



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

June / July / August 2014



Program – Annual Picnic and Butterfly Garden Tour

Thursday, June 12, 2014 at 6:00 PM at Chestnut Branch Park (directions below)

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks (856-468-6342)

The Gloucester County Nature Club ends this year's season of meetings and programs on June 12 with our annual spring picnic. The picnic will be held this year at the Chestnut Branch Park in Mantua Twp. Attendees should bring a food item to share, and their own utensils, plates, and cups to cut down on the waste of disposables. As with all club functions, the picnic is open to the public so why not bring a friend? We hope you will join us for the picnic.

A highlight of the evening will be a tour of the Butterfly Garden at Chestnut Branch Park maintained by the Mantua Environmental Commission. Members of the Commission will offer a brief informative talk on the garden's design and maintenance, selection of plants, and identify butterflies that frequent the garden. If you have a pair of close-focusing binoculars, they are great for butterfly viewing.



Directions: Chestnut Branch Park is located on Main St. (Alt. 553) in Barnsboro, Mantua Twp. Approaching from the north, the park is 1.3 miles south of the traffic light at the intersection of Main St. and Mantua Blvd. Approaching from the south, the park is 1500 ft. north of the traffic light at Mt. Royal Rd. The entrance to the park is on the east side of the highway.

Summer Field Trips!

Beach Walk

Sunday, June 22 at 11:00 AM in Two Mile Unit of Cape May Wildlife Refuge

Trip Leaders: Brian and Paula Hayes cell 609-221-5195 Email: pnbhayes@gmail.com

Come ramble down an undeveloped beach where wildlife rules. Find out what our barrier islands used to look like, this area that was once a coast guard base is largely wild and contains maritime forest and wild beaches. We will hike through the dunes and then down a beautiful stretch of beach where there are no hotels or houses, and few people. Piping plover use this secluded beach to nest and raise young. We may spot dolphin off the beach. We will find horseshoe crab shells, and other treasures, maybe even mermaid's purses. The walk is about 2 miles over sand. Consider your footwear: the dunes can have sand burs and poison ivy (don't let this scare you away), we may scramble up onto the jetty when we reach the inlet, and you may want to dip your toes in the ocean along the way. Bring binoculars to enjoy the birds. Wear your sunscreen, and consider bringing your chairs and sand toys, to hit the beach after our walk. It's only about 5 blocks to the beautiful free beaches of Wildwood Crest.

Directions: Travel south on the Garden State Parkway to its end at a traffic light where Route 109 is on the right. Go straight through the light and turn left at the next light onto CR 621/Ocean Drive. Follow Ocean Drive 3 ½ miles over 2 causeways and a toll bridge (there is no toll in this direction). Turn right into the Refuge directly across from the mini golf.

Painting in the Park

Tuesday, June 24 at 6:00 PM in Atkinson Park, Sewell

Trip Leader: Paula Hayes cell 609-221-5195 Email: pnbhayes@gmail.com



Something new for summer... We will be using watercolors to create masterpieces at Atkinson Park. This trip will not be a lesson, it is meant to be an exploration of your creative side, an opportunity to create. We will provide all materials, you provide the talent. All ages and abilities are welcome, but do request you register either through Meetup or by emailing pnbhayes@gmail.com to ensure we have enough supplies. We will meet at the pavilion that is between the playgrounds and then head down to the lake to paint.

Directions: From Woodbury Glassboro Road (553) take Lambs Road towards Washington Township. After you cross the dam stay right onto Bethel Mill Rd. The park is on the right.

Butterfly Field Trip (Joint trip with Audubon Wildlife Society)

Saturday, July 12 at 9:30 AM in the parking lot at Riverwinds Scenic Trail in West Deptford.

Trip Leader: Chris Herz

We will be looking for butterflies primarily, but will stop to observe birds too. The Scenic Trail is a short loop walk through woods and open grassy areas. Wear appropriate shoes and clothes as there can be mosquitoes, ticks, and wet grass. After this trail, we will drive to the end of Riverwinds Drive and walk a bit on the River Trail. Bring binoculars, water, hat, sunscreen. Trip will go until noon. Rain cancels the trip.



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.

Any questions please email marwil132@verizon.net or on the day of the walk, my cell is 856-534-5597.

Family Fun Stream Walk #1- all ages are welcome!

Wednesday, July 30 at 6:00 PM at Pitman Memorial School

Trip Leaders: Maria Keefe & Paula Hayes cell 609-221-5195 Email: pnbhayes@gmail.com

This stream walk is an old favorite, we do this one most years and it is always filled with a surprise or two. We'll explore what is in, on, under and around the creek as we walk in the water. We'll look for fish, frogs, turtles, mussels, animal prints, flowers, birds and more. Wear appropriate water shoes or old sneakers to walk in the water. We will get wet!! You may want to bring insect repellent.

Directions: From Lambs Road turn onto Hudson Avenue (near Total Turf Experience). Turn into Pitman Memorial School parking lot on the right.

Stroll to the Blue Hole

Saturday, August 9, 2014 at 9:45 AM at Winslow Wildlife Management Area, Monroe Twp.

Trip Leader: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

The legendary "Blue Hole" of the Jersey Pine Barrens at Winslow WMA is a spring fed circular pool of water about 70 feet across. Unlike the brown tinted "cedar water" typical of the Pinelands, the water of the Blue Hole is crystal clear. Although traditionally described as "bottomless", the pool has a depth of about 12 ft. and a sugar sand bottom. Associated in legend with the Jersey Devil, the origins of the Blue Hole, and similar features elsewhere in the Pine Barrens, is still debated. The well-marked trail to the Blue Hole is about a mile from the parking area at the former shotgun range off Piney Hollow Rd. and passes through prime Pinelands habitat. It will offer us an opportunity to view a rich variety of Pineland wildflowers and shrubs. Bringing water and a repellent for insects, ticks and chiggers is strongly recommended.

Participants who wish to car pool can meet at Timberline Shopping Center in Sewell, NJ at 9:00 AM. Those who choose to go directly to the trail head should meet at the former shotgun range parking lot at 9:45 AM.

Directions: Take the Black Horse Pike (RT. 42) south through Williamstown. At the traffic light at Geet's Diner, the Black Horse Pike becomes Rt. 322. Continue south from Geet's Diner for approximately 8 miles to the traffic light at Piney Hollow Rd. Using the jug handle, turn left (east) onto Piney Hollow Rd. Continue for about 8/10 of a mile and turn left onto the first available unpaved road. (If you cross the small bridge over the Great Egg Harbor River, you've gone too far.) Follow the unpaved road for about 500 ft. to the parking area of the former gun range.

Family Fun Stream Walk #2- all ages are welcome!

Tuesday, August 12th at 6:00 PM in Ceres Park, Mantua

Trip Leaders: Maria Keefe & Paula Hayes cell 609-221-5195 Email: pnbhayes@gmail.com

This park is a great one for summer hikes since its tall trees provide lots of shade. There is easy access to a stream after a short hike to the corner of this lovely park. We'll explore what is in, on, under and around the creek as we walk in the water. We'll look for fish, frogs, turtles, mussels, animal prints, flowers, birds and more. Wear appropriate water shoes or old sneakers to walk in the water. We will get wet!! You may want to bring insect repellent.

Directions: From Rt 322 take Lambs Rd (635) to Pitman-Barnsboro Rd (553Alt). Turn left onto Rt553A. Watch for Ceres Park sign on your left after crossing over Rt 55. We'll meet in the parking lot.



Celebrating 15 Years of Bird Quest

May is such an incredible time of year. The cerulean sky seems more intense as you feel the warmth radiating through the atmosphere to waken the sleepy soil. The plants and trees reach new growth towards the sun with green so bright they almost glow. My mind stretches with the highest limbs to welcome and encourage the feathered jewels who are returning to New Jersey and beyond. The migrating birds, scarlet tanagers, Baltimore orioles, and indigo buntings, are all completing a perfectly timed cycle. This cycle of renewal has been going on for many thousands of years in Gloucester County. I struggle to comprehend the precision of these avian migrants to return, after all their winter travels, at the perfect time to mate and raise their young. Each individual bird seems to be unaware of the important role they play in continuing this incredible cycle. You can watch it unfold each year in May...

On Saturday May 3rd, 2014 the Nature Club conducted the 15th annual Gloucester County Bird Quest. It was a beautiful day with comfortable temperatures brought to us by a strong warm front. The warm spring air was used by traveling birds to give them a little extra push to go farther on less energy. By using these fronts, the birds save energy on migration and are healthier when they start mating and nesting. The birds travel all night and arrive in large numbers looking for food and a safe place to rest. That is where we found them on Bird Quest.

The Wenonah Warblers took the top honors for the second consecutive year spotting 100 different species of birds in 5 hours. This is one of only a few times we have had a team reach the 100 species mark. Compiling the birds seen from each group, 148 species of birds were seen that day. A complete checklist of the birds seen at Bird Quest 2014 will be available on the website or you can email me – bhayes@eirc.org for a copy.

At the gathering at Scotland Run Park everyone received lunch and our Bird Quest t-shirt from Gariel Graphics (Woodbury) depicting a great horned owl. The owl theme was designed by George Yurgin but inspired by the incredible irruption of snowy owls that flooded New Jersey this past winter. It was estimated there were well over 50 snowy owls in New Jersey this winter.

As the educational part of the theme there was an owl pellet discovery table. Participants were encouraged to dissect and explore the composition of the pellets. Owls eat their prey whole but can't pass the bones and fur. The solid waste material is compacted and then regurgitated to clear the digestive tract. This ejected material can be used to determine what the owl consumed and is called a pellet. The day was capped with a wonderful program including live owls. The Freedom Center for Wildlife, based in Cinnaminson NJ, brought a barn owl, a great horned owl, and two screech owls as well as a couple of hawks. It was the perfect end to a great day. We thank them for the show and if you need to contact them their phone number is 856.366.4114.

This completed another year of Bird Quest; connecting people in Gloucester County to the ageless cycle of the returning birds. For 15 years we have been active participants in the spring drama of rebirth. That is a milestone worth celebrating. Congratulations to the following folks who are the only people that have participated in all 15 Bird Quests to date: Kevin Jeffers, Suzanne McCarthy, Donna Strohmeier, and Kirk Strohmeier. I look forward to celebrating 25 years of Bird Quest with them!

Thank you to all the sponsors - specifically Wheelabrator which paid for the buses, cake, and the educational materials - and to all the volunteers who make this event a success.

Save the date: May 2, 2015 our 16th annual Gloucester County Bird Quest.

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: June 2014

- June 1, 2014 (Sunday), 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM. **Water Fest** at Scotland Run Park, Clayton. There will be free canoeing/kayaking, face painting, music, crafts, exhibits and live animal shows at 12 noon, 1:30pm and 3pm. Hope to see you at Water Fest and all of the other free events scheduled for June.
- June 7, 2014 (Saturday), 10:00 AM **Cleanup and Kirkwood Lake Study Day**. Sponsored by Sponsored by the South Jersey Land and Water Trust. Free. We will have a cleanup and macro invertebrate lake study at Kirkwood Lake in Lindenwold. We will meet at the end of Pinelawn Avenue and clean the trails that run through the park. After the cleanup Michael Hogan and the Watershed Ambassador will do a macro invertebrate assessment and discuss how the numerous macro invertebrates found in the lake can indicate its health. **Directions:** Take Rt.30 east,

make left onto White Horse Road, right onto Berlin Road, left onto Pinelawn Ave. We will meet at the end of the street. Bags, gloves and grabbers will be supplied. Please RSVP: 609-476-2086 - Email Michael Hogan at hoganphoto@verizon.net for a map.

- June 9, 2014 (Monday), 7:00 – 9:00 PM – **Swoop into Summer!** At Adelphia restaurant, 1750 Clements Bridge Rd., Deptford NJ. Sponsored by the South Jersey Land and Water Trust. \$20. Join us on June 9. Support your local waterways, help preserve our South Jersey farmland, and share a meal and conversation with friends who care about our natural areas. The price of your ticket includes a hot buffet, open bar (wine and beer) and the opportunity to participate in the plant and flower auction. Why cook when you can come spend the evening with us? For information contact Christine Nolan at 856-881-2269.
- June 14, 2014 (Saturday), 10:00 AM **Cleanup and New Brooklyn Lake Study Day.** We will have a cleanup and macro invertebrate Lake Study at New Brooklyn Park in Winslow. We will meet at the playground parking lot on New Brooklyn-Blackwood Road. After the cleanup Michael Hogan and the Watershed Ambassador will do a macro invertebrate assessment at the pond and discuss how the numerous macro invertebrates found in the pond can indicate its health.
- June 15, 2014 (Sunday), 2:00 PM – **Ticks.** Sponsored by the Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust. Free. Experience a casual stroll on the trails of the land trust with a knowledgeable leader to observe the plants, animals, natural features and processes, and just plain magic that make this place very special. Meet in the parking area at the end of Rankin Avenue in Blackwood Terrace. Please check at www.oldpinefarm.org/ for changes to the schedule and directions. Or just use your favorite mapping program or your GPS by typing in "400 Rankin Ave, Deptford, NJ." Further details available by calling Carl Ford at 856-579-4441. We will do this on the third Sunday of each month, with a different focus each month.



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.

- Evening Bird Walk: Tuesday 6/17 at 6:00 PM. Bring binoculars and discover the many species of birds that call Scotland Run Park home.
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 6/11 at 10:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 6/18 at 2:30 PM
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 6/14 at 10:00 AM

Natural Events for the month of June

- During courtship, a cedar waxwing pair may repeatedly pass a flower petal or insect back and forth.
- White-tailed deer are giving birth. The young fawns lie down and "freeze" when threatened.
- Longest day of the year is June 21.
- Pond turtles are digging nests and laying eggs, which will hatch in 80 to 90 days.
- Mountain laurel in bloom.
- Herons can be found roosting with young in marshes at the shore.
- Wood duck and mallard ducklings hatch and venture forth.
- Canada geese begin molting.

Natural Events for the month of July

- Blueberries ripen in early July.
- Bog asphodel, now found only in New Jersey, blooms in early July in Pinelands fens.
- The first brood of monarch butterflies is emerging from their chrysalis.
- Raccoons, skunks, and opossums are digging up and eating turtle eggs.
- Breeding and nesting season for birds ends this month except for goldfinches and late bluebirds.
- Thistle plants are beginning to seed; goldfinches gather thistle down for nesting materials.
- Listen for the feeding calls of young barred and great horned owls.
- Yellow warblers begin to head south in July; migration is complete in August.

Natural Events for the month of August

- Sweet goldenrod, early goldenrod, cardinal flower, and other late-summer flowers bloom.
- Sweet pepperbush in bloom.
- Purple martins begin roosting in phragmites along the Maurice River near Port Elizabeth in preparation for their southern migration. Peak numbers usually occur around the third week in August.
- Red knots pass through New Jersey again on their southward migration to Chile. Adults are still in breeding plumage.
- Fall raptor migration begins in mid-August with small numbers of several species, including American kestrels, ospreys and bald eagles.
- Gray squirrels give birth to second brood.
- Early warblers migrating south through New Jersey.
- American goldfinches finish nesting late in this month
- Second brood of hummingbirds begin to appear at feeders.
- Birds are feeding on fruits of flowering dogwood trees.

Club Notes:

- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Karen Kravchuck at president@gcnatureclub.org or call 856-468-6536.
- 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 newsletter@gcnatureclub.org or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.
- The June Executive Committee meeting will be held on June 8th at the home of Karen Kravchuck. Please contact Karen for more information.