



# Gloucester County Nature Club

## Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

December 2010

**Program – Only Time and the River Flowing: A Trip Down the Tatshenshini River**  
**Thursday, December 9 at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church,**  
**Wenonah, NJ**

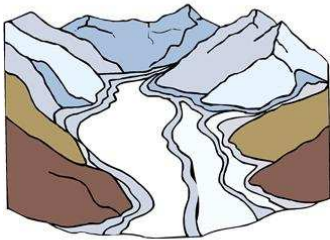
**Presenters: Kris and Erik Mollenhauer**

**Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342**

*“Nature was here something savage and awful, though beautiful. I looked with awe at the ground I trod on, to see what the Powers had made there... This was that Earth of which we have heard, made out of Chaos and Old Night. Here was no man’s garden... There was clearly felt the presence of a force not bound to be kind to man. It was a place of heathenism and superstitious rites... What is this Titan that has possession of me? Talk of mysteries! Think of our life in nature – daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it – rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! The solid earth! The actual world! The common sense! Contact! Contact! Who are we? Where are we?”*

-- Henry David Thoreau

Though Thoreau never visited Alaska, his words might well describe a trip down the Alsek-Tatshenshini Rivers. The “Tat” begins as a modest-size river in the Yukon Territory, in one of the wildest areas in the world. It quickly becomes a large volume, fast-moving glacial river as it joins the Alsek and flows through British Columbia, Alaska and into the ocean. The highest mountains in Canada are cut by the river, which is fed by an abundance of glaciers.



A float down the “Tat” is a complex process that requires extensive planning, good equipment and a company of well-chosen companions. Unpredictable weather and ice-cold water are a constant presence. This area is home to perhaps the highest densities of black and grizzly bears in the world: their presence, and spirit, is never far away.

This past summer two Club members, Kris and Erik Mollenhauer, were among a party of 12 who floated the Tat in inflatable rafts. Join us for spectacular photos of that trip and a look at what is involved in carrying out this kind of trip.

**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 – Audubon Christmas Bird Count** **Saturday, December 18, 8:30 AM to Sunset**

**Trip Coordinator/Compiler: Ron Kegel 856-881-9262 e-mail: [ronaldk52@comcast.net](mailto:ronaldk52@comcast.net)**

Please join us for the Christmas Bird Count as our December field trip. Many of you have joined us in the past and hope you will again. We always look forward to new participants as they add a breath of fresh air to the ‘hunt’. Once again we will have area leaders for each zone of the Count. The leader will form a group(s) and travel their area to see and hear as many birds as possible documenting the ‘finds’ as they go along. Some groups start “Owling” in the wee hours, others might get out there at daybreak. Start and finish times can be arranged with the leader. One can put in as much time as you wish. One does not need to be an ‘expert’ birder, quite the contrary. This citizen science exercise is for everyone, beginner to expert. For those who are unable to participate yet might be available to watch their feeders (providing your property is in the Count circle), you may count what you see in your yard and submit the information. I am hoping to have forms and count sheets at the next 2 meetings to distribute. Or you can phone me at 856-881-9262 and I would be more than happy to mail the info to you. It would be great to build on our core of feeder watchers. If you wish to go out on the Count and have not linked up with anyone, merely give me a call and I will place you with a group. That’s how I got my start! This is a fun experience and an excuse to break away from the sometimes craziness of the season, to see some interesting and different territories and animals. You may e-mail as well: [ronaldk52@comcast.net](mailto:ronaldk52@comcast.net)



Below is Ron’s letter to potential participants:

### **Area Leaders and Birding Friends,**

It is coming upon that time of year again when we will get out there and beat the bushes on the Northwestern Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count. The date set for the Count this year is Saturday, the 18th. I have been in touch with many of you already and hope you all can participate again this year. The Count last year was somewhat of a disaster due to the weather despite the fine efforts of a few souls who still opted to give it a try. I would imagine we should have better weather this year!

Some northern finch species are already being sighted. We have had in our yard Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, and additionally White-crowned Sparrow fairly regularly. This may be an indication of things to come. The area in that encompasses our Count is growing in population and building. Please be careful while traveling these highways. If not familiar with the area, a ‘dry run’ may be in order. It also is worthwhile to secure permission to get on properties if one wants to inspect prime territories. Let me know if I can be of help with this.

We are fortunate to have Kirk and Donna Strohmeier offer to have the “Wrap Up” at their home once again starting at 5:00P.M. This is usually a very fine get together with warm fire and food. Additionally we are able to review and hear what folks saw and heard throughout the course of the day. This part is much fun and gives us a chance to reflect. I remember when the Gloucester County Nature Club would conduct a field trip the day after to visit some of the locations where special sightings had taken place. Maybe we should resurrect this happening again some time. I specifically remember re-visiting Vestry Rd. off of Rt.45 to view a large flock of Horned Larks the following day!

I would like to dedicate the Count this year to our good friend Bob Cassel who passed away in September. Bob was compiler of this Count for quite a few years. He started participating in this Count back in the 50's. Bob was a great birder and even better people person. I would imagine most we folks participating in the Count started as a result of connection (or "coercion") with Bob. He is missed and I encourage you to review "Bob stories" as you travel that day.

Please let me know if for some reason you are unable to participate. Here's to a good Count and more importantly to having fun. Bob would have it no other way! – **Ron Kegel, Compiler**

### **Field Trip Report – Birding at Riverwinds, November 6**

The sky was blue, the weather cool, and autumn foliage still pretty, for this pleasant morning walk around the Scenic Trail and other paths at the Riverwinds complex. Birds seen included white-throated, savannah, song, and white-crowned sparrows, dark-eyed junco, purple finch, yellow-rumped warbler, ruby-crowned kinglet, red-bellied woodpecker, merlin, and red-tailed hawk, plus the usual Carolina chickadee, Carolina wren, and other resident species. Bufflehead, wigeon, and gadwall were found among the Canada geese and mallards on the Riverwinds retention basin. A few asters, goldenrods, camphorweed, and storksbill were still in bloom. There were six participants, plus trip leaders Gary and Marge Lizzi.

### **Family Fun Walk**

**Tuesday, December 28 at 10:00 AM at Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust, Deptford**

**Trip Leader: Maria Keefe 856-627-7010**

**Email: [maria\\_mk@comcast.net](mailto:maria_mk@comcast.net)**

Join us on Tuesday, December 28 at 10 am at the Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust in Deptford. Bring your baby in a backpack, your toddler in tow or your grandmom along for a walk. We will walk at a toddler's pace exploring as we go. Bring your own backpack and/or a stroller that is able to be pushed on unpaved paths. Everyone welcome.

Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust is one of the few remaining natural and protected areas along the highly-developed tidal portion of Big Timber Creek. It is located in the Blackwood Terrace section of Deptford. It offers a variety of terrain, including a meadow, woodlands and wetlands, while being surrounded on three sides by many acres of fresh water in Big Timber Creek. There are several trails to walk and a picnic table near the creek.

#### **Directions:**

From Woodbury: Drive east on Cooper Street towards Blackwood. Cross Delsea Drive. At the next traffic light, go straight. At the fork, bear right to go down Good Intent Road. As you go through the second traffic light you have crossed Route 41. The fourth street on your left is Rankin Avenue. Make a left turn (you cannot make a right) and drive to the end of the street where you will see a parking lot.

From Pitman/Glassboro/Clayton: Drive North on Delsea Drive towards the Deptford Mall. At the Five Points intersection, go straight which puts you on Route 41. At the second traffic light you are at the intersection of Route 41 and Good Intent Road. Make a right turn. The fourth street on your left is Rankin Avenue. Make a left turn and go to the end of the street where you will see a parking lot.

## **Kid's Corner - Tips for Watching Wildlife at Night**\*\* by Deb Maka

- One of the best times to watch nocturnal wildlife is about a half hour after sunset.
- If you are watching mammals, check what direction the wind is blowing, and then sit down-wind so your scent won't reach them.
- Red light is less visible to wildlife. If possible, use a red light source. You can also use red cellophane paper to cover a flashlight.
- Keep a respectable distance from the birds and mammals you are viewing, especially young one.
- Pick areas where night-flying insects are abundant, such as over water, or near flood lights and street lights. Light and water attract the insects that certain animals feed on at night.

\* adapted from the National Wildlife Federation website (<http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Activities/Camp/10-Tips-for-Watching-Wildlife-at-Night.aspx>)

## **Other Nature Notes**

### **Events by other Organizations: December 2010**

- December 19 (Sunday) - Pinelands Christmas Count. Compiler: Robert Confer. To participate: phone 609-859-2973, or e-mail [Parula9@hotmail.com](mailto:Parula9@hotmail.com).
- December 26 (Sunday) - Moorestown Christmas Count. Compiler: Mark Pensiero. To participate: phone 856-235-0171, or e-mail [Vwpassat99@verizon.net](mailto:Vwpassat99@verizon.net).
- January 2 ( Sunday) - Cumberland County Christmas Count. Compiler: Mark Fritz, Seaville NJ. To participate: e-mail [King-fisher@comcast.net](mailto:King-fisher@comcast.net).
- Saturday mornings, 7:00 AM to about 9:00, Joe Esterly is doing bird walks at Scotland Run Park, weather permitting. Walks meet at the nature center parking lot. For information phone Joe at 856-629-7626, or e-mail [jde9773@aol.com](mailto:jde9773@aol.com)

**The following events take place at the Scotland Run Nature Center in Clayton.** For details and to register for programs, call the center at (856) 881-0845. All events are free.

- Bird Walk: Saturday 12/4 at 8:00 AM
- Trim a Tree for Wildlife: Saturday 12/4 at 10:30 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 12/8 at 10:00 AM
- Family Nature Adventure: Holiday Hunt and Craft: Saturday 12/11 at 9:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 11/15 at 2:30 PM
- Made an Evergreen Wreath: Thursday 12/16 at 7:00 PM

### **Natural Events for the month of December**

- Geminid meteor shower - December 13.
- Shortest day of the year is December 22.
- Bald eagles arrive from the north and winter in New Jersey.
- Raptor migration ends mid-month.
- Great horned owls are pairing up this month – listen for their calls
- Watch for late waterfowl migrants – shovelers, mergansers and goldeneyes.
- Take part in a local Christmas Count.

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

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount (for non bird food items) to GCNC members! *Due to the current volatile market for bird food, the 10% discount for these items has had to be discontinued.* However, members will still receive credit for their purchases towards the Frequent Seed Shopper Program. WBU offers the GCNC discount on all other items in the store. Members are requested to identify themselves as GNNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please contact Sharon at 856-218-2973 or [sillybird348@comcast.net](mailto:sillybird348@comcast.net).



**Looking Ahead:**

**Upcoming GCNC Programs**

January 13, 2011: **The Natural & Unnatural History of Dragons** – Brian Hayes & Erik Mollenhauer

February 10, 2011: **Fungus** - John Dighton

March 10, 2011: TBD

April 14, 2011: **Wild Journeys: Migration in New Jersey** - Don Freiday

May 12, 2011: **Landscaping With Native Plants** - Alan Koch

June 9, 2011: **Annual Picnic plus "Cargo For Conservation"**. Location TBD.

**2010-2011 GCNC Field Trips**

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the next season. Changes and additions are not impossible. If you would be able and willing to lead an additional field trip, please contact Karl Anderson at [karlanderson6@aol.com](mailto:karlanderson6@aol.com) or 856-845-7075.

January (To be determined) – A January trip may be announced if conditions appear favorable

February 19 (Saturday) – **Looking for Wintering Waterfowl at the Jersey Shore** - Bob Duke

March 12 (Saturday) – **Early Spring Birding in Mannington Twp, Salem County** - Jonathan Stillwell

April 16 (Saturday) – **Biking Along the Delaware** - Brian Hayes

May – **Bird Quest Training Sessions**

June – **To be determined.**

**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 856-468-6536.
- 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 December Executive Committee meeting will be held on December 5<sup>th</sup> at the home of Erik & Kris Mollenhauer. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.