



Oxley Nature Center Newsletter


Volume 161

January/February 2006

We will be closed for the following holidays:
* Sunday, January 1. &
* Monday, January 16

Program Information and Registration:

-918-669-6644
-oxley@ci.tulsa.ok.us
-"http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org"

- Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.
- Wheelchair accessible programs designated by  symbol.
- Programs with insufficient registration may be cancelled 48 hours prior to program.

Hours:

Oxley Nature Center

- Open daily, except most City holidays.
- Oxley gate open from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Building open from 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Monday - Saturday:
12 noon - 4:30 Sunday.
- Oxley trails accessible during Mohawk Park hours 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

- Open Wednesday through Sunday, except most City holidays.
- Gate and trails open from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. only.
- Interpretive building open 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Birds in Bracelets by Valerie O'Brian

As you walk the trails at Oxley Nature Center this winter or watch birds on the ground around the feeders at the Interpretive Building, you may notice many small greyish-brown and white birds with brightly colored bands on their legs. This isn't a bird beautification project. It is a study of the Dark-eyed Junco. For the past two winters, I have been banding juncos as a Northeastern State University and now University of Tulsa student to explore the dynamics of winter flocking. Since November, 2003, 247 juncos have been banded with a unique combination of color bands, which allow them to be individually identified. Many of the banded birds you will see this winter have returned from their summer breeding grounds in Canada. Last winter, 25% of the banded juncos in Oxley Nature Center were banded here the year before.

This winter's research will focus on determining which birds are dominant in the flock, and on assessing how they fare over the winter compared to their more submissive flockmates. We'll also be looking at associations, and asking whether birds that strongly associate with certain other birds in the group have characteristics that distinguish them from the "loners" who show no preference for particular flockmates.

Scientists don't conduct winter ecological studies very often because of the difficulty of finding a suitable location close to home during the academic year. Oxley Nature Center's proximity to local universities, its large, protected natural areas, and the helpfulness and enthusiasm of Oxley staff make the center an ideal place to conduct ecological research.

The Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)



- One of the most common winter residents in North America
- Nests in Canadian boreal forests
- Territorial (in nesting pairs) in breeding season
- Migrates south across North America in winter
- Forms flocks in winter
- Males are slaty on top; females browner - both have white bellies and outer tail feathers
- Eat seeds in winter, on ground - especially likes seed like millet
- An important species for ecological research
- Available for viewing at Oxley Nature Center!

Nature Center Happenings



Volunteers Recognized at Awards Dinner

Many of our volunteers, staff, and guests gathered at the Tulsa Garden Center December 6 to celebrate all the services our wonderful volunteers provide to so many different people. The following awards were presented:

Carol Eames and Kristen Melton: 3 year/6 season lapel pin.
Sharon Cairns, Mary Lou McGilbra, Jim Thayer, and Karen Watkins: frameable print for 5 years/10 seasons.
Marilee Chambers: award plaque for 20 years/40 seasons.
Sharon Duncan, Tommy Duncan, and Troy Thayer also received their 20 year/40 seasons plaques.
Bambie Murphy and Jacquie Young each received a vest for their outstanding service as volunteers.

Thank you to all our volunteers for your amazing help!

\$2 for general public, free for members **Kid's Saturday Programs** Please register in advance, all

Discovery Club (Ages 3-5 years)

Each child accompanied by an adult, please

January 21, 10:00-11:30 "Who_oo's Nesting Now?"

Let's find out more about the owls living in the woods. Are they already nesting?



February 18, 10:00-11:30 "Creepy Crawlies"

What mysterious creatures are under the leaf litter and fallen trees trying to keep warm?

Adventure Club (Grades K-2nd)

Kids only, please

January 21, 10:00-11:30 "Winter Wind"

Let's explore the wind through rhymes and songs, and find out where the wild ones go.

February 18, 10:00-11:30 "Extreme Hike"

What "opposites" will we find on the trail--the largest, smallest, highest, lowest, and the coldest, warmest?



Astronomy Programs



Registration required, \$2 for general public, free to members, all ages, with advance notice
Bring binoculars if you have them, and meet on the east side of Lake Yahola above the circle drive.

Thursday, January 26, **"Sky Neighbors, Near and Far"** 7:00-8:30 p.m. Sometimes we forget that some objects in the sky are much farther away than others. We'll find our nearest neighbors first, and then move outward, perhaps even beyond our own galaxy!

Wednesday, February 15, **"Finding Mercury"** 7:00-8:30 p.m. The planet closest to the sun can be found with the naked eye, but it is not as easy to find as brilliant Venus. Like Venus, reddish-yellow Mercury can appear as a morning "star" or an evening "star", and it can occasionally be seen crossing the disk of the sun in a rare transit. We'll look for its tiny crescent shape through a telescope.

Full Moon Walks

Registration required, \$2 for general public, free for members, all ages,

Saturday, January 14, 6:00-7:30 p.m. **"Wolf Moon"**

It is now midwinter, the air is cold and sharp. We may not hear wolf packs howling hungrily, but the yipping and song of their cousins the coyotes might pierce the night around us.

Sunday, February 12, 6:00-7:30 p.m. **"Snow Moon"**

This is the month we may experience heavy snow. Perhaps we'll be the first to leave our mark in the snow, or perhaps we will follow the tracks of curious critters exploring before us.



Programs and Special Events

January

7 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All
 Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
 Free registration not required



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

7 "Fireside Birding" Ages: All
 Saturday 10:00-11:00 a.m.
 \$2 for general public free for members

Sit by the fireplace, sip on a hot drink, and watch what comes to the birdfeeders. Learn about birds that winter at Oxley. Please sign up in advance.

8 "Recycle Magic" Ages: All
 Sunday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
 \$2 for general public free for members



Got trash? Join us to make a craft out of what you thought was garbage. Learn about recycling and ways to reduce our garbage output. Please register in advance. Meet at Oxley.

14 "Leaf Animals" Ages: All
 Saturday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
 \$2 for general public free for members

What can you create with different kinds of leaves? Critters for framing or giving as cards!! Meet at Oxley. Please register in advance.

21 "Survival Kits" Ages: 12 & up
 Saturday 1:00 -3:00 p.m.
 \$5 for general public \$2 for members

Do you have a survival kit to take on a day hike or for a week of camping? We'll pack everything you need to survive into the smallest and lightest container: first aid, fire starter, shelter, and more. Meet at Oxley. Please register in advance.

28 "Green Plants of Winter" Ages: All
 Saturday 1:00-3:30 p.m.
 Free registration not required

Will we find any green plants in the North Woods? Put on hiking boots and warm clothes, and we'll hunt for them. Meet at the North Woods sign by the northwest corner of golf course.

29 "Gourd Baskets" Ages: 14 & up
 Sunday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
 \$7 for general public \$5 for members

Learn to cut and clean a dried gourd. You will decorate and create a gourd basket to take home. Meet at Oxley. Please register in advance.

February

4 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All
 Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
 Free registration not required



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

4 "Soap Making" Ages: 18 & up
 Saturday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
 \$20 for general public \$15 for members

Come experience soap making the old fashioned way. We will use fats and lye for the base, and each participant may customize their soap for their own purpose. Meet at Oxley. Please sign up in advance.

5 "Gourd Birdhouses" Ages: All
 Sunday 2:00-3:00 p.m.
 \$7 for general public \$5 for members

The Purple Martin scouts are due back from South America around February 15. Carolina Wrens and Eastern Bluebirds are also scouting out potential nesting cavities. Who might share your yard with you if you prepare a home for new neighbors? Meet at Oxley. Please register in advance.

11 "Trees in Winter" Ages: All
 Saturday 10:00-12:00 noon
 \$2 for general public free for members

We'll go for a walk and learn to identify trees without their leaves. Meet at Oxley. Please register in advance.

19 "Habitat Hunt" Ages: All
 Sunday 1:30-3:00 p.m.
 \$2 for general public free for members



Let's explore the Wildlife Study Trail to look at differences in habitats. What kind of forests, wetlands, and wildlife will we discover? Meet at Oxley. Please register in advance.

25 "Early Wildflowers" Ages: All
 Saturday 3:00-5:00 p.m.
 Free no registration required

There may not be many and they may be tiny, but we should be able to find the first brave wildflowers of the year. Meet at Redbud Valley.

26 "Family Journals" Ages: All
 Saturday 2:00-3:30 p.m.
 \$5 for general public \$2 for members

Bring the family and create a special memory to capture your walks in nature. Meet at Oxley. Please register in advance.

Brain Tan Buckskin

When: January 10 & 11 from 6:00-8:00 p.m.
and January 13 from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Ages: 12 & up

Tuition: \$8 for members. \$10 for non-members.

Learn this ancient technique of dressing hides used the world over by many cultures. Ancient peoples up to the 19th century used brain tan buckskin for bags, clothing, pillows, moccasins, and any other use where a soft and durable material is required. No tools are required for this hands-on workshop, only a willingness to put in the considerable effort it takes to turn a raw hide into velvet soft buckskin. Meet at Oxley. Please register in advance.

Nature Valentines



Date: Thursday, February 9

Time: 1:00-2:30 p.m. for ages 5 to 9 or
2:30-4:00 p.m. for ages 9 and up.

Tuition: \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members

Instructor: Heidi Contreras

Create a whimsical watercolor valentine inspired by nature. Expect a lot of fun as we draw, paint, embellish, and emboss!

Preregistration is required. A supply list will be provided. Fee must accompany registration.



Imagine....



--a soft silence, gray sky, flakes of snow falling softly; orange, yellow, and bronze grasses; catching flakes of snow, tingling, on your tongue; the sharp, cold feel of the air on your cheeks, nose, and ears; this is winter at Oxley. Getting too cold? Come inside, warm your hands in front of the fire, watch the birds and squirrels gather at the feeder, and visit a while. We look forward to seeing you!

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