

N A T U R E N O T E S

The Bulletin of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society.

Webster Groves, Mo.

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A Hike Up The Angel Trail.

The Lodge Unit invites all members of the Society and their friends to join it in a "hike" up the Angel Trail Sunday, November 8th. In order to make the event a real nature-study, as well as social success, leaders have been designated as follows: Dr. Meiners, Mr. R. C. Lange, and Mr. Stuart O'Byrne, guides; and Mrs. Stones, Mr. H. O'Byrne, and others leaders in bird, plant and insect study.

The party will leave the Lodge promptly at 10.30 A.M., after loading their lunch -baskets on Mr. Lange's truck. An hour and a half are being allowed for a leisurely walk along the creek to the place where the trail begins. Mr. Lange with the "eats" will meet the party there. A beautiful spot in the woods will make lunch taste a thousand times better, and if the day is cold, a fire will be built so we can warm our "tootsies". Those who cannot get started so early may meet at the Lodge later, leaving there at one o'clock with Dr. Meiners, to join the others at the trail. At 1:30 P.M. the combined forces will start up the Angel Trail, and will return to the Lodge eventually.

All who have been on this trail are enthusiastic in their praises of its charms, and no nature lover should miss this opportunity. It is confidently expected that everybody present will find the trip worth while and if the attendance justifies our anticipation, other hikes are promised for the future.

The Lodge Unit.

A List Of Local Butterflies.

The Society is publishing, in mimeograph form, a list of the butterflies of St. Louis Co, named and arranged according to Holland's new butterfly book. Besides the scientific names, it gives the common names in widest use, and also some of the scientific names used in popular books on butterflies, where these differ from the ones used by Holland. This feature should make the list particularly useful for beginners who have been confused by the assortment of names used for the same species by different authors.

To pay the cost of materials, a price of ten cents per copy will be charged. Copies can be secured from Mr. Sterling P. Jones.

A Woodland Tragedy.

On May 3rd we were scouting around in the woods at Ranken eager to find something new in our experience. Suddenly a dove flew out from a nearby cedar tree. Glancing up we noticed what appeared to be an unfinished bird's nest, or possibly the remains of what had been a nest last season. Curiosity, however, prompted investigation and lying on this rather loosely laid mass of twigs resting at the fork of the cedar tree about ten feet from the ground we found two oval white eggs. What country boy has never climbed in the hay-loft of the barn and looked into the nest of the pigeon? Here, then, were similar looking eggs but decidedly smaller. Striking, is't it, how many characters point to the affinity of species.

I made motion pictures of the nest, hoping to follow up with a series of the baby birds. What disappointment ten days later to find both babes dead in their nest. It had rained for a week, but on the day previous to finding the tragedy, it had rained exceptionally hard and had hailed. Probably the mother bird was forced to flee the storm even though it cost the lives of the young.

On the same day of finding the dove's nest with the two eggs, we also found, very near-by the nest of a pair of cardinals which was found to contain two very young birds. This nest was also empty and we wondered if there had been two tragedies. Searching around further, we found the half grown youngster perched on a low bush near-by. He eyed us rather dubiously but posed for his picture with a blink of his eye. A few minutes later, upon leaving him, we saw first, the male and then the female approach and cram a tid-bit down his hungry throat. What a picture! but it was not recorded, sad to relate. The other birdling was not found, although we watched the movements of the parents for a clue to its whereabouts. Is this, then, a toll that nature exacts from its own? An infant mortality rate of 75% from the combined total of two nests. What better reason for protecting those that we can.

Edwin P. Meiners, M D.

Dione vanillae.

The Girl Scouts of Troop 21 who are rearing butterflies from caterpillars cared for until the chrysalis forms, have made a discovery which fills us with elation.

cont. next page.

Nature Notes.

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Winter Butterflies.

Like all other insects, butterflies are coldblooded creatures, and their activity consequently varies according to the temperature outside of their bodies. They are usually most active in the summer, and during the hotter part of the day. When the temperature falls, they become sluggish, and during cold snaps in the autumn, butterflies are often found lying on the ground in a quite dormant condition.

Perhaps the majority of our species have their life cycles so adjusted to the seasons that they spend the winter in the pupal stage, a period when they would be inactive anyway. But there are several species that emerge from their pupa in the fall, and endure the cold of winter as butterflies.

These butterflies are not active, however, in cold weather; they stay in sheltered places, such as hollow trees, and are dormant most of the time. This dormancy is essential in preventing the too-rapid exhaustion of the reserve food supplies stored in their bodies, thus enabling the spark of life to glow until spring when food will be again available. Mating and oviposition take place in the spring.

In the neighborhood of ST. Louis, Polytonia comma, Aglais antiope, and Anaea andria are known to hibernate as butterflies. But we have several other species whose wintering habits are not known with certainty; some suspected of hibernation; others are believed to spend the winter with part of the individuals in the pupa stage while the rest are butterflies. Our knowledge of the following Missouri species is incomplete, and there is more or less doubt as to whether the adults of any of them can survive the winter, and if so, whether they habitually do so:

Polytonia interrogationis

" pregna

Vanessa atalanta

" virginicensis

" cardui

Junonia coenia

Zerene caesonia

Colias eurytheme

Eurena nicippe

" lisa

If anyone who observes late fall emergence--late October or November--of any of these species, or very early spring flight--February--March--will report the fact to me, it will aid materially in filling up the many gaps that exist in our knowledge of the winter behavior of these insects.

Harold O'Byrne.

Soon, The Leonid Meteors.

Elaborate plans are being made by the Observation Committee of the Astronomy Group for obtaining as good a record of the Leonids as was obtained of the Perseids last Aug. Seven observers took part in the observation of the Perseids and we wish to have double that number out to watch the Leonids. Every interested person should communicate at once with Mr. Jones, Chairman, Observation Committee (Webster 833 J), or with the writer (Webster 2498 W), unless you have already expressed your desire to aid. Those who watched the Perseids say that it was "great fun" and are going to observe the Leonids. The Leonids are characterized by their very swift, blue or bluegreen streaks. Like all other meteor showers they are most frequent after midnight, so the best time to observe them is from 2 to 4 o'clock in the morning. We may expect them every night from November 13-14 to 17-18 with the maximum most likely coming on the night of November 14-15. This swarm travels in an orbit, formerly occupied by a comet which has disappeared, in a period of about 33 years. Although many of the swarm are scattered along the orbit, the majority of them are bunched and when the earth passes through the main swarm we have an unusually brilliant shower. During the next three Novembers we are scheduled to meet different parts of the main swarm, so if you get out and watch for them you are very likely to be well rewarded for your loss of sleep. Another favorable thing about this year's Leonids is that their probable date of maximum comes on a Saturday night and Sunday morning with the advantage that one need not worry about "getting up the morning after".

Remember the dates, November 13-14 to 17-18, maximum due November 14-15. Be sure you know just what to record to make your observations valuable. You can find out by calling Mr. Jones or the writer.

Stuart L. O'Byrne.

Dione vanillae. Continued.

Feeding side by side on a vine of the genus Passiflora were found caterpillars of Dione vanillae and Euptoieta claudia. We hoped that such was the case and our wishes were fulfilled when the first Gulf Fritillary in all its lovely delicate coloring broke through its chrysalis and waved its wings slowly to and fro.

We understand that Gulf Fritillaries have not been found breeding here before, and naturally we are delighted.

Towhee.

The Editor has his Aquarium house about completed, all those interested in tropical and other toy fishes will find on exhibition a very good selection. We will have a grand opening on November 13 to 15 and Mr. and Mrs. Lange extend their invitation to all.

Webster Groves Nature-Study Society

A BRANCH OF THE AMERICAN NATURE-STUDY SOCIETY

(Organized in 1920)

Webster Groves, Mo.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR NOVEMBER - 1931

FIELD TRIP

Sunday November 8th. The LODGE UNIT announces a general hike up the "Angel Trail". Two parties, leaving the Nature-Study Lodge at 10.30 AM and 1.30 PM, will join forces later and the return to the Lodge will be late in the afternoon. Read carefully on page 17 of "Nature-Notes" for complete information. Bring lunch, cameras and field books on your particular interests.

GENERAL MEETING.

Friday November 6th, 8 PM sharp, at the U. S. Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place, Webster Groves. Awarding of Insect Collection Contest prizes and five minute talks by the contestants. Dr. Wm Devriant will follow with a talk on "Mandragora, a sleeping draught from ancient times".

GROUP MEETINGS

Photography Group - Monday November 2nd, 8 PM sharp; at the Bradley home, 7111 Nashville Avenue, Richmond Heights. Amateur Movie Making.

Astronomy Group - Monday November 9th, 8 PM sharp; at the Jones residence, 690 Bonita Ave., Webster Groves. Topics: "Copernicus and Galileo" by Mr. Stuart O'Byrne; "Excursions to the Planets - their possibilities as abodes of life" by Mr. Harold O'Byrne. Miss Clara Heising will tell of an experience with the 60 inch reflector at Mount Wilson Observatory.

Microscopy Group - Friday November 13th, 8 PM sharp; at Dr. Meiners' office, 6600 Delmar Avenue, St. Louis. (2nd floor).

Botany Group - Monday November 16th, 8 PM sharp; at the home of Miss Olive Schregardus, 633 West Lockwood Ave., Webster Groves. "The Mallow Family and some of its Insect Friends - and Enemies", Miss Catherine Rabenau; "Botanical Excursions in Pennsylvania", Miss Bessie Nau.

Geology Group - Friday November 20th, 8 PM sharp, at the U.S. Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place, Webster Groves. "Geology of the Alps", Mr. Courtney Werner of Washington University, will be the speaker.

Herpetology Group - Saturday November 21st at 7.30 PM, at the home of Mrs. George C. Gundlach, 6948 Marquette Ave., St. Louis. Mr. Henry M. Kennon, curator of the tropical bird display at the St. Louis "Zoo" will address the group on his experiences with reptiles.

Nature Melody Group - Monday November 23rd, 8 PM, at the U.S. Entomological Laboratory. Dr. A. G. Pohlman will speak on "Vibration and Ear Structure".

Ornithology Group - Tuesday November 24th, 8 PM at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Hobbs, 315 Glendale Road, Webster Groves. (Big Bend Road is the best route from the city; it is the fourth house on Glendale Road west of its junction with the Big Bend, at a point about 3/4 mile west of where the Big Bend crosses the Frisco tracks at Gore Avenue). Topic: "Summer Experiences and Bird Observations". Mr. Hobbs.

Ichthyology Group - Monday November 30th, 8 PM sharp, at the Lang residence, 319 Westside Ave., Webster Groves. Topic: "Suckers and Carp".

Junior Groups. The boys and girls of the Bristol School Group will meet at Mrs. Pickens' home, 72 Marshall Place, -Boys Friday Nov. 6th, Girls Friday Nov. 27th. The children of the Avery School group will all meet Friday Nov. 13th, place arranged by phone. Picnics will also be arranged by phone.

Anne A. Jones, Secretary.

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NATURE NOTES

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