



January/February 2010
volume 61 ♦ number 3

Nature Notes

Outdoor Nature Club

our charter...

A nonprofit educational and scientific organization established in 1923 to protect and conserve natural resources by fostering an interest in nature study.

ONC

Outdoor Nature Club
P.O. Box 270894
Houston, TX 77277-0894
www.OutdoorNatureClub.org

Odonata On Parade



story and photo by Connie Blakley

One usually expects to see damselflies and dragonflies in the heat of summer, but when we were at LTNS on November 1 we found several species of Odonata at the pond on Cullinan Meadow. One of the most impressive, and new to the sanctuary, was the Variegated Meadowhawk (*Symptetrum corruptum*). There were at least three of these beauties flying near the pond and frequently perching on twigs near the grass.

This species is identified by its bright orange-red coloring, a yellow spot on the thorax, and the black spot on abdominal segments 8 and 9. Variegated Meadowhawks fly year-round but are more abundant in early spring and late fall so it's not surprising that we saw them in November.

Damselflies were also active that day. I don't usually attempt to ID damselflies—I don't have the patience!—but Calvin and I

took a few photos anyway. With help from Wanda Smith, who has studied Odonata extensively, we identified two of them. The Familiar Bluets were plentiful and an added bonus was seeing them in the tandem position (mating). We also saw and photographed a Common Spreadwing, which is so itty-bitty it disappeared in the reeds when perched.

All in all it was a productive day and we added three species to the LTNS Odonata list. I plan to submit a photo to Odonata Central (www.odonatacentral.org) to record the sighting in San Jacinto County.

Join us on January 16 at LTNS, help with trash pickup, then help us search Cullinan Meadow for wintering sparrows. We've had Henslow's and LeConte's in past years, so maybe we'll find them again this year. See you there!

Group Activities — January/February

ONC Contacts

ONC General Information

Calvin Blakley
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Botany/Entomology Group

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Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

Aaron Stoley
713-781-1372

Ornithology Group (OG)

Pam Smolen
832-212-1368
Adam Wood (Field Trips)
713-515-1692

Meting Places

All meetings are at Bayland Community Center (see map) unless otherwise noted.

Botany/Entomology

JANUARY 2, noon–4 pm
Twelfth Night Party at home of the Blakleys.

FEBRUARY 9, 7:30
The Beauty of Texas Wildflowers, presented by Carolyn Fannon.

Ornithology (OG)

Learning Corner, 6:30 pm
Program, 7:00 pm

JANUARY 11

Program to be determined; see *The Spoonbill* for additional information.

FEBRUARY 1

Birding & Bird Conservation in the English Lake District, by Helen & John Baines.

OG Field Trips

JANUARY 16

Birding at Brazos Bend State Park & Davis Estates with leader Bill Godley. Details to be published in *The Spoonbill*.

FEBRUARY 20

Birding on the Katy Prairie with leader Adam Wood. Details to be published in *The Spoonbill*.

ONC Meeting

JANUARY 14

Spring Creek Greenway Project by Dennis Johnston, Harris City Precinct 4 Park Administrator
7:00 pm – Refreshments
7:30 pm – Program

The Spring Creek Greenway will connect and protect up to 12,000 acres of forest, on both sides of the creek — a biologically diverse ecosystem that provides important habitat for many wildlife species, and aims to create an ecotourism mecca and a peaceful respite from busy urban lives for those from Houston or even nationwide.

At our January meeting, Dennis Johnston will tell us how this project evolved and what is planned going forward. See you there.

ONC Board Meeting

FEBRUARY 11, 7:00 pm

Board meeting at Bayland Community Center; all members are welcome.

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

JANUARY 16, 9:00 am

Visitors Day and Highway Pickup

Join us for trash pickup along our adopted highway adjacent to the sanctuary. Bring gloves, hat, water, etc. Highway pickup only takes about an hour, so be sure to also bring a lunch and plan to stay for a walk along the trails after pickup is completed.

FEBRUARY 20-21, Visitors Days

Join us for a day of relaxation in the woods. We should see some winter sparrows, and might see some early bloomers, such as Twayblade Orchids and Cardamine). If the Cardamine is blooming, we will probably find some Falcate orangetip butterflies. If the weather is mild, plan to camp on Saturday night.

January 2009

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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						

February 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Bayland Community Center 6400 Bissonnet (at Hillcroft)



Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary 2001 FM 945, Cleveland, TX



Other Notes of Interest

(Submit news and articles to editor – see back page for contact info)

ONC Appreciates Your Donations

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

In memory of John Tveten

*John & Gloria Jones
Charles Peterson
Aaron & Karen Stoley
Billie Strickland*

For LTNS Sanctuary Fund

Dave & Linda Knowles

ONC Supports Pyramid Magnolia Project

ONC has joined an initiative begun by Big Thicket Association (BTA) to protect the pyramid magnolia (*Magnolia pyramidata*) in Newton and Jasper counties. Texas conservationists have an opportunity to acquire a 296-acre tract in east Texas comprising several small populations of this rare beauty. To formalize the effort, BTA launched a campaign—Partners To Preserve Pyramid Magnolias—to purchase (or obtain a conservation easement) on the site.

BTA has pledged \$10,000 to begin the campaign. The conservation easement will be held by a land trust, and a management plan will be drafted by the partners participating in the project. ONC is partnering with BTA and

is represented by Charles Smith. From time to time he will provide information on progress of the project and is also available to answer questions.

Donations may be made to Big Thicket Association Land Fund, P.O. Box 198, Saratoga, TX, 77585.

Notes from Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS)

Fall is a busy season at the sanctuary and is the time of year when most of the trail maintenance takes place. Calvin Blakley and Charles Smith mowed meadows, trails, and fence lines. This year it was decided to mow King's Hill in September as an experiment in weed control. It seems for the past couple of years gumweed has grown abundantly and taken over on the hill, so this year King's Hill was mowed early while the gumweed was still blooming. We're hoping that mowing before the plant goes to seed will reduce the population. We'll have to wait until next fall to see if this made a difference.

November was trail maintenance month. Unfortunately, the day scheduled for maintenance was a rainy, dreary day so no work could be done. The three of us who showed up spent the day around a campfire "jawing" and reminiscing. Sergio and Wanda Henao postponed their visit to the following weekend, had much nicer weather, and were able to trim and paint trails.

Please Renew Your Membership

If you haven't already done so, please renew your membership in ONC. Your support is important and contributes to maintaining our educational libraries and Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary.

Three ways to renew:

- use the enclosed dues envelope
- use the form on back page
- go to www.outdoornatureclub.org and use the on line form

THANK YOU!



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Ornithology Group (you must be member of ONC to join OG Study Group)

Add \$14-individual, \$19-family _____

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