



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

January 2016

Program - If You Plant It, They Will Come

Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 7:00pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenters: Ron and Linda Kegel

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves. ~Mahatma Gandhi

I think the true gardener is a lover of his flowers, not a critic of them. I think the true gardener is the reverent servant of Nature, not her... master. ~ Reginald Farrer, In a Yorkshire Garden, 1909

Let nature be in your yard. ~ Greg Peterson



Ever wonder how long it might take a barren piece of ground to recover and once again attract wildlife? When do birds return? When do mammals once again forage in the area? Linda and Ron Kegel moved from one side of town to the other. They moved from woodland edge to a development with no trees (former peach orchard). It can almost be said they went from forest to the desert. In year one they began to plant trees and shrubs in an attempt to transform the lot into a hospitable landscape for critters. While continuing to place more greenery in their just less than acre lot, they began documenting the wildlife they were beginning to see or for that matter what was disappearing because of the new vegetation. As one might expect, as plants began to grow some species felt less comfortable in the yard whereas others began to arrive. They will tell us what those species are.

How long do you think it took that first Chickadee to enter their yard? Keep in mind the nearest woodland was at least ¼ mile away. What birds have disappeared from the yard? What birds have now become frequent fliers? Over 20 years of observation can give us some clues.

Linda is a retired kindergarten teacher and Ron is a manager at a plant nursery, growing trees and shrubs for over 40 years. Both are long time GCNC members and have been birding for over 40 years too. Ron was a past club president and is our enthusiastic coordinator for the GCNC Christmas Bird Count. Come out and hear how their bird yard list has grown to over 130 species.

Directions: The Holy Nativity Lutheran Church is located just off Rt 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd.) immediately south of the traffic light at Mantua Ave. The church parking lot can be accessed by entrances on either Woodbury-Glassboro Road or Lenape Trail (first left off of Mantua Ave).

Field Trip – Delaware Valley Floral Group

Friday January 8, 2016, 12:00pm-2:00pm. Trip Coordinator – Jayne Rhynard

If you are already tired of Winter, join us to get a shot of Spring at our private tour of Delaware Valley Floral Group's facility, greenhouses, and the adjacent outdoor property. Bob and Doris Wilkins started Delaware Valley Wholesale Florist on a wing and a prayer. DV 57 years later is one of the largest floral distribution and logistics companies in the United States. To learn more about the fascinating floral business and this true local success story, register with Jayne. This field trip will be limited to the first 20 participants registering, and is also posted on Meetup (www.meetup.com/Gloucester-County-Nature-Club).

Meet in the parking lot at: 520 Mantua Blvd., North, Sewell, NJ 08080 (856) 468-7000. Directions can be found at www.dvflora.com/nfdvwdirections.htm. Dress in layers for indoors and out (insurance requirement: no open toe shoes).

Field Trip – Birding at John Heinz at Tinicum National Wildlife Refuge

Saturday January 9, 2016 at 9:30am (meet at Refuge in parking lot outside Nature Center)

Trip Leader: Dan Ceravolo

Join Dan to explore this wildlife oasis that is surrounded by highways, an international airport, and neighborhoods. The refuge is free to enter and has over 10 miles of trails and a nature center with restrooms and exhibits. The refuge is designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. The park is centered around Tinicum Marsh and draws large numbers of water birds to its 145 acre impoundment and smaller ponds in all seasons. Dan will lead a walk to explore the refuge and discover what birds are present, checking for roosting owls and other rarities, while seeking out the regular winter residents. For more information, check - www.fws.gov/refuge/John_Heinz/about.html.



Address: 8601 Lindbergh Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19153

Directions: From the South (Traveling Northbound) on I-95 - take Exit 10 (on to Rt. 291), At the first light, turn left onto Bartram Ave., At the fifth light, turn left onto 84th St., At the second light, turn left onto Lindbergh Blvd.

From the North (Traveling Southbound) on I-95 -Traveling on I-95 South, take Exit 14 (Bartram Ave.), At the 5th light turn right onto 84th Street, At the second light, turn left onto Lindbergh Blvd.

More on the John Heinz refuge (Courtesy of Glenn Green and the Darby Creek Valley Association)

The John Heinz Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum is located just across the Delaware River from Gloucester County. Many GCNC members have hiked the nature trails there and might find of interest the article "A History of the Founding of the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum" on pages 3-6 in the [fall issue of the Darby Creek Valley Association \(DCVA\)'s The Valley newsletter](#), which is too large to include in this newsletter.

The following was noted in the article - "Groundwater Recharge: An aquifer under Tinicum Marsh supplies well water to a sizable portion of Gloucester County NJ; if the land over the aquifer is kept open, water can continue to seep into it and feed those wells."

Trip Report: Northwestern Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count 12/19/2015

With 11 of the 13 areas reporting, there is an unofficial total of species at 87. However, as has been noted recently, total # of birds in the area seems to be off and low. The cold, very windy weather the day of the count no doubt played into reduced activity as well. All areas were covered and many participants braved the weather! Full report in Feb. newsletter when all data is retrieved and summation is finished.

MEETUP: In order to reach members with the most up to date field trip information we are asking everyone who is able to sign up for the Gloucester County Nature Club Meetup site. By accessing the site at www.meetup.com/Gloucester-County-Nature-Club/ or using the QR Code to the right, you will be directed to the site. Once you are signed up on the site you will receive up-to-date information on upcoming trips, meetings, events, and fun walks. If you attend field trips you should consider joining Meetup even if you receive the newsletter electronically.



Conservation Corner by Suzan Delozier

POSITIVE NEWS ON PIPING PLOVERS

Piping plovers have shown a rebound in numbers in the last two years according to Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey. The species is federally listed as threatened and, despite the recent encouraging numbers, it is still struggling in New Jersey where it is listed as endangered. The rebound must last for a number of years to sustain any recovery. Some facts:

- Breeding pairs rose to 108 in 2015 (up 17% from 2014) still below the 118 pairs in 1986 when it was federally listed
- The fledgling rate of 1.29 fledglings per pair is above the 1.25 fledgling rate necessary to maintain the population
- 79% of the nesting pairs produced young – a high percentage
- The Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge accounts for 43 pairs or 40% of the statewide total
- Cape May County continues a long decline with just 8 pairs

The plovers face threats from human recreational activity on beaches where they nest, the high density of predators and a shortage of suitable habitat due to development. Intensive management is needed in order to protect the plovers – volunteers build fences and signage around nesting sites, monitor breeding pairs frequently from March to August, and work with the public and municipalities to educate them on ways to minimize impacts. With luck, this small, sand-colored shorebird may yet survive.

<http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/blog/tag/piping-plovers/>.



LEAD AND BIRDS

Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research (www.tristatebird.org), which specializes in bird rehabilitation, every year receives birds suffering from lead poisoning. Waterfowl may ingest spent lead shot in marshes where they forage and birds of prey, particularly vultures, may ingest lead fragments when they feed on carcasses of animals hunted with lead shot. Birds are often profoundly affected with permanent brain damage and seldom survive. Others who can be treated must undergo weeks of treatment to remove lead from their bodies. In 1991, the Fish and Wildlife Service banned lead shot for hunting migratory waterfowl on federal lands and California recently passed legislation phasing out lead ammunition for hunting. If you are a hunter or you know a hunter, please consider using non-lead ammunition this fall. See also <http://peregrinefund.org/challenges> and Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research newsletter Fall 2015.

NEW JERSEY'S WATER

As New Jersey's population grows, the demand on its drinking water grows too. The Water Supply Master Plan for New Jersey was recently updated after nearly two decades. However, state officials have failed to release it for public input. Without this plan, NJ cannot address its aging water infrastructure, cannot plan for future demand, and cannot address water quality and ecological water requirements. Challenges to our water supply are already here – from water shortages to saltwater intrusion. You may add your name to a petition telling Governor Christie to release the updated plan now by going to www.greenactions.org/save-h20-nj?sc=ems. Thanks to South Jersey Land and Water Trust and Pinelands Preservation Alliance for this information.

The beautiful fragrant and evergreen rosemary is a winter favorite. It is also one of the most frequently killed plants each year. Whether you have the kind cascading down a pot, or wrapped into a wreath, or the upright variety gracefully grown into a miniature Christmas tree, it needs the same care to survive the holidays.

Fragrant and Evergreen Rosemary is a Winter Favorite from the Allentown Morning Call

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) is a small perennial shrub native to the Mediterranean region, bright, warm and rocky. The name, ros marinus, means dew of the sea. It loves sunshine, even in winter, and quick-draining soil. The plant can be bright green to silvery gray, the leaves thin, broad or even short and stubby, and the plant tall and straight or crawling over the ground. While most flower blue, there are pink and white flowering varieties.

So how do you keep that beautiful green and wonderfully fragrant plant alive over the winter? Here's what it needs:

Pot and soil: A good potting soil mix with plenty of perlite for soil that is not overly rich nor one that retains a lot of moisture. Clay pots encourage the soil to dry out, making them ideal for winter growing or those who tend to overwater. Plastic is great for summer growing as the evaporation is slowed. It also may be best for those of us who are not diligent about watering plants.

Light: As much as possible in summer and a brightly lit south or east exposure indoors is the best.

Water: Allow the soil to dry out and then water thoroughly but be sure to dump any water from the drainage tray.

Humidity: About 50 percent humidity is great; too much encourages mold/mildew. Some sources recommend misting but only do this in areas with plenty of air circulation.

Air: Winter temperatures should be on the cool side (about 65 degrees) and in an area with good air flow. Stagnant air will encourage leaves to remain wet and spores to settle on plants, resulting in powdery mildew. However, avoid placing in spots with cold drafts or directly in front of forced-air heat grates.

Signs of problems are yellowing leaves at the base of the plant, indicating a root-bound plant, and browning leaves, usually an indication of overwatering or poor drainage.

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: January 2016

The following events take place at the Scotland Run Nature Center in Clayton. For details and to register for programs, call the center at (856) 881-0845. All events are free.

- Bird Walk: Saturday 1/9 at 8:30am. A beautiful time of year for a leisurely morning walk. Bring your binoculars and discover the many species of birds that call Scotland Run Park home.
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 1/13 at 10:00am. A fun program for preschoolers and their caregivers. Make a craft and take a walk on the park trail.
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 1/16 at 10:00am. A great way for scouts to earn their naturalist and forestry badges.
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 1/20 at 2:30pm. Take a leisurely walk through the park on one of the beautiful trails.
- Nature Explorers: Saturday 1/30 at 10:00am. Family Adventure program.

Natural Events for the month of January

- Earthworms burrow below frost line and become dormant.
- Newly fallen snow makes it easy to find and study animal tracks.
- First mating season for gray squirrels.
- Look for flocks of robins eating holly berries in your backyard.
- Great horned owls, America's earliest nesting owl, may be on eggs by the end of the month.
- As days lengthen, tufted titmice and cardinals start singing.

Looking Ahead:

Listed below are the programs we have lined up for the rest of this season. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

February 11, 2016: **Pot Luck Dinner (6:00pm) & Bag it, a documentary film (7:00pm)** - Interactive member activity

March 10, 2016: **A Journey Through Time and Space: Following the Ancient Song-lines of Ireland** - Erik Mollenhauer & Brian Hayes

April 14, 2016: **A Panama Adventure** - Barbara Bassett

May 12, 2016: **Annual Plant Sale (6:00pm) and Program: The Horseshoe Crab Lab 6:30pm** - Sue Slotterback, The Wetlands Institute

June 9, 2016: **Thursday, June 9, 2016 Annual Picnic (6:00pm) at Alcyon Park, Pitman, NJ followed by program: Bluebirds** - Allen Jackson, President, New Jersey Bluebird Society

2015-2016 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the rest of this season. Changes and additions are not impossible. If you would be able and willing to lead an additional field trip, please contact Paula Hayes at pnbhayes@gmail.com.

February - **Hike at Palmyra Cove**

March - TBA

April - **Bird Quest Trainings**

May 7, 2016 - **Bird Quest**

June - **Duke Farms**

Club Notes:

- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Karen Kravchuck at blackbirdsinging@hotmail.com or call 856-468-6536.
- The Nature Club is always looking for ideas for future programs and field trips. Please contact the program or trip coordinator if you have ideas or would like to help.
- Information for the next newsletter should be sent to Barry Bengel at sharkeyes@comcast.net or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.
- The January Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday, January 10th at the home of Jayne Rhynard. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.