



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

January 2011

Program – The Natural & Unnatural History of Dragons

Thursday, January 13 at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ

Presenters: Brian Hayes & Erik Mollenhauer Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

"Always speak politely to an enraged Dragon." --- Steven Brust

"I desired dragons with a profound desire." --- C.S. Lewis



Until modern times, sightings of dragons were quite common as they breathed fire, hoarded treasure and terrorized both villagers and kings. If livestock went missing, it must be a dragon. Strange noises from the mountain? Dragon. Damsel in distress? Dragon. Stories of dragons are woven in cultures across Asia and Europe, the Middle East and even in the Americas and Australia. Dragons no longer ravage the countryside in Europe or lay waste to towns in Asia, but their legends remain. You can find dragon images on buildings, flown as patriotic symbols on flags or as statues in parks. There's a dragon statue near the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia and the image of a dragon in stone along the Blue Route (I - 476). Why did dragons disappear? Are humans hard-wired to believe in dragons? In this program we search

for the origin of dragons and ponder their demise. How were they able to breathe fire? Why did they thirst for gold? Will they return? Join us as Brian Hayes and Erik Mollenhauer use science, history, legend and story to explore the realm of dragons.

"I believe in everything until it's disproved. So I believe in fairies, myths, dragons. It all exists, even if it's in your mind. Who's to say that dreams and nightmares aren't as real as the here and now?" — John Lennon

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 – Moonlit Walk at Alcyon Lake Park

Wednesday January 19th, 7:00 - 8:00 PM at Alcyon Lake Park, Pitman

Trip Leader: Deb Maka

On Wednesday January 19th at 7 pm, we will enjoy the first full moon of 2011 with a moonlit walk at Alcyon Lake Park in Pitman. Bundle up for a short hike around the park. Join us and see how the light from the full moon transforms the park. We will take a short hike around the park and take a look at some constellations in the winter sky. We will also have a nature scavenger hunt in the dark. This scavenger hunt will require you to use your imagination because Items on our list will be identified but nothing will be gathered. This is a good trip for children and families. Please dress warm. We will begin in the LOWER parking lot closest to the lake.



Family Fun Walk

Monday, January 17 at 10:00 AM at Washington Lake Park, Sewell

Trip Leader: Maria Keefe 856-627-7010

Email: maria_mk@comcast.net

Join us on Monday, January 17 at 10:00 AM at Washington Lake Park, Sewell. We'll ring in the new year on Dr. Martin Luther King Day with a walk in the fresh cold air. Bring your baby in a backpack, your toddler in tow or your Grandmom along for a walk. We will walk at a toddler's pace exploring as we go. Dress in layers for the weather. We will walk on paved paths. Everyone welcome.

Directions:

From the intersection of Route 47 and Hurffville-Cross Keys Road (Route 654) in Hurffville, go southeast on Hurffville-Cross Keys Road for 1.7 miles to Greentree Road. Make a right on Greentree Road, and continue about 0.3 mile to the park entrance on the right. Enter the park and meet at Lot 1, which is the first right once you enter the park off of Greentree Road.

Kid's Corner - Play Squirrely Seek by Deb Maka**

This game is a variation on hide-and-seek. It has each player trying to find hidden items while also using his/her imagination.

What You Need:

- Handful of acorns or acorn shapes cut out of paper
- Small container for each player
- Timer (if more than one child plays the game)

What You Do

- Hide the acorns around your house
- Let your child pretend to be a squirrel by collecting the acorns in a small container

For multiple players: Give each player a container and set a timer for one minute. The child who collects the most acorns before the timer rings, wins!

* adapted from the National Wildlife Federation website (<http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Activities/Play-Squirrely-Seek.aspx>)

December Field Trip Report - Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The weather cooperated this year, and the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count was held on December 18. The data is now being compiled and we'll have a detailed wrap-up in the February newsletter.

Other Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: January 2011

- Saturday mornings, 7:30 AM to about 9:00, Joe Esterly is doing bird walks at Scotland Run Park, weather permitting. Walks meet at the nature center parking lot. For information phone Joe at 856-629-7626, or e-mail jde9773@aol.com.
- January 2 (Sunday) - Cumberland County Christmas Bird Count. Compiler: Mark Fritz, Seaville NJ. To participate: e-mail King-fisher@comcast.net.
- January 8-9 (Saturday-Sunday) – Gloucester-Salem County Winter Eagle Count. For information contact compiler Jack Mahon, cjmahon@msn.com.
- January 15 (Saturday) – Birding Salem County for Winter Eagles, Raptors, and Waterfowl. Leader: Sandra Keller. Sponsored by the Audubon Wildlife Society. For info: www.audubonwildlifesociety.org
- January 22 (Saturday) – 9:00 AM to early afternoon. Birding at Assunpink Wildlife Management Area. Leader: Lloyd Shaw. \$Fee. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. For info: phone 609-261-2495.

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 1/8 and 2/5 at 8:00 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 1/19 and 2/16 at 10:30 AM
- Afternoon Nature Strolls: Wednesday 1/19 and 2/16 at 2:30 PM
- Cabin Fever Walk and Craft: Saturday 1/22 at 10:00 AM

Natural Events for the month of January

- Earthworms burrow below frost line and become dormant.
- Newly fallen snow makes it easy to find and study animal tracks.
- First mating season for gray squirrels.
- Look for flocks of robins eating holly berries in your backyard.
- Great horned owls, America's earliest nesting owl, may be on eggs by the end of the month.
- As days lengthen, tufted titmice and cardinals start singing.

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

February 10, 2011: **Fungus** - John Dighton of Rutgers University

March 10, 2011: **Snakes of the NJ Pine Barrens** - Dave Schneider of Herpetological Associates

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

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

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.

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.**

Gloucester County Nature columns on the Gloucester County Times website

A collection of past Gloucester County Nature columns can be viewed on the Gloucester County Times website at: http://www.nj.com/gloucester/voices/index.ssf/gloucester_county_nature_club/index.html.

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 January Executive Committee meeting will be held on January 9th at the home of Karl Anderson. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.