# Gloucester County Nature Club
# Monthly Newsletter

**www.gcnatureclub.org**

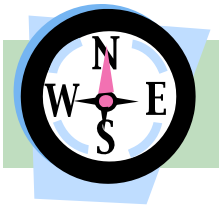
**Nature Club meetings are open to the public**

**March 2008**

## Program – The Sport and Adventure of Geocaching
## Thursday, March 13th at 7:00 PM at EIRC, Sewell

**Presenter: Joe Valentino** **Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks (856-468-6342)**

It may be said that geocaching is like life. Knowing where you want to go is not nearly so difficult as figuring out how you get there.




Geocaching is an outdoor adventure and treasure hunting game in which the participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers (called "geocaches" or "caches") anywhere in the world. A typical cache is a small waterproof container containing a logbook and "treasure," usually toys or trinkets of little value. The sport of geochaching was born with the new millennium in 2000. Today, well over 480,000 geocaches are registered on various websites devoted to the sport. Geocaches are currently placed in over 100 countries on all seven continents including Antarctica.

Our presenter this evening is geocache enthusiast, Joe Valentino, who will introduce us this fascinating and challenging sport, talk about what satellites are used, explain geocaching equipment and give a demonstration of GPS receivers. He will also tell us the rules of the game, its connection with the internet and will show us some caches actually used in the field. Joe has geocached since January 2006 and has already logged nearly 3,000 caches in several states.

## Field Trip – Ringing Rocks and Lake Nockamixon
## Saturday, March 15th, 9:00 A.M. to about 4:00 P.M.

Trip Leaders: Brian and Paula Hayes

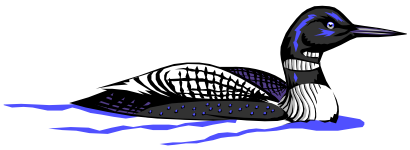
Travel Time – 1 ½ hour each way. Meet in the Timberline Shopping Center parking lot (Rt 553 & Mantua Blvd) at 9AM to carpool. Trip is expected to go into the afternoon, so bring a lunch or snack.

Lake Nockamixon, our first stop, is a large reservoir with lots of opportunity for outside activities. We will mostly be looking for local birds and wildlife depending on the weather. Formed in 1973 the park is often host to rare birds and unusual sightings. The most recent sighting was a long-billed murrelet in December 2007. This bird is an Asian species only seen rarely in North America. While the trip is a bit too early for it this is also a great area in the Spring for Native wildflowers like Dutchman's Breeches, Bloodroot, and Bluebells which are all found in significant numbers throughout the park. The terrain is very rocky and clearly shows the boulder line left from the last ice age. This is exemplified by the next stop on the trip, a small park called Ringing Rocks. This park has a small boulder field with a unique feature. Many of the boulders, when struck with a metal object will produce a ringing or bell-like sound. Yes, that's correct: when you hit these rocks with a hammer you can get a music-like ringing sound. Many people have experimented with these special properties over the years including a concert and several symphonic recordings. We will experience it as well. While there we will

visit a beautiful 30 foot tall waterfall at the park which is actually the largest waterfall in Bucks County. The whole area is beautiful and a small jewel easily overlooked.

Weather permitting we will do some walking on this trip, though it won't be long walks it will be over very uneven ground (small boulders). You should bring a hammer (the type used for hitting nails) if you wish to "ring" the rocks.

## Field Trip Report - Long Beach Island (Winter Birding) – February 16



Over thirty species of birds were seen on this trip. Some of the seasonal specialties included brant, harlequin duck, long-tailed duck, redhead (four of them!), common loon (fifty or more), red-throated loon, purple sandpiper, dunlin, ruddy turnstone, great cormorant, red-breasted and hooded mergansers, and northern harrier. Harbor seal was a surprise sighting! The weather was perfect - cool, of course, but sunny, with blue skies and very little wind. There were seventeen participants. The leaders were Gale Cannon and Karl Anderson.

## Edible Arts and Crafts by Deb Maka

In addition to sharing a wonderful meal at our February meeting, we shared nature-focused crafts which appealed to the kid in all of us (particularly the pine cone bird feeders). Hopefully, the meeting inspired you to continue creating arts and crafts projects. On the other hand, you may have missed the meeting but wish to join in the fun. The following are two examples of wildlife feeders. Happy Crafting!

<u>Cranberry Wreath (Bird Feeder)</u>

- Cut a 12-16 inch length of medium gauge florist wire
- Bend one inch of one end of the wire into an "L"
- At the other end of the wire, begin stringing fresh cranberries

  **Note:** (1) do not use berries that are soft
  (2) run the wire through the top & bottom of the berry, not the sides
- String fruit until there is about one inch of wire left and twist both ends of the wire together to form a wreath
- Refrigerate until ready to use

<u>Citrus Cups (Bird Feeder)</u>

- Halve an orange or grapefruit and remove the juice and pulp
- Make three holes spaced equally around and near the cut edge of the citrus
- Thread a 10 to 12-inch piece of ribbon or raffia through each hole and secure with a knot
- Tie the three loose raffia ends together no more than five inches above the fruit cup
- Make a small hole in the bottom center of the cup for drainage
- Fill the cup with bird seed or nuts
- Store in a cool, dry place for one to two days before hanging

## **Conservation Corner – Our Own Back Yard** by Loretta Dunne

Red Knots, robin-sized shorebirds, come to the Delaware Bay each spring after flying non-stop from Brazil. These birds rely on the availability of a large amount of horseshoe crab eggs to nearly double their body weight in less than 2 weeks, before taking flight again. From the Delaware Bay the Knots fly non-stop to their Arctic breeding grounds. During the last ten years, there has been an 80% decline in the Red Knot population.

For the last two years, New Jersey has had a moratorium on the harvesting of horseshoe crabs. As part of the effort to save the birds from extinction, there was an attempt to have the Red Knot declared an endangered species. Unfortunately, the federal government did not grant that request.

On February 13, by a vote of 5 (commercial fisheries special interest members) to 4 (recreational fishing members), the NJ Marine Fisheries Council rejected the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's proposed continued moratorium on the harvest of horseshoe crabs. About 35 local watermen harvest horseshoe crabs, which they either use or sell as bait to catch eel and conch. They estimate that the harvest brings them a total income of $100,000. The Fisheries Council decision will allow the harvesting of 100,000 male horseshoe crabs later this spring.

NJ Audubon Society members submitted over 500 letters and over 30 members testified in support of the moratorium. Nature Club members certainly contributed to this number. Eric Stiles of New Jersey Audubon indicated that this decision has set the Red Knot on a path to extinction. How can we hope to protect elephants, polar bears or other species at risk thousands of miles from us when we cannot save a bird that depends on feeding in New Jersey for its survival in our own backyard?

A recent article in the Courier Post, "Crab Vote Hinges on 2 Empty Seats" by Richard Pearsall indicates that there were two empty positions on the Fisheries Council and these are the "representatives of the public". It is unclear why these seats are empty. One has been open for five years and the other this last year. All eleven members of the council are appointed by the Governor. It is likely that the public members would have approved the moratorium.

State lawmakers have now introduced a bill to ban horseshoe crabbing. Assemblyman John McKeon introduced the bill in the assembly and an identical bill was introduced in the senate. In an article entitled "State Lawmakers Move to Ban Horseshoe Crabbing" by Michael Miller of the Atlantic City Press, Assemblyman McKeon indicates that it is an embarrassment for New Jersey to sacrifice an entire species in exchange for $100,000 in gross revenues. Contact your representatives in both the Senate and the Assembly. Let them clearly know that you support this bill and fully expect them to see that it passes!

Information about the red knot can be found at the NJ Fish and Wildlife website (http://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/ensp/redknot.htm).

Keep track of what NJ Audubon is doing to fight this decision at http://www.njaudubon.org/Conservation/HSCrabAlert.html. Join their action alerts.

Raise your voice in what is likely our last chance to save this species!

**Household hazardous waste collection set**

Gloucester County residents can drop off oil-based paint, motor oil, antifreeze, batteries, fluorescent tubes, solvents, pesticides, pool chemicals and similar materials for recycling, reuse or proper disposal on eight dates this year through the Household Special Waste program offered by the county.

The waste will be accepted at the Gloucester County Solid Waste Complex, 493 Monroeville Rd., South Harrison Township, on March 8, April 12, May 10, July 12, Sept. 13, and Oct. 11. It will also be accepted at the Gloucester County Public Works Department, 1200 N. Delsea Dr., Clayton, on May 17 and Oct. 18. The service is free to county residents.
For more information or to have a detailed brochure mailed to you that includes materials accepted and maps to the drop-off sites, call 856-478-6045 ext14, or see the recycling page at http://www.gcianj.com.

## The East Coast Vulture Festival 2008 is Coming Saturday, March 1st.

This year we will be celebrating our vultures in new ways with events and activities that will engage and entertain adults and young people alike. The third year of this annual celebration and homage to these amazing birds, sponsored by the Gloucester County Nature Club and the Wenonah Environmental Commission, is the most ambitious festival yet. We are building on last year's great success with new events, activities and programs.

**NEW This Year - Vulture Day Children's Fair** at the Wenonah Community Center (the historic railroad station) 3:00 P.M. to 5:45 P.M. This family oriented event will transform the Community Center into a "children's vulturefest" with hands on vulture arts & crafts, games, story telling, educational and vulture art displays, brief natural history talks and guided walks to observe the vultures and their roost. This event is FREE and open to the public.

**The East Coast Vulture Festival 2008 Evening Gala** 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 a special program by ***The Center for Birds of Prey*** of Charleston, SC. This professional presentation will feature live birds including Black Vultures, an owl and hawks. This is the first time ***The Center for Birds of Prey*** has presented a program in New Jersey and is an opportunity not to be missed. The festival will also include a live performance by singer/songwriter, Jim Six and an encore performance by the Road Kill Review Dance Ensemble. Fruit, coffee and elegant desserts will be served. Tickets must be 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 www.EastCoastVulturefestival.org.

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

We are always looking for volunteers to join with us in bringing this event together. If you would like to get involved in ways large or small, help with planning, activities, hospitality, decorating, set up or clean up contact Rich Dilks at 468-6342 or by email at rad721@aahawk.com.

The Gloucester County Nature Club has brought the ***Center for Birds of Prey*** to our area not only to participate in our festival, but also to provide special educational presentations at selected elementary schools in Camden, NJ. These school presentations have been funded through the generosity of the ***Campbell Soup Foundation*** and the club gratefully acknowledges its support and interest. The East Coast Vulture Festival and its sponsoring organizations, are proud to have joined together with the ***Center for Birds of Prey*** and The ***Campbell Soup Foundation*** in making these enriching experiences for young people possible and in expanding their awareness of the wonders of the natural world.

## The 2008 Gloucester County Bird Quest: Saturday May 3, 2008

The Gloucester County Nature Club and its co-sponsors invite people of all ages to participate in the **2008 (ninth annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest. The 2008 Bird Quest** will take place on **Sat., May 3, 2008 from 7 AM to 12 noon throughout Gloucester County.**

During this time, teams visit parks and natural sites in Gloucester County to find as many different bird species as they can. The Quest is:

- A way to discover Gloucester County's parks and natural areas
- A way to discover the unique birds that live in and through our county
- An opportunity to learn how to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat
- An opportunity to have fun with family, friends, and colleagues
- A light-hearted competition

**The Quest is an educational event: novices are encouraged to participate.** At noon, all participants gather at Atkinson County Park on Delsea Drive to report results and for **(free) lunch, t-shirts, and prizes.**

We encourage you to organize your own Quest team with colleagues, friends, and/or family. Last year's Gloucester County Bird Quest attracted several hundred participants made up of families, friends, teachers, school groups, scout troops, environmental commissions … residents of Gloucester and neighboring counties. **If you have participated in the past why not invite a friend or colleagues to join you for this year's Bird Quest!** With support from Wheelabrator, LP of Gloucester County, the club will again operate two (free) guided buses for individuals unable to form their own team and who are willing to join a larger group. Our theme this year is "Natural Places of Gloucester County" and will be featured in a T-shirt designed by the club's own Gary Lizzi. A county map and other materials are provided to registered teams. **A $12 fee per participant helps to defray the cost of lunch, T-shirts, prizes etc.**

More information and registration forms will be posted to the Gloucester County Nature Club's website at www.gcnatureclub.org. For more information, to receive a registration form, join a team or reserve a seat on the bus, contact Paula or Brian Hayes at pnbhayes@comcast.net or (856) 468-9272.

**Participants are encouraged to attend any of a series of free field trainings in the evenings, mornings and weekends before the Quest. Most of the training sessions are listed below; a complete list will be provided in next month's newsletter. A complete list will also be available on the club website. More detailed directions and additional site information can be found in our book, *Natural Places of Gloucester County NJ*.**

### Bird Quest 2008 Training Sessions

**April 14 (Monday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM** **Birding Basics**
Alcyon Lake, Pitman Learn the basics of good birding and the tools of the trade.
*Directions: From Rt 55 Exit 53A (or Exit 53 if coming from the south) take Rt 553 (Glassboro Road) south for about 1.5 miles to Holly Avenue. Turn right (west) on Holly Avenue. Continue for 1.2 miles to the park entrance, which is on the left. There is a small sign. Drive past the sports fields; meet at the pavilion.*
Leader: Deb Maka Co-leader: Waltraut Paust

**April 15 (Tuesday), 6:00 – 7:00 AM** **Bird Quest Training**
Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua
*Directions: From the intersection of Rt 45 (Broad Street) and Cooper Street in Woodbury, go south on Rt 45 for 4.2 miles. Turn left (from right hand lane) onto Rt 553Alt (Main Street) in Mantua. Go south on Rt 553Alt for 1.6 miles. The park entrance will be on the left. There is a large paved parking area. Meet at the wildflower garden.*
Leader: Kris Mollenhauer Co-leader: Elaine Dzeima

**April 16 (Wednesday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM** **Bird Quest Training**
Greenwich Township Walking Trail, Greenwich
*Directions: From Interstate 295 Exit 16B, go north on Democrat Road (Rt 673) toward Gibbstown for about 0.2 mile to Swedesboro-Paulsboro Road (Rt 653). Turn right and go about 0.5 mile to the Nehaunsey Middle School, which will be on the left, just before the Greenwich Township Library. Turn into the school parking lot. The entrance to the trail is behind the school, and is marked with a small green sign.*
Leaders: Bob Duke Co-leaders: Doris and Dwight Weir

**April 17 (Thursday), 6:00 – 7:00 AM** **Bird Quest Training**
Red Bank Battlefield Park, National Park
*Directions: From Interstate 295 Exit 22, take Red Bank Avenue west for about 0.5 mile to Hessian Avenue. Turn left on Hessian Avenue, and continue for 1.2 miles to the park. Meet at the parking area on the left.*
Leader: Gale Cannon Co-leader: Karl Anderson

**April 20 (Sunday), 7:00 – 8:30 AM** **Bird Quest Training**
West Deptford Scenic Park, West Deptford w/ DVOC
*Directions: From Exit 21 on I-295, take Delaware Avenue west. In about 0.4 mile, cross Grove Street. Continue for another 0.3 mile, on what is then called Riverwinds Drive. Watch for a sign to the trail, on the right. Meet in the parking lot.*
Leader: Jeff Holt

**April 21 (Monday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM** **Bird Quest Training**
Old Pine Farm, Deptford
*Directions: Access from Good Intent road (534), turn North onto Rankin Ave. Follow to end and park. Walk down woods road to the Big Timber Creek.*
Co-leaders: Ed and Millie Cleary

**April 22 (Tuesday), 6:00 – 7:00 AM** **Bird Quest Training**
Greenwich Lake Park, Greenwich
*Directions: From I-295 Exit 15, go north on Tomlin Station Road (Rt 607) toward Gibbstown. The park entrance will be on the right, in about 0.25 mile.*
Leader: Gale Cannon Co-leader: Karl Anderson

**April 23 (Wednesday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM** **Birding by Ear Part I**
EIRC building, Washington Twp This is an introduction to bird calls in a classroom setting.
*Directions: Located right on Delsea Dr. (Rt 47) in Washington Twp just south of the Terra Nova Restaurant (used to be the Italian Bistro).*
Co-leaders: Brian and Paula Hayes

**April 24 (Thursday), 6:00 – 7:00 AM** **Birding by Ear Part II**
Ceres Park, Mantua Twp Take the skills you learned in the classroom into the field.
*Directions: From Rt 322 take Lambs Rd (635) to Pitman-Barnsboro Rd (553Alt). Make a left onto Rt553A. Watch for Ceres Park sign on your left after crossing over Rt 55.*
Leader: Barry Bengel Co-leader: Jayne Rhynard

**April 27 (Sunday), 7:00 – 8:30 AM** **Bird Quest Training**
Floodgate Road, Greenwich
*Directions: From I-295 Exit 14 (Repaupo Station Road), take Repaupo Station Road west. In 0.6 mile it crosses Rt 44 and becomes Floodgates Road. Continue on Floodgates Road for another 1.6 miles to its end.*
Leader: Ron Kegel Co-leaders: Doris and Dwight Weir

## Other Nature Notes

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

Wild Birds Unlimited has a discount agreement with the GCNC executive board and is pleased to offer GCNC members an everyday 10% discount on all purchases excluding optics and food or sale items. Sharon Oakes, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, appreciates the many volunteer contributions made by GCNC members and hopes members can benefit from this discount. Members are requested to identify themselves as GCNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please call Sharon at 218-2973.

## WANTED: Information about Gloucester County Big Trees

The Nature Club is embarking on a new project - a publication about the trees of Gloucester County. For each species, there will be identifying information, a description of the range nationwide and in New Jersey, habitat information, a compilation of hopefully-interesting facts, and notes on where to find the species in Gloucester County. There will be photos of leaves, fruit, bark, and overall aspect. Between 35 and 40 species will be covered.

We would like to tell readers of this publication where to find some good examples of each species. So if any readers of this newsletter can provide locations for exceptionally large, well-grown specimens of any native trees (plus non-native white pine, princess tree, Norway maple, Norway spruce, black locust, and common catalpa) that are growing on public land or that are easily visible from a public road, please get this information to Karl Anderson, 46 North Childs Street, Woodbury NJ 08096; karlanderson6@aol.com. A complete list of tree species slated for this project will be on the GCNC website. Many thanks!

**Demonstration Rain Gardens** - The Rutgers NJAES Water Resources Program and Cooperative Extension of Gloucester County are looking for numerous sites throughout Gloucester County for the installation of Demonstration Rain Gardens. Rain Gardens are designed to capture runoff from rain storms and prevent this runoff, which contains pollutants, from entering into nearby streams and lakes via storm drains. The gardens are planted with native plants, which once established, require minimal care. Requirements are that these gardens be installed on public property where the public has unfettered access to the garden, with an area where information on the gardens is available, and space where an educational program can be presented-such as libraries, parks, schools and community buildings. Once a site is approved, all plants and materials will be supplied through a grant and we will work with your group on installation. There are currently three demonstration gardens in the County; behind the Office of Government Services Building in Clayton; the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church in Wenonah, and at the Greenwich Library. More information will be available at the next club meeting.

### Events by other Organizations

- March 2 (Sunday) - **Night Hike**. 4:30-6:30 P.M. Family-oriented program. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. $Fee. For info: http://njaudubon.org/centers/rancocas/.
- March 8 (Saturday) - **Field trip: Cumberland County Waterfowl.** Leaders: Chris Herz and Jean Gutsmuth. Sponsored by the Audubon Wildlife Society of N.J. For info: www.audubonwildlifesociety.org/.
- March 15 (Saturday) - **Field trip: Salem County Birding.** Leader: Joseph Costanza. Sponsored by the Burlington County Natural Sciences Club. For info: http://oldsquaw.tripod.com/.
- March 15 (Saturday) - **Field trip: Mission Mistletoe. (Botanical Exploration of Winslow WMA).** 10:00 A.M - 3:00 P.M. Leader: Joe Arsenault. For info: phone Karl Anderson at 856-845-7075, or e-mail karlanderson6@aol.com.
- March 22 (Saturday) - **Wenonah Environmental Commission Work Party.** Meets 9:00 A.M. Woodbury-Glassboro Road Cleanup. For info: www.wenonahenvironmentalcommission.org/.

**Natural Events for the month of March**

- Woodchucks emerge from hibernation.
- Male skunks wander widely, searching for mates.
- Red maples flower in late March, with male and female flowers on separate trees.
- Roadside "weeds" such as speedwell, wintercress, hairy bittercress, purple dead-nettle, and storksbill bloom before most native wildflowers.
- Eastern screech owls, New Jersey's most common owl, lay eggs beginning in March and continue through May.
- Woodcocks begin courtship flights.
- Male goldfinches begin to molt into their brilliant yellow breeding plumage.
- Eastern Phoebes return this month.

## Looking Ahead:

### 2007-2008 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the upcoming field trips for the remainder of this year:

- April 12, 2008 (Saturday) - Salem County Birding - Lloyd Shaw
- May 18, 2008 (Sunday) - Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve - Richard Dilks
- June 21, 2008 (Saturday) - Unexpected Refuge - Karl Anderson and Sarah Summerville

**Upcoming GCNC Programs** (All occur on Thursdays)

Here is the program list for the rest of this year:

- April 10, 2008 - The Birds of Panama - Jeff Holt
- May 8, 2008 - Horseshoe Crabs - Sue Ann Slotterback from the Cape May Nature Center
- June 12, 2008 - Annual Picnic

## 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 April Executive Committee meeting will be held on April 6th at a site TBD. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.
- 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 6 Greenwood Drive, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.