

Outdoor  
Nature Club

November/December 2009  
volume 61 ♦ number 2

# Nature Notes

**Outdoor Nature Club**  
*our charter...*

*A nonprofit educational  
and scientific organiza-  
tion 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](http://www.OutdoorNatureClub.org)



story by Connie Blakley

photo by Wanda Smith

**A**nyone who is a butterfly enthusiast knows we have many beautiful species right here in southeast Texas. But did you also know there are some equally if not more beautiful species of moths. The day-flying scarlet-bodied wasp moth falls into this category. This small moth, with a wing span of about 31 mm, is native to Florida but ranges as far east as Texas and is usually found in coastal counties. Its vibrant coloring makes it easy to identify if you're lucky enough to find one. Wanda Smith found one in early October nectaring on its host plant hempweed vine (*Milkania scandens*) at her home in Colmesneil—a record for Tyler County.

Scarlet-bodied wasp moths exhibit distinctive mating behavior in order to avoid being eaten by predators during courtship.

This discovery was made by a research team from Wake Forest University while conducting studies in Florida. The male moth extracts toxins from dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*) then sprays the female with a poisonous substance just before mating. Not only are both partners protected from predators, but the female also passes the toxin to her eggs thereby protecting her young.

If you have hempweed vine on your property, be sure to keep a watchful eye on the plant for a scarlet-bodied wasp moth. When you first see one, you might mistake it for a wasp and be fearful of being stung. But don't worry, it will not sting. It's a moth, after all, so you can leisurely observe this interesting natural phenomenon.

# Group Activities — November/December

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

## ONC Contacts

### ONC General Information

Calvin Blakley  
281-358-5407

### Botany/Entomology Group

Russell Jeffords  
713-504-9215

### 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

**NOVEMBER 10, 7:30 pm**  
*Asclepias Species and Other Genera of the Milkweed Family*, presented by Flo Hannah.

**DECEMBER 8, 7:30**  
*Flowers of the Wetland Prairie at Sheldon Lake State Park*, presented by Dr. Paul Roling.

## Ornithology (OG)

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

**NOVEMBER 2**  
*Wingbeats Over Texas*, by Malcolm Mark Swan.

**DECEMBER 7**  
*Whooping Cranes*, by Tonya Nix, USFWS Aransas Pass National Wildlife Refuge.



## OG Field Trips

**NOVEMBER 21**  
Birding at Huntsville State Park (\$4 entrance fee). We will meet at 8:00 am at the entrance parking lot.

Huntsville State Park is a 2083 acre park that lies in the pineywoods of the Sam Houston National Forest. A dominate feature of the park is the 210-acre Lake Raven, where we will be on the look out for Wood Duck, Canvasback, American Goldeneye, Bufflehead, and Eared Grebe.

Directions: Take I-45 North out of Houston to Park Road 40 (Exit 109) in Huntsville. Take a left (southwest) on Park Road 40 and go six miles to the park entrance parking lot.

**DECEMBER 19**  
**Houston Christmas Bird Count**  
In lieu of a field trip in December, please plan to help with the ONC/OG sponsored CBC. To sign up, contact David Sarkozi.

### Bayland Community Center 6400 Bissonnet (at Hillcroft)



## No ONC Meeting in November

Due to Bayland Community Center being closed on our regular meeting day, there will not be an ONC meeting in November. In lieu of ONC meeting, please plan to attend the Botany/Entomology and the Ornithology meetings.

## Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

**NOVEMBER 21-22, Visitors Day**  
Fall is a beautiful season at the sanctuary. There are usually plenty of mushrooms, a few fall bloomers, and winter birds have arrived. We'll be on the lookout for Henslow's and LeConte's sparrows—both have spent winters on Big and Cullinan meadows in past years. If skies are clear, we'll have a telescope set up on Martin Flat for stargazing.

### Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary 2001 FM 945, Cleveland, TX



### November 2009

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					

### December 2009

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		

# Other Notes of Interest

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

## In memory of John L. Tveten

John Tveten passed away on October 12 after a brief bout with cancer. John served as president of ONC in 1969-70 and has been a friend, mentor, and teacher to many ONC members during his long association with the club.

John was a walking encyclopedia of all things natural and happily shared that knowledge through publications and lectures. His weekly column Nature Trails ran in the Houston Chronicle for 25 years. John and his wife Gloria devoted their time to photography and writing and jointly published, among others, nature books on birds, flowers, and butterflies of Houston and southeast Texas.

We will miss John's enthusiasm and his spirit of generosity, but most of all we will miss his friendship.

## 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 memoriam*

#### **for Ellen Red**

*Imogene Cummings  
Paul & Bette Lester  
Billie Strickland*

#### **for Bob Martin**

*Calvin & Connie Blakley  
Imogene Cummings*

#### **for John Tveten**

*Calvin & Connie Blakley*



## Shell exhibit gifted to ONC



ONC is honored that Mildred Elkins has agreed to donate her shell exhibit to the club. The exhibit was designed and assembled by Mildred's sister, Helen Ebersbacher, an avid sheller who also crafted jewelry and other artifacts from her shell collection. The exhibit, encased in a beautiful wooden box, is a work of art as well an educational tool. It has been displayed over the years at numerous nature festivals, Earth Day celebrations, and ONC functions as the centerpiece of ONC's booth and always attracts a crowd.

## Notes from Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS)

September at the thicket was trash pickup weekend. We had a good turnout and beautiful weather. Thanks to the following for helping to pick up trash along our adopted section of FM945: Calvin Blakley, Leland Day, Kellene Jarratt, Charles & Wanda Smith, and Aaron & Karen Stoley. Calvin set up his telescope Saturday night on Martin Flat and members got some good looks at Jupiter and three of its moons. Viewers got a special treat as the moon Io traversed in front of Jupiter and the shadow was visible on the planet. The photo at right was taken with a special video cam attached to the scope. The video is then processed with software that creates a graphic image.



**ONC**

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

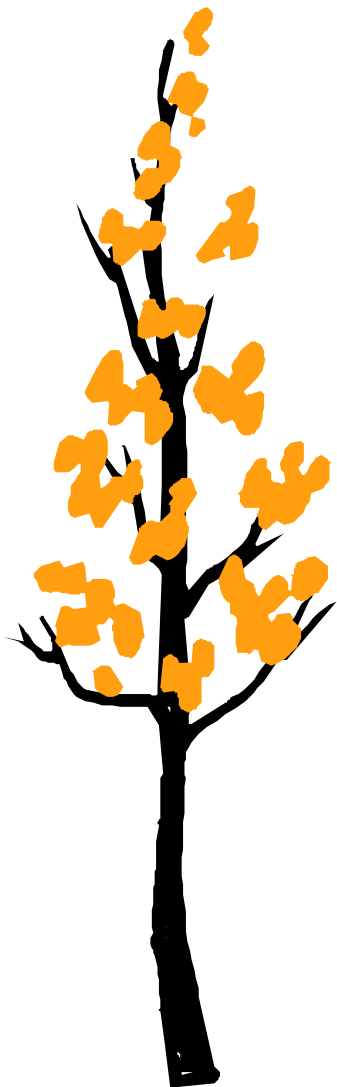
**Memorials:**

Gwen Kunz  
2001 Holcombe Blvd. #2901  
Houston TX 77030-4231  
memory1@outdoornatureclub.org

**Labels/Mailing:**

Russell Jeffords

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# Fall at LTNS

*Mark your calendar — Visitors Weekend  
November 21–22*

*...something for everyone...  
autumn leaves, mushrooms, winter birds,  
indian pipes, star gazing, and more*

