



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public.

December 2019

Program: Once Upon a Mountain: A Story of Hawk Mountain and the Man who was "Born with a Bird in His Heart".

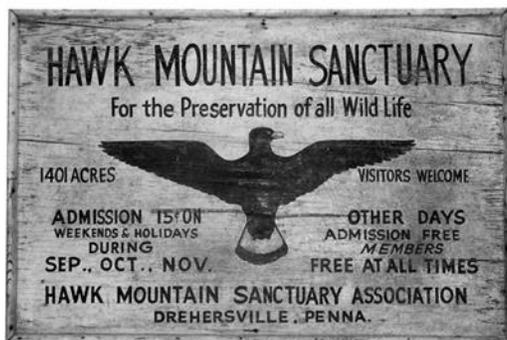
Thursday, December 12 at 7:00pm at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenters: Erik Mollenhauer, Jeff Mollenhauer

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

In the early decades of the 20th Century, birds of prey were shot by the thousands as they migrated south along the ridges of the Appalachian Mts. Perhaps no place was better known for this autumnal slaughter than a spectacular crag on Blue Mountain, less than two hours from Philadelphia, PA. In 1934, a small group of environmental activists sought to end this "sport" of hawk-shooting at "Hawk Mountain". Much like other small groups of activists then and now, they could not have imagined the far-reaching impact their actions would take. Join us as we explore the origins and legacy of Hawk Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary... and a man who was "born with a bird in his heart".

This program will be jointly presented by Jeff and Erik Mollenhauer. Jeff is an ornithologist with a deep knowledge of birds. Erik and his wife Kris have spent 60+ years exploring the wonder of Hawk Mountain.



"To truly see wonder in any place, one has to experience it through the seasons, through years of subtle learning that comes only from cumulative observation. One has to bathe in the country, in its spring creeks, in its summer lakes, in its autumn larches, and in the howling winds of its bitter winters. The legend and legacy of the land are derived only partly from the rock walls and waterfalls. The ways of properly and fully experiencing the country are passed on generation to generation by those who have lived on and loved the land."

--- R.W. Sandford

Original Hawk Mountain Sanctuary sign

"Wisdom sits in places. It's like water that never dries up. You need to drink water to stay alive, don't you? Well, you also need to drink from places. You must remember everything about them. You must learn their names. You must remember what happened at them long ago. You must think about it and keep on thinking about it. Then your mind will become smoother and smoother. Then you will see danger before it happens. You will walk a long way and live a long time. You will be wise."

--- Dudley Patterson, White Mountain Apache

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 Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 14, 2019

Compiler: Ron Kegel

Most folks have heard about the decline of the birds in recent decades. I can remember National Geographic predicting this back in the late 70's or early 80's. If I recall, one edition was primarily dedicated to this concern. I'm not sure we have done much since that time to correct those the possibilities. There have been some recent success stories with Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Eastern Bluebird. But as a whole, our avian friends are suffering.

No better opportunity to aid in citizen science and the energy involved in helping with the bird count. Participating in the count helps in gathering info and data on today's trends. The Gloucester Count is getting close to 70 years old, and there has been much data collected over those years. Many things have changed, but likewise many things have not. The landscape has changed, the people have changed (Can't believe I am one of the longest-tenured participants) and the birds have changed. Birds like the Eastern Meadowlark, Ruddy Duck, Northern Harrier, Common Bobwhite, Barn Owl, and Saw-whet Owl are disappearing, all the while Canada Goose, Black Vulture, Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, and Northern Mockingbird have increased over recent decades. We know this from observations but also because of continued counts like the Audubon Christmas counts.

We all need a break from the trials and tribulations of everyday life. Between the electronics, the politics, the holidays and the everyday direction and pulse, the count offers a different perspective. It is camaraderie, it's what the weather provides (and yours truly has not picked good weather days in recent counts). It is seeing new territory and given the chance to do it more than one year, the changes that take place in said area.

And of course its the birds! There is nothing staged in what we see and hear. The birds are free to go wherever they wish. Sometimes the birds surprise us in the locations where they show up. Sometimes they don't, as they can be found in the same place year in and year out. Many a time I've heard "Hey isn't this where we saw a!?!"

My dream is as compiler is to get 100 participants and 100 species on the day. We can accomplish this with more people to help beat the bushes! New folks are always welcome. You can join an area / area leader if you know one. Or if you have a specific area you would like to traverse (near your home or an area that fascinate you). I can try to facilitate contacting the leader that canvases that zone. Also, if you would like merely to be placed with a group I can expedite that as well. Experience is helpful but not at all necessary. Everyone has to start somewhere! I did back in 1977 and every count since then has been different and well worth it!

Yes the weather can be cold and difficult, but dressing warm, taking along food and snacks, and having open eyes and mind can be extremely helpful and rewarding. (Editors note: Flannel or Fleece-lined pants are extremely worthwhile!) Gloves, warm footwear, warm hat, and binoculars are recommended. Some area leaders go out early (5 AM?) listening and looking for owls while others may emerge at sunrise. Area leaders are asked to please cover their entire areas. Participants can offer whatever time they have available: all day, ½ day, a few hours (with coordination with specified leader). With this age of cell phones, it is quite easier to link up while in the field. (Another Editor's note: Going out looking for owls is quite fascinating)

Kirk and Donna Strohmeier have once again offered their hospitality to entertain us for a wrap-up that evening after the sun sets. Here we have refreshments (offered by all) and compare notes on the "days hunt." There is nothing better than sitting by a warm fireplace after a long and maybe cold day. It is always nice to see everyone there and hear their interesting observations.

Please join us. If you can't, I can send you a feeder watch form. Perhaps your name is in the count circle and you would like to observe the birds in your own yard and document your sightings. This area of the count has grown remarkably over the last 5 years.

The birds are declining, the green is declining in our world, Habitat is being taken away. Keep on planting and help us locate birds so we might assist in knowing where they stand and ultimately where we do too!

Involvement is free. Reward is worthwhile. Social activity within is memorable and the experience is priceless.

Thanks!

Ron Kegel, Compiler

(One final note: I can remember as a kid going to my high school football games. After the game all I wanted to do is go home and play football. Same thing here. After a count one can't wait to get out there and do more birding. Often times on the day of the count and after the count is finished, on your way home from your area, are you still find yourself counting birds! That is when you know you are hooked!)

Bird Walks - Recurring Event

The Scotland Run Park Nature Center and the Gloucester County Nature Club will be hosting bird walks year-round on the **first and third Thursday of every month at 7:30am**. This month, walks will be on **December 5** and **December 19**. Come and explore the nature trails as we look for all different species of feathered friends that the park has to offer. This event is open to all ages and families are encouraged to attend together. Bird walks will NOT take place during snow or rain.

Events by other Organizations: December 2019.

- December 7 (Saturday), 10:00am to 1:00pm – The South Jersey Land and Water Trust hosts a **Winter Bird Walk at Batsto Village**. Grab your camera and binoculars and join us as we learn about New Jersey's winter birds on our Batsto walk! We'll observe and learn about towhees, sparrows, juncos, and more! Location: 31 Batsto Rd, Hammonton, NJ 08037. Please RSVP: Contact Michael Hogan at hoganphoto@verizon.net or 609-476-2086 to RSVP and/or if you have any questions.
- December 15 (Sunday) at 2:00pm - Join Charles White at Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust for our "**Walk in the Wild**." Charles will be demonstrating **cooking over an open fire**. Sample the joy of simple cooking. Recipes will be available. During inclement weather we will meet inside the Willoughby House. Meet at the Willoughby House at the end of Pine Avenue, off Good Intent Road in Blackwood Terrace, or you can put "340 Pine Avenue, Deptford" into your favorite mapping service. Please check the Old Pine Farm Facebook page for changes and directions. Information and questions: call Charles White, 856-217-9138 or see <https://oldpinefarm.org/>. Carpooling is recommended due to limited parking. Free and open to all.

Natural Events for the month of December

- Geminid meteor shower – peaks on the night of 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.

Conservation Corner

The club is still looking for someone to follow in Suzan Delozier's footsteps by serving as the club's Conservation Chair. This is not as hard as it sounds; generally it just involves providing timely Conservation information for the newsletter. Please contact club President Karen Kravchuck or any other member of the executive committee if interested.

The NJ Green Amendment (Provided by Kris Mollenhauer. Thanks Kris!)

As Americans we have freedom of religion and freedom of speech among other freedoms. These are part of the Bill of Rights guaranteed by the federal Constitution. BUT Americans do not have a right to clean air or clean water or a healthy environment. Two states (Montana and Pennsylvania) have amended their state constitutions to include this right to their residents. Both states have used this amendment to win disputes with fracking and mining companies.

Our October program speaker, Maya Van Rossum, is leading the fight in New Jersey for the Green Amendment. Before this program I was not aware of the amendment or its potential. Nor were any of the people I have spoken with after the program.

Maya has written a book: ***The Green Amendment - Securing Our Right to a Healthy Environment*** It makes a good Christmas present for friends and family!

For more information there is a website: www.MayavanRossum.green. There is an online petition on the website to sign, urging the NJ state Assembly and Senate to support and pass NJ's Green Amendment. This amendment will update the state constitution so as to read that "Every person has the right to a clean and healthy environment."

Please support the Green Amendment for New Jersey. Get more information, go to the website, sign the petition and talk with your family and friends to create an awareness of this opportunity to protect ourselves and our rivers, beaches, and forests. And buy the book!

Looking Ahead:

Listed below are the programs we have lined up for the rest of the 2019-2020 season. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month. Meetings start at 7:00pm unless otherwise noted.

2019 - 2020 Programs

January 9, 2020: **Rediscovering America's First Artificial River** - Scott Barnes

February 13, 2020 (6:00pm): **Annual Pot Luck Dinner** followed by program **Bird-Window Collisions** - Jeff Mollenhauer

March 12, 2020 **Species Discovery and the Future of Biodiversity Exploration** - Dr. Daniel Duran, Lecturer, Rowan U; Naturalist, Scotland Run Park.

April 9, 2020: **Birding the American Heartland** - Jeff Mollenhauer

May 14, 2020. **Annual Plant Sale** (6:00pm) followed by program **May on the Bay: Taking Action for Shorebirds and Horseshoe Crabs** - Laura Chamberlin, Assistant Director for the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network

June 11, 2020 (6:00pm): **GCNC Annual Picnic** at Fasola Park, Deptford, NJ

2019-2020 Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the 2019 – 2020 season. Changes and additions are not impossible. If you would be willing to lead an additional field trip, please contact Paula Hayes at pnbhayes@gmail.com.

January 2020 - **Birding Along the Delaware River**

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 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 December Executive Committee meeting will be held on Sunday December 8th at the home of Karen Kravchuck. Please contact Karen for more information.

Please help out the Gloucester County Nature Club while shopping for the holidays online!



Holiday 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.

