



# Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

December 2021

**Program: Invasive Species.**

Presented by: Barbara Fiedler and Jesse Connor, Native Plant Society of New Jersey, Southeast Chapter

**A special online live presentation of the Gloucester County Nature Club**

Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 7:00 P.M

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Web link: <https://meet.jit.si/GCNCMeeting>

**This presentation is free and open to the public**

We welcome the Native Plant Society of New Jersey for a special short film presentation on New Jersey's invasive species. This will be followed by a group discussion with the NPSNJ's Barbara Fiedler and Jesse Connor on invasives, how to control them to protect native ecosystems, and what we all can do minimize their presence in our yards and landscaping as well as in natural areas.

**Three troublesome invasive species found in our region**



Callery Pear



Mile-A Minute



Spotted Lanternfly

New Jersey has well over 2,000 plant species and about 1,000 non-native plants that were brought here deliberately or inadvertently by humans. An invasive species can be any kind of living organism—a plant, amphibian, insect, fish, fungus, bacteria, or even an organism's seeds or eggs—that is not native to an ecosystem and causes harm. They can harm the environment, the economy, or even human health. Species that grow and reproduce quickly, and spread aggressively, with potential to cause harm, are given the label "invasive."

The Native Plant Society of New Jersey is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to the appreciation, protection, and study of the native flora of New Jersey. Founded in 1985, the NPSNJ has hundreds of members across the state, and is organized into county and regional chapters. Its members include gardeners, horticulturists, naturalists, landscape designers, students, and native plant enthusiasts from all walks of life.



## **Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count**

The annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count in Gloucester County will take place on **Saturday, December 18th**. There are no state limitations to do this outdoor endeavor. We will be following the Audubon and CDC guidance trying to social distance and going out in familiar pods. Guidelines are basically the same as last year.

If you are interested and have not participated previously feel free to contact me @: 609-618-0635 or at ronaldk52@comcast.net. I can put you in touch with one of our area leaders. There are 13 areas, a leader assigned to each one.

If your residence is in the 'count circle' and you can not join a group, you may participate as a 'feeder watcher' and submit your findings that way. Just contact me and I can get you info and checklist.

Weather will not stop us. Hope all leaders can attend once more and as well, all our colleagues who make this citizen science endeavor possible. There will be no wrap-up this year due to continued concerns over Covid. Area leaders please get results to me quickly so I might submit to National Audubon Society.

Hope you will join us!

Ron Kegel, compiler

## **Conservation Corner** by Bonnie Dann

### **New Jersey's Pine Barrens**

Despite being one of the smaller and more densely populated states, New Jersey contains a large territory of forest land with unique natural value, interspersed with towns and farms. The New Jersey Pine Barrens is in fact the largest remaining example of an ecosystem known as the Atlantic coastal pine barrens. It is an area to be treasured by residents of the state.

Most of southern New Jersey's outer coastal plain lies within the Pine Barrens. The area is characterized by sandy, acidic, nutrient-poor soil. Underneath it lies the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer, holding 17 trillion gallons of water, one of the purest sources of fresh water in the country. It is traversed by numerous streams and rivers, many of which are favored by canoeists and kayakers.

The signature tree of the Pine Barrens is pitch pine, which maintains an ecological advantage because of its resistance to the wildfires that frequent the region. Some pines, known as pygmy pine, display stunted growth. The other prevalent species of the upland forest is oak, while Atlantic white cedar is found in swamps along the waterways. The understory contains shrubs such as mountain laurel, heather, and sweet-fern.

The Barrens is home to many rare plants, including various orchids (such as pink lady's slipper), pitcher plants, Pine Barrens gentian, bog asphodel, broom crowberry, and swamp pink. There are also many species of mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds, of which 36 animal species are threatened or endangered.

Blueberries and cranberries are well-known agricultural products of the region.

To protect the Pine Barrens from overdevelopment, Congress created the Pinelands National Reserve in 1978. It consists of 1.1 million acres covering parts of seven counties. This legislation was followed by the state Pinelands Preservation Act in 1979. The Pinelands is also recognized by the United Nations as an International Biosphere Reserve. Land use and development in most of the Pinelands Reserve is regulated by the state Pinelands Commission.

**NEW YOUTUBE CHANNEL:** We have begun posting full recordings of recent club programs for the convenience of members and the public. To find the club's channel, use [this link](#) or search for the club's full name within YouTube. Three videos are now available:

1. [Roger Tory Peterson and the Origins of the Modern Field Guide](#) (April)
2. [Native Plants of South Jersey](#) (May)
3. [Birding in Argentina](#) (September)



As you often hear on YouTube, be sure to subscribe to the club's channel and "like" the videos so they will get recommended to more people! We will continue recording all online programs, and hopefully in-person ones as well, during this club year.

### **Nature Notes**

#### **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..

#### **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 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](mailto:sharkeyes@comcast.net) or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.

## ***Natural Places of Gloucester County NJ – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition makes a great gift!***

Our wildly popular ***Natural Places of Gloucester County NJ*** book is back as a 2nd Edition with a new fresh look, updated copy and new locations outdoors for you to get-out-and-go-to while staying distanced and safe. Just what you need to stuff stockings and help find places full of natural beauty tucked away in our county.

The Natural Places Guide is one of the many ways the Nature Club provides valuable detailed information, not available elsewhere, about the plants, trees, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians at over 35 local Natural Places. Each site description includes directions, address and parking information plus a map of the site to make visiting easy and enjoyable. For the Second Edition, information for existing sites has been brought up-to-date. Several new sites have also been added, including: Tall Pines State Preserve, Andoloro WMA, and Tranquility Trails.

These books are not stuck on a container ship anchored somewhere off the California coast; they are available for immediate purchase via the [GCNC website](#) or at local retailers including:

- Words Matter - 52 S. Broadway, Pitman, NJ 08071
- Daminger's Natural Pet Foods - 641 Main St, Sewell (Mantua Township), NJ 08080
- Wild Birds Unlimited Cherry Hill - 1619 N Kings Hwy, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
- Triple Oaks Nursery & Herb Garden – 2359 Delsea Drive, Franklinville NJ 08322
- The Yellow Garage Antiques – 66 South Main St, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062
- Dambly's Garden Center – 51 West Factory Rd, Berlin, NJ 08009

### **Remember to help out the Gloucester County Nature Club**



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