



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

November 2010

Program – The Swamp Pink

Thursday, November 11 at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (Annual joint meeting with The South Jersey Land & Water Trust)

Presenter: Mike Hogan, SJLWT Habitat Assessment Coordinator

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

At our November gathering we again welcome The South Jersey Land & Water Trust to the annual joint meeting of our two organizations. The November program will be a special presentation by noted New Jersey naturalist and nature photographer, Mike Hogan of the SJL&WT on his 20-year study of the endangered Swamp Pink. In his decades long effort to locate and map occurrence sites, Mike and the SJL&WT have collected critical data that will significantly assist with the protection and preservation of this unique wildflower species and its habitat.



Each spring in Southern New Jersey's forested wetlands one of the most unique and beautiful wildflowers in the eastern United States comes into bloom. Those fortunate enough to know where to look will find the Swamp Pink (*Helonias bullata*) with its lovely cluster of pink flowers, with their striking blue anthers, rising on a single stem from a surrounding ring of basal leaves. It is a plant like no other, the only member of its genus. Once placed in the family Liliaceae (Lillies), it is now classified as belonging to the family Melanthiaceae (Bunch Flower Family). Its closest relative, *Heloniopsis orientalis*, is native to Japan. The Swamp Pink is federally listed as Threatened and state listed in New Jersey as Endangered. Its global ranking is G3 (Globally very rare and known for less than 100 locations). Its state ranking is S3 (Rare in NJ and known from less than 50 locations). The great majority of Swamp Pinks are found in central and southern New Jersey with 70% to 90% of the global population occurring here. It is also found in Delaware, a small section of Maryland and at localized upland sites in Virginia and an area in the western Carolinas and Georgia. These are likely remnant populations of a historically larger range.

Join us and learn about this special wildflower so close to home and about the SJL&WT's excellent work to protect it.

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).

Field Trip – Birding at Riverwinds

Saturday, November 6, 8:30 AM to Noon

Trip Leaders: Gary and Marge Lizzi



Join us for some fall birding at Riverwinds. We'll start at the Scenic Trail at 8:30 AM and walk through the varied habitats there. We'll be focusing on fall sparrows, hoping to see American tree sparrow, fox sparrow, and white-crowned sparrow, along with four or five other more common species. Time permitting, we'll also explore some little-known trails in different areas of the Riverwinds Complex looking for the many raptors that could be located there, including bald eagle, red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, and possible falcons as well, including American kestrel and peregrine. This will be an easy walk on mowed trails. Rest rooms are located in the Riverwinds main building.

Directions: See your guide to the *Natural Places of Gloucester County*. Or, from the intersection of Route 45 and Cooper Street/Delaware Street in the center of Woodbury, take Delaware Avenue west. In about two miles, cross Grove Street. Continue for another 0.3 mile, on what is then called Riverwinds Drive. Watch for a sign for the trail entrance, on the right.

Advance Notice - December Field Trip: Audubon Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 18

Please join us for the Christmas Bird Count as our December field trip. Many of you have joined us in the past and hope you will again. We always look forward to new participants as they add a breath of fresh air to the 'hunt'. Once again we will have area leaders for each zone of the Count. The leader will form a group(s) and travel their area to see and hear as many birds as possible documenting the 'finds' as they go along. Some groups start "Owling" in the wee hours, others might get out there at daybreak. Start and finish times can be arranged with the leader. One can put in as much time as you wish. One does not need to be an 'expert' birder, quite the contrary. This citizen science exercise is for everyone, beginner to expert. For those who are unable to participate yet might be available to watch their feeders (providing your property is in the Count circle), you may count what you see in your yard and submit the information. I am hoping to have forms and count sheets at the next 2 meetings to distribute. Or you can phone me at 856-881-9262 and I would be more than happy to mail the info to you. It would be great to build on our core of feeder watchers. If you wish to go out on the Count and have not linked up with anyone, merely give me a call and I will place you with a group. That's how I got my start! This is a fun experience and an excuse to break away from the sometimes craziness of the season, to see some interesting and different territories and animals. You may e-mail as well: ronaljdk52@comcast.net

- **Ron Kegel, Compiler**

Family Fun Walk

Friday, November 14 at 10:00 AM at Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua

Trip Leader: Maria Keefe 856-627-7010 Email: maria_mk@comcast.net

Join us on Friday, November 5th at 10 am at Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua. Bring the kids out for a walk at Chestnut Branch Park in the fresh fall air. 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 that is able to be pushed on unpaved paths. Everyone welcome.

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.

Project FeederWatch

Embrace the winter. Count feeder birds for science!

Ithaca, NY—What happens in the backyard should not stay in the backyard—at least when it comes to bird feeders. By sharing information about which birds visit their feeders between November and April, backyard bird watchers can help scientists track changes in bird numbers and movements from year to year, through Project FeederWatch, a citizen-science program from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

Project FeederWatch participants may begin collecting data as early as November 1. The season officially starts on November 1 and runs through early April. Taking part is easy. Anyone can count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders and enter their information on the FeederWatch website. Since 1987, more than 40,000 people from the United States and Canada have taken part in the project.

“To get the most complete picture of bird movements, we always need new sets of eyes to tell us what species are showing up at backyard feeders,” says David Bonter, leader of Project FeederWatch.

“Participants always tell us how much fun it is and how good it feels to contribute to our understanding of birds by submitting their sightings.”

Project FeederWatch is for people of all ages and skill levels. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Cornell Lab toll-free at 866-982-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Cornell Lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher’s Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds, a calendar, complete instructions, and Winter Bird Highlights, an annual summary of FeederWatch findings.



Kid's Corner - Create a “Treasure Chest”* by Deb Maka

We all have things that we want to carry with us and need someplace to store them. You can show your creativity and recycle at the same time by decorating an empty, metal, mint container to create your own “treasure chest”. You can fill your “treasure chest” with what ever you’d like to bring with you. One example is to fill it with miniature versions of toys and games (i.e. dice, playing cards, toy cars, etc). Another option is to fill your container with fashion items like lip gloss and hair accessories.

What you need:

- a clean, empty, metal mint container
- lightweight paper (colored printer paper works well)
- craft glue
- markers

What you do:

1. Clean and dry an empty mint container
2. Trace the lid on lightweight paper and adhere it to the lid with craft glue
3. Decorate the lid with markers*
4. When finished decorating the container fill it with your “treasures”

Another option to decorate your container is to get an adhesive magnetic sheet. Stick white paper on the magnetic sheet. Then draw facial features (i.e. eyes, mouths, eye brows) on the paper with a marker and cut out the shapes. You can use the cut outs to create a face on the outside of your container and stow the extra cut outs in the inside of the lid.

- adapted from Disney Family Fun magazine (May 2010); “Pack a Handy Kit”

Other Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: November 2010

- November 13 (Saturday) – 9:00 AM to early afternoon. **Birding at Supawna Meadows and Abbott Farm.** Leader: Lloyd Shaw. \$Fee. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. For info: phone 609-261-2495.
- November 20 (Saturday) – 9:00 AM to Noon. **Beginning birding for adults.** \$Fee. Sponsored by the Palmyra Cove Nature Park. For info: <http://palmyracove.org/>.

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.

- Nature Tots: Wednesday 11/10 at 10:00 AM
- Bird Walk: Saturday 11/6 at 8:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 11/17 at 2:30pm

Natural Events for the month of November

- Persimmons ripen - they are delicious when fully soft-ripe, astringent when unripe.
- Witch hazel in bloom.
- Woodchucks and chipmunks go into hibernation.
- Bats seek their hibernating sites in caves and abandoned mines.
- American tree sparrow, sometimes called the "winter chippy", is a regular winter bird feeder visitor.

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:

Upcoming GCNC Programs

December 9, 2010: **The Tatshenshini River** – Erik & Kris Mollenhauer

January 13, 2011: **The Natural & Unnatural History of Dragons** – Brian Hayes & Erik Mollenhauer

February 10, 2011: **Fungus** - John Dighton

March 10, 2011: TBD

April 14, 2011: **Wild Journeys: Migration in New Jersey** - Don Freiday

May 12, 2011: **Landscaping With Native Plants** - Alan Koch

June 9, 2011: **Annual Picnic plus "Cargo For Conservation"**. Location TBD.

2010-2011 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the next season. Changes and additions are not impossible. If you would be able and willing to lead an additional field trip, please contact Karl Anderson at karlanderson6@aol.com or 856-845-7075.

December 18 (Saturday) – **Audubon Christmas Count** – Ron Kegel

February 19 (Saturday) – **Looking for Wintering Waterfowl at the Jersey Shore** – Bob Duke

March 12 (Saturday) – **Early Spring Birding in Mannington Twp, Salem County** – Jonathan Stillwell

April 16 (Saturday) – **Biking Along the Delaware** - Brian Hayes

May – **Bird Quest Training Sessions**

June – **To be determined.**

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 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 sharkeyes@comcast.net or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.
- The November Executive Committee meeting will be held on November 7th at the home of Elaine Dzeima. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.