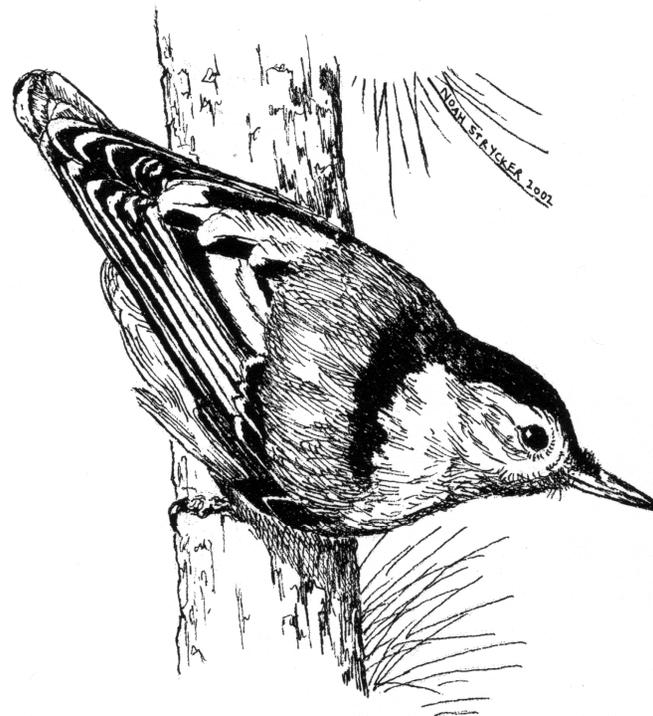


Write about what you have learned in an oak habitat, add drawings too!



# Oak Woodland Naturalist



White-breasted Nuthatch

illustration © Noah Strycker 2001

## Be A Nature Detective



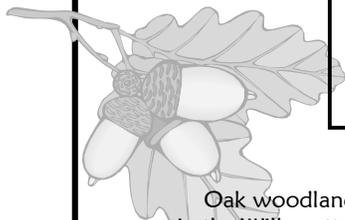
Extension Service  
Benton County

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/benton/resources-1>

OSU Extension Service, Benton Co.  
4077 SW Research Way  
Corvallis, Oregon 97333

541-766-6750





## What is the difference between an oak woodland and oak savanna?

Oak woodland areas are a common deciduous forest type that occurs in the Willamette Valley, Oregon on dry hillsides. It is an intermediate habitat between grassy prairies and conifer dominant forests.

Current oak woodlands are the product of years of fire suppression in the valley and are much more common today than the historic open savanna found here before European settlers. The oaks of these woodland are closely spaced and intermixed with other tree species. These oaks grow to have an upright vase-like profile. The understory of the woodland is made up of more shade tolerant plants.

Historic and restored oak savanna, are characterized by oaks that grow singly with no over-story competition. These trees grow large, spreading their gnarled branches in a graceful globe shape. The understory of these solitary savanna trees is made up of many native grasses and wildflowers of the prairies.

Before European settlement Native American people burned the valley to maintain the open savanna type habitat. After settlement, burning was discouraged and oak woodlands have come to dominate the valley.

## Become an Oak Woodland Naturalist

We challenge you to:

- care for natural areas and treat them with respect
- explore and learn more about the ecosystems and ecology in Benton County
- share with your family and friends the special places and the incredible things you have learned in nature

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I visited (place) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Try your hand at nature writing!

Become an animal that lives in an oak woodland. Write a riddle/poem to tell us who you are.

Example: Red-tail Hawk

Bird

Large, Strong

Soaring, Diving, Twisting

Predator, Hunter

Red-tail



Now you try:

Pick an animal: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.) Write one word below that describes you
- 2.) Write two words below that describe what you look like
- 3.) Write three words below that describe how you move or where you live
- 4.) Write two words below about how you contribute to the ecosystem where you live:
- 5.) Write another word below that describes who you are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

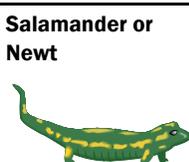
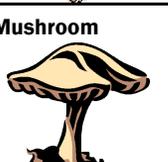
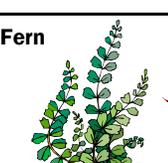
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Try your riddle on a friend, can they guess who you are?

## Play Oak Woodland Bingo



Use your detective skills to look for the items pictured below. Each picture is something interesting that you can find in an oak habitat. Cross off the picture when you find the item.

 Tracks	 Oak Tree	 Wasp or Yellow-jacket	 Poisonoak
 Acorn	 Woodpecker	 Wildflower	 Squirrel
 Ground Beetle	 Salamander or Newt	 Oak Gall	 Mushroom
 Fern	 Snake	 Nest	 Oak Leaf

Cross off four in a row either across, up and down, or diagonally and you have a BINGO!

## Caring for nature, and taking care in nature!

Have Fun, Be Safe and Be Respectful!

- Be prepared with water, snack, rain gear, hat, or sunscreen
- Stay with your group leader
- Take only photos, leave only footprints. Leave nature for others to enjoy too!



- Some things can harm you, be careful around stinging insects or poison oak. Learn to identify species before you go and respect their homes.

- Enjoy wildlife from a distance - to protect them and you!

## Find an Oak Tree!

Draw the shape



Do you think I am growing in a woodland or savanna?



## Learn about the Oak Community

Oak woodlands and savannas make up communities that provide homes, food and habitat for many species of wildlife and plants. Use your detective skills and the Ecology Field Cards to investigate these relationships. Each of the species below depends on oaks or another species off this list. Can you spot the relationships and write it in the relationship column? You can also add additional observations that you make in you studies.

Species	What is the Relationship and with who?
White-breasted nuthatch	
Western gray squirrel	
Oak gall wasp	
Oak mistletoe	
Beard lichen	
Scrub jay	
Acorn woodpecker	
Field mouse	
Rubber boa	



## Become a Wildlife Detective

Many species of wildlife lives here. Look for tracks, scat, homes, or evidence of feeding. Can you think of any more evidence?

### Wildlife Sightings

Animal \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time of day \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior (what was the animal doing?)

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### Evidence of Wildlife

Clue \_\_\_\_\_

Where found \_\_\_\_\_

Draw or write about what it looks like

What animal do you think left this evidence?

\_\_\_\_\_

