



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

April 2016

Program - A Panama Adventure

**Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 7:00pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church,
Wenonah, NJ (directions below)**

Presenter: Barbara Bassett

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Last year, Barb Bassett spent twelve days in Panama, starting with a week in the Canopy Camp Darien, and wrapping up with a five-night stay at the famous Canopy Tower. It was a private tour led by Mark Garland. (For a sneak preview of some of the photos, check out his website, www.mgnature.com) The trip not only featured birds but a variety of flora and fauna, including sloths, an anteater, and howler monkeys. Panama is the southernmost Central American country situated on the isthmus that links Central and South America. It is bisected by the famous Panama Canal. The country is longer east to west than north to south.



The adventure starts in Panama City. Barb will take us to Miraflores Locks and the Panama Canal museum. Next, the journey continues along the Panamerican Highway to the Darien province. The Darién, as the entire eastern-most region of Panama is called, is perhaps the most diverse and species-rich region of Central America. Long coveted by avid birders as an impenetrable haven for rare species, this region is now readily accessible by a highway extending through the spine of Panama right into the heart of this bird-rich land. At the Canopy Camp Darien, which is entirely sustained by solar energy, the accommodations were in safari-style tents. The protected forests of the Filo del Tallo Hydrological Reserve surround the camp. This provided a terrific central point for the daily excursions, including a visit to the local indian village. One highlight was a visit each night by a rare hummingbird: the Ruby Topaz.



Next, it was back along the Panamerican Highway to the bird-rich, lowland tropical forests of the Canal Zone. Along the way was a stop at the San Francisco Reserve, a private forest reserve owned and managed by the St. Francis Foundation, covering 1,300 acres. Lodging and our base of operations was the Canopy Tower. The tower was built in 1965 by the United States Air Force to house a powerful radar used in the defense of the Panama Canal. It served other purposes until it was transferred in

1996 to Panama. The tower was then transformed into a eco-lodge and is surrounded by Soberania National Park. The Observation Deck, on the top floor, gave 360 degree views of the surrounding forests and provided "canopy birding". Areas visited from here included Pipeline Road, Semaphore Hill, Plantation Trail, Summit Ponds, and the Ammo Ponds. Throughout the trip over 200 different species of birds were recorded. Coupled with the mammals, insects, tropical plants, and superb company made this a truly unforgettable trip!

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).

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 East 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.

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.



Conservation Corner by Suzan Delozier

WEBSITES FOR MONARCHS AND THEIR FRIENDS

Getting closer and closer to warm weather, our anticipation grows as we wait for the first monarchs in our gardens. Be on the lookout for the first adult, first egg, first larva and even the first milkweed you observe and report the date on Journey North learner.org/jnorth/. Other wildlife tracked on this site are hummingbirds, singing frogs, earthworms, bats and more.

A second online site that asks for public involvement is the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project mlmp.org/. This site has valuable training videos to help you identify all the life stages of a monarch and understand its truly amazing cycle of breeding, migrating and overwintering. As a citizen scientist you may monitor milkweed patches on a regular basis and report your observations or you may submit anecdotal observations.

The third site is eButterfly e-butterfly.org/#/ where butterfly watchers can input their observations for all butterflies. Participants are able to keep track of their personal butterfly sightings as well as store and share photos, all the while contributing to science and conservation. All of these online sites are fun to explore and they offer a wealth of information.

Remember to plant some common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) and swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) in your garden. These plants are native to our area and milkweeds are the only plants on which monarchs will lay their eggs. Prairie Nursery (I have ordered from them in the past prairienursery.com) offers milkweed plants. You may also start plants from seed, but swamp milkweed seeds need a month in the refrigerator (see monarchwatch.org/milkweed/prop.htm for propagation information. This site also offers plants by the flat.)

GOOD NEWS: According to World Wildlife Fund Mexico and as reported by the Associated Press, monarchs covered 10 acres (up from 2.8 acres in 2014 and low of 1.6 acres in 2013) in their wintering grounds in Mexico! Yet twenty years ago the butterflies covered nearly 20 acres. More milkweed is needed across America to get the population to a place where it can absorb losses in a bad year. This leads us to our fourth website, monarchjointventure.org/get-involved, where you'll find more info on choosing, planting and caring for milkweed and nectar plants in your garden.

STOP DAMAGE TO WHARTON STATE FOREST

Last year, the South Jersey Land and Water Trust along with other conservation organizations worked to advocate for a Motorized Access Plan, (MAP), to reduce the damage caused by illegal off-road vehicle traffic in Wharton State Forest. This problem is ongoing as the destruction of these natural areas continues. To see a blog post that covers the extensive damage and the ongoing fight to stop it, go to <http://www.wolfenotes.com/2016/02/anarchy-in-the-pines/>. To continue this fight, South Jersey Land and Water Trust will need your help! Please visit <http://www.saveh2onj.org/takeaction/support-wharton-state-forest-plan/> to show your support for the Wharton MAP plan which will work to stop the illegal destruction of vernal pools and other natural habitats. Show your support by visiting this link, then please help us spread the word!

ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS

The National Audubon Society has sent out an alert concerning albatrosses and petrels which are some of the most endangered birds on the planet. These birds spend most of their lives on the open ocean and all too often suffer a tragic death after becoming hooked on fishing lines or, as we saw in the documentary "Bag It", after ingesting plastic. To ensure the survival of these magnificent birds, we need international cooperation. The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) coordinates and advances protections for these birds, but the United States has yet to sign on. Now, legislation has been introduced into the US House of Representative (HR4480) that would enable the U.S. to join this treaty. Please ask your representative to sign on to this bill.

JUPITER AT OPPOSITION

Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system, has been putting on quite a show lately. It is the brightest object in the night sky (excluding the moon, of course, and Venus which rises shortly before sunrise) and easily spotted looking south toward the constellation Leo. The planet attained opposition on March 8th, which meant that it was opposite the sun in the sky and thus visible all night. It is still in good position for using a small telescope or good pair of binoculars to see the four largest of Jupiter's moons — the same moons that Galileo was the first to observe in 1610.

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: April 2016

- April 2, 2016 (Saturday), 10:00am -**Walk In the Woods: Spring Birding Walk at Tall Pines Preserve.** Join SJLWT for the first event at the NEWLY PRESERVED Tall Pines Preserve, Gloucester County's first nature reserve! This former 110-acre golf course was approved for the construction of over 100 houses before it was preserved in November 2015. The property features trails, forests and meadows, as well as areas for jogging, cycling, picnicking and birdwatching. Bring your binoculars and camera for this birding walk. This event is FREE for SJLWT members and \$3 per nonmember; please RSVP by emailing mhoganphoto@verizon.net.
- April 25, 2016 (Monday), 7:00 pm at the Woodbury Library – **Fracking and the Food System** The South Jersey Vegetarian Society and Food and Water Watch will host a discussion “Fracking and the Food System” about the effects of hydraulic fracking on agriculture and rural communities.

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 8:30am. 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 4/13 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 4/23 at 10:00am. A great way for scouts to earn their naturalist and forestry badges.
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 4/20 at 2:30pm. Take a leisurely walk through the park on one of the beautiful trails.

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:

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

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.

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 April Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday, April 10th at the home of Karen Kravchuck. Please contact Karen 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 26 (Tuesday) 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