



Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

Volume 14#

November/December, 2001

The Voice of the Coyote by Eddie Ross

Ever since I was a kid I knew I was not-out-out to live in the city. I certainly knew I never wanted to. Whenever we visited relatives in the big towns or actually lived there, I always felt surrounded and closed in like being stuffed in a box. It was such a relief to get out into the open spaces.

I was listening my current situation. All I wanted to do was go home. But there I was just sitting there waiting for the light to switch green for the third time. It was taking forever to get through this intersection. The assault on my senses increased the anxiety swirling around inside me. Exhaust fumes, the whine of tires on concrete, the clumping of someone's heavy foot-cars behind me. It was all too much for a country boy.

If only I could hear a coyote sing I would be alright. When was the last time I'd heard them? The last night walk, that was it. It was dark and still and we had taken the Wildlife Study Trail. The two families I was walking with suddenly stopped and became very still. Somewhere not far away a lone coyote broke the stillness of that uncommonly quiet night. A couple of others joined in. Coyote song filled the river valley like mist. For a few minutes we listened and then it was over. You could see the wonder on the faces of the people. We decided they sounded happy that night but it was definitely a wild sound. To me it's the sound of

freedom, like howling Canada geese as they fly over or when the only sound you can hear is the wind in the cottonwood trees on a summer day.

It's moments like these that set the spirit free. But coyote song is my favorite. Coyote song is peculiar. When two coyotes sing a duet as they are kind of doing, they don't bark haphazardly or in unison. Together they gather up speed and produce such a torrent of yips and yaps that the two song dogs sound like an entire pack of animals. Whatever the reason for the singing, the effect on my soul is what I reach for. I consider us lucky, the city dwellers we have become, to have a place like the nature center where we can go and experience wonder, and leave the traffic and the city behind.



Nature Center Happenings

 **We will be closed for the following holidays:** 

Tuesday, November 11,
Thursday & Friday,
November 27 & 28 &
Wednesday & Thursday,
December 24 & 25.

Happy Holidays!



ENTRY AND VISITOR BOOKS

The gates at Oley Nature Center are open daily, with the exception of most City holidays, from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. At Oley, you may park outside the gates from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. to walk the trails even when the gates are closed.

At Redford Valley Nature Preserve, the gates are open Wednesday through Sunday, from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. You may park here for free when the Nature Preserve is closed on Monday or Tuesday, on City holidays, before 8:00 a.m., or after 3:00 p.m.

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Call: 610-8844 to register or for more information about programs. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult, unless otherwise stated. Programs that are wheelchair accessible are designated with the ♣ symbol.

Web site: <http://www.oleynaturecenter.org/>

Kid's Saturday Programs

\$5 for general public, \$3 for members, all ♣

Discovery Club Ages 4-5 years

Fee will be waived by an adult parent

November 8, 8:00-9:00 "Look Look"

We will learn about what happened. Come prepared to read some of these textbooks. Sign-up begins Sunday, November 1.

December 13, 8:00-9:00 "Winter Wildlife Viewing"

Come help us make winter treats for the birds at Oley. Sign-up begins December 1.

Adventure Club Minutes K-5th

Fee is only \$3.00

November 15, 8:00-9:00 "Introduction for Kids"

Enter groups and posters continuously will be provided for the Friends of Oley Nature Center's introduction. Sign-up begins Sunday, November 1.

December 13, 8:00-9:00 "Winter Forest & Forest"

Use 12 insects & mammals as we learn who we can find in the winter forest. Sign-up begins Sunday, December 1.

"Lunar Eclipse Watch"

Saturday, November 8,
5:00-9:00 p.m.

If you can't join us tonight, try to watch the moon from wherever you are. The visibility portion of the eclipse will be between 7:00 and 7:20 p.m. Bring binoculars if you have them. Sunset: 5:15 p.m. and moonset: 5:18 p.m. Meet at Oley. Sign-up begins October 28.

Star Programs

\$5 to general public
Free to members

All ages welcome

♣ with advance notice

"Planet Watch"

Thursday, December 11,
8:00-9:00 p.m.

Which bright point of light is a star, and which one is a planet? Maybe we'll spot a main-belt asteroid, too. Bring something to sit on and binoculars if you have them. Meet on the east side of Lake Yaluda above the clinic drive. ♣ make arrangements to arrive early. Sign-up begins November 28.

Programs and special events

November

1 "Saturday Morning Birding" **Agnes 10 11**
Saturday 8:00-10:00 a.m.
\$10 registration not required



Meet in the lobby, parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

1 "Fall Leaves at Redwood Valley" **Agnes 10 4 up**
Saturday 8:00-11:00 a.m.
\$10 for members
\$15 for general public



Several sunny mornings, we will stroll the red at Redwood Valley, WAUCOlogy will visit on October 10th, 11th, and 12th, please, welcome. Meet at Redwood Valley, Agnes 10 begins October 10.

5 "Kia's Nature Card Design" **Agnes 4-6 11**
Saturday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
\$4 for members

\$10 for general public

Students will design and create Fall nature cards using nature objects and/or photos. Students welcome. How to do basic drawing, color, journaling, and how to make envelopes. Meet at the local Meet at Cedar. Refreshments, registration, register at the table.

7 "Carnival Crafts" **Agnes 4 5 up 11**
Sunday 1:00-4:00 p.m.
\$10 for members
\$15 for general public

We will have simple-crafts and will be people projects. There is also a "Carnival" with prizes. There is a great picnic in the park and more. Meet at Cedar. Agnes 10 begins October 10.

21 "Search for Hidden Forests" **Agnes 10 11**
Saturday 8:00-10:00 a.m.
\$10 for members



What do you see when you look at a tree? Come learn about the hidden life of trees. Meet at Cedar. Refreshments, registration, register at the table. Meet at Cedar. Agnes 10 begins November 8.

December

4 "Saturday Morning Birding" **Agnes 10 11**
Saturday 8:00-10:00 a.m.
\$10 registration not required



Meet in the lobby, parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

6 "Searching for Frost Flowers" **Agnes 10 11**
Saturday 8:00-10:00 a.m.
\$10 for members

If temperatures are right, we'll look for the plants that make frost flowers. If it rains, we'll explore the local forests from above. We'll explore the local forests from above. Meet at Cedar. Agnes 10 begins November 10.

17 "A Winter Walk" **Agnes 10 11**
Saturday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
\$4 for members

Join us for a winter walk to enjoy the local forest. Meet at Cedar. Refreshments, registration, register at the table. Meet at Cedar. Agnes 10 begins December 10.

Congratulations New Volunteers!

Nine people have successfully completed Ojai's volunteer naturalist training and will be leading school tours this Fall:



Richard Alford, Shelly Cox, Joanne, Michele DeWitt-Wilkinson, Mary Lou Mullins, Ellen Miller, Janice O'Melia, Jackie Young and Stephanie Gifford.

People that have applied to volunteer in other areas are: Dennis Edgewood, Richard Hentzen, James Frank Miller, Bob Moore, Bill Newham, and Cindy Wilkerson. We welcome everyone and are glad to have you with us!

Through The Window

Imagine you had a library with large windows overlooking a pond, forest and prairie. During the summer/ fall it is cool and during the winter a crowding hot after-noon sun. Outside the windows a parade of life goes by. In March a pair of Canada Geese nest on the island in the pond, the female sitting and brooding in bits of vegetation as the male serves by its guard. On a single day in May, a bevy of birds come to drink and bathe in the water feature just outside the window. There are warblers, kinglets, nuthatches, goldfinches, housefinches, chickadees, robins, and chickadees. In addition to the birds that day, a small white woodchuck, long tail. Frog droppings the little pool too. Wildlife is attracted to the running water.

In the view out across the pond you can see turtles, snakes, and ducks swimming. Fish are jumping and dragonflies are buzzing. Across the pond along the trail a mother woodchuck and six youngsters play and run on the bank. In August a mother raccoon and her young kit walk along the bank of the pond at the water's edge and then swim across to the island where they reside. In late September a mother raccoon jumps by the window several days in a row, and eventually returns with three youngsters in tow. They climb the large white pine outside the window, a little reluctant, very cautious, and evading encouragement to one another. The next day they show no further interest, reaching up and pulling the large purple leaves within reach.

The red leaves of the green dragon complement the color of the cardinal birds and goldfinch. On beyond into the prairie you may see a hawk or white-tailed hawk. The prairie in September will color the first of October. The big bluestem has waves of cream color, punctuated by purplish grass, white yucca, hazel, goldenrod, yellow yarrow and asters. Clouds of mist rise from the pond, softening the reflections of clouds in the still water. In October appears in front by sulphur, white, willow and redstarts. Starlings dressed in orange and black are preparing for their long migration.

In winter the woodchuck attracts a variety of birds, winter visitors and residents alike. Opowans also visit the woodchuck. And there is a vole beneath his tunnels of dried grass that protects of the food. You may want to write to with a good book or just reflect on the refuge nature looks here with us. You don't even have to leave the building, imagine that.