



# Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

[www.gcnatureclub.org](http://www.gcnatureclub.org)

Nature Club meetings are open to the public.

January 2018

## Program - Biking across the Eastern Continental Divide: Pittsburgh to Washington DC -

Thursday, Jan. 11, 2018 at 7:00pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenters: Scott Barnes, Kris and Erik Mollenhauer

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

*Find out how a bicycling or hiking trip can help you see a great variety of Appalachian natural beauty and American history in a short amount of time.*

By coincidence, club members Scott Barnes and Erik and Kris Mollenhauer planned similar bicycle vacations during 2017. Both trips started with the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP), a relatively new 150-mile rail-trail that offers a gentle passage over the Eastern Continental Divide between Pittsburgh and Cumberland, Maryland. Scott's trip continued along the entirety of the C&O Canal Towpath, a National Historical Park which follows the meandering course of the Potomac River for 184 miles into the heart of Washington, DC.

The two trips had a few key differences, which will help highlight the numerous recreational options offered by this trail system. First, Erik and Kris planned and executed their trip themselves, carrying essentials between overnight lodging stops. Scott rode in a fully-supported group of 7 cyclists organized by a bike tour company. Second, the pacing of the trips was different: Erik and Kris covered the GAP in 4 days, whereas Scott covered the GAP and C&O trails in 6 days. Finally, Erik and Kris took their trip in early April, whereas Scott rode in August.



Our presentation will show the diverse flora, fauna, and other sights that can be seen during a ride or hike. We will also explore why these trails exist at all, and how topography and natural resources helped determine their location. We will bring the bikes and related gear that we used. Most importantly, we hope to show that people of even modest physical abilities can enjoy this specific trail system as well as similar ones being created all across the country.

**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 Along the Delaware River in Gloucester County**

**Saturday, January 20, 2010, 9:00am – early afternoon (meet in the lower parking lot at Red Bank Battlefield).**

### **Trip Leader - Lloyd Shaw**

This guided birding trip will have you visiting several locations along the Delaware River to look for winter birds. This trip will be a joint trip with Audubon Wildlife Society. You can expect to see some of the following water birds such as canvasback, cormorants, grebes, long tailed ducks, ruddy ducks. The group may even see loons or scooter. Your trip leader Lloyd Shaw, is an experienced birder and knows the locations to be visited well. Scopes will be available to help you view distant birds, but participants should bring binoculars. The area along the river will be cold in January, so dress in layers for comfort. Snow or heavy rain will cancel this trip.

**Directions:** Meet in the lower parking lot at Red Bank Battlefield.

Address: 100 Hessian Ave, National Park, NJ 08063



Highlights for last month's **Christmas Bird Count** are still being compiled, and will be provided in the February newsletter.

### **Events by other Organizations: January 2018**

The following two events are sponsored by the South Jersey Land and Water Trust. For details see [www.SJLandWater.org](http://www.SJLandWater.org).

Saturday January 6, 10:00am – 12:00pm: **Lake Worth Cleanup**. Join us for a cleanup of Lake Worth. Lake Worth Park (43.9 acres) is located in Lindenwold, NJ 08021; off of the White Horse Pike at Rosemond Avenue. The Park houses this beautiful Lake and a large tributary of Big Timber Creek. We will be collecting and talking about this interesting lake and its surrounding natural and historical aspects. Bring water, comfortable shoes and your camera! Please RSVP to [MHogan@SJLandWater.org](mailto:MHogan@SJLandWater.org).

Saturday January 20, 10:00am – 1:00pm: **Walk in the Woods - Blue Hole Walk**. Join us for our next "Walk in the Woods" We will meet at the entrance to the Winslow Wildlife Management Area on Piney Hollow Rd. in Winslow NJ We provide an exciting guided walk through the woods in this beautiful and mysterious gem in South Jersey. This event is FREE for SJLWT members and \$3 for nonmembers. Bring water, comfortable shoes and your camera! Please RSVP to [MHogan@SJLandWater.org](mailto:MHogan@SJLandWater.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.

- Bird Walk: Saturday 1/6 at 9:00am - Join other bird watchers for a brisk morning walk to discover the beautiful birds of Scotland Run Park.
- Nature Tots: Tuesdays at 9:00am:
  - 1/9 – I am an Animal
  - 1/16 – Bearly There
  - 1/23 – Winter Walk
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 1/13 at 10:00am

## **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.

## **Conservation Corner** by Suzan Delozier

### **BATS AND THEIR FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL**

It is unfortunate that bats have a bad reputation causing people to fear them. But bats are a friend to humankind, providing us with a non-toxic control of small insects – a bat can devour over 3000 mosquito-sized insects every night. The benefit they give us by eating thousands of mosquitos is priceless. They also feed on gypsy moths which have devastated our forests. In recent years, however, bats have been facing deadly challenges from 2 very different sources – a fungus and wind turbines.

White-nose Syndrome (WNS) is a fungal disease that has killed millions of bats in North America since it was first discovered in a cave in New York State in 2007. It is believed that it was brought here by spelunkers (cave explorers) from Europe. The fungus is transmitted from bat to bat and then from bat to cave and has spread to 31 states and 5 Canadian provinces. It has caused massive declines in hibernating species particularly the northern long-eared bat, the little brown bat and the tricolored bat. The northern long-eared bat has declined 99% in New Jersey. The Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey estimates that over 60 tons of mosquitos go uneaten each year due to bats lost in just New Jersey.

White-nose Syndrome (*Pseudogymnoascus destructans*) gets its name from the fuzzy white growth that appears on a bat's nose, ears and wings. It grows in low temperatures and high humidity – conditions provided by caves. The infection causes skin lesions which disrupt the natural processes that occur during hibernation. An infected bat will become active and may even fly during daytime in freezing weather. The bat's fat reserve will be quickly used up and the animal will die.

Research in how to fight WNS is on-going. It took several years for researchers to understand what was happening to the bats and to identify the cause as a fungus. In October, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded over \$1.36 million in grants to fight WNS. Potential treatments include a vaccine, microclimate optimization in caves and mines, a probiotic "cocktail", and treatment with ultraviolet light. A newly developed antifungal agent, Chitosan, has been tested in the lab and the field and has been shown to kill the WNS fungus without affecting other microbiota. Chitosan will be tested in Texas and Michigan. We can only hope for the best.

In general, bats either hibernate or migrate (little brown bats do some of both) and migrating bats face a new threat in wind turbines. In a study of the effects of turbines on hoary bats, it was determined that there would be a 90% decline in bats even with no new turbines over the next 50 years. What is sad is that bats have a natural curiosity and, from analysis of infrared video, they are seen inspecting the airspace around the turbines. There is no learning curve as it only takes one hit to kill a bat.

So far, a strategy known as operational minimization has been found to be the most effective method to prevent bat deaths. Since bats tend to be killed under low winds during autumn migration, this strategy involves limiting the rotation of the blades during certain times – at night, under low wind conditions from late summer through early autumn. The American Wind Energy Association has a voluntary program for its members that follows the

operational minimization outline and there has been some acceptance in the industry (loss of capacity due to limiting generation could be up to 3%).

Work continues to understand how, why, where, when and which species are killed at wind facilities. Researchers are trying to determine the exact time of night that bats interact with turbines and how weather data such as temperature, pressure, wind speed and direction affect bat behavior. What is it that bats find so interesting about turbines? Can broadcasting ultrasound deter bats? By attaching small GPS tags on bats, scientists will get a better grasp of migratory patterns and where to site new turbines. While the immediate future does not look good for migratory bats, there is some hope in the long term.

For more information on bats including what to do if a bat enters your home and how to make your yard bat friendly, go to Bat Conservation International's website [www.batcon.org](http://www.batcon.org).

Note: several years ago we found a single bat asleep on a window sill in an upstairs bedroom. After talking to someone at Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge, I put on heavy work gloves and with a towel I lifted the bat off the sill. I took the bat, now lightly wrapped in the towel, outside and hung the towel over a low branch. The bat clung to the towel for 3 or 4 hours then around 10 PM he took off and joined other bats flying over our house.

## **TRUMP ROLLS BACK PROTECTION OF TWO FEDERAL MONUMENTS**

In 1906, Congress passed the Antiquities Act which enables American presidents to set aside federal land to protect "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest." Bears Ears National Monument was set aside by President Obama and Grand Staircase-Escalante was set aside by President Clinton. Both monuments are in southern Utah. Bears Ears is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and a coalition of 5 Native American tribes while Grand Staircase-Escalante is managed solely by the BLM. By protecting these lands, the American people are given the opportunity to hike, fish, camp, and enjoy these lands while at the same time these lands are providing us with clean water and air and providing wildlife with precious habitat. These lands are also considered sacred by Native Americans.

On December 4, Trump announced he was rolling back protection of 85% of Bears Ears and 50% of Grand Staircase-Escalante. By allowing mining, gas and oil drilling, and other industrial development, Trump declared the people were getting their land back. If you do not agree with Trump's assessment, you may send a letter to your Congressional representatives asking them to fight to protect our federal lands – lands owned by the American people. The Center for Biological Diversity has prepared a letter which you may use located at [http://action.biologicaldiversity.org/p/dia/action4/common/public/index.sjs?action\\_KEY=17740](http://action.biologicaldiversity.org/p/dia/action4/common/public/index.sjs?action_KEY=17740).

## **ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

In 1960, President Eisenhower set aside 8.9 million acres in what is now known as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). President Carter in 1980 expanded the refuge to 19.6 million acres and designated it a 'wilderness' which gave it the highest level of protection afforded to public lands. However, its coastal plain (1.5 million acres), which is known as the jewel in the crown of our wildlife system and provides habitat to animals ranging from denning polar bears to porcupine caribou, is not covered by the wilderness designation.

The tax bill recently passed by the Senate contains a provision allowing the sale of gas and oil leases in the coastal plain of the ANWR. The New Jersey Audubon Society reminds us that the coastal plain provides nesting and feeding grounds for many birds that visit New Jersey. This is especially meaningful as we experience an influx of snowy owls in numbers rarely seen. If you so choose, write or call your US senators and representative or send a pre-written letter at

[http://www.capwiz.com/njaudubon/issues/alert/?alertid=79250626&type=CO&external\\_id=11355.-6183540](http://www.capwiz.com/njaudubon/issues/alert/?alertid=79250626&type=CO&external_id=11355.-6183540) .

## **Looking Ahead:**

Listed below are the remaining programs we have lined up for the 2017-2018 season. Meeting dates are the second Thursday of the month.

February 8, 2018: **Annual Pot Luck Dinner plus Members' Show & Tell and Story Sharing**

March 8, 2018: **Salt Marshes of Delaware Bay** - Zach Nickerson, The American Littoral Society

April 12, 2018: **Exploring the Birds of Ecuador** -:Marilyn Henry and Jeff Mollenhauer.

May 10, 2018. **Annual Plant Sale** followed by **Program: Pollinators and the Plants They Pollinate** - Joe Kiefer, Triple Oaks Nursery

June 10, 2018: **GCNC Annual Picnic** at The Village Dock Campground, Franklinville, NJ, followed by Program: **The Plight of the Bobwhite and Our Efforts to Save It** - South Jersey Quail Project

## **2017-2018 GCNC Field Trips**

Listed below are the remaining field trips we have lined up for the new season. 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](mailto:pnbhayes@gmail.com).

January 20, 2018 - **Birding Along the Delaware River**

February 10, 2018 - **Hike at The Village Dock in Franklinville**

March 2018 - **Hike in Wissahickon Park, Philadelphia**

April 2018 - **Bird Quest Trainings**

May 5, 2018 - **Bird Quest**

June 15, 2018 - **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](mailto: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](mailto:sharkeyes@comcast.net) or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.
- The January Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup> at the home of Jayne Rhynard. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.

**Please remember to help out the Gloucester County Nature Club while shopping online!**



Shopping at Amazon can also benefit the Gloucester County Nature Club at **NO extra cost** to you!

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