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Coyote on Lake Sherry | Bryan Tapp

Oxley Nature Center will have a wonderful new Birding class for you to enjoy this month and next! Six Saturdays beginning with February 10th from 2:00 - 3:30PM Josh Smith, our Natural Resources Coordinator will share his knowledge of birds. See the details below in our February Programs and be sure and register. Call us at 918-596-9054 to receive your member's discount for this special program.

### Fat Birds! (or ... It's Wintertime at Oxley)



Chubby Birds | Bryan Tapp, Greg Silva

### George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center



We thank Daniel Harris from George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center for the Live Bird Presentation out at Oxley Nature Center on January 27th.



These two ash seeds fell on a rotting log. If they germinate, nutrients from the log will feed the seedlings. Death of one organism can support life of another one.

## Naturalist's Notebook

By Karen Harris

### MUDDY BOOTS AND WORLD WETLANDS DAY

Last Sunday after a very rainy week, I walked to Blackbird Marsh. I found the marsh and Lake Sherry with more water than they had had all fall and winter. Coal Creek was running steady and muddy. As I returned to the visitor's center via Woodpecker and Green Dragon Trails, I walked through standing water. When I checked an area off trail through the woods, I could feel the spongy soil beneath my feet and, in places, could not avoid more standing water. I suppose some folks would find muddy shoes and wet feet an annoyance, but my trek brought a great sense of gratitude for Oxley as an increasingly rare ecological jewel called a wetland. The UN defines wetlands as "ecosystems in which water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated plant and animal life." Examples are marshes, ponds, lakes, and floodplains adjoining streams. Unfortunately, since the 1700s nearly 90% of the world's wetlands have been degraded or lost entirely (35% since 1970), drained, filled, paved, and planted - LOST. Wetlands have been called the Earth's most threatened ecosystem and one of the most critical to its health.

Oxley certainly fits the definition of a wetland. It lies in the floodplains of Bird and Coal Creeks. Rains fill up BJ's and Blue Heron Ponds, the old fish hatchery pools and low areas in-between the trails and, yes, those two trails I walked. Instead of flooding homes and eroding farmland, the rain that falls here and upstream of here is left to slowly percolate through the ground, cleansed by Mother Nature's filter on its way to the water table from which it can be accessed by wells for human use. The marshy boggy areas most likely sequester carbon and play a small but important role in mitigating climate change. Peat bogs in other areas of the world are the champions in this regard. While the water is on the surface, it provides temporary pools where frogs, toads, and salamanders can lay eggs free of predation by fish. Waterfowl can puddle about in the ponds and lake, feeding and resting during migration, and small mammals can get a drink and maybe a crayfish snack. Myriad songbirds and mammals large and small find necessary resources among the trees that thrive in the bottomland. And children - children can splash and get muddy. Margaret Renkl, our January book club author, wrote in the New York Times recently, "Every child I have ever known is drawn to water... to children, a puddle is for stomping."

February 2 has been designated World Wetlands Day, a day Tulsans can celebrate Oxley, our own premiere wetland. So bring your children sometime this month, explain to them the importance of protecting wetlands, and feel free to stomp a puddle or two in gratitude for this special place.



# INTRODUCTION TO BIRDING



SIX SATURDAY SESSIONS  
STARTING FEBRUARY 10

2:00 – 3:30 P.M.

TAUGHT BY JOSH SMITH

Each session will combine classroom instruction and experiential trail walks. Learn what to look and listen for when identifying birds of Northeast Oklahoma, what equipment can help you, and the best resources available for beginning and intermediate birders.



**\$35/ONCA MEMBERS**  
**\$50/NON-MEMBERS**

CALL 918-596-9054 OR USE THE QR CODE TO REGISTER

## Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - February Programs

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: NEW! "Introduction to Birding" Class

Six Saturday sessions, running February 10 – March 16, 2:00 – 3:30pm; \$35 for ONCA members, \$50 for the general public (includes all 6 sessions); Register by February 9. Please call Oxley to receive your Member discount.

Oxley is offering an "Introduction to Birding" course taught by Natural Resources Coordinator, Josh Smith. With a background in Wildlife Ecology and as a longtime active board member of Tulsa Audubon, Josh has contributed to avian research projects across the country and has been leading Birding Walks at Oxley for several years. His passion for birding is contagious and he is excited to share his experience and knowledge. Each of the six weekly Saturday sessions will be a mixture of classroom instruction and trail walks to practice what you're learning. Focusing on the birds of Northeast Oklahoma, including waterfowl, gamebirds, warblers, sparrows, and more, topics covered will be:

- Proper equipment (binoculars, scopes, blinds, feeders, etc.)
- Tips for location scouting
- Basic bird anatomy and physiology
- Key Identifiers, divided by family
  - What to look for
  - What to listen for
  - Migration, mating, and other behaviors
- Resources
  - Books, free apps, paid apps
  - Citizen Science (tutorial on using *ebird*)

February 3, 8am – 9:45 am: **Saturday Morning Birding**

This is a free guided birding walk, no pre-registration is required.

February 13 and February 16, 10am – 11am: **Little Seedlings: "Finding Patterns in the Trees"**

Experience nature with your little ones (ages 1-5 with a caregiver). Through stories, crafts, and time exploring the trails, we will help to inspire a life-long love of the outdoors. The Tuesday and Friday sessions are the same and pre-registration is required. Please call 918-596-9054 to receive your member discount.

February 17, 10:30am – 12:00pm: **Explore Flora**

This is a free guided botany walk, no pre-registration is required.

February 23, 11:00am-12:30pm: **"All About Nature" Book Club**

Join us for a discussion of books related to nature, conservation, and the environment. February's selection: "The World-Ending Fire: The Essential Wendell Berry." Contact Mary Seabourn for information. mseabourn@cityoftulsa.org

February 24, 7pm – 8:30pm: **Full Snow Moon Walk**

This is a guided night hike and requires pre-registration. Please call 918-596-9054 to receive your ONCA discount. (\$3/ person for members, \$5/person for non-members).

Pre-registration is required. \$10/person for members, \$15 for non-members, please call 918-596-9054 for information and to receive your ONCA discount.

Join us for a transformative experience with our Forest Bathing program, a restorative practice rooted in scientific research that invites you to immerse yourself in the soothing embrace of nature. Guided by Pam Rogers, a certified guide through the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, and with a master's in environmental studies, this program offers a unique opportunity to connect with the natural world and rejuvenate your mind, body, and spirit.

See <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1195337204> if you would like to learn more about the benefits of forest bathing.



great egret | Bryan Tapp

### OXLEY NATURE CENTER HOURS

**10-4:30PM Tuesday through Saturday**

**Noon - 4:30PM on Sunday**



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