

Outdoor
Nature Club

Nature Notes

December '05
volume 57 • number 4

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



A reproduction print of Reddish Egret, or "Purple Heron," John James Audubon's plate 256 is one of four prints donated to ONC for fund raising. See the other prints inside on page 3.

Audubon print set donated for fund raising

By Calvin R. Blakley, Ph.D.
Acting President

ONC life member Katrina Ladwig, who joined our club in the fifties, has generously donated a set of four reproductions of John James Audubon's prints to ONC for fund raising purposes. The prints were commissioned by Northwestern Mutual Insurance Company for their 1960 calendar and these oversized copies were printed for promotional purposes. They are printed on 16"x21" heavy paper with a 12"x18" picture area. The set includes: Reddish egret or "Purple Heron," plate 256, originally printed 1835; Common Loon or "Great Northern Diver," plate 306, originally printed 1836; "Red-breasted Merganser," plate 301, originally printed 1838; and Sage Grouse or "Cock of the Plains," plate 371, originally printed 1837. They are in excellent condition and are enclosed in a heavy paper portfolio with a descriptive sheet.

Our board decided the best format for auctioning the set of four prints would be via the Internet, but bids can also be submitted by mail for those who don't have access to the Internet. This way all our members will be able to participate. The bid closing date is noon, January 14, 2006, for Internet bids. For bids sent via mail, they must reach our PO Box by January 12, 2006.

We are publishing a copy of the prints in this issue so everyone can see how beautiful they are, but to really appreciate the quality and color reproduction you can also view the prints and check on the latest bid at our website, OutdoorNatureClub.org. There is a link on our website to place a bid, or you can send an e-mail to Auction_bid@outdoornatureclub.org giving your name and bid. Send mail bids to ONC, PO box 270894, Houston, TX 77277. You may also view the prints at the January 12, 2006, ONC meeting and place a bid at that time. The successful bid amount will be posted on our web site and the bidder notified to make arrangements for payment and pick up.

Thanks again to Katrina for this wonderful donation.

Group Activities

Membership Renewal

Conchology

Saturday, December 3, 6:00 pm

NOTE: Date Change

Bayou Manor, 7th Floor
4141 S. Braeswood

The group's "traditional" Christmas seafood buffet is a popular event. Bring a covered dish and join us for our holiday celebration.

Botany • Entomology

Tuesday, December 13, 7:30 pm

Bayland Community Center

Summer Wildflowers of Houston, by Leland Day.

Ornithology (OG)

Monday, December 5

Bayland Community Center

Learning Corner: 6:30 pm

Houston Area Winter Sparrows

Program: 7:00 pm

Texas Rarities and TBRC by Dr. Keith Arnold, Texas A&M University

OG FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, December 17

Houston Christmas Bird Count

In lieu of a field trip in December, we encourage everyone to participate in our club's Christmas Bird Count, centered near Baytown. For additional information

or to be assigned to a team, contact David Sarkozi, david@sarkozi.net or 713-412-4409.

ONC Regular Meeting

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, January 12

Bayland Community Center

Program: *Marine Life through Underwater Photography*, by Frank & Joyce Burek, Texas Underwater Photo Society

ONC Board Meeting

December 8, 7:30 pm

Bayland Community Center

Board meetings are open to everyone.

Upcoming in January

January 7

Botany • Entomology Twelfth Night Party

January 9

OG Meeting, Rio Grande Valley birding

January 12

ONC Meeting, see above

January 21

OG Field Trip, birding in Northeast Texas

January 21-22

LTNS Visitors Weekend and Highway

Trash Pickup along our adopted road

January 26

Conchology Meeting

Dear members,

Thank you for your loyal support and participation during this past year as a member of Outdoor Nature Club. I'd like to invite you to continue your association with ONC by renewing your membership.

Your member support plays a vital role in ONC's success. One of our goals, through field trips and monthly programs on a variety of subjects, is to educate our members and the public at large about the natural sciences. We achieve this goal through our parent organization ONC as well as through our special study groups, which include botany/entomology, conchology, and ornithology.

We are also committed to protect and conserve our natural resources. To this end, we have ensured the protection of 700 acres of East Texas forest, the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary on the edge of Texas' Big Thicket area. Through dues, donations, and volunteering, you our members help to support and maintain the LTNS.

Your membership is important to us and our resources are always accessible should you need additional information. The enclosed dues envelope is for your convenience and I hope you will take a few moments to renew your ONC membership.

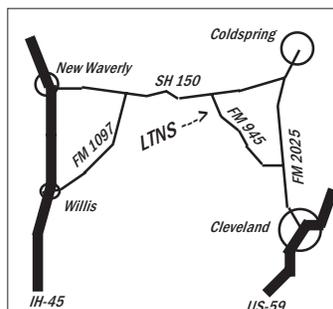
Thank you in advance for your continued support!

Calvin R. Blakley
ONC Acting President

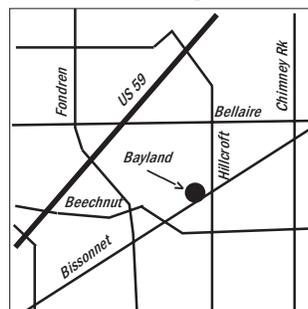
December 2005

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

Map to LTNS



Map to Bayland



Contact Persons

Conchology
Elizabeth Ruthven, 713-861-7301

Botany/Entomology
Russell Jeffords, 713-504-9215

Ornithology
Michael Williams, 713-228-9064

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary
Aaron Stoley, 713-781-1372

Trail Maintenance Report from Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

by Connie Blakley

It was a beautiful weekend November 12-13 for trail maintenance at LTNS. Thank goodness we had good turnout with 10 people arriving Saturday morning, clippers and gloves in hand, to help clear and mark trails. We divided into teams of two and spread out; there was plenty of work as a result of Hurricane Rita. Branches needed to be trimmed overhead and fallen limbs and debris needed to be cleared off the trails to eliminate as much "trip hazard" as possible. Also, most of the trails needed to be marked with tree paint so future visitors unfamiliar with the trails can find their way. By noon everyone was ready to take a break. After lunch, everyone hit the trails again, snipping, clearing and painting and by about 4:00 we were plumb tired!

There was much more damage than reported in last month's newsletter. Unfortunately, we lost numerous old growth oak and other hardwood trees. I counted at least ten on the trails I covered and I know there were more in remote areas. My favorite white oak tree

on Dillo Wallo Trail was downed. I shed a tear over that one; she was so majestic and I would estimate was near 100 years old. But the forest will regenerate itself — that's what forests do — so I know in another 100 years there will be another oak in the same spot just as beautiful as the one we lost.

In between trail maintenance, a few workers found time to enjoy the outdoors. Wanda and Mary Helen spotted two woodcocks near Little Jordan Trail, Cissy and Kellene found a bright orange, freshly emerged amanita mushroom on the road to Little Jordan, Connie and Wanda found fresh Indian Pipes on Half Moon Lake Trail, and I'm sure there were other sightings that I didn't hear about.

We need to say a very special "thank you" to those folks who gave up their Saturday to help with trail maintenance. Without our volunteers, we could not exist; they were: Calvin Blakley, Connie Blakley, Leland Day, Cissy Donaldson, Kellene Jarratt, Mary Helen Pritchett, Wanda Smith, Charlie Smith, DeDe Snavelly, and Aaron Stoley.

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.

**Donation of Audubon Prints
for silent auction**
Katrina Ladwig

In memory of Mary Gillette
Ellen Red
Charles & Wanda Smith

In memory of Mary Tigner
Ellen Red

Donation to Sanctuary Fund
Mary Lippman

thank you

More Audubon prints ...



Sage Grouse or "Cock of the Plains,"
plate 371



Red-breasted Merganser,
plate 301



Common Loon or "Great Northern Diver,"
plate 306

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.

Nature Notes

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Read *Nature Notes* in COLOR at
www.OutdoorNatureClub.org

In the beginning ... or, how the Ornithology Group got its start

[Editor's note: Ellen Greer is a long-time life member of ONC who now lives in Maine. Her letter and photo speak for themselves and give us a glimpse of our history.]

Members of Outdoor Nature Club, Greetings from Ellen M. Greer

Sometime in 1952, a few of us wished to know more about birds than was available in the Field Guides. We had a meeting in my apartment. No plans were made, just discussion

Mrs. MacMahan (sp) was a teacher and wished to take a correspondence course in bird study from Louisiana State University. I believe.

It pleased several of us and we met at her home for workshops. We bought the books that she had for texts. We provided feathers, bones etc. that we picked up on various nature trips.

At the end she received a set of study skins to identify.

She received an A. We received a lot of information.

This was the beginning of the Ornithology Group of the Outdoor Nature Club.

This was the first subgroup. The Botany Group soon began and other groups followed.

The Texas Ornithology Organization was started afterwards.

Jim Greer and I married in January 1953, we liked botany and were active members of the Botany Group.

I am still trying to identify every plant I encounter. I have moved to mushrooms and still studying. Why I'm not smarter I don't know.

ALL the different wild things keep me interested. Now more books are available than when I was enjoying the Outdoor Nature Club, the greatest club I have belonged to.

Jim has been dead many years.

I am enclosing two photographs of one of the workshops. As I am now 96 years old, I won't be needing these much longer. You may have them for the archives. I suspect most of those attending are deceased.

I have been so inspired by the ONC that I have since been active as able in other nature clubs. I was P.R. for Stanton Bird Club, Lewiston, Maine 3 years, Volunteer at Natural History Museum, Springfield, Mass, 9 years, Editor of Audubon Chapter newsletter, Kissimmee, FL 7 years. Review literature Maine Mycological Association newsletter, past 5 years.

Enclosed 2 photographs and list of people.

Ellen M. Greer May 23, 2005
Ellen M. Watson Greer



ONC members at a 1952 gathering to study birds. Beginning at far end center and going counter clockwise: Ellen M. Watson Greer, Betty Crowley, Mrs. MacMahan, Mrs. Doris Massengill, Armand Yramatagui, Nancy Cunningham (later Mrs. McDavid), Carrie Holcomb (white blouse), Miss Stamm(?), Josiephine Wilkin, Walter James Greer, taxidermist.