



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

May 2016

Annual GCNC Plant Sale & Program: The Season of the Horseshoe Crab

Thursday, May 12, 2016 at 6:45pm at the Holy Nativity

Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenter: Sue Slotterback of the Wetlands Institute

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

**Reminder: Starting time for the plant sale is 6:00pm.
Starting time for the program is 6:45pm, 15 minutes
earlier than usual.**

Every year at this time an ancient seasonal ritual plays out along our shoreline. It's the horseshoe crabs' annual migration and spawning, the cornerstone to the migration and spawning of other species. Join us for a glimpse at this phenomenal local-to-global phenological event. We'll look at horseshoe crabs from stem to stern: their biology, ecology, and their connections to humans and shorebirds.



Horseshoe crabs are some of the strangest creatures on earth. Not really crabs at all, they are more closely related to the Trilobites that swam in Paleozoic seas. Related to scorpions, ticks and land spiders, horseshoe crabs have their own classification (Class Merostomata). Horseshoe crabs, common along the Delaware Bay shore, have evolved little in the last 250 million years. Still, they have survived because of their hard, curved shells, which have made it difficult for predators to overturn them and expose their soft, vulnerable underbellies. The horseshoe crab has also survived because it can go a year without eating and endure extreme temperatures and salinity. The Delaware Bay region is home to the largest population of the American horseshoe crab (*Limulus polyphemus*), which is found along the western shores of the Atlantic Ocean from Maine to the Yucatan. Each spring the eggs of spawning horseshoe crabs along the Delaware Bay provide an essential food source for migrating shore birds, including the imperiled Red Knot on its extraordinary 12,000 journey.

Our presenter will be Sue Anne Slotterback of the Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor, NJ. Sue's presentation tonight will be an adult (but kid friendly) version of the Horseshoe Crab Lab program she presents in area schools. We will have live horseshoe crab as part of the presentation. Come and see one of nature's most unusual animals and learn how even these unlikely creatures play their part in the interconnectedness of the natural world. Join us for this hands-on participatory "Lab" where you will see the biological, ecological, and even human connections for yourself!

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).

Annual Plant Sale!

It's that time again! Spring is here and it's time to be in our gardens, getting them ready for the warm weather season. This means it is also time for the Club's annual plant sale. Hopefully, once again, we'll have a wonderful combination of nursery grown plants and plants from our very own gardens.

Here's where your part of this comes in. As you are in your gardens in the next couple of weeks, keep an eye out for plants you can share. It could be some of those perennials you have been meaning to divide or a volunteer shrub or tree that just has to be moved. Even some extra seeds that you collected in the fall would be great. Just pot them up or pack them up and bring them with you. Please mark them carefully, though, so we keep the mystery plants to a minimum.

The Plant Sale will be held just before the May meeting. It will start at 6:00 pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church. It is open to the public so please tell family and friends.



Celebrating 17 years of Bird Quest...Bird Quest 2016

Bird Quest is a half-day event from 7:00 AM to noon on the first Saturday in May (May 7, 2016), with the purpose to find as many different bird species as possible in Gloucester County. This event is family and child friendly. It is a unique way for the entire family to discover the birds of Gloucester County. As you learn the birds you will also discover the natural places and varied habitats we have in the county. There are plenty of public sites you can visit in Gloucester County.

We are pleased to return to Scotland Run Park (Wilson Lake) in Clayton as our host site again this year. We hope to reach new families and continue to excite our legacy participants with a wonderful setting for our picnic. Scotland Run Park is located at 980 East Academy St., Clayton, NJ (directions below).

In our 17th year of Bird Quest we have developed educational materials including a Quest t-shirt with original artwork entitled "Hope is the thing with Feathers" to celebrate birds and the amazing adaptation known as the feather. Participants will learn about how feathers have been adapted for flight and how we have benefited from feathers through the years. These materials will have lasting educational value for teachers, students, and the general public.

The rules of Bird Quest are simple: Identify as many different bird species as you can between 7am and noon staying within the boundary of Gloucester County. You can participate in one of the following ways:

- Form a team, plan your route (locations you will visit) for the day of the event and record all the bird species you see within Gloucester County. Hand in your results at Scotland Run by 12:30pm to be eligible for prizes.
- Join one of the buses lead by a bird expert. These buses will visit a few locations in the County where bird experts will help you to identify the many bird species. The buses will meet back at Scotland Run Park at 12:30pm.
- Join one of three guided walks, each lasting between an hour and an hour and a half, in various natural places in Gloucester County lead by a bird expert who will help you identify the bird species present. These walks will be paced and placed so you can participate in all of the walks or just one or two while you spend the rest of the time birding on your own. Hand in your results at Scotland Run Park at 12:30pm to be eligible for prizes.

- **7:00-8:45: Tall Pines Preserve (Maple Ridge):** From the intersection of Rt 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd) and Mantua Ave in Wenonah (and Holy Nativity Lutheran Church), travel .75 mile south on Rt 553 to the intersection with Bark Bridge Rd. Turn right onto Bark Bridge Rd then in 200ft turn left into the parking lot meet there. There are no bathrooms at Tall Pines
- **9:30-11:15: Glassboro Wildlife Management Area:** Meet at Carpenter Ave in Clayton. From the Intersection of 322 and Route 47 (Delsea Drive), take RT 47 South into Clayton. Make a left onto Carpenter Ave – about 1.6 miles south of Route 322. Meet in the parking / turn around area where the road turns to dirt.
- **11:30-12:30: Scotland Run Park (also the picnic location):** From Route 55 take exit 45 and proceed North on Route 553/ Buck Road. After 1.2 miles turn Right on CR 610/ Clayton-Aura Road. Continue on CR 610 for 3.8 miles. After the traffic light at Fries Mill Road, turn Left into the parking lot for Scotland Run Park. You will meet in the bluebird field adjacent to the parking lot.

No matter how you participate, everyone meets at our new location: Scotland Run Park by 12:30pm to hand in their results (total number of bird species seen that day from 7am to 12:30pm), share stories, activities, games, and for a free lunch. The emphasis of this event is on learning and sharing, not on the competition. Everyone who participates receives a t-shirt, lunch, and is eligible for a variety of prizes.

The cost to participate is \$12 per person. Additional t-shirts are \$12 per shirt. In addition, you can purchase bird or tree identification flash cards (\$6 per pack) which will help you identify birds or trees of Gloucester County.

Want to sign up for Bird Quest? Click on the link to Download the Registration form, or use the form included in the Bird Quest 2016 Flyer. Send in the completed form with your check (made out to The Gloucester County Nature Club) to GCNC, ATTN: Brian Hayes, P.O. Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080.

You say you don't know one bird from another? The Gloucester County Nature Club offers a series of training sessions (see below) leading up to the event itself to teach you everything from the basics of bird watching to gardening for nature. These trainings are worthwhile even if you already know how to identify birds. They can help you discover the natural places of Gloucester County as well. During the trainings you will visit some of the many local places where you can enjoy nature anytime of the year. These locations are perfect for photography of animals and plants of Gloucester County.

If you have questions you can call Brian Hayes at 856.582.7000 x110 or email at pnbhayes@gmail.com.

Remaining Bird Quest Training Sessions 2016

Please note that there are AM and PM sessions!

May 1 (Sunday) 7:00 - 8:30 A.M. Forest Edge and Swamp Habitat.

Railroad Avenue, Elk Township — Meet at Elk Township Recreational Complex Park, Recreation Drive, Monroeville 08343

Established trees line this quiet lane that follows the Elephant Swamp Trail, part of the Rails to Trails Conservancy. Gnatcatchers, woodpeckers and some early warblers can usually be seen.

Directions: *Meet in the paved lot of the Recreational Complex.*

Leaders: Ron and Linda Kegel

May 2 (Monday) 6– 7:30 P.M. Birding by Ear Part 2. “ To Pish or Not to Pish, That is the Question.” Wenonah Lake — W. Maple St, Wenonah, NJ 08090

Take your “Birding by Ear” skills into the field on this lakeside trail. We will listen to the sounds of the forest. Learn about Pishing — What is it? Who does it? Is it right for you?

Leaders: Brian Hayes

May 4 (Wednesday) 6 - 7:30 P.M. Delaware River Riparian Habitat.

Wheelabrator Refuge — 600 Crown Point Rd, Westville, 08093

At the intersection of the Delaware River and Big Timber Creek, the wide-open space behind the Wheelabrator plant is great habitat for swamp, meadow and river birds. Trails and old roads make access easy. Bob White can be heard here. *Directions:* Access from Rt. 130 (Crown Point Rd,) opposite Hazel Ave in Westville, just south of Big Timber Creek. Meet at the pavilion in parking lot.

Leaders: Kris Mollenhauer and Marilyn Henry

May 5 (Thursday) 6 - 7:30 P.M. RiverWinds Park

1000 Riverwinds Drive, Thorofare, NJ 08086

Riverside shrubs and forested areas along the Delaware River make for great birding here. Start at the West Deptford Scenic Trail and, if time allows, continue along the Delaware River. Look for migrating warblers, scarlet tanagers, hawks and maybe a bald eagle! *Directions;* Turn left onto Riverwinds Drive. Go approx.1000 ft, then turn right onto the first dirt road.

Leaders: Gary Lizzi and Gale Cannon

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

A GREAT WEB CAM

A great site for a web cam is <http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/all-cams/> sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Barn owls, barred owls, California condors, red-tail hawks, ospreys and more are streamed live for all to enjoy!

LIGHT POLLUTION and LIFE

Most of us associate the need for a dark sky with astronomy. We know by just looking up at night that we see fewer stars than we did just a few decades ago. Over time, we begin to forget the vast spectacle presented to us by the heavens. I wonder how many young people have seen the Milky Way or experienced a dark night sky where there were so many stars that it was a challenge to find the Big Dipper. However astronomy is not the only victim of light pollution.

- Humans are tied into the circadian rhythm, which is the 24 hour cycle corresponding to light and dark. Disruption of the circadian rhythm has been linked to sleep disorders like insomnia as well as depression, hypertension, attention deficit disorder, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Even a small night light in your bedroom disrupts your body's production of melatonin, which regulates metabolism and immune responses. There is a correlation between lowered melatonin levels and rising breast cancer rates.
- There are safety-related dangers that come with poor visibility at night caused by glaring lights. Bright, unshielded lights not only affect night driving, but when used for security, can render you unable to see an intruder.
- Beach front lighting disorients sea turtle hatchlings as they move from their nests to the sea.

- Fish are strongly attracted to artificial light. Extracting large amounts of fish with the help of artificial light contributes to over-fishing.
- Lighted towers and tall buildings confuse migrating birds. Artificial light attracts birds to smokestacks, broadcast towers, lighthouses, boats, greenhouses, oil platforms, and other structures at night. Estimates by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the number of birds killed after being attracted to tall towers range from 4-5 million per year.
- Changes in light level may also disrupt orientation in nocturnal animals. Nocturnal animals wake up when there is no light. Light pollution may cause frogs and salamanders to come out from under cover later, giving them less time to mate. Sky glow around sports stadiums caused by artificial light at night can halt the mating activity of nearby frogs.
- Artificial light at night interferes with the ability of moths and other nocturnal insects to navigate. As a result, night blooming flowers that depend on moths for pollination may be affected. This can lead to the decline of a plant species.

The combined effects of artificial light on the lives of the vast number of nocturnal creatures has the potential to disrupt their entire behavior.

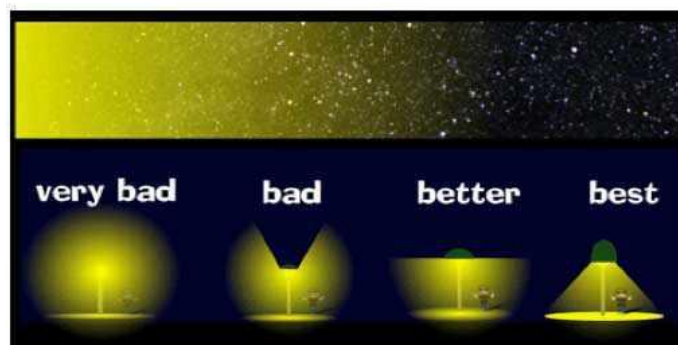
Technically light pollution is excessive and inappropriate artificial light. This light includes...

Urban Sky Glow—the brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas. Responsible for disappearance of the Milky Way.

Light Trespass—light falling where it is not intended, wanted, or needed. Occurs when street lights or your neighbor’s security lights direct unwanted light onto your property.

Glare—excessive brightness which causes visual discomfort. High levels of glare can decrease visibility. Glaring lights prevent our eyes from becoming dark-adapted and areas adjacent to brightly lit areas become difficult to see. When driving at night, bright on-coming headlights can blot out the visibility of the darker road ahead.

Bad lighting design allows artificial light to shine outward and upward into the sky, where it's not wanted or useful. What can you do to minimize light pollution? The most effective fix to light pollution is to turn OFF the lights! Even the light in your living room spills into the night sky! Inspect your property for inefficient and unnecessary outdoor lighting. Use [fully shielded, light efficient fixtures](#) as they prevent light from traveling above the horizontal.



See <http://we-watch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/FullyShieldedLightFixture-1.pdf> for a discussion of shielded fixtures.

Sources: https://www.nigms.nih.gov/Education/Pages/Factsheet_CircadianRhythms.aspx, <http://physics.fau.edu/observatory/lightpol-Birds.html>, <https://www.jmu.edu/planetarium/light-pollution.shtml>, and <http://darksky.org/>.

MONARCH UPDATE

In the last few days there has been a severe storm in the area of Mexico where monarchs overstay the winter. It is feared many monarchs were killed. A new study by the Monarch Science Conservation Partnership shows there is a substantial probability of “quasi-extinction” of the Eastern monarch butterfly migratory population within 20 years if habitat restoration is not achieved. **PLEASE PLANT COMMON MILKWEED AND SWAMP MILKWEED IN YOUR GARDEN.** Avoid planting invasive non-native plants and avoid using pesticides and herbicides in your garden.

Nature Notes

Natural Events for the month of April

- Jack in the pulpit, pink lady's-slipper, and mayapple bloom by mid-May in the County's remnant woodlands.
- Early spring flowers such as spring beauty fade rapidly, as trees leaf out and shade the forest floor.
- Princess tree, or Paulownia (named after an 18th-Century Russian princess) blooms with large clusters of pale purple flowers. It's an invasive species but still very pretty.
- By late May, monarch butterflies arrive from the south and begin laying their eggs on newly emerged plants of common milkweed.
- Young rabbits, gray squirrels, and other small mammals are leaving their home nests. Drive carefully.
- Horseshoe crabs spawn on Delaware Bayshore beaches from late May to early June.
- Red knots arrive for their stop-over at the Delaware Bay area to double their weight on horseshoe crab eggs in preparation for their nonstop journey to Arctic breeding grounds.

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.

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

Remaining 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.

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 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.

Election of Trustees

The May Nature Club meeting is when we annually hold elections for our Board of Trustees. The Trustees hold the ultimate governing power of the Club. The Trustees elect the members of the Executive Committee (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and chairpersons of the standing committees).

The Trustees' other primary responsibility is to provide direction to the Executive Committee because our by-laws specify that the Board of Trustees authorizes power to the Executive Committee for the day-to-day operations of the Club.

Trustees meet annually at a joint meeting with the Executive Committee in June.

There are a total of 12 members of the Board of Trustees. Elected Trustees agree to serve a 3 year term and one third of the Trustees are elected by the Club's membership at the May meeting.

The current Trustees are as follows:

2013 – 2016 term: Barry Bengel, Elaine Dzeima, Paula Hayes, Dave Partridge

*The term of the Trustees listed above will end June 2016.

The names of Barry Bengel, Elaine Dzeima, Paula Hayes, Dave Partridge will be on the ballot for re-election to a 2016-2019 term.

2014 – 2017 term: Erik Mollenhauer, Bonnie Dann, Jackie Partridge, Jayne Rhynard

2015 – 2018 term: Brian Hayes, Karen Kravchuck, Kris Mollenhauer, Rich Dilks

We will be electing Trustees for the term of 2016 - 2019. If you are interested in running for election, please contact Karen Kravchuck at 609-617-6693 or at president@gcnatureclub.org.

Reminder – Help out the Gloucester County Nature Club



Shopping at Amazon can also benefit the Gloucester County Nature Club at **NO extra cost** to you!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. The purchase price is the amount paid for the item minus any rebates and excluding shipping & handling, gift-wrapping fees, taxes, or service charges. You may even use your existing Amazon.com account for your purchases.

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.