

Outdoor  
Nature Club

# Nature Notes

September 2007  
volume 59 • number 1

## our charter ...

OUTDOOR NATURE CLUB  
IS A NONPROFIT EDU-  
CATIONAL AND SCIEN-  
TIFIC ORGANIZATION  
ESTABLISHED IN 1923 TO  
PROTECT AND CONSERVE  
OUR NATURAL RESOURC-  
ES BY FOSTERING AN IN-  
TEREST IN NATURE STUDY

ONC

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story by Charlie Smith  
photos by Wanda Smith

The Amazon basin covers an area almost as large as the lower 48 states. The Amazon river is the largest river in the world by volume, with a flow to the sea greater than the next eight largest rivers combined, more than 10 times the flow of the Mississippi, and one-fifth the flow of all the world's fresh water entering the ocean. With a length of about 4000 miles it is arguably the longest river in the world, up to seven miles wide between banks, and 28 miles wide during flooded season.

The Amazon basin contains one-half of the world's remaining rain forest, about two million square miles, nurtured by 100 inches of rain a year. The rain forest produces 20% of the earth's oxygen and stores 10% of the earth's carbon in ecosystems. The biodiversity of the Amazon rain forest is immense, contain-

ing more than one-third of all species in the world.

We traveled to Brazil in July to experience this incredible place, starting in Manaus, a large city in the middle of the Amazon basin. We boarded a boat on the Rio Negro River and soon entered the Solimoes River, the main tributary of the Amazon, and traveled upstream about 1000 miles to the Columbia border. In 15 days we witnessed a sampling of what this vast ecosystem has to offer.

July is the flooded season in the Amazon, with water levels 40 feet or higher than in the dry season. This allowed us to travel by canoe into the forest and numerous lakes along the river. We were able to experience this water world, the forest, and its incredible creatures. We saw over 200 species of birds, including spectacular parrots, macaws, hawks, and many indigenous species. Butterflies and moths lit up the forest. Monkeys frolicked in the forest canopy and sloths clung motionless

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# Group Activities

## Botany/Entomology

**Tuesday, September 11,  
7:30 pm**

Bayland Community Center  
6400 Bissonnet (at Hillcroft)

**Colorful Views of Coastal Prairie Vegetation**, by Carolyn Fannon. Carolyn is well known in our area for her knowledge of coastal prairies and her excellent nature photographs. Her work has appeared in several publications and can be viewed online at the UH eih website.

## Botany Field Trip

**Sunday, September 30**

Burroughs Park with Leader, Dr. Larry Brown  
This is a joint field trip with Native Plant Society of Texas, Houston Chapter. See details next page.

## Ornithology

**Monday, September 10**

Bayland Community Center  
6400 Bissonnet (at Hillcroft)  
Learning Corner, 6:30 pm  
Program, 7:00 pm  
**The State of Texas Parks** by George Bristol

## OG Field Trip

**Saturday, September 22**

This month's trip is our annual Hawk Watch trip to Smith Point. The trip leader will be John Arvin of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory; he is one of the senior Hawk Watch counters and organizers. Meet at the hawk watch tower, Smith Point, 8:30 a.m.

## OG Field Trip for Beginning Birders

**Sunday, September 30  
(Note day is SUNDAY)**

Join us at Cullinan Park ready to meet new people and to ask questions and learn more about birding and

the birding community. We will meet in the parking lot near the boardwalk at Cullinan Park at 8:00 a.m. The park is located on the west side of TX 6 before you reach US 90 in Sugarland.

## ONC Regular Monthly Meeting

**Thursday, September 11,**

**Refreshments: 7:00 pm**

**Program: 7:30 pm**

Bayland Community Center  
6400 Bissonnet (at Hillcroft)

**Flooded Rainforests of the Amazon** presented by Charlie and Wanda Smith

The Smiths ventured to Brazil this summer and experienced life on the Amazon for 15 days. They will share their experiences at our September meeting. See more in our front page story.

## Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

**Visitors Weekend  
September 22-23**

Join us for our first camp out of the season at the Thicket. On Saturday morning we will pick up trash along our adopted section of FM 945. The remainder of the weekend is for exploring the thicket in search of fall bloomers and butterflies.

**Saturday, September 22**

**Highway Trash Pickup**

**Time: 8:30 am**

**Place: LTNS FM 945**

## September 2007

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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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# Notes of Interest

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## Amazon ... Continued from page 1

to the high branches. Fish, snakes, frogs, and insects added to the variety.

We were privileged to meet the people of the Amazon and experience their way of life where the canoe is their only means of travel and fish is their primary source of food and money. They were friendly people who ap-

peared happy and content in their simple life style.

Please join us at the September ONC general meeting for more pictures and accounts of the Amazon, and don't miss the OG meeting on October 1<sup>st</sup> when George Regmund, one of our guides on the trip, will give a program on the birds of the Amazon.



*The friendly Amazonian people live a simple life with the canoe being their only means of travel.*



*One of many beautiful butterflies (as yet unidentified) found in the Amazon rainforest. To see more, join us at the September 13 ONC meeting.*

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## ONC Botany & NPSOT Field Trip

**Sunday, September 30**

**Burroughs Park**

**Meet at Houston Arboretum, 8:15 am**

**Leader: Dr. Larry Brown**

The 320-acre Burroughs Park in northwest Harris County will be our first botany outing for this season. The park consists of soccer fields, picnic facilities, a seven-acre pond, and eight miles of hiking trails, mostly through soodlands. There are many aquatic, wetland, and woodland flowrs. Several years ago, the *Bidens aris-tosa* formed a most impressive display along one side of the pond.

This is a joint field trip with Houston Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas. We will meet at Houston Arboretum, 4501 Woodway, and depart the parking lot PROMPTLY at 8:30 am. Be sure to wear appropriate footwear for walking through wet or dry fields, bring drinking water, bug spray, and a packed lunch.

Field trips normally end after lunch. For additional information or questions, contact Paul Roling at 281-353-7413 or [PVRoling@att.net](mailto:PVRoling@att.net).



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## ONC Appreciates Your Generous 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 fund special projects as designated by the donor. Thanks, everyone for your generosity.

**in memory of Helen Wolfer**

*Calvin & Connie Blakley*

*Bill & Jean Harwell*

**for LTNS Sanctuary Fund**

*Ellyn Roof*



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