



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

December 2015

Program - Yellowstone

Thursday, December 10, 2015 at 7:00pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church,
Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenter: Karl Anderson

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Yellowstone National Park was created in 1872. It is less than half the size of New Jersey and you can drive the 142-mile scenic loop road in a few hours. But thanks in part to careful management it mimics the endless open spaces of the unspoiled Old West. There are sixty species of mammals resident in the park, including eight ungulates, three “dogs”, three “cats”, and 21 rodents. One sees new visitors trying to photograph a bison that is half a mile distant, not realizing that a short way down the road there will be fifty of the animals blocking the highway.



There are about 1,900 species of plants, almost all of them native. Most of them bloom in July. Over 200 species of birds occur regularly. Thermal features include steam vents, hot pools, hot springs, and geysers, and there many of them. Old Faithful is not the largest geyser but it is the most regularly-erupting of the large geysers and is worth looking at. Habitats accessible to casual visitors within the park range from sagebrush grassland at an elevation of about 5,000 feet to alpine heath at an elevation of 10,000 feet. There's no need to hike. Mammals, wildflowers, birds, and butterflies are easily seen from the park roads if you know how to look for them. The park receives over three million visitors a year. The average visitor stays less than two days. Karl suggests six days for a casual visit, or about ten years if you want to know the place reasonably well.

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 – Northwestern Gloucester County Bird Count: 12/19/2015

The NW Gloucester Bird Count will take place Saturday, December 19 rain or shine. The count is rich in history having started in 1951. The first date was December 29, 1951. There were 11 participants attempting to cover 11 zones in the 15 mile radius. Some of the notable folks involved in that 1st count were Will (compiler) and Thelma Middleton, Julian Potter, Ed Manners, and George Hitchner. They were to find 59 species of bird that day.

Fast forward to now and... The 15 mile radius consists of 13 different areas, each with an area leader and good compliment of assistants. Recently we have had on average around 60 participants and bird species totals range between 75-95, depending upon the year. We owe a lot to those pioneers of the count. They had the vision and the wherewithal to conduct this citizen science endeavor.

Join us for the day if you can. It is a great opportunity to get out and see new territory, meet new people, and bone up on those birding skills. Experience is not necessary and quite frankly we enjoy having folks along that are learning. It makes the day more enjoyable for the old guard who have a tendency to sometimes take sightings for granted (me). Our leaders are a wonderful source of knowledge and experience. Most know their area like the back of their hand and tend to expect to see some species in the same area they were seen during other years!

Prerequisites are: dress warm, goodies to eat during the day, binoculars (if you have a pair), field guide (but not absolutely necessary, others will have no doubt), and an appetite to try something new and/or different! Time spent with your group can be arranged with your leader. Some folks do an entire day, others may opt to do a few hours, again arrange with your leader. Meeting place to canvass the area is usually established by the leader as well. If you are new to the count, have interest, yet not sure where or who you would like to join, the compiler can assist with this.

This year we will be doing the feeder watching again too. If you are located within the count circle and are unable to join a group but want to watch your feeders and tally you observations, I can send forms to you so you might document and aid the count. This is a helpful way of assisting the count. Sometimes some birds are seen by feeder watchers that escape those birders out beating the bushes! Please think about it.

If you have any questions please contact me; my info is below. I will be bringing the “map” to the December Nature Club meeting should anyone want to see the count area. Other details will likely be shared at the meeting too. The count has always been made up of mostly Gloucester County Nature Club members and friends. We would like to continue and build upon this legacy. Those pioneers would be proud of us.

- **Ron Kegel (compiler) 856-881-9262 ronalk52@comcast.net**

MEETUP: In order to reach members with the most up to date field trip information we are asking everyone who is able to sign up for the Gloucester County Nature Club Meetup site. By accessing the site at www.meetup.com/Gloucester-County-Nature-Club/ or using the QR Code to the right, you will be directed to the site. Once you are signed up on the site you will receive up-to-date information on upcoming trips, meetings, events, and fun walks. If you attend field trips you should consider joining Meetup even if you receive the newsletter electronically.



Field Trip – Delaware Valley Floral Group

Friday January 8, 2016, 12:00pm-2:00pm. Trip Coordinator – Jayne Rhynard.

If you are already tired of Winter, join us to get a shot of Spring at our private tour of Delaware Valley Floral Group's facility, greenhouses, and the adjacent outdoor property. **Bob and Doris Wilkins** started Delaware Valley Wholesale Florist on a wing and a prayer. DV 57 years later is one of the largest floral distribution and logistics companies in the United States. To learn more about the fascinating floral business and this true local success story, register with Jayne at the December meeting. This field trip will be limited to the first 20 participants registering, and is being made available to GCNC members prior to being posted on Meetup (www.meetup.com/Gloucester-County-Nature-Club/).

Meet in the parking lot at: **520 Mantua Blvd., North, Sewell, NJ 08080 (856) 468-7000**. Directions can be found at www.dvflora.com/nfdvdfdirections.htm. Dress in layers for indoors and out (insurance requirement: no open toe shoes).

Conservation Corner - Neonicotinoids, Our Bees, and Saving America's Pollinators Act of 2015 by Suzan Delozier

Native pollinators such as honey bees, bumble bees, the iconic monarch butterfly, and 40 other pollinating species listed as threatened or endangered have suffered alarming population declines. Scientists have linked the use of insecticides known as neonicotinoids to the rapid decline of pollinators and to the deterioration of pollinator health.

Neonicotinoids are pesticides that have been widely used since the mid-1990s on farm crops, ornamental landscape plants and trees. They are systemic chemicals, which means they are absorbed by the whole plant making the plant, including its pollen and nectar, toxic to insects. These pesticides can persist in the soil and in plants for months or years after a single application. The most common neonicotinoids used in the U.S. are imidacloprid, clothianidin, acetamiprid, thiamethoxam, and dinotefuran. They are found in many garden products with trademark names.

Neonicotinoids are highly toxic to honey bees and bumblebees. Bees exposed to sub-lethal levels of neonicotinoids experience impaired foraging and feeding behavior, disorientation, weakened immunity, delayed larval development and increased susceptibility to viruses, diseases and parasites. A single corn kernel coated with a neonicotinoid is toxic enough to kill a songbird. In addition, Roundup-ready crops, like corn and soybeans, are sprayed with Roundup which kills all weeds (including milkweed) and wildflowers, adding to the destruction of pollinator habitat.

In January 2013, the European Food Safety Authority determined that the most widely used neonicotinoids pose unacceptable hazards to bees, prompting the European Union to suspend their use on agricultural crops. In July 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced plans to phase out neonicotinoids in all national wildlife refuges by January 2016. And in October 2014, an assessment by the Environmental Protection Agency found that neonicotinoid seed coatings provide little benefit to overall soybean crop yield.

What can we do?

First, avoid using neonicotinoids in your garden. Read product labels to determine whether a product contains neonicotinoids.

Second, when purchasing plants, ask nursery or garden center staff if the plants were treated with neonicotinoids. Lowe's, Home Depot, Whole Foods and BJ's are taking steps to either eliminate plants treated with neonicotinoids or to label plants that are treated.

Third, create patches of pesticide free, pollinator-friendly plants in your garden or community.

Fourth, write your federal representative and ask that he/she co-sponsor HR1284 the Saving America's Pollinators Act of 2015. As of this writing, Donald Norcross (NJ-01) has not signed on.

Fifth, encourage your municipality or local park to use alternatives to neonicotinoids on plants that are bee-visited such as maple trees and bee-pollinated such as linden trees and roses.

Sources:

www.xerces.org/pesticides Xerces is an international, nonprofit organization that protects wildlife through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitat. The Xerces website also contains information on safer, organic pesticides and information on pollinator-friendly plants.

www.congress.gov Read the text of HR1284—it is easily read.

www.environmentalleader.com/2014/07/01/home-depot-to-require-neonicotinoids-labeling/

www.environmentalleader.com/2014/06/25/clear-evidence-neonicotinoids-a-key-factor-in-bee-decline/

www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/09/lowes-pesticides-bees_n_7035208.html

NOTE: There is no direct link between neonicotinoids and the syndrome known as Colony Collapse Disorder, in which the majority of worker bees in a colony suddenly disappear leaving behind a dead hive. However, research suggests that neonicotinoids may make honey bees more susceptible to parasites, including the intestinal parasite *Nosema* which has been implicated as one causative factor in CCD.

Nature Notes

Events by other Organizations: October 2015

- December 20 (Sunday), 2:00pm – **Walk in the Wild: Wild Holidays**. 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. We will do this on the third Sunday of each month, with a different focus each month. Please check at www.oldpinefarm.org for changes to the schedule and directions. Meet in the parking area at the end of Rankin Avenue in Blackwood Terrace. Or just use your favorite mapping program or your GPS by typing in "400 Rankin Ave, Deptford, NJ." Further details available by calling Carl Ford at 856-579-4441. No reservations necessary -- just show up!

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 12/5 at 8:30am
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 12/9 at 10:00am
- Trim a Tree for Wildlife: Saturday 12/12 at 10:00am
- Evergreen Wreath Making: Wednesday 12/16 at 7:00pm

Natural Events for the month of December

- Geminid meteor shower – Night of December 13 thru Morning of Dec 14.
- 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 this season. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

January 14, 2016: **If You Plant It, They Will Come** - Ron and Linda Kegel

February 11, 2016: **Pot Luck Dinner (6:00pm) & Bag it, a documentary film (7:00pm)** - Interactive member activity

March 10, 2016: **A Journey Through Time and Space: Following the Ancient Song-lines of Ireland** - Erik Mollenhauer & Brian Hayes

April 14, 2016: **A Panama Adventure** - Barbara Bassett

May 12, 2016: **Annual Plant Sale (6:00pm) and Program: The Horseshoe Crab Lab 6:30pm** - Sue Slotterback, The Wetlands Institute

June 9, 2016: **Thursday, June 9, 2016 Annual Picnic (6:00pm) at Alcyon Park, Pitman, NJ followed by program: Bluebirds** - Allen Jackson, President, New Jersey Bluebird Society

2015-2016 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the rest of this 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.

January – **South Jersey Wholesale Flora**

February - **Hike at Palmyra Cove**

March - TBA

April - **Bird Quest Trainings**

May 7, 2016 - **Bird Quest**

June - **Duke Farms**

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 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 Sunday December 6th at the home of Erik and Kris Mollenhauer. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.

New way to help out the Gloucester County Nature Club



It's Holiday Shopping Time!

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.

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to 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 to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.