

## LITTLE SPINY FACE

One of my favorite things to do is to hike through the mixed hardwoods of the Sam D. Hamilton Wildlife Refuge and observe the wonders of nature. I usually have to remove many spider webs from my path, and I actually carve hiking sticks that are a little more than head high so to catch the webs. Anyone who frequents these hardwoods in the summer or fall is sure to have ended up pulling spider webs out of their hair and seen the little spider responsible for most of these webs. It's small, about a half inch or less, with a chunky abdomen that has ten spines on it and looks mean and ugly, especially while crawling around on face or neck. It is called the Spined Micrathena.

Since I am no spider expert, I googled this baby up and discovered many interesting things about "little spiny face." This is my name for them since they seem to come with many different designs on their abdomen but all resemble a face surrounded by spines. Some even look like tiny skulls, and I know that can't be good. However, they are not known to bite. When growing up, my big brother claimed he was bitten by one and claimed he was swelling up, but I still think he was just putting on to scare me. Still, I don't fancy them crawling around on me even if they are just on my hat. Usually, it is only the female spider that is seen. The male Spiny Face is about half the size of the female and only has a couple of spines. Only the female builds a web which follows the Cosmic Order of things.

Little Spiny Face builds her web between shrubs and trees, preferably across your trail and head high. First, she weaves three main lines of web, and then she builds her orb (circular part of the web). The orb is six to eight inches across. She always builds an "escape line" into her web and will make a low pitch whine if disturbed. Again, this follows the Cosmic Order of things. It is reported that when the sun goes down, she eats her web and builds it again when the sun comes up but maybe she builds a spare and leaves it out all night to catch night bugs and the unaware early morning hiker or hunter. Most of the prey is small flies, mosquitoes and gnats so she does serve a good purpose.

Little Spiny Face hangs out in the center of her web with her head hanging down and as soon as she feels trapped, prey shaking in her web, she will run to bite it and wrap it up in silk. Males do not build webs, but they do weave a

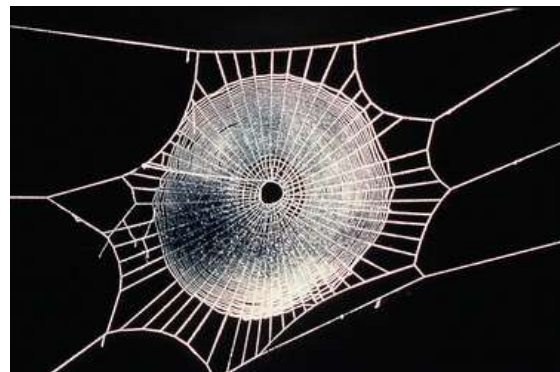
"mating thread." He finds a female's web, and weaves his mating thread onto her web. Don't know for sure why but may be a way to let the other males know this one is taken. Anyway, when he is ready, he quickly runs out and mates with the female. Males often do not survive the encounter which again, yes you guessed it, follows the Cosmic Order of things.

If you get the chance, take a hike in the deep woods of the Sam D. Hamilton Wildlife Refuge to observe the wonders of nature. After wiping the webs off your face take a close look at that little spider crawling upon your clothes and see Little Spiny Face. She won't bite, maybe, but don't shake.

*Submitted by Tom Gregory*



*Photo by David Cappaert, Bugwood.org*



*Photo by Jonathan Coddington, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.*

*Note from Editor: Thankfully, I've never seen "Little Spiny Face" and hope it stays that way – Cosmic order or not!*

## From the FONR President- Bob Fuller



As our short autumn comes to a close and the winter season begins, let me encourage you to come out and enjoy your national wildlife refuge. The trails and boardwalks with their diverse native plants and animals are awaiting.

Also consider starting a new family holiday tradition by coming out and walking off the Thanksgiving and/or Christmas meal with an afternoon walk. When you can't make it out, you might enjoy checking out the amazing photographs posted by several of our patrons on the Friends of Noxubee Refuge Facebook page. We are truly blessed to have this refuge in Noxubee, Oktibbeha, and Winston counties.

As 2016 winds down, you are reminded to renew your membership to the Friends of Noxubee Refuge (FoNR). In addition, please consider making a tax-deductible donation as well. Our refuge staff has worked tirelessly to meet the challenges of a declining federal budget. FoNR must step up our efforts to help ensure that our refuge continues its journey, not only to be an asset to our community, but to be one of the very best in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife System.

## Recognition



Friends President, Bob Fuller, presents a well-deserved award to Barbara Crawford commencing the volunteer service she has given and continues to give the Refuge over the past years.

## Refuge Manager Steve Reagan's Reflections



The hardest part of managing natural resources on a national wildlife refuge is trying to understand time. Changes made today can take decades to be realized and changes made in the past are just now being seen. Just the mention of the word "time" raises the

question, what is time? It always seems like I don't have enough of it, but it is a hard concept to put your fingers on. For me, my mind almost immediately tries to answer the question through quotes like, "timing is everything," "time is fleeting," and "time is relative." As a manager of a refuge, I continually question timing of our actions such as, is it the right time to mow so that we control woody vegetation but not harm ground nesting birds or newly born deer fawns? Or, is it the right time to disturb moist soil areas with a tractor and plow to promote plant foods beneficial to waterfowl without causing an unwanted release of noxious weeds? I also find myself asking is it the right time to address the mountains of emails and data demands required by the federal machine? Often I find myself wanting more time, or to step away from the demands on my time, to be out on the land seeing and interacting with wildlife and the public.

Each of us battles our own challenges with understanding and managing time. We continually need to address time and what choices to make in how we use it in the brief time we may have. I am just happy that once in while I decide connecting with wildlife on the Refuge is worth the time. When I get this opportunity, it seems like time slows down and the stress fades, and I remember why I love this place and the other wild places within our country so much. There is no other surefire way to make myself feel so rejuvenated than to be outside enjoying nature. I know others out there have a similar experience as well, and I thank each of you that share this love with others. Also, those of you who give time to the Refuge deserve special thanks. This includes my "thank you" to the more than 870 volunteers that provided 2,610 hours of work that helped begin the creation of the Connecting People with Nature Trail that will eventually allow visitors to enjoy a 7-mile loop trail around the Loakfoma Lake area. Our immediate objective is to connect the area near the Bluff Lake Spillway to that of the Visitor Center.

Most of the improvements you notice within the Connecting People with Nature Area are being made possible through volunteer work and supplies obtained through the new Entrance Fee dollars. So, please take a moment and evaluate the time you have, and hopefully, you too will agree some of that time should be used at the Refuge.

## NATURE STORE



The Noxubee Nature Store operates in the Visitor Center. The store is open daily Tuesday through Saturday 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, a new Refuge adult T-shirt will be released. The store is stocked with wildlife books on various topics. Regular items such as mugs, water bottles, and coffee tumblers are available as well as an assortment of children's wildlife toys. Noxubee Refuge decals, pins, and magnets make great souvenirs. Visit your Nature Store. All proceeds go to the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge for special programs and activities. The store only accepts check or cash.

*Submitted by A. Dunstan*

### **Nominating Committee Nominees for Board of Directors**

These are the nominees for five vacancies on the Board of Directors. The election will be held at the December 1 meeting.

Beverly Smith  
John Tomlinson  
Lorraine Walker  
Wayne Wells  
Kara Roberts

### **Building Memories**



Laura Ann Unruh of Macon captured this picture of her husband and son (Josh and Aiden). The Refuge is one of Aiden's favorite places to visit with family.

Noxubee Nature Series  
December 1 - 6:30 p.m.  
Tisdale Auditorium  
Noxubee Visitor Center

### **The Importance of Nature to the Choctaw Indians**

December's presenter, Mitzi Reed, serves as the Director of Choctaw Wildlife and Parks (CWP) and as a certified wildlife ranger and Tribal biologist to the Choctaw community. She will present an interesting program on the tribe and its history within the local environment.

*The quarterly membership meeting will be in the Tisdale Auditorium of the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. The meeting is open to the public, and there is no charge. Light refreshments and a social time will follow the presentation.*

### **Artist in Residence – Tom Cowsert**

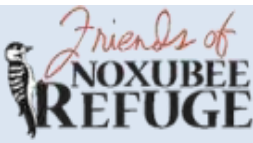


Tom Cowsert, Noxubee artist in residence during August, presented an oil painting to add to the collection of art now hanging in the Tisdale Auditorium. During his stay at Noxubee, Cowsert volunteered with a fourth grade class from Virgil Jones Elementary School in Brooksville. Under the supervision of teacher Vera Taylor and Cowsert, students constructed a paper quilt using leaves, mushrooms, rock, birds, and flowers for inspiration. The teacher, Vera Taylor, is a Friends board member and the coordinator for the Connecting Art to Nature/Nature to Art program.

In another project, Cowsert collaborated with local quilt artist, Julia Graber who reproduced one of his paintings as an art quilt. Cowsert also spoke to art classes at Starkville High School and Mississippi State during his visit.

*Submitted by F. Box*





is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, dedicated to conserving our natural resources through volunteer work and fund raising

**OFFICERS**

President, Bob Fuller  
Vice President, Joe Mulrooney  
Secretary, Vera Taylor  
Treasurer, Anna Marie Rasberry

**REFUGE LIASIONS**

Andrea Dunstan  
Steve Reagan

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Larry Box  
Crayton Coleman  
Gwen Cotton  
Barbara Crawford  
John Dugan  
Tom Gregory  
Gerald McKibben  
Kara Roberts  
Wayne Wells

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Gwen Cotton, [cottongwen@aol.com](mailto:cottongwen@aol.com)

**JOIN FOUR TODAY!**

Individual yearly memberships start at only \$15.  
**13723 BLUFF LAKE ROAD**  
Brooksville, MS 39739

**2016 Noxubee Nature Series**

**Dec 1**

*Contributions to this newsletter were made by B. Fuller, L. Box, F. Box, J. Mulrooney, T. Gregory, S. Reagan, A. Dunstan, L. Croft, R. Snow, B. Parker, L. Unruh and G. Cotton*

**ART DONATIONS**



Gerald McKibben made a one-and-a-half size model of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker and donated it to the Refuge during the last membership meeting. Refuge Manager Steve Reagan placed it in the woods around the Visitor Center.



Bob Fuller, Steve Reagan, Barbara Fedeler, Volunteer Thomas Kroot, and Diana Lyons representing Starkville Area Arts Council.

Artist-in-Residence, Barbara Fedeler (center), donated a charcoal drawing of cypress trees in Bluff Lake to the Refuge. The drawing is on display at the Refuge Visitor Center.

**HAVEYAEVER?**



Photographer Bill Parker posted this pic on the Friends' Facebook page. This mushroom has many names: red rocket, dog stinkhorn, elegant stinkhorn, devil's dipstick, etc. Have you ever seen one of these?

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutinus\\_elegans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutinus_elegans)

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FriendsOfNoxubeeRefuge>, or <http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org>.

Go to <http://www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org/> to view a 30-second Refuge promotion from WCBI.