



The Wild Side!

October 2015

200 monarch butterflies were tagged this month as part of the Hackberry Flat Center Monarch Watch. Monarchs visit Hackberry Flat WMA each year as they migrate south to Mexico.

Upcoming Events

A Walk in the Forest

Ardmore Regional Park
Oct. 17, 2015
8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Professional foresters and natural resource specialists will share the story of the forest and provide some fascinating activities for folks of all ages. Contact jeri.irby@ag.ok.gov for more information.

Saturday Morning Hikes

[Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge](#)
Oct. 24, 2015

Meet at the Refuge Visitor Center at 9 a.m. each Saturday for a kid-friendly guided hike.

Celebrate Bats Oct. 25-31

National Bat Week is the perfect time to celebrate Oklahoma's only flying mammals.



Not only are bats fascinating to watch, they also perform important ecological roles. Studies have shown an individual bat can eat more than 1,000 mosquito-sized insects in one hour. They also play a vital role in cave ecosystems, providing nutrients for other cave life through their droppings. Bats take their place in the food chain by serving as prey for other animals such as snakes and owls.

More than 20 species of bats can be found in the state, half of all the species found in North America. These bats live in every county in Oklahoma and can be found in our largest cities as well as the most rural areas of the state. While some species of bats are adaptable and can live under bridges, in culverts and outbuildings, others have stricter habitat needs. Some bats require caves with specific temperatures, while others need roost trees with loose bark. Understanding these habitat needs is a crucial aspect of bat management.

Follow the below links to learn more about our state's unique mammals and for ways to celebrate National Bat Week.

Bat Resources:

- [Bat House Construction Plans](#)
- [Bats of Oklahoma Field Guide](#)
- [Oklahoma Bat Facts](#)
- [Mexican Free-tailed Bat Coloring Page](#)

Recent Articles About Bats:

- [Managing for Bats](#): Find out what you can do to help bats on your property. (excerpt from May/June 2015 "Outdoor Oklahoma")
- [Counting Bats](#): Learn how biologists conduct population counts in caves across the state. (excerpt from May/June 2015 "Outdoor Oklahoma")

National Bat Week was created by the [Organization for Bat Conservation](#) in 2014.

Species Profile: Eastern Woodrat



On a cool fall night in the eastern two-thirds of Oklahoma you may witness the scampering of an eastern woodrat, or stumble upon the woodrat's distinctive nest or "house." But you won't find these rats in a group; they are solitary animals and are very hostile towards each other.

Woodrats are medium-sized rodents, but are rather large when compared to other mice and rats. Eastern woodrats often exceed one foot in length. They also have long whiskers, large naked ears and prominent eyes that allow for nocturnal activity. They are gray-brown to bright cinnamon-orange with black tipped hairs and have a cream belly and feet. The long, haired tail is similarly bicolored - dark brown on top and cream on the bottom. The tail is nearly one-half the total body length.

Like other rodents, woodrats have long, sharp incisors and are constantly nibbling and chewing. Primarily herbivores, woodrats feed on berries, stems, seeds and buds of a multitude of plants. They will also opportunistically feed on snails, grasshoppers and scorpions.

Though capable of breeding throughout the year given favorable weather, woodrat reproduction is most prominent during winter months. Females give birth to 2-7 young 32-38 days after mating. They can have up to four litters a year. When first born, the young are blind but have whiskers, claws and sharp incisors. They are dependent on the female and their protective nest.

Eastern woodrats are locally known as pack rats or trade rats. These nicknames come from the caching or hoarding of items. This behavior is seasonal, usually occurring during the fall and winter months. Woodrats continually add sticks, leaves and other building materials to these "middens." The stick houses are often one to four feet tall and are frequently found in brush piles, under fallen trees, at the bases of trees, or in tangles of vegetation. In rocky areas, smaller stick houses are built in crevices or along rock ledges. Woodrat nests have also been found in the lower branches of juniper trees. Middens are surprisingly tidy; most have specific areas for food storage, and even a designated bathroom!

Article by Whitney Jenkins, Information and Education Technician

Species List Available for Cross Timbers WMA

After conducting [intensive surveys](#) in 2013 and 2014, the Wildlife Diversity Team has compiled a list of species that can be found on Cross Timbers Wildlife Management Area.

In addition to tallying the amphibian, reptile, mammal and butterfly species found on the area, this list also shows the area's diverse bird community, including the season the bird species was detected. While this list will help biologists make better informed management decisions, it can also help you prepare for your next wildlife watching trip to the area. Find the species list and other Cross Timbers WMA resources in the links below.

Plan your visit to Cross Timbers WMA:

- [Cross Timbers WMA Species list](#)
- [Cross Timbers WMA Map](#)
- [Destination Outdoors: Cross Timbers WMA](#) (excerpt from the September/October 2015 "Outdoor Oklahoma")
- [Destination Outdoors video clip](#)



The Woodhouse's Toad was one of eight amphibian species documented on Cross Timbers WMA. (Jena Donnell/ODWC)



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

This program operates free from discrimination on the basis of political or religious opinion or affiliation, race, creed, color, gender, age, ancestry, marital status or disability. A person who feels he or she may have been discriminated against or would like further information should write:
Director, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, P.O. Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152, or Office of Equal Opportunity,
U.S. Department of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240