



# Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public.

October 2018

## **Program - New Jersey's Fish Hawk - The Amazing Osprey**

Thursday, October 11, 2018 at 7:00pm at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenter: Ben Wurst, Habitat Program Manager, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

The osprey, formerly known as the “fish hawk,” is one of New Jersey’s largest raptors. It is well known and highly visible along coastal marshes of the NJ Atlantic and Delaware Bay shores. A unique bird that is unmistakable when seen at close range, the osprey is found worldwide. It is the only species in its family, Pandionidae (although some scientists recognize the osprey population of the southwest Pacific region as a second species, the eastern osprey). Ospreys are superb fishers and indeed eat little else—fish make up some 99 percent of their diet. Ospreys hunt by diving to the water’s surface from some 30 to 100 feet up. They have gripping pads on their feet to help them pluck fish from the water. The Osprey’s talons are uniquely adapted for catching and carrying fish and their toes can be held with three forward and one back, or with two forward and two back, an arrangement seen in owls but not in other diurnal raptors.



With its New Jersey Osprey Project, The Conserve Wildlife Foundation plays an active role in helping to manage and protect ospreys in New Jersey. Historically, before the effects of DDT caused the state’s osprey population to decline, over 500 osprey nests could be found along New Jersey’s coastline. By 1974 only 50 nests remained. The effects of DDT in the food chain caused reproduction to fail, and habitat was lost with a burgeoning shore population that eliminated many trees and increased ground predator populations. In New Jersey the osprey was listed as endangered in 1973 by the NJ Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife. Today, thanks to a concerted effort by conservationists to manage and protect the statewide population of ospreys, the goal of restoring the population to the historic levels of over 500 nesting pairs was surpassed in 2013.

As Habitat program Manager for CWF, Ben Wurst is responsible for identifying and enhancing degraded wildlife habitat and helps manage and protect ospreys as part of the NJ Osprey Project. He received a B.S. in Environmental Science with emphasis in Wildlife Conservation from Unity College in 2004. Ben also works on a variety of other conservation projects that include peregrine falcons, bald eagles, and northern diamondback terrapins.

**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).

## Special Event: The Mad Hatter's Tree Party

Sunday, October 21, 2018: 1:00pm – 4:00pm



The Mad Hatter's Tree Party is a fun way for people to learn about the trees of our community and the critical role that trees play in a healthy environment. The Tree Party is a chance for families and people of all ages to share a whimsical adventure in a community forest.

This event consists of a self-paced, 45-minute walk in Wenonah Woods. This is more than an ordinary hike, though. You will stop at several locations to learn about specific trees along the trail and their role in the overall forest. All stations have been updated for this year and a children's story telling station will be available near the tea house. Musicians will add an instrumental accompaniment to your journey. At the end, you can share light refreshments in the Tea House with the Mad Hatter himself. This event is great for family, and takes place rain or shine.

Walk begins at Eldridge Trail, at the intersection of E. Pine St and S. Princeton Ave. in Wenonah. Families can arrive at their convenience as walks leave regularly. No pre-registration is necessary.

### Events by other Organizations: October 2018

- October 14 (Sunday) – **Pine Barrens Jamboree**. 10:00am to 4:00pm at Wells Mills County Park, 905 Wells Mills Rd. (Rt 532), Waretown, NJ. Live Country, Bluegrass and Folk Music on the Stage, Cultural Demos and Lectures, Traditional Crafts and Crafters, Kids' Games, Nature Walks, History Programs, Vendors and Exhibits, Food and Beverages, Free Shuttle Buses. For additional information and directions, visit [www.pineyower.com](http://www.pineyower.com).
- October 18 (Thursday) 5:00pm to October 21 (Sunday) 5:00pm - **Cape May Fall Festival**. Presented by NJ Audubon and the Cape May Bird Observatory. There is no place like Cape May, New Jersey for autumn birding! Exhibits, lectures, day trips, demos, and birds, birds, birds! For all the details click [here](#).



- October 21 (Sunday) – **Country Living Fair**, 10:00am to 4:00pm at Historic Batsto Village . There will be crafts, exhibits, music, old-time engines & cars, food, antiques, pony rides, farm equipment, chain-saw art, quilting, and more. All ages. For more, visit [www.batstovillage.org](http://www.batstovillage.org).
- October 21 (Sunday) – **Blueberry Music Jam**, 11:00am to 2:00pm at Whitesbog Village, Brendan Byrne State Forest, 120 West Whitesbog Rd, Browns Mills, NJ. Open to all to listen or play along, look for the group on the porch of the General Store or in the Barrel Factory just down the road on the left. Visitors are free to drop in to listen anytime. For details, visit [www.whitesbog.org](http://www.whitesbog.org).

### Natural Events for the month of October

- The last brood of monarch butterflies emerges and flies south to Mexico.
- Pine barrens gentian in bloom in the Pinelands.
- Goldenrods, asters, bonesets, and blazing star in bloom.
- Cranberry harvest in the Pinelands.
- Autumn colors peak in late October.
- The greatest variety of raptor migration comes in mid-October, with golden eagles, red-shouldered hawks and more.
- Fox sparrows, one of the largest sparrows, are often seen under seed feeders during their autumn migration.
- Wood ducks are migrating south.
- Green-winged teals, one of the smallest dabbling ducks, are passing through the area as they migrate to the shore.



### Deterring House Sparrows with Fishing Line

Had enough of those pesky house sparrows scarfing up all of the seed in your bird feeder? Club member Jay Hoffecker saw an idea for deterring them in a recent issue of Birdwatcher's Digest and decided to try it out. Jay had great results and wanted to pass this along. Basically all that needs to be done is to fasten several lengths of monofilament fishing line to the feeder so that they dangle over the feeder ports (see illustration). For whatever reason the sparrows will not go anywhere near the feeder, but other birds are not frightened. This method is also known to keep house sparrows away from bluebird nest boxes, Just dangle the fishing line in front of the entrance hole of the nest box.

## **Conservation Corner** by Suzan Delozier

### **THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT AND MIGRATORY BIRD ACT UNDER FIRE**

On July 18, 2018 the Department of Interior proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act and established a federal register comment period of 60 days. Two changes are of major concern: 1) the elimination of the “4d rule” for threatened species which means threatened species will not automatically receive the same protections as endangered species. The Marbled Murrelet and Northern Spotted Owl, both considered threatened, owe their existence to the 4d rule. With this proposed change, threatened species will continue to decline and become endangered. 2) The inclusion of economic analyses would be part of the decision making about listing a species. This invites political interference. Currently, the process follows science and forbids inclusion of economic considerations. According the American Bird Conservancy, economic consideration would have prevented the Red Knot from being granted protection due to political interference. Although the comment period will have ended by the time this newsletter is available, the Xerces Society urges you to contact your senators and representative stating your opposition to these changes. See [xerces.org/2018/08/29/the-endangered-species-act-needs-your-help/](http://xerces.org/2018/08/29/the-endangered-species-act-needs-your-help/) for more information.

Late last year, the US Department of Interior issued a policy reversal concerning the Migratory Bird Act by issuing a new interpretation of the Act that says industry is no longer liable for bird deaths that were not deliberate even if the deaths were predictable and preventable. An example of such an industrial activity is uncovered toxic oil pits. Under the proposed interpretation, a company that does not cover its toxic oil pits will no longer be liable for the deaths of migratory birds that die in those pits. It will also be much more difficult to protect birds from wind turbines and communications towers located in migration hotspots.

For a hundred years, the prohibition against killing migratory birds has extended beyond hunting to industrial activities and has been credited with saving many species including the Wood Duck, Sandhill Crane and Eastern Bluebird. Holding industry financially liable for the deaths of our birds has been an incentive for industry to cooperate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in an effort to minimize bird deaths. You may add your name to an American Bird Conservancy petition to protect the Migratory Bird Treaty Act at [www.abcbirds.org/action/petition-mbta](http://www.abcbirds.org/action/petition-mbta).

Source: American Bird Conservation magazine *Bird Conservation*, Summer/Fall 2018

### **THE RIO GRANDE AND THE WALL**

The Rio Grande Valley has long been recognized as a birding hotspot. Many tropical bird species are located here and nowhere else in the US. Two major bird migration routes, the Mississippi and Central flyways, pass through the Valley. Over 100 endangered species live there. While you may think that this area is dusty and barren, it actually abounds in biodiversity and is the home of the last tracts of Sabal Pines which provide a lush, tropical habitat used by the endangered ocelot. In order to preserve this valuable ecological region, the US Fish and Wildlife Service in partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife created the World Birding Center. The WBC is comprised of nine separate locations containing over 10,000 acres along a 120 mile river road and creates tracts of land that are close enough together to permit wildlife movement for territory, food and mates. The goal of the WBC is to protect native habitat and to increase awareness and appreciation of the region and its birds and wildlife. It is here that Trump wants to build a wall consisting of an 18-foot tall concrete slab with 20-30 foot tall concrete-filled steel bollards on top. The Bentsten-Rio Grande Valley State Park in particular is threatened with possible closure as the wall will cut the park in half. The National Butterfly Center sits on private property next to the Bentsten Park and is also threatened with bifurcation. (The Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, called the crown jewel of our refuge system, was recently exempted from the wall by Congress after a great deal of public outcry.)

Private landowners including the Butterfly Center are already being notified that their lands will be taken by the federal government even as nearly 100 lawsuits are still open from the first round of wall building 10 years ago under the Bush Administration and into the Obama Administration. The wall is being built as far as a mile north of the Rio Grande. It cannot be built along the river as the river's course changes. Some private owners have found themselves totally south of the wall and cut off from their country while others have seen large portions of their property south of the wall become inaccessible.

There is debate about how effective the Bush era wall is at keeping out people – handprints on the iron posts show that the wall is being scaled. But it is the damage done to wildlife by the wall that completely negates the reason the refuges were established – which was to create contiguous habitat in an already fragmented environment. About one third of the Mexican border has either a vehicle barrier or a fence. Scientists have found the existing barriers make it difficult for animals to find food, water and mates, especially jaguars, wolves and ocelots which are already endangered. The posts in the fencing are 2 inches apart making it difficult for any animal, including the threatened pigmy owl which flies low to the ground, to pass through it. Many amphibians, reptiles and mammals have seen their ranges reduced by 75%. Constant noise from border patrols, radar which disrupts bat migration, and bright lights at night all adversely affect wildlife. The hardened, continuous border wall that Trump wants to build all along the Mexican border will be even more devastating. In the Rio Grande Valley, the wall increases the potential for devastating floods up to 2 miles behind the wall down to the Rio Grande and beyond and at the same time deprives animals of an escape route. During droughts or natural disasters animals will also be deprived of free movement. Humans north of the wall will be cut off from the only supply of fresh water. If the Butterfly Center is cut in half, a huge amount of butterfly habitat will be destroyed. The total land to be forfeited between the wall and the Rio Grande River is over 6500 acres equal to 5,019 NFL football fields.

In 2005, Congress gave Homeland Security, the department building the wall, the power to waive environmental impact assessments and they have chosen not to perform any environmental studies concerning the wall. (Several universities including Penn State have done studies) The Texas State Parks suggested that investment be made in technology and manpower rather than in structures. A former mayor of Brownsville said "You've spent money to build this environmental corridor, and now you're gonna go right through the middle of it and put up a wall." ABA (American Birding Association) asks that if you are concerned about the environmental damage caused by walls, call your senators and representative.

Sources: [www.texastribune.org/2018/07/30/texas-parks-agency-park-could-close-if-border-wall-built-through-it/](http://www.texastribune.org/2018/07/30/texas-parks-agency-park-could-close-if-border-wall-built-through-it/) , [www.nationalbutterflycenter.org/](http://www.nationalbutterflycenter.org/) , American Birding Association magazine *Birder's Guide* August 2018, [www.theworldbirdingcenter.com/](http://www.theworldbirdingcenter.com/).

### Looking Ahead:

Listed below are the programs we have lined up for the 2018-2019 season. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

### 2018 – 2019 Programs

Nov. 8, 2018: **Live Animal Presentation: Owls - Animals of the Night** - Freedom Center for Wildlife

Dec. 13, 2018: **Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps.**

Jan.10, 2019: **Flora of the California Deserts** - Rich Dilks

Feb. 14, 2019 **Annual Pot Luck Dinner, followed by a fun activity.**

March 14, 2019: **National Hiking Trail of England and Wales** - Kris & Erik Mollenhauer

April 11, 2019: **How to Plan a Birding Trip to Colorado.**- Jeff Mollenhauer

May 9, 2019. **Annual Plant Sale** followed by program **Butterflies of New Jersey** - Steve Glynn.

June 13, 2019: **GCNC Annual Picnic** at Alcyon Park, Pitman, NJ followed by **A guided walk through Alcyon Woods**.

### **2018 2019 GCNC Field Trips**

Listed below are the remaining field trips we have lined up for the 2018 – 2019 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).

November 3, 2018 - **Fungi Hike with John Burghardt**

December 15, 2018 – **Christmas Bird Count**

January 6, 2019 - **Smithville Afternoon Hike with optional Lightshow on Lake to follow**

February 2019 - **TBD**

March 16, 2019 - **Drum Circle**

April 2019 - **Bird Quest Trainings**

May 4, 2019 - **Bird Quest**

June 2019 - **Hike at Mantua Fossil Park**

### **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 October Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday October 7<sup>th</sup> at the home of Karen Kravchuck. Please contact Karen for more information.

**Please remember to help out the Gloucester County Nature Club while shopping online!**



Shopping at Amazon can also benefit the Gloucester County Nature Club at **NO extra cost** to you!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. The purchase price is the amount paid for the item minus any rebates and excluding shipping & handling, gift-wrapping fees, taxes, or service charges. You may even use your existing Amazon.com account for your purchases.

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

### **Reminder - Membership Dues**

October brings with it membership renewals. This year we will be keeping the price the same as last year. Please remember that your dues are the only costs associated with being a club member, we do not charge for any of our programs or field trips. Many organizations charge their members for each walk or activity they attend. We believe that the club is still an excellent value and hope the added cost will not deter any of our members. It is much cheaper for us to send the newsletter electronically to our members and as a result those members who choose to receive the newsletter electronically will receive a discount on their membership. The dues are \$20 for electronic mailings and \$25 for regular mail delivery. Please fill out the membership form at the end of this newsletter and bring it along with your dues to the September Meeting, or send your renewal form and a check payable to "Gloucester County Nature Club" to: GCNC Membership, P.O. Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080.

You may also sign up and pay your membership dues electronically via PayPal. Just go to <http://gcnatureclub.org/membership.php> and fill out the online form.

**WAIVER**

Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members or representatives shall not be liable for any injuries, loss or damage to person and/or property, direct or consequential, arising out of any trips and/or activities of the Gloucester County Nature Club. The assumption of risk, which is inherent in this type of outdoor activity, is implied on the part of each person who attends any Gloucester County Nature Club trip, and every person participating in any of said trips and/or activities assumes all risk and liability in connection therewith.

Everyone participating in any activity of the Gloucester County Nature Club will be required to read the release of liability, protecting the Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members and representatives from liability.

Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members and representatives are not in any way responsible for the personal safety of the attendees. When walking along a road, keep to the left, facing oncoming traffic and walk in a single file. When walking along trails, do not follow too closely or move too fast for your safety and for the safety of others (avoid collisions and/or whipped branches). FOLLOW THE LEADER: If you forge ahead, you may find yourself alone. Responsible adults must accompany children under the age of 16. If you expect to drop out of the group early, please inform the leader. Report to one or more of the hikers if you intend to discontinue on the route.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2018-2019**

- New Member  Renewal
- Paper Membership (\$25) - regular mail
- Electronic Membership (\$20) - newsletter via email; \*\*\*please provide email address below

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*\*Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note any special knowledge you would be willing to share: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to serve on a committee? If so, which committee(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there other ways you could participate? If so, how?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Would you like to give a gift membership? If so, indicate Paper \_\_\_\_ or Electronic \_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

A note will be sent informing them of your gift membership in the GCNC, thank you.

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I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE WAIVER

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail completed form with payment to GCNC, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 or bring to a meeting.