



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

March 2012

Program – Dazzling Dragonflies

Thursday March 8, 2012 at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church,
Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenter: Mary Lenahan

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

*Dragonfly
For the body
A thirsty twig
Blackened as the earth
Forgotten and abandoned over time.*

*For the wings
Smash a stained glass window
And take the pieces.
They say that beauty is in the flaws.*

*For the heart
Let it fly freely
Unencumbered by confinement
For freedom is of what we dream.*

~Anne Oddity

This dragonfly came up to me. He was hovering right in front of my face, and I was really examining him, thinking, How does he see me? I became enlightened.

~Ziggy Marley



The beauty of a dragonfly is more subtle and more austere than a butterfly's. With speed, power and economy of design, these colorful and fierce predators are masters in their world as they patrol the ponds and streams or perch motionless on a slender stem. Intriguing and fascinating to us, they are found in the myths, legends and art of many cultures. Dragonflies have been on Earth for 325 million years. In the Carboniferous, some reached enormous size with wingspans of a meter (30 in.). Today they play an

important and beneficial role in the natural world, keeping the populations of many insect species under control.

Mary Lenahan not only knows but raises dragonflies as well. This evening, she will present Dazzling Dragonflies where we will:

- Learn about the magical life cycle of the insects from the Order Odonata.
- See how the dragonfly is viewed throughout the world and in many cultures.
- Identify common species found in our area.
- Explore raising dragonfly and damselfly naiads.
- Examine Dragonfly Migration.
- Discuss additional resources on dragonflies.

Mary Lenahan is a professional educator with a long history in environmental studies. She has been a teacher in the Pleasantville School District for 22 years; currently teaching 4th grade. She is a volunteer Master Naturalist and Certified Interpretive Guide for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and volunteer for Edwin B. Forsythe Wildlife Refuge for the past 6 years. She has been awarded a fellowship from the Monarch Teacher Network and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation to study monarch butterflies in their wintering habitat in Michoacán, Mexico and was designated the Teacher of the Year for her school and her district in 2009-2010.

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 the Delaware Bayshore
Saturday March 24, 2012, 9:00 AM to Mid-afternoon
Trip Leader: Joseph Esterly**

Drive some of the roads along the bay in Cumberland County, looking for waterfowl and raptors including bald eagle, northern harrier, and short-eared owl. Meet for car-pooling at 9:00 AM at the main parking lot of Scotland Run Park, off Academy Street in Clayton. Dress to suit the weather, bring lunch and beverage, and have fuel in your car if you plan to drive during the trip. For additional information, phone trip leader Joseph Esterly at 856-629-7626.



**Field Trip Report –Winter Waterfowling at Local Hot Spots
Saturday January 28, 2012**

Our combined GCNC-Audubon Wildlife Society trip to find and study waterfowl was a great success and will be repeated next year! We struggled to find some species, but we managed several canvasback, common mergansers, bufflehead, tundra swans, with a small flock of pintail at Floodgates being a surprise. We decided to head south to the Mannington Marsh-Salem County area after several stops in Gloucester County. We picked up several more duck species – black duck, gadwall, wigeon, and green-winged teal. The unanimous bird-of-the-day honors, though, went to the nine sandhill cranes we got to see and heard very well at Mannington. The weather was too nice - hence the very low numbers of waterfowl around. Karl Anderson and I look forward to seeing the differences a “normal” winter will bring.

Sandra Keller

About that breakwater

During the January 28 trip, some participants asked about the stone breakwater between Monds Island and Chester Island, which is visible upstream of Floodgates Road. It was built around 1910 and it forces tidal flow into the main ship channel, helping to keep it from silting up. The estimated cost was \$71,000.

Field Trip Report – Wheelabrator Waste to Energy Facility, Westville **Saturday February 18, 2012**

The attendance for this trip was very impressive. There were approximately 30 people who showed up, so we had to break into two groups to insure there were enough hardhats and safety glasses to go around. After a “Q and A” session in the conference room, the groups were each led on a tour of the facility and learned how our municipal waste from Gloucester County towns is converted into electricity which is capable of powering 15,000 Gloucester County homes. We also learned about non-ferrous metals processing, electric power production and air quality control. The weather outside was outstanding for a February day, so many people chose to take a walk around the adjacent Wheelabrator Wildlife Refuge before or after their respective tour. Many thanks to Wheelabrator for enlightening us on this important facility which not only significantly reduces the amount of trash in our landfills, but also provides electrical power to the immediate area.

Kid’s Corner - Hold Your Own Winter Olympics * by Deb Maka

On those days that are chilly but there is no snow on the ground; you can still find fun ways to play outside. One way is to hold your own version of the Winter Olympics. Invite your friends and family your yard or neighborhood park for the competition.

What to Do:

1. Create a variety of events for your competition.

Here is one idea:

- Dog Sled Race

- Decide on a starting place and a finish line
- Each competitor has a snow sled loaded with toys, sticks, or rocks.
- Competitors pull the loaded sleds as fast as they can from the start to the finish line.

The sillier the event, the better. Use your imagination.

2. Invite people to compete in your competition.
3. Award each participant with an “outdoorsy” Olympic medal – tie a pine cone to a string like a necklace so it can be worn like a real Olympic medal.
4. Remember: it’s about fun not who wins each event so each participant should receive a medal as a souvenir that they were part of your Olympic Games.

* Adapted from: National Wildlife Federation; Fun Winter Outdoor Activities for Families – To Beat Cabin Fever (<http://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/National-Wildlife/Outdoors/Archives/2010/Winter-Activities>)



The East Coast Vulture Festival Presents:

The 2012 Vulture Day Children's Fair

March 3, 2012, 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM at the Wenonah Community Center

Vulture Day Children's Fair is again coming to Wenonah to celebrate the vultures that soar our skies, help keep our lands clean and healthy and who have made this quiet town their winter home for the past decade. This family oriented event will transform the Community Center (the historic train station) into a "children's vulturefest" with hands on vulture arts & crafts, games, educational and vulture art displays, and guided walks to observe the vultures and their roost. The Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge will be present with a special exhibit, hosted by Refuge naturalists that will include live birds and reptiles.

The Children's Fair is sponsored by the Gloucester County Nature Club and the Wenonah Environmental Commission.

This event is FREE and open to the public. Everyone is welcome.

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: March 2012

- March 3 (Saturday) – 9:00-11:00 AM. **Exploring Insects in Winter Family Hike.** Sponsored by the Palmyra Cove Nature Park. \$Fee. Reservations required. For information phone 856-825-1900 x 270.
- March 10 (Saturday) – **Salem County Waterfowl, Raptors, and Eagles.** Leader: Jean Gutsmuth. Sponsored by the Audubon Wildlife Society. For information: www.audubonwildlifesociety.org/
- March 18 (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. For more information call Carl Ford at 856-579-4441. We will do this on the third Sunday of each month, with a different focus each month.

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: Saturdays 3/3 and 4/14 at 8:00 AM, Tuesday, 5/15 at 6:00 PM
- 4H Kid's Nature Club: Saturdays 3/3 and 4/14 at 10:30 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesdays 3/14, 4/11 and 5/9 at 10:00 AM
- Scout Saturday: Saturdays 3/10, 4/21 and 5/12 at 10:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesdays 3/21, 4/18 and 5/16 at 2:30 PM
- Nature Explorers: Thursdays 3/8, 5/10 at 4:00 PM and 4/12 at 10:00AM; Saturdays 3/17, 4/28 at 10am and 5/19 at 11:00 AM
- Stream Assessment Training : Visual—3/24 and Biological-3/31, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

- Crafting: Wednesdays 3/28, 4/25 and 5/23 at 10:00 AM
- Wonders of Wetlands Educators Workshop: Friday 4/27 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
- Canoeing/Kayaking: Saturday 5/19 11:00 AM
- Performers in the Park: Saturdays 2:30 to 3:30 PM, when performers are available

Natural Events for the month of March

- Woodchucks emerge from hibernation.
- Male skunks wander widely, searching for mates.
- Red maples flower in late March, with male and female flowers on separate trees.
- Roadside "weeds" such as speedwell, wintercress, hairy bittercress, purple dead-nettle, and storksbill bloom before most native wildflowers.
- Eastern screech owls, New Jersey's most common owl, lay eggs beginning in March and continue through May.
- Woodcocks begin courtship flights.
- Male goldfinches begin to molt into their brilliant yellow breeding plumage.
- Eastern Phoebes return this month.

Looking Ahead:

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

April 12, 2012: **Birding Trails of Florida** - Joe Baur

May 10, 2012: **Rare Plants of Southern New Jersey** - Renee Brecht

June 14, 2012: **Annual Picnic** (Location to be determined)

2012 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the rest of the year. 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.

Sunday April 22, 2012: **Wildflowers Along the Wenonah Trail**

An easy walk to see some of the early spring wildflowers along the trail. Leader: Richard Dilks.

Saturday May 5, 2012: **Gloucester County Bird Quest**

Form a team, join a group, or go on your own to visit natural places in Gloucester County to identify as many birds as you can between 7:00 AM and Noon. Pre-registration is required.

Saturday June 9, 2012: **Kayaking and Birding**

At a local park. With luck we might see bald eagle, osprey, beaver, and possibly river otter. Leader: Jay Hoffecker.

Club Notes:

- Check out our **FACEBOOK PAGE:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gcnatureclub/>. Note: You will need to have a Facebook membership, and new group members will need to be added by one of the administrators. Join today and share your nature information!
- 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 March Executive Committee meeting will be held on March 4th at the home of Karl Anderson. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.