



# Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public.

January 2019

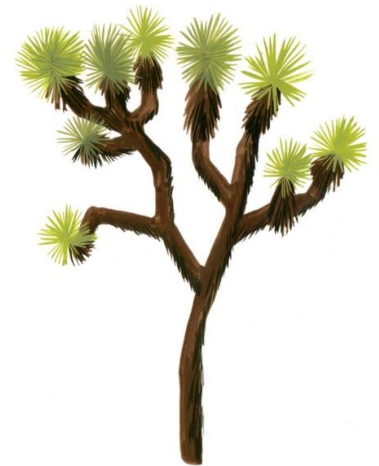
## **Program - Flora of the California Deserts: (A Sampling) & Other Curious Things**

Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 7:00pm at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenter: Rich Dilks

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Deserts are strange places. The first thing you notice is the immensity of scale. It is a landscape that dwarfs you and at the same time engages you with the smallest of wonders- a delicate wildflower arising from bone dry pebbles and sand, a lizard scampering among some boulders, a darkling beetle racing across hot sands. I've been to the California deserts several times and love those places. Admittedly, I have made my journeys there in the spring, when the desert climate is most benign, and when I came in search of the ephemeral flora that graces the deserts for just a few short weeks each year. I found many other things there as well- mud caves, wind caves, stone pumpkins and other odd rock formations, the incredible vista at Fonts's Point where the sediments scoured from the depths of the Grand Canyon form a magnificent badlands landscape, a desert palm oasis and, of course, the remarkable Joshua trees.



There are two desert ecosystems in California: the Mojave, sometimes called the high desert, and the Colorado, a part of the Sonoran desert in the extreme south eastern part of the state. We will be visiting both in this presentation. Far from being barren wastelands, they are teeming with the diversity of life, life that has adapted to the harsh arid climate and temperature extremes. Join me as we travel into the California deserts to experience a sampling of their wildflowers, and to glimpse the austere and powerful beauty of these truly awesome places.

**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 – Exploration of Historic Smithville Park

**Sunday, January 6, 2019 at 12:30 pm**

**Trip Leaders: Paula and Brian Hayes (Paula's cell for day of the walk questions 609-221-5195)**

**Note: This trip occurs 4 days before the monthly meeting.**

Come with us as we visit this gem of a park. This park has it all: a historic mansion, historic worker's homes, a museum, remnants of a bicycle railroad, Smithville Lake, the Rancocas Creek, and a variety of habitats to wander. The Smithville Village was a mill operation sited on the Rancocas Creek from the 1860s to the 1920s. During the mill's productive time it was known for its wood working machinery and providing a community for its workers. This industrial town provided its workers with recreational, artistic, and educational opportunities as well as housing. We will meet at the visitor's center near the mansion and explore the historic and natural elements of Historic Smithville Park. We will walk 2- 3 miles through the park, stopping to enjoy the sites and finishing in the mature forest near the visitor's centers. The mansion will not be open for tours during our visit but we will walk in the gardens. There will not be an opportunity for a light show, sorry for the change of plans.

Address: 803 Smithville Road, Easthampton, NJ 08060. There is a bridge out on Smithville Road in the park, you will have to pass a road closed barrier to arrive at the mansion and its parking lot, the closed bridge is beyond the parking area.

### **Events by other Organizations: January 2019**

- January 27 (Sunday) – **Benefit for South Jersey Land & Water Trust - Groovin' on a Sunday Afternoon with Love Alive.** 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at Bogey's Club and Cafe, 501 Pitman Rd in Sewell, NJ 08080.. Enjoy hits of the 60s and 70s courtesy of South Jersey band, Love Alive. The concert will take place at Bogey's Club and Cafe where a light lunch will be served. There will also be some fabulous chance baskets and a 50-50 as well as a cash bar, \$5 appetizers, and plenty of room for dancing! Please note that the bar is cash only! No debit or credit cards will be accepted Tickets are \$25 before January 12th and \$30 from January 13th to 27th Tickets sell out quickly, so get yours today!! Purchase tickets at <http://sjlandwater.org>.
- February 2 (Saturday) – **2019 Cumberland County Winter Eagle Festival** 8:00am – 4:00pm at Mauricetown Firehall 9544 Noble Street, Mauricetown, NJ. \$10.00 Adults, \$5.00 Children (12 and under)
  - **At the Firehall:** Speakers and presentations, Non-profit and commercial exhibitors, Local fare refreshments & lunch available, Live raptors exhibited by Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge. Hands-on art activities by Clay College.
  - **Along the Delaware Bay:** Five staffed viewing sites with scopes & birdwatching experts, Bayshore Center at Bivalve walks, food & activities, Morning & evening owl watches, Guided trail walks, East Point Lighthouse, Leechester Hall



### **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.
- Lunar Eclipse on January 20 -21. See article in *Conservation Corner* for details.

## **Conservation Corner** by Suzan Delozier

### **TWO IMPORTANT BILLS REGULATING THE SALE, USE, AND PROPAGATION OF NON-NATIVE PLANTS INTRODUCED IN THE NJ LEGISLATURE – THESE BILLS NEED YOUR SUPPORT!**

Two similar bills, Assembly Bill 4460 (click [here](#)) and Senate Bill 3086 (click [here](#)) have been introduced in the state legislature. Both of these bills deal with problems created by the uncontrolled spread of non-native, invasive plants – plants used by landscapers and sold by nurseries and big-box stores. On her website Pat Sutton states “the ecological damages done by invasive, alien plants are far larger than most of us realize: fewer pollinators, fewer birds, some bird species winking out (N. Bobwhite for example), outcompeted native nectar plants and native berry-producing plants, less healthy habitats, uglier landscapes, and impenetrable lands.” Please call or email your NJ senator and assemblypersons and ask them to co-sponsor these bills. Go to [www.njleg.state.nj.us/districts/districtnumbers.asp](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/districts/districtnumbers.asp) to find your representatives. For more information on these bills and the damage done by non-native plants see Pat Sutton’s website [patsuttonwildlifegarden.com/nj-legislation-invasive-plants/](http://patsuttonwildlifegarden.com/nj-legislation-invasive-plants/).

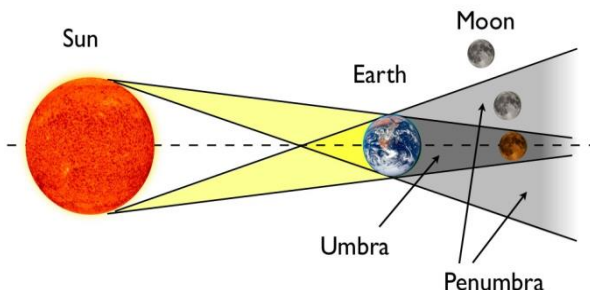
Our native plants and our native wildlife evolved side by side and are uniquely dependent on each other. In his book *Bringing Nature Home*, Doug Tallamy points out that ornamental, non-native plants are selected specifically because they are not palatable to local insects. So when your Tartarian Honeysuckle or Burning Bush escapes into the wild they are not attacked by bugs and easily outcompete native flora. But insects are at the bottom of the food chain and are the first step in harnessing the energy from the sun stored in plants and passing that energy up the food chain. Because most non-natives do not attract our insects, non-natives are effectively not part of the food chain. *Bringing Nature Home* is an essential read by all concerned citizens.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) has a paperback titled *Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants* which states “Invasive plants may grow faster, taller, or wider and shade out native plants. Many stay green later into the season or leaf out earlier, giving them an advantage over natives. Nonnative plants can change the vertical and horizontal structure of ecosystems, alter hydrology, and disrupt nutrient cycles — all with devastating effects on native plants and animals.” This book is offered on several online sites, however the BBG has made the information available on their website. For each nonnative listed, one or more native alternatives are given. See [https://www.bbg.org/gardening/article/native\\_alternatives\\_plant\\_list1](https://www.bbg.org/gardening/article/native_alternatives_plant_list1) and [https://www.bbg.org/gardening/article/native\\_alternatives\\_plant\\_list2](https://www.bbg.org/gardening/article/native_alternatives_plant_list2).

### **PROJECT FEEDERWATCH**

Do you enjoy watching the birds at your feeders? Project FeederWatch, sponsored by Cornell University, is a citizen science project in which participants count and report the birds at their feeders. This year’s FeederWatch season runs from November 10, 2018 to April 5, 2019 — so it’s not too late to sign up and contribute your bird sightings. See [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) for more information.

### **LUNAR ECLIPSE JANUARY 20-21**



For the third time in less than a year there will be a total eclipse of the moon, but this will be the first visible in the western hemisphere in its entirety since 2015. A lunar eclipse only occurs when the moon is full and the earth comes between the sun and the moon. Because the moon’s orbit around the earth does not lie in the same plane as the earth’s orbit around the sun, there is not always the alignment needed to produce a

lunar eclipse. During the eclipse, the earth shadow is in 2 parts – the umbra (dark inner shadow) and the penumbra (lighter outer shadow). If the whole moon passes through the umbra, we see a **total eclipse** (to someone standing on the moon the sun is totally blocked out). If the moon passes through the penumbra only, we see a **penumbral eclipse** which we may not even notice. A **partial eclipse** occurs when only part of the moon passes through the umbra and the earth's shadow seems to be taking a bite out of the moon.

January's eclipse begins at 10:10 PM. Totality begins at 11:41PM and the eclipse ends at 2:15AM. Notice the moon passing through the penumbra to the umbra. The moon can become very red (called a blood moon) while in the umbra due to bending of light passing through the earth's atmosphere and reaching the moon. For more information on lunar eclipses see [space.com/15689-lunar-eclipses.html](http://space.com/15689-lunar-eclipses.html).

### **Looking Ahead:**

Listed below are the remaining programs we have lined up for the 2018-2019 season. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

### **2019 Programs**

Feb. 14, 2019 **Annual Pot Luck Dinner followed by a fun activity.**

March 14, 2019: **National Hiking Trail of England and Wales** - Kris & Erik Mollenhauer

April 11, 2019: **How to Plan a Birding Trip to Colorado.**- Jeff Mollenhauer

May 9, 2019. **Annual Plant Sale** followed by program **Butterflies of New Jersey** - Steve Glynn.

June 13, 2019: **GCNC Annual Picnic** at Alcyon Park, Pitman, NJ followed by **A guided walk through Alcyon Woods.**

### **2019 GCNC Field Trips**

Listed below are the remaining field trips we have lined up for the 2018 – 2019 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).

February 10, 2019 – **Black Run Preserve, Marlton NJ**

March 16, 2019 - **Drum Circle**

April 2019 - **Bird Quest Trainings**

May 4, 2019 - **Bird Quest**

June 2019 - **Hike at Mantua Fossil Park**

### **Club Notes:**

- The Nature Club welcomes the following new members:
  - Joe DeAntonio of Sewell
  - Nina & John Burghardt of Hopewell
- 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 December Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday January 6<sup>th</sup> at the home of Jayne Rhynard. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.

## Please help out the Gloucester County Nature Club while shopping online!



Holiday 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](https://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.

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