



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

April 2012

Program - The Great Florida Birding Trail

**Thursday April 12, 2012 at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church,
Wenonah, NJ** (directions below)

Presenter: Joe Baur Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks (856-468-6342)

The speaker for our April program is GCNC member Joe Baur, who for the last decade has been exploring the rich natural heritage of Florida. An avid birder and photographer, Joe will be our guide along the Great Florida Birding Trail. Florida is a birder's and wildlife watcher's paradise, thanks to its diversity of habitats, its location on migration routes, the extent of its remaining wild lands and its geographic span of both temperate and subtropical climates.

“The Great Florida Birding Trail includes almost 500 sites connected by a 2,000-mile self-guided highway trail. Over the past ten years I've had time to get involved in birding and photography. Winter birding is a lot more comfortable in Florida. Not only is it a lot warmer, but the state and county make it easy to find and use their birding trails (all 477 of them). I will describe my experiences in finding all there is to offer in Florida about birding trails, biking trails, blueways, greenways and equestrian trails. All of this information is provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



On a smaller scale, I will describe the fifteen year plan Pinellas County has developed to connect all its bicycle trails and parks and how they are paying for it. Maybe there is something Gloucester County and New Jersey can learn from Pinellas County. Not to worry, the majority of the presentation includes birding photos from the five most popular birding trails in Pinellas County including the state's most popular state park, Honeymoon Island (2.3 million visitors in 2009). There are also many photos from other places: our back yard, front yard, causeways, bridges, golf courses and around power plants. You never know where or when a bird might be posing. Always have a camera handy. Finally there is an unusual race in Florida every other year, The Ultimate Florida Challenge, a 1,200 mile kayak race around Florida. Did you know Florida is an island?” -Joe Baur

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 - Spring Wildflowers of Wenonah: An Earth Day Walk in the Woods
Sunday, April 22, 2012, 9:00 A.M. until mid-afternoon
Trip Leader: Rich Dilks (856) 468-6342**

It has become an informal tradition for the GCNC to host a leisurely spring walk through the Wenonah Conservation Area once every couple of years. That tradition continues this Earth Day as we explore, and celebrate this preserve of natural beauty and diversity so close to home. Wenonah is a historic one square mile borough of stately Victorian homes and quiet streets. Surrounding the town is the Ring of Green - the 135 acre Wenonah Conservation Area, which consists of deciduous woodlands, lakes, streams, wooded swamp and fresh water marsh, all easily accessible by a six mile network of walking trails.



Come and experience the diversity of plant and animal life along these winding trails. See early spring wildflowers such as the Spring Beauty, Trout Lily (left), Marsh Marigold, Wood Anemone and Dwarf Ginseng. Observe the evidence of our thriving beaver colony along Mantua Creek. Hear the cries of a Belted Kingfisher or the soft melody of a Wood Thrush. Bring field glasses if you like and observe a soaring Red-tail or view the many songbirds of the spring woods. On our 2009 walk, we spotted a Bald Eagle, perched along Mantua Creek. See specimens of the 68 species of trees in the Wenonah Conservation Area including stately Tulip Poplars, Chestnut Oak, America Sycamore, Kentucky Coffeetree, the Wenonah Shingle Oaks (the only native stand in New Jersey) and even a small Pawpaw patch. We will see reminders of Wenonah's past: Wenonah Lake - a mill

pond dammed in 1762 to power Dilks' Little Mill, Clay Hill, the ruins of an 1860's railroad trestle, the Green estate amphitheater and the restored teahouse at the north end of Comey's Lake. We will also be visiting the Stone Pool Garden, a recently renovated and redesigned woodland garden featuring native plants. We will be ending our walk at the open air teahouse pavilion.

We will meet at the Wenonah Lake parking lot at W. Maple St. and N. Jefferson Ave. at 9:00 A.M. Insect repellent is advisable. A species list of the wildflowers, ferns, shrubs and trees you can see on the walk will be available for participants.

Directions: From Woodbury-Glassboro Rd. (Rt. 553)- Go west on Maple St., crossing the railroad tracks. At the stop sign at the bottom of the hill, turn right into the Wenonah Lake parking lot. From Rt. 45 – Take Ogden Station Rd. east through the OakValley section of Deptford Twp. (If approaching on Rt. 45 from the north, use the jug handle just past the West Deptford Shop Rite.) After approximately one mile, Ogden Rd. becomes Maple St. You will pass Wenonah Lake on your left. At the stop sign, turn left into the Wenonah Lake parking lot.

**Field Trip Report - Wheelabrator Waste to Energy Facility, Westville
Saturday February 18, 2012 (More Details than last month)**

Our Wheelabrator facility tour began with almost 30 participants meeting our guide, Jerry, in the conference room. Jerry told us a little bit about himself and the Wheelabrator corporation, answered some great questions and then gave the group a general overview of the process from trash trucks dumping their contents to the operation of the turbines to how NJ carefully monitors the plant's emissions. He explained that the plant operates 24/7 and has a contract to accept trash from Gloucester County communities including Mantua and Pitman. After watching a short video where we learned the

technical details about the fires, the turbines, and the generators, one half of our group donned hard hats and safety glasses and followed Jerry to the Control Room.

Meanwhile, the other half of our group took advantage of the sunny 50+ degree day to explore the wildlife sanctuary and wait for the 2nd shift tour. In the Control Room we watched the fires burning on the video monitors and Gerald explained what indicators he looks for to make sure all is running as it should. He explained how the composition and the condition of the trash (wet or dry) effects the burn and why that is important. Next was the Crane Room platform to observe the crane operator build a wall of trash. Jerry explained how important it is to "fluff" the trash to make sure there is air content to ensure a proper burn and to mix up the loads so there is not too much of any one type of trash in any one load going into the fire at one time. The Crane Room overlooks a building full of trash. It reminded me of a stories-tall version of the arcade games where you try to manuever the claw to grab a prize from a pile below. However there is no prize here and to look at a refuse wall taller than most buildings, where you can pick out discrete everyday items that we all throw away like sheets of plastic, pieces of wood, cartons - stuff that we all generate, really made me stop to think about what I could do to waste less. The groups' last stop was in the bowels of the plant among the pipelines to take a look at the fires. Several people noted that there was no ash and how non-smelly it was! We gave Jerry a big Thank You and told him to have a great weekend and we'd see him at Bird Quest! - Jayne Rhynard

Field Trip Report - Delaware Bayshore, March 24, 2012

On this trip to the marshlands south of Dividing Creek, we saw eagles, eagles, and more eagles! Seems like every place we stopped, we saw another half a dozen eagles. Eagles flying. Eagles perched. Old eagles. Young eagles. Bald eagles. Really amazing! Of course, that's not all we saw. Osprey, northern harriers, and red-tailed hawks made their appearance. A great horned owl on an easily-seen nest was a treat! Great blue herons, a scattering of waterfowl, four species of gulls, dunlin, greater yellowlegs, wild turkey, and a few resident passerines rounded out the day's total. The weather was typical for the season – somewhat overcast, a bit breezy, cool but not really cold. The trip was led by Joseph Esterly.

2012 Gloucester County Bird Quest: Saturday May 5, 2012

The Gloucester County Nature Club and co-sponsors invite people of all ages to participate in the **2012 (13th annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest. The 2012 Bird Quest** will take place on **Sat., May 5, 2012 from 7 AM to 12 noon throughout Gloucester County.**

***We are very excited to be in a new location this year for the picnic – Scotland Run Park (Wilson Lake) in Clayton. 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 08312 (directions below).**

See the registration form on the Bird Quest brochure.

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 **Scotland Run Park in Clayton** 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 "Gardening for Nature" 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, 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 at the end of this newsletter.

Kid's Corner - Take a Quest...a Conifer Quest * by Deb Maka

Conifers are trees with cones that hold their seeds. The great thing about conifers is that they stay green all year round. Pines, spruces, cedars, and others are all conifers. Regardless of where you live, there are sure to be some conifers near where you live.

Try going on a conifer quest to determine what members of the conifer family live near you.

To figure this out, you will need to answer some questions.

- Does the tree have thin needles or flattened scale-like leaves?
- If the tree has needles, do they come out of the stem one by one or are they bundled together in groups?
- What shape are the needles? If you roll the needle between your fingers, does it feel round, square-shaped or flat?
- What kind of cones does the tree have? Are they big or small? Long and thin, short and round, or some other shape?



Once you know what questions to ask, it's time to go outside and look at the conifers in your yard or neighborhood park.

* Adapted from: National Wildlife Federation – Be Out There; Go On a Conifer Quest (<http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Activities/Observe-and-Explore/Go-On-A-Conifer-Quest>)

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: April 2012

- April 7 (Saturday) 9:00-11:00 AM. **Awakening to Spring Family Hike.** Sponsored by the Palmyra Cove Nature Park. \$Fee. Reservations required. For information phone 856-825-1900 x 267.
- **Lake Shoreline Plantings:** Get your hands dirty planting natives and installing shoreline buffers at these South Jersey lakes courtesy of a grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Federation. Interested in volunteering? Contact Christine Nolan: 856-881-2269 cnolan@sjlandwater.org.
 - Westville Lake : Saturdays April 14 & April 20, 2012 9:00AM - 1:00 PM
 - Scotland Run : Saturday, April 21, 2012 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM.
- April 14 (Saturday) –10:00 AM – 1:00 PM. **Oldmans Creek Preserve Clean Up Day.** Lend a hand in cleaning up the Oldmans Creek Preserve - 21 Main St. (Rt 551) Auburn, NJ. Sponsored by the South Jersey Land & Water Trust. For more info contact Mike Hogan: 609-476-2086 or email hoganphoto@verizon.net.
- April 15 (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 24 (Tuesday) 10:00 AM-Noon. **Wildflowers and Early Avian Migrants walk at the Smith Woods Section of Smithville County Park, Eastampton.** Sponsored by the Burlington County Park Commission. Free, but registration is required; phone 609-265-5858. Bad weather cancels.
- April 28 (Saturday) 10:00 AM-Noon. **Wildflowers at Holly Hills Golf Course** (now part of Thundergut WMA), Alloway-Friesburg Road, Alloway Township. Leader: Karl Anderson. Sponsored by the Salem County Nature Club. For information: contact leader at 856-845-7075 or e-mail karlanderson6@aol.com.
- April 28 (Saturday) – **Birding at Long Bridge County Park, Burlington County.** Leader: Bob Duke. Sponsored by the Audubon Wildlife Society. For information: www.audubonwildlifesociety.org/.
- April 29 (Sunday) 10:00 AM. **Walk in the Woods: New Jersey Conservation Foundation Franklin Parker Preserve.** Join the SJLWT for a special guided tour of early summer wildflowers at the 9,400 acre Franklin Parker Preserve, a former cranberry and blueberry farm located in the heart of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. Explore pitch pine forests, cedar swamps, streams, ponds, and former blueberry fields and cranberry bogs as we wind along the sand road of land rich with over 50 rare and threatened endangered species including native orchids and a pair of nesting bald eagles. No cost for SJLWT members; \$3 per nonmember. Meet at the Chatsworth Firehouse at the intersection of Rt. 532 and Rt. 563. This hike is a day event; please back a bagged lunch. RSVP required. Contact Mike Hogan 609-476-2086 or email hoganphoto@verizon.net.

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 4/14 at 8:00 AM and Tuesday, 5/15 at 6:00 PM
- 4H Kid's Nature Club: Saturday 4/14 at 10:30 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesdays 4/11 and 5/9 at 10:00 AM
- Scout Saturday: Saturdays 4/21 and 5/12 at 10:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesdays 4/18 and 5/16 at 2:30 PM
- Nature Explorers: Thursdays 5/10 at 4:00 PM and 4/12 at 10:00AM; Saturdays 4/28 at 10AM and 5/19 at 11:00 AM
- Crafting: Wednesdays 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 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:

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.

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.

2012 Programs

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

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

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

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.

Bird Quest 2012 Training Sessions

April 21 (Saturday), 7:00- 8:30 AM Birding the Borders

Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua

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:** 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.*

Leaders: Kris Mollenhauer and Jay Hoffecker

April 22 (Sunday), 6:00 – 7:30 PM Birding Basics

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

Discover the world of birding from bird guides to binoculars, clothing to footwear, etiquette to bird song and of course bird identification as well. Any level of interest is welcome. Questions are encouraged.

***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.*

Leaders: Brian Hayes and Rich Dilks

April 23 (Monday), 7:00 – 8:30 AM Woodland Birds and Bird calls

Ceres Park, Mantua Twp.

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 or sight (or both). There is some water here which can increase the number of species possible. ***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.*

Leaders: Jayne Rhynard and Barry Bengel

April 25 (Wednesday), 6:00 - 7:30 PM Introduction to Gardening for Wildlife

Wheelabrator Refuge, Westville

We will share tips for ensuring wildlife will find your yard irresistible. A yard of any size can provide important habitat to birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. We will provide you with a framework that will show you how any yard can be transformed into a backyard habitat for a variety of animals. Examine a newly installed butterfly garden and learn about the effort Wheelabrator is making to restore habitat for Bob White. **Directions:** Access from Rt 130, opposite Hazel Ave in Westville, just south of Big Timber Creek. Meet at the pavilion in parking lot on the right just before the guard station.

Leaders: Karen Kravchuck and Paula Hayes

April 28 (Saturday) 8:00- 9:30 AM Attracting Wildlife to your Backyard

Doris and Dwight Weir's Backyard

Come see how Doris and Dwight attract a wide variety of birds to their backyard. They will share how they use feeders and plants to ensure birds and other wildlife visit and return to their yard. This yard takes advantage of a wooded area behind the house and with careful planning provides turkeys and woodpeckers with food and cover. Come see how a few small changes can add up to a big difference. **Directions:** Take route 42 South and turn right onto Greentree Road. Turn right onto Hurffville Road. Take Hurffville Road to the Wedgewood Country Club and turn right onto Wilson Road. Take the 3rd right onto Bryant Road and then make an almost immediate left onto Forest Drive. Take the 2nd left onto Brae Ct. They live at 24 Brae Court, Turnersville.

Leaders: Doris and Dwight Weir

April 29 (Sunday) 7:00- 8:30 AM Attracting Wildlife to your Backyard

Ron and Linda Kegel's Backyard

Ron and Linda live in a typical suburban development, but their yard and its visitors are not so typical. They have chosen plants and designed their yard to maximize every bit of space. They have breeding bluebirds, tree swallows and several other songbirds. Ron will share his "yard list" which will certainly inspire participants in this trip to think differently about birding in their own yard. **Directions:** From route 47 south in Clayton, make a left onto Academy Street (towards Scotland Run Park). After 1 mile make a right onto East Ave. Go ½ mile and turn right into Countryside Development (Moore Blvd.), make the first right onto Countryside Circle. They live at 3 Countryside Circle, Clayton.

Leaders: Ron and Linda Kegel

May 2 (Wednesday), 7:00-8:00 AM Birds of Local Waterways

Old Pine Farm, Deptford

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 North onto Rankin Ave. Follow to end and park. Walk down woods road to the Big Timber Creek.

Leaders: Ed & Millie Cleary

May 2 (Wednesday) 6:00 – 7:30 PM River access and creating Bobwhite habitat

Wheelabrator Refuge, Westville

Explore the newly restored Bobwhite (a type of quail) habitat. This location has many different types of habitat including access to the Delaware River and the mouth of the Big Timber Creek. Waterfowl, orioles, warblers, eagles and scrub species are fairly common. Often a good stop to find migrant birds. **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.

Leaders: Bob Duke and Loretta Dunne