



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

April 2023

Program: Getting to the Source of Our Native Plants: Does Provenance Matter?

Presenter: Dr. Daniel Duran, Assistant Professor, Rowan U; Naturalist, Scotland Run Park

Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

As native plants gain popularity in the horticultural trade, there are important issues and challenges that need to be considered. The potential for genetic exchange between cultivated native plants and wild plant populations means that our landscaping decisions have impacts beyond the boundaries of our yards. Does the geographic source of a plant matter as long as it's a native species? Are cultivars of native species equivalent to naturally occurring populations? These topics will be discussed and recommendations given to help native plant enthusiasts make better-informed decisions for the long-term survival of native species.

Daniel P. Duran, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Science at Rowan University, as well as the naturalist for Scotland Run Park, a 1300-acre nature preserve at the edge of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. He has published research papers on agricultural entomology, biodiversity, and molecular phylogenetics. Duran has described 10 new species of insects previously unknown to science. He earned a B.S. in environmental science from Stockton University, an M.S. in entomology from the University of Missouri and a Ph.D. in evolution and ecology from Vanderbilt University. In between his degrees, he has also worked for the Natural History Museum, London, UK and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. Duran is a co-author of the book "A Field Guide to the Tiger Beetles of the United States and Canada, 2nd Edition.



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).

BIRD QUEST IS COMING SOON: Saturday May 6, 2023

The club invites people of all ages to participate in the **23rd Annual Gloucester County Bird Quest** taking place on **Saturday, May 6th from 7 AM to 12 noon** throughout Gloucester County. After a bit of a washout last year, we will plan once again for a full-featured event including: **T-shirts, expert-led walks, and an in-person outdoor gathering with lunch.**



What exactly is Bird Quest? It is several things:

- A way to discover the unique birds that live in and pass through our county.
- A way to discover local parks and natural areas.
- 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 where 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. During the noon hour, all participants gather at an outdoor pavilion at the WIN/Wheelabrator Wildlife Refuge in Westville for lunch, t-shirts, story swapping, and door prizes.

How you can participate: There are some options:

- You can form a team, plan your route, and record the bird species you see or hear between 7 AM and noon.
- For some variety join our guided walks in various natural places in Gloucester County led 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.
 - 7:00-9:15: Tall Pines State Preserve: From the intersection of Rt 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd) and Mantua Ave in Wenonah (and Holy Nativity Lutheran Church), travel south on Rt 553 to the next traffic light at Bark Bridge Rd. Turn right onto Bark Bridge Rd. then in 200ft turn left into the parking lot to meet there. There are no restrooms at Tall Pines.
 - 9:30-11:00: Riverwinds: From Route 44 in West Deptford take Delaware St which becomes Riverwinds Drive upon entering the Riverwinds Complex. Drive past the community center, stay to the left, and park in the parking lot just before the Riverwinds restaurant entrance.
 - 11:15-12:15: WIN/Wheelabrator Wildlife Refuge in Westville (also the picnic location): Access from Rt 130 – opposite Hazel Ave in Westville, just south of Big Timber Creek. Turn into the Butterfly Garden Parking area to park for the Pavilion and meeting area.
- Team leaders should be sure to enter the species found at birdquest.gcnatureclub.org by 12:30 PM. We prefer not to collect paper checklists.



How to register: Registration will take place online, not using paper forms and checks. The cost is \$15 per person, payable by credit/debit card. Each participant will receive a 2023 “Birds On The Move” 100% Cotton T-shirt as shown above, available in both youth and adult sizes. We ask that team leaders strive to enter one “order” with the names and shirt sizes for their team. The website birdquest.gcnatureclub.org is open now! The deadline to register is **Saturday, April 29th**. Shirts will need to be picked up at WIN/Wheelabrator on May 6th, or at the regular May club meeting in Wenonah on Thursday, May 11th.

How to get ready for May 6th:

- Join one or more of the 10 free, friendly training sessions this month; the schedule is elsewhere in this newsletter and on [Meetup](#).
- At the Bird Quest website birdquest.gcnatureclub.org you will be able to find the rules, our traditional paper checklists (for use in the field), and general info about the event.
- The club’s “Natural Places” book can guide you to 35 publicly-accessible natural areas around the county, many of which are good bird habitats. Check [the club’s website](#) to find a copy for sale near you.

If you have questions, please contact event coordinator Scott Barnes via email at birdquest@gcnatureclub.org or by leaving a message at 856-468-4174. Messages will generally be returned during non-business hours.

Happy spring birding!

Save the Date!

Saturday May 6, 2023 - Gloucester County Bird Quest

The 23rd Annual Gloucester County Bird Quest will be held on the first Saturday in May. The theme this year will be "Birds on the Move" in recognition of humanity's increasing knowledge and appreciation of bird migration. The basic schedule will be the same as last year, only this time without a windy rainstorm (we hope): birding from 7 AM to noon, followed by a lunch gathering at Wheelabrator in Westville. There will be a new T-shirt design as well. We'll put full info including registration details in the April newsletter.

June 24, 2023 - Gloucester County Firefly Festival

This year’s Gloucester County Firefly Festival will be held at Tall Pines Preserve on Saturday, June 24th at 8:00 pm. The details will be in the May and June newsletters.

Nature Notes

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.

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 20th of the preceding month.

YOUTUBE CHANNEL: We are now posting recordings of recent club programs for the convenience of members and the public. To find the club's channel, use [this link](#) or search for the club's full name within YouTube. 14 videos are now available, including these recent additions:



- [Costa Rica: The Destination We Didn't Know We'd Love](#) (November 2022)
- [Hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu \(January 2023\)](#)

Be sure to subscribe to the club's channel and "like" the videos so they will get recommended to more people! We will continue recording programs during this club year whenever permitted by speakers and their sponsoring organizations.

Bird Quest Training Sessions 2023

April 16 (Sunday) 6 PM - 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 & Karen Kravchuck

April 18 (Tuesday) 8 - 9 AM

WIN (formerly Wheelabrator) Refuge

600 Crown Point Rd, Westville, NJ 08093

At the intersection of the Delaware River and Big Timber Creek, the wide-open space behind the WIN plant is great habitat for swamp, meadow and river birds. 200 species have been recorded at the site. Trails and old roads make access easy.

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: Marilyn Henry & Lloyd Shaw

April 20 (Thursday) 7:30 - 9 AM

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. At least 158 species of birds, including the Bald Eagle 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 22 (Saturday) 8 – 9:30 AM

Fasola Park

12 Sycamore Lane, Deptford Township, NJ 08096

Part of the Deptford Township park system, wooded areas and open areas make space for quite a few species in this more suburban park landscape. Look for possible woodpeckers, bluebird, turkey, kinglet, several sparrow flavors, phoebe, and Eastern wood pee wee. Raptors including Coopers, Red-shouldered and sharp shinned hawks, merlin, and black vultures might be seen. The paved paths make it an easy walk.

Directions: From Delsea Drive, turn east onto Sycamore Lane. At the circle, take the 2nd exit and park in the 1st parking lot on the right.

Leaders: Jayne Rhynard and Karen Kravchuck

April 26 (Wednesday) 6 – 8 PM

George Eldridge Trail

E. Pine St, Wenonah, NJ 08090

Eldridge Trail is part of the Wenonah Conservation Area, a ring of green that extends nearly the entire circumference of the town. Look and listen for spring migrants.

Directions: From E. Mantua Ave, turn south onto S. Princeton Avenue and continue to the intersection of South Princeton and East Pine. Park at the trailhead, just east of the intersection on E. Pine St

Leaders: Brian & Paula Hayes

April 27 (Thursday) 7:30 - 9 AM

Glassboro Woods (WMA)

202 Carpenter Ave., Clayton NJ

This wildlife management area, which is a 2337 acre forest accompanied by swamps and open fields boast chances to see vast variety of warblers and other bird species including worm-eating warbler, barred owl, LA waterthrush, prothonotary warbler, BH vireo, and broad-wing hawk.

Directions: From Glassboro, take Route 47 (Delsea Drive) south 1.2 miles past Route 322. Turn left onto East Stanger Avenue. Proceed 0.4 miles to the end of the paved road in front of 245 East Stanger Avenue. Note that "245 Stanger Avenue" may take you to an incorrect location.

Leaders: Kris & Erik Mollenhauer

April 29 (Saturday) 7:30 - 9 AM

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. Many migrants begin nesting in the woods, especially near the streams, and the bluebirds are active around their boxes. More than 20 species of warblers have been identified here. This event is being jointly held with the Washington Township Environmental Commission.

Directions: Meet at parking lot E by the amphitheater, accessible from either entrance.

Leaders: Marie Hageman & Jayne Rhynard

May 3 (Wednesday) 8 – 9:30 AM

Scotland Run Park

980 E. Academy St., Clayton, NJ 08312

Scotland Run Park, the largest of the county parks, spans over 1000 acres and includes the 80 acre Wilson lake. 143 species of birds have been recorded here, including 25 species of warblers. This is a great place and the right time to enjoy the spring migration!

Directions: Take exit 45 off route 55 to Centerton- Clayton. Make a left onto Buck Road (Rt. 553). Make a right at the first traffic light onto Academy Road (Rt. 610). Take Academy Road for 2 miles crossing over route 47 and Fries Mill Road. Just beyond Fries Mill Road turn right into the Nature Center parking lot. Address for GPS: 980 East Academy Street, Clayton NJ.

Leaders: Marilyn Henry & Marie Hageman

May 4 (Thursday) 6 PM - Dusk

RiverWinds Park

1000 RiverWinds Drive, Thorofare, NJ 08086

Riverside shrubs and forested areas along the Delaware River make for great birding here. Look for migrating warblers, scarlet tanagers, hawks and maybe a bald eagle!

Directions; Turn onto RiverWinds Drive. Drive past the community center and park in the parking lot just before the RiverWinds restaurant.

Leaders: Gary Lizzi & Lloyd Shaw

***** THERE ARE 2 BQ TRAINING SESSIONS FOR RIVERWINDS *****

MAY 4 at 6 PM and MAY 5 at 6 AM

***** The meeting places are different *****

May 5 (Friday) 6 - 7:30 AM

RiverWinds Park — As Different as Night and Day???

1000 RiverWinds Drive, Thorofare, NJ 08086

Yes, we had a training session here last evening, but here is a chance to compare what you might find at the same spot, but at a different time of day!

Look for scarlet tanager, magnolia warbler, blackburnian warbler, ovenbird, black-throated green warbler and many other migrants.

Directions; Turn onto RiverWinds Drive. Go approx. 1000 ft. to meet in the Riverwinds Nature Trail parking lot.

Leaders: Dan & Danny Ceravolo