



# Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public.

April 2018

## **Program - Exploring the Birds of Ecuador**

Thursday, April 12, 2018 at 7:00pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenters: Marilyn Henry and Jeff Mollenhauer

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

The relatively small country of Ecuador (about the size of Colorado), located along the equator in South America, is truly a birding paradise. More than 1600 species of birds have been recorded within its borders, including more than 125 species of hummingbirds alone. In fact, Ecuador actually has the most biological diversity per square kilometer of any nation! Presenters Marilyn Henry and Jeff Mollenhauer will take us on a journey from the foothills on the Pacific slope of Ecuador into the Andes Mountains and then down to the Amazon River basin. Along the way Marilyn and Jeff will highlight some of their favorite locations, bird species, and stories from their trips.



Marilyn visited Ecuador in November 2014 as part of an 18-day tour organized by the Delaware Nature Society and Rockjumper Birding Tours, while Jeff did a 13-day solo trip to Ecuador in August 2016. The program will focus on some of the similarities and differences between their two trips such as how they prepared for the possibility of altitude sickness in the high peaks of the Andes Mountains!

**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).

## **2018 Gloucester County Bird Quest: Saturday May 5, 2018**

The Gloucester County Nature Club and co-sponsors invite people of all ages to participate in the **2018 (19th annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest**. This year Bird Quest will take place on **Sat. May 5, from 7 AM to 12 noon throughout Gloucester County**.

We are pleased to return to Scotland Run Park (Wilson Lake) in Clayton for our picnic and gathering. 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 08312 (directions below).

See the separate enrollment form on the Bird Quest 2018 flyer, available on the Nature Club website at [www.gcnatureclub.org/birdquest.htm](http://www.gcnatureclub.org/birdquest.htm).

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, educational material, and prizes.**

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.
  - 7:00-9:15: 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
  - 9:45-11:15: 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.

Last year's Gloucester County Bird Quest attracted participants from across the county organized in teams representing schools, scout troops, environmental commissions, families and friends. Each year the Club holds pre-Quest field and classroom trainings, attracting 15-30 persons each, in which local experts help new birders learn to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat. The winning team in 2017 located 102 species in 5 hours!!! A wonderful effort when you consider all teams saw a total of 128 species but everyone was a winner

because of how much they learned about birds and the natural areas of Gloucester County through this fun, educational event.

**This year we have developed educational materials including a Quest t-shirt with original artwork featuring the Bald Eagle, the symbol of our nation and a great conservation success story. We will provide educational materials on conservation success.** These materials will have lasting educational value for teachers, students, and the general public. **The \$15 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](http://www.gcnatureclub.org). For more information, join a team or reserve a seat on the bus, contact Brian Hayes at [bkhayesoutdoors@gmail.com](mailto:bkhayesoutdoors@gmail.com) or 856.649.8723.

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.

**Bluebird Box Monitors Needed** - Can you help us grow the bluebird population in Gloucester County? These projects are being done in partnership between the NJ Bluebird Society and GCNC. Training will be provided, if needed. There are two locations that need monitoring help:

- **Washington Lake Park:** The Washington Township Environmental Commission is seeking volunteers to help monitor bluebird boxes in Washington Lake Park and several other locations in the community. Please contact us at [WTEC@twp.washington.nj.us](mailto:WTEC@twp.washington.nj.us) ("Bluebirds" in the subject line) to volunteer or to learn more.
- **Tall Pines State Preserve:** The Friends of Tall Pines needs volunteers to help monitor boxes at Tall Pines State Preserve: Please contact Rich Dilks at (856) 468-6342 to volunteer or to learn more.



### Events by other Organizations: April 2018

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.

- Nature Tots: Tuesdays at 9:00am:
  - 4/3 – April Fool You
  - 4/10 – Aril Showers
  - 4/17 – Earth Day
  - 4/24 – Lake Study



### **23rd Annual Optics Sale at New Jersey Audubon's, Cape May Bird Observatory**

**April 14 & 15, 2018**

**9:00 am – 5:00 pm**

600 Route 47 North

Cape May Court House, NJ 08210

*We look forward to getting the best optics into your hands, whether it is your first binocular or scope, or an upgrade to your dream optics. Hope to see you then!"*

## 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.

## Conservation Corner by Suzan Delozier

### UPDATE ON MONARCHS

In Mexico, the wintering health of monarchs is measured by the area in hectares that they occupy (one hectare is approximately 1.47 acres). This winter the area occupied was 2.48 hectares, down 14.77% from the previous winter. According to Monarch Joint Venture, storms along the Atlantic coast last fall may have contributed to the decrease. Also, late warm weather may have delayed migration causing fewer butterflies to reach Mexico. For more information see <https://monarchjointventure.org/news-events/news/eastern-monarch-overwintering-population-numbers-announced>.

Monarch Joint Venture also states that a minimum area needed in Mexico for a stable population is 6 hectares and that an additional 1.6 billion milkweed stems are needed in the US along with a diversity of nectar plants. Please consider putting common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) and/or butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) in your garden along with some beautiful nectar plants. See <http://monarchjointventure.org/get-involved/create-habitat-for-monarchs> for help creating a habitat for monarchs.

Mid to late March is when the butterflies depart their winter sanctuary and begin their flight north. **Both host and nectar plants are needed by monarchs and other butterflies and pollinators.** The Monarch Watch web page <http://monarchwatch.org/garden/plant-list-monarchwatch.pdf> is an excellent source for identifying host and nectar plants that are suitable for northeast gardens. The Xerces Society has a plant list for the Mid-Atlantic States located at [http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/MidAtlanticPlantList\\_web.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/MidAtlanticPlantList_web.pdf).

Report your sightings of monarch butterflies, caterpillars and milkweed to Journey North at <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/monarch/SpringWatch.html>.

### PALM OIL AND THE RAINFOREST

The Rainforest Action Network (RAN) reports that the last female white rhino in Malaysia is struggling to survive due to the destruction of the rainforest for the production of “conflict palm oil”. Conflict palm oil is defined as a product whose production causes rainforest destruction and blatant violations of human rights including the land rights of native peoples. Consumers can play a role by not buying products with palm oil, however, this is difficult to do since nearly any food you eat directly from the box, can, or bag (ice cream, canned soup, doughnuts, frozen meals, potato chips for example) contains palm oil. RAN’s website provides information on wildlife species and

forest communities affected by conflict palm oil, products that contain known conflict palm oil, different labeling schemes used by food companies and help for the concerned consumer.

There is still hope for the white rhino population in Indonesia but, sadly, that country has announced plans to convert rainforest the size of Missouri into palm oil plantations. See [ran.org/palm\\_oil](http://ran.org/palm_oil), [goldmanprize.org/blog/power-end-conflict-palm-oil-hands/](http://goldmanprize.org/blog/power-end-conflict-palm-oil-hands/) and [poig.org](http://poig.org) for more information.

## **GRASSLANDS AND THE 2018 FARM BILL**

The American Bird Conservancy asks that we write our Congressional representatives and tell them to support and strengthen conservation measures in the 2018 farm bill such as the Regional Conservation Partnership Program's restoration project which particularly benefits grassland birds (see Feb.2018 newsletter). You may find a pre-written letter that you may send at <https://abcbirds.org/action/petition-farm-bill?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=869dd2b4-c912-4a65-bf5e-0cb668a1ac88>.

## **WHERE TO FIND NATIVE PLANTS IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY**

Pat Sutton has provided a list of plant sellers who deal in native plants that are safe for pollinators. By safe, we mean plants that have not been treated with chemicals such as neonicotinoids (neonics) which are systemic pesticides that find their way into every section of a plant including nectar. Pat also says to be careful buying cultivars of native plants since the specific characteristic sought in the cultivar may be at the expense of nectar needed by pollinators. She also warns that leaf chemistry may be changed in a cultivar and the leaf may no longer be edible to pollinator larva. See <http://www.patsuttonwildlifegarden.com/some-sources-native-plants/> for more information and the list of plant sellers.

### **Looking Ahead:**

Listed below are the remaining programs we have lined up for the 2017-2018 season. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

May 10, 2018. **Annual Plant Sale** followed by **Program: Pollinators and the Plants They Pollinate** - Joe Kiefer, Triple Oaks Nursery

June 10, 2018: **GCNC Annual Picnic** at The Village Dock Campground, Franklinville, NJ, followed by Program: **The Plight of the Bobwhite and Our Efforts to Save It** - South Jersey Quail Project

### **2018 GCNC Field Trips**

Listed below are the remaining field trips we have lined up for the 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](mailto:pnbhayes@gmail.com).

May 5, 2018 - **Bird Quest**

June 15, 2018 - **Horseshoe Crab Walk**

## **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](mailto: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](mailto:sharkeyes@comcast.net) or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.
- The April Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday April 8<sup>th</sup> at the home of Erik & Kris Mollenhauer. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.

## **Bird Quest Training Sessions 2018**

### **Please note that there are AM and PM sessions!**

**April 15 (Sunday) 6 P.M. to Dusk**

**Birding Basics**

**Alcyon Lake Park**

**Track Ave. Pitman, NJ 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 & Suzan DeLozier**

**April 16 (Monday) 6:30 – 8 P.M.**

**Birding by Ear — Part 1 “An Introduction to Birdcalls”**

**Jack Sheppard Community Center (historic train station)**

**E. Mantua Ave & N. East Ave, Wenonah, NJ 08090**

In a classroom 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.

**Leaders: Brian Hayes and Jeff Mollenhauer**

**April 19 (Thursday) 6 P.M. to Dusk**

**Old Pine Natural Lands Trust**

**400 Rankin Ave., Deptford, NJ 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 Cleary & Erik Mollenhauer**

**April 21 (Saturday) 8 – 9:30 A.M.**

**Chestnut Branch Park**

**545 Main Street, Mantua, NJ 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 wildflower garden, beyond the basketball court.*

**Leaders: Bob Duke and Jay Hoffecker**

**April 23 (Monday) - 6:30 to Dusk**

**Junior Birding**

**Alcyon Lake Park**

**Track Ave. Pitman, NJ 08071 (off W. Holly Avenue)**

This field trip is designed to introduce young birders to the "sport." Binoculars to borrow will be available to all participants on this trip. As they enjoy 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 & Maria Keefe.**

**April 24 (Tuesday) 7 - 8:30 A.M.**

**Tall Pines State Preserve**

**Bark Bridge Rd., Sewell, NJ 08080**

Gloucester County's only state park, 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 left. Please do not park at Hutchinson Cabinets.*

**Leaders: Rich Dilks and Erik Mollenhauer**

**April 26 (Thursday) 6 P.M. to Dusk**

**Red Bank Battlefield Park**

**100 Hessian Avenue National Park, 08063**

Located on the Delaware River, this 44-acre site of the Revolutionary War Battle of Red Bank is a developed, passive park with the remains of Fort Mercer. The park provides excellent views of the Delaware River and surrounding bird life. From the parking lot, walk through the park looking and listening for the typical birds found in the spring such as woodpeckers, blue jays, northern cardinals, Carolina wrens, sparrows, and swallows. Next scan the river for gulls, cormorants and possible lingering winter ducks. There is a bald eagle nest nearby. Special emphasis will be placed on learning the songs and calls of common species, and ID tips for crows (American, fish), blackbirds (red-winged, grackle, brown headed cowbird), waterfowl (mallard, bufflehead, mergansers, black duck, grebes) and the common gull species (laughing, herring, ring-billed, great black backed).

**Directions:** *Meet at the pavilion closest to the river.*

**Leaders: Barb Bassett & Dennis DiMarco**

**April 27 (Friday) 7:30 – 9 A.M.**

**Washington Lake Park**

**626 Hurffville-Crosskeys Rd, Sewell, NJ 08080**

This is the largest municipal park in New Jersey and in spring it comes alive with songbird and raptor migrants adding to the year-round residents. Red-winged Blackbirds and Canada Geese are nesting around the lakes. Many migrants begin nesting in the woods, especially near the streams, and the Bluebirds are active around their boxes. **Directions:** *Meet at the parking lot by the amphitheater*

**Leaders: Barb Bassett & Jayne Rhynard**

**April 28 (Saturday) 7:30 – 9 A.M.**

**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 29 (Sunday) 8 – 10 A.M.**

**Ron & Linda's 8 Lakes Tour**

**Scotland Run Park**

**980 E Academy St, Clayton, NJ 08312**

Something new for BQ Training — Ron & Linda's 8 Lakes Tour — Caravan to check out 8 lakes in the eastern half of the county! Starting at Wilson Lake at Scotland Run Park, travel to Sun Haven Dr. Pond, Silver Lake, Lake Garrison, Idle Acres Lake, Franklinville Lake, Malaga Lake, and Iona Lake looking for waterfowl (including lingering species), Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron and other wading birds, and "Tweety" birds that frequent water's edge and surrounding areas. Some lakes afford parking and viewing, while others will allow a slow drive by. The trip is approximately 25-30 miles and will run a little more than 2 hours.

***Directions:** Meet at the Wilson Lake side of the Scotland Run parking lot. We will carpool/caravan from there.*

**Leaders: Ron & Linda Kegel and Scott Henderson**

**April 30 (Monday) 6:30 – 8 P.M.**

**Birding by Ear — Part 2 "To Pish or Not to Pish, That is the Question."**

**Jack Sheppard Community Center (historic train station)**

**E. Mantua Ave & N. East Ave, Wenonah, NJ 08090**

Learn more mnemonics and "tricks of the trade" to identify birds by their songs and calls. Learn about Pishing — What is it? Who does it? Is it right for you? This is a great session for novices and those that would like to brush-up on their "Birding by Ear" skills.

**Leaders: Brian Hayes and Jeff Mollenhauer**

**THERE ARE 2 BQ TRAINING SESSIONS ON MAY 1<sup>st</sup> — 7:30 AM & 6:30 PM**

**May 1 (Tuesday) 7:30 – 9 A.M.**

**Piney Hollow Preserve**

**Piney Hollow Rd., Franklin Twp. 08344**

Wetlands forested with Atlantic white cedar, uplands covered with mostly oak-pine forest and the 40acre McCarthy's Lake — once a cranberry bog — are what you will find at this underdeveloped preserve in the southern part of the county. Barred owl, prothonotary, yellow throated, pine and prairie warblers, yellow-throated vireo, scarlet tanagers, and Eastern towhee are among the birds on the site.

***Directions:** Meet in the parking lot.*

**Leader: Dan Ceravolo**

**May 1 (Tuesday) 6:30 P.M. to Dusk**

**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 Nature Trail and, if time allows, continue along the Delaware River. Look for migrating warblers, scarlet tanagers, hawks and maybe a bald eagle!

***Directions;** Turn onto RiverWinds Drive. Go approx. 1000 ft. then turn right at the Nature Trail sign.*

**Leaders: Gary Lizzi & Gale Cannon**

**May 2 (Wednesday) 7:30 - 9 A.M.**

**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 may 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 the parking lot.*

**Leaders: Kris Mollenhauer and Marilyn Henry**