



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

May 2022

Program: The Big Year Eco-Challenge

Thursday May 12, 2022 at 7:00 P.M. at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Presenters:: Big Year Eco-Challenge Coordinator, Jeff Mollenhauer, Erik Mollenhauer and additional BYEC participants..



From January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, teams of volunteers regularly visited five local parks to document all the species of plants, animals and fungi found there. The five parks were Ceres Park (Mantua Twp), Elephant Swamp Trail (Pittsgrove Twp), Piney Hollow (Franklin Twp), RiverWinds Park (West Deptford) and Tall Pines State Preserve.

Participants used cell phones and cameras to document their finds. Photos and sound recordings were uploaded to the "iNaturalist" website for verification by local and international experts. iNaturalist technology enables ordinary people to become experienced naturalists. Their discoveries are now a permanent record of what was found in those parks in 2021.

Some teams documented over 1,000 species, including species not previously reported in Gloucester County... or New Jersey... or the world. An 18-minute film which tells the story of The Big Year Eco-Challenge can be viewed at: <https://vimeo.com/6852281599>.

Big Year Eco-Challenge Coordinator, Jeff Mollenhauer will give a photo presentation on some of the interesting organisms seen at the 5 BYEC sites in our area. Several members of the 2021 Big Year Eco-Challenge observer teams will then share their experiences over the year and talk about the discoveries they made at natural sites here in Gloucester and Salem Counties.



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 BACK: Saturday May 7, 2022

The club invites people of all ages to participate in the **22nd Annual Gloucester County Bird Quest** taking place on **Saturday, May 7th from 7 AM to 12 noon** throughout Gloucester County. After a socially-distanced Bird Quest in 2021, we are pleased to bring back a more full-featured event including: **T-shirts, expert-led walks, and an in-person 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 WIN Waste Innovations (formerly Wheelabrator) 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 .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 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 2nd driveway on your right (just past 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. Like in 2021, we will not be collecting paper checklists.

How to register – NEW: 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 2022 “Birds of Gloucester County” 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 will be available starting April 4th. The deadline to register is **Saturday, April 30th**. Shirts will need to be picked up at WIN/Wheelabrator on May 7th, or at the regular May club meeting in Wenonah on Thursday, May 12th.

How to get ready for May 7th:

- Join one or more of the 12 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.

For more information, 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!

YOUTUBE CHANNEL: *We are now posting full 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. Six videos are now available, including these recent additions:*



- [Edible Wild Plants](#) (January 2022)
- [My Year in the Antarctic in 1962](#) (March 2022)

As you often hear on YouTube, 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 all online programs, and hopefully in-person ones as well, during this club year.

Nature Notes

Natural Events for the month of May

- Jack in the pulpit, pink lady’s-slipper, and mayapple bloom by mid-May in the County’s remnant woodlands.
- Early spring flowers such as spring beauty fade rapidly, as trees leaf out and shade the forest floor.
- Princess tree, or Paulownia (named after an 18th-Century Russian princess) blooms with large clusters of pale purple flowers. It’s an invasive species but still very pretty.
- By late May, monarch butterflies arrive from the south and begin laying their eggs on newly emerged plants of common milkweed.
- Young rabbits, gray squirrels, and other small mammals are leaving their home nests. Drive carefully.
- Horseshoe crabs spawn on Delaware Bayshore beaches from late May to early June.
- Red knots arrive for their stop-over at the Delaware Bay area to double their weight on horseshoe crab eggs in preparation for their nonstop journey to Arctic breeding grounds.

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.
- Newsletters now have a From address of newsletter@gcnatureclub.org, instead of the personal email address. You may want to add newsletter@gcnatureclub.org to your address book just in case your email thinks it is Spam.

Upcoming Events

Bi-Monthly Bird Walks at Scotland Run Park

Come search for the many birds that visit or inhabit Scotland Run Park! Volunteer birders from the Gloucester County Nature Club will be leading two walks a month in May, June, September, and October. The walks are free of charge and will take place on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 8:0 am to 9:30 a m. Meet at the Nature Center Parking Lot. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars. Mask wearing and social distancing will be observed.

Spring Paddles at Scotland Run Park

This month our highly anticipated Spring Paddles program starts for the season! Spring paddles will be held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from 9:30am-11:30am, April through June. This is a perfect opportunity for you to get outside and enjoy all of what Wilson Lake has to offer.

This program is free and allows you to use our kayaks/canoes for a guided tour of Wilson Lake. The tour consists of light educational components and will be led by county employees.

Registration is required, and we ask that you register for the specific boat you'd need. We offer double kayaks, canoes, and single kayaks. You can register for the event at the link below.

<https://secure.rec1.com/NJ/gloucester-county-nj/catalog>

For more information on Spring Paddles call 856-251-6710.

June 25, 2022 - Gloucester County Firefly Festival

The Firefly Festival sponsored by the Gloucester County Nature Club will be held on Saturday June 25th (rain date on June 26) at Tall Pines State Preserve from 7-9 pm. It is a free event, open to the public and is family friendly. Visitors walk along a trail where at various stations, interpreters have displays and discuss topics such as bioluminescence, the firefly life cycle and environmental concerns such as habitat protection and light pollution. For young people there are firefly-related crafts, games and storytelling. Visitors then proceed to the heart of the preserve to view the evening firefly display.

New Jersey Bluebird Society Seeks New Coordinator for Gloucester County



The eastern bluebird has been making a great comeback in Gloucester County and the NJBBS has played an important role in that, assisting with the installation of nesting boxes on private and public lands and the establishment and maintenance of bluebird trails at places such as Tall Pines State Preserve, Alcyon Park and at Washington Twp. parks.

The NJBBS is now seeking a new Coordinator for Gloucester County. This is a part time voluntary position. The Coordinator would work to coordinate bluebird activities within the county.

Requirements: The Coordinator should be someone who has had some experience with serious/proper nest box monitoring and a familiarity with bluebird management techniques. The NJBBS would be happy to help train the Coordinator in additional management techniques and the retiring Coordinator would also assist as much as possible.

The County Coordinator is an ambassador for proper bluebird management and the NJBBS.

Duties:

- Conduct on site visits on properties to determine if a location is suitable for a bluebird nest box.
- Assist folks with proper placement of boxes in promising bluebird habitat. That could be in a back yard, farm land or on public lands or parks.
- Assist with single box installation and the setting up of bluebird trails in parks and natural areas.
- Monitor boxes himself/herself or help individual monitors monitor boxes on their own. The idea is to get folks involved in proper bluebird management. Teams can be established to monitor larger trails and report back to the Coordinator.
- Assist potential monitors on how to obtain a NJBBS approved nest box with predator guard and have it placed properly.
- Refer potential bluebirders to the NJBBS for guidance and any assistance when needed.

Anyone who may be interested in or would like to know more about this opportunity can contact:

Allen Jackson, President, New Jersey Bluebird Society

email aljaxn@aol.com

Remaining Bird Quest Training Sessions 2022

May 2 (Monday) 7:30 - 9:30 AM

Tranquility Trail

High Hill Rd, (between Fredrick Blvd. & Hillside Dr.) Woolwich Township, NJ 08085

Tranquility trail, with its wooded areas, open fields, and several spots to see Raccoon Creek is a diamond in the rough. The opening of the trail is just the start of Woolwich's Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Township plans to preserve the grassland habitat, providing a space for grassland birds.

Directions: Meet in the parking lot.

Leaders: Marilyn Henry & Lloyd Shaw

May 4 (Wednesday) 6 - 8 AM

Glassboro Woods (WMA)

Stanger Ave., Glassboro, NJ 08028

This wildlife management area, which is a 2,337 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: Meet at end of Stanger Ave.

Leaders: Dan & Danny Ceravolo

May 5 (Thursday) 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 1,000 acres and includes the 80 acre Wilson lake. More than 136 species of birds have been recorded here, including 21 species of warblers. This is a great place and the right time to enjoy the spring migration!

Directions: Meet in the nature center parking lot

Leaders: Marilyn Henry & Marie Hageman

May 5 (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 5 at 6 PM and MAY 6 at 6 AM

The meeting places are different.

May 6 (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