



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

March 2016

******* Note: Special Date, a change in the Evening Program Date*******

Program - A Journey Through Time and Space: Exploring the Ancient Landscapes of Ireland

Thursday, March 17, 2016 at 7:00pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenters: Erik Mollenhauer & Brian Hayes

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Across ancient Europe, Celtic people were a loose-knit group of tribes who saw a spiritual landscape within the physical landscape. Trees, rivers and mountains were imbued with special power. The sacred chain of existence was revealed in flowing water and growing trees, in mountains and stone and storm. Mythic stories spoke of the links between gods and people and land.

Celtic traditions are best-preserved in Ireland. No king could successfully rule Ireland without the approval of the Earth Goddess. It was she who granted “sovereignty” and a healthy landscape. When the king respected his duties and obligations, the land flourished. When the king neglected them, the land fell into waste and the people suffered. Respect for these natural obligations is summarized by this Celtic oath: *“If I break faith with you, may the skies fall upon me, may the seas drown me, may the earth rise up and swallow me.”*



Join our presenters, Erik Mollenhauer and Brian Hayes, for a wide-ranging program about the physical and spiritual landscapes of Ireland... and what this ancient land can teach us, today. Erik and Brian have traveled to Ireland multiple times and currently lead groups of people there.

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 – Tall Pines Walk

Sunday, March 13th, 2016 at 6:00pm

Trip Leader: Paula Hayes

Come enjoy the first night of daylight savings time and the extra hour of light in the evening. We will take a casual walk through New Jersey’s newest State Park. Tall Pines State Preserve straddles Mantua and Deptford Townships, was once the Eagle’s Nest Golf Course, and up until recently was slated to become a housing development. This park is still a bit rugged but we will explore lovely rolling hills, beautiful meadows, a meandering creek, ponds, and wooded areas while looking for interesting flora and fauna. Wear a sturdy pair of walking shoes and bring binoculars if you have them.

Directions: For GPS use 244 Barkbridge Rd, Deptford Township. This park is new enough that there isn't a sign marking it yet. We will meet in the parking lot off Barkbridge Rd. The lot is about 200 feet from the Woodbury Glassboro Rd (route 553) intersection. Coming from Rt. 55, exit onto Woodbury Glassboro Rd. (Rt. 553) towards Wenonah/Woodbury. After about 1.5 miles turn left on Barkbridge road; the entrance to the parking lot is a dirt driveway on your left.

Field Trip – Unexpected Wildlife Refuge

Sunday, March 20th, 2016 at 10:00am

Trip Leader: Veronica Van Hof, UWR Director and Paula Hayes

This walk will explore Unexpected Wildlife Refuge with its new director. We will hike the Boundary Trail of the refuge. The sanctuary was founded in 1961 to preserve native wildlife and educate the public about the native wildlife. The preserve has grown over the years to 767 acres which encompasses bogs, swamps, forests, and lakes. It provides an extensive habitat for species indigenous to the Southern New Jersey Pinelands region. Due to the nature of the refuge's trails, such as narrow boardwalks, **this trip requires registration and will be available to a limited number of participants (First come/first served)**. If you wish to attend please register through our MeetUp site or email Paula at pnbhayes@gmail.com.

Directions: Will be sent to those who register for the trip about a week prior to the trip.

MEETUP: In order to reach members with the most up to date field trip information we are asking everyone who is able to sign up for the Gloucester County Nature Club Meetup site. By accessing the site at www.meetup.com/Gloucester-County-Nature-Club/ or using the QR Code to the right, you will be directed to the site. Once you are signed up on the site you will receive up-to-date information on upcoming trips, meetings, events, and fun walks. If you attend field trips you should consider joining Meetup even if you receive the newsletter electronically.



Celebrating 17 years of Bird Quest...Bird Quest 2016

Bird Quest is a half-day event from 7:00 AM to noon on the first Saturday in May (May 7, 2016), with the purpose to find as many different bird species as possible in Gloucester County. This event is family and child friendly. It is a unique way for the entire family to discover the birds of Gloucester County. As you learn the birds you will also discover the natural places and varied habitats we have in the county. There are plenty of public sites you can visit in Gloucester County.

We are pleased to return to Scotland Run Park (Wilson Lake) in Clayton as our host site again this year. We hope to reach new families and continue to excite our legacy participants with a wonderful setting for our picnic. Scotland Run Park is located at 980 West Academy St., Clayton, NJ (directions below).

In our 17th year of Bird Quest we have developed educational materials including a Quest t-shirt with original artwork entitled “Hope is the thing with Feathers” to celebrate birds and the amazing adaptation known as the feather. Participants will learn about how feathers have been adapted for flight and how we have benefited from feathers through the years. These materials will have lasting educational value for teachers, students, and the general public.

The rules of Bird Quest are simple: Identify as many different bird species as you can between 7am and noon staying within the boundary of Gloucester County. You can participate in one of the following ways:

- Form a team, plan your route (locations you will visit) for the day of the event and record all the bird species you see within Gloucester County. Hand in your results at Scotland Run by 12:30pm to be eligible for prizes.
- Join one of the buses lead by a bird expert. These buses will visit a few locations in the County where bird experts will help you to identify the many bird species. The buses will meet back at Scotland Run Park at 12:30pm.
- Join one of three guided walks, each lasting between an hour and an hour and a half, in various natural places in Gloucester County lead by a bird expert who will help you identify the bird species present. These walks will be paced and placed so you can participate in all of the walks or just one or two while you spend the rest of the time birding on your own. Hand in your results at Scotland Run Park at 12:30pm to be eligible for prizes.
 - **7:00-8:45: Tall Pines Preserve (Maple Ridge):** From the intersection of Rt 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd) and Mantua Ave in Wenonah (and Holy Nativity Lutheran Church), travel .75 mile south on Rt 553 to the intersection with Bark Bridge Rd. Turn right onto Bark Bridge Rd then in 200ft turn left into the parking lot meet there. There are no bathrooms at Tall Pines
 - **9:30-11:15: Glassboro Wildlife Management Area:** Meet at Carpenter Ave in Clayton. From the Intersection of 322 and Route 47 (Delsea Drive), take RT 47 South into Clayton. Make a left onto Carpenter Ave – about 1.6 miles south of Route 322. Meet in the parking / turn around area where the road turns to dirt.
 - **11:30-12:30: Scotland Run Park (also the picnic location):** From Route 55 take exit 45 and proceed North on Route 553/ Buck Road. After 1.2 miles turn Right on CR 610/ Clayton-Aura Road. Continue on CR 610 for 3.8 miles. After the traffic light at Fries Mill Road, turn Left into the parking lot for Scotland Run Park. You will meet in the bluebird field adjacent to the parking lot.

No matter how you participate, everyone meets at our new location: Scotland Run Park by 12:30pm to hand in their results (total number of bird species seen that day from 7am to 12:30pm), share stories, activities, games, and for a free lunch. The emphasis of this event is on learning and sharing, not on the competition. Everyone who participates receives a t-shirt, lunch, and is eligible for a variety of prizes.

The cost to participate is \$12 per person. Additional t-shirts are \$12 per shirt. In addition, you can purchase bird or tree identification flash cards (\$6 per pack) which will help you identify birds or trees of Gloucester County.

Want to sign up for Bird Quest? Click on the link to Download the Registration form, or use the form included in the Bird Quest 2016 Flyer. Send in the completed form with your check (made out to The Gloucester County Nature Club) to GCNC, ATTN: Brian Hayes, P.O. Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080.

You say you don't know one bird from another? The Gloucester County Nature Club offers a series of training sessions (see below) leading up to the event itself to teach you everything from the basics of bird watching to gardening for nature. These trainings are worthwhile even if you already know how to identify birds. They can help you discover the natural places of Gloucester County as well. During the trainings you will visit some of the many local places where you can enjoy nature anytime of the year. These locations are perfect for photography of animals and plants of Gloucester County.

If you have questions you can call Brian Hayes at 856.582.7000 x110 or email at pnbhayes@gmail.com.

Conservation Corner by Suzan Delozier



BUMBLE BEES AND CITIZEN SCIENTISTS

In December's newsletter, the negative effects of pesticides known as neonicotinoids (aka neonics) on our pollinators were discussed with an emphasis on bees. Our native bumble bee populations have also suffered declines due to pests and diseases, habitat loss, invasive species and climate change, prompting several conservation groups to form the Bumble Bee Watch (www.bumblebeewatch.org) which utilizes citizen scientists to track bumble bees. Participants take photographs of a bumble bee, identify it if possible (this is not necessary), then upload the photographs to the above website where experts will examine and identify the bee. By doing this, you will help researchers determine the status and conservation needs of bumble bees.

Bumble Bee Watch's website will help you with photography tips, bee identification, bee biology, bee conservation and more. Here are a few facts about bumble bees:

- All bumble bees belong to the genus *Bombus* within the family Apidae.
- Of the over 4000 species of bees native to the US, bumble bees are the only ones that are truly social. They live in colonies and share the work. However, unlike the non-native honey bees, at the end of the summer only the fertilized queens survive to hibernate through the winter.
- Bumble bees nest in cavities either above or below ground
- They perform a behavior called "buzz pollination," in which the bee grabs the pollen producing structure of the flower in her jaws and vibrates her wing muscles. This causes vibrations that dislodge pollen from the flower.
- In North America, two bumble bee species have been commercially reared for pollination of greenhouse tomatoes and other crops. Between 1992 and 1994, queens were shipped to Europe, where colonies were produced then shipped back to the U.S. for commercial pollination. It has been hypothesized that these bumble bee colonies acquired a disease, *Nosema bombi*, from European bees in the same rearing facilities. Sadly, the North American bumble bees have no resistance to this pathogen.

Please consider participating in Bumble Bee Watch. Our bees are worth it!

See also www.xerces.org/bumblebees

NEW JERSEY'S EAGLE POPULATION (and a pair of peregrines)

According to an article in the Jan. 17th issue of the South Jersey Times, eagles are doing quite well in New Jersey. We now have 161 pairs in our state – up from just 1 nest in the early 1980s. Thirteen new pairs were found this year with 9 of those pairs in South Jersey. Also encouraging is the number of overwintering birds which has grown along with the nesting population. While the federal government removed the bald eagle from its endangered species list, the birds still remain endangered in NJ during their nesting season and threatened during non-nesting season. Biologists, the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, and volunteers continue to locate and monitor bald eagle nests and territories. The eagle population would not be thriving without their work.

The Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ and Duke Farms in central NJ operate a webcam enabling viewers to observe a bald eagle nest. The website is www.conservewildlifenj.org/education/eaglecam/.

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife also has a webcam for observing a pair of peregrine falcons in Jersey City. Check out <http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/education/falconcam/>.

TWO MONARCH FRIENDLY BILLS PASSED BY NJ ASSEMBLY

On the last day of the legislative session (Jan. 11) the New Jersey Assembly passed A3352 “Milkweed for Monarchs” and A3353 “Adopt a Monarch Butterfly Waystation”. These bills dealt with planting milkweed in drainage basins and planting milkweed on state lands respectively. Although no corresponding bill had been introduced in the Senate, this is a hopeful sign that pollinator importance is being noticed. See <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bills/BillsByNumber.asp> to find info on the bills (remember these bills are under 2014-2015). New bills need to be introduced in the new session (2016-2017). Contact your state senator and assemblypersons and ask them to sponsor/support such bills. You may also want to contact Assemblyman Tim Eustace (District 38) who sponsored A3352 and A3353, thank him, and ask him to sponsor legislation in the new session. Thanks to the New Jersey Audubon Society for this info.

MILKWEED

Additionally, Suzan will bring 25 packets of common milkweed seeds and 25 packets of swamp milkweed seeds to the March meeting. They are free and each packet contains at least 50 seeds. Members and friends are welcome to take a packet of one or both. A good place to start investigating the propagation of milkweed is <http://monarchwatch.org/milkweed/prop.htm>.

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: March 2016

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 3/5 at 8:30am. A beautiful time of year for a leisurely morning walk. Bring your binoculars and discover the many species of birds that call Scotland Run Park home.
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 3/9 at 10:00am. A fun program for preschoolers and their caregivers. Make a craft and take a walk on the park trail.
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 3/19 at 10:00am. A great way for scouts to earn their naturalist and forestry badges.
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 3/23 at 2:30pm. Take a leisurely walk through the park on one of the beautiful trails.

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 Phoebe return this month.



Looking Ahead:

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

April 14, 2016: **A Panama Adventure** - Barbara Bassett

May 12, 2016: **Annual Plant Sale (6:00pm) and Program: The Horseshoe Crab Lab 6:30pm)** - Sue Slotterback, The Wetlands Institute

June 9, 2016: **Thursday, June 9, 2016 Annual Picnic (6:00pm) at Alcyon Park, Pitman, NJ followed by program: Bluebirds** - Allen Jackson, President, New Jersey Bluebird Society

Remaining 2016 GCNC Field Trips

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

April - **Bird Quest Trainings**

May 7, 2016 - **Bird Quest**

June - **Duke Farms**

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 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 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 Sunday, February March 6th at the home of Jayne Rhynard. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.

Bird Quest Training Sessions 2016

Please note that there are AM and PM sessions!

April 17 (Sunday) 6 – 7:30 P.M. Birding Basics.

Alcyon Lake Park — Track Ave. Pitman, 08071 (off W. Holly Avenue)

Learn the basics of good birding and the tools of the trade. Discover the world of birding from bird guides to binoculars, birding etiquette to bird song and of course bird identification. Any level of interest is welcome. Questions are encouraged. A walk around the park will let you use your newfound —or refreshed — skills.

Directions: Drive past sports fields; meet at the pavilion.

Leaders: Rich Dilks, Mike and Suzan DeLozier

April 18 (Monday) 6 – 7:30 P.M. Junior Birding

Alcyon Lake Park — Track Ave, Pitman 08071 (off W. Holly Avenue)

This field trip is designed to introduce young birders to the "sport." Binoculars to borrow are available. As they enjoy all the birds, young birders will be shown how to locate and identify birds through binoculars and in field guides. This is a great first field trip for a child that is interested in birding. Depending on the age and size of the group of the birders we can divide the group by age or ability. This trip will be designed to be fun and engage children with the goal of introducing them to the activity. However, any level of interest is welcome. Questions are encouraged. *Directions: Drive past sports fields; meet at the pavilion.*

Leaders: Paula Hayes and Maria Keefe

April 19 (Tuesday) 7- 8:30 A.M Nature Preserved!

Maple Ridge / Tall Pines State Preserve — Bark Bridge Rd., Sewell, NJ 08080

Newly preserved by the state, this former golf course has ponds, marsh and wetlands, and patches of eastern hardwood forest. More than seventy species of birds, including the Bald Eagle, a rare albino Red Tail Hawk and eleven species of warblers, have been identified here. *Directions: From Rt. 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd) turn west onto Bark Bridge Rd. Park in the lot on the right. Please do not park at Hutchinson Cabinets.*

Leaders: Rich Dilks and Erik Mollenhauer

April 21 (Thursday) 6 – 7:30 P.M. Birds Of Local Waterways

Old Pine Natural Lands Trust — 400 Rankin Ave., Deptford, 08096

Open views of the water provide good opportunity for sighting water birds like ducks, herons, red wing blackbirds and mergansers. Wooded section could produce woodpeckers, nuthatches, warblers, chickadees, and tufted titmouse. *Directions: Access from Good Intent road (Rt.534), turn onto Rankin Ave. Follow to end and park. Walk down woods road to the Big Timber Creek.*

Leaders: Ed & Millie Cleary

April 23 (Saturday) 7:30 – 9 A.M. Forest Edge Habitat.

Chestnut Branch Park — 545 Main Street, Mantua, 08051

Find the hidden habitat in any location. This multiple use park has some great birding spots around and among the ball fields. Find species that like the edge like indigo buntings, mockingbirds, and yellow-rump warblers.

Directions: Meet at the butterfly garden, beyond the basketball courts.

Leaders: Bob Duke and Jay Hoffecker

April 25 (Monday) 6:30 – 8 P.M. An Introduction to Birdcalls, Classroom Setting

Wenonah Community Center, (historic train station)

Corner of East Mantua Ave. and North East Ave., Wenonah, 08090.

In an indoor setting, learn mnemonics and “tricks of the trade” to identify birds by their songs and calls. This is a great session for novices and those that would like to brush-up on their “Birding by Ear” skills in a controlled setting. Birding By Ear Part 1 – Part 2 is outdoors.

Leaders: Brian Hayes

**April 26 (Tuesday) 7 – 8:30 A.M. Birding at Glassboro Woods
Glassboro Wildlife Management Area, Carpenter Avenue, Clayton, 08312**

A deciduous wetland forest with streams and some cleared fields offers opportunities to view birds in different habitats. This is a good “birding by ear” destination most of the year because of the dense understory of mountain laurel and highbush blueberry. Look for migrating warblers, ovenbird, red-shoulder hawk, and white-eyed vireo.

Directions: Carpenter Ave. is on the east side of Delsea Drive (Rt 47), just north of the Gloucester County Clayton Complex.

Leader: Dan Ceravolo

**April 29 (Friday) 7 – 8:30 A.M. Woodland Birds and Birdcalls.
Ceres Park Nature Preserve, Main Street/Alternate Route 553, Mantua Township, 08080**

Learn your woodland birds like wood thrush, scarlet tanagers, ovenbirds, water thrush, black and white warblers, and pine warblers. Birds will be identified by sound, sight or both. *Directions:* Meet in the Main Street parking lot.

Leaders: Barry Bengel and Jayne Rhynard

**April 30 (Saturday) 7 - 8:30 A.M. Forest Edge and Riparian Habitat.
Triple Oaks Nursery, 2359 Delsea Drive, Franklinville, 08322**

Great access to Scotland Run riparian habitat and forest edge birding at Triple Oaks.

Directions: Triple Oaks Nursery is on the west side of Rt. 47 (Delsea Drive,) half a mile south of the center of Franklinville.

Leader: Kris Mollenhauer and Jayne Rhynard

**May 1 (Sunday) 7:00 - 8:30 A.M. Forest Edge and Swamp Habitat.
Railroad Avenue, Elk Township — Meet at Elk Township Recreational Complex Park, Recreation Drive,
Monroeville 08343**

Established trees line this quiet lane that follows the Elephant Swamp Trail, part of the Rails to Trails Conservancy. Gnatcatchers, woodpeckers and some early warblers can usually be seen.

Directions: Meet in the paved lot of the Recreational Complex.

Leaders: Ron and Linda Kegel

**May 2 (Monday) 6– 7:30 P.M. Birding by Ear Part 2. “To Pish or Not to Pish, That is the Question.”
Wenonah Lake — W. Maple St, Wenonah, NJ 08090**

Take your “Birding by Ear” skills into the field on this lakeside trail. We will listen to the sounds of the forest. Learn about Pishing — What is it? Who does it? Is it right for you?

Leaders: Brian Hayes

**May 4 (Wednesday) 6 - 7:30 P.M. Delaware River Riparian Habitat.
Wheelabrator Refuge — 600 Crown Point Rd, Westville, 08093**

At the intersection of the Delaware River and Big Timber Creek, the wide-open space behind the Wheelabrator plant is great habitat for swamp, meadow and river birds. Trails and old roads make access easy. Bob White can be heard here. *Directions:* Access from Rt. 130 (Crown Point Rd,) opposite Hazel Ave in Westville, just south of Big Timber Creek. Meet at the pavilion in parking lot.

Leaders: Kris Mollenhauer and Marilyn Henry

**May 5 (Thursday) 6 - 7:30 P.M. RiverWinds Park
1000 Riverwinds Drive, Thorofare, NJ 08086**

Riverside shrubs and forested areas along the Delaware River make for great birding here. Start at the West Deptford Scenic Trail and, if time allows, continue along the Delaware River. Look for migrating warblers, scarlet tanagers, hawks and maybe a bald eagle! *Directions;* Turn left onto Riverwinds Drive. Go approx.1000 ft, then turn right onto the first dirt road.

Leaders: Gary Lizzi and Gale Cannon