



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

February 2011

**6:00 PM Traditional Pot Luck Dinner followed at 7:00 PM by program:
The Fungus Kingdom**

**Thursday, February 10 at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church,
Wenonah, NJ**

**Presenter: Dr. John Dighton, Director of Pinelands Research at the Rutgers University Pinelands
Field Station**

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

For many years our February gathering has brought us together for the traditional Pot Luck Dinner. In that spirit we will again share a meal and celebrate winter with the pleasure of good fellowship and good food. Please bring either an entrée or dessert and a plate and utensils for yourself. Also please note the dinner begins at 6:00 P.M.

*Overnight, very
Whitely, discreetly,
Very quietly*

*Our toes, our noses
Take hold on the loam,
Acquire the air.*

*Nudgers and shovers
In spite of ourselves.
Our kind multiplies:.....*

*We shall by morning
Inherit the earth.
Our foot's in the door.*

From Mushrooms by Sylvia Plath



"Nature alone is antique and the oldest art a mushroom."

-Thomas Carlyle

How often have we walked through the woods, or even our own back yards, on a late summer day after a rain to encounter a fairy ring of strange and colorful mushrooms where that day before there was nothing? The common names of these multihued, exotic, ephemeral, edible, deadly, diverse and covert organisms - Turkey Tail, Death Cap, Dryad's Saddle, Earthstar, Earth Tongue, Jack O'Lantern (it's bioluminescent) and Fly Agaric conjure an alien and fanciful universe in our midst. Once classified with plants, fungi are now recognized as a separate kingdom, actually more closely related to the Animal Kingdom than to plants. It is a hidden kingdom. The part of the fungus that we see is only the "fruit" of the organism. The living body of the fungus is a mycelium made out of a web of tiny filaments called hyphae. The mycelium is usually hidden in the soil, in wood, or another food source. A mycelium may fill a single ant, or cover many acres. The branching hyphae can add over a half mile of total length to the mycelium each day. These webs live unseen until they develop mushrooms, puffballs, truffles, brackets, cups, "birds nests," "corals" or other fruiting bodies. If the mycelium produces microscopic fruiting bodies, people may never notice the fungus. Tonight, Rutgers University's Professor Dighton will take us on a journey through this kingdom with a particular emphasis on the fungi of the New Jersey Pinelands. Dr. Dighton is an expert on forest soil ecology and has extensively studied the interactions of forest trees with mycorrhizal fungi (fungi that interact with the roots of vascular plants).

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 – Looking for Wintering Waterfowl at the Jersey Shore **Saturday February 19, 9:00 AM (car-pool), 10:30 (at destination)**

Trip Leader: Bob Duke



Feb. 19, 2011 is the date for the February field trip, which will be to Belmar, Monmouth County, NJ. and a few surrounding towns. We will be looking for the ducks, swans, loons, and other birds that have come south for the winter.

Meet at the southeast corner of the Timberline Shopping Center in Mantua (Rt 553 at Mantua Blvd) at 9:00 AM in order to car-pool. Bring lunch and hot or cold drinks. Dress warmly, it tends to be windy, chilly and damp along the coast.

Directions from Timberline Shopping Center: Take Rt 553 S to Rt 55 N to I-295 N. Then at exit 60, proceed to I-195 E. After about 32 miles, I-195 becomes Rt 138 E. Rt 138 will merge with Rt 35 and then with RT 71 N. Within a block or so, turn LEFT into the Belmar Marina. Hopefully, we can all meet there by 10:30 AM. A sheet of directions to all the other stops will be passed out when we meet at the marina.

If you're not going to car-pool, call Bob at 856-848-7012 so that he can call you if we cancel the trip.

December Field Trip Report: Audubon Christmas Bird Count Wrap-Up

The 2010 Northwestern Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count was very successful. The final tallies put the total # of species at 97 and we had 51 field participants and 5 feeder watchers. Unusual species sightings included the following: Red-throated Loon, on the Delaware River by Bob Duke and his friends; a Common Yellowthroat (warbler) seen by the crew led by Loretta Dunne and Jonathan Stillwell; Orchard Oriole seen by the Strohmeier's and folks; and Lapland Longspur and Barred Owl,

seen and heard respectively by the crew led by the Hayes (Brian and Paula) and Maria Keefe and Deb Maka.

Highlights also included: satisfactory #'s of waterfowl before everything froze not long after the count. Cooper's Hawk #'s were up a bit. Red-shouldered Hawks seemed more frequent. Over 650 Wild Turkeys were viewed with only 2 areas not seeing them. Screech Owl and Great horned Owl #'s were steady, but no Saw-whet, nor Long-eared Owls were noted. Sapsucker #'s were up a bit with 11 seen through the Count (Yellow-bellied). Over 100 Eastern Bluebirds were counted too.

Species with low counts or missing for that matter included: Snow Goose, with a little over 200 reported. Most of the flock was probably in Salem County or the Eastern portion of Gloucester County. Bobwhite only 6, and Pheasant missing, and only 2 American Woodcock. Barn Owl went missing again. (Should anyone happen to know where Barn Owl can yet be found in the Count circle please let us know!). Red-breasted Nuthatches were low in #. Catbird (3) and Thrasher (0), were hard to find. Cedar Waxwings were not to be found and Yellow-rumped Warbler #'s were very low probably due to the scarcity of Red Cedar berries.

I would like to thank all of you who participated in the Count! You donate your precious time and it is very much appreciated. Without this participation, this citizen science endeavour would not take place nor would it be anywhere near as successful! A special 'Thank You' to the Strohmeier's for inviting us into their home for the wrap-up. May you all please join us again next year and please involve more friends.

As some of you know I noted previously, I would like to dedicate this Count to the memory of Bob Cassel, former compiler, wonderful naturalist and humanitarian. Bob was kind enough to pick up the "compilership" when it appeared the Count might fall through the cracks! He carried on the tradition when it appeared there was no interest to go forward. He did so at the young age of 80-85 years old! Bob knew this Count was part of the Nature Club and would not let it slip away. He felt called, made the contacts with his usual ability and ease (and coercion!) and kept the ball rolling in the tradition of the Middletons and Deloziers, and others. He made it again what it is today. Bob Cassel was also instrumental in giving a number of us our start and indoctrination into the world of the "Christmas Count". Much is owed to this fascinating individual! Thanks Bob!

Ron Kegel, Compiler

**** Next year the Count will be held on Saturday, December 17!

Family Fun Walk

Friday, February 18 at 10:00 AM at Alcyon Lake Park, Pitman

Trip Leader: Maria Keefe 856-627-7010

Email: maria_mk@comcast.net

Join us on a kid friendly walk on Friday, February 18 @ 10am. We will explore Alcyon Lake Park, Pitman. Bring your own backpack and/or a stroller. We can walk the paved path around the wildflower garden and then will walk along the wooded path. We will walk at a toddler's pace exploring as we go. Dress in layers according to the weather. Bring your own backpack and/or a stroller that is able to be pushed on unpaved paths. Everyone welcome.

Directions: From Rt 55 Exit 53A (or Exit 53 if coming from the south) take Rt 553 (Glassboro Road) south for about 1.5 miles to Holly Avenue. Turn right (west) on Holly Avenue. Continue for 1.2 miles to the park entrance, which is on the left. There is a small sign. Drive past the sports fields; meet at the pavilion.

Kid's Corner - Write a Nature Poem* by Deb Maka

When the weather is bad, you can still show your love of nature even if you can't play outside. Try writing an acrostic poem.

What You Do

- Pick a nature word (i.e. oak or water)
- Write your nature word up and down on a piece of paper instead of across
- Then, start writing your poem. Each line of your poem will start with a letter in your nature word.
Example: nature word = OAK
Outstanding in size and beauty--
Acorns drop from this leafy
King
- The lines can be silly or serious, rhyme or not. It's all up to you.

* adapted from the National Wildlife Federation website (<http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Activities/Cook-and-Craft/Write-a-Nature-Poem.aspx>)

Conservation Corner - eCycle Cell Phones by Deb Maka

Whether or not you have jumped on the technology bandwagon, the likelihood is that you own a cell phone. In addition, with technology advancing so rapidly, you may have just gotten a new cell phone. If that's the case, are you wondering what to do with the old one? Rather than adding it to your growing collection of unwanted cell phones, recycle it.

Recycling cell phones helps the environment by saving energy and keeping usable materials out of landfills. Cell phones and PDAs are made of precious metals, copper, and plastics-all of which require energy to mine and manufacture.

In 2007, approximately 14 million Americans recycled their used cell phones. Recycling one million cell phones saves enough energy to power more than 185 households in the US with electricity for a year. In addition, working cell phone or PDA can be donated to charities which provide them at a discount or free of charge to those in need.

Today, donating or recycling cell phones, PDAs, chargers, and batteries has never been easier. Many organizations, such as cell phone manufacturers, retailers, network carriers, charities, and state or local solid waste programs offer cell phone donation and recycling programs. A few of the companies that have drop off locations are AT&T, Best Buy, Office Depot, Sony Ericsson, Sprint, Staples, T-Mobile, LG Electronics, and Verizon Wireless. Visit their websites for detailed drop-off and collection event information.

If you decide to recycle your cell phone, please remember the following:

Before you drop off or mail in your old cell phone, make sure that you have terminated your service contract for the phone and erased any data in the phone. You can manually delete all the information and remove the SIM card or contact your service provider or phone manufacturer for instructions.

Reference: www.epa.gov/osw/partnerships/plugin/cellphone/index.htm



Native Fish Art and Writing Contest

The Native Fish Art and Writing Contest is an annual contest, sponsored by [Trout Unlimited](#), is open to all New Jersey students in grades 4 through 7. Participation can meet NJ Core Content Curriculum Standards Science 5.5: Grade 4 - A.1, C.1; Grade 6 - C.1; Science 5.10: Grade 6 - A.1 (as based on [Trout Life Cycle](#) (pdf, 96kb) (from [Trout in the Classroom](#) Activity Guide).

To enter the contest, participants need to research one of [New Jersey's native fish](#). With the information gained from their research, students write a short story depicting one year in the life of that fish and submit an artistic depiction of the species featured in their story.

The story must be original and include correct biological and ecological information about the fish. Things to include in the story are habitat, food, habits, and any other ecological information that pertains to that fish. The fish species must be named in the story and the fish must be native to New Jersey. Stories must be 500 words or more and typed.

The drawing of the native New Jersey fish can be done in acrylics, pencils, watercolors, oil, oil pastels, crayons or ink. Art must be original and depict a scene from the story. The finished size of the artwork must be 8.5 x 11 inches. Entries will be judged on both the artwork and the short story.

There are first and second place winners in each of the following categories: 4th grade, 5th grade, 6th grade, and 7th grade. All winners will receive a certificate and fishing equipment. First place winners will also receive a youth membership in Trout Unlimited. In addition, each winner and their immediate family will be invited to the [Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center](#) in Warren County for a luncheon and awards ceremony on the morning of opening day of trout season (Saturday, April 9 in 2011). Winners will also be able to fish at the Pequest Fishing Education Pond.

Entries must be received by Friday, March 4, 2011. Entries must include the entrant's name, home address, home telephone number, grade and school name. Failure to include this information will lead to disqualification. **All entries become the property of the Division of Fish and Wildlife and will not be returned.**

Submit entries to:

Native Fish Art and Writing Contest
NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife
605 Pequest Rd.
Oxford, NJ 07863

Winners are notified within 2 weeks following the contest deadline. **No other notifications are sent.**

Note that this contest is not affiliated with Wildlife Forever's State Fish Art Contest. For information on their contest, see www.statefishart.com.

Fish of New Jersey (includes all fish)

- [Freshwater](#)
- [Saltwater](#)
- [True New Jersey Natives](#) (article from the [2009 Freshwater Fishing Digest](#)) (pdf, 345kb)

The following Web sites can be used to find information about fish:

- N.J. Fish Fact Sheets: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/fishfact.htm>

- Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation: www.rbff-education.org/
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: www.outdooralabama.com/Fishing/freshwater/fish/
- Cornell University: <http://fish.dnr.cornell.edu/nyfish/fish.html>
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: www.floridafisheries.com/fishes/
- Iowa Division of Natural Resources: www.state.ia.us/dnr/organiza/fwb/fish/iafish/iafish.htm
- Kentucky AWAKE (All Wild About Kentucky's Environment): www.kentuckyawake.org/
- Nevada Division of Wildlife: www.ndow.org/fish/id/
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission: http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/anglerboater/play/2002/fall_index.htm

Reference: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/fishart.htm>

Other Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: February 2011

- Saturday mornings, 7:30 AM to about 9:00, **Bird Walks**. 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.
- February 6 (Sunday) – **Tri-County Raptor Count**. Starts 8:00 AM. . For information contact compiler Jack Mahon, cjmahon@msn.com, or phone 856-275-1746.
- February 6 (Sunday) – 2:00 PM. **Winter Waterfowl at Amico Island Park**. Sponsored by the Burlington County Park Commission. Free, but registration is required; phone 609-265-5858. Bad weather cancels.
- February 18-21 (Friday -Monday) – **Great Backyard Bird Count**. Count birds in your backyard or other locations, submit highest daily species totals. Organized by the Cornell Lab. Of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. For information: www.birdsource.org/gbbc/
- February 19 (Saturday) – **Birding at Barnegat Light, for Winter Waterfowl**. Leader: Lloyd Shaw. Sponsored by the Audubon Wildlife Society. For info: www.audubonwildlifesociety.org/
- February 22 (Tuesday) – 2:30 PM. **Winter Waterfowl at Amico Island and Boundary Creek Park**. Sponsored by the Burlington County Park Commission. Free, but registration is required; phone 609-265-5858. Bad weather cancels.

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 2/5 at 8:00 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 2/16 at 10:30 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 2/16 at 2:30 PM

Natural Events for the month of February

- Skunk cabbage flowers are emerging from the ground, in wetlands throughout the County. As they grow they generate heat, which melts the frozen ground around them.
- Alder catkins are swelling and will open on the first warm days.
- Melting snow may reveal the trackways of meadow voles, dug along the interface between the frozen ground and snow cover.
- Broom crowberry in bloom in the Pinelands.
- Mourning cloak butterflies emerge from hibernation on warm days.
- Killdeer and great blue herons return from the south as waterways thaw and snow cover melts.
- Chipmunks reappear around bird feeders.
- Best time for viewing tundra swans at Whitesbog and other Pinelands ponds.

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

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.

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 February Executive Committee meeting will be held on February 6th at the home of Karen Kravchuck. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.