



# Gloucester County Nature Club

## Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

February 2013

**Thursday February 14, 2013**

**6:00 PM Valentine's Day Pot Luck Dinner**

**7:00 PM Program: Worship-Worthy Chocolate**

**Presenter: Marie Hageman**

**Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks (856-468-6342)**

**Special Location: The Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ**  
(directions below)

Our annual Pot Luck Dinner this year will be a celebration with a Valentine's theme. Join us on this traditional winter holiday of love, romance, hearts, flowers, candy, lace-trimmed cards and of course, chocolate. Gourmet Godiva Chocolates will be on the dessert menu (Thank you, Jayne Rhynard) and our program, **Worship-Worthy Chocolate**, presented by the GCNC's own Marie Hageman will enlighten us how chocolate is far more than just a tasty confection.

As always, please bring either an entrée or dessert and a plate and utensils for yourself.

**Please note the dinner begins at 6:00 P.M.**

**Worship-Worthy Chocolate.** Chocolate: One amazing paradox - Beloved yet beneficial for us and beneficial for the planet. Can it be true? How can this rich dessert and ultimate comfort food also be healthful for our bodies - AND- at the same time- good for the peoples and ecological balance of the planet?! Chocolate has been renowned as tasty, pleasurable, healthful, comforting, versatile, earth-wise, and adored since the Mayans declared it "The Food of the Gods." We'll follow its history through Europe's aristocracy to present day America- where more than three billion pounds of chocolate were consumed last year. We'll debunk those viciously fallacious assertions that choc harbors bad fat, and decays teeth. Let's enjoy a tasty evening of everything you need to know about the science, history, production, environmental impact, and allure of this coveted substance, and maybe, get a good start on breaking last year's consumption record.



Many of us know Marie Hageman as a longtime member of the GCNC, but did you also know she is a freelance writer, an Adjunct Professor and Guest Lecturer at Rowan, Camden County College, and Gloucester County College, has developed and teaches professional-development-credit courses on Cuisine, Ecology, and Hawaiiana and is a Member of Board of Trustees of the South Jersey Orchid Society.

**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 – Winter Walk at Alcyon Lake Park**

**Saturday February 23, 2013 Starts 11:00 AM**

**Trip Leader: Maria Keefe cell/text 609-315-4759 Email: [mariakeefe19@comcast.net](mailto:mariakeefe19@comcast.net)**



Join us at Alcyon Lake, Pitman, for a winter walk on Saturday, February 23@11am. **All ages are welcome.** These walks are for anyone that enjoys seeing the wonder of the natural world through a child's eye. You don't need children to join these walks with active, excitable, and enthusiastic children... Bring a baby in a backpack, a toddler in tow, grade schoolers, parents, or grandparents along for a walk. We will walk at child's pace stopping to look at anything interesting we find. The walk will last an hour or so. Dress in layers according to the weather. Bring your sense of adventure and join us for a morning outdoors.

**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.

## **The Northwestern Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count - conducted on December 15, 2012**

The final summary of the Christmas Bird Count found us at 92 species. It was a very fine endeavor with 61 folks participating. Thanks to all the new folks that joined us this year. Your energy is much appreciated.

**\*\*Highlights included:**

Great Blue Heron 61

Snow Geese over 13,000

(with bulk seen in 3 areas)

Red-shouldered Hawk 3

Bald Eagle 24!

(only missed in 2 areas)

Turkey 227

Killdeer 61

(testimony to warmer weather)

Eastern Screech Owl 14

Great horned Owl 20

Eastern Phoebe 4

Horned Lark 158

White-breasted Nuthatch 87

Red-breasted Nuthatch 39

Brown Creeper 21

Common Grackle 2,070

(significant because 2,000 were seen in one area. The other 70 were spread over 7 areas.)

Pine Siskin 17

(all seen in one area. Obviously the earlier invasion of Siskin's had the birds moving on.)

\*\*Concerns and low counts involved:

Green-winged Teal 0

Peregrine Falcon 0

(recent years have found us sighting at least 1 a year)

Common Bobwhite 0

Ring-necked Pheasant 0

(other than Turkey, game birds continue to be alarmingly low)

Gray Catbird 0

Eastern Meadowlark 1

The big "surprises" of the Count were a female Painted Bunting seen along the Delaware River by the Bob Duke group, 2 Dunlin seen by Brian and Paula Hayes and Maria and Robbie Keefe, and 8 Sandhill Cranes seen by the group led by the Strohmeier's. Even with these "surprises" as we know it is very important to count all of the birds to complete the task. This citizen science mission is so important to the tracking and documenting of what is happening in our 'circle' and area. In the future I am hoping to do a little comparison, now and maybe 35 years ago to see what change has happened within our own little area. Keep tuned!

Thank you again to all those who participated and made this all happen. There is no script. The story is started with those that go out looking for Owls and the 'play/movie' builds as the hours go by. The stories become more interesting and then there is the finish in which one gets a chance to reflect and relive the whole experience in your mind. Unfortunately there were no 'feeder counts' submitted this year. Next year I would like to build this back up again as this information is just as important and allows those to participate that might otherwise be unavailable or unable.

If you would like a comprehensive account of the Bird Count and normally do not receive it, e-mail me in February @ [ronaldk52@comcast.net](mailto:ronaldk52@comcast.net) and I will see that you get a copy. Happy birding in 2013! Ron Kegel-compiler

## Nature Notes

### **Events by other Organizations: February 2013**

- February 9 (Saturday) – 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM. **Cumberland County Eagle Festival.** Family programs, exhibits, speakers, and guided walks. Food will be for sale during the day. Mauricetown Fire Hall, Mauricetown NJ. Admission is \$10.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children. For information: [www.coumauriceriver.org/](http://www.coumauriceriver.org/).
- February 9 (Saturday) – 6:30 PM (after the Eagle Festival). **Chili Bowl and Auction fundraiser.** Mauricetown Fire Hall, Mauricetown NJ. Sponsored by the Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River. Tickets \$25.00. For information: [www.coumauriceriver.org/](http://www.coumauriceriver.org/).

- February 15-18 (Friday -Monday) – Great Backyard Bird Count. Count birds in your backyard or other locations, submit highest daily species totals. Organized by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. For information: [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).
- February 17 (Sunday), 2:00 PM – **Walk in the Wild**. Sponsored by the Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust. Free. Experience a casual stroll on the trails of the land trust with a knowledgeable leader to observe the plants, animals, natural features and processes, and just plain magic that make this place very special. Meet in the parking area at the end of Rankin Avenue in Blackwood Terrace. Please check at [www.oldpinefarm.org/](http://www.oldpinefarm.org/) for changes to the schedule and directions. Or just use your favorite mapping program or your GPS by typing in "400 Rankin Ave, Deptford, NJ." Further details available by calling Carl Ford at 856-579-4441. We will do this on the third Sunday of each month, with a different focus each month.
- February 23 (Saturday) – 9:00-11:30 AM. **Cruising for Raptors in the Mannington and Salem areas**. Sponsored by the Salem County Nature Club. For information: [www.Salemcountynatureclubnews.blogspot.com](http://www.Salemcountynatureclubnews.blogspot.com).
- February 23 (Saturday) - Starts 9:00 AM. **Winter Botany in the Pines**. Russell Juelg of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation will lead an indoor winter botany workshop at PPA Headquarters and after lunch you will head out to the Franklin Parker Preserve for some field studies. Cost is \$20/person. For more information phone 609-859-8860 x 14.

**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 2/2 at 8:00 AM
- 4H Kids Nature Club: Saturday 2/2 at 10:30 AM
- Volunteer Meeting: Friday 2/1 at 9:00 AM
- Nature Explorers: Saturday 2/9 at 10:00 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 2/13 at 10:00 AM
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 2/23 at 10:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 2/20 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.

### **Looking Ahead:**

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

March 14, 2013: **Pollinators: The Amazing Insects Among Us** – Susan E. Ellis

April 11, 2013: **Birding South Carolina** – Jeff Mollenhauer

May 9, 2013: **The Fossils at Inversand and the KT Boundary Mass Extinction** - Dr. Kenneth Lacovara, Drexel University

June 13, 2013: **Annual Picnic** (Location to be determined)

### **2012-2013 GCNC Field Trips**

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the 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](mailto:karlanderson6@aol.com) or (856) 845-7075.

March 23 (Saturday) – **Birding the Delaware Bayshore**. Leader: Joe Esterly

April 27 – **Birding at Long Bridge Park**. Leader: Bob Duke.

April (Dates to be determined) – **Bird Quest Training Sessions**

May 4 – **Bird Quest**

### **Club Notes:**

- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Karen Kravchuck at [president@gcnatureclub.org](mailto:president@gcnatureclub.org) 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 [newsletter@gcnatureclub.org](mailto:newsletter@gcnatureclub.org) or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.
- The February Executive Committee meeting will be held on February 10<sup>th</sup> at the home of Sharon Oakes. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.