

A Different Kind of Flannel



by Connie Blakley

While working in the garden a few months back, Calvin found an unusual (to us) caterpillar and we were both clueless as to its identity. The challenge in find a new species, at least to me, is the identification and sometimes I spend hours scouring books and web sites in search of an elusive species.

This caterpillar was covered in long silky hairs a grayish brown color which made it appear to be soft and furry. There was just a hint of reddish brown down the center of the back. I immediately assumed it was a moth because I had always heard moth caterpillars are usually furry. I searched every caterpillar and moth book we have but most field guides contain very few caterpillar photos. I then started searching the internet and found a wonderful site (<http://www.duke.edu/~jspippen/naturephotos/caterpillars.htm>) with lots of moth caterpillar photos and that is where I found a similar critter of a reddish brown color and decided I must at least be in the right family. I then went back to my books and sure enough finally narrowed it down to a Southern Flannel Moth.

The moth isn't nearly as interesting as the caterpillar; it has a wing spread of about 1 to 1-1/2 inches and a fat hairy body. Coloring is mostly white with a bit of yellow and brown on the forewing. The small family of flannel moths comprises only 11 species in North America. The larvae usually overwinter in their cocoons and that's exactly what ours is doing. Can't wait for spring to get a glimpse of the moth before we set it free.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 5

Botany•Entomology Twelfth Night Party, noon-4 pm
at home of Calvin & Connie Blakley, 281-358-5407

January 10*

ONC Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm
Program: Big Thicket National Preserve, by Joe Liggio

January 14*

OG Learning Corner, 6:30 pm
OG Meeting, 7:00 pm
Program: Bird Banding by Robert & Kay Lookingbill

January 19

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Hiway Pickup, 8:30 am

January 19

OG Field Trip to Chappell Hill & Washington County
with Leader Darrell Vollert

***Meeting Place: Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet (at Hilcroft), Houston, Texas**

January 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Map To Bayland



ONC Contact Information

ONC General Information

Calvin Blakley, 281-358-5407

Botany/Entomology

Russell Jeffords, 713-504-9215

LTNS

Aaron Stoley, 713-781-1372

Ornithology

Bernice Hotman, 713-782-7889

Adam Wood, 713-515-1692



Outdoor Nature Club
 P.O. Box 270894
 Houston TX
 77277-0894

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Editor:
 Connie Blakley
 2007 Wilderness Pt
 Humble TX 77339
 nature_notes1@outdoornatureclub.org

Address Changes:
 Margret Simmons
 6111 Bayou Bridge
 Houston TX 77096
 member1@outdoornatureclub.org

Memorials:
 Sylvia McCrevey
 P.O. Box 270894
 Houston TX 77277-0894
 memory1@outdoornatureclub.org

Labels/Mailing:
 Russell Jeffords

**ONC Appreciates
 Your Donations**

Donations to ONC are always appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. Memorials and Honor Gifts are contributed to the Sanctuary Fund for Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. Other gifts are used to fund special projects as designated by the donor. Thanks, everyone, for your generosity.

- in memory of Kay Lewis**
- Imogene Cummings*
 - Leland Day, Jr.*
 - Ms. Kathryn Gilson*
 - Walter & Carolyn Hesson*
 - Charles & Wanda Smith*

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