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Eastern Bluebirds | Greg Silva

The New Year brings Oxley's January Lecture Series! This month we will be hosting experts on bird migration, bats of Oklahoma and bald eagles. These three presentations are free and open to the public. Come to any or all of these on Saturdays at 2:00PM!

Look who is wishing you a Happy New Year!



Winter Wren *Troglodytes hiemalis*



Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*



Cedar Waxwing *Bombycillo cedrorum*



Belted Kingfisher *Megasceryle alcyon*



Limpkin *Aramus guarauna*



American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

Audubon Christmas Bird Count





Naturalist’s Notebook

By Karen Harris

DISTRACTED NATURALISTS MAKE INTERESTING DISCOVERIES

Several years ago I was on a botany walk along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Our leader was enthusiastic and knowledgeable, but when one of the group spotted a bird and attempted to point it out to the group, the leader’s mood soured and he snarled, “We are botanizing, not bird watching.”

I recalled that incident last month during the Christmas Bird Count at Oxley. We were using spotting scopes to identify waterfowl on Lake Sherry when I looked down to see a large black and orange beetle digging in the soil at my feet. Others gathered around to watch and we noticed several orange aphids crawling around and under the beetle. We abandoned the scopes and the birds for about ten minutes to watch the beetle bury itself and the aphids. Before the beetle disappeared, one of the group took a picture and, using iNaturalist, identified it as a Margined Burying Beetle *Nicrophorus marginatus*.

When we finished the bird count and returned to the building, I began researching burying beetles. There are several species including the threatened American Burying Beetle *Nicrophorus americanus* in Northeast Oklahoma. Burying or Carrion Beetles apparently use their long antennae to locate the odor of dead animals and then use the carcass as a resource for food, a place to mate, lay eggs, and raise their young. Their biggest competitors are flies whose larva (maggots) also use the carcass as a food source. So what are the aphids doing there? Turns out they are hitching a ride on the beetle and then reducing the beetle’s competition by eating the fly eggs and maggots - a classic example of mutualism.

That same day, Judy LaFrance was leading the monthly wildflower walk when one of her group spotted a large chunk of wasp nest next to a freshly dug hole. A picture of the comb-like nest material also showed a couple of Yellowjackets flying around it. Judy researched ground nesting bees and wasps, most of whom are solitary, and found that Yellowjackets are the only wasps to nest in colonies underground. They are true social insects with division of labor between different castes. Unlike honeybees, only the queen Yellowjacket survives the winter to start a new colony the next spring. Often in the fall a predator like a skunk will dig out the nest and consume the remaining young. Is that what happened to this nest? Maybe.

Sometimes it’s important to focus on the task at hand. (Please don’t drive and text!) But when you are at Oxley and your task is counting birds or looking for plants, keep your eyes peeled for other interesting phenomena. You only need to be observant and curious to have a blast botanizing and bird watching and looking for insects all on the same walk. Ask questions about what you see and do a little research when you get home. You can do it all and enjoy every minute. Let us know what you find out.



OXLEY NATURE CENTER

**KAYLA ANLEY**

RESIDENCY SHOWCASE

ONE NIGHT ONLY11TH JANUARY 2024, 6-7:30 PM
6700 MOHAWK BLVD, TULSA, OK 74115

JANUARY LECTURE SERIES

THE WONDER OF WINGS

JOIN US TO LEARN ABOUT THE LIVES OF BIRDS
AND BATS AND HOW STEWARDS ACROSS THE
STATE ARE WORKING TO PROTECT THEMSATURDAYS IN JANUARY
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**1.13 Migration**

Come join PhD student Amy West to explore the amazing feat of bird migration. Amy recently completed her Master's degree at the University of South Dakota, focusing on prairie bird migration. She will share her knowledge on how birds migrate and how scientist study birds when they are on the move.

1.20 Oklahoma Bats

Professor of Biology and Dean Emeritus of the School of Arts and Sciences at RSU, Dr. Keith Martin will present on the unique specializations and adaptations of bats, the ongoing management and monitoring of bats, and current threats to bat diversity in Eastern Oklahoma.

1.27 Live Bird Presentation!

Daniel Harris is a conservation biologist and the education program manager at the Sutton Avian Research Center in Bartlesville. He will be joining us to share the story of bald eagles in Oklahoma and bringing along a few feathered friends to help tell the story and talk about conservation efforts in our state.

OXLEY NATURE CENTER

**ARTIST RESIDENCY****APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN**

DEADLINE: JANUARY 31ST, 2024
6700 MOHAWK BLVD, TULSA, OK 74115
MREGAN@CITYOFTULSA.ORG



frost flower | Bryan Tapp

Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - January Programs

January 6, 8:00 – 9:45am: **Birding Walk**

January 11, 6:00 – 7:30pm: **Artist Reception and Open House with Kayla Anley**

Kayla Anley will hold a solo exhibition of the works she has created over the past 9 months as the inaugural Artist in Residence at Oxley. Kayla's contributions to Oxley have been enormous and we invite you to come meet the artist and see her phenomenal charcoal and pencil drawings. Light refreshments will be served. This event free and open to the public, please drop in!

January 9 and 12, 10:00 – 11:00am: **LITTLE SEEDLINGS: "Whose burrow is that?"**

Experience nature with your little ones. Through stories, crafts, and time exploring the trails, we will help to inspire a life long love of the outdoors. For our January sessions, we will look for winter burrows made by animals. Ages 1-5 + a caregiver \$5 or Free for ONCA members. Pre-registration is required; Sign up online at <https://tulsaparks.recdesk.com/Community/Program> or call 918-596-9054

LECTURE SERIES: The Wonder of Wings

Join us on Saturdays in January to learn about the lives of birds and bats and how stewards across the state and working to protect them. All three lectures will begin at 2:00 in the Oxley Classroom. These lectures are free and open to the public.

January 13: 2:00pm **Lecture 1 - Migration**

Join PhD student Amy West to explore the amazing feat of bird migration. Amy recently completed her Master's degree at the University of South Dakota, focusing on prairie bird migration. She will share her knowledge on how birds migrate and how scientists study birds when they are on the move.

Professor of Biology and Dean Emeritus of the School of Arts and Sciences at Rogers State University, Dr. Keith Marin will present on the unique specializations and adaptations of bats, the ongoing management and monitoring of bats, and current threats to bat diversity in Eastern Oklahoma.

January 27: 2:00pm **Lecture 3 - Live Bird Presentation with Sutton Research Center**
Daniel Harris is a conservation biologist and the education program manager at the Sutton Avian Research Center in Bartlesville. He will be joining us to share the story of the bald eagles in Oklahoma and bringing along a few feathered friends to help tell the story and talk about conservation efforts in our state.

January 20, 10:30am – 12:00pm: **Botany Walk**

January 26, 11:00am – 12:30pm: **All About Nature Book Club**
Join us for a discussion of books related to nature, conservation, and the environment. January's selection: The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year by Margaret Renkl.

January 25, 7:00 – 8:30pm: **Full Wolf Moon Walk**
Small, guided groups explore the Nature Center by night, without flashlights, learning to use senses other than sight. Preregistration required. \$3 for members, \$5 for non-members. Pre-registration is required; Sign up online at <https://tulsaparks.recdesk.com/Community/Program> or call 918-596-9054



OXLEY NATURE CENTER HOURS

10-4:30PM Tuesday through Saturday

Noon - 4:30PM on Sunday

