



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

February 2017

6:00pm - Annual GCNC Pot Luck Dinner

7:00pm - Program: Adventures in Paddling for Clean Water and a Healthy Ocean

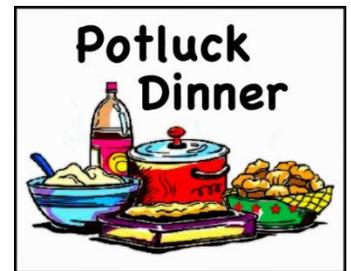
Presenter: Margo Pellegrino

Thursday, February 9, 2017 at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (Directions below)

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Please note the dinner begins at 6:00pm, and the program at approximately 7:00pm.

This February we gather, as we have for many years past, for our traditional annual winter Pot Luck Dinner. It is always a highlight of the year and a great opportunity to gather together with fellow club members and share a wonderful meal on a cold winter's night in the warmth of good company. As always, please bring either an entrée or dessert and a plate and utensils for yourself.



"Water is our most precious resource. Droughts are impacting California, there are floods in Texas, Florida's facing a water crisis, Lake Erie is having record algae blooms, and many of our nation's streams are too polluted for swimming or to use as drinking water. We can't ignore these problems, we've got to fix them, and they are fixable. Sometimes the solution is actually very simple. Natural resources can come back on their own if we just provide them the opportunity to do so. I know this because I've also seen the success stories first hand and they're all around also. But to do so, it requires people who care to take action – which is the core of activism. This is what I and my paddling journeys are all about – a call to action."

~Margo Pellegrino

Our program this evening, Adventures in Paddling for Clean Water and a Healthy Ocean will be presented by Margo Pellegrino, paddler and clean water activist. Since 2007, when she piloted her outrigger canoe from Maine to Miami, she has paddled the coasts of the US in partnership with various environmental nonprofits to highlight the problems challenging our ocean, a resource on which the world depends for oxygen, food, weather, and well-being. Our ocean resources are an important economic driver for our national, and in fact global, economy. Margo is currently a project of the Blue Frontier Campaign.

TheBigApple2TheBigEasy has been Margo's sixth and seventh long adventure, not including a little jaunt around NJ. In the month of August, 2014, Margo paddled from Trenton to Newark to highlight this state's water resources and the problems within them. In 2015 Margo navigated from New York City to Chicago and in 2016 she paddled down the Mississippi to New Orleans (Chi2NOLA) to highlight the upstream impacts on our ocean downstream.

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 – Family Moonlit Hike and Campfire at Scotland Run

Saturday, February 11, 2017 at 7:00pm

Trip Leader: Maria Keefe (cell/text: 609-315-4759)

We are hoping the weather will cooperate for a full moon walk. Join us as we experience the magic of walking in the woods by the light of the moon. We explore the music of the night as our eyes give way to our other senses and we share the night with owls, raccoons, and flying squirrels. Come out and see tree silhouettes, moon shadows and the stillness of the woods in winter. The walk is short but will include uneven and sloping wooded trails so sturdy walking shoes are recommended. The walk will last about one hour which will give us time for some stories as well. We will end with a campfire compliments of the Scotland Run staff. This event will be cancelled in the event of rain. To fully enjoy the splendor of the night keep your flashlights off and in your pocket. This event is open to all ages.

To reserve your spot for this special event please register by calling Scotland Run at 856-881-0845 or emailing ltaylor@co.gloucester.nj.us.

Directions: Take exit 45 off route 55 to Centerton- Clayton exit. Make a left onto Buck Road (Rt. 553). Make a right at the first traffic light onto Academy Road (Rt. 610). Take Academy Road for 2 miles crossing over route 47 and Fries Mill Road. Just beyond Fries Mill Road turn right into the Nature Center. Address for GPS: 980 East Academy Street, Clayton NJ.

Field Trip Report - Birding Along the Delaware River in Gloucester County by Jayne Rhynard



Our engaging and knowledgeable leader, Lloyd Shaw, started the Club's joint field trip with NJ Audubon Society off by welcoming and thanking the 28 hardy participants to the foggy first stop at Red Bank Battlefield in National Park. In the dense fog, Lloyd helped the group spot Ring-billed Gulls, Mallards, 5 Common Mergansers, and lots of Canada Geese from river's edge. Distant in the fog we scoped 2 Bald Eagles perched in the tree with their nest which we were also able to glimpse at our next stop, Riverwinds in West Deptford. Starlings, Juncos, Blue Jay, Robin, Song Sparrow, Pigeon and a Red Bellied Woodpecker in a cedar on the way back to the parking lot rounded out the spot. From

Riverwinds' viewing area (with slightly lifting fog) we had Great Black-backed Gull and adult and juvenile Double-crested Cormorants gave us good looks atop the pilings; with the stop at the retention pond by the golf and tennis center we picked up Buffleheads, more Mallards, White throated Sparrow, Mockingbird, Crow and Belted Kingfisher. Our group followed the leader to Floodgates near Bridgeport where new adds to the day's list in addition to another (!) Bald Eagle, Carolina Wren, Song Sparrow, Blue Jay and cooperative Red-bellied Woodpecker were a Red-tailed Hawk, Red-winged Blackbird in the phragmites and the Hermit Thrush that Lloyd pished out of the tangle next to the pathway. Although fog and mist stuck with us throughout our trip, our leader's skills, running commentary and sunny disposition kept it fun and had something for everyone to learn.

Christmas Bird Count Follow-Up by Ron Kegel, compiler

Fellow birders,

Thank you to all who attempted to go out for the Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count. What a messy day! As you could sense from my numerous texts and e-mails I wasn't sure what to do – cancel, delay, or other. Fortunately after soliciting advice, Jerry Haag, compiler of the Salem and Elmer counts wrote back to me and said "We have done this before as you know. Jack Mahon and I will be going out a little later." This kind of sealed my decision to have folks go out later if they were not ready or if they were somewhat uncomfortable earlier.

Despite the weather and the shortened day by most, we were still able to find 95 species on the day. As with every count, there were some oddities, omissions, and highlights. One of the more impressive (or unimpressive depending upon how you look at it) highlights was that there were 17 species counted only one area in a count

circle. This means that some of you were the only ones viewing this particular species. This sounds unusually high for the count. Only nine species were seen by all areas; this is down a bit from the previous count.

Some other notable finds are the following (not meant to leave anyone or anything out!):

- Snow Goose lower numbers (643)
- Mallard / Black Duck is solid. 549/308.
- Green Winged Teal - nine, wonder if the couple days of freezing weather pushed them out
- Red-Breasted Merganser - none
- Black Vultures outnumber Turkey Vultures, 148 to 62. More Black Vultures in the roost.
- Red-Shouldered Hawk - (seven) little higher
- Bald Eagle - lower numbers eight this year - weather?
- Falcons - low numbers.
- No came birds other than Turkeys
- American Woodcock - one seen by Rich Dilks group
- Northern Flicker and Red Bellied Woodpecker numbers neck and neck 70 and 67 respectively.
- Crow numbers were low.
- White-Breasted Nuthatch numbers up
- House Wren - seen by Glenn Green at feeder
- Gray Catbird - none
- Robins - fairly common
- Cedar Waxwings - three
- Yellow Rumped Warblers down a bit only 40 and 22 seen by one party
- Eastern Meadowlark - none concern here
- Purple Finch - one seen by Henderson/Holt Basset and Rhynard group
- Chipping Sparrow - none
- Horned Grebe - five seen by two parties: Henry/Shaw
- Baltimore Oriole - seen by Mollenhauers
- Common Yellowthroat - warbler seen by Brian & Paula Hayes



If we were to add the "none" to the list above we would have possibly hit 100! This happens, however, it all averages out. Some species drop unexpectedly and others seem to get elusive.

Thanks to all our feeder watchers. Some of you became feeder watchers as a result of the weather and help to make the count notable. We continue to build on this segment of the count.

May our next count bring more pleasurable weather. However, there are no guarantees! Sometimes the circumstances are cause for various stories that can go on forever. Thank you again for taking part. If you didn't join us please save the date. The 2017 Northwestern Gloucester County Christmas count will be held on Saturday, December 16.

Thank you again to Kirk and Donna Strohmeier for welcoming us into their home for the wrap-up the night of the count. It is always a welcome finish to an exciting day. Remember your time is well spent and appreciated since this is a Citizen Science project providing important observations and info to the database.

Good birding,

Ron Kegel, compiler

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: February 2017

- February 4, 2016 (Saturday), 8:00am to 4:00pm – **2017 Cumberland County Winter Eagle Festival.** Mauricetown Fire Hall, Noble Street, Mauricetown NJ. Special Family Programs, Lectures, Exhibits, Vendors, Food. Adults \$10, Children under 12, \$5. For more information call 856-453-2177 or visit <https://www.facebook.com/wintereaglefest/>.

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.

- Nature Tots - Me & My Shadow- Groundhog Day: Wednesday 2/1 at 10:30am
- Bird Walk: Saturday 2/4 at 9:00am
- Nature Tots - Go as you Grow: Wednesday 2/8 at 10:30am
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 2/11 at 10:00am
- Nature Tots - To Nature with Love- Valentine's Day: Wednesday 2/15 at 10:30am
- Nature Tots - Wiggly Worms: Wednesday 2/22 at 10:30am

The Long Beach Island Foundation, 120 Long Beach Blvd, Loveladies, NJ, 08008 hosts **Science Saturday** programs from January through April. For details and to register for programs, call the foundation at (609) 494-1241 or see www.LBIfoundation.org. All events are free for members and \$5 for non-members.

- Saturday 2/4, 10:00 - 11:00am: **Turtle Encounters: Family Program** (hands-on with live turtles) followed at 11:00am - 12:30 pm by **Turtles of the Island: Past, Present, and Future** (discussion)
- Saturday 2/11, 11:00am - 12:30 pm: **The Army Corps of Engineers and LBI**
- Saturday 2/18, 11:00am - 12:30 pm: **Cooking Fresh Seafood**
- Saturday 2/25, 11:00am - 12:30 pm: **The Ecology of the New Jersey Pine Barrens**

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.

Conservation Corner by Suzan Delozier

BIRDS AND THE NEW YEAR

Remember it's never too early to get ready for spring birding, so bring some birdsong into your life by going to Cornell's website www.allaboutbirds.org and start brushing up on your bird identification. You can browse the online bird guide which contains recordings of bird calls and songs as well as extensive information on habitat, food, nesting sites, behaviors, migration, and conservation issues. Also download Cornell's free Merlin Bird ID App to your smartphone for use in the field. Cornell also offers self-paced, online bird identification courses for a small fee, including a comprehensive course on waterfowl ID.

BEEES AND THE NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLY

Currently there are 3 bills in the NJ Assembly that need our support. All three bills have passed in the Senate.

- S2076/A3398 – There are nearly 400 species of native bees that pollinate not only our agricultural crops but also our native plants, having evolved alongside those native plants. They are better at pollinating cranberry and blueberry plants than non-native honey bees and also work in colder conditions and put in longer hours. This bill extends protections that are now only for honey bees to native bees by requiring pesticide applicators to notify registered non-native and native beekeepers within 3 miles of an impending application. This gives the beekeeper time to protect the hives from pesticide drift. Passed the Senate on Dec. 19th.
- S227/A963 – This bill requires the NJ Department of Transportation, the NJ Turnpike Authority, and South Jersey Transportation Authority to use native plants for landscaping, land management, reforestation, and habitat restoration. This bill passed the Senate on Oct.20th.
- S2078/A3400 – This bill requires the state to establish a basic training course for pesticide applicators. The course would ensure that applicators are 'trained to avoid, reduce, or eliminate the effects of pesticides on pollinating bees in NJ'. Passed the Senate Sept. 15th.

See <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/> for more information on the bills and to find your district and representatives' names and emails. Contact your Assemblypersons and tell them the bees are essential to our and the environment's well-being.

What else can you do to safeguard the bees on your property?

- Never buy an insecticide containing neonicotinoids (neonics). Neonicotinoids are highly toxic to bees at small dosages and persist for months to years in both plants and soil. Check labels for these most common neonics – Acetamiprid, Clothianidin, Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid, Nitenpyram, Thiacloprid and Thiamethoxam.
- Avoid using a pesticide labeled as 'systemic' in your garden.
- Ask retailers if the plants they sell are treated with neonics. Over the last 2 years many retailers including Lowe's, Home Depot, Whole Foods and BJ's have committed to phasing out neonics but still may be selling treated plants.
- Buy seeds that have been harvested from organically grown plants. A good seed company to start with is www.seedsofchange.com.

See following websites for much more info on a bee-friendly environment:

www.pesticideresearch.com/site/?page_id=9990#How_to_create_a_bee-friendly_garden and http://webiva-downton.s3.amazonaws.com/877/a1/5/8972/GardenersBewareFollowupReport_4.pdf

STONE HARBOR POINT RESTORATION

The winter issue of the New Jersey Audubon magazine reports that beach restoration at Stone Harbor Point begun in 2015 has produced great results in 2016 – five pairs of Piping Plovers, a record 27 pairs of American Oystercatchers, and colonies of Black Skimmers, Least Terns and Common Terns. Work continues to keep nests safe from flooding and to decrease human disturbance. Investigation is also being done to determine the effect of restoration on invertebrates.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

It is hard to believe that giraffes are threatened with extinction in the wild because of illegal hunting and loss of habitat. According to a New York Times article on December 8, unless something is done NOW, it is very possible the giraffe will be gone from the wild by 2040. Giraffes can soar to 20 feet in height and have tongues that are a foot long. There are actually 5 subspecies of giraffes found mostly in southern and eastern Africa. Unfortunately, many giraffes reside in areas plagued by civil wars.

On a better note, the Center for Biological Diversity reports in its fall magazine Endangered Earth that the Endangered Species Act in the US has had success protecting American birds. The following results are drawn from more than 1800 scientific surveys to determine how populations are faring for all 120 US birds that are listed endangered or threatened.

- On average, populations of listed birds increased by 624 percent since listing.
- 85% of listed birds in the continental US have increased or remained stable since listing. Unprotected species have suffered a decline of 24%.
- Listed birds in Hawaii and other Pacific Islands have not done as well as continental birds, with 61% increasing or remaining stable.
- Twelve species have been delisted due to level of recovery,

The Endangered Species Act has saved more than 90% of the species it protects from extinction and has done an especially good job with birds.

CONDOR RELEASES

Two magnificent condors released at Vermilion Cliffs National Monument in Arizona/Utah were captured on camera taking flight. Check out <https://medium.com/usfws/breathtaking-condor-release-c5d5b838c235#.84dfq7f3o> and <https://youtube/CU3YcjZF8oA> to see these awe-inspiring birds which the Endangered Species Act helped to save. In 1982 only 23 birds survived. Today there are over 400 with more birds flying free than are in captivity.

Looking Ahead:

Listed below are the programs we have lined up for the remainder of the club year. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

March 9, 2017: **Vulture Culture: A Face Only a Mother Could Love** - Jane Morton Galetto, President, Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River

April 13, 2017: **Birds of Gloucester County and Tips on Photographing Them** - Dennis DiMarco & Marilyn Henry

May 11, 2017: **Annual Plant Sale (6:00pm)** and **Program: A Green Legacy: John Burroughs and the Catskill Mts (6:45pm)** - Erik Mollenhauer

June 8, 2017: **Annual Picnic (6:00pm)** at Alcyon Park, Pitman, NJ followed by **Program: Surfskis, Outrigger Canoes, Kayaks, Lifejackets, Rescue Throw bags, Paddles - Up Close & Personal** - Glen Forest Green, P.E., U.S. Canoe Assoc. Safety Committee Chairman

2016-2017 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the remainder of the club year. 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.

March 2017 - **Crystal Lake Park** (Burlington County)

April 2017 - **BirdQuest Training Sessions**

May 6, 2017 - **BirdQuest**

June 2017 - **Horseshoe Crab Walk**

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 609-617-6693 (cell).
- 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.