

Eensy, weensy spider hides out in winter

By LEM MESEE
Outdoors writer

Those ants swarming on your picnic bench when it's 90 degrees always reappear the following summer. But where are they in the winter?

Naturalist Dave Molanen told us about the winter habitat of the six-legged creatures during a nature walk at Kensington Metropark recently.

An enthusiastic group of adults and children braved 15 degree temperatures to find out how the crawling friends survive the cold sting of the season.

We learned that some insects live, some don't.

HONEYBEES, explained Molanen, insulate their hives with sap from trees, store honey for food, cluster together within the hive and are ready to bed down for the winter.

"Temperatures may reach as high as 90 degrees in the center of the hive where the bees congregate," he explained. "And it never gets below 55 degrees."

When fall arrives, the queen and the female workers, push the drones (males) out of the hive to die.

Body waste is a problem bees must deal with. They store their wastes within their bodies. When a warm spell occurs, they then leave the hive to eliminate the waste.

Spiders, while not technically insects, were observed. The female spider lays eggs and then dies. The eggs, protected by a hard, sphere-shaped casing, will hatch before winter. The babies feed off the yolk of the egg and often on other young spiders. "Evidently, there is no love lost in the spider world," observed Molanen.

OTHER INSECTS form galls, he explained, pointing out a gall on a willow.

A gall is a swelling that is formed from a chemical secreted by the female after she has laid her eggs on the stem of a weed or plant. The egg also secretes a chemical which looks like a swelling



Outdoors

of the stem. Actually, it is the nesting place for the insect larvae and pupa stages of the insect.

Often these galls are attacked by birds, which peck holes in the gall, extract the pupa or larvae and have them for dinner. The black-capped chickadee, blue jays and nuthatch like these insects.

Further examples along the trail revealed cocoons formed by tent caterpillars. Close examination showed minute white spheres which were the eggs of the caterpillars.

LEAVING THE main trail, Molanen led us to a clearing on top of a hill. He pointed out a mound approximately 18 inches high and 12 inches across.

"This is where the ants winter over," he said. "They build this mound all summer long and the portion above the ground is used for a nursery in the summer." Then, using a shovel, the naturalist dug into the mound, explaining that sometimes it's necessary to dig as deep as four to five feet to find the wintering ants.

After digging about two feet, he decided not to go any farther, and explained that the ants would rebuild the mound in the summer.

The nature center trail on the west side of the park had lots of other wildlife. The youngsters spotted red squirrels feeding on cobs of corn, blue jays, nuthatches, and tree sparrows relishing sunflower seeds and other seeds at the bird feeder.

A final treat was the sighting of four white-tailed deer.

"As I explained in the beginning," said Molanen, "if we are lucky enough to see other wildlife in addition to insects, we would not close our eyes to it."

No one closed his eyes to the sight of the deer.

could you survive?

tips from the Air Force Survival School

You have been hiking across snow-covered terrain. The temperature is in the low teens and is accompanied by a 15 mph wind. It is the third day of a three-day excursion when you notice two fingers on your right hand are numb and have taken on a grayish tint. The fingers feel "wooden" to the touch. It is apparent the two fingers are suffering from frostbite.

WOULD YOU . . .

A. Try to thaw the frozen fingers by exercising.

B. Rub the fingers vigorously to increase the circulation in the afflicted area.

C. Rub snow on the frozen fingers while exercising and massaging them until normal color has returned.

D. Rewarm the fingers rapidly. Ideally, immersion in water between 105 and 110 degrees is best.

TO SURVIVE

D is the best answer. Rapid rewarming, preferably in water heated to 105-110 degrees, is best.

If this is impractical, placing the injured area against the chest, under the armpits, or between the legs at the groin are good locations to gain best use of body heat. Once a frostbitten area is thawed, it must be protected against the possibility of refreezing.

None of the other alternatives provide acceptable treatment for frostbite. A, exercising the frozen fingers, will increase tissue damage resulting from movement of the ice crystals. Application of snow (C) and rubbing (B) is only compounding the situation by increasing the cold injury.



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Utah residents split reward for helping convict eagle killer

Two Utah residents have received a \$500 reward from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) for providing information that led to the conviction of a construction worker for killing a bald eagle.

Gladys Capson, 76, an Arcadia housewife, and Howard Brinkerhoff, 25, an Altamont grammar school teacher, were rewarded for testifying against Glen Ross, 24, of Arcadia, before U.S. District Court Judge Aldon Anderson in Salt Lake City.

Ross was fined \$750 for violating the Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940. He also lost his hunting privileges for two years and was ordered to spend his weekends in jail for two months.

Mrs. Capson was at home Feb. 10 when she heard a rifle shot from across the road. She looked outside and saw four young men drive away in a mustard-colored truck.

The next day her grandchildren found a wounded bald eagle near where Mrs. Capson had seen the truck. She immediately contacted the local game warden of the Utah Division of Natural Resources (DNR), who rushed the bird to a raptor (bird of prey) rehabilitator 150 miles away in Salt Lake City.

But it was too late. Because of the severe damage to the bird's foot and tail, the eagle was destroyed.

BASED ON Capson's description of the mustard-colored pick-up truck, the DNR began an investigation. Soon after, Brinkerhoff overheard a student bragging about shooting an eagle. He relayed this to the game authorities.

Ross was arrested after he and the other persons in the truck that day were questioned. Ross pleaded guilty to violating the federal law.

Brinkerhoff, who is president of the Utah Falconers and Raptor Breeders Association, will donate his \$250 to that group.

The \$500 reward is the 11th paid by the NWF, the nation's largest nonprofit conservation group, since the reward was posted in 1971.

The NWF pays the reward to persons giving "substantial assistance" in obtaining convictions for shooting bald eagles under the Bald Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, in cases in which at least a 30-day sentence or \$500 fine are levied.

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