



The Wild Side!

September 2016

The dun skipper is just one of the 18 "grass skipper" butterflies found in Oklahoma. The dun skipper is common in the eastern half of the state and feeds on a variety of sedges.

Upcoming Events

Wildlife Expo

Sept. 24-25, 2016
Lazy E Arena, Guthrie

OKC Zoo Monarch Festival

Sept. 24, 2016
OKC

BioBlitz! 2016

Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2016
Kingston

Wildlife Expo Will Be Held Sept. 24-25

The Wildlife Department's Wildlife Expo is a great place to get involved in wildlife conservation.



Wildlife Expo, our state's largest outdoor recreation event, encourages visitors to have a new appreciation for wildlife and the hobbies of hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching. Expo participants will have two days to try their hand at a number of indoor and outdoor activities. A sample of wildlife diversity related booths include:

- Build a bluebird house (sessions limited): *Outdoor Booth #1*
- Learn how to attract animals to your wildscape: *Outdoor Booths #2 & 4*
- Explore the fish and bugs found in Oklahoma's streams: *Outdoor Booth # 19*
- Discover Oklahoma's Bat Nightlife: *Indoor Booth # 45*
- Uncover our state's diverse reptile and amphibian communities: *Indoor Booth # 52*

Wildlife Expo Will Be Held Sept. 24-25, Continued:

The Wildlife Diversity Program will be represented at Outdoor Booth #3. Stop by to learn more about what the Wildlife Department is doing for nongame wildlife conservation and to meet some of the Wildlife Diversity Team!

This weekend of wildlife is hosted by the Wildlife Department and will be held at the [Lazy E Arena in Guthrie](#). All activities and seminars are free of charge. Samples of wild game will be available at the "Taste of the Wild" booth, water stations will be available across the Expo grounds, or drinks and food can be purchased through the concessions.

A complete list of Wildlife Expo activities can be found at wildlifedepartment.com.

Species Profile: Five-lined Skink

adapted from Dr. Laurie Vitt's species account available at wildlifedepartment.com



Five-lined skinks are small to medium-sized lizards with smooth, glass-like scales, well-developed limbs, and a tail that is slightly longer than the body. They closely resemble the larger broad-headed skink in coloration and overall shape. Juvenile five-lined skinks are black with five distinct white stripes extending from the head to the first one-third of the tail. The stripes become less well defined as the skinks age, with the background coloration fading to brown or tan. When mature, the blue tails fade, and most blue coloration disappears completely within a year. Adult males lose the stripes completely and have a brown body and tail. Stripes also fade in adult females, but most females retain at least some indication of the stripes. A combination of size, coloration, and scale characteristics distinguish five-lined skinks from other skinks in the region. Large adult five-lined skinks can reach approximately eight inches in total length. Males are larger than females.

Diet: Five-lined skinks feed primarily on small insects and spiders. Similar to other skinks, five-lined skinks use chemical cues to find prey. They avoid insects that produce chemicals for defense, such as many ants and beetles.

Distribution: In Oklahoma, five-lined can be found in the eastern half of the state where hardwood forests and decaying hardwood logs persist. They are also common in yards in towns and cities of central and eastern Oklahoma.

Reproduction: Mating occurs from May through June. During this time, the heads of males turn bright red or orange. After mating, females deposit clutches of eggs varying from as few as 3 to 8 or more eggs in June and July. Nests are made by females in hollowed out areas, under hardwood logs or in rotted areas of hardwood logs under bark, and frequently under rocks. Once the nest is constructed, the female lays the eggs, coils around them, and remains with the eggs until they hatch in July through early September. Both the female and the hatchlings abandon the nest when hatching occurs.

Find more information about this and other lizards at wildlifedepartment.com or in "A Field Guide to Oklahoma's Amphibians and Reptiles" by Greg and Lynnette Sievert, published by the Wildlife Diversity Program.

Oklahoma Hosts Fall Monarchs

Monarchs are beginning to trickle into our state on their annual journey to Mexico, but a fifth generation is just getting started.

Wildlife enthusiasts can witness one of the greatest butterfly migrations each September as a steady stream of colorful monarchs flow into the state on their way to their over-wintering grounds in Mexico. It's thought that four generations of monarchs are produced in a single year, with the "fourth generation" focused solely on the southern leg of their annual journey. But some of these fourth generation butterflies are laying eggs on milkweed plants as they fly to Mexico's forested mountainsides.

Oklahoma State University's Dr. Kristen Baum is interested in these remarkable insects and how different habitat management practices affect monarchs as well as other pollinators. She recently visited a native grass pasture where a prescribed burn was conducted earlier this summer and found several "fifth generation" monarch eggs and developing caterpillars by carefully examining the undersides of milkweed leaves. Each leaf was gently rotated and scanned from top to bottom. She said the eggs (the size of a pinhead) and first caterpillar stage (smaller than a grain of rice) can be easily overlooked, especially when the leaves are coated in a layer of dirt. As the caterpillars grow, their distinctive black, yellow and white markings become more noticeable, as does the tell-tale damage to the milkweed leaves.



Entomologists are currently uncertain how this fifth generation contributes to the overall population, but some think it may supplement the population in years when Mexico experiences harsh winters. Two fifth-generation monarchs tagged by Baum in 2015 were recovered in Mexico, confirming at least some of this final generation arrive at the over-wintering site.

To contribute to monarch conservation in Oklahoma, the Wildlife Diversity Program suggests:

- Registering with [Journey North](#) to track adult monarchs
- Maintaining fall butterfly gardens to serve as a vital nectar source
- Sharing wildflower seeds with friends and neighbors to increase pollinator habitat in your area

Citizen Science Opportunity: Report Nest Box Success to the Oklahoma Nest Box Trails Program

Let our Wildlife Diversity biologists know how many eastern bluebirds, wrens and other cavity-nesting birds laid claim to your nest boxes this spring and summer! Our program has been tracking the number of nests built, eggs laid, chicks hatched and fledged from man-made boxes since 1985.

In the Nest Box Trails' 30 years, the eastern bluebird has become a recognizable mascot; citizen scientists have provided 62,653 bluebird fledglings with a home address. In last year's survey, bluebird pairs initiated 159 clutches of eggs and fledged 614 chicks. Six other species of birds were also reported to use the 165 monitored nest boxes.

Report the number of fledglings fostered this year at wildlifedepartment.com. Information can be submitted directly through the site or datasheets can be emailed or mailed to the Wildlife Diversity Program.



Eastern bluebirds are just one of the many species the Wildlife Diversity Program has been tracking for the last 30 years.

New Certified Wildscape: #472 - Cheyenne Middle School Exploratorium, Edmond, Okla.

Congratulations to the students and teachers of Edmond's Cheyenne Middle School! Their newly certified wildscape serves as the school's outdoor education area and is referred to as the "Exploratorium." Sharron Wolf, coordinator of this wildscape, said "it continues to evolve each year as an outdoor environment where kids learn to observe and where they conduct various experiments and build a variety of projects." The bird feeders and bird houses have been made by the students and the beds have been planned and planted by them. Students plan to continue enhancing the habitat with additional feeders and nesting areas.

In Other News...

Check out this *Wildlife Diversity news release*.

- [Wildlife Department to Mark Monarchs](#)



The Wild Side e-newsletter is a project of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Wildlife Diversity Program. The Wildlife Diversity Program monitors, manages and promotes rare, declining and endangered wildlife as well as common wildlife not fished or hunted. It is primarily funded by the sales of Department of Wildlife license plates, publication sales and private donors. Visit wildlifedepartment.com for more wildlife diversity information and events. For questions or comments, please email jena.donnell@odwc.ok.gov

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