

our charter ...

**OUTDOOR NATURE
CLUB IS A NONPROFIT
EDUCATIONAL AND
SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZA-
TION ESTABLISHED IN
1923 TO PROTECT AND
CONSERVE NATURAL
RESOURCES BY FOS-
TERING AN INTEREST IN
NATURE STUDY**

ONC

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photo by Calvin Blakley

Mourning Moth

story by Connie Blakley
photo by Calvin Blakley

Spring has arrived and with it comes a bounty of wildflowers and insects. I was in the garden the other day admiring a patch of baby blue eyes; suddenly a small black insect flew in and landed on one of the flowers. At first I thought it was a fly but then realized it was too big for a fly. I grabbed my close-up binoculars and after several minutes of observation and a search of the field guides, I found that we had a lovely Mourning Moth (*Thyris sepulchralis*).

This species is not uncommon in East Texas but is not easily spotted due its small size (less than one-inch wingspan). I never would have seen it except it liked to perch and feed on the baby blue eyes

flowers. The adult is dark brown to black with white translucent window spots on the upper wings, which are also edged in white. It is a daytime flier and in our garden it stayed near the ground when flying. With its rapid wing beats and nondescript coloring, it would easily disappear into the grass.

Host plants for *Thyris* Moth are clematis and grapes. The larvae are leaf rollers or borers in stems of host plants. We have been observing this moth for a couple of weeks so I'm sure it will be gone soon. But since there are plenty of food plants in the forest around our home, I hope we will see more of these delicate insects in our garden.

Group Activities

Botany/Entomology

Tuesday, April 8, 7:30 pm
 Bayland Community Center
 6400 Bissonnet (at Hillcroft)

Some Local Species of Cyperaceae and Juncaceae and Some Nomenclature Changes, by Dr. Larry Brown. Although retired from Houston Community College, Dr. Brown continues to teach a botany course at University of Houston Clear Lake Campus. He is coauthor with Charles Peterson of "Vascular Flora of the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary" and with Hatch and Ghandi of the "1990 Checklist of the Vascular Flora of Texas" and has written numerous keys for plants of the Houston area. We are fortunate for all the contributions in field trips and programs he has made to our group.

Ornithology (OG)

Monday, April 7
 Bayland Community Center
 6400 Bissonnet (at Hillcroft)

Learning Corner, 6:30 pm
 Program, 7:00 pm
Birding By Ear
 by Dr. Mike Austin

OG Field Trips

REGULAR MONTHLY FIELD TRIP
Saturday, April 19, 7:00 am
Meet in parking lot near Admissions Building

Birding at Armand Bayou Nature Center with Leader George Regmund. Our main targets for the trip will be spring migrants like vireos, thrushes, buntings, grosbeaks, warblers, orioles and tanagers. This will be a full day trip. Bring binoculars, field guide, hat, sunscreen, water, snacks, camera, spotting scope, rain gear in case it rains and a lunch.

OG QUARTERLY FIELD TRIP

April 10-13
 Laredo, San Ygnacia and Falcon Dam. Leaders: Susan Foster and Joel Ruiz

If you plan to attend this trip, please contact Adam Wood for details.

ONC Regular Monthly Meeting

NO MEETING IN APRIL
NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, May 8

Introduction to Geology to be presented by ONC Member Aaron Stoley. Details in next issue.

ONC Board Meeting

Thursday, April 10, 7:00 pm
Bayland Community Center

All members are welcome at ONC board meetings. If you plan to attend, please check our web site to confirm the date and time.

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Visitor Weekend & Trash Pickup April 5-6

Join us for a spring weekend in the East Texas forest. The wildflowers are blooming and butterflies abound. We should also see some spring migrant birds; it's nesting season and a good time to learn bird calls.

On Saturday, April 5, we will pick up trash along our adopted highway adjacent to the sanctuary. Bring a hat and sturdy gloves.

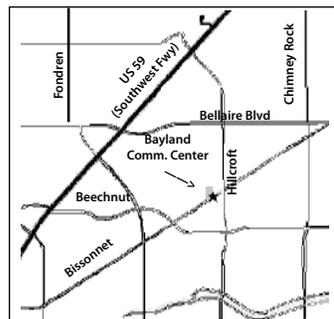
Primitive camping available in the Cove at LTNS or there is a motel in Coldspring. Contact Aaron Stoley for additional information.

Trash Pickup
Saturday, April 5
8:30 am
Meet at entrance to LTNS

April 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			

Map To Meeting Place



ONC Contact Information

ONC General Information
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Botany/Entomology
 Russell Jeffords, 713-504-9215

LTNS
 Aaron Stoley, 713-781-1372

Ornithology
 Bernice Hotman, 713-782-7889
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Notes of Interest

ONC Elects Officers

At the regular monthly meeting in March, ONC members elected its slate of officers for the 2008-2009 season.

These officers will begin their terms with our next fiscal year, June 1, 2008. Elected to serve two-year terms were:

Executive VPSergio Henao
Sanctuaries VPAaron Stoley
Treasurer.....Farrar Stockton
Custodian.....Russell Jeffords

Other officers who will continue for the second year of their two-year terms are:

Acting PresidentCalvin Blakley
Membership VP.....Margret Simmons
SecretaryWanda Smith

Next time to see one of our officers, please say "thanks for helping ONC." Our organization depends on volunteers and without them there would be no ONC. Thanks, everyone!

New Memorials Chair Appointed

Sylvia McCrevey decided last month to retire as Memorial Chair for ONC. For the past two years Sylvia has worked quietly behind the scenes to collect memorials, write thank-you notes, and keep the Memorials Book up to date. Thank you, Sylvia, for your volunteer service.

Gwen Kunz, another long time volunteer and past Treasurer, has agreed to take over the task. Gwen has requested you send memorials to her home rather than our post office box. The address is available on our web site and also on the back page of *Nature Notes*.

Thanks, Sylvia and Gwen, for giving your time to ONC.

New Gate Lock Installed at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

For several years we have talked about changing the gate lock at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary from a keyed lock to a combination lock. We needed to do something because the existing Yale lock carries a "do not duplicate" registration and blanks are hard to get to make more keys

for members. Furthermore, a combination lock precludes losing keys and makes access control easier. The Sanctuary Committee decided the time is right for a switch, and a new chain and lock will be installed soon after you receive this newsletter.

We will e-mail the combination and a copy of sanctuary rules to those members who are known to regularly visit the sanctuary. Access to the sanctuary on non-open house days is available only to members who meet eligibility requirements, so please do not give the combination to others. If we miss sending you the combination, contact the Sanctuary Vice-president, LTNS1@outdoornatureclub.org to request access.

ONC Web Site Adds Photo Gallery

At the request of several members, we have added a photo section to ONC's web site. We are starting out with two sections, one for photos from Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary and one for photos from ONC field trips.

This is an experiment to see how much interest there is in posting recent pictures to our web site. The intent is to show recent events and happenings and not to archive. Thus "old" pictures will be purged to keep the number manageable. For now pictures will be posted with most recent on top, scrolling to oldest at bottom. If there is enough interest we can add pages for different subjects.

Prepare pictures in medium quality jpeg format, 72 dpi, to fit in a 320x320 pixel box. Submit by attaching them to your e-mail and send to pictures1@outdoornatureclub.org. There is also a link on the web site to submit photos. Be sure to include a caption for each picture. A good program for sizing photos is Irfanview (it's free!). Remember that anything posted on the Internet is freely copied and used by the world.



**Start shootin'
and send us your
photos!**

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New Sightings at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

If you've never been to LTNS, you're missing a golden opportunity to learn about East Texas nature. Long time members who regularly visit the sanctuary can help you identify species and tell you where you might find the more commonly occurring plants, animals, insects, etc. But even the old-timers are occasionally surprised by finding a new species. During visitors weekend, March 15-16, there were three new sightings.

Louisiana Pine Snake



We don't often see snakes at LTNS, although we know they're around. It's just that they are as wary of us as we are afraid of them. We know they like wood piles so we are always cautious when

grabbing wood for the fire pit. Thus it was that Charlie Smith found a Louisiana Pine Snake curled atop the wood pile when he removed the plastic covering.

The Louisiana Pine Snake is not commonly seen and its numbers are dwindling due to loss of habitat. Isn't it nice that we can provide a home for this lovely creature.

White M Hairstreak Butterfly

The butterflies were out in full force this weekend and on Sunday Sergio and Wanda Henao found a White M Hairstreak near the entrance to the Cove by the flagpole. Its blue coloring and markings on the underside of wing are very distinctive. We'll keep an eye out for this one at future gatherings.

Southern Brook Lamprey



While conducting a butterfly count at LTNS on Saturday, March 15, David Henderson and his team found a school of lampreys in Mill Creek near Boy Scout Bridge. What a great find! This nonparasitic species is probably resident in LTNS streams, we've just never looked closely enough to see them.