

Winters Bayou Bird Sanctuary



WAYNE NICHOLAS

RED-EYED VIREO

Winters Bayou is an important area of varied habitats for migrants and for breeding of threatened birds, such as the Louisiana Waterthrush (documented by James Stewart). The habitat also forms a buffer zone for the Sam Houston National Forest, which supports the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

LOCATION: The sanctuary is located in San Jacinto County, 11 miles northwest of Cleveland, Texas and is adjacent to the Sam Houston National Forest.

SIZE: 66.83 ha (165 acres)

HABITAT: The property is in the transition zone between the Gulf Coastal Prairie, the Piney Woods, and the Blackland Prairie ecoregions. It is dominated by mature pine forest habitat with a mature oak subcanopy layer. Winters Bayou forms the western boundary of the sanctuary. The sanctuary is made up of two adjacent tracts, divided by a residential road. The northeastern tract is 36 acres of large pines and woody underbrush. The larger 130-acre tract is upland pine forest and mixed pine/hardwood bottomland. There are 3 intermittent streams flowing into Winters Bayou, with riparian habitat bordering the bayou. An acid seep divides the upland and bottomland ecosystems.

BIRDS: The property is adjacent to the Sam Houston National Forest, which presently supports approximately 160 Red-cockaded Woodpecker groups. This population in Sam Houston National Forest represents one of the largest populations west of the Mississippi River. The Winters Bayou Bird Sanctuary is approximately 0.5 miles from six active nesting clusters. The property has the potential for providing population expansion and foraging sites for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Louisiana Waterthrush is also a prominent breeder here.

CONSERVATION: The Houston Audubon Society is protecting the property from encroaching development. Poachers and off-road vehicles are current threats, as well as overcrowding in the pine stand that leaves it vulnerable to Southern pine beetle infestations and wildfires.



Site Partner:

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