nose would make a great story, he took his friend from the Montgomery Ward's art department, Denver Gillen, to the Lincoln Park Zoo to sketch some reindeer with red noses. May's boss finally approved the idea. That year, 2.4 million copies of the Rudolph booklet were distributed. By the end of 1946, that number increased to 6 million and would have been much higher had there not been a paper shortage due to the war.

May's wife died from a terminal illness about the time he created Rudolph and he was deeply in debt with medical expenses. Even though May created Rudolph, he was an employee of Montgomery Ward and they held the copyright to Rudolph. May didn't make a penny on his creation. In January of 1947, May convinced Sewell Avery, the corporate president, to turn the copyright over to him and his financial security was no longer an issue.

The Rudolph booklet was reprinted in 1947 and in 1948 it was shown in theaters as a 9-minute cartoon. It really took off when May's brother-in-law, songwriter Johnny Marks, turned the Rudolph story into a song. Many in the music industry weren't interested in the song. In 1949 it was recorded by Gene Autry and went on to become one of the best-selling songs of all time. In 1964, Rudolph became a television special and is a holiday favorite to this day. Both the song and the television show differ greatly from the booklet May wrote but he is credited for Rudolph's creation.

Now that we know how Rudolph was created, how much do we actually know about real reindeer? Reindeer are a species of deer and in North America are called caribou. They live in the Arctic tundra and forests of Greenland, Scandinavia, Russia, Alaska and Canada. Both males and females have antlers. Males' antlers can grow 7 feet in length and can have as many as 44 points or "tines." In captivity they can live up to 20 years but only 15 years in the wild. Males can grow up to 4 feet tall at the shoulder and can weigh up to 550 pounds. Females are slightly smaller. Their predators include wolverines, bears and even eagles.

Can reindeer live in hot climates like Texas? Yes, they can. As a matter of fact there's a reindeer ranch called the Double R Reindeer Ranch just outside of Dallas. To stay cool, reindeer need shade and bodies of water to wade in. One



Texas reindeer owner says he puts wet sand on the barn floor and uses fans to cool the animals in hot weather.

With Christmas just around the corner, I think it's the perfect time to think about Rudolph and the message in his story. Rudolph always knew he was a little different but he let his light shine regardless of what others said. Don't hide who you are; your difference can be your strength. Let's all be more like Rudolph!





From our friends at the National Butterfly Center -  
Mission, Texas



Greater Roadrunner - 11-29-2023 - Photo credit to National Butterfly Center





*Blue Metalmark, male - Photo credit to National Butterfly Center*



*Blue Metalmark, female - 11-11-2023 - Photo credit to National Butterfly Center*





*Mazans Scallopwing 11-27-2023 - Photo credit to National Butterfly Center*



*Turk's-cap White-Skipper - 11-27-2023 - Photo credit to National Butterfly Center*





*Painted Lady - Photo Credit to National Butterfly Center*



*White-patched Skipper - Photo credit National Butterfly Center*





*White Peacock - 11-27-2023 - Photo credit National Butterfly Center*



*Hammock Skipper - 11-27-2023 - Photo credit National Butterfly Center*





Ornate Bella Moth - 11-29-2023 - Photo credit National Butterfly Center



## Photos by Randy Scott

Apparently true. Cattle Tyrant from South America; the first of this species to be reported in the USA and this report comes from Corpus Christi! Cattle Tyrant (<https://ebird.org/species/cattyr>). It is recorded on Ebird on November 12, 2023.



*Cattle Tyrant - Photo Skip Cantrell*





*Cattle Tyrant - Photo Skip Cantrell*



© Skip Cantrell  
*Cattle Tyrant - Photo Skip Cantrell*





*Cattle Tyrant - Photo by Skip Cantrell*



Cattle Tyrant - Photo by Skip Cantrell



Male and Female Chipping Sparrows (I think) in my Conroe backyard. First arrival of sparrow flocks this winter. 11-17-2023 - Photo by Randy Scott





*Long-tailed Skipper in front yard. They have become numerous lately. Only tailed butterfly in North America with iridescent green coloring in the forward area. 11-21-2023 - - Photo by Randy Scott*

Bluebirds came for a visit, checking out one of the two birdhouses for them. We debated whether this is for the winter or for the Spring. They seem to come only on beautiful warm days.



*Blue Bird - 11-21-23 - Photo by Randy Scott*



Blue Bird - 11-21-23 - Photo by Randy Scott



Blue Bird - 11-21-23 - Photo by Randy Scott





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**Photos by Bill Miller**



*Sue Miller found this tree frog chilling in a hibiscus flower. - Photo by Sue Miller*



One of Sue Miller's cacti gets this weird little flower on it. It's about the size of (and looks like) a Lifesaver candy. - Photo by Bill Miller



Beautiful day for a hike! (11-03-23) Have never seen the water so low after this brutal summer. These Blue-winged Teal found a wet green spot though. Brazos Bend State Park - Photo by Bill Miller





*Quick trip on a beautiful late autumn day. (11-17-23) Sheldon Lake State Park was also very dry, but some of the old fish hatchery ponds still had water in them. Photo by Bill Miller*



*Photo by Bill Miller*





*Photo by Bill Miller*



*Photo by Bill Miller*

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**Photos by Jim Snyder**



*Altamira Oriole male, National Butterfly Center, Mission, Hidalgo County, TX 06-Nov-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder*



*Buff-bellied Hummingbird, National Butterfly Center, Mission, Hidalgo County, TX 09-Nov-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder*





*Great-tailed Grackle male, National Butterfly Center, Mission, Hidalgo County, TX 04-Nov-2023- Photo by Jim Snyder*



*Green Jay, National Butterfly Center, Mission, Hidalgo County, TX 09-Nov-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder*





*Javelina, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, Hidalgo County, TX 09-Nov-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder*



*Plain Chachalaca, National Butterfly Center, Mission, Hidalgo County, TX 09-Nov-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder*





*Yellow-bellied Sapsucker female, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley SP, Mission, Hidalgo County, TX 06-Nov-2023  
- Photo by Jim Snyder*



*We have a nice bloom on our 'Veteran's Honor' hybrid tea rose today! 28-Nov-2023 - Photo by Jim Snyder*

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## **CREATOR'S CANVAS/AFRICA'S BIG FIVE/SHOOT, BUT WITH A CAMERA!**

Photo by Wayne Easley





*lion, male in kenya in the masia mara, date unknown R - Photo by Wayne Easley*

It was shortly after midnight when we heard the roar of a lion. My wife and I were visiting Fig Tree Lodge in Kenya's Masai Mara Game Reserve when we were awakened from a sound sleep. We both sat up in bed and listened to the lion as he notified everyone in the animal kingdom where he was located. It is said the roar of a lion can be heard up to five miles away. Listening to that chilly

sound, we were happy to have four walls around us. The lion is one of the animals that makes up the Big Five in Africa.

The term Big Five comes from early trophy hunters who made a list of the most difficult animals in Africa to bring down on foot. They are the Lion, the Leopard, the Elephant (Savannah), the Black Rhinoceros and the Cape Buffalo. Fortunately for the animals in Africa, times have changed, with less hunting and more people who want to see and photograph those awesome animals. My wife and I lived six years in Kenya and enjoyed seeing and photographing all five of the creatures that make up the Big Five. Let's begin our discussion with the lion.

1-The lion-male lions have a huge mane that covers their necks, The females lack the mane but make up for it in doing most of the hunting and caring for the young. The females bring in the 'bacon', so to speak. They are active at night and live their entire lives in a pride of related females and their young ones. Once the females bring in the food, the male lion is the first to eat, even before the cubs are fed. I am sure most women already had that figured out. Lions are the second largest of the cats (the tiger is bigger) and are considered to be vulnerable with only around 20,000 individuals remaining. May your safaris to Africa be filled with great images of the King of the Beast. And leave the guns at home.

2-The leopard-unlike the lions, the leopards are solitary creatures except for breeding seasons. They hunt at night and have great night vision. They are excellent swimmers and spend a lot of time up in the trees. They are said to be able to hoist an animal three times their weight up into the trees where they will feed on it. The leopard is known for its distinctive spots that are called rosettes (rose like). Once in Nakuru National Park, my wife who was in the back seat of our van, spotted a leopard which was about fifteen feet away from our car. It is an uneasy feeling to see a leopard staring down at you from that distance.

3-The savannah elephant-these guys are the largest of the land mammals. They pretty much rule the roost in Africa due to their size which can reach up to seven tons. Equipped with a huge prehensile trunk and long incisor teeth (ivory) that continue to grow during the life of the elephant; they are well-suited for life on the savannah. The tusk (one is dominant like a right or left-handed person) is used for digging salt, water, roots and debarking trees. Baby elephants are born almost blind and like a lot of little kids who suck their thumbs, baby elephants will sometimes suck their trunks. Illegal hunting, poaching for the ivory and loss of habitat has diminished the population of the elephants. They are listed as vulnerable.



4-The Black Rhino-this one is critically endangered with estimates of around 5,000 remaining. Said to be related to horses, they live in a group called a crash. Unlike another species of rhino in Africa (the White Rhino), the Black Rhino has a specialized lip which is used to feed on leafs and plant material. They feed at night and rest during the day light hours. One night we watched an interesting encounter between rhinos and elephants. We were staying at a lodge on Mount Kenya (third tallest mountain in Africa) where there was an active waterhole that was lit up at night. We watched as a group of four rhinos came into feed on the near side of the small lake. Shortly afterward, a group of four or five elephants came and began to feed with the rhinos. After a couple of hours of feeding, the rhinos were ready to return to the forest and decided to use the same route they had used on the way in. But the elephants blocked their path and made the rhinos return the long way around the lake. It was comical to watch how it went.

5-The Cape Buffalo-the buffalo was considered by the old-time hunters to be the most dangerous of all the animals of the Big Five. They can be very aggressive especially when injured and often would circle around and come back toward the hunter with deadly vengeance. Hunters often called the buffalo, the Black Death or the Widow Maker. Even today, it is estimated a couple of hundred villagers are killed each year in Africa by rampaging buffalos. When buffalo are migrating, they keep their young in the center of the group for protection. The young are often attacked by lions, but those massive horns can do a lot of damage to the lions. Also, the lions do not like to go into the water and buffalo use the water as a defense against the lions. The Cape Buffalo is the only member of the Big Five that is not vulnerable or endangered. It is estimated there are somewhere around a million Cape Buffalo in the world.

Understanding that four of the Big Five animals of Africa are vulnerable or critically endangered, Creator's Canvas hopes that the killing of these magnificent beasts will stop. Killing the elephants to obtain their ivory ought to be a crime against nature. Breeding semi-wild lions to be placed in large reserves for the purpose of trophy hunting has no place in a civilized world. We need to share our planet with these amazing animals. The Creator God, according to Gen. 1 verse 28 gave man the dominion or stewardship over these animals, a job which we have handled very poorly. For me, I had rather shoot the animals with a camera and leave the guns and the trophy cases out of the picture. Let's do what we can to see that the Big Five survive!

Wayne Easley/written on Sept. 19, 2019/ in Costa Rica

Pictures: Lions-male with the mane and the females with the cubs. Leopards-this is the one that looked down at us. Note spots. Elephants- mom with baby

and a group traveling in Amboseli National Park in Kenya. Black Rhinoceros- likely a mother and an immature and a pair in Nairobi NP. Cape Buffalos- our very first Cape Buffalo in Nairobi NP and a group of buffalos migrating to better pastures.



*lions, females, all related in samburu national park, kenya 1990s R - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*leopard in nakuru national park, kenya in the 1990s R.jpg - Photo by Wayne Easley*





*leopard, kenya in the 90s date uncertain. - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*savannah elephant with baby, kenya in 1990s R - Photo by Wayne Easley*





*elephants in kenya, 1990s R - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*Black rhinos in nairobi national park, kenya, in the 1990s R - Photo by Wayne Easley*





*black rhino in the masai mara game reserve sw kenya, 1990s R - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*cape buffalo in nairobi national park, august of 1994, R - Photo by Wayne Easley*





*migration in kenya, east africa 1990s R - Photo by Wayne Easley*

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**CREATOR'S CANVAS-SNAILS, NATURE'S  
SLOWPOKES AND THE BIRDS THAT LIKE TO EAT**



# THEM!

Photo by Wayne Easley



*heron, great blue, mar. 12, 2018 at catie research center in turialba, cr., RD -  
Photo by Wayne Easley*

The snail is one of the slowest creatures we are aware of. They slowly crawl over grass, rocks and even sharp surfaces and it does not seem to hurt them. Snails are invertebrates which means they do not have a backbone. Using their single foot, they secrete a slime or mucous onto the foot which allows them to slide along as they carry their home with them. When danger threatens, they simply back up into their shell. Actually they are born with the shell in place but at birth it is very soft. If the shell is broken from whatever cause, the creature will most likely die. And by the way, they can sleep for long periods of time. Just close down the hatch and take a long nap. The rent for the room is all taken

care of.

There are thousands of different kinds of snails. Some of them live on land, while others live in the sea. They feed on fruits and vegetables and at times, will eat other snails. Their eyes, which are not very good are at the tip-end of either one or two tentacles. They do have a brain and a heart but as you can imagine, both of them are quite primitive. If everything goes well, some of them can live for a couple of years. Not long ago, I read an anecdote that illustrates just how slow the snail is. Seems as if, a rich man was coming out of his mansion and looking down, he spied a loathsome snail. The man was enraged that a snail would invade his property so he reached down, picked it up, and heaved it with disgust into the distance. Six months later, the man was coming out the front door again and looking down he saw the snail again. As the story goes, the snail with a sad look on its face said slowly, "Why did you do that? Now, there are people in the world who love to eat snails but I am not one of those. And there are many birds that feed on snails. The majority of food taken by the Snail Kites of Central America is the snail. Also there are Limpkins, Everglade Kites in Florida, and Great Blue Herons as well as Little Blues along with many other smaller birds that like nothing better than to dine on the lowly snail. Check the picture gallery for birds that like to eat snails. Enjoy,

Wayne Easley/written on Feb. 22, 2023 in Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Pictures can be used for educational purposes only.





*limpkin with snail in guanacaste, costa rica, date not known RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*snail kite female or immature in costa rica. eats mostly snails. - Photo by Wayne Easley*





*snail kite in guanacaste, costa rica. - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*endemic snail on dom. rep., dec. 2014 - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*snail, on la mina road, cr.. may of 2015 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*





*snail, in kenya in the mid 1990s RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*



*snail, at casa rancho, cr., may 17, 2015 RD - Photo by Wayne Easley*

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**Just One Bird. . . . ???**

Photos by Paul Gregg





*Cattle Tyrant - Photo by Paul Gregg*

Happy Thanksgiving, Paul's Peeps!

Just one bird. . . . and NOT your Thanksgiving Turkey! And not JUST a bird!

A week or so ago we got information about a bird that was 2,600 miles away from its range in South America and never before seen north of Panama. It was evidently putting on a show in downtown Corpus Christi, TX. It is a Cattle Tyrant and is in the flycatcher family. It is the first recorded time one has been seen in Texas, or America.

One of our members of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society was in her car and headed there within a few hours of when it first showed up. At our monthly meeting the other night she showed a few minutes of video she took of the bird foraging mostly on the ground, catching flies and eating maggots it found under a dumpster. Word got out and she said she met people from 4 or 5 countries who had travelled to see the bird.

Carol and I have been "chasers" just a few times. I receive eBird Rare Bird Alerts from a number of counties around us. If a bird is reported that we'd like to "chase" we take off and try to find it at the reported location. I've chased and found a Red-naped Sapsucker, Black-throated Gray Warbler, a Red-legged Honey Creeper, and a Limpkin (mostly found in Florida, but they are moving into Texas). We haven't always been successful though, and have been a day late more than a couple times.

On the 20th of this month we decided to drive down to Corpus to hopefully see

it before it decides to relocate. We were not let down. Friends gave us instructions where it hangs out (corner of Chaparrel and Schatzel). When we got there and parked, we found a couple other birders looking for it. One man with his dog, binoculars and camera walked down Chaparrel and found it and others showed up and the shutters started firing!

Though numbers of photos have shown it on the ground, where it likes to find insects, it didn't go to ground for the hour or so we were following it up and down the street. The enclosed photos show it in trees, with one exception of it taking off from the roof of a building and coming straight toward me. In one photo you can see a fly in its beak. It sat at that location, maybe 10-12 feet above the entrance of the Dokyo Daunatun restaurant for quite a while. We watched it just sitting there and when a fly got close enough, it would snag it in mid-air, not having to rise up, enjoying the food coming to it instead of it having to work for it. (Most of my photos are not cropped much!)

How did it get there? Some have postulated that it hiked on a tanker from South America. Others think it might have been blown there from a storm. Nobody knows for sure. But it almost is sure he is going to keep his tyrant ways and will stay around that area for a while because there are so many meals to snatch out of midair!

Go here for a great article: <https://www.texasmonthly.com/travel/texas-birders-cattle-tyrant-never-seen-north-america/>

In the article there are various links that have interesting information. I got a kick out of where the name "twitchers" came from. Twitchers are birders who will do almost anything to find a bird they haven't seen before. There's more to the story. You will enjoy it.

Happy Thanksgiving from Paul and Carol.

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)





*Cattle Tyrant - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Cattle Tyrant - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Cattle Tyrant - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Cattle Tyrant - Photo by Paul Gregg*





*Cattle Tyrant - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Cattle Tyrant - Photo by Paul Gregg*

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## National Butterfly Center - Oct. 11-12, 2023 - Set 1

Photos by Paul Gregg



*Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - Photo by Paul Gregg*

Howdy!

Carol and I went to the Lower Rio Grande Valley from Nov. 11 to 16 and had a great time down in far South Texas, our third visit in the area. Carol attended the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting and while she was attending sessions, I would go birding. She was able to join me a couple times and we stayed 2 extra days after the meeting to go birding together.

The National Butterfly Center is a nice place to visit for variety in species, both birds AND butterflies. There's also a very interesting Tortoise by the name of Spike who has his own fenced in area where he comes out to meet you as you approach his domain. He's apparently expecting visitors to bring him an apple. We saw a number of butterflies and a Queen and White Peacock were working flowers near the welcome center.

The Center has one bird blind with flowing water in front of it to attract birds. They also have hummingbird feeders at the blind and a couple different species were present. The Hackberry Trail we took gave us some good looks at birds. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was on the trail and I call it my "money shot" because they are so hard to photograph.

The Center puts out bird food twice a day. I think I was there just after they put the feed out around 1p.m. (If you go, call to ask when feeding time is.) The feeding area (see photo) is fairly open and there's a couple picnic tables where visitors can sit and photograph birds. The dark area near the center of the photo has a water drip and attracted a good variety of birds that day. The Golden-fronted Woodpecker perched to get seeds and the red on top of his head reminds me of the "wax" on the tips of feathers on Cedar Waxwings. A Plain Chachalaca stood and looked around for more seeds.

When Carol was with me, we were walking near the bird feeding station when she saw 4 Plain Chachalacas following us, all in single file. They are obviously used to being fed by humans. I'll send more photos from the Center in my next email.

Here's a link to the Butterfly Center: <https://nationalbutterflycenter.org/>

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)



*Golden-fronted Woodpecker - Photo by Paul Gregg*





*Golden-fronted Woodpecker - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Paul and his followers - Photo by Carol Gregg*





*Spike - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Plain Chachalaca - Photo by Paul Gregg*





Queen Butterfly - Photo by Paul Gregg



National Butterfly Center - Photo by Paul Gregg





*National Butterfly Center Feeding area - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*White Peacock Butterfly - Photo by Paul Gregg*

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## National Butterfly Center - Oct. 11-12, 2023 - Set 2

Photos by Paul Gregg



*Nashville Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg*

Greetings!

Here's #2 with more photos from the National Butterfly Center. Note, in my previous email, the Date in the 1st paragraph Should be October 11-16, not November. Anyway, these photos are entirely from the immediate area around the bird feeding area, pictured in the last email.

The Nashville Warbler came to the water feature and bathed, as well as it gave me good looks in vegetation nearby. I believe the Indigo Bunting might be a female, but in another photo there were hints of blue near the wings, possibly indicating an immature male. The White-tipped Dove and the Plain Chachalaca relaxed on the ground and spread their wings and tails to absorb sunlight. I

found that particular behavior interesting. The Clay-colored Thrush and Curve-billed Thrasher enjoyed a nice bath. I could have produced a whole email with Green Jay photos.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were working the Turk's Cap flowers and it was a challenge to get good photos of them in the shadow of the overhead tree. I bumped up the shutter speed to 1/8000sec and processing in Lightroom and Topaz turned out some decent photos of them. The one on the hummingbird feeder fluffed itself up and made for an interesting look.

Particularly challenging was obtaining an ID of the Oriole that showed up just long enough to pose for a few seconds. At first I thought it was a Hooded Oriole, or Audubon's. I put the photo up on my desktop screen and poured over almost all my bird books as well as checking it out with iBird Pro's "Photo Sleuth" and Merlin Bird ID. No photos showed similar black markings on the head and neck. I sent the photo out to friends who voted Hooded. One of my friends said he had read of hybrid Orioles in that area, so I did an online search of that particular hybrid he mentioned and found photos almost exactly the same as my photo. So my conclusion is that it is an Altamira x Audubon Oriole hybrid. Can I be wrong? Absolutely!

Be watching for a couple more emails from the Valley in a few days.

Enjoy!

Paul Gregg, SMSGT, USAF (Ret.)

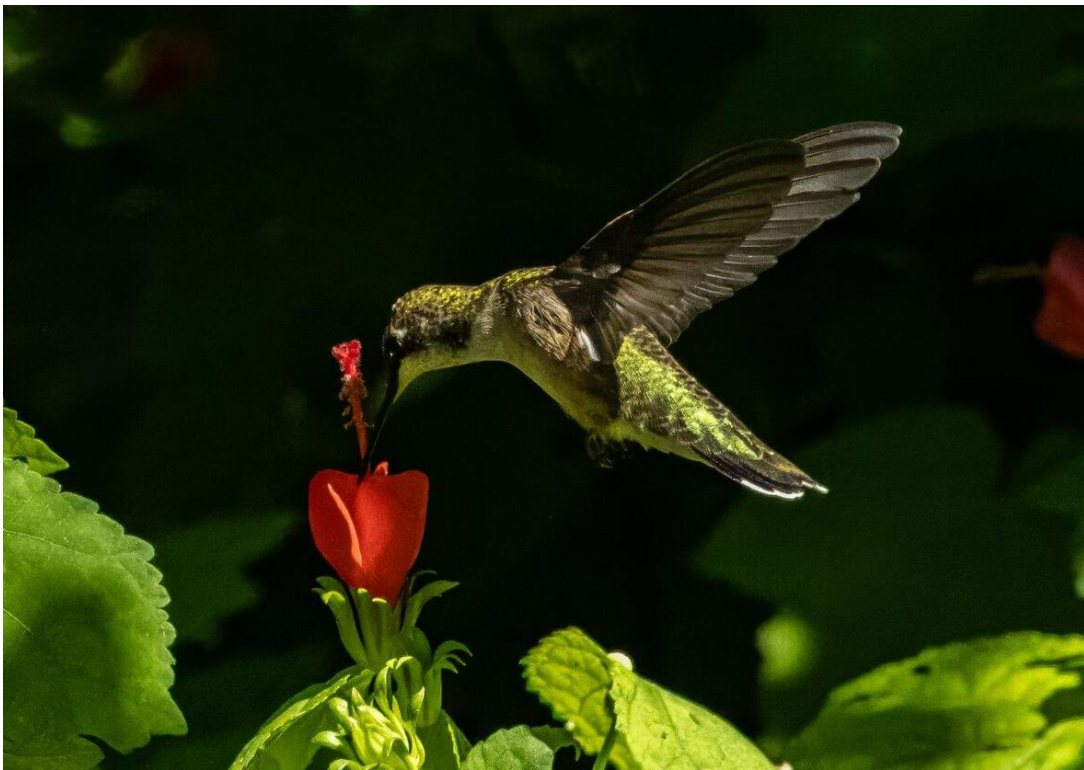




*Indigo Bunting - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*White-tipped Dove - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Paul Gregg*





*Clay-colored Thrush - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Plain Chachalaca - Photo by Paul Gregg*





1209 Curve-billed Thrasher - Photo by Paul Gregg



Nashville Warbler - Photo by Paul Gregg



*Green Jay - Photo by Paul Gregg*





*Altamira x Audubon hybrid - Photo by Paul Gregg*



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Paul Gregg*

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## **Mulberry Madness April 2023**

**Photos by Hank Arnold**

The short version is that it's still a hopping scene.



I can't go out to get in the car without seeing some bird, then running back inside to get the camera.

We were having some A/C maintenance done on the house, and those things are NEVER improved by my presence and/or supervision, so I grabbed the camera and left.

After driving around Rockport, Texas, one of the most exciting birding locations on the planet, for about 20 minutes, I realized that the best birding in town was in my yard. There was a light rain, so I drove back and parked close to the Mulberry tree.

Car birding my own house.

Nancy walked outside, saw a strangely familiar looking car with a 600mm lens poking out the window, then immediately realized I was cheating on her.

She ran inside, grabbed the Swarovski's, and came out and jumped in the back seat.

A few minutes later Karan joined us with her binoculars.

I was thinking if that trend kept up I was going to have to go rent one of those excursion vans.

I'm not EVEN going to go over the highlights today, just the questionable birds...

Ok

I lied

One highlight...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

Now the “No Idea” birds...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*





*Photo by Hank Arnold*

This next one is Oriole/Tanager size...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*



*Photo by Hank Arnold*

I'm convinced this next one is the scoop of the day because it wasn't like any of the others. I just got a brief glimpse and one single image. Note the ring around the eye and the long legs...



*Photo by Hank Arnold*



Nancy and I have argued about these birds so much she isn't speaking to me anymore.

I think if I want to have a conversation with her I'll need buy some roses, then to go park next to the Mulberry tree and stick the lens out the window.

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20230427-202-SHW/>

<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20230427-202-SHW-2/>



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## A Day In Camden Yards - May 2023

Photos by Hank Arnold



We have so many Baltimore Orioles in our yard that I'm going to have to start calling it Camden Yards.

For those of you not of the baseball persuasion, Camden Yards is the home fields for the Baltimore Orioles of Major League Baseball.

Actually, Baseball Baltimore has not been doing so well for the past few years, so with them in 2nd place in the AL East right now, these guys are probably anxious to get home quickly.



(The one on the left is saying "AHEAD OF THE YANKEES!!!")





There are 7 Orioles in that picture. There were more about but that's all I could fit into one image.

Note the hummingbirds wondering where their top status went.

We also have other kinds of Orioles.

Several Orchard Orioles (on the right)...



And some others that I don't know what kind they are, and I'm not sure they do, either...



There were so many beautiful birds about that all the neighbors came out and sat with us, including some people that were renting for the weekend and wondered what all the fuss was about.



(Well, he's GOING to be a beautiful blue bird someday)

We had so many people that whenever a car would come to pass through we would give them the wave-off like an LSO on an aircraft carrier...

"GO AROUND!!!"





We were all entranced by the activity, motion, and color.

Just about the time we thought we were going to need a group break from all the action, this guy flew in...



While we were trying to emotionally recover from that, Sandra pointed up to the sky and said, "Hey! There are a bunch of HAWKS up there!"



It was the river of northbound Broad Winged Hawks lifting off from nearby woods in the morning thermals.



Spectacular

Mixed in were groups of kettling Anhingas...





By the time I had finished my morning coffee, I was exhausted, Nancy was ferrying camera batteries, and the camera was muttering in a deep voice about mutiny.

Thank you Ray Little for talking me into putting in a volunteer Mulberry Tree. He was adamant about not getting a store bought one because it wouldn't bear as much fruit as one that worked it's way up through the ranks.

This one started life as a dropping from a northbound migrant in a pecan orchard up in College Station, and look how much entertainment it has brought to our HOA.

This is what happens with increasing property values...



<https://hmarnold.smugmug.com/20220430-202-SHW/>

I'm only sorry that Kathy Friday couldn't be here to see it with us.

COME HOME SOON, KATHY!!!

We have your chair ready!







## 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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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)

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