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CEDAR POINT TIMES

The Newsletter of Cedar Point Biological Station (CPBS)
School of Biological Sciences
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Above: American Bittern at Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge, May 25, 2022. Photo by Stella F. Uiterwaal. Below right: Fledgling Eastern Screech-Owl, encountered in Alligator Canyon, June 2022. Photo by Allison Johnson

Cedar Point hosts visitors from South America

This summer, visitors to Cedar Point highlighted the expanding research profile of the station. First, Franco Cargnelutti and Mariela Ovideo-Diego arrived from Argentina. They came to continue their collaborative work on arachnids with Dr. Eileen Hebets ([website](#)), begun while Dr. Hebets was on sabbatical at the National University of Córdoba. Supported by a UNL CAS Spark grant, Franco and Mariela came in search of solfugids, mysterious arachnids known as sun spiders, but there were few to be found. Nonetheless, they used the couple of solfugids they did find to demonstrate how long hairs on their forelegs function as mechano-sensory organs. Then they started a new project looking at male-male contests in harvestmen (another kind of arachnid, but not a spider).



Franco Cargnelutti and Mariela Ovideo-Diego at Cedar Point, summer 2022.

Curiously, Franco and Mariela shared their flight plan with a Lesser Yellowlegs that flew up to Lake Ogallala from Colombia. We know this because of the recently installed Motus Tower at Cedar Point. This tower – funded by the Cooper Foundation in Lincoln, NE – is part of a global network of radio receivers linked together through the internet to function as a tracking grid for animals.

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The Cedar Point Motus station sits above the bluff west of the central part of the station, overlooking Lake Ogallala. It uses a cedar tree as a mast, both simplifying installation and camouflaging the station. From here, the station can detect birds across the lake, on the prairie above the station, and east and west along the Platte River. Photo by John DeLong

Cedar Point joins Motus network

We are excited to announce that Cedar Point now has a working Motus tower (see above)! A Motus tower is a radio receiver designed to pick up the transmissions from small tags placed on birds, mammals, and other animals, including insects. Part of a global network of towers (see the [Motus website](#)), Motus towers pick up and transmit information about any tags they detect via the internet, so users can benefit from the entire network.

The Cedar Point tower was generously funded by the Cooper Foundation (see their [website](#)) to support broader research of animal movements through Nebraska and along the Platte and to create an opportunity for students to learn about this cutting edge research technology. The Cedar Point tower is now part of a series of towers along the Platte poised together to fill gaps about animal movements in Nebraska.

Our Motus station was near complete in June, and as soon as the tower was functional, we detected our first birds (see right). On July 17, a Lesser Yellowlegs tagged in Colombia traveled north and up the Platte River to Cedar Point, passing by the Rowe Audubon center on its way. The bird was back in Colombia by September after its summer vacation at the lake. (This is a somewhat fitting beginning, given the 1980 book 'Yellowlegs' by one John Janovy Jr.) More recently, a Black Tern from Saskatchewan was detected on its way to the west coast of Mexico. As migration season takes off, we are excited to be part of this global effort in animal tracking and to see what other animals pass through the area! Many thanks to the Cooper Foundation for their generous support.

Above right: Map showing the route of a Lesser Yellowlegs coming from Colombia and the route of Franco and Mariela coming from Argentina, both arriving at Cedar Point in July. Right: A Lesser Yellowlegs, photo by Wwcsig ([link to photo online](#)).



If you would like to learn about ways to give to Cedar Point, please contact our Foundation representative Joye Fehringer at joye.fehringer@nufoundation.org or 402-875-0611.



Top: The Lit class out front of Goodall Lodge. Connor Beck is in front. Right: In the Cheyenne Buttes at Fort Robinson State Park. Photos by Emily Rau.



Literature and the Environment

The Literature and the Environment course at Cedar Point has really found its footing. Taught by Dr. Emily Rau, recent PhD from UNL's English Department and now faculty in the Library and director of the Cather Archive, (see [website](#)) Emily has brought a passion for the Great Plains, literature, and history to a course that links life and the land. This year, a student in the course – Connor Beck – wrote a piece on the experience of being at Cedar Point and taking the literature course. Here is a lightly edited excerpt:

--The relationships I would cultivate at Cedar Point had been foreshadowed long before my initial stay. Dr. DeLong had approached our biological studies learning community offering something far stranger than the opportunities we had been presented with thus far. A chance to share sleeping quarters with any insect daring enough to ask for their share of the blanket, a guaranteed spot around a warm fire each night, a self-induced insomnia from good friends and great stories. A portion of the class, including myself, began to daydream finally of a biology class taught within the natural world. Full credits earned within a fraction of the time of its conventional counterpart caught our eye. Cedar Point packs more experience and passion into three weeks than some will find within an entire semester.

I wasn't certain what to expect coming from campus classes just a week before. I believe each of us was uneasy at first, yet we quickly learned how to keep one another awake while we read. We learned how to keep the fire burning all night, and what kind of candy our lodge leader Mr. Cory liked best. We learned when to try and make Dr. Emily laugh and when to listen, when to read and when to write. We learned of all of these things and more until the lodge was our home. Our texts centered on the land, a topic hard to discuss without discussing the land's people. Dr. Rau's excellent selections brought beautiful literature and hard conversations to the table.

We sought the perspectives of pioneers, imaginative naturalists, as well as contemporary environmentally based fiction writers. Through traveling to wonderful wild and historic sections of western Nebraska we were exposed to the earth we read of and sought after. I found my home state along our travels unrecognizable and myself once again in love. Though each gave themselves fully to our education, it was only through the combined efforts of our immersion into literature, land, class, and friendship which made Literature in the Environment by far my most impactful course taken at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. The breeze over the hilltop soft and gentle as a mother's whisper, soft and gentle as the sunlight which although dulled by a faint cloud coverage still left, the fields, the lake, and the valleys plated with gold, with the telling of the birds and the biting of the flies, it was apparent everyone was enjoying this midsummer's evening. Everything was in such a fine focus, as it so rarely was, I could so easily then see the entire painting without being overwhelmed by a single stroke of it. I wished only that if I were to lay and rest my sore and tired body, upon waking, not a moment would have passed me by. I could never do my time there justice in writing, there is so much more to say. To speak about the class more, I could recite the course description, the class syllabus, and all the reasons why Dr. Rau is somehow equally as good of a professor as she is a friend. This class affirmed my love for literature and our natural world, highlighted to me the English department's wonderful faculty and students, and found me one more home, in Cedar Point.



The Literature and the Environment class hiking along a ridge at Toadstool Geological Park. Photo by Emily Rau.

About the Station

Cedar Point Biological Station is a site for research and experiential learning located along the banks of Lake Ogallala in western Nebraska. CPBS is surrounded by a wide range of habitats, ponds and lakes, and landscape features such as box canyons, making it an ideal place to learn about and interact with nature. CPBS is operated by the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. The station provides unparalleled experiential learning in the high plains through a wide range of courses and partnerships with the School of Natural Resources; the School of Art, Art History, and Design; the College of Architecture; the Department of Hospitality, Tourism, and Restaurant Management; and the School of Global Integrative Studies at UNL.

Art @ Cedar Point



The Cedar Point art program continued in 2022, with 10 artists-in-residence and our popular middle-school art camps. Run by Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Art's Hannah Demma (see [website](#)) and Aaron Holz, each summer features visual and literary artists who take a break from routine and inspiration from western Nebraska. The above painting, "Turtle Island 3-22" drew inspiration from observations of Lake McConaughy by Aaron Holz. Aaron's work was recently shown at Kiechel Gallery in Lincoln, NE. See more at his [website](#).

Summer 2023 schedule

May 17 to May 20

Grad Student Writing Retreat

Session 1 (3 weeks) - May 21 to June 9

Avian Biology

Fundamentals of Biology II

Session 1 (2 weeks) - May 21 to June 3

Literature and the Environment

Session 2 (3 weeks) - June 11 to June 30

Predator Ecology

Field Herpetology

Session 2 (2 weeks) - June 11 to June 23

Art at Cedar Point

Session 3 - July 2 to July 21

Field Epidemiology

Fundamentals of Biology II

Session 4 - July 23 to August 11

Field Parasitology

Limnology (tentative)

Arabic language immersion (tentative)

Contact or Follow Us

Director: John P. DeLong

Email: jpdelong@unl.edu

Associate Director: Jon Garbisch

Email: jgarbisch2@unl.edu

Program Coordinator: Airicca Roddy

Email: aroddy2@unl.edu

CPBS website:

<https://cedarpoint.unl.edu/>

CPBS Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/CPBS.unl

CPBS Twitter: @CPBS.unl

Mailing address: 170 Cedar Point Dr.,

Ogallala, NE 69153

Station phone: 402-472-5977

Cedar Point Works is supported by grants and donations. If you would like to support experiential learning at CPBS, please consider donating to one of our student-oriented funds.