



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

November 2011

Program - The Hidden Life of Streams: Leaf Packs

Thursday, November 10, 2011 at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (Annual joint meeting with The South Jersey Land & Water Trust)

Presenters: Erik & Kris Mollenhauer

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

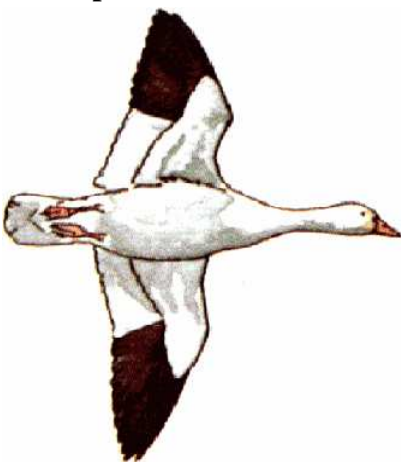
Streams are dynamic environments, with variation in flow, temperature and food quality. Autumn leaf-fall is an event of huge importance to the life of streams. As leaves fall from overhanging trees and shrubs into streams, they collect and accumulate with other small floating debris (twigs, bark, seeds, flowers), forming natural leaf packs. These packs get lodged against rocks or other obstructions and begin to decay. Leaf packs provide food and habitat for an array of stream organisms, including many aquatic forms of insects that often go unnoticed because of their size and habits. Assessing the abundance and variety of these organisms in leaf-packs can tell us something about habitat and water quality. Join Erik and Kris Mollenhauer in a look at the hidden life of streams: attendees will work in small groups with low-power microscopes and other tools to explore an actual leaf-pack.

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 Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

Sunday November 13, 2011 8:30 AM to Mid-afternoon

Trip Leader: Jonathan Stillwell



Forsythe NWR is an important site on the Atlantic Flyway for southbound migrants during November. Snow geese, migratory passerines, dunlin and other waders are species that can be seen there at this time of year. The trees will have mostly shed their leaves and the bugs will have eased their assault by this date.

We will meet at the information center at 8:30 AM and briefly survey for woodland birds, then drive the 8-mile loop to view autumn migrants on the salt marsh beside the bay. The loop affords excellent close views of the birds on the marsh. There are also short hiking trails and boardwalks and observation towers for viewing. Afterwards we will have lunch at the picnic area, then continue to one or more nearby less-known nature spots: Scott's Landing, the Galloway Tract, and Absecon WMA.

Directions: Take the AC Expressway to Exit 5 and take Route 9 north for 6.3 miles. Turn right at the light for "Great Creek Road" and go 0.8 miles to the parking area. There is a \$4.00 per vehicle entrance fee. Bring lunch, binoculars, and scopes, and have clothing for windy conditions.

Carpooling is encouraged. Meet at the north end of the parking lot for Boscov's Department Store on Clements Bridge Road in Deptford at 7:30 AM.

Contact numbers: (609) 485-6524 daytime, (609) 965-0553 or (856) 848-1324 evenings; (609) 202-4254 evening before and morning of the trip (cell phone).

Field Trip Report – Amico Island Birding, October 8

About 40 species of birds were seen on this morning trip to 55-acre Amico Island, a Burlington County park at the confluence of Rancocas Creek and the Delaware River. This included six species of warblers, including Tennessee, Nashville, blackpoll, and magnolia in addition to common yellowthroat and hundreds of yellow-rumps. Also seen were bald eagle, belted kingfisher, and osprey. A few butterflies and late-blooming wildflowers were taken note of. We walked about two miles on wide, level mowed trails. The weather was lovely – a cool, bright, late summer day, with just a few hints of autumn foliage. The trip was very ably led by Gary and Marge Lizzi.

Advance Notice: Audubon Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 17

Need an excuse to breakaway briefly from the holiday craziness in December? Want to help in a Citizen Science endeavor? Won't you join us for the 58th Northwestern Gloucester County Audubon Christmas Bird Count?! We hope to have an exhilarating time afield as we attempt to find many "Prizes" (and gifts) out there in the birding world.

The Count can start as early as you wish to participate. Maybe you are game for 'Owling' and finish at dusk? However, any time offered is accepted and can be arranged in advance with your area leader. Keep in mind part of a day is just as important, helpful, and hopefully rewarding! Those participating may contact your area leader or vice versa. Those participating for the first time can contact me or approach an area leader if you know one or have preference. If no contact is made please let me know. I do not want to lose anyone from our group.

You need not be an 'expert' or avid birder for that matter, quite the contrary. As an area leader, and I think I can speak for my fellow leaders and say it is much fun to have new folks along. It is nice for we 'returnees' to see the experience through the eyes of new folks.

Would love to have folks watch their feeders too if they are in the 'Count Circle' and unable to get out in the field! Feeder watching is just as important. I will have detailed information at the next 2 meetings or call me at 856-881-9262.

It certainly would be nice if we could have 100 participants and document (see and hear) 100 species too! Hopefully those of you who participated in the Count last year recently received your copy of American Birds which highlights the Christmas count process! Here's hoping you will join us!

- Ron Kegel, Compiler

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: November 2011

- November 12 (Saturday) – 8:30 AM – Early afternoon. **Birding at Taylor's Refuge and Amico Island.** Leader: Lloyd Shaw. \$Fee. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. For information phone 609-261-2495, Tuesday – Saturday.

- November 20 (Sunday), 2:00 PM – **Walk in the Wild**. 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. For more information call 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.

- Bird Walks: Saturday 11/5 at 8:00 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 11/9 at 10:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 11/16 at 2:30 PM
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 11/19 at 10:00 AM
- 4H Kids Nature Club: Saturday 11/5 at 10:30 AM

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.

Help needed for Girl Scout Troop

We are a group of girls from Girl Scout Cadette Troop #64247 who are working on our Silver Award. We have constructed nest boxes for Eastern Bluebirds and are now searching for a location to put them up. If possible, we would like to install five of them for a "trail." We are also in need of expert volunteers to monitor the nest boxes on a yearly basis. We do not feel we have the knowledge to maintain the nest boxes. We do not want to install the boxes and risk endangering any bluebirds if they aren't being monitored appropriately. If you have any ideas or suggestions, feel free to contact Barbara Woodward at 856-534-9791.

Looking Ahead:

Listed below are the programs we have lined up for the rest of the year season. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

December 8, 2011: **A Birding Adventure in Cuba** - Marilyn Henry

January 12, 2012: **Trickster Makes The World** - Erik & Kris Mollenhauer and Brian Hayes

February 9, 2012: **Pot Luck Dinner & Cargo For Conservation** - various GCNC members

March 8, 2012: **Dragonflies** - Mary Lenahan

April 12, 2012: **Birding Trails of Florida** - Joe Baur

May 10, 2012: **Rare Plants of Southern New Jersey** - Renee Brecht

June 14, 2012: **Annual Picnic** (Location to be determined)

2011-2012 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the rest of the year. January and February are still TBD. 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.

Saturday December 17, 2011: **Audubon Christmas Count**

Join a team or go on your own, to seek out and count wintering birds of Gloucester County, in a traditional citizen science activity. Coordinator: Ron Kegel.

January: TBD

February: TBD

Saturday March 24, 2012: **Birding the Delaware Bayshore**

Drive some of the roads along the bay in Cumberland County, looking for waterfowl and raptors including bald eagle, northern harrier, and short-eared owl. Leader: Joseph Esterly..

Sunday April 22, 2012: **Wildflowers Along the Wenonah Trail**

An easy walk to see some of the early spring wildflowers along the trail. Leader: Richard Dilks.

Saturday May 5, 2012: **Gloucester County Bird Quest**

Form a team, join a group, or go on your own to visit natural places in Gloucester County to identify as many birds as you can between 7:00 AM and Noon. Pre-registration is required.

Saturday June 9, 2012: **Kayaking and Birding**

At a local park. With luck we might see bald eagle, osprey, beaver, and possibly river otter. Leader: Jay Hoffecker.

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 6th at the home of Karen Kravchuck. Please contact Karen for more information.