



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

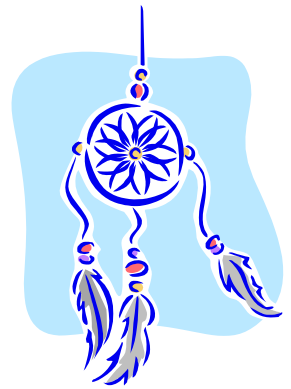
www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

March 2006

Program – 1491: The Americas before Columbus
Thursday, March 9th at 7:00 PM at EIRC, Sewell
Program Coordinator – Rich Dilks

What was the New World like at the time of Columbus? The picture that is emerging is quite different than what most Americans believe. The wild, pristine American forest of the first colonists was in fact in the midst of violent change and demographic collapse. Modern research is only beginning to reveal the extent of our tragic loss. Join the ghosts of North America as they tell a story of things long forgotten or only recently known, of firemasters and 500 nations, of passenger pigeons and distant mammoths, of holocaust and survival. Presentation will be given by our own Erik Mollenhauer.



Field Trip – John James Audubon Center a/k/a Mill Grove - Audubon, PA
Sunday March 12th, 12:00 Noon until late afternoon

Leader: Jeff Holt

Mill Grove was the first residence of John James Audubon in America. It was here that Audubon began to develop his talent as an artist and his unique style of portraying birds.

Now a museum, Mill Grove houses one of only 120 surviving complete sets of Audubon's Birds of America. Produced from 1827 to 1838 in England on double elephant folio paper, each plate of measures an astonishing 29 ½" X 39 ½". In addition, on display are samples of Audubon's other works, including prints from his quadruped project and prints from the Royal Octavo American edition of Birds of America. There is a nominal fee charged by the Museum (\$4 for Adults, \$3 for Seniors 60+, and \$2 for children).

Those attending this field trip should also bring binoculars; we should have an opportunity to wander some of the trails at the sanctuary if the weather permits.

We will leave at NOON by caravan from the Timberline Shopping Center on Woodbury-Glassboro Rd. (CR 553) in Sewell. It is strongly urged that every driver attending this field trip copy the following directions in the event that you become separated from the caravan.

Directions: From the Timberline Shopping Center get on Route 55 north to Route 42 & the Walt Whitman Bridge. Once across the river follow I-76 West to King of Prussia. As you approach King of Prussia watch for and follow signs for Route 422 North/West. Take Route 422 to the Audubon Exit. At the top of the exit ramp make a right and then an immediate left turn at the traffic light onto Audubon Rd. Go straight on Audubon Rd. until it dead ends with Pawlings Rd. The entrance to Mill Grove will be directly in front of you.

Field Trip Report: Dead End Roads of the Western Shore (2/11/06) by Karl Anderson

Despite predictions for a major snowstorm, this trip went off as scheduled, with a small group and a slightly modified and abbreviated itinerary. About thirty species of birds were seen, including rough-legged hawk (a good, not-too-distant view of a bird perched, then flying), northern harrier, red-tailed hawk, great blue heron, thousands of greater scaup, brant, hooded and red-breasted mergansers, ruddy ducks, bufflehead, the usual gulls, and a scattering of passerines. A Native American shell mound was viewed in passing. The weather was dry and seasonable in the morning, but deteriorated by mid-afternoon. Trip leaders were Karl Anderson and Gale Cannon.

Conservation Corner by Loretta Dunne

Your Inner Activist

We all have that better self, that person who wants to fight for what is right and speak out against injustice. That self usually gets slowed down by the reality of everyday life – shoveling snow, buying a gift for a friend, doing the wash, etc.. Despite time constraints, you can still be an effective activist by writing a letter or two a month or making a call to your representative. Here are some tips for making your time spent on issues that you care about pay off.

How to Communicate with Your Representatives:

General Guidelines

Any communication should be concise and on just one topic. Indicate that you are a constituent. Always, always include your address and name! If it is in response to a piece of legislation, include the name and number of the legislation, if you know it. Indicate that your response is your official comment. Use examples from your own life to support your opinions. If you are a member of an organization that is affected by the issue, it is usually useful to indicate your membership. Be polite no matter how much you might disagree with the representative's position.

Letters

This is a good way to express your concerns and wishes to your representatives. The most effective letter is a hand-written one. It shows that you have dedicated time and energy to contacting them. The next best would be a typed letter.

Third, there is the email approach. If you have spent time online, you have probably signed up for action alerts from a number of organizations. They provide ready-made emails to send on

important issues. If possible, it is good to personalize these emails as it shows your representative that you care about the issue enough to put personal thought into it. They will recognize generic form letters. But the truth is that sometimes there just seems to be so many issues deserving of comment that you can't keep up with them. If there is a choice of sending the action email or doing nothing, the canned action email is definitely the right path. Any action is better than none.

Telephone Calls

A call to your representative can be very important when there is little time for a letter to arrive before a crucial vote or when you want to emphasize your position. Telephone calls also work well for quick communication if you don't have access to email.

Meet Your Representative

Meeting your representative can be important in establishing communication. It is necessary to schedule an appointment with your representative. If you want to meet with your congressional representative, it is sometimes easier to meet with them when Congress is recessed and they are in their home office. Often, elected officials have staff dedicated to specific functions or issues. Consider meeting with one of your representative's staff. It might be much easier to meet with them than your representative and they often have much more influence than you realize.

On all levels of government, elected officials are supposed to represent the views of their constituents. As a constituent, your task is to contact them and let them know your opinions. Even better, work on a more general communication plan to establish a relationship with your representative. Meet with them, as suggested above. Go to an event that they are scheduled to attend and introduce yourself. If they know you on some level, you will have a better opportunity to influence them and have your voice heard.

Save a little time out of each busy week and dedicate it to the causes that are important to you. Your inner activist will be glad that you are moving in the right direction.

Red Knots and Horseshoe Crabs

The NJ State Department of Environmental Protection has called for a ban on the harvesting of horseshoe crabs. The red knot, a bird that depends on horseshoe crab eggs on the Delaware Bayshore during their migration from South America to the Arctic, have declined dramatically. Once considered one of New Jersey's most abundant shorebirds, state biologists fear that they will become extinct in the next five years. In 1989, there were 95,000 birds. Last year, only 13,000 came to the state. Other birds that depend on the horseshoe crab eggs have also declined, including the ruddy turnstones, sanderlings and semi-palmated sandpipers. The state will take written comments on the proposed ban through April 7th. Speak up for these birds before they are lost to us! Send comments to:

Gary J. Brower
Office of Legal Affairs
Department of Environmental Protection
401 East State St.
PO Box 402
Trenton, NJ 08615-0402

The 2006 Gloucester County Bird Quest: Saturday May 6, 2006



The Gloucester County Nature Club and many area businesses, industries and local environmental commissions invite people of all ages to participate in the **2006 (seventh annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest. The 2006 Bird Quest** will take place on **Sat., May 6, 2006 from 7 AM to 12 noon in Gloucester County.**

During this time, teams visit parks and natural sites in Gloucester County and find as many different bird species as they can. The Quest is:

- A way to discover Gloucester County's parks and natural areas
- A way to discover the unique birds that live in and through our county
- A chance to learn how to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat
- A chance to have fun with friends and colleagues
- A light-hearted competition

The Quest is an educational event: novices are encouraged to participate. At noon, all participants gather at Atkinson County Park on Delsea Drive to report results and for **(free) lunch, t-shirts, posters and prizes.**

Most people organize their own Quest team with colleagues, friends, and/or family. Last years Gloucester County Bird Quest attracted several hundred participants made up of teachers, school groups, scout troops, environmental commissions, families, friends... residents of Gloucester and neighboring counties. This year with support from Wheelabrator, LP of Gloucester County, the club will operate two (free) guided buses for teachers and other persons unable to form their own team and who are willing to join a larger group.

This year we are proud to announce that we have our own colorful "Birds of Gloucester County" T-shirt and posters, designed by the club's own Gary Lizzi. A county map and other materials are provided to registered teams. **A \$12 fee per participant covers the cost of lunch, T-shirt, posters, prizes etc.**

For more information and registration forms will be posted to the Gloucester County Nature Club's website at www.gcnatureclub.org To join a team or to ride a bus, contact Anne Rossell at EIRC, 606 Delsea Drive, Sewell NJ 08080. Registration forms can also be requested by phone (856-582-7000 X110) FAX (856-582-4206) or e-mail at anner@eirc.org.

Participants can attend any of a series of free field trainings in the evenings, mornings and weekends before the Quest. These training sessions are listed on the following page.

BirdQuest 2006 Training Schedule

- April 19th – (Wednesday) 6:00 – 7:30 PM Birding Basics**
Alcyon Lake, Pitman Learn the basics of good birding and the tools of the trade.
Leader: Deb Maka Co-leader: Ed Cleary
- April 20th – (Thursday) 6:00 – 7:00 AM Bird Quest Training**
Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua
Leader: Kris Mollenhauer Co-leader: Cindi Leiby
- April 23rd – (Sunday) 7:00 – 8:30 AM Bird Quest Training**
West Deptford Scenic Park, West Deptford
Leader: Gale Cannon Co-leader: Karl Anderson
- April 24th – (Monday) 6:00 – 7:00 PM Bird Quest Training**
Scotland Run Park, Clayton
Leader: Bob Duke Co-leader: Barry Bengel
- April 25th – (Tuesday) 6:00 – 7:00 AM Bird Quest Training**
Greenwich Lake Park, East Greenwich
Leader: Barry Bengel Co-leader: Ed Cleary
- April 26th – (Wednesday) 6:00 – 7:30 PM Birding Basics**
Alcyon Lake, Pitman Learn the basics of good birding and the tools of the trade.
Leader: Deb Maka Co-leader: Millie Cleary
- April 27th – (Thursday) 6:00 – 7:30 PM Birding by Ear Part I**
EIRC building, Washington Twp This is an intro to bird calls in a classroom setting.
Leader: Kris Mollenhauer Co-leader: Karen Kravchuck
- April 30th – (Sunday) 7:00 – 8:30 AM Bird Quest Training**
Floodgate Road, East Greenwich
Leader: Jeff Holt Co-leader: Loretta Dunne
- April 30th – (Sunday) 6:00 – 7:30 PM**
Washington Lake Park, Washington Twp
Leader: Bob Baruzzi Co-leader: Dwight Weir
- May 1st – (Monday) 6:00 – 7:00 AM Bird Quest Training**
Ceres Park, Mantua
Leader: Bob Cassel Co-leader: Carol Cassel
- May 2nd – (Tuesday) 6:00 - 7:00 PM Bird Quest Training**
Wheelerabator, Westville
Leader: Gale Cannon Co-leader: Karl Anderson
- May 3rd – (Wednesday) 6:00 - 7:30 PM Birding by Ear Part II**
EIRC building, Washington Twp. This is an intro to bird calls in a classroom setting.
Leader: Erik Mollenhauer Co-leader: Marge Dolente
- May 4th – (Thursday) 6:00 – 7:00 AM Bird Quest Training**
Glassboro Woods, Glassboro
Leader: Bob Baruzzi Co-leader: Gary Lizzi

Other Nature Notes

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount to GCNC members!

Wild Birds Unlimited has a discount agreement with the GCNC executive board and is pleased to offer GCNC members an everyday 10% discount on all purchases excluding optics and food or sale items. Sharon Oakes, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, appreciates the many volunteer contributions made by GCNC members and hopes members can benefit from this discount. Members are requested to identify themselves as GCNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please call Sharon at 218-2973.

Looking Ahead

Programs-

April 13, 2006 - Organic Farming
May 11, 2006 - Ivory Billed Woodpecker
June 8, 2006 - Annual Picnic

Field Trips-

April & May (various dates) – Bird Quest Training
May - Bird Quest, Mullica Hill Friends Wild Site
June – Batsto Trip

Other Events-

Saturday Evening, March 4: ***The Vulture Festival*** (at the Wenonah Community Center)
Sponsored by the Wenonah Environmental Commission and the Gloucester County Nature Club
...a fun evening out...with live music, food, and educational activities. (TICKETS ARE SOLD OUT!)

Club Notes:

- The March Executive Committee meeting will be on March 5th at Ed and Millie Cleary's house.
- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Deb Maka at deborahann@backpacker.com or call 863-0330.
- 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.
- We're still looking for a **field trip coordinator** and **secretary**. If anyone is interested in helping out the club, please email Deb Maka at deborahann@backpacker.com or call 863-0330.
- Information for the next newsletter should be sent to Barry Bengel at sharkeyes@comcast.net or 6 Greenwood Drive, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.