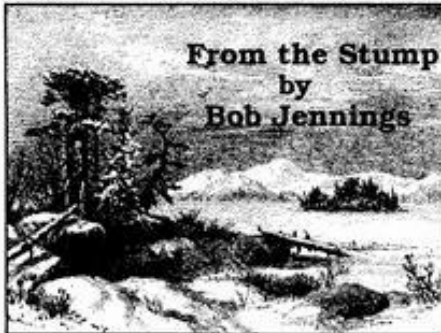




Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

Volume 136

November/December, 2001



As you will see later in the newsletter, we are now on the web, the WWW web, that is. Be sure to visit us and watch our web page develop as we add new stuff. One new thing is that you can order books and records and videos from a virtual "web nature shop" at that site. That 'store' is not actually here at Oxley, but some other place out in cyberspace, and carries LOTS more than we could ever cram into our little shop. Give it a look. However, you'll still have to come visit our real shop if you want things like the Oxley t-shirts and hats and patches and pins.

Being on the Web should be good for us and convenient for you. It should also help us get the word out to folks who will be visiting Tulsa, who can now find us as they are planning their trips.

Webs, of course, are nothing new to our naturalists. We deal with all kinds of webs out here in the woods. Spider webs come to mind, especially this time of year. As much as I love the Autumn, I know that I'll be picking *Micrathena* spider webs off my glasses and out of my hair for a month or two.

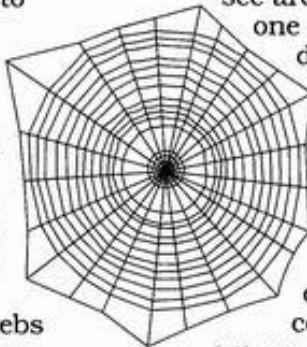
Micrathenas are little spiders that love to string their webs across our trails in the fall,



and they seem to be able to measure exactly how tall I am. Being the leader of a group means that I go down the trail first, and thus I become a sort of 'spider web clearance device' for the others following behind me. Still, I enjoy these little spiders. We commonly see two species; one with a triangular white back and one with black and yellow spiny looking things sticking out. They would be scarier if they were bigger, but seeing as they're only about 1/3 as big as a dime, they aren't that spooky. Unless, of course, one is caught on your hair and trying to crawl into your ear.



Autumn also means the appearance of the big *Argiope*s and the *Neosconas*. The common *Argiope* locally is the big black and yellow orb-weaver that we find scattered through the Center. These are about an inch and a half long, and their bright colors really make them stand out. They don't seem to like to build very high. Most of their webs we see are below eye level. Be sure to ask one of staff how to make an *Argiope* do push-ups. It's one of the secret things we know!



The *Neosconas* are about the same size, but they're brown, and they like to put their webs high. You might even have them in your yard.

I have one that shows up every autumn outside the corner of my garage. Their webs are usually built about eight to ten feet off the ground. There is often one outside the library window here at Oxley, above where we put the birdfeeders. Look for it next time you're out, and check around your house this month. There is a good chance you can find one.

Nature Center Happenings

Closed!

Monday, November 12,
Thursday & Friday,
November 22 & 23,
Monday & Tuesday,
December 24 & 25 &
Tuesday, January 1,
2002.

Happy Holidays!



OXLEY AND REDBUD HOURS:

The gates at Oxley Nature Center are open daily, with the exception of most City holidays, from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. At Oxley, you may park outside the gates from 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. to walk the trails even when the gates are closed.

At Redbud Valley Nature Preserve, the gates are open Wednesdays through Sundays, from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. You may **not** hop the fence when the Nature Preserve is closed: on Mondays or Tuesdays, on City holidays, before 8:00 a.m., or after 5:00 p.m.

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Call: 669-6644 to register or for more information about programs. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult, unless otherwise stated. Programs that are wheelchair accessible are designated with the ♿ symbol.



Kid's Saturday Programs

\$2 general public, free to members, all ♿



Discovery Club (Ages 3-5 years)

Each child accompanied by an adult, please

November 17, 10:00-11:30 "Hair, Feathers or Scales". Let's explore the difference between mammals, birds and reptiles.

Sign-up begins November 4.

December 15, 10:00-11:30 "Wildlife Holiday"

Come help us create some edible treats for the wildlife at Oxley.

Sign-up begins December 2.



Adventure Club (Grades K-2nd)

Kid's only, please

November 17, 10:00-11:30 "Can You Make A Nest?"

Let's learn about different kinds of nests and make one of our own!

Sign-up begins November 4.

December 15, 10:00-11:30 "Wildlife Celebration"

Celebrate the season with the wildlife by providing them with special edibles.

Sign-up begins December 2.



"Gas Giants"

Clouds permitting, we'll peek through the telescope at one or more of Earth's huge, distant neighbors. Bring something to sit on. Meet at the circle drive east of Lake Yahola. Sunset is 5:12 p.m. and Moonset is 9:08 p.m. Sign-up begins November 11.

**Monday, November 19,
7:00-8:15 p.m.**

Star Programs

\$2 general public,
free to members
All Ages All ♿



"Bucket of Stars"

We'll enjoy finding constellations while scanning the sky for "shooting stars." Clouds permitting, we'll also look at several telescope targets. Meet at Oxley. Sunset is 5:10 p.m. and Moonset is 3:47 p.m. Sign-up begins December 2.

**Wednesday, December 12,
7:00-8:15 p.m.**

Visit our new website at "<http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>"

Our new website, maintained and operated by ONCA, is now in service thanks to server space donated by Greg Myers and the efforts of Mike Ayling, Jacques LaFrance and John Kennington.

Programs and special events

November

3 "Saturday Morning Birding"

Saturday
Free



Ages: All

8:00-9:45 a.m.
registration not required

Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

3 "Fall Frost Flowers"

Saturday
\$2 for non-members

Ages: 12 & up

7:00-9:00 a.m.
free to members

If it is indeed a frosty morning we'll look for frost flowers. If not, we'll watch the moon set on a refreshing autumn morning. Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins October 21.

18 "Spotting Sparrows"

Sunday
\$2 for non-members



Ages: 10 & up

9:00-11:00 a.m.
free to members

The winter sparrows should be in and as puzzling as ever. We'll walk the woods and fields to see who we can find. We'll also learn some identification tips. Bring binoculars. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins November 4.



Riding air currents with a wingspan of up to 6-7 feet, the Bald Eagle, our National Bird, is a symbol of wilderness, freedom and survival. As early as 1940 it was illegal to harm or possess a Bald Eagle. When the Endangered Species Act was implemented in 1973 the eagle began making a comeback after suffering serious declines in populations due to the pesticide DDT. Today this once endangered raptor is making a rapid recovery and has even been nesting at sites in Oklahoma.

December

1 "Saturday Morning Birding"

Saturday
Free



Ages: All

8:00-9:45 a.m.
registration not required

Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

1 "Winter Survival"

Saturday
\$2 for non-members

Ages: All

1:00-2:30 p.m.
free to members

How have the plants and animals prepared for a long, cold winter? Let's walk the trails and observe different ways nature settles in for the cold months ahead. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins November 18.

2 "Make Your Own Binocular Strap"

Sunday
\$2 fee plus \$4 for materials

Ages: 12 & up

2:00-3:00 p.m.
members pay only \$4

Come make your own strap. Some dexterity is required to assemble these adjustable cords so they will transfer the weight of binoculars or camera to the wearer's shoulder blades and back. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins Nov. 18.

22 "Bone Needles"

Saturday
\$2 for non-members

Ages: 13 & up

9:30-12:00 noon
free to members

Using stone tool technology we will manufacture a functional tool using deer leg bone, chert and sandstone. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins December 9.

30 "Farewell 2001 Walk"

Sunday
\$2 for non-members



Ages: All
2:00-3:30 p.m.
free to members

Join us as we walk on the trails and bid farewell to the year 2001. What will we find? A Robin's nest? Animal burrows? Who knows? Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins December 16.

"Where Beavers Swim"

We see their dams and lodges. We find holes and paths they've made. This month we'll try to find these nocturnal engineers at work.

\$2 general public, members free



Families & Individuals

Tuesday, November 20, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Sign-up begins November 11.

Groups (6 or more)

Tuesday, November 27, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Sign-up begins November 1.

Night Walks

"Owl Prowl"

This is the time of year when owls begin their mating season. Join us as we prowl through the woodlands listening for courting calls and watching for these silent fliers of the night.

Families & Individuals

Thursday, December 6, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Sign-up begins November 25.

Groups (6 or more)

Thursday, December 13, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Sign-up begins December 1.



Congratulations New Volunteers

The following people have successfully completed volunteer naturalist training:

Robby Bricker, Karen Johnson, Julie Lickteig, Dee Mounce, Justin Rutherford and Teri Smith. The staff looks forward to your help this fall season with school groups!

Other new volunteers include Marcia Wilson and Clara Muret (Adopt a Trail); Frank Howard and Richard Mullins (T.A.S.K.); Frank Brannon (trail work and bum crew) and Vicki Pierce (bum crew). Welcome to our team--we look forward to working with you.



A Year To Remember.....



Do you remember the cold rain, sleet, snow and wind of last November, December and January? Brrrrr.... The Sunday after Thanksgiving last year two refugees suddenly appeared at our birdfeeders outside the library windows--two juvenile Wild Turkeys--somewhat shy but unwilling to abandon the easy meals provided daily at the feeders. They turned out to be a pair, entertaining us with their courtship rituals in late February and March. Talk about "strutting your stuff"! They both disappeared soon after, as mysteriously as they had appeared.

The white coat of winter snow left a quiet hush over the landscape, but the evidence of life left indelible tracks of all shapes and sizes strewn through the woods and fields. What an experience to see those pristine etchings--shadow prints! The cold also attracted several opossums, woodchucks and raccoons to our feeders for daily visits. Where were you? This winter join us in front of a crackling fire and see Oxley from a new perspective.

Spring returned as always. April 9, 2001 our first hummingbird returned. In late April we watched a pair of Canada Geese build a nest on the small island in the pond. The female laid and tended her eggs while the male remained close and alert for danger. Six goslings hatched May 4 and were swimming by the next morning. White-tailed Deer frolicked in the field with their fawns.

Summer brought a bobcat sighting outside the classroom window and several sightings of mink at the marsh. Butterflies were everywhere on the prairie, taking full advantage of the abundant flowering plants. A butterfly count on July 5 resulted in the discovery of 966 butterflies of 49 different species! Today a cool breeze signals the approach of Autumn after a hot, dry summer. The Monarchs, hummingbirds and others are beginning their migration South. We're coming full circle. Won't you join us for the next cycle?