



# Gloucester County Nature Club

## Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

April 2006

### **Program – Organic Farming and Sustainable Agriculture at The Muth Family Farm**

**Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at EIRC, Sewell**

**Presenter: Bob Muth of The Muth Family Farm**

**Program Coordinator – Rich Dilks**



We have all heard the words “organic” and “natural” in connection with food and agricultural products without perhaps knowing exactly what these words imply about the produce we buy. Bob Muth of The Muth Family Farm, right here in Gloucester County, will explain to us what organic farming really is and how sustainable agricultural practices that are in harmony with the environment can provide products that are wholesome, attractive and economically competitive. Bob has

been a farmer all his life, holds a masters in agricultural sciences and is a passionate and knowledgeable advocate of environmentally friendly farming practices. What is a tall tunnel? What is the best way to grow heirloom tomatoes? When and why would one release predatory mites to attack spider mites? How do you create a California climate on a New Jersey farm? Bob Muth will provide the answers to these questions and more when he reveals to us how a successful organic farm operates and explains the importance of these innovative techniques for the future of agriculture.

### **Field Trip – Bird Quest Trainings**

**Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup> through Thursday May 4** (See schedule on page 3)

### **Field Trip Report: John James Audubon Center a/k/a Mill Grove by Kris Mollenhauer**

The Nature Club had a pleasant visit to Mill Grove. This lovely old stone house is located high above the Perkiomen Creek in Audubon, PA. We toured the John James Audubon Center with Jeff Holt as our guide. In February, Jeff presented a wonderful program about Audubon. So we already had some background information, plus we had Jeff with us to guide us through the museum. This is a topic on which Jeff is very knowledgeable, and he could answer our many questions. Inside we discovered rooms full of Audubon’s prints. Our visit there brought a new appreciation for his art and the way he made birds come alive on paper. Outside we walked along some of the trails that cross through the fields and woodlands of the sanctuary.

## **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, see the Gloucester County Nature Club's website at [www.gcnatureclub.org](http://www.gcnatureclub.org). An additional registration form is available at the end of this newsletter. 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](mailto: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**  
Wheeler, 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

## **Conservation Corner** by Loretta Dunne

### **Outdoors**

Are the coots at the dredge spoils in National Park this year and will they breed there, as they have in the past? Exactly when do the singing northern orioles arrive at Wheelabrator? In what month do the yellow necks of the green frogs in the Riverwinds pond turn boldly fluorescent, as they are ready to breed? When is the best time to hear wood thrushes at Narraticon Park in Swedesboro – just before sunset or early in the morning when the sun first warms the woods?

Dedication to knowing a natural area is different from the thrill of seeking out a new bird for your life list or traveling far to an interesting spot for wildflowers. Learning an area puts you in touch with the natural world, in tune with its changes. It sets you on a path of knowing a site so well that you immediately can recognize the seasonal changes from week to week, how the area looks when it is wet and how many insects favor the spot in the heat of summer. This is a special connection worth pursuing.

Spring is the perfect time to select a spot that you can make your own. Knowing a natural area over time, through the changes of the seasons and the weather has value both for the person who has dedicated some time to a spot as well as to the area itself. Without human oversight and interest, any natural area could become tomorrow's convenience store or another soccer field.

Do you know when the vultures of Wenonah leave their winter roost and disperse? Do some vultures stay beyond the winter? Which dragonflies can be seen crossing the fields and zipping over Cedar Lake in the Cedar Lake Wildlife Management Area? These questions are worth studying over time.

### **Critical Habitat Protection for New Jersey**

Although New Jersey's laws protect threatened and endangered species, they do not protect the habitat essential for these species to survive. The rate of habitat loss in New Jersey is very high. According to NJ Audubon, between 1986 and 1995, a habitat area equal to the size of Union and Essex Counties was lost, including over 44,500 acres of forested land and 52,000 acres of freshwater wetland. NJ Audubon ([www.njaudubon.org](http://www.njaudubon.org)) has started a campaign to protect critical habitat. This campaign is very important and warrants our immediate action. Please contact Governor Corzine and urge him to propose habitat rules this spring. The Governor can be contacted at:

Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000  
Email contact is available at [www.state.nj.us](http://www.state.nj.us)

## **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-

May 11, 2006 - Ivory Billed Woodpecker and Annual Plant Sale  
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

## **Club Notes:**

- The April Executive Committee meeting will be on April 2<sup>nd</sup> at Deb Maka'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](mailto: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 **secretary**. If anyone is interested in helping out the club, please email Deb Maka at [deborahann@backpacker.com](mailto:deborahann@backpacker.com) or call 863-0330.
- Information for the next newsletter should be sent to Barry Bengel at [sharkeyes@comcast.net](mailto:sharkeyes@comcast.net) or 6 Greenwood Drive, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.

## Bird Quest Registration

To register a team, **complete the form below**. Registering as an individual/couple? **Be sure to include your name, address, phone # and T-shirt size on the form**. Mail the form (or deliver it in person to EIRC on Rt. 47 near Wacker's Trading Post, north of Pitman) ASAP with a check (\$12 per person) payable to *Gloucester County Nature Club* to: GC BirdQuest 2005, c/o EIRC, 606 Delsea Dr., Sewell NJ 08080, Attn: Erik Mollenhauer If you have questions, call 582-7000 X128 or X110.

Name of Team (ex: Costello's Cardinals) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Team Leader (contact person) \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt size \_\_\_\_\_

Leader's address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Person #2 (name) \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt size \_\_\_\_\_

Person #3 (name) \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt size \_\_\_\_\_

Person #4 \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt size \_\_\_\_\_

Person #5 \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt size \_\_\_\_\_

Person #6 \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt size \_\_\_\_\_

Person #7 \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt size \_\_\_\_\_

Attach extra sheet with additional names and T-shirt sizes

New for this year is a set of 35 training flash cards depicting Birds of Gloucester County. Also available are Birds of Gloucester County posters at \$5.00 each, and additional T-shirts at \$12.95 each.

**Fill in here for additional items:**

Additional T-shirts: Qty \_\_\_\_\_ (\$12.95 each)

Birds of Gloucester County Flash Cards \_\_\_\_\_ (\$4.00/set)

Birds of Gloucester County Posters: Qty \_\_\_\_\_ (\$5.00 each)

Notes:

- At least half of the team must be rank novices. If your team includes persons under the age of 18, we recommend that you obtain parental permission and include two adults as part of your team.
- **T-shirt sizes are small, medium, large, X large, XX large. Receiving a T-shirt on the day of the event cannot be guaranteed if you register after April 29<sup>th</sup>.**
- A series of free trainings is being offered from April 19 - May 4 before the Quest. See schedule for details.
- If you want to ride the bus, you must reserve a seat in advance. **Room on the bus is limited, first come, first served.** Bus leaves at 7 am from Atkinson Park.

Please provide a list of people, if any, who wish to ride a bus.