

# WASHINGTON COUNTY Wildlife Society

1305 E. Blue Bell Rd., Brenham, Texas 77833

Telephone 979-277-6212 Fax 979-277-6223 [www.wcwildlife.org](http://www.wcwildlife.org)



## Washington County Wildlife Corridors

By Amy Thomsen, MNRD Sandtown WMA

Many of us have heard the term “Wildlife Corridor,” but what does it actually mean? A wildlife corridor can go by different names, most commonly “wildlife corridor, habitat corridor, or green corridor.”

It is an “area of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities or structures (such as roads, development, or logging). This allows an exchange of individuals between populations, which may help prevent the negative effects of inbreeding and reduced genetic diversity (via genetic drift) that often occur within isolated populations. Corridors may also help facilitate the re-establishment of populations that have been reduced or eliminated due to random events (such as fires or disease).

This may potentially moderate some of the worst effects of habitat fragmentation, wherein urbanization can split up habitat areas, causing animals to lose both their natural habitat and the ability to move between regions to use all of the resources they need to survive. Habitat fragmentation due to human development is an ever-increasing threat to biodiversity, and habitat corridors are a possible mitigation.” (Wikipedia)

In Washington county, as noted in “The Place to Live” article in this issue, the human population is predicted to increase dramatically over the next several decades, leading to accelerated land fragmentation.

The greatest urbanization is occurring near Brenham, so it could be assumed there is more road building there, which may be the case, but due to the rich oil reserves now accessible through modern technology, there is considerable road and pad construction in Giddings Field Area in the more westerly portions of Washington County as well, causing land fragmentation.

Since you can’t stop progress given what the future holds, what can be done to protect Washington County’s “wild heritage” - one of the main reasons so many folks are attracted to Washington County in the first place? Creating wildlife corridors now, while it’s feasible, makes good sense. Approximately 98% of Washington County is privately owned, starting in April 2018, landowners gathered to learn about the process of developing wildlife corridors, and to map areas in the county where people are interested in habitat conservation. A very large map of the county was taped to the wall at the April meeting, and property owners placed stars on their property. Concentrated “clusters” of stars in various areas of Washington county were identified, and based on both the high attendance of the meeting, and the stars placed on the map, it is clear there is considerable public interest.

To figure out the next step, a subsequent meeting with conservationists, wildlife biologists and ecologists who have been involved in the development of other wildlife corridors in Texas, were called on to provide brainstorming and technical advice. An idea generated in the meeting was to select one of the several “cluster” areas as a pilot area, and begin to gather habitat suitability assessments. Those assessments could then be compiled into potential land mass areas in acre terms, identifying where there is a combination of both landowner interest and wildlife suitability. TPWD Wildlife Biologist Stephanie Damron, along with members of the Wildlife Management Association, have proposed that the first area slated for assessment could be the Greenvine and Sandtown areas. The selection of this area in no way precludes any other property owners or “clusters” from getting started or organizing neighbors in their areas. A larger more readable map is currently being worked on for the county as well as each WMA. If you are interested in being involved, but there is no “cluster” around your property, contact one of our WMA directors to find out more. (continued on Page 3)

How you can pay your dues: Annual dues of \$20 may be paid online at [wcwildlife.org](http://wcwildlife.org) by logging in, by mail to 1305 E. Bluebell Rd, Suite 104, Brenham, TX 77833, or in person at the same address.

## WASHINGTON COUNTY Wildlife Society

### **OFFICERS for 2018:**

Celeste Dickshat, President, (979) 277-2331,  
[maroon-out@hotmail.com](mailto:maroon-out@hotmail.com)  
Jon Wellmann, Vice President, (936) 419-3910,  
[jonwellmann@live.com](mailto:jonwellmann@live.com)  
Dave Redden, Treasurer, (979) 218-0493,  
[dreddden00@gmail.com](mailto:dreddden00@gmail.com)  
Brick Peele, Secretary, (979) 278 3778, [brickpeele@aol.com](mailto:brickpeele@aol.com)

### **WMA DIRECTORS for 2018:**

#### **Greenvine WMA**

Adam Seilheimer, Director (979) 830-3960,  
[texastrophyscapes@yahoo.com](mailto:texastrophyscapes@yahoo.com)

Cary Dietzmann, Vice-Director, (979) 203-3942,  
[cary@acountryliferealestate.com](mailto:cary@acountryliferealestate.com)

#### **Sun Oil Field WMA**

Boo Christensen, Director, (979) 277-8426,  
[boo@reatlorboo.com](mailto:boo@reatlorboo.com)

Charlotte Von Rosenberg, Vice-Director (512) 924-3068,  
[quebefarm@yahoo.com](mailto:quebefarm@yahoo.com)

#### **Rocky Creek WMA**

William Amelang, Director, (979) 337-4283,  
[disctree@yahoo.com](mailto:disctree@yahoo.com)

John Knapp, Vice-Director, (979) 289-5533  
[jknapp@knappfralick.com](mailto:jknapp@knappfralick.com)

#### **Post Oak WMA**

Jon Wellmann, Director, (936) 419-3910,  
[jonwellmann@live.com](mailto:jonwellmann@live.com)

#### **Mt. Vernon WMA**

Director-**OPEN**

Vice-Director-**OPEN**

#### **Sandtown WMA**

Richard Thames, Director, (979) 278-3053,  
[rbthames@industryinet.com](mailto:rbthames@industryinet.com)

Amy Thomsen, Vice-director, (713) 408-6135,  
[amy.thomsen@icloud.net](mailto:amy.thomsen@icloud.net)

#### **New Years Creek WMA**

Terry Atmar, Director, (281) 303-6023,  
[terry.atmar@yahoo.com](mailto:terry.atmar@yahoo.com)

Vice-Director-**OPEN**

### **RESOURCE CONTACTS:**

Stephanie M. Damron, TPWD Natural Resource Specialist III,  
Washington & Waller Counties, (979) 277-6297,  
[stephanie.damron@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:stephanie.damron@tpwd.texas.gov)

Kara J. Matheney, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
Agent-Agriculture/Natural Resources, (979) 277-6212,  
[kjmatheney@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:kjmatheney@ag.tamu.edu)

Ben Garcia, NRCS District Conservationist, (979) 830-7123 Ext. 3,  
[ben.garcia@tx.usda.gov](mailto:ben.garcia@tx.usda.gov)

Rachel Mowbray, Washington County Appraisal District/  
Collections, (979) 277-3740, [rmowbray@brenhamk-12.net](mailto:rmowbray@brenhamk-12.net)

Gene Bishop, Web Administrator, [g\\_bishop@austin.rr.com](mailto:g_bishop@austin.rr.com)

Faith Ferreri, WCWS Coordinator/Newsletter, (979) 820-1673,  
[faith.wcwildlife@gmail.com](mailto:faith.wcwildlife@gmail.com)

### **President's Remarks**

It was great to have such a wonderful turnout of members and friends at our Fall meeting and fundraiser. Speaker Larry Weishuhn enlighten us with just a few of his many wildlife stories and experiences. We appreciate him giving of his time exemplifying the importance of Land stewardship.

Our fundraiser was a great success. We met our goal of raising the necessary funds to continue our Good Works programs. I want to thank our donors and sponsors for their generous contributions for the door prizes, silent auction items and monetary support. Thank you to the directors, co-directors, board members and volunteers for giving of their time to help and to the members and friends who supported the silent auction. You went home with some great items. Lastly, thank you to Mike Hopkins for donating the beer and Mantey Catering for preparing the great meal. Without everyone's help, the success of this event would not happen.

The WCWS wants to emphasize that anyone can make a difference in contributing to LAND CONSERVATION. You do not have to own land to be a member of the wildlife society. You can join as an "at large" member and participate in any of our co-op's and our good works programs. I encourage you to read "The place to Live" on page 4 of the newsletter. There are also other articles of interest you will definitely want to read from knowing your prairie grasses, to what's in your water, to creating a photographic journal.

I want to recognize Dave Redden, our treasurer, and wish him and his wife, Jan the "best of luck" as they embark on a new adventure in South Caroline. Dave's hard work and contribution to the wildlife society as director, officer, leader in control burns, volunteer in educational programs, as well as the numerous many hats worn with other organizations are truly appreciated and will be greatly missed. Thank you for your many years of service to the wildlife society.

With this said, it is time for new officer elections. If you or anyone you know is interested in serving as a board member of the wildlife society, please let our nominating committee know (detail information is on page 6.)

I wish everyone a happy Fall!

*Celeste Dickschat*

## *Save the Date!*

Annual Stew Dinner and Business Meeting

January 18, 2019, Social at 6pm, Meal at 6:30pm


Speaker will be Kelly Conrad Simon with TPWD

### ADDRESS CHANGES

For address changes, or to be added or removed from our mailing list, please contact Faith Ferreri, (979) 820-1673,

Wildlife Corridors (continued from Page 1)

Corridor creation is also an opportunity to be part of something bigger already taking place in nearby counties. There is a wildlife corridor running from the Attwater Prairie Chicken refuge north towards Washington County which could be expanded upon, as well as areas radiating from the Bastrop region. This serves as encouragement and more good news; others have done it and succeeded.

Landowners, WMA members, biologists, and conservation experts are continuing to generate ideas on how to technically proceed and organize this effort. The WMAs of Washington County invites input from property landowners and WMA members in any of the cluster areas, with the number of cluster areas expected to grow. Further meetings to continue interest and action are being discussed, and property owners are encouraged to reach out to their neighbors to get the word out. The Washington County Wildlife Corridor movement is individual neighbors coming together and cooperating to create and protect Washington County's wildlife habitat heritage, into the future. We encourage everyone to get involved. Stay posted for upcoming events and information. 

## Memories of Summer

Dee Wolff, Rocky Creek WMA

In autumn, when the sunlight begins to take on a golden hue, when sweet humming birds gather in groups to make the journey to more southern vacation spots, when the first cold snap is detected in the aroma of dew filled morning grasses, summer becomes a haze of memories.

The evidence that summer arrived early in Texas this year, was the plaintive voice of the whip-o-will flowing through the soft night air on the first of June. His unique and beautiful song seemed a lamentation of night, an ode to the transitory nature of light and of life itself. Many years ago, my husband and I spotted this elusive creature as we enjoyed an eventide walk. We followed him into the woods until he disappeared into the thicket. We felt that we had just seen the mythical Himalayan Snow Leopard.

When summer did arrive, it was captured in a canvas bag along with tones of dampness, decaying autumnal matter, earthworms, and mildew. As Mother Nature opened this Pandora bag, out came flying rain storms, branches snapping, booming thunder and early threats of hurricanes. The cool misty mornings of spring became a memory, along with coffee on the porch overlooking the lush fields of wildflowers, watching cardinals in the birdfeeders and enjoying the sounds of crows cawing out the morning wake-up call. Stepping outside the house into the summer heat was a shock akin to opening the door to some foreign country where camels live or crocodiles might come out of the swamp.

If you were asked to describe summer:

Would your description of summer include images of young children swirling until dizzy and then falling down into soft green grass and feeling the clouds magically lift them into space?

Would it include a loose barn door swinging and creaking in the hot summer air as the sound of an old chain saw hums in the distance while slicing trees into firewood?

Or would it include sounds of rolling and roaring thunder crossing the sky as vast ethereal ocean waves?

Would you remember that thunder was created by "Ol Peter Stuyvesant" bowling with his buddies in the long alleys of the Hudson River Valley and that lightning was a way of keeping score?

Would your description include fireflies flitting in long summer grasses making hoops of color in the dark, or friends drinking iced tea with a splash of bourbon while sitting on the back porch on an airless summer night, or swishing the bait on a cane pole into the water, hoping for a quick tug on the line?

Perhaps your description would include one of the many wonderful images in paintings in our human history which could describe "summer." Monet, the French painter, created "Impression, Sunrise," in which the atmospheric and gloriously colorful work suggests the first sunrise of the world. Thomas Eakins, the great American painter created "Swimming Hole", in which he expressed the pure joy of a group of young boys jumping into a shockingly cold, pristine lake on an idyllic afternoon. In another century, Pieter Breughel the Elder's raucous painting of a "Peasant Wedding" includes the entire village attending the joyous event. Tables are bountifully laid with birds, breads and ales. After the feast, there is a dance for all to enjoy.

This season as autumn approaches, summer is becoming a memory. As early summer moved into HOT TEXAS SUMMER, there was a bit of difficulty in finding joy in mosquitoes, or a catch in the breath while inhaling one-hundred degree temperatures. Frying an egg on a car sounded fine, but once done the allure was lost. While scurrying back into shelter, praying for an early autumn, I know that God created autumn and air conditioning just for Texas and that Texans are truly blessed!

## The Place to Live - Four Important Numbers

By **Jim Dickson**, Membership Chairmain

First Number 481

This is the current membership total for WCWS.

Second Number 25,000

This number represents the combined years of life experience (any year beyond 20) among our current membership.

Third Number 34,500

This is the total population of Washington County at the end of 2015

Fourth Number 100,000

This is the projected population of Washington County within the next 10 to 15 years.

So what do these number mean to the WCWS. We do not want to nor will we be able to stop progress. But we also do not want to see Washington county become just another area of Texas losing its identity. We should all want to see this growth and progress balanced with our heritage, our habitat, and our wildlife.

Make no mistake, if we do not continue our role educating our children, new arrivals, and just as importantly ourselves; We could lose what we all hold so dear, our "Sense of Place" so eloquently put by Dr. Bill in a prior newsletter.

Each morning when you look in the mirror while brushing your teeth or washing you face, make a commitment to reach out to someone new that day and tell them about the Washington County Wildlife Society; Who are we, what we are doing, and encourage them to become involved.

It is important to never forget that owning 5, 10, or 200 acres is not a prerequisite to becoming a member. A member can live in a 200 unit apartment complex and still be able to participate in the good works of WCWS. A member can live in a house on a lot in the middle of town, and discover the types of shrubs that attract birds and pollinators.

As a member of WCWS, you can make a difference. Do not let your wisdom earned living through the bad, the good, and the wonderful go to waste. Don't just bring in the new member, bring in a person who will join us in keeping Washington County "THE PLACE TO LIVE".

At this time the Washington County Wildlife Society is opening its' membership to anyone interested in Wildlife and other natural resources. It is not necessary to be a property owner or even a resident of Washington County to become a member. Currently we are calling this group on new members "At Large".

WMA Meetings are a great time to invite your friends and neighbors to join us as a guest then hopefully as a new member! Even folks from the city could enjoy the outdoors for a day.

## FALL WMA Meetings are Coming Up!

**Sun Oil Field— November 10** at the Weiss Store on FM 390 at 6pm Program by TPWD Game Warden **Kyle Yoder**, Meal of chopped beef bbq sandwiches with all the trimmings,

**Rocky Creek—November 17** at the White Horse in Burton, Social at 5pm Program "Water you crazy? How your ponds and rain tanks can change your life" Meal of Chili , BYO Dessert and band to follow at 8pm

**Sandtown & Mt.Vernon—November 30** at 6pm " Proposed Changes for the 2019 Whitetail Deer Season" by TPWD Biologist, Stephanie Damron and "Hog Talk" with local members and hog trapper. More info to follow.

**Greenvine, Post Oak, and New Years Creek—To Be Determined**



## Why Natives?

By John Reilley, PMC Manager, USDA-NRCS, Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center – Kingsville, TX

Native plants are plants that have evolved naturally in their environment. They were well established in their region for hundreds of years before any human intervention. Ecosystems are specifically evolved around the native plants of that area. These native plants provide a diverse, balanced environment that maintains a healthy ecosystem. They help conserved water, protect soil from erosion and coevolved with these native plants. And as Lady Bird Johnson said, naïve plants “give us a sense of where we are in this great land of ours.”

President Bill Clinton signed Executive order 13112 in order to help promote the use of native species and the restoration of native habitats in Federal projects (Clinton 1999; Harper-Lore and Wilson 1999; Forman et al. 2003). Native plants and seed are needed for publically funded ecosystem restoration programs, highway right-of-way plantings, mitigation of oil, gas, and other energy production activities, and for improvement of wildlife habitat on private and public lands. The consequences of not having native plants and see available for these uses is often the unwanted or unintentional use of non-native, aggressive plants. Native plants are intrinsic to the overall resilience and stability of a region and are a critical component of the numerous food and energy cycles that maintain its biological diversity. Native plants ecosystems that are a part of that regions biological heritage.

So, why do people use non-native plants? Non-native plants ar often easier to establish than natives, making them useful for livestock forage, erosion control and highway right-of ways. Seeds of non-natives are also usually less expensive and more readily available than natives. However, as Dr. Tim Fulbright of Texas A&M– Kingsville points out, “aggressive, non-native plants reduce plant species diversity, displace and prevent re-establishment of native species and lower soil nitrogen and carbon sequestration”.

Native plants are valued for their long-term economic, ecological, genetic and aesthetic benefits in addition to the growing belief that they have intrinsic value in and of themselves. Native plants provide the essential elements for ecosystem health. They are the key to maintaining the critical association's with soil mycorrhizae, native invertebrates, beneficial insects, and pollinators of flowers and important crops.

Financial Assistance Programs are readily available to assist landowners with technical knowledge as well as possible financial assistance. “No matter if you have one acre or five hundred acres, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) will work with landowners to devise a conservation plan for their property and assist with implementation of native grass and forb restoration projects on the land.”-Ben Garcia, NRCS District Conservationist in Washington County.

For more information, to schedule an office or field visit, you may contact Ben Garcia at the local USDA Service Center, 2305 Becker Dr, Suite C, Brenham, TX or by phone at (979)830-7123x3 or by email at [ben.garcia@tx.usda.gov](mailto:ben.garcia@tx.usda.gov). The Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District offers native seed sales with a portion of the sales retuned to educational activities for adults and children in Washington County. To purchase seed, contact Terry at (979)830-7123x3

Pictured right, is a Washington County grassland restoration project with a landowner who used financial assistance programs and NRCS specifications for seedbed preparation, pre and/or post-fertilization, and planting recommendations.



## Are you curious about what's in your water?

By Faith Chase

If you are, the Texas Stream Team is currently looking for volunteers to collect data on water quality in our area. Data measures you may collect could be the observations of the water body such as algae cover, water color, clarity, odor, or more scientific tests such as water conductivity, water temperature, dissolved oxygen level, pH, total depth, E. Coli levels, and Fecal Coliform Units (FCUs).

The Texas Stream Team is a citizen science based organization funded by grants through the 319 Clean Water Act. Data collected by them serves as an Early Warning Systems for bodies of water across the State of Texas. Although data collected by citizen's scientists cannot be used to add or remove water bodies from EPA's impaired lists, it can be used to answer questions and identify changes that occur through the seasons, including before and after unusual rain events like those we have had in recent years.

If you are interested in participating in this program please contact Faith Chase at [faith.wcwildlife@gmail.com](mailto:faith.wcwildlife@gmail.com) or leave your name and number with Stephanie or Nancy at (979)277-6212 and don't forget to mention the Texas Stream Team!

Please note: These tools are not the same tools used to test well water. If you would like to have your well water tested, you may stop by the AgriLife office, 1305 E Blue Bell Rd, Brenham, to request a sample kit with instructions.

*Save the Date!* March 30, 2019 - for the 8th Annual Lone Star Water Forum  
at the Washington County Fairgrounds Event Center

## Interest in a Photographic Journal?

By Cary Dietzmann, Greenville WMA

I am seeking Wildlife related DIGITAL photographs from you, the members of the Washington County Wildlife Society. The digital photographs should be of the highest resolution possible. I'm not a professional photographer, but know that practically every camera offers you the ability to adjust the quality resolution setting. Even most game cameras enable this. I'm looking for pics that would be of high enough quality to include in future newsletters, WCWS presentations or thinking out loud, maybe a Washington County Wildlife Society photographic journal? Please, don't hold me to this, just a thought? What I do know is that the diversification of habitat across our county coupled with the enthusiasm of our membership, creates an opportunity to share beautiful moments in time.



With respect to "game camera" pics. I'm interested in close up, broadside, hoof to head, deer pics for aging purposes. The example here would be perfect, if you could see the entire buck! In this picture he is actually a little too close to the camera. Shots out 5-10 yards are optimal. If a broadside pic is out farther, and you think it useable, the resolution of the pic will determine if we can increase its size to use without losing clarity. Again, highest resolution possible!

Purposes this could be used for would be to learn plant and animal ID skills. Or have unknown plants or animals identified by our membership. Of course we will make sure appropriate credit is given and we would like to provide any details you wish to share, such as date, time, location, or id information. If you have any photos you would like to submit.

## From the WCWS Board

At our last board meeting on Oct 4th the board formed a nominating committee, consisting of Richard Thames, Jim Dickson and Stephanie Damron, to assist in the recommendations of society officer's for 2019, to be voted on at our January annual meeting.

As it stands now, our current officers have indicated that they would be willing to stay on at their current position with the exception of the treasurer's position, held by Dave Redden. Dave and Jan will be leaving Washington County in the coming months for South Carolina, so we will need to fill the treasurer's position for 2019.

Here is a description of the officer's duties as they are in the WCWS bylaws:

"At the January members meeting of each calendar year, the general membership shall elect a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer within the membership contingent. The nominating committee shall present a proposed slate of candidates and nominations will be accepted from the membership in attendance. If multiple nominees are named for a position the vote will be by secret ballot. Duties of the officers shall consist of the following:

- a) President** – Shall preside over all directors, annual and special meetings. The President may appoint necessary committees.
- b) Vice President** – Shall preside in the absence of the President and is an ex officio member of the Membership Committee.
- c) Secretary** – Shall keep minutes of all official meetings and coordinate keeping of membership records and mailings. Shall also assist in the coordination of news media releases such as radio and newspaper articles.
- d) Treasurer** – Shall review records of all receipts and expenditure and be prepared to issue financial reports at all meetings."

In regards to the treasurer's duties, they will draft and present the annual budget to the board, prepare and present a treasurer's report at board meetings, sign or approve checks and other payments, file the Texas franchise tax report and confirm the filing of the society's annual tax return, known as a Form 990, prepared by an outside, third party CPA firm. The society uses QuickBooks Online, PayPal, Billpay and a phone deposit application for after business hours convenience. QuickBooks Online requires the ability to also use online banking (currently with Brenham National Bank) for reconciliation between QuickBooks and the BNB statements. QuickBooks also provides a reporting feature that can export an Excel file to a template that produces the graphical budget status reports we are currently using. Familiarity with Excel will be helpful, but anyone can learn to use these tools.

If you are interested and would like to discuss the treasurer's position, or any of the other officer's positions, please contact Richard Thames at 979 278-3053 or email [rbthames@industryinet.com](mailto:rbthames@industryinet.com)



## The Washington County Wildlife Society

would like to **THANK** our **Sponsors** and **Donors** for helping us reach our goal and making the 2018 Fundraiser a great success!!

Andrew Sansom	Carol Lake	Ken Mueller	Ricky & Debra Kieke
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Cary Dietzmann - A Country Life Real Estate	Jack & Sandra Taylor	Red Fern Woodwork & Restoration - Bill Holmes	
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Washington County Wildlife Society appreciates our donors and encourages you to support their businesses.

**Thank You!**

Enhancing and conserving wildlife in Washington County through wildlife education

### October is Prairie Month by Charlotte von Rosenberg

October is Prairie Month because that's when the native prairie tallgrasses bloom, flower and set seed. It's the best time to identify grass species and collect seed. Each species has a very distinctive color, shape, seed head and growth habit. Generally seed is ready to harvest when it strips off easily in your hand. Store seeds in paper bags. Sideoats gramma is the Texas State Grass and is the first to bloom. Next will be Eastern Gammagrass, Switchgrass, Indiangrass, Big and little Bluestem. Big Bluestem of the "turkey foot" profile is usually the last to bloom. It's impossible to pick a favorite tallgrass. Each species is spectacular, colorful and distinctive in every way. Already some of these can be seen along roadways like SH 390 and others. Drive carefully!



Sideoats Grama in front of Little Bluestem



Switchgrass



Eastern Gammagrass in front of Indiangrass



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### **White-Rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*), by Faith Chase, WCWS Coordinator**

This year when I was dove hunting on the prairie, I spotted a new bird hanging out with the white-wings. I, nor any of the experienced hunters in the group, were familiar with the bird, so when we went in after the hunt I immediately got out my Sibley field guide to ID the Mystery Bird.

The white-rumped sandpiper can be found from the Mid-Western states, all the way East and up to northern Canada. It is closely related to the Wilson's Snipe, also a member of the Scolopacidae family. Members of this family are typically short, round, and stocky. They are 7.5 inches in length with a wing span of 17 inches and have a weight of 1.5oz. I was able to ID this bird based on its coloration. It was mostly brownish with beautiful shiny orange, purple, and green feather patches on its back and upper portion of the wings. This coloration is present from April to September in adult breeding birds and from July to November in juveniles. From July to November, during the non-breeding season, they have a white eyebrows on each side. At this point in my description you may be wondering why it's called "white-rumped," the white-rump is visible during flight just above the tail. They feed in shallow waters or mud. When these birds call they emit a high mouse-like *tzeek* and sing a high mechanical insect-like song.

Photo is from the National Audubon Society.

