



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public
June 2005

(CORRECTED VERSION)

****Note the time and location change for this meeting****

June Program - Picnic at Alcyon Lake Park (Pitman) - June 9th at 6:00 PM

The June 9th meeting of the Gloucester County Nature Club will be our annual spring picnic. The picnic will be held at the Washington Lake Park. Attendees should bring a food item to share, and their own utensils, plates, and cups to cut down on the waste of disposables. Bring

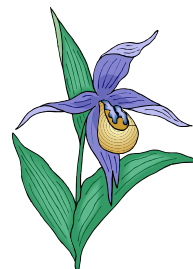


your binoculars as well because after dinner we will take a walk through the varied habitats of the park looking for birds, wildflowers and other items of interest. As with all club functions the picnic is open to the public so why not bring a friend? We hope you will join us for the picnic.

Directions: From Lamb's Rd (Rt 635), at JG Cook's restaurant, take West Holly Ave towards Alcyon Lake. About 100 feet before (west) of the Lake, turn right onto Track Ave. Follow Track Ave back through the sports complex to the Picnic pavilion near the lake.

Field Trip – Pine Barrens Orchids and Amphibians **Saturday June 11th, 1:00 PM to 9:00 PM or even later**

Meet at the parking lot at the Brendan Byrne State Forest Office. From here, we will visit several sites in the Pine Barrens, from Whitesbog to Warren Grove, for general ecology, specialty plants, birds, and a bit of local history. For those who stay late, dinner will be in a local restaurant. After dinner we will listen for some night noises of the Pine Barrens, and perhaps (if weather is suitable, i.e., warm, wet, and buggy) to look for the rare pine barrens tree frog and other amphibians. There will be relatively little walking, but be prepared for about 25 miles of driving in the course of the day. There are no rest rooms. Bring lunch, beverage, insect repellent, field guides, binoculars; and a flashlight if you are staying late. For the nocturnal component only, meet at the Brendan Byrne State Forest Office at 8:00 PM. Be prepared for very wet walking if you plan to stay for the evening.



Directions: Route 295 to Route 70; Route 70 east for about 23 miles to the intersection with Route 72 at the "Four Mile" traffic circle; continue east on Route 70 for about one mile; watch for a sign for the State Forest on the right. Turn in, continue to the office. Travel time from Woodbury is about one hour.

Summer Field Trip: Bird Walk at Scotland Run Park, Clayton
Tuesday June 21, 6:00 PM

Leader: Bob Duke

The varied habitat of this park enables a great number of different species of birds to co-exist. There are usually bluebirds at the nest boxes, kingbirds in the tops of the trees, and orioles along the lake.

Directions: From Rt 47 (Delsea Drive) heading South in Clayton turn left onto Academy Ave (Rt. 610). Just past Fries Mill Road you will see the lake on your left and the HQ on your right. Meet at the park HQ on route 610 (Clayton-Williamston Rd.).

More summer field trips to be announced in next month's newsletter.

Bird Quest Wrapup – by Brian Hayes

Bird Quest 2005, our sixth annual, was a perfect day to be outside. The meteorologists were all wrong. We could not have asked for a better day to have the Bird Quest. We had just under 300 people participate in the event which included four buses. Everyone had a great time and saw some wonderful birds.

A grand total of 130 different species were seen during Bird Quest (which is one more than last year). Each of the 15 training sessions held in the three weeks prior to Bird Quest helped a core group of people become more adept at bird identification by both site and sound. From the information learned at the trainings about birds, bird songs, bird habitat and locations in Gloucester County, the teams canvassed the county searching for each new species. There were some great stories shared over the lunch provided (courtesy of Shop Rite) at Atkinson Park.

Thanks to all who participated and congratulations to our winners. The winning team, led by Jeff Holt, *saw 77 species of birds in five hours.*



Again a special note of thanks to our on-site crew: Bob Bevilaqua, Ed and Millie Cleary, Joan Tracy, and Elaine Dzeima, and Pat Ransom, our training instructors, our photographer, and our sponsors. You have made it look so easy.

Each year the BirdQuest is made possible by a large group of sponsors. ShopRite Supermarkets has provided food for the quest each year since the beginning and we thank them for their support. In addition, the last three years Wheelabrator of Gloucester County provides the funding for two of the buses we use (the yellow warbler bus and the teacher teacher bus). Pitman School district paid for a bus for teachers and students in their district. Campbell's Soup helped to sponsor a bus and materials for a group of inner city children through the Sierra Club's ICO program (and the GCNC). Gariel Graphics printed the shirts as well as donating some prizes. Sharon Oakes of Wild Birds Unlimited in Washington Township donated many wonderful prizes and helped sponsor the ICO children.

ICO Group at Bird Quest

This year The Nature Club partnered with the South Jersey Inner City Outings group, a non-profit division of the Sierra Club, to help some youth from Camden participate in Bird Quest. This was possible this year due to funding from Campbell's Soup and Wild Bird's Unlimited. The group of 21 children from the Cream Elementary School in Camden, two of their teachers, one father, two ICO leaders, and several Nature Club members traveled around Gloucester County in a yellow school bus. The children ranged from age 8-12 years old, and were treated to a great morning of bird watching in Gloucester County. Each child was able to have their own binoculars for the day and thrilled in learning to use these as the day progressed. In addition to the t-shirt, poster, and lunch that all participants shared this group also each received a Peterson bird field guide, a CD of bird calls, and a set of bird ID trading cards made by Gary Lizzi.

The children were treated to great looks at baby mallards, a great egret, orchard orioles, tree swallows, red-winged blackbirds, red-tailed hawk, and many other birds. The definite favorite for the day was the male bluebirds at Alycon Park in Pitman. The group could barely tear themselves away from these sparkling jewels to head back to the park for lunch. Some of the children were great with finding and recalling birds they had already seen and delighted in showing each bird to the others in the group. When we returned to the bus they used their Peterson First Guides to check the birds they had seen and tally their lists. The team had 27 species though many individuals' lists were higher. All in all a great day for a group who had never "birded" before!

The ICO group takes disadvantaged youth on monthly outings in order to foster an appreciation and understanding of the outdoors. The group needs adult volunteers, if you are interested in finding out more about volunteering with them you can contact Paula Hayes at pnbhayes@comcast.net or 856-468-9272 or Joy Booth at joyeboo@hotmail.com or 856-486-1574. Volunteers can join the group for a few outings each year or more dedicated individuals can become certified leaders.

May 14, 2005 – The 22st World Series of Birding

Congratulations to our Word Series of Birding (WSB) team (Jeff Holt - Captain, Bob Baruzzi, Gale Cannon, and Dick Ebert) with an awesome effort of 127 species. This was good enough to earn them 3rd place in the Limited Geographic Area category. And this is only our third year! This improves on their total number of species from the last two years which was 123 and they placed third which is better than the 5th place finish the past two years. Our team is entered in the limited geographical area competition and didn't leave the confines of Gloucester County for that 24 hour period. Keep up the great work guys!!!!!!

Now is your turn, support them by giving your donations and fulfilling your pledges. In the next few weeks Marge Dolente will be contacting all those who made pledges. It isn't too late to give, contact the Nature Club if you wish to show your support for this outstanding effort.

Your contribution will go to the South Jersey Land Trust to be used here in Gloucester County for land acquisition. You can contribute any amount, all contributions are welcome.

Please send your pledge(s) to Marge Dolente, 1001 Stonybrook Drive, Deptford, NJ 08096 or go to the website for the form or to contact someone from the Nature Club about giving to the cause. The results of our competitive efforts and your pledges will be posted on the website and in the next newsletter.

Conservation Corner – Fast Track Update by Loretta Dunne

The Fast Track Law moratorium will be over in June. Nearly half of the state legislature has signed on to the bill opposing Fast Track. Nevertheless, acting Governor Codey, who is also the president of the senate, has not allowed the scheduling of the bill for hearing.

An article in The Press of Atlantic City on May 10 indicated that the new state budget shows a reduction in the budget for NJ Fish and Wildlife of \$3.9 million. According to Jeff Tittle, the NJ Sierra Club President, this is the most dramatic reduction to DEP in 10 years and could result in the layoff of 54 Fish and Wildlife staff. Tittle indicated further that the state budget includes \$20 million and 160 newly added jobs for the enforcement of Fast Track.

Please contact Governor Cody and the Assembly Speaker Albion Sires and urge them to bring bill S2157/A3650, the bill to repeal Fast Track, to the floor for a full, public debate. The moratorium has given the citizens of the state and the state assembly members the chance to be educated on the bill. Now many people and elected officials are opposed to Fast Track and our voices deserve to be heard.

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Plant Sale Update by Karen Kravchuck

Just wanted to let everyone know that the Annual Plant Sale held just before our May meeting worked out wonderfully. The threatened thunder showers never showed up, thankfully, and we were able to take full advantage of a great spring evening.



We were able once again to provide a great variety of plants. Whether it was a Japanese red maple, tree peony or clematis, there seemed to be just the right plant to fill a spot or two (or three) in everyone's garden. As usual, the prices were kept quite reasonable.

Again, this year we would like to say a special thanks to Ron Kegel for his help with the Plant Sale. A special thanks also to George Dean and Dean's Evergreens in Monroeville for their generosity in supplying plants for the sale.

Another big part of the sale this year was the number and diversity of plants brought by the members of the club from their own gardens. Thanks to these folks, many were able to go home with common milkweed and columbine, day lilies and even a few unusual trillium.

One of the great joys of being a member of the Gloucester County Nature Club is the generosity of our members in sharing their knowledge. Although most of the plants marked with name tags, a few were not. Our thanks to those who helped to identify the mystery plants.

Hope all of your transplants are doing well. Let's do it again next Spring!

Other Nature Notes

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount to GCNC members!

Wild Birds Unlimited has a discount agreement with the GCNC executive board and is pleased to offer GCNC members an everyday 10% discount on all purchases excluding optics and food or sale items. Sharon Oakes, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, appreciates the many volunteer contributions made by GCNC members and hopes members can benefit from this discount. Members are requested to identify themselves as GCNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please call Sharon at 218-2973.

Where to Search for an Ivory-billed Woodpecker - by Jeff Holt

The recent re-discovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) in eastern Arkansas justifiably created a minor tsunami in the birding community. Historically, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker was considered "uncommon but widespread across lowland primary forest of the southeastern United States until midway through the 19th Century." (Fitzpatrick, 2005)

For most birders, the opportunity to explore the Cache River and White River National Wildlife Refuges for this majestic species is likely little more than dream. Thus, I began to ponder the question, where else might the Lord God bird be found? My examination of historical records finds that distribution of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker was further north than many birders may realize.

North of Arkansas, in the Ozarks of Missouri, Johnson Neff notes that it "was my father's good fortune years ago to see an Ivory-billed Woodpecker close to the location of our orchards." (Neff, 1923) Other ornithologists have also concluded that "southern Missouri and Illinois as the northwestern extension of its former range." (Parmalee, 1958) A discovery in 1956 of tarsometatarsal bone at a Native American archaeological site in Madison County, Illinois extends the northern range to an area east of the city of St. Louis.

The discovery of an additional metatarsal bone excavated from a site in south-central Ohio the 1940's now pushes the Ivory-billed Woodpecker range eastward. This discovery dates from the fifteenth or sixteenth century. "The Ivory-billed Woodpecker was found years ago in Franklin County, Indiana, adjacent to the southwestern corner of Ohio, and on this basis it has been carried in the hypothetical list of birds for the latter state, on the logical assumption that formerly it must have occurred there. There have been no positive records for it, however....It appears to me that this (discovery) constitutes a definite record for the former occurrence of this bird in

Ohio. It is true that the Ivory-bill was considered of some value by the Indians, who without question carried the heads and bills about, using them in medicine bundles and in other ways. It seems hardly probable, however, that the foot (which was of no particular interest) would have been taken to a locality distant from where the bird was killed.” (Wetmore, 1943)

In 1964, another burial site was excavated near Wheeling, West Virginia, where two lower bill sections of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. However, unlike the discoveries above, it was “impossible to ascertain whether these bones were from a bird taken locally or represent a trade artifact; the early range of this species probably included sections of West Virginia although there are apparently no existing specimens or other authenticated records from this region.” (Parmalee, 1967)

Given the above evidence, one begins to wonder, could an Ivory-bill have occurred in the Delaware Valley?

In 1748, a Swedish botanist, Peter Kalm traveled to North America where he stayed, for three years, in and around Philadelphia. Upon his return to Sweden, he published a three volume account of his travels, which was translated into English and published in 1770-1771 in London under the title, *Travels into North America*. Unlike the work of more notable pioneer American ornithologists, Kalm’s work “is merely a desultory account of the different birds he observed during his sojourn, principally in the country about Philadelphia, scattered through the text of the volumes, coupled with observations borrowed from the more intelligent Swedish and English residents. The greater number of species seems altogether to have escaped his notice, probably because the plant rather than the bird was in his mind’s eye. Kalm’s observations have little scientific value, but they possess a certain freshness that commends them to every lover of the wayside.” (Trotter, 1903) On March 11, 1749, at Raccoon, New Jersey, Kalm compiled a list of woodpeckers. “In this review of the woodpeckers by Kalm the most notable fact, which must be taken *cum grano salus*, is the occurrence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, as far north as the Delaware Valley. Possibly the bird had been observed as a straggler (for Kalm speaks of it being only an occasional visitor) on the borders of the dense cedar swamps and pine forests of South Jersey, and this region we know is decidedly Carolinian in its faunal and floral features. At that time also a more or less unbroken woodland must have extended far up along the shores of the Delaware, quite to the site of the old Swedish village of Raccoon. But this is idle speculation, for the bird has never been authentically reported from Pennsylvania or New Jersey.” (Trotter, 1903)

Is it idle speculation? If after over a half century a bird thought to be extinct can rise from the grave, should Kalm’s observations be summarily dismissed? For myself, the next time I visit the wildlife management areas of southern New Jersey, I’ll be searching for...

Literature Cited

- Fitzpatrick, J. 2005. Ivory-Billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) Persists in Continental North America. Scienceexpress. <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/rapidpdf/1114103v1.pdf>
- Neff, J. 1923. Some Birds of the Ozark Region. *Wilson Bulletin* 35: 202-215.
- Parmalee, P. 1958. Remains of Rare and Extinct Birds from Illinois Indian Sites. *Auk* 75: 169-176.
- Parmalee, P. 1967. Additional Noteworthy Records of Birds from Archaeological Sites. *Wilson Bulletin* 79: 155-162.
- Trotter, S. 1903. Notes on the Ornithological Observations of Peter Kalm. *Auk* 20: 249-262.

Wetmore, A. 1943. Evidence for the Former Occurrence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Ohio. Wilson Bulletin 55:55

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Club Notes:

- The June Trustee and Executive Committee meeting will be at 7:30 PM on June 5th at Brian and Paula Hayes' house.
- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Brian or Paula Hayes at pnbhayes@comcast.net or call 468-9272.
- 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 6 Greenwood Drive, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month. Also - if your email address changes, please inform Barry.

Board of Trustees

Elections for the Gloucester County Nature Club's Board of Trustees were held at our May meeting. The trustees are elected for a three year term and are responsible for appointing the executive committee and guiding the direction of the club. We are pleased to announce the newly elected trustees - Bob Cassel, Bonnie Dann, Erik Mollenhauer, and Jackie Partridge who will serve the term from July 2005 through June 2008.