

Outdoor
Nature Club

Nature Notes

March '07
volume 58 • number 7

our charter ...

Outdoor Nature Club

was established in

1923 as a nonprofit

organization with the

purpose of protecting

and conserving our

natural resources by

fostering an interest

in nature study

ONC

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

our websites ...

OutdoorNatureClub.org
OrnithologyGroup.org

Winter Birding at Bosque del Apache NWR

*A Program by
John & Gloria Jones*

*Thursday, March 8
ONC Membership Meeting
(see inside for directions)*



Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, located along the Rio Grande River in the shelter of the Magdalena Mountains in central New Mexico, is a gigantic pantry for migrating and wintering birds. Each season, this refuge offers unique bird and wildlife viewing opportunities, but the winter season is by far the most popular. It is then that Bald Eagles and thousands of Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes flock to the fields and marshes. It is then that birders and nature photographers flock to the same areas. During this period, you can expect to rub shoulders and tripods with some of the outstanding nature photographers of the world.

What makes this place so special? Up to twenty thousand Snow Geese, two thousand Canadas, thirty thousand ducks of seventeen species, and fourteen thousand Sandhill Cranes help. But, it is the nearness of the wildlife and their high degree of visibility that really makes it special. Bird and mammal species that ordinarily are shy and wary often seem to show little fear there, especially when viewed from your vehicle. A twelve-mile auto tour loop offers a full range of wildlife viewing and photographic opportunities. It can be toured in two sections—the Marsh Loop and the Farm Loop. And, since early morning and late afternoon are the optimum periods for wildlife viewing and photography, both loops should be driven during both of those periods.

The Joneses visited the refuge on three occasions and are eager to make it four. A world-famous Festival of the Cranes is held every year the week before Thanksgiving with speakers, special tours, and arts and wildlife displays. If you are into nature festivals, this is a good one; but if you want to miss some of the crowds that the festival draws, visit around the first week in December.

John and Gloria are active members of Piney Woods Wildlife Society and are also members of ONC. They are avid birdwatchers and John is an accomplished nature photographer.

Group Activities

Botany•Entomology

Tuesday, March 13 , 7:30 pm

Bayland Community Center

Flowerless Plants — Liverworts and Mosses, presented by Paul Roling.

This will be an enlightening program to help us identify some of the less common plants and where to find them.

Ornithology (OG)

Monday, March 5

Bayland Community Center

Learning Corner: 6:30 pm

Program: 7:00 pm

The Great Texas Birding Classic, presented by Carol Jones.

OG FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, March 18

Birding at Bolivar and Texas City Dike with Leader Adam Wood.

See *The Spoonbill* for details.

ONC Regular Meeting

Thursday, March 8

Social, 7:00 pm; Program, 7:30 pm

Bayland Community Center

Winter Birding at Bosque del Apache NWR, presented by John and Gloria Jones.

Join us for a beautiful photographic tour of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. John is an accomplished nature photographer and both Joneses are avid birdwatchers. They have visited the refuge three times and are eager to return. See Page 1 for more about Bosque del Apache, and be sure to join us on March 8.

LTNS Visitors Weekend

March 17-18

By mid-March wildflowers should be blooming and native trees will be flowering. Dogwood and Redbud are beautiful in the spring and there are plenty of both species at LTNS.

There's a good chance of finding lingering winter sparrows at Cullinan Meadow and perhaps some early migrant songbirds. Plan to camp in the Cove or join us for the day.

ONC Spring Field Trip

Saturday, March 31

Wildflowers of Dewitt County

Leader: Derek Muschalek

Details for this trip are still being formulated at press time. Dewitt County has had a rather dry winter and Derek is concerned the wildflowers may be sparse, so we are asking everyone who is interested to please sign up for the trip and we will keep you posted of the details.

To sign up for this trip, please contact Connie Blakley. Email info on back page of this newsletter, or call and leave a message at 281-358-5407. More general information on next page.

Mark Your April Calendars

Saturday, April 14 : SPRING FEAST

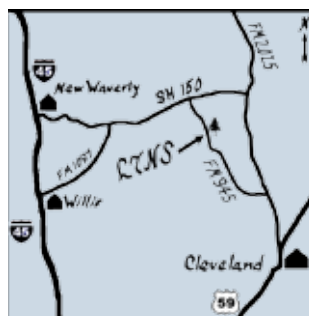
Little Thicket Nature Sancturay

Formerly known as "Reunion Day" this is our most popular event at LTNS. Everyone brings a covered dish and we eat to our heart's content—thus the new name—then we walk the trails so we don't feel so guilty! Mark your calendars and be sure to join us.

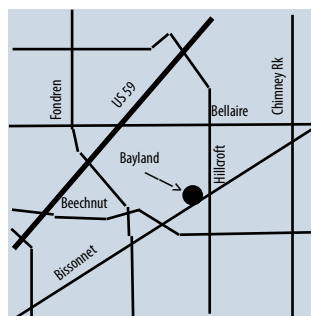
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Map to LTNS



Map to Bayland



Contact Persons

ONC General Information

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Botany/Entomology

Russell Jeffords, 713-504-9215

Ornithology

Michael Williams, 713-263-1919

Adam Wood, 713-515-1692

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

Aaron Stoley, 713-781-1372

Field Trip

Dewitt County Wildflowers

On May 4, 1999, the 76th Texas Legislature passed HR 769 designating DeWitt County as Wildflower Capital of Texas. No where else in the state can you find the variety of wildflowers that you do in DeWitt County. Over 1,000 species of wildflowers which bloom in the county throughout the year have been catalogued.

Dewitt County sits at the confluence of soil and climatic conditions of the hill country, central and coastal plains, and the south Texas desert region. Thus vegetation is found native to all these areas.

Cuero, the capital of Dewitt County, is site #28 on the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail so this area is also a popular destination for birdwatchers. Cuero is also proud of its history and has laid out a 25-mile historical driving tour, which is popular among photographers.

This is a popular destination for ONC members and we've hosted two field trips here in the past. We plan to study wildflowers and butterflies on Saturday. However, members often plan to arrive on Friday and stay for the weekend so they can experience all the amenities offered in the area.

If you plan to stay the weekend, information about lodging and RV parks is available on the internet at www.cuero.org/lodging.shtml. For those without internet access, here is a brief listing:

Motels

Antlers Inn

(361-275-5766)

1304 E. Broadway
Highway 87 South
Cuero, TX 77954

Executive Inn & Suites

(361-275-2000)

2125 N. Esplanade
Cuero, TX 77954

Houston Motel

(361-275-3437)

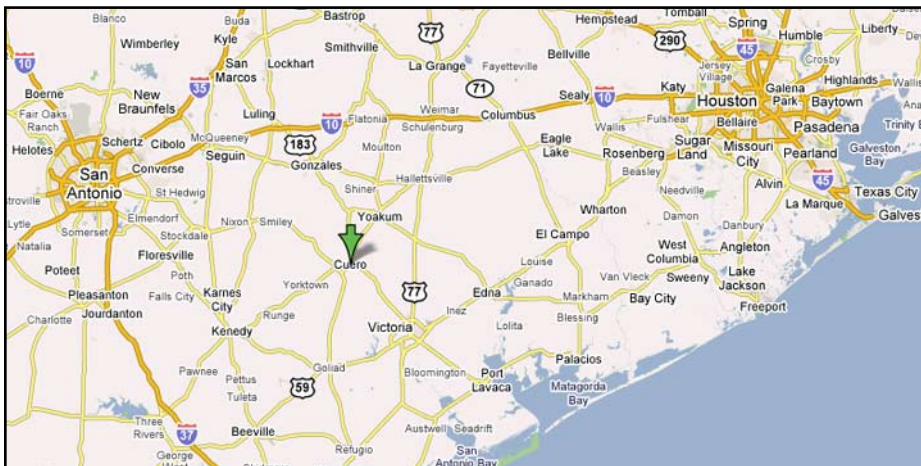
2117 N. Esplanade
Cuero, TX 77954

RV Park

Houston Motel & RV Park

(361-275-3437)

2117 N. Esplanade
Cuero, TX 77954



Donations

Donations ... Honor Gifts ... Memorials

Donations are always appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. Memorials and Honor Gifts are contributed to the Permanent Endowment Sanctuary Fund for Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. Other gifts go to special projects designated by donors. Thanks, everyone, for your generosity.

Donations for Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

Ron Anderson

Gary & Patricia Brockway

Cissy Donaldson

Julia Garrett

Bill Godley

Donna Grittmann

Flo Hannah

Gwen Kunz

William & Kathryn Medford

Barbara Neal

Bessie & Jerry O'Brien

Aaron & Karen Stoley

Robert Wall

General Fund Donations

Walt & Carolyn Hesson

Paul & Bette Lester

David & Patricia Lewis

Chong OK Matthews

Clark Terrell

thank you

Leave a Legacy

Please consider including ONC in your will or estate plan. By so doing, you can help ensure that our sanctuary will be protected for future generations.

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Read Nature Notes in COLOR at
www.OutdoorNatureClub.org

Nature Fest 2007

Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center
Saturday, March 3, 9 am to 4 pm

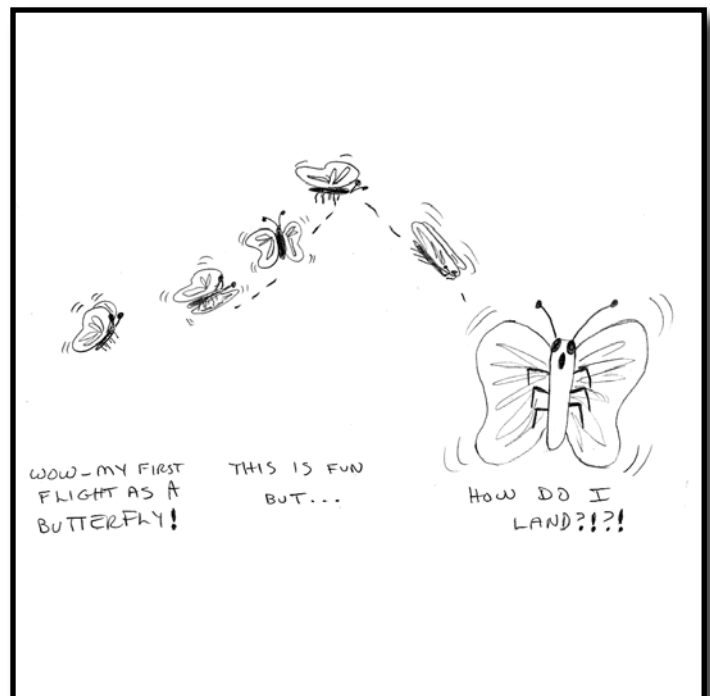
ONC will be an exhibitor at this year's Nature Fest. We plan to have posters, photos and information about Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, a couple of microscopes, and our popular mystery box.

This event draws hundreds of people. If you can spare a couple of hours to help at the booth, come on out or call Calvin Blakley (281-358-5407) to sign up for a time.

There will be guided tours (walks and pontoon boats), speakers, bird banding, nature crafts, and a saltwater touch tank, among other events all geared toward nature education. The best part is ... IT'S FREE!

Directions to the park: Go north on US 59 to the exit for FM 1960. Go through the first light, then turn left at the next light (top of the overpass). Go past all the Humble shopping areas to Kenswick Drive (about two miles) and turn right; there's a sign at the intersection. The park is at the end of Kenswick Drive along Spring Creek.

Just For Fun ... by Wanda Smith



March 31 Field Trip

IS A "GO"

Wildflowers & Butterflies

Saturday, March 31
Cuero, Texas

Leader: Derek Muschalek

Meeting Time: 8:00 am

Meeting Place: Cuero City Park

Directions:

Coming into Cuero on US Hwy 77, turn left (east) on Broadway at the McDonald's. Go east on E. Broadway past the Dewitt County Historical Museum about 1/2 mile. The City Park is on the right, across from Wal-Mart.

We will be searching the back roads for wildflowers and butterflies. Derek lives in this area and is an expert on local flora and fauna. He has led two previous field trips for ONC in Dewitt County, which have been both fun and educational.

For additional information refer to write-up in this issue. See you there!

