

What Can I Do During Fall and Winter at the Nature Center?

by Elizabeth Bittner, Park Naturalist



Weekend naturalist Zelphany enjoyed learning to weave a basket last December. FWNC&R Staff Photo.

School has barely started, but many of us are already looking forward to the holidays and visits from family and friends. The Nature Center offers many opportunities to engage with the outdoors, including different types of experiences tailored toward adults, families, and children. Our regular programs such as canoe tours, hikes, and weekend learning programs will continue through the holiday season. An extra weekday hiking opportunity has also been added on Wednesday mornings.

Programs during fall often highlight birds as many fantastic migratory species visit from the frigid north. Some will stay all winter, but a few are just passing through, so frequent excursions outdoors are a must if you want to add them all to your birding “life list.” From October to December, you can explore owl pellets, take a



The levee to Greer Island leads you back in time to the founding of the Nature Center. FWNC&R Staff Photo.

woodpecker walk, discover more about turkeys, learn to identify backyard birds, or take the whole family out birding on a trail. Hiking on your own or with a naturalist is a great way to appreciate how our feathered friends thrive in the winter.

Lifelong learning is a big part of programming at the Nature Center, and there is always a new aspect of North Texas nature to discover. During the fall, you can join a naturalist to learn about winter constellations, beginner tree and prairie grass ID, winter animal hangouts, and historical treasures preserved within the Nature Center. If you've always

wondered how the Nature Center began, be sure to sign up for a tour of Greer Island, the "original" Fort Worth Nature Center. We'll also offer our popular tour of Civilian Conservation Corps structures, including areas not readily accessible to the public. If you and your loved ones enjoy crafting and creativity, you may want to participate in some fall favorites such as beginner's basket weaving and animal ambassador keychains along with a new program that will help you document your love of nature through journaling.

Many regular visitors to the Nature Center know that the bison are given access to their western pasture during the winter so they can find the best grass to eat. This, unfortunately, means they aren't visible to the public on a regular basis. However, during Thanksgiving and end-of-the-year school breaks, we will offer our bison feeding hayrides so you can see the bison up close, get a peek behind the scenes, and feed the bison a tasty snack of range cubes. This is the best way to see some typical bison behaviors and get a real feel for how impressive they are. Also during the end-of-the-year break, be sure to sign your kindergarten through 6th graders up for a summer camp sampler class. Kids will spend three hours with a naturalist exploring what the Nature Center has to offer in winter.

All classes and programs are available for advanced registration online. Be sure to take a look at the calendar and start making your plans. Don't miss this chance to show your out-of-town guests why you love the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge.