



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

December 2011

Program - A Birding Adventure in Cuba

Thursday, December 8, 2011 at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ

Presenters: Marilyn Henry

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

“Cuban Bird Survey! A two week birding trip to Cuba! How could a retired Spanish teacher and bird-watcher pass that up? And...how was it possible to travel to Cuba *with* the permission of the US government? What wonderful birds will I see during this once-in-a-lifetime adventure?”

Those were the thoughts of Wenonah resident Marilyn Henry when she took the opportunity to travel to the island nation of Cuba this past year in the company of a group of expert birders. Cuba, the largest island in the Caribbean, with its tropical climate and diverse habitats, is home to some of the most amazing birds in the world. 368 species of birds in 54 families have been noted in Cuba. There are 14 endangered species and 25 species, such as the Bee Hummingbird (the world's smallest bird), the Cuban Amazon Parrot and Grundlach's Hawk, which are found nowhere else.



On her journey, Marilyn explored and captured with the camera not only Cuba's birds but the beauty of the land, the rich history, the architecture and the people of this nation so geographically close to us yet so little known to most Americans after a half century of political and diplomatic isolation.

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 17, 2011 5:00 A.M. if... 'til Sunset)

Trip Coordinator/Compiler: Ron Kegel 856-881-9262 e-mail: ronaldk52@comcast.net

Hope you will join us for the Audubon Christmas Bird Count on the 17th of December. One can offer as much time as you feel comfortable and can be arranged with your leader. It is a magical event with something usually around each corner or every stop while “hunting” for birds. Just last year for example, we stepped out of the car where our gang assembles for ‘owling’ at 5:00 A.M. and a pair of Screech Owls were calling and flying back and forth across the parking lot under the lights! Many memories and friendships are made and one can also identify with the area you might participate in as well. We have at least one area that is not covered this year so if you ever had the inclination to lead an area here is your opportunity. Beginners are welcomed and very much appreciated quite frankly. Sometimes veterans of the Count like me get a little stale and it is nice to have new, energetic blood on the endeavor! If unable to attend and your home is in the Count circle and you would like to tally the birds in the yard to help,

information and tally sheet can be forwarded to you. After the Count we have been invited to the Strohmeier's once again for a wrap-up. If interested see me at the December meeting or call 856-881-9262 or e-mail ronaldk52@comcast.net. We need your help! A \$5.00 fee is collected to participate and covers administration costs for Audubon. There is no fee for feeder watching and also folks under 18 are free!

- **Ron Kegel, Compiler**

Field Trip Report – Birding at Forsythe NWR, November 13

This trip met at the refuge parking area at 8:30 AM, and lasted till early afternoon. The first hour was spent birding the shrubbery and woodland edges near the parking area, where robins, eastern bluebirds, and cedar waxwings were feeding on the fruits of holly and red cedar. Yellow-rumped warblers and a yellow-bellied sapsucker also dropped in. The rest of the morning was taken up by the eight-mile auto tour. About 35 species of birds were seen during the day, including twelve species of waterfowl, pied-billed and horned grebes, large numbers of dunlin, several bald eagles, brants and snow geese, and northern harriers (lots of them). The weather was slightly overcast and somewhat windy, with temperatures in the high 60s. After lunch, a brief visit was made to the Absecon Wildlife Management Area. The trip was led by Jonathan Stillwell.

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: December 2011

- December 18 (Sunday), 2:00 PM – **Walk in the Wild**. Sponsored by the Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust. Free. Experience a casual stroll on the trails of the land trust with a knowledgeable leader to observe the plants, animals, natural features and processes, and just plain magic that make this place very special. Meet in the parking area at the end of Rankin Avenue in Blackwood Terrace. For more information call Carl Ford at 856-579-4441. We will do this on the third Sunday of each month, with a different focus each month.
- December 18 (Sunday) – **Pinelands Christmas Bird Count**. Contact Bob Confer at 609-859-2973, or e-mail parula9@hotmail.com to participate.
- January 1, 2012 (Sunday) – **Moorestown Christmas Bird Count**. Contact Mark Pensiero at 856-235-0171 or e-mail wypassat99@verizon.net to participate.

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 12/3 at 8:00 AM
- Trim a Tree for Wildlife: Saturday 12/3 at 10:30 AM
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 12/7 at 10:00 AM
- Make a Fresh Evergreen Wreath: Thursday 12/8 at 7:00 PM
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 12/10 at 10:00 AM
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 12/14 at 2:30 PM
- Nature Explorers Holiday Walk: Saturday 12/17 at 10:30 AM

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.

Looking Ahead:

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

January 12, 2012: **Trickster Makes The World** - Erik & Kris Mollenhauer and Brian Hayes

February 9, 2012: **Pot Luck Dinner & Cargo For Conservation** - various GCNC members

March 8, 2012: **Dragonflies** - Mary Lenahan

April 12, 2012: **Birding Trails of Florida** - Joe Baur

May 10, 2012: **Rare Plants of Southern New Jersey** - Renee Brecht

June 14, 2012: **Annual Picnic** (Location to be determined)

2011-2012 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the rest of the year. A February trip has not yet been scheduled. If you would be able and willing to lead an additional field trip, please contact Karl Anderson at karlanderson6@aol.com or 856-845-7075.

Saturday January 21, 2012: **Winter Waterfowling at Local Hot Spots** Joint trip with the Audubon Wildlife Society of New Jersey. Leader: Sandra Keller.

Saturday March 24, 2012: **Birding the Delaware Bayshore**

Drive some of the roads along the bay in Cumberland County, looking for waterfowl and raptors including bald eagle, northern harrier, and short-eared owl. Leader: Joseph Esterly.

Sunday April 22, 2012: **Wildflowers Along the Wenonah Trail**

An easy walk to see some of the early spring wildflowers along the trail. Leader: Richard Dilks.

Saturday May 5, 2012: **Gloucester County Bird Quest**

Form a team, join a group, or go on your own to visit natural places in Gloucester County to identify as many birds as you can between 7:00 AM and Noon. Pre-registration is required.

Saturday June 9, 2012: **Kayaking and Birding**

At a local park. With luck we might see bald eagle, osprey, beaver, and possibly river otter. Leader: Jay Hoffecker.

Club Notes:

- Check out our **new Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gcnatureclub/>
- 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 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 or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.
- The December Executive Committee meeting will be held on December 4th at the home of Kris and Erik Mollenhauer. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.