



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public
September 2005

Program– Delaware River Oil Spill Cleanup with US Coast Guard **Thursday, Sept 8th at 7:00 PM at EIRC, Sewell**

Program Coordinator - Bob Cassel 478-2496

Our September program will feature the United States Coast Guard, in the person of Jerry Conrad - a dynamic and outstanding speaker. His subject will be the cleanup of the Delaware River following the Athos I crude oil spill of November 26, 2004. The heavy crude oil shifted rapidly to three states, as wind and tide spread it into creeks and docks for over 60 miles up and down the river. Mr. Conrad will relate the final findings as to the cause of the tear in the ship's hull. He will also give us details on the response made to contain the spill and also the current condition on the beaches. Several GCNC members assisted in de-oiling birds affected. Though most were Canada Geese, other species included Bufflehead, Great Blue Heron, Northern Gannet, American Coot, Belted Kingfisher, Ring-billed Gull, Mallard duck, Double-crested Cormorant, Snow Goose, Mute Swan, and some domestic waterfowl. Also in West Deptford, a Bald Eagle was sighted with oil contamination, but later appeared restored to normal.



Field Trip – Bird and Botany Walk at Greenwald Memorial Park (aka Pennypacker Park)

Saturday September 10, 7 AM to Noon

Trip Leader: Gale Cannon

Co-leader: Karl Anderson



Enjoy an early morning walk along the Cooper River in this urban park bordering Haddonfield and Cherry Hill. We're hoping for a cold front that could push a nice variety of migrant passerines into the area. Field guides will be helpful for identifying confusing fall warblers. We'll also look at a variety of asters, goldenrods and other fall specialties. Be prepared for muddy walking. Trip will end by lunchtime.

Directions: Meet at the playground parking lot for this park which is located on Park Blvd, 1/4 mile west of Kings Hwy (left turn on Park Blvd off Kings Hwy if traveling north out of Haddonfield).

GCNC Summer Activity Reports

Below are reports on GCNC summer activities. Who says that we're not active in the summer?

Watercolor Workshop (7/13/05) by Millie Cleary

Following a brief introduction including some basic water painting tips and techniques, and a short demonstration, eight aspiring artists set off to capture some beautiful scenery on paper at Red Bank Battlefield. Paper, paint, brushes, and other supplies were all provided by the Club. Inspiration, style and talent were supplied by the individual participants. Each artist selected and painted a different view: the Walt Whitman Bridge and Philadelphia skyline, the Anne Whitall house and gardens, a particularly striking tree, a picnic table and bench, etc. At the end of the session, everyone gathered back at the pavilion to admire each other's work. A lovely evening and setting generated some lovely paintings. Look out Thomas Kinkade!

Nature Walk at Ceres Park (7/26/05) by Barry Bengel

It was the hottest day of the year so far, and the trip leaders were a little skeptical that anyone would show up. Yet more than 13 intrepid souls showed up and had a great walk through Ceres Park in Mantua Township. Though the birds were not particularly active on this steamy evening, we did manage to hear at least two scarlet tanagers, red-bellied woodpeckers, and numerous wood thrushes calling to each other. The trip included a walk on the south of Chestnut Branch, which for those not familiar, is very different from the northern side. This area includes several ravines, along with some very lush vegetation that is not found on the northern side.

Canoe/Kayak Trip (8/3/05) by Deb Maka

This was our third summer having a canoe/kayak trip. Each year we've chosen a different location for various reasons. This year was the Mantua Creek...not starting at the Delaware River like last year but launching our boats in Wenonah.

We had good weather and a record setting turnout with 14 boats starting the journey with us and a few more left later with the intension of catching up with us. We had a nice, relaxed paddle down the creek. It was a little shallow in parts but the scenery was lovely. Some of us were even commenting on wanting to look into buying property on the Mantua Creek.

For me, it was a trip of firsts...first time I led a trip with Bob (a great co-leader, by the way), first time I kayaked with my father (he was visiting from Indiana), and the first time I experienced low tide. Coming from the Midwest, I never had to worry about tides. It was just something you read about in a science textbook.

We paddled forward about 45 minutes and when it was time to turn around, the tide was going out. The scenery was still lovely and the company wonderful, but it was no longer the relaxed paddle it was previously. The creek got shallow in a number spots and the current against us made it slow going but we all made it back safe and sound. All and all, it was a good trip. Who needs going to the gym when you can just come out with the Nature Club? Thank you to all of you who joined us that evening and maybe I'll see some of you next summer on another adventure.

Digiscoping at Scotland Run Park (8/9/05) by Barry Bengel

Bob Baruzzi taught a small group of budding nature photographers the basics of digiscoping, which is digital photography through a spotting scope. Bob gave us some very helpful pointers, including which digital cameras are best suited to this use, as well as which spotting scopes yield the best results. He also presented some fantastic enlarged nature photos to show us the benefit of being able to use increased magnification to be able to get “up close and personal” with the subject. Throughout the talk, a live demonstration of this fairly new technique was also provided, as we zoomed in on various subjects on and around the lake.

Fern & Native Plant Walk at Wenonah Woods (8/17/05) by Barry Bengel

Rick Dilks provided an enjoyable walk along the trail around the Wenonah Lake. Rich began the walk by telling us that ferns have been around for millions of years, and that they are amongst the oldest plant on earth. We saw many species of ferns along the trail, including Hay-Scented Fern, Sensitive Fern, Bracken, Netted Chain Fern, Spinulose Wood Fern, Cinnamon Fern, and Rattlesnake Fern. Rich also showed us a clump of Field Horsetails, which are known as a “Fern ALLY”, and are also an ancient species. Another highlight of the walk was when we spotted a Rat Snake that was about 6 feet long sunning himself along the trail.

Conservation Corner – Endangered Species Act Under Attack by Loretta Dunne

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is in danger. It is threatened by amendments proposed by Representative Richard Pombo, chair of the House Resources Committee as well as the Bush Administration’s failure to move on adding species to the Endangered and Threatened Lists.

Pombo’s proposal includes a number of very troubling changes to the law. It would preclude listing plants or animals that are not endangered worldwide. For example, recently a group of environmental organizations, including New Jersey Audubon, petitioned the government to list the red knot as an endangered species. In the 80s, the number of red knots to visit the Delaware Bay shore was estimated at 100,000 and today the number is around 15,000. At this rate of decline, the red knot will be extinct by 2010, unless action is taken to protect both the red knots and the horseshoe crabs whose eggs the red knots depend on for food. Because there are populations of old world red knots that are doing well, under the new proposals for the ESA, the red knots would not be protected. .

Another aspect of Pombo’s bill would limit the amount of habitat protected to only that required for survival of the species, rather than to recovery. Additionally, it would eliminate required timelines to be met in protecting species and increase political involvement in decisions that should be made strictly by wildlife biologists. These are just a few examples of the changes proposed that would drastically undermine the ESA.

This proposal comes at a time when it has been very difficult to get any species added to the list. In 2004, The Center for Biological Diversity <http://www.sw-center.org/swcbd/>, which provides extensive information about the ESA, issued a report stating:

"Listing delays and extinctions have plagued the Fish and Wildlife Service for 30 years, but the Bush administration has pushed the crisis to an unprecedented level. It has virtually shut down the listing program, placing an average of just nine species on the list per year. The Clinton administration averaged 65 listings per year, Bush Sr. averaged 59, and even Reagan mustered 32. It's a disgrace."

Please do not sit by and watch the dilution of the Endangered Species Act, and subsequently, the continued extinction of wildlife. Contact your Congressional representatives and the President. Let them know that you do not want to see the Endangered Species Act weakened. Rather, call for a more vigorous enforcement and funding of the act so endangered and threatened species may survive.

Data for this article is from the "Proposed Changes to Wildlife Law Causing Concern" by Kirk More, Asbury Park Press, July 19, 2005 and the Center for Biological Diversity Website, <http://www.sw-center.org/swcbd/>.

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.

Reminder - Membership Dues

September brings with it membership renewals. This year we will be keeping the price the same as last year. Please remember that your dues are the only costs associated with being a club member, we do not charge for any of our programs or field trips. Many organizations charge their members for each walk or activity they attend. We believe that the club is still an excellent value and hope the added cost will not deter any of our members. It is much cheaper for us to send the newsletter electronically to our members and as a result those members who choose to receive the newsletter electronically will receive a discount on their membership. The dues are \$15 for electronic mailings and \$20 for regular mail delivery. Please fill out the membership form at the end of this newsletter and bring it along with your dues to the September Meeting, or send your renewal form and a check payable to "Gloucester County Nature Club" to: Ed Cleary, 1874 McKee Ave., Deptford, NJ 08096.

Looking Ahead:

Programs-

October 13th - Herpetologist from Philadelphia Zoo
November 10th - Water Quality with NJ American Water Company
December 8th - Organic Farming

Field Trips-

Oct. 16th (Sun)	Tree Trip (Karl Anderson and Karen Kravchuck)
Nov. 5th (Sat.)	Avalon Sea Watch/Hawk Watch (Jeff Holt)
Dec. 17th (Sat.)	Christmas Bird Count

Club Notes:

- The October Executive Committee meeting will be on October 9th at Elaine Dzeima's house.
- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Deb Maka at deborahann@backpacker.com or call 863-0330.
- 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.

WAIVER

Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members or representatives shall not be liable for any injuries, loss or damage to person and/or property, direct or consequential, arising out of any trips and/or activities of the Gloucester County Nature Club. The assumption of risk, which is inherent in this type of outdoor activity, is implied on the part of each person who attends any Gloucester County Nature Club trip, and every person participating in any of said trips and/or activities assumes all risk and liability in connection therewith.

Everyone participating in any activity of the Gloucester County Nature Club will be required to read the release of liability, protecting the Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members and representatives from liability.

Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members and representatives are not in any way responsible for the personal safety of the attendees. When walking along a road, keep to the left, facing oncoming traffic and walk in a single file. When walking along trails, do not follow too closely or move too fast for your safety and for the safety of others (avoid collisions and/or whipped branches). FOLLOW THE LEADER: If you forge ahead, you may find yourself alone. Responsible adults must accompany children under the age of 16. If you expect to drop out of the group early, please inform the leader. Report to one or more of the hikers if you discontinue on route.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2005-2006

- New Member Renewal
- Paper Membership(\$20) - regular mail
- Electronic Membership(\$15) - newsletter via email; ***please provide email address below

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ ***Email Address: _____

Please note any special knowledge you would be willing to share: _____

Would you be willing to serve on a committee? If so, which committee(s): _____

Are there other ways you could participate? If so, how?

Would you like to give a gift membership? If so, indicate Individual ____ or Family ____

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

A note will be sent informing them of your gift membership in the GCNC, thank you.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE WAIVER

Signature: _____ Date: _____