



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public.

November 2018

Program - Owls: Animals of the Night

Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 7:00pm at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenter: Freedom Center for Wildlife

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Owls are enigmatic birds, by turns mysterious, lovable, or spooky. Owls have super-tuned senses and amazing physiological adaptations that make them superb hunters and masters of the night skies. For example, instead of spherical eyeballs, owls have "eye tubes" that go far back into their skulls—which means their eyes are fixed in place, so they have to turn their heads to see. The size of their eyes helps them see in the dark, and they're far-sighted, which allows them to spot prey from yards away. Up close, everything is blurry, and they depend on small, hair-like feathers on their beaks and feet to feel their food. Owls have extraordinarily acute hearing. Owls are capable of hearing prey under leaves, plants, dirt, and snow. Some owls have sets of ears at different heights on their heads, which lets them locate prey based on tiny differences in sound waves. Other owls have flat faces with special feathers that focus sound, essentially turning their faces into one big ear. Unlike most birds, owls make virtually no noise when they fly. They have special feathers that break turbulence into smaller currents, which reduces sound. Soft velvety down further muffles noise.



Of the 18 species of owls native to North America, 8 can be found in New Jersey: the Barn Owl, Barred Owl (listed as state threatened), Eastern Screech Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Short-eared Owl (listed as state endangered), Long-eared Owl (listed as state threatened), Great horned Owl and Snowy Owl.

Join the Freedom Center for Wildlife Inc. as it gives this presentation on owls featuring live birds and introduces us to some of its Animal Ambassadors. See these animals that are heard, but rarely seen close-up, and learn about their habitats and why they are important to New Jersey's ecosystem.

Freedom Center for Wildlife Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization registered in the state of New Jersey, and holds federal and state rehabilitation and educational permits. Our mission: through rehabilitation, education and research programs, Freedom Center for Wildlife, Inc. strives to increase public knowledge and appreciation towards the conservation, protection and preservation of native New Jersey habitats and animals.



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).

Field Trip: Fungi Hike at Chestnut Branch Park with John and Jennifer Burghardt

Saturday, November 3, 2018: 10:00am – Noon

Trip Leaders: John and Jennifer Burghardt



NOTE: This field trip takes place BEFORE the regular monthly meeting on November 8. Join John and Jennifer to explore the 9/11 Memorial Trail at Chestnut Branch Park. This trail descends from the paved path into a wooded ravine with a rich mix of mature hardwood and nut trees. On this roughly 1 ½ mile walk we will identify and examine fungi. We expect to see examples of most of the “form groups” that were highlighted during the September 13 GCNC Fungi Program. We will encourage everyone to point out everything fungal, and then talk about what we find as we go. There will be fungi that we won’t identify on the spot, and we will take photos and make collections of these to try to identify them later.

Address for GPS: 545 Main Street, Mantua Township

Meet in the parking area adjacent to the Butterfly Garden

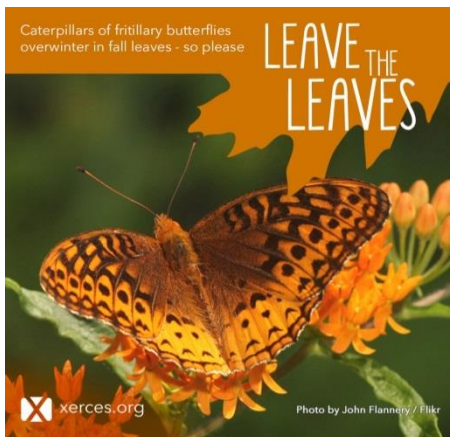
Events by other Organizations: November 2018

- November 10 (Saturday) – **Manumuskin River Walk** 10:00am at the Nature Conservancy's Manumuskin River Preserve, Port Elizabeth Rd. Millville, NJ 08332. Join the South Jersey Land & Water Trust on a guided trip led by Michael Hogan. We'll walk the railroad tracks across the Manumuskin River and tidal wetlands, follow the trail along the edge of the river and walk around a portion of one of the large lakes. The trail may be wet, so be sure to wear appropriate footwear. Bring insect repellent, your camera, binoculars, pack a lunch and expect to hike about 3-4 miles. For more info and directions see <http://sjlandwater.org>.
- November 24 (Saturday) – **Oldmans Creek Preserve Nature Walk** 10:00am at the Oldmans Creek Preserve - 21 Main St, Swedesboro, NJ 08085. Join the South Jersey Land & Water Trust on a guided walk through one of their preserved properties. For more info and directions see <http://sjlandwater.org>.

Natural Events for the month of November

- Persimmons ripen - they are delicious when fully soft-ripe, astringent when unripe.
- Witch hazel in bloom.
- Woodchucks and chipmunks go into hibernation.
- Bats seek their hibernating sites in caves and abandoned mines.
- American tree sparrow, sometimes called the "winter chippy", is a regular winter bird feeder visitor.

LEAVE THE LEAVES — PROVIDE SHELTER AND FOOD FOR BUTTERFLIES, MOTHS, BEES, BEETLES



Unlike our beloved monarch butterflies, most butterflies (and moths) do not migrate but spend their winters here as eggs, caterpillars, chrysalides, or adults. They, like countless snails, spiders, worms, beetles, millipedes, mites, bees and more, rely on leaf litter for winter protection. These critters are very important in the food chain — chipmunks, turtles, birds, amphibians and others depend on them for food.

The nearly 40 million acres of lawn in our country makes grass the single largest crop that we grow. When clearing all that lawn of leaves The Xerces Society encourages us to use a rake or a leaf vacuum — this is preferable to shredding leaves with a mower since shredding will destroy eggs, larva and chrysalides. And shredded leaves do not provide the same cover as whole leaves. Where space allows, create a leaf pile and allow the leaves to break down naturally. Better still, reduce the lawn space, replace it with native plants and use the leaves as mulch. Leaves provide organic matter, build up a healthy soil and they're free. If you are worried that whole leaves will smother your perennials, remember that spring ephemerals pop up in the woods through leaf litter. Leaves provide insulation against the cold as well as soil heaving.

Finally, if you feel you must remove the leaves from your property then the best time to do this is late in the spring giving eggs, larva and chrysalides time to mature and emerge. If you have spent time attracting birds and butterflies to your yard, then do not treat your leaves like trash.

Source: : <https://xerces.org/2017/10/06/leave-the-leaves/>

THERMOELECTRIC POWER PLANTS AND OUR WATER

In the July/August issue of the Sierra Club's magazine Sierra, the reader is asked if he/she knows what industry draws the greatest volume of water from America's bodies of water. Many people might answer agriculture but the correct answer is energy generation (coal, natural gas and nuclear power plants) which takes 41% of all freshwater withdrawals while agriculture takes 37%. Every day US power plants use 161 billion gallons of water which is 3 times more every minute than the amount of water flowing over Niagara Falls in that same minute.

Because thermoelectric plants heat water to steam in order to drive generators, the power equipment can get very hot which may cause malfunctions. Therefore, water is withdrawn from nearby aquifers, rivers, lakes, and the ocean and used to cool the equipment. In older plants this heated water is returned directly to the source. Higher water temperatures can stress and kill fish and other aquatic life. Larger fish are trapped in screens inside the pipes, smaller fish, eggs and larvae are sucked into the cooling apparatus and die. The Natural Resources Defense Council states that the toll on fish by energy plants equals and may exceed the toll exacted by the fishing industry.

Drought and extreme summer heat caused by climate change make power plants vulnerable to water shortages and rising ambient water temperatures. Power plants also create 100 million tons of highly toxic coal ash every year. Because power plants are located near water, the stored ash can release toxins back into the water if there is a leak or a flood. This is just what happened last month in North Carolina. Some people like to point out that wind and solar are unreliable, but thermoelectric plants have their own drawbacks and very real dangers.

PETITION TO STOP RIO GRAND WALL

Last month we wrote about the effect of Trump's wall on the Rio Grande Valley. The Center for Biological Diversity now has a petition opposing the wall which says in part "Adding 33 miles of border walls would significantly damage the environment, including habitat for endangered species like ocelots and jaguarundis. It would also harm the culture, commerce and quality of life for people in the area. The project would cut through or destroy numerous wildlife-refuge tracts, historic areas, nature reserves and private lands. And it may force the closure of Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park. The environmental damage that would come from this proposal is severe and unjustifiable". Click [here](#) to sign the petition.

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

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.

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:

- The Nature Club welcomes the following new members:
 1. Andrea Sparano of Blackwood
 2. Mitzi Kowal of West Deptford
 3. Patrice Sheehan of Pitman
 4. Michael Jacob of Marlton s
- 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.
- The November Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday November 4th at the home of Barry Bengel. Please contact Karen Kravchuck 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, 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.

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