



Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

January/February 2006

Volume 191

Programs

• Programs will be closed for the following holidays:
• Christmas, January 1, & 2
• Maundy Thursday, January 19

Program Information and Registration:

• 408-866-6644
• oxley@oxley-nature.org
• <http://www.oxley-nature.org/>

• Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.
• All fees are payable in advance.
• Payment accepted by credit.

• Programs with multiple registrations may be cancelled at least 30 days in advance.

Hours:

Oxley Nature Center

• Open daily except near Christmas
• 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
• 4:00 am - 1:00 pm
• 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
• 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
• 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
• 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
• 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
• 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
• 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Guided by Oxley Nature Preserve

• Open Wednesday through Sunday, except during the holidays
• 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
• 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
• 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Birds in Bandlets by Helen O'Brien

As you walk the trails at Oxley Nature Center this winter or watch birds on the ground around the feeders at the Interpretive building, you may notice many small greyish-brown and white birds with brightly colored bands on their legs. This isn't a bird banding project. It is a study of the Dark-eyed Junco. For the past few winters, I have been banding juncos at a Northern State University and near University of Tulsa students to explore the dynamics of winter flocking. Over November, 2003, 247 juncos have been banded with a unique combination of color bands, which allow them to be individually identified. Many of the banded birds you will see this winter have returned from their summer breeding grounds in Canada. Last winter, 70% of the banded juncos in Oxley Nature Center were banded here the year before.

This winter's research will focus on determining which birds are dominant in the flock, and on assessing how they fare over the winter compared to their more colorful neighbors. We'll also be looking at associations, and seeing whether birds that strongly associate with certain other birds in the group have characteristics that distinguish them from the "others" who show no preference for particular flockmates.

Scientists don't conduct winter ecological studies very often because of the difficulty of finding a suitable location close to home during the academic year. Oxley Nature Center's proximity to local universities, its large, protected natural areas, and the hospitality and enthusiasm of Oxley staff make the center an ideal place to conduct ecological research.

The Dark-eyed Junco (Junco hyemalis)

- One of the most common winter residents in North America
- Native to Canadian forest biomes
- Migrate to nesting ground in breeding season
- Migrate south across North America in winter
- Some birds migrate
- Males are duller on top (darker brownish) both here while males and water tail finches
- Females are darker on ground - especially blue and the white
- An important species for ecological research
- Available for viewing at Oxley Nature Center



Nature Center Happenings

Volunteers Recognized at Awards Dinner

Most of our volunteers, staff, and guests gathered at the Tyler Garden Center December 6 to celebrate all the services our wonderful volunteers provide to so many different people. The following awards were presented:

Carol James and Kylene Mathews: 3 year/30 season Super Jax.
Sharon Collins, Mary Lee McCallum, Jim Thayer, and Karen Watkins: Irreplaceable just for 5 years/10 seasons.
Marilee Chambers: award plaque for 20 years/40 seasons.
Sharon Brunson, Tammy Sanchez, and Troy Thayer: also received their 20 year/40 season plaques.
Bonnie Murphy and Joseph Young: each received a vest for their outstanding service as volunteers.

Thank you to all our volunteers for your amazing help!

☑ to general public, free to members ☑ **Kid's Saturday Programs** ☑ **Adventures in Science at 10**

Discovery Club (Ages 3-8 years)

Each child accompanied by an adult, please

January 20, 10:00-11:00 "What are Squirrels Doing?"

Let's find out more about the cubitling in the woods. Are they really nesting?



February 18, 10:00-11:00 "Crazy Crawlers"

What mysterious creatures are under the soil that sometimes seem trying to help us?

Adventure Club (Grades 4-5th)

Free entry, please

January 20, 10:00-11:00 "Water/Wind"

Let's explore the world through storms and wings, and find out where the wind blows.

February 18, 10:00-11:00 "Extreme Blue"

What "Opposite" will we find on the far, the largest, the most, highest, lowest, and the coolest planet?



Astronomy Programs



Registration required, ☑ to general public, free to members, all ages, ☑ with advance notice being 300-600 ft if you have been, and meet on the east side of Lake Tule above the store-pole.

Monday, January 24, "My Neighbors, Near and Far" 7:00-8:30 p.m. Sometimes we forget that some objects in the sky are much farther away than others. We'll find our nearest neighbors first, and then move outward, perhaps even beyond our own galaxy!

Wednesday, February 15, "Winking Mercury" 7:00-8:30 p.m. The planet closest to the sun can be found with the naked eye, but it's not as easy to find as bright Venus (the iconic, reddish-yellow Mercury can appear as a morning "star" or an evening "star", and it can occasionally be seen crossing the disk of the sun in certain years). We'll look for its tiny crescent shape through a telescope.

Full Moon Walks

Registration required, ☑ to general public, free to members, all ages, ☑

Saturday, January 14, 6:00-7:30 p.m. "Full Moon"

Stargazing under the stars and moon. Always with our wolf packs howling loudly, and the yelping and bing of their owners. The coyotes might howl the night away too.

Sunday, February 12, 6:00-7:30 p.m. "New Moon"

This is a Full Moon walk, but experience heavy clouds. Perhaps we'll be the lucky ones our moon in the show, or perhaps we will follow the tracks of curious others exploring before us.



Programs and Special Events

January

7 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All

Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
free registration not required

Meet in the Cafeteria starting at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars if you have them.

7 "Fresno Birding" Ages: All

Saturday 10:00-11:00 a.m.
\$2 for general public
free for members

Bring binoculars or spotting scope, and water when coming to the wilderness. Later about 11:30 a.m. meet at the Cafeteria. Please register in advance.

8 "Recycle Magic" Ages: All

Sunday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public
free for members



Our goal? Let us try to make a small difference where we thought we got things. Learn about recycling and ways to recycle our garbage properly. Please register in advance. Meet at 8:00 a.m.

14 "Leaf Animals" Ages: All

Saturday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public
free for members

Whether you search with interest or just observe, come to the "leaf" animal activity at the University of California. Please register in advance.

21 "Survival Kits" Ages: 12 & up

Saturday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public
\$2 for members

Do you know how to make a simple survival kit for a week of emergency? We'll teach you how to assemble the most important survival gear. So come to come, make, and more. Meet at Cafeteria. Please register in advance.

28 "Green Plants of Winter" Ages: All

Saturday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
free registration not required

Discover the green plants in the home, including garden, house and wild plants. Learn to identify them. Meet at the University of California. Please register in advance.

29 "Grand Beetles" Ages: 14 & up

Sunday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public
\$2 for members

Learn about and about a beetle. Meet at the University of California. Please register in advance.

February

4 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All

Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
free registration not required

Meet in the Cafeteria starting at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars if you have them.

4 "Soap Making" Ages: 12 & up

Saturday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public
\$2 for members

Consequence soap making for the home. Meet at the University of California. Please register in advance.

5 "Grand Birdhouses" Ages: All

Sunday 2:00-3:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public
\$2 for members

Do you have a birdhouse? Meet at the University of California. Please register in advance.

11 "Trees in Winter" Ages: All

Saturday 10:00-11:00 a.m.
\$2 for general public
free for members

Whether you work or just observe, meet at the University of California. Please register in advance.

18 "Robin's Nest" Ages: All

Sunday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public
free for members



Let's explore the Robin's Nest. Meet at the University of California. Please register in advance.

25 "Early Wildflowers" Ages: All

Saturday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
free registration not required

Meet at the University of California. Please register in advance.

26 "Family Journals" Ages: All

Saturday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public
\$2 for members

Bring the family to the University of California. Please register in advance.

Book: Tom Buckskin

When: January 10 & 11 from 8:00-8:30 p.m.
and January 12 from 8:00-8:30 p.m.

Age: 13 & up ■

Tuition: \$8 for members, \$40 for non-members

Learn this ancient technique of chesing hides used the world over by many cultures. Ancient peoples up to the 19th-century used skins for buckskin for bags, clothing, pillows, shoes, and any other use where a soft and durable material is required. No tools are required for this hands-on workshop, only willingness to put in the considerable effort it takes to turn a deer hide into vibrant soft buckskin. Meet at Chazy. Please register in advance.

Make Valentine's

Date: Thursday, February 9



Time: 1:00-2:30 p.m. for ages 5 to 9 or
2:30-4:00 p.m. for ages 9 and up. ■

Tuition: \$10 for members, \$18 for non-members.
Instructor: Heidi Conners

Create original watercolor valentine inspired by nature. Expect a lot of fun as we draw, paint, embellish, and enjoy!

Registration is required. A substitute will be provided. Fee must accompany registration.



Imagine...



...a soft stream, gray sky, flocks of snow falling softly, orange, yellow, and brown grasses, catching flakes of snow, singing, on your tongue; the always, cold feel of the air on your cheeks, nose, and ears; this is winter at Chazy. Getting too cold? Your hands, warm your hands in front of the fire, watch the birds and squirrels gather at the feeder, and wait a while. We look forward to seeing you!

Small Groupings of 10 or more may arrange a private or private or semi-private event. See us or contact us at 516-362-6666 for details. The fee for a private or semi-private event is \$100 per person. The fee for a private or semi-private event is \$100 per person. The fee for a private or semi-private event is \$100 per person. The fee for a private or semi-private event is \$100 per person.