



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

December 2016

Program - An Amazon Expedition with the Earthwatch Organization

Thursday, December 8, 2016 at 7:00pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ

Presenter: Larry Lyons

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

The World Wildlife Fund has stated:

“Spanning 6.7 million square kilometers (twice the size of India) the Amazon Biome is virtually unrivalled in scale, complexity and opportunity, and truly is a region distinguished by superlatives. Not only does the Amazon encompass the single largest remaining tropical rainforest in the world, it also houses at least 10% of the world’s known biodiversity, including endemic and endangered flora and fauna, and its river accounts for 15-16% of the world’s total river discharge into the oceans. The Amazon River flows for more than 6,600 km, and with its hundreds of tributaries and streams contains the largest number of freshwater fish species in the world. Equally impressive are the unfathomable numbers of mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles found across the biome. The Amazon is home to more than 30 million people living across a vast region subdivided into nine different national political systems.”



Join Larry Lyons as he presents an eye witness account of an ongoing research expedition in the Peruvian Amazon which strives to conserve one of the largest protected areas in Peru. This research, which is made possible by the EarthWatch organization and their volunteers, involves surveying freshwater dolphins, performing wading bird and macaw surveys, collecting fish, capturing and releasing caimans, and conducting transects to survey for primates and other mammals. Larry will speak on how the research is performed and on the purpose and value of these efforts to understand and protect this priceless natural heritage.

GCNC member Larry A. Lyons has been an Environmental Scientist for more than 30 years investigating and helping to protect aquatic and terrestrial environments in the U.S. and the Caribbean. He is credited with numerous publications and several patents. His love of all types of environments and the diversity of the living organisms that depend on these environments has extended to his love of capturing their beauty with his photography, which he uses to reinforce the need for the protection and conservation of wildlife and their habitats. Larry’s website (<http://enviroquest.me>) regularly posts write-ups along with his photography providing environmental messages about the beauty of the natural world and the organisms that we need to protect.

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 – Northwestern Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 17, 2016

Need a distraction during the holiday season? Need something to push you outside to enjoy nature (even when it is a bit chilly)? We've got just the thing for you! How about trying an Audubon Christmas Count?

On Saturday, December 17, the Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count will take place. 13 area leaders and their colleagues will venture out, some starting in the wee hours for owls and other nocturnal things, in an attempt to count all birds they can identify through sight and sound. One may help for as long as you would like; all day, half-day, a few hours, or maybe even only owling as some do - if your group does it. Participation time it may be arranged with your leader. Experience is not necessary. There should be enough "seasoned" birders in the group to assist you in identifying. In fact, I know most birders are thrilled to share their experiences and knowledge! This is how most of us learn!

We will be canvassing a good portion of the Western end of the County. If you would like to join us, contact the compiler.

Things one might want to take along would be warm close (flannel lined jeans are real good for an outing like this), food including lunch and snacks, binoculars if you have them, gloves, foot gear – warm and those that can keep feet dry, and a good sense of humor.

Once again we will be encouraging feeder watching. If you are unable to join a group that if you are within the count circle. I can either send you the forms or give them to you at the December Nature Club meeting. If you would like to have them mailed, just contact me. This way of counting has certainly added to our results favorably. Again, join us please! Become a supporter of a century-plus of this process, a very important citizen science project. Thanks to those who have participated in the past and will join us again. Your area leaders will be in touch with you. Should you need to find a group, contact a leader of your choice should you know someone or merely contact me and I can help place you. Let's have fun and make it a good count.

Kirk and Donna Strohmeier are opening their home to us for a wrap up after the count. If interested in attending contact me for directions. It's a nice end to a usually nice day sitting by the fireplace...

Compiler – Ron Kegel

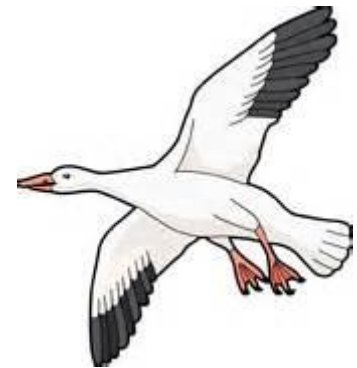
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Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: December 2016

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 Walk: Saturday 12/3 at 9:00am.
- Nature Tots - Holiday Walk: Tuesday 12/6 at 9:00am
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 12/10 at 10:00am

- Nature Tots: River Walk (at Red Bank Battlefield) Wednesday 12/14 at 9:00am
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 12/14 at 9:00am
- Wreath Making Class: Thursday 12/15 at 7:00pm
- Family Fun/Nature Explorers - Trim a Tree for Wildlife: Saturday 12/17 at 10:00am
- Bird Walk: Saturday 12/30 at 9:00am.

Natural Events for the month of December

- Geminid meteor shower – peaks on December 13.
- Shortest day of the year is December 22.
- Bald eagles arrive from the north and winter in New Jersey.
- Raptor migration ends mid-month.
- Great horned owls are pairing up this month – listen for their calls
- Watch for late waterfowl migrants – shovelers, mergansers and goldeneyes.
- Take part in a local Christmas Count.

Conservation Corner by Suzan Delozier

MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT

THE PINELANDS AND OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

In the October issue of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance's Inside the Pinelands newsletter, a disturbing article appeared. On July 3, volunteers with the PPA planted 300 Atlantic White Cedar saplings on private property that had suffered great damage by off-road vehicles. It was very hot but the volunteers were dedicated to restoration of the Pines. Sadly, on August 6, a group of off-road vehicle drivers drove their vehicles in circles over the cedars, then physically pulled the trees out of the ground, piled them up and set them on fire. The PPA states "whether it is a historic site, ice-aged pond, paleo-dune, stream, or river, off-road vehicle drivers have shown no mercy to the Pine Barrens." They ask that you visit www.pinelandsalliance.org/blog for more information including a report on the damage in Wharton State Park.

Unexpected Wildlife Refuge also reports invasions by people on all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes. This type of intrusion causes massive damage to habitat, animals and plants. The director of the refuge attended a Pinelands Commission meeting and added her voice to the public outcry concerning this kind of destructive use of off-road vehicles. She hopes to work with the PPA in the future. The refuge's website is www.unexpectedwildliferefuge.org.

You may also visit <http://www.pinelandsalliance.org/blog/2016/08/grassroots-call-for-more-federal-participation-in-the-pinelands/> for an article (and link to a petition to NJ senators) calling for the US government to make the Pinelands a national park which would afford greater protection to the area.

PLASTICS IN OUR WATERS

It is estimated that there are 315 billion pounds of plastic waste in the world's oceans with an additional 17 billion pounds added every year. Even landlocked cities contribute to this trash when improperly disposed debris is blown into sewers and streams and carried to rivers and then to the ocean. Street trash is washed into storm drains by heavy rains and, if not filtered, also finds its way to streams, rivers and the ocean. The substitution of plastics for natural materials started 60 years ago (in 1957 "baggies" were introduced) and today plastics are found not only in

bottles, shopping bags and coffee cups, but also in clothing, packaging, toiletries and cosmetics. Furthermore, the chemicals in plastics do not exist in nature and never truly break down, changing the chemistry of the ocean.

Plastics present risks to wildlife and people. Seabirds, turtles, fish and marine animals become fatally entangled in plastics. Animals also ingest plastics. However, animals cannot digest plastic and their stomachs become filled with it causing them to slowly starve to death. Plastic absorbs DDT and BPA which are known carcinogens and these toxins travel up the food chain to humans. Invasive species like barnacles and mussels attach themselves to floating plastics and travel from coastline to coastline.

Cleaning up the oceans is a very complicated matter since no net can capture pieces of micro-plastics that are smaller than 5 millimeters and barely visible to the naked eye. Micro-plastics originate in microfiber and nylon clothing, microbeads in face wash, and the breakdown of larger items. Also sensitive ecosystems such as coral reefs could be damaged in the cleaning process. The best solution to marine waste is to stop the debris at its source – preventing your waste from reaching the ocean. What can you do?

- Reduce your waste – select reusable cups, water bottles, grocery bags. Take your own containers as doggy bags to restaurants. Always think about how you are using and disposing of plastics.
- Clean up your local waterways – pick up trash along your local stream or river and in your neighborhood to prevent trash from reaching your local stream.
- Secure your bins – tightly cover your curbside trashcan so that trash does not blow away.
- Ensure that your soap, exfoliating face washes, toothpaste, cosmetics and other personal care products do not contain microbeads.
- Americans throw away 100 billion polyethylene bags a year. Each ton of recycled plastic bags would save 11 barrels of oil, yet less than 1% of plastic bags are actually recycled. You may support a ban on single-use plastic bags in NJ by signing a petition to the governor located by clicking [here](#).

Sources: Defenders of Wildlife Defenders magazine Fall 2016

Environmental Action email of 10/26/16. <http://environmental-action.org/>

Worldwatch Institute http://www.worldwatch.org/system/files/Plastic_Bags.pdf

PALM OIL AND TROPICAL FORESTS

Palm oil is big business. It is found in roughly half of packaged goods sold in the US. It is in ice cream, cookies, crackers, chocolate products, noodles, cereals, doughnuts, and potato chips. Several conservation groups have recently reported on tropical deforestation due to the palm oil industry. Forcibly removing native peoples from their land in order to create oil palm plantations threatens native cultures as well as many critically endangered animals such as orangutans, sloths, tigers, jaguars and pygmy elephants that live in these forests. (Oil palms are native to Africa but are also grown in Indonesia and Malaysia) The Bornean orangutan may go extinct within 10 years if its habitat is not protected. Additionally, deforestation accounts for 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Companies like McDonald's and Dunkin' Donuts have committed to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains over the next few years and instead use sustainable palm oil. However, Burger King (and its parent company, RBI) has made no sort of commitment. Sign a petition [here](#) to urge Burger King to use sustainable palm oil.

The Union of Concerned Scientists has a palm oil scorecard evaluating 30 companies on their commitment to use deforestation-free palm oil. See [here](#) for a look.

Sources: SumOfUs www.SumOfUs.org,

Friends of the Earth email of 9/22/16 www.foe.org

Rainforest Action Network http://www.ran.org/palm_oil

MONARCH UPDATE



Journey North reported on Nov.3 that monarchs have begun to arrive in numbers at their wintering site in Mexico. It is still too early to really know how they are faring, but you can check in at www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/fall2016/12/monarch-butterfly-migration110316.html at the beginning of each month for an update.

Looking Ahead:

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

January 12, 2017: **A Practical Guide to Plant Propagation** - Ron Kegel

February 9, 2017: **Pot Luck Dinner (6:00pm) & Program:Adventures in Paddling for Clean Water and a Healthy Ocean** - Margo Pellegrino

March 9, 2017: **Vulture Culture: A Face Only a Mother Could Love** - Jane Morton Galetto, President, Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River

April 13, 2017: **Birds of Gloucester County and Tips on Photographing Them** - Dennis DiMarco & Marilyn Henry

May 11, 2017: **Annual Plant Sale (6:00pm) and Program: A Green Legacy: John Burroughs and the Catskill Mts (6:45pm)** - Erik Mollenhauer

June 8, 2017: **Annual Picnic (6:00pm) at Alcyon Park, Pitman, NJ** followed by **Program: Surfskis, Outrigger Canoes, Kayaks, Lifejackets, Rescue Throw bags, Paddles - Up Close & Personal** - Glen Forest Green, P.E., U.S. Canoe Assoc. Safety Committee Chairman

2016-2017 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the remainder of the club year. 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.

January 2017 - **Winter Ducks**

February 11, 2017 - **Scotland Run Full Moon Hike**

March 2017 - **TBD**

April 2017 - **BirdQuest Training Sessions**

May 6, 2017 - **BirdQuest**

June 2017 - **Horseshoe Crab Walk**

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.
- The December Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday December 4th at the home of Karen Kravchuck. Please contact Karen for more information.

This holiday season, Use AmazonSmile to help out the Gloucester County Nature Club



It's Holiday Shopping Time!

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. As of May 15, 2016, \$12.46 has been donated to the club.

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. If it's your first time, you will be asked to select a charity. Select *Gloucester County Nature Club*. 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.