



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

April 2011

Program – Creatures of the Miocene Seas

Thursday, April 14 at 7:00 PM at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah NJ

Presenter: Ken MacKenzie- The Fossil Shark Man

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Creatures of the abyss

Coming up to feed on animals of the sea.

Swallowed whole by each other

In the most vicious ways....

They fight until only the strongest survive.

That may be the reason they are here

From The Shark by Adam Smith



The Miocene Epoch is a vanished world that existed between 23 and 5.3 million years ago and was a part of the great Age of Mammals that began 65 million years ago with the extinction of dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous. On land the Miocene has been called the Age of Grasslands for those habitats first arose in abundance during that time as did the many grassland mammals such as species of horses, rhinoceros, camels, and antelope-like mammals. The Miocene seas were also teeming with life. In the seas off of ancient eastern North America, marine crocodiles were still common and lived as far north as Maryland. Many species of marine mammals also inhabited the seas, including baleen and toothed whales, seals, sea lions, walruses, and sea cows. Both toothed and baleen whales were particularly diverse during this period. Some of these marine mammals were undoubtedly preyed upon by the extinct giant-toothed white shark, *Carcharodon megalodon*. This giant shark is well-known from fossils along the east coast of North America. In fact, by this time most types of living sharks were present in all the world's seas.

Our speaker tonight is Ken Mackenzie, who will share with us his vast and astounding collection of Miocene marine fossils. He will tell us about these amazing creatures, some species long extinct and some still with us, which swam the ancient seas. Ken has spent many years not only collecting these fossils, many from the Miocene deposits of eastern North Carolina, but studying the world in which these creatures lived and its connections with our own.

You will also have the opportunity to be a fossil hunter tonight. Ken will be bringing a bucket of unexamined Miocene sediments and will be offering samples to whomever would like to sift through them for a fossil treasure to take home.

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: Biking the Delaware & Raritan Canal near Bull's Island **Saturday April 16, 9:30 AM**

Trip Leaders: Paula and Brian Hayes

It's time to get outside and enjoy the warmer weather and longer days. Bull's Island Recreation Area is sandwiched between the Delaware River and the Delaware Raritan Canal just north of Stockton, NJ. We will meet in the park and take a ride along the historic canal tow path to look for birds and enjoy the wildflowers and scenery. We plan to ride from Bull's Island to Stockton and then return (about 7 miles round trip) or for the more adventurous we can go all the way to Lambertville and back (about 14 miles round trip). We will picnic after the ride at the park if you'd like to bring your lunch or pick up something in Stockton /Lambertville. You will need your own bike for this trip. We will meet in the lot near the Park Office which also contains restrooms at 9:30 am for this family friendly trip. Call Brian at 856-649-8723 with questions.

Directions for Bulls Island: Take I-295 North. You will follow I-295 N until it becomes I-95 S (you won't exit, the highway changes names - uniquely New Jersey). Exit at Rt. 29 just before highway comes to Delaware River and heads in PA. Follow Rt 29 North through Lambertville and Stockton staying on Rt 29 N. Bull's Island Recreation Area is about 15-20 miles (and about 30 minutes) North of the exit from I-95. The entrance will be on your left about 3.5 miles / 5 minutes north of Stockton. From Gloucester County to Bull's Island is between 1½- 2 hours drive.

Field Trip Report – Salem County Early Spring Birding, March 12

On Saturday March 12 in Salem County 4 intrepid early risers viewed 49 bald eagles as they flew out of a roost at dawn. After collecting seven additional later-arriving participants, the group of 11 visited some bucolic sites and waterscape overlooks around the Salem River and saw and heard 44 species of birds. The trip ended at Marilyn Patterson's nature preserve in Alloway where she identified 3 species of frogs calling and pointed out praying mantis cocoons scattered throughout a field.

2011 Gloucester County Bird Quest: Saturday May 7, 2011

The Gloucester County Nature Club and co-sponsors invite people of all ages to participate in the **2011 (12th annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest. The 2011 Bird Quest** will take place on **Sat., May 7, 2011 from 7 AM to 12 noon throughout Gloucester County.**

***We will meet at our new location: Washington Lake (the swimming lake accessed off of Chapel Heights Road near the community church). Washington Lake is located at 343 Chapel Heights Rd; Sewell, NJ 08080.**

During this time, teams visit parks and natural sites in Gloucester County to 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
- An opportunity to learn how to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat
- An opportunity to have fun with family, friends, and colleagues
- A light-hearted competition

The Quest is an educational event: novices are encouraged to participate.

How it works: Teams have 5 hours on Saturday (7am to noon) to visit sites in Gloucester County. Birds are identified by sight or sound. The goal is to find as many different species of birds as possible. At noon, all participants gather at **Washington Lake (the swimming lake accessed off of Chapel Heights Road near the community church)** to report results and for **(free) lunch, t-shirts, and prizes.**

We have three ways you can participate:

- Organize your own Quest team with colleagues, friends, and/or family and visit parks and natural areas as a team to find your bird species.
- Join a bus - with support from Wheelabrator, LP of Gloucester County, the club will again operate expert guided buses for individuals unable to form their own teams and are willing to join a larger group.
- Walk with our expert guides at locations around Gloucester County for those folks who are looking for a smaller group size but are not able to form a team.

Last year's Gloucester County Bird Quest attracted hundreds of participants made up of families, friends, teachers, school groups, scout troops, environmental commissions ... residents of Gloucester and neighboring counties. **If you have participated in the past why not invite a friend or colleagues to join you for this year's Bird Quest!**

Our theme this year is "Saving Natural Places of Gloucester County – Maple Ridge" and will be featured in a T-shirt designed by Gariel Graphics. **The \$12 fee per participant helps to defray the cost of lunch, T-shirts, prizes etc.**

More information and registration forms will be posted to the Gloucester County Nature Club's website at www.gcnatureclub.org. For more information, to receive a registration form, join a team or reserve a seat on the bus, contact Brian Hayes at bhayes@eirc.org or 856.582.7000 x110.

Participants are encouraged to attend any of a series of free field trainings in the evenings, mornings and weekends before the Quest. Training sessions are listed near the end of this newsletter.

Kid's Corner - Go on a Bird Behavior Hike* by Deb Maka

What you need:

- Access to the outdoors
- Notebook and pencil
- Bird behavior primer
 - Hiding: using camouflage or cover to protect themselves from predators
 - Flocking: creating large groups to fly or feed, creating safety in numbers
 - Bathing: washing in water, or sometimes, giving themselves a dirt bath
 - Flying: using their wings or air currents to travel through the air
 - Preening: cleaning their feathers using their beak or feet
 - Singing: communicating using calls and songs
 - Giving an alarm call: hard to distinguish from a song, but usually shorter & simpler than songs
 - Foraging: searching for food on the ground, in bark, in water, etc.



What you do:

- Head outside to a park or a tree-lined street, where birds of different species can be observed.
- Look for different types of bird behaviors and record what you've noticed in your notebook.
- Use the bird-behavior primer to help you identify bird behaviors
- Try sketching the different bird behaviors you've found

* adapted from the National Wildlife Federation website (<http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Activities/Observe-and-Explore/Bird-Behavior-Hike.aspx>)

Conservation Corner – Spring: Time for Cleaning & Greening Your Garden by Jayne Rhynard

Use old clothing and sheets for dusting and cleaning rags, rather than paper towels.

Install a clothesline in your backyard or basement or use a drying rack and let your clothes dry naturally.

Let your houseplants do the cleaning! Some houseplants—such as Boston ferns, English ivy, rubber plants, and peace lilies—can help clean your indoor air by absorbing toxic chemicals.

Your garden isn't green yet - but start planning now as living things outside are starting to green up. Compost dead leaves, tops trimmed off grasses, etc. if you already aren't. As you clean your yard up from winter's ravages think about making brush piles for creatures to hide and forage in.

When browsing all those plant catalogs (and recycle them when you're done) make sure you spend time looking at the native plants, they have better chances thriving without chemicals than some other plants. They also require less watering and attract birds and insects. Consider organic gardening for a new challenge.

Start planning your garden for your own vegetables, save money and fuel for shipping veggies to the store.

Use those Spring breezes to do something that takes no energy except the wind - with a kid or do it yourself- go fly a kite, and even better if you make it.

Other Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: April 2011

- Saturday mornings, 7:30 AM to about 9:00, **Bird Walks**. Joe Esterly is doing bird walks at Scotland Run Park, weather permitting. Walks meet at the nature center parking lot. For information phone Joe at 856-629-7626, or e-mail jde9773@aol.com.
- April 5 (Tuesday) – 10:30 AM. **Nature Walk With a Focus on Herons**, at Amico Island Park. Leader: Jen Bulava. Sponsored by the Burlington County Park Commission. Free, but registration is required; phone 609-265-5858.
- April 6 (Wednesday) **Vernal Pool Training** – 6:00 - 8:30 PM. The South Jersey Land and Water Trust needs volunteers to collect information about amphibian habitats in South Jersey. Learn to identify vernal pools and help the SJLWT protect them from development. Upper Deerfield Senior Center, 1323 State Highway 77, Bridgeton, NJ. For more information, please contact Director Christine Nolan at 856-881-2269 or cnolan@sjlandwater.org or see www.sjlandwater.org/.
- April 16 (Saturday) – 10:00 AM – Noon. **Spring Wildflower and Macrophotography Walk**, at Smithville Park. Meet at the Meade Lane Parking Lot. Leader: Jen Bulava. Sponsored by the Burlington County Park Commission. Free, but registration is required; phone 609-265-5858.
- April 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. 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.
- April 17 (Sunday) **Timber Creek Park Walk** – 1:00 PM. A two hour guided walk through Timber Creek Park in Gloucester Township with SJLWT staff member Michael Hogan. Walk includes possible sightings of waterfowl, bald eagles and red-tailed hawks. Pink azalea will be in

bloom. Free SJLWT members, \$3 nonmembers. Meet in the parking area on Chews Landing Rd. To RSVP and for directions, please contact Mike at 609-476-2086 or hoganphoto@verizon.net, or see www.sjlandwater.org/.

- April 23 (Saturday) – **Spring Migrants at Long Branch Park**, Burlington County. Leader: Bob Duke. Sponsored by the Audubon Wildlife Society. For info: www.audubonwildlifesociety.org/
- April 30 (Saturday) – 10:00 AM – Mid-afternoon. **Botany of the Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh**. Leaders: Mary Anne Borge and Mary Leck. Sponsored by the Torrey Botanical Society. For info: www.torreybotanical.org/.

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 4/2 at 8:00 AM; Tuesday 5/10 at 6:00 PM
- Nature Tots: Wednesdays 4/13 and 5/11 at 10:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesdays 4/20 and 5/25 at 2:30 PM
- Family Nature Adventure: Saturday 4/16 at 10:00 AM
- “Fresh Air” After School Program: Every Thursday starting 3/3 from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM (except 5/12 and 5/19)
- 4H Kids Nature Club: Saturday 4/2 at 10:30am
- Environmental Workshop for Teachers: Aquatic Project Wild, Friday 4/15 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
- Performers in the Park: Every Tuesday starting 3/15 from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM (except 4/26 and 5/31)
- Scout Saturday: Saturdays 4/30 and 5/21 at 10:00 AM
- Frog Song Night Walk: Thursday 5/19 at 7:00 PM

Natural Events for the month of April

- Pond turtles emerge from hibernation and bask in the sun.
- Spring beauty, bloodroot, and trout lily bloom on the floor of deciduous woodlands.
- Spring peepers and wood frogs begin calling when vernal ponds warm to about 50 degrees F.
- Shad migrate up the Delaware River to spawn.
- Ruby-throated hummingbirds, purple martins, and warblers begin to arrive.
- Most juncos and white-throated sparrows have left by the end of the month.
- Rose-breasted grosbeaks show up at feeders for a few days before heading north.
- Prairie warbler, misnamed when it was first found in a barren area in Kentucky, returns late April – mid May.
- The peak of spring raptor migration is mid- to late-April. Consider a visit to a hawk lookout.
- Red-winged blackbirds return to marshes.

Looking Ahead:

Upcoming GCNC Programs

May 12, 2011: **Landscaping With Native Plants** - Alan Koch, Landscape Architect

June 9, 2011: **Annual Picnic plus "Cargo For Conservation"** Location: Wenonah Lake

2010-2011 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the rest of 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 856-845-7075.

April & May – **Bird Quest Training Sessions**

May 7 (Saturday) – **Bird Quest 2011**

June 18 (Saturday) – **Kayaking and Birding at Scotland Run Park** - Jay Hoffecker

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

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount (for non bird food items) to GCNC members! *Due to the current volatile market for bird food, the 10% discount for these items has had to be discontinued.* However, members will still receive credit for their purchases towards the Frequent Seed Shopper Program. WBU offers the GCNC discount on all other items in the store. Members are requested to identify themselves as GNNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please contact Sharon at 856-218-2973 or sillybird348@comcast.net.



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 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 April Executive Committee meeting will be held on April 10th at the home of Karl Anderson. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.
- Election of Trustees – Next month we will be holding elections for our Board of Trustees. We will be electing four Trustees for the term of 2011-2014. So far the list of candidates is as follows: Running for re-election are Erik Mollenhauer, Bonnie Dann, and Jackie Partridge. Running for the first time is Jayne Rhynard. If you are interested in running for election, please contact Karen Kravchuck at 856-468-6536 or email her at blackbirdsinging@hotmail.com.

ANNUAL PLANT SALE NEXT MONTH - It is officially Spring! And that means it's time to be in our gardens, getting them ready for the warm weather season. This means it is also time for the Club's annual plant sale. Hopefully, once again, we'll have a wonderful combination of nursery-grown plants and plants from our very own gardens.

Here's where your part of this comes in. As you are in your gardens in the next couple of weeks keep an eye out for plants you can share. Maybe it could be some of those perennials you have been meaning to divide or a volunteer shrub or tree that just has to be moved. Even some extra seeds that you collected in the fall would be great. Just pot them up or pack them up and bring them with you. Please mark them carefully, though, so we keep the mystery plants to a minimum.

The Plant Sale will be held just before the May meeting. It will start at 6:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Church. It is open to the public so please tell family and friends.

Bird Quest 2011 Training Sessions

April 13 (Wednesday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM Birding Basics

Alcyon Lake, Pitman Learn the basics of good birding and the tools of the trade.

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.

Leader: Brian Hayes Co-leader: Karen Kravchuck

April 17 (Sunday), 7:00 – 8:30 AM Bird Quest Training

Ceres Park, Mantua Twp.

Directions: From Rt 322 take Lambs Rd (635) to Pitman-Barnsboro Rd (553Alt). Turn left onto Rt553A. Watch for Ceres Park sign on your left after crossing over Rt 55.

Co-Leaders: Barry Bengel & Jayne Rhynard

April 18 (Monday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM Birding by Ear

Wenonah Community Center, Wenonah This is an introduction to bird calls in a classroom setting.

Directions: From Woodbury/Glassboro Road (Rt 553) in Wenonah, turn onto Mantua Avenue. Proceed to the intersection of East Mantua Avenue and North East Avenue. The community center is located in the old railroad station.

Co-Leaders: Kris Mollenhauer & Paula Hayes

April 20 (Wednesday) 6:00 – 7:30 PM Bird Quest Training

Wheelabrator Refuge, Westville

Directions: Access from Rt 130, opposite Hazel Ave in Westville, just south of Big Timber Creek. Meet in parking lot on the right just before the guard station.

Co-Leaders: Bob Duke Co-Leaders Doris and Dwight Weir

April 21 (Thursday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM Bird Quest Training

Location: West Deptford Field of Dreams

Directions: From Interstate 295, Exit 21, take Crown Pint Road (Rt 44) West . In about .25 miles, take a right onto River Road. Park in the lot.

Leader: Gary Lizzi Co-leader: Margie Lizzi

April 23 (Saturday) 7:00 – 8:30 AM Bird Quest Training

Location: Glassboro Wildlife Management Area – Carpenter St.

Directions: From the intersection of Rt.47 and Rt 322 in Glassboro, go South 1.7 miles on Rt. 47. Immediately after crossing the Clayton Borough boundary, an unmarked dirt road will branch off on the left. Park on Carpenter Ave.

Leader: Lloyd Shaw

April 26 (Tuesday), 6:00-7:00 AM Step Up Your Birding

Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua

Directions: From the intersection of Rt 45 (Broad Street) and Cooper Street in Woodbury, go south on Rt 45 for 4.2 miles. Turn left (from right hand lane) onto Rt 553Alt (Main Street) in Mantua. Go south on Rt 553Alt for 1.6 miles. The park entrance will be on the left. There is a large paved parking area. Meet at the wildflower garden.

Co-Leaders: Kris & Erik Mollenhauer

April 27 (Wednesday), 6:00 – 7:00 AM Bird Quest Training

Old Pine Farm, Deptford

Directions: Access from Good Intent road (Rt.534), turn North onto Rankin Ave. Follow to end and park. Walk down woods road to the Big Timber Creek.

Co-Leaders: Ed & Millie Cleary

May 1 (Sunday), 7:00-8:30 AM Bird Quest Training

Railroad Avenue, Elk Twp.

Directions: From Rt. 322 in Richwood turn at light onto Aura Rd. (Rt. 667.) Continue 3.5 mi. and turn Right onto Whig Lane Rd.(Rt. 619.) At fork stay Left . Pass Aura Elementary School and turn left into the Elk Township Recreational Complex. Park in the paved lot.

Leader: Ron Kegel Co-Leader: Loretta Dunne

May 4 (Wednesday), 6:00 – 7:00 AM Birding by Ear

Red Bank Battlefield Park, National Park

Directions: From Interstate 295 Exit 22, take Red Bank Avenue west for about 0.5 mile to Hessian Avenue. Turn left on Hessian Avenue, and continue for 1.2 miles to the park. Meet at the parking area on the left.

Leader: Gale Cannon Co-Leader Karl Anderson

Bird Quest Registration - May 7, 2011

Be sure to include your name, address, phone # and T-shirt size on the form. Mail the form with a check (\$12 per person) payable to Gloucester County Nature Club to: GC Nature Club, P.O. Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080. Questions? Contact Brian Hayes at (856) 582-7000 x110 daytime, (856) 468-9272 evenings and weekends or pnbhayes@comcast.net. Entries must be received by April 29, for t-shirts to be guaranteed.

Name of Team (ex: Heritage Hummingbirds) _____

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

Leader's mailing address _____

Leader's phone number _____ Leaders email _____

Person #2 (name) _____ T-shirt size _____

Person #3 _____ T-shirt size _____

Person #4 _____ T-shirt size _____

Person #5 _____ T-shirt size _____

Our team will be participating on the: Walks _____ or Bus _____ or as a Team _____
Attach extra sheet with additional names and T-shirt sizes.

Bus Space is limited: first come first served. You must reserve a seat in advance. Bus leaves at 7 am from Washington Lake (the swimming lake accessed from Chapel Heights Road).

Fill in here for additional items: Additional T-shirts: Qty _____ (\$12.95 each)
Birds of Gloucester County Flash Cards _____ (\$6.00/set)
Natural Places of Gloucester Co. NJ book _____ (\$12.00 each)