



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

February 2009

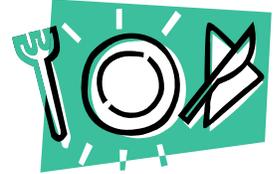
**Program – 6:00 PM Traditional Pot Luck Dinner (Please note earlier start time)
7:00 PM Down Jersey: The Songs and Stories of Jim Albertson**

Thursday, February 12th

Special Location: The Holy Nativity Lutheran Church
3 Lenape Trail, Wenonah, NJ (see directions below)

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks (856) 468-6342

As the winds of winter whistle through the bare and leafless trees or the snows of winter softly fall, we are warmed by the pleasure of good fellowship and good food. In that spirit we are again celebrating winter with our traditional February Pot Luck Dinner. Please bring either an entrée or dessert and a plate and utensils for yourself. Also please note the dinner begins at **6:00 PM**.



Following our dinner we will be entertained by a very special guest. Our program tonight will be Down Jersey: The Songs and Stories of Jim Albertson. Jim is a talented singer, musician and storyteller who has steeped himself in the stories, legends and musical heritage of South Jersey and the Pinelands. Jim grew up in Atlantic City and he has long played an important part in the cultural scene of South Jersey. Jim was elected the first president of the New Jersey Folklore Society, has served for many years as emcee of the New Jersey Folk Festival. He has released the album, Down Jersey, on the Smithsonian Institution's Folkways label. Come hear Jim tell the story of the **Jersey Devil** "Some night when it's very dark, listen to the wind as it blows through the tree.....", or sing of the dark cells and hard times of the **Mt. Holly Jail** or the life and times of the **Pinelands Traveler**. Join us for an evening of fun, music, songs and stories of the folk heritage of South Jersey.

Historical note and warning: There have been several sighting of the Jersey Devil in Wenonah. – source: The Woodbury Daily Times, January 1909.

The Gloucester County Nature Club extends sincere thanks to the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church for opening its doors to us and generously offering use of its facilities for tonight's dinner and program.

Directions: The Holy Nativity Lutheran Church is located just off Rte 553 (Woodbury Glassboro Rd.) immediately south of the traffic light at Mantua Ave. The church parking lot can be accessed by either of two entrances:

1. From Woodbury Glassboro Road:

Heading South. Proceed south on Woodbury-Glassboro Road past the light at Mantua Ave. (at Wachovia Bank). After about 200 feet, turn right onto the driveway into the church parking lot.

Heading North. Approximately 200 feet before the light at Woodbury Glassboro Rd. and Mantua Ave., turn left onto the driveway into the church parking lot.

2. From Lenape Trail:

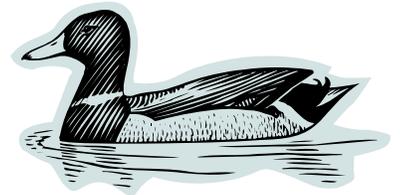
Heading West on Mantua Ave. Turn onto Mantua Ave. from Woodbury-Glassboro Rd. Make the first left (one block and opposite the Wachovia Bank driveway) onto Lenape Trail. The church is immediately ahead on your left. Turn left into the parking lot.

Heading East on Mantua Ave. One block before the light at Woodbury-Glassboro Rd., turn right onto Lenape Trail (opposite the Wachovia Bank driveway). The church is immediately ahead on your left. Turn left into the parking lot.

Field Trip – Winter Birding at Jakes Landing Saturday February 28th, 4:30 PM until after dark Trip Leader: Brian Hayes

The parking lot at Jakes Landing (Dennisville NJ) in the middle of the marsh could be one of the best spots to end your day of winter birding in all of NJ. Join us just before sunset as we scan the marshes for Northern Harriers floating above the grasses looking for their next meal. We will look for bald eagles or rough-leg hawks along the tree-line and search for the many species of duck to be found in the waterways. As the sun sets it will provide a spectacular backdrop as we look for short-eared owls and listen for clapper rails. Finally, as we get into our cars and the last glimmer of light fades before our eyes we could hear the soft calls of great horned owls. All this and more is possible at this very cold spot.

Interesting tidbit: As you head out Jake's Landing Road you may notice a centuries old cemetery on your right. This belongs to the Ludlam family, proprietors of the land in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Most of the headstones are unreadable but there is a sign now stating this is the final resting site of Tomas Ludlam II (born 1767, died 1829), his wife, and their three sons.



For those who want to carpool – meet at the Timberline Shopping Center at 3:30 PM. Bring binoculars, scope, bird book, and lots of warm clothes. The combination of the water and a slight breeze can put a chill in anyone when they are standing around looking for birds. It is always cold there (unless it is summer when it is always hot and buggy) so bring good footwear and lots of extra layers.

Directions: Take Rt 55 South until it becomes Rt 47 South. Take Rt 347 South (47 and 347 split but come back together just above Dennisville: 347 is just a little quicker). From the light where 347 and 47 come back together, travel about 1 mile then turn right onto Jake's Landing Road. Follow this road all the way out to the parking lot. NOTE: Road can be treacherous with large potholes and ice, caution is best.

Field Trip – Babies in Backpacks / Toddlers in Tow Friday February 13th, 9:30AM at Timber Creek Park, Gloucester Township. Trip Leader: Maria Keefe (627-7010) Email: walkingwith4boyz@comcast.net



Bring your little Valentine for a winter walk on Friday, February 13 at 9:30am at Timber Creek Park, Gloucester Township. We will walk at a toddler's pace exploring as we go. Dress in layers according to the weather. Bring your own backpack and/or a stroller that is able to be pushed on unpaved paths. Everyone welcome.

Directions: Entrance to park is on Chews Landing Road, Gloucester Township.

From the Deptford Mall head south on Almonesson Road toward Deptford Center Road. Turn left at Deptford Center Road. Turn left at Hurffville Rd/ Rt 41 (signs for Runnemede/Haddonfield/State Hwy 41N). Continue to follow Hurffville Road. Continue on Clements Bridge Road. Slight right at W Evesham Rd. Turn right at South Blackhorse Pike/Rt 168. Turn left at Chews Landing Road.

Field Trip Report: Babies in Backpacks/ Toddlers in Tow (December 30) by Paula Hayes

On a windy morning last month a high-spirited group of children led their parents on a walk through Chestnut Branch Park. The walk included about 14 children and 8 adults. The group explored the paved and wooded trails at the park. One of the highlights was climbing on a fallen tree. The children enjoyed walking and running on this slanted log. Another highlight was when the Keefe boys made a train as they carried a long stick from the woods. The adults enjoyed a few birds while the children mostly relished the idea of running, romping, and whooping after too many days inside. These walks aren't just for kids they are for the young at heart too. If you would enjoy a bit of time outside and a fresh (young) perspective think of joining one of these walks. I will warn you though, these walks are not quiet or calm they are filled with the sounds of wonder and discovery. Thanks for a great morning Maria!

Field Trip Report: Conowingo Dam (January 18) by Jonathan Stillwell

On a relatively mild January Sunday morning 15 people traveled to Conowingo Dam to view wintering Bald Eagles. We saw about 60 individual eagles of various ages and discussed aspects of their plumage as they mature. Some interesting behaviors were observed including hunting, eating and interactions between eagles.

We also got to see a nice group of Bufflehead and some Hooded Mergansers, plus Goldeneye, Pied Billed Grebe, Winter Wren, Ruby Crowned Kinglet and Belted Kingfisher. Also spotted were 30 Great Blue Heron in a row. Thanks to Karl Anderson for spotting the Lesser Black Back Gull.

Conservation Corner – Information on Nesting Herons Sought



The New Jersey DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife is seeking information on inland nesting colonies of herons. Colonies located on marsh islands along the Atlantic coast are easy to identify and monitor, but those in inland areas are more difficult to detect. Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) is therefore seeking information on these colonies to improve the understanding of the distribution of these species throughout the state.

Of special interest are great blue heron, yellow-crowned night heron and black-crowned night-heron colonies (especially in the northeast portion of the state). A colony is defined as having one or more pairs of nesting birds so please don't hesitate to report locations that have a small number of birds utilizing them.

Anyone with information on heron colonies should submit it to Christina Kisiel at mckisiel@hughes.net. Please include details on the species using the site and directions to the site.

HELP!!! WE NEED HELP!!! Our conservation committee needs some help. Following the philosophy that “Many hands make light work” we are looking for members who can be part of our conservation committee. It doesn’t have to be a huge time commitment. You don’t have to stand up and speak in front of everyone. Maybe you can collect some information on a topic that interests you. Maybe your organizational skills are topnotch and you can get us coordinated. Maybe you are passionate about an environmental issue and want to make sure others know about it.

All of us in the Nature Club are interested in our environment and realize the importance of its conservation — that’s a big part of why we come out each month to meetings and field trips. That’s why we try to stay on top the issues.



Our Conservation Committee can help keep us current about what’s going on out there and what we can do to make a difference.

If you have been thinking about getting a little more involved with the club — or even if you haven’t been thinking about it and just realized it’s a great idea — please think about being part of our Conservation Committee. It’s a relatively easy way to make a difference.

You can call Karen at 468-6536 or e-mail blackbirdsinging@hotmail.com.

Kid’s Corner –Ice Sculptures* by Deb Maka

What you’ll need:

- natural items collected from your yard (for example: acorns, berries, leaves, seeds)
- a container that will hold water (a cup or bowl)
- water

How to create your own ice sculpture:

- fill the container with water
- place the items you collected into your container
- put the container outside overnight so that it will freeze
- once it’s frozen, take the ice out of the container and you have your ice sculpture
- if it doesn’t get cold enough outside, you can make ice sculptures in your freezer



* adapted from GREEN HOUR® a program of the National Wildlife Federation (www.greenhour.org); Discovery Journal & Activities (issue #52: ice sculptures)

Natural Events for the month of February

- Skunk cabbage flowers are emerging from the ground, in wetlands throughout the County. As they grow they generate heat, which melts the frozen ground around them.
- Alder catkins are swelling and will open on the first warm days.
- Melting snow may reveal the trackways of meadow voles, dug along the interface between the frozen ground and snow cover.
- Broom crowberry in bloom in the Pinelands.
- Mourning cloak butterflies emerge from hibernation on warm days.
- Killdeer and great blue herons return from the south as waterways thaw and snow cover melts.
- Chipmunks reappear around bird feeders.
- Best time for viewing tundra swans at Whitesbog and other Pinelands ponds.

East Coast Vulture Festival 2009
Saturday, March 7th, Wenonah, NJ
Featuring programs from

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia

The 200 Black and Turkey Vultures are in their winter roost. The time is approaching for us to come together for the fourth year of this annual celebration and homage to these amazing birds, sponsored by the Gloucester County Nature Club and the Wenonah Environmental Commission. This year the festival is proud to partner with one of our regions most prestigious institutions, **The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia**, to spread our message not only that vultures are an important and beneficial part of a healthy environment, but that a healthy and sustainable environment where people and wildlife can coexist is necessary for us. It will be an afternoon and evening of fun, education, wildlife encounters, music, dance, good company and a great time for all.

Vulture Day Children's Fair will again be held at the Wenonah Community Center (the historic railroad station) 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. This family oriented event will transform the Community Center into a "children's vulturefest" with hands on vulture arts & crafts, games, educational and vulture art displays, and guided walks to observe the vultures and their roost. The **Academy of Natural Sciences** will be present with a special- not to be missed exhibit- ***Animal Encounters***, hosted by Academy naturalists. It will include live birds, mammals, reptiles and vulture biofacts. This event is FREE and open to the public.

The East Coast Vulture Festival 2009 Evening Roost will be held at Wenonah School from 7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. The highlight of this year's festival will be the special program ***Raptors: Predators of The Sky*** presented by **The Academy of Natural Sciences** and featuring live birds including owls, hawks, a falcon and very possible a live Turkey Vulture. Come see and learn about these beautiful and fascinating birds. The program will also include a short presentation by Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge of Medford, NJ and the awarding of the 2009 VEE Grants to local educators. The festival is proud to announce we will be entertained by a return live performance by singer/songwriter, Jim Six and an encore performance by the Road Kill Review Dance Ensemble, this time dancing to a Vulture Rap. Fruit, coffee and elegant desserts were served. Tickets are ordered in advance. The price is \$18 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under.

For more information on the festival, go to our web site at EastCoastVulturefestival.org.

Proceeds from the festival go to support environmental education through the festival's VEE (Vulturefest Environmental Education) Grant Program.

Events by other Organizations: February 2009

- February 1 (Sunday) – Winter Afternoon Birding at Boundary Creek Natural Resource Area, Moorestown. Sponsored by the Burlington County Department of Parks. For info: Phone 609-265-5068.
- February 9 (Monday) – Estuary Enhancement – 7:30 PM at the Collingswood Public Library, 711 Haddon Ave, Collingswood. Regular meeting of the Audubon Wildlife Society. For info: www.audubonwildlifesociety.org
- February 10 (Tuesday) – Salem County Nature Club meets at the Alloway School at 7:00 PM. There will be a short video about mollusks. For info: www.salemcountynatureclubnews.blogspot.com/

- February 14 (Saturday) – Birding at Barnegat Light. 9:00 AM – Mid-afternoon. Leader: John Courtney. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. \$Fee. For info: <http://njudubon.org/centers/rancocas/>.
- February 14 (Saturday) – Birding the North Shore (Monmouth County Coastal Ponds and Ocean). Leader: Cliff Jones. Sponsored by the Burlington County Natural Sciences Club. For info: <http://oldsquaw.tripod.com/>.
- February 18 (Wednesday) – Beaver pond Hike. 9:00 AM-11:00 AM. \$Fee (free for PCNP members). Sponsored by the Palmyra Cove Nature Park. For info: <http://palmyracove.org/>.
- February 21 (Saturday) - Birding at Taylor’s Refuge and Amico Island. 9:00 AM – Mid-afternoon. Leader: Lloyd Shaw. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. \$Fee. For info: <http://njudubon.org/centers/rancocas/>.
- February 25 (Wednesday) – Fox Hike; Discover Dens and Learn about Red Fox Behavior. 9:00 AM-11:00 AM. \$Fee (free for PCNP members). Sponsored by the Palmyra Cove Nature Park. For info: <http://palmyracove.org/>.

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

- Bird Walk: Saturday 2/7 at 8:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 2/18 at 2:30 PM
- Family Nature Adventure: Saturday 2/14 at 10:00 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 2/11 at 10:00 AM
- 4H Kids Nature Club Meeting: Saturday 2/7 at 10:30 AM

Cumberland County Winter Eagle Festival

On Saturday, February 7, Cumberland County, NJ will be hosting its annual Winter Eagle Festival. This is a great chance to see Hawks, Vultures, and Eagles, and there are plenty of knowledgeable volunteers around to help you spot and identify them.



The Festival will start with a 7:00 AM Sunrise Walk at Turkey Point, lead by Karen Johnson. Four viewing sites will be staffed by throughout the Day. Don Freiday (our January GCNC speaker) will lead a 5:00 PM Owl Watch. There will also be exhibits, lectures, and food in the Mauricetown Fire Hall from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. In addition to this, a 10:00 AM Bald Eagle Trail walk and 12:30 PM Maple Ave. Trail Walk will be led by Steve Eisenhauer and Brian Johnson of the Natural Lands Trust.

The cost of admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. For more information about the Festival, or for directions, call 856-453-2177 or 866-866-M-O-R-E. Mauricetown Firehall is located on Noble Street in Mauricetown, NJ 08329.

On Sunday, NJAS will host its regularly scheduled TURKEY POINT Sunrise walk @ 8:00 AM. \$6.00 for NJAS & CMBO members, \$10 for non-members.

Great Backyard Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Bird Count web site. This year's GBBC will take place on Feb. 13-16, 2009. For more information about this event, go to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>.

20th Annual Pinelands Short Course

Saturday, March 7, 8:45 AM to 3:30 PM, at the Pemberton Campus of Burlington County College. Choose five from a menu of 34 workshops, field trips, and mini-courses. Pre-registration is required. This is a great chance to learn about New Jersey's most famous ecosystem. \$35.00 for adults, \$30.00 for seniors (65+). For information contact the New Jersey Pinelands Commission at <http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/about/events/index.html>.

Other Nature Notes

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount to GCNC members!

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount (for non bird food items) to GCNC members! *Due to the current volatile market for bird food, the 10% discount for these items has had to be discontinued.* However, members will still receive credit for their purchases towards the Frequent Seed Shopper Program. WBU offers the GCNC discount on all other items in the store. Members are requested to identify themselves as GNNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please contact Sharon at (856) 218-2973 or sillybird348@comcast.net.



New Nature Club column in Gloucester County Times!

It's official! The Gloucester County Times has agreed to publish a Gloucester County Nature Club nature column on a monthly basis. It will appear in print in the newspaper on the 4th Sunday of each month and on their online blog at the same time. It will be called "Gloucester County Nature."

Our next column is scheduled for Sunday, February 22nd. It is supposed to be inside Section "D" of the print newspaper. Go to www.nj.com/south to find it on the Times blog. Vultures will be the topic - just in time to get us ready for the 4th annual East Coast Vulture Festival.

Karl Anderson has gotten us off to a running start with several great columns. We have more promised from another member or two, as this is going to be a team effort. If there are any writers in our ranks that would like to contribute, please let us know. You can call Karen at 468-6536 or e-mail blackbirdsinging@hotmail.com.

Looking Ahead:

2008-2009 GCNC Programs

March 12, 2009 - **Birds of the Spring Migration** – Brian Hayes

April 9, 2009 – **The Grand Canyon: White Water Rafting, Canyon History and Geology** - Brett & Erik Mollenhauer

May 14, 2009 – **Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife In Our Gardens** - Doug Tallamy, Professor of Entomology, U. of Del

June 11, 2009 – **Annual Picnic at Red Bank Battlefield and The Art of Karen Paust**

2008-2009 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the rest of the season. Others may be added as opportunity permits and leaders become available. There will also be a series of Summer Field Trips.

March 10, 2009 (Tuesday) - **Full Moon Hike at Alcyon Park** - Kris Mollenhauer

April 19, 2009 (Sunday) - **Wildflowers on the Wenonah Trail** - Richard Dilks

May 16, 2009 (Saturday) - **Birding at Allaire State Park** - Jonathan Weir

June 6, 2009 (Saturday) - **Birding at Brightview Farm** - Bob Duke

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 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 February Executive Committee meeting will be held on February 8th at the home of Ed and Millie Cleary. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.