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Greg Silva

May is always an exciting month at Oxley Nature Center. If you like snakes and turtles especially you will love to join the Herpetology walks. You will enjoy seeing the great variety of species which abound, from lithe rough green snakes arcing through low branches with their large sweet eyes, to the more robust diamond backed watersnake sliding through the waters of Coal Creek. And did you know that we have large snapping turtles both in BJ's pond and in Lake Sherry? Get a little cup of turtle food at the Interpretive Center and toss some over the patio rails, you'll be surprised at the number of turtles you'll spot.

All photos | Greg Silva

Naturalist's Notebook

By Karen Harris

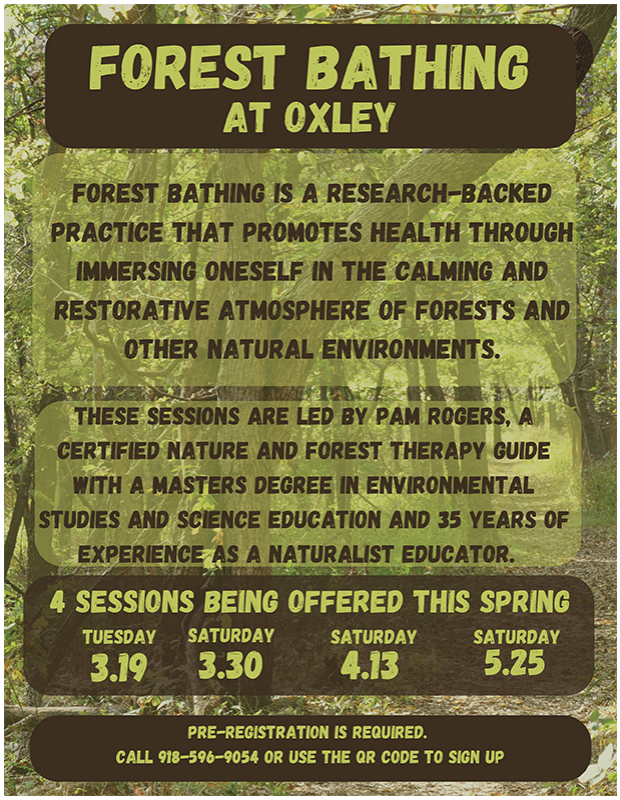
It's that time of year. Everywhere you look, it seems, babies are appearing. Judy and Mary, who are gathering data for Cornell's Nest Watch, report that Chickadees and Bluebirds have already fledged out of nest boxes. There are geese with goslings and ducks with ducklings exploring ponds and lakes. Visitors told us as early as last week that they saw a pair of fawns with mom just off of Green Dragon trail. This Sunday Judy and I checked out all of the Pipeline Swallowtail caterpillars on the Dutchman's Pipevine. Yes, insect babies count too! And it's not just at Oxley that it's happening. Early in April I received a picture of two Great Horned Owl owlets from one lucky ONCA member who located the nest on his property. Just yesterday another member sent a picture of her partner rescuing a baby cardinal that had fallen out of a nest. The nest, by the way, was built in a dip net leaning against the side of a house. That reminded me of the spring I couldn't get my gardening gloves out of the cloth bag in the garage because the Carolina Wren had flown through an open window and built her nest in there. This year a cardinal chose my Zephirine Drouhin rose for a nest site (prettier than a dip net). She's been keeping her one baby warm and

dry through our recent storms. I have a Purple Martin house in the middle of my garden but have kept it lowered and doors closed because there have been no martins in my neighborhood for several years. This spring, robins built a nest and are raising three babies on the porch of the Martin house. While I was picking strawberries last week, I laughed as one parent jammed food down a baby's throat: probably an insect but maybe a strawberry? I couldn't tell but am happy to share either way.

I invite you to look for babies in your own yard or neighborhood park or come take a walk here at Oxley. Please be respectful and try hard not to disturb them. Just look. Remember, if you find a baby bird on the ground, it is usually best to simply let the parents take care of it. If it looks naked and too immature, place it back in the nest as our friend did. The same goes for baby mammals. Mom knows where they are and mom knows best, so leave them alone and celebrate their birth.

Babies make us happy and give us hope. Not only are they cute, but they are also a new beginning, a fresh start. They are a sign of Nature's ingenuity (think various nest sites) and resilience. They are a big reason to celebrate spring.

Crayfish with Babies | Lisa Cobb



Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - May Programs

Call 918-596-9054 to register for any program that requires pre-registration.

May 4, 8:00 – 9:45 a.m. **Saturday Morning Birding**
All ages and skill levels are welcome for this free drop-in Birding Walk, guided by Oxley Natural Resources Coordinator, Josh Smith. Bring binoculars if you have them!

May 4, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. **Nature Photography with Anitra Lavanhar**
Learn simple ways to dramatically improve your smart phone photos (all devices welcome). We will spend time covering composition principles, lighting, and learning our way around our phone cameras and then practice our new techniques on a guided photo walk along the beautiful trails at Oxley Nature Center. This class is open to adults and people as young as 10 years old, but 17 and under require a caregiver to participate too. Sign up on the website or by giving us a call. (Pre-registration required.)

May 9, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. **Herpetology Walk**
Join volunteer naturalists with an expertise in herpetology for an evening walk to learn more about some of the amphibians and reptiles who call Oxley home. All ages are welcome for this free drop-in event.

May 14 and May 17, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. **Little Seedlings "Dirt Discovery"**
Experience nature with your little ones. Through stories, crafts, and time exploring the trails, we will help to inspire a lifelong love of the outdoors. For our May sessions, we will sift through the soil looking for worms and roly-polies. For ages 1-5 with a caregiver. Visit the website or give us a call to register. (Pre-registration required.)

May 18, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Wild Voice Poetry Workshop: Life and Mutuality**
Using poetry, collage, and a trail walk, we will explore the themes of "Life and Mutuality," deepening our connection to self and world. Guided by Oxley artist-in-residence Sasha Martin. Adults and youth ages 9 and up: those under 16 should be accompanied by an adult participant. A Spanish language translator will be onsite. Register online or by giving us a call. (Pre-registration required.)

May 18, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Botany Walk**
Oxley Naturalists guide this free drop-in event, where we explore the lives of the plants and what's blooming in the forest, prairie, and wetlands.

May 23, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. **Full Flower 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 required.)

May 24, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **All About Nature Book club**
Join us for a discussion of books related to nature, conservation, and the environment. May's selection: "Of Time and Turtles" by Sy Montgomery.

May 25, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Butterfly Walk**
Stroll the grounds in search of butterflies on this walk guided by Oxley Volunteer Naturalists. This is a free, drop-in, family-friendly event.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN MAY
Forest Bathing Sessions: Forest Bathing Sessions May 25 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.

Prothonotary Warbler | Janis Blanton

OXLEY NATURE CENTER HOURS

10-4:30PM Tuesday through Saturday

Noon - 4:30PM on Sunday

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