



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

March 2009

Program – The Migration of Birds in Gloucester County – The Flying Colors of Spring
Thursday, March 12th at 7:00 PM at the Wenonah Community Center

Presenter: Brian Hayes

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks (856) 468-6342

We will explore what wonderful birds can be found in Gloucester County in the Spring. Some very colorful characters can be seen each Spring practically in your back yard. Have you seen them? Have you heard them? How did they get here? Where are they coming from and where are they going? You might be surprised to learn about the ordeal many of these fanciful beauties endure each year to continue the struggle for survival. The Blackpoll Warbler, for example, which weighs in under 13 grams or .46 ounces, will fly out over the Atlantic Ocean to winter in South America and then fly across the Gulf of Mexico on its way back again in the Spring. The Cerulean Warbler is a fascinating study since it seems to know the best place to jump off of Louisiana and Mississippi to fly over the Gulf of Mexico and reach the Yucatan peninsula. How do they do that?

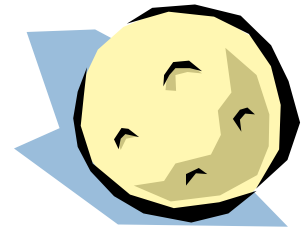


There are many challenges to these incredible yearly journeys. We will discuss different strategies the birds have to cope with the dangers of the trip. How do they do it and why do they follow the routes they choose. What is a flyway and what do they eat? By selecting some examples we hope to pique your interest in this intriguing subject. Scientists have noticed some bird species have changed the timing of their migrations. Climate change could be a major factor affecting when birds migrate and could totally disrupt these long distant travels. Will some birds simply pass us by in the future?

Where is the best place to see the Spring migration? Well, there are many excellent places here in our County to see the migration but one of the best places might surprise you. Come to the meeting for some answers and a chance to discuss these amazing birds and their travels.

Pinelands Birding and Wildlife Trail Guide (additional short presentation)

Also at our March meeting there will be a brief presentation by a representative of New Jersey Audubon. The presentation will outline opportunities for The Gloucester County Nature Club to get involved with the creation of the New Jersey Pinelands Birding and Wildlife Trails Guide – which will encompass Camden, Burlington, Gloucester & Atlantic Counties. N.J Audubon has already completed 3 guides for NJ – the Delaware Bayshores, the Meadowlands and mostly recently, the Skylands. You can visit www.njwildlifetrails.org and check this project out.



**Field Trip – Moonlit Walk at Alcyon Park
Tuesday March 10th, 7:00-8:00 PM at Alcyon Park, Pitman
Trip Leader: Kris Mollenhaeur**

The light of the full moon will transform Alcyon Park into a magical place. Although the moon is over 238 thousand miles away - it will seem much closer tonight. Join us just after sunset as the full moon begins to rise. We will search the night sky for constellations and planets. Facts and folktales about the moon will be told. The third moon of the year was known as the Maple Sugar Moon to the Native American people of the Anishinabe tribe. This is a good trip for children and families. We will take a walk around the park which is a distance of .8 miles. Please dress warm.

Location: Alcyon Park, Pitman (located on West Holly Ave.) We will begin in the UPPER parking lot near the playground.

**Field Trip – Babies in Backpacks / Toddlers in Tow
Thursday March 19th, 9:30AM at Alcyon Lake Park, Pitman
Trip Leader: Maria Keefe (627-7010) Email: walkingwith4boyz@comcast.net**



Enjoy a little March Madness with a walk with us on Thursday, March 19 at 9:30 am at Alcyon Lake Park, Pitman. Our January walk to Alcyon was so cold that I thought we should try again. 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. We can walk the paved path around the wildflower garden. Everyone is welcome.

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 on the left. There is a small sign. Drive past the sports fields; meet at the pavilion.

Field Trip Report: Babies in Backpacks/ Toddlers in Tow (January and February) by Maria Keefe

January's Babies in Backpacks Toddlers in Tow walk was at Alcyon Lake Park on a day that the temperature was about 18 degrees. The Keefe boys and their cousin, Drew, braved the weather with three adults. Needless to say the cold temperature made the walk remain short. The boys all had a great time regardless and were not thrilled to get back into the car despite all of the rosy cheeks.

February's walk was on a chilly, windy overcast day but the kids didn't mind. 4 adults and 8 kids enjoyed a nice walk through the woods on trails at Timber Creek Park in Gloucester Township. The kids all seemed to be happy to be out in the fresh air romping through the woods and rolling around in the field. The adults enjoyed chatting in the windy air. Join us for a walk! Everyone is welcome and it's not just for people with children. Just know we walk at the pace of the children, stop often and we may be a little rambunctious. Hope to see you soon!

Field Trip Report: Audubon Christmas Bird Count (December 20)

All of the data is in, and the 2008 Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count was very successful. We had 50 participants of which most of the folks were members of the Nature Club. We amassed a total of 87 species with over 51,000 birds sighted or heard. Thanks to all who participated!

Wild Turkey numbers were up, as were Black Vultures. 14 Bald Eagles were sighted, although some may have been duplicates since they travel large distances. Unusual Birdsthis year included Northern

Shoveler, Gadwall, Northern Pintail, American Woodcock, Pine Siskin, Snow Bunting, and Tundra Swan. Thanks again to the Strohmeiers for hosting the wrap-up that evening. The stories and results are always interesting to hear. Please set aside December 19, 2009 for the 2009 Christmas Count.

Conservation Corner – Solar Plant Coming to Vineland

Vineland is preparing for the eventual solar plant that will be built on a piece of vacant land. On February 3, the Vineland Municipal Electric Utility, Conectiv Energy and Landis Sewerage Authority officials announced that a 4-megawatt solar generating plant will be built in Vineland. The solar plant will span 28 acres at the Landis Sewerage Authority on Mill Road. A plant this size can be used to service between 400-500 homes. The energy will be pumped into VMEU's power grid and be spread out to benefit ratepayer's homes.

The project, called Vineland Solar One, will help the state reach its energy goal of being 30 percent more renewable by 2020. Conectiv Energy will cover the cost for the project, which will be around \$20 to \$24 million.

The solar panels are a fairly new technology, according to Art Agra, the chief financial officer. They will last about 25 years longer than other panels. Currently there is already a co-generation plant on the land.

Kid's Corner – Create a Moon Journal* by Deb Maka

Over a month, go outside each night to observe the moon and track its changes in your notebook.

What you'll need:

- a notebook
- pencil
- a round object like a quarter (optional)



Directions:

- Draw a circle in your notebook (you can trace around a quarter if you need help drawing a circle)
- Within the circle, draw the shape of the moon
- Add the date, time, and weather conditions underneath the drawing

* adapted from GREEN HOUR® a program of the National Wildlife Federation (www.greenhour.org); Discovery Journal & Activities (issue #46: moon journal)

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.

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.

The 2009 Gloucester County Bird Quest: Saturday May 2, 2009

The Gloucester County Nature Club and many area businesses, industries, and local environmental commissions invite people of all ages to participate in the **2009 (Tenth Annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest**. The **2009 Bird Quest** will take place on **Sat., May 2, 2009 from 7 AM to 12 noon in Gloucester County**. **This year we are celebrating our 10 year anniversary. We are going to have a special treat. We will have live birds at the Park and a demonstration from trained wildlife handlers.**

From 7am to 12 noon teams visit parks and natural sites in Gloucester County and 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
- A chance to learn how to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat
- A chance to have fun with 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 and a presentation with live birds for our 10th anniversary. We are giving out a tote bag to commemorate the event as well (while supplies last).**

Most people organize their own Quest team with colleagues, friends, and/or family. Last year's Gloucester County Bird Quest attracted several hundred participants made up of teachers, school groups, scout troops, environmental commissions, families, friends... residents of Gloucester and neighboring counties. This year with support from Wheelabrator, LP of Gloucester County, the club will operate two (free) guided buses for teachers and other persons unable to form their own team and who are willing to join a larger group. This year we will have another new way to participate- individuals and groups can take part in all or some of 3 guided walks the day of Bird Quest. Check out the website or April newsletter for more information on this exciting new way to participate.

A \$12 fee per participant covers the cost of lunch, T-shirt, prize, live bird show, and tote (while supplies last), trainings, etc.

More information and registration forms will be posted to the Gloucester County Nature Club's website at www.gcnatureclub.org. To join a team or to ride a bus, contact Brian Hayes at EIRC, 606 Delsea Drive, Sewell NJ 08080. Registration forms can also be requested by phone (856-582-7000 X110) FAX (856-582-4206) or e-mail at bhayes@eirc.org.

Participants can attend any of a series of free field trainings in the evenings, mornings and weekends before the Quest. A few of the early training sessions are listed below.

Bird Quest 2009 Training Sessions

April 13 (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 16 (Thursday), 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.

Leader: Bob Duke Co-leaders: Doris and Dwight Weir

April 18 (Saturday), 7:00 – 8:30 AM 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 19 (Sunday), 7:00 – 8:30 AM Bird Quest Training

Little Ease Park, Clayton This trip will include some travel to a few nearby spots.

Directions: From Rt 47 in Clayton, take Academy St. (Rt 610) east for one mile to East Ave. Turn right (south) on East Ave. The park is on the left in 0.3 mile. Meet in parking lot.

Leader: Ron Kegel Co-leader: Loretta Dunne

April 21 (Tuesday), 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 22 (Wednesday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM Bird Quest Training

Field of Dreams, West Deptford

Directions: From Interstate 295, Exit 21, take Crown Point Road (Rt 44) West. In about .25 miles, take a right onto River Road. Park in the lot.

Leader: Gary Lizzi Co-leader: Margie Lizzi

April 23 (Thursday), 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.

Co-Leaders: Kris and Erik Mollenhauer

April 25 (Saturday), 7:00-8:30 AM Step Up Your Birding

Glassboro Woods, Clayton Introduction to skills that can move you beyond beginning birding

Directions: From the intersection of Rt 47 (Delsea Drive) and eastbound Rt 322 in Glassboro, go south about 1.7 miles on Rt 47. Immediately after crossing the Clayton Borough boundary, an unmarked dirt road will branch off on the left. This is Carpenter Ave. Meet at the spot where the pavement ends.

Leader: Lloyd Shaw Co-leader: Gary Lizzi

April 26 (Sunday), 7:00-8:30 AM Bird Quest Training

West Deptford Scenic Park, West Deptford

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 Co-Leader: Ed Cleary

April 28 (Tuesday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM Birding by Ear Part I

Municipal Building, Wenonah (across Mantua Ave from Community Center) This is an introduction to bird calls in a classroom setting.

Directions: From Woodbury/Glassboro Road (Rt 553) in Wenonah, turn onto Mantua Avenue. Proceed to the intersection of East Mantua Avenue and North East Avenue. The municipal building is across Mantua Ave from our regular meeting location.

Co-leaders: Paula Hayes and Kris Mollenhauer

Events by other Organizations: March 2009

- March 4 (Wednesday) – Daytime Owl Prowl. 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM. \$Fee (free for PCNP members). Sponsored by the Palmyra Cove Nature Park. For info: <http://palmyracove.org/>.
- March 10 (Tuesday) – Salem County Nature Club meets at the Alloway School at 7:00 PM. The program will be “Birding Cape May” by Pat Sutton. For info: www.salemcountynatureclubnews.blogspot.com/.
- March 14 (Saturday) – Duck Hunting with Binoculars in Salem County. 8:45 AM to Mid-afternoon. Leader: Lloyd Shaw. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. \$Fee. For info: <http://njudubon.org/centers/rancocas/>.
- March 14 (Saturday) – Cumberland County Birding. Leaders: Barbara Jones and Susan Setterberg. Sponsored by the Burlington County Natural Sciences Club. For info: <http://oldsquaw.tripod.com/>.
- March 29 (Sunday) – Spring has Sprung. Guided Nature Walk at Smithville Park, Eastampton. Sponsored by the Burlington County Department of Parks. For info: Phone 609-265-5068.

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.



Looking Ahead:

2008-2009 GCNC Programs

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.

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 March Executive Committee meeting will be held on March 7th at the home of Estelle Ostroff. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.

Bird Quest 2009 Registration

Be sure to include your name, address, phone # and T-shirt size on the form. Mail the form with a check (\$12 per person) payable to Gloucester County Nature Club to: Bird Quest, GC Nature Club, P.O. Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080, or bring it to one of the many training sessions. Entries must be received by April 24 for t-shirts to be guaranteed on day of event.

Name of Team (ex: Costello's Cardinals) _____

Name of Team Leader (contact person) _____ T-shirt size _____

Leader's address & Telephone _____

Person #2 (name) _____ T-shirt size _____

Person #3 _____ T-shirt size _____

Person #4 _____ T-shirt size _____

Person #5 _____ T-shirt size _____

Person #6 _____ T-shirt size _____

Person #7 _____ T-shirt size _____

Attach extra sheet with additional names and T-shirt sizes.

Bus Space is limited: first come first served. You must reserve a seat in advance. Bus leaves at 7 AM from Atkinson Park. **Please attach a list of names of any people who wish to ride the bus.**

Fill in here for additional items: Additional T-shirts: Qty _____ (\$12.95 each)
Birds of Gloucester County Flash Cards _____ (\$4.00/set)
Natural Places of Gloucester Co. NJ book _____ (\$12.00 each)