



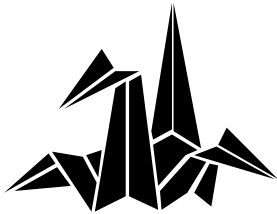
Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

Nature Club meetings are open to the public
February 2003

Regular Program- Mid-Winter Social: Craft Night, Feb. 13 at 7:00 pm, This meeting will be at EIRC in Sewell- Program Coordinator, Bob Cassel 478-2496

Two years ago the Nature Club started a tradition of having a social gathering rather than a formal program at the February meeting. This year the tradition continues with a dessert social. Attendees should bring a dessert of their choice to contribute to the evening's fare. While all desserts are welcome, consider desserts that will be easy to eat while participating in the evening's event. The Club will provide plates and utensils or bring your own and save some landfill space.



The theme for this year's social is a craft night. A variety of nature-focused crafts have been selected to appeal to kids (and adults) of all ages. Just one example is a cranberry wreath bird feeder. Attendees are invited to join us for an evening of arts & crafts and delicious desserts.

Regular Field Trip- Bombay Hook -Sunday, Feb. 16 at 11:00 am Field Trip Coordinator, Kris Mollenhauer 589-4387

A tremendous resource not only for the Mid - Atlantic States, but for the entire nation, the 15,978-acre Bombay Hook NWR is an important link in a chain of waterfowl refuges stretching from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. About three-quarters of the refuge consists of tidal salt marsh, but other acreage includes impounded fresh water pools, swamps, timbered and grassy upland, and agricultural land. The general terrain is flat and less than ten feet above sea level. Bombay Hook is primarily a refuge for migrating and wintering ducks and geese. The marsh, with its intersecting tidal streams and rivers, provides excellent natural habitat for the birds and mammals of the area. Last winter while driving the 12 mile auto tour, we watched a Snowy Owl eating a Pintail Duck and later spied a Screech Owl hiding in a wooden nest box. Remember to Dress warm, bring binocs, field guides, some snacks, and drinks, too.

We will meet at Timberline Shopping Center at 11 am. Admission: \$4.00 per vehicle. Seniors can obtain a lifetime pass for \$10.00. Handicapped: Visitor Center, 1 trail, and 1 dock accessible.

Directions: I-95 South to Rt. 202 South to Rt. 13 South toward Dover. About ½ mile after passing Rt. 6 in Smyrna, turn left onto Road 12. 5 miles to Rt. 9 South. Go ¼ mile, turn left onto Road 85 to Refuge. Time: 60 - 90 minutes south of Philadelphia.



Conowingo Dam- January 11, 2003

This was a day for eagles! Right from the moment we stepped out of our cars an eagle soared over the parking area where we stood. Another eagle perched high in the trees near by. And yet another stood on a rock out in the river just below the dam. More eagles soared high in the brilliant blue sky with their white heads and tails shining in the sunlight. Over 40 Nature Club members braved the frigid weather and everyone that came got good looks at bald eagles. We even saw an eagle pick a fish out of the river and pass so close overhead that we could actually see the fish wiggling in his talons.



Winter Raptor Festival- February 7-8, 2003-

This will be the third annual Raptor Festival to be held in Cumberland County. This well attended event has speakers, artists, vendors, a circuit of viewing sites, slideshows, and refreshments. An impressive collection of eagles, harriers, rough-legged hawks, kestrel, and many other birds of prey congregate in rural Cumberland County. The events will run throughout the day from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. If you attend the event your day should begin in Mauricetown at the Firehouse. Here you will pay a small registration fee and receive a listing of the day's events and a map of the area. From there it's up to you to plan your day. The excellent map of the area will lead you to various viewing areas that are manned by staff from CMBO and the Nature Conservancy. At each viewing area the naturalists will help you search the marshes, skies, and tree lines for the day's quarry- raptors! You may also want to visit the exhibit hall to see the beautiful artwork of local artists and the various nature related products available for purchase. Additionally, you can stop back in Mauricetown for one of the scheduled lectures.

Directions- Take route 55 until it ends and merges with south route 47. When you come to the Y where 347 and 47 split bear right on 47 and proceed to the traffic light. At the light there is a small store called Campbell's and a Wawa. At that intersection you will turn right onto route 670 and go across the bridge to Mauricetown. Once across the bridge turn left at the blinking light. Then make a right onto Noble Street and watch for the Fire Hall. If you need more information you may call Cumberland County's Planning and Development office at 856-453-2177.

Conservation Notes **Cutting Catalog Waste**

Gloria Caccia, Environmental Coordinator, 582-0980

American catalog companies sent out nearly 17 billion catalogs last year, or 59 for every man, woman, and child. In order to make these catalogs the industry used over 3.5 million tons of paper. The manufacturing of that paper uses large amounts of wood, energy, and water. In addition, it generates significant water and air pollution and solid waste. If companies were to switch to recycled paper the environment would benefit in many ways. We would be able to use less wood and cut fewer trees. If post-consumer recycled fiber is used solid waste could be reduced along with cutting the amount of energy, chemicals and water needed to produce paper.

Most catalog companies (and magazines) use virgin paper. They use little or no recycled paper, despite its wide availability, competitive price, and high quality. Even

catalogs that market their products to outdoor enthusiasts are slow to change. Those that do are eager to label their catalogs as using recycled paper. I encourage you to check the ones in your house, and call or contact the companies you shop with and let them know how you feel. In addition, consider calling the companies whose catalogs you receive but do not want and have them stopped. Do your part to encourage retailers to change their ways. (You may also want to check into the magazines you receive as well.)

Global Warming Effects Bird's Nesting Seasons

Hundreds of plant and animal species around the world are feeling the impacts of global warming, although the most dramatic effects may not be felt for decades, according to new research from a Stanford University team. They predict that a rapid temperature rise, together with other environmental pressures, "could easily disrupt the connectedness among species" and lead to numerous extinctions.

Many bird species are returning to their nesting areas earlier than they did in the past. This creates a problem for many birds who time their young's hatching to match a peak in food availability. This can also create problems with pest insect populations that may grow rapidly without the predators that eat them. As the climate changes faster than the birds, insects, plants and other living things can evolve our environment becomes out of sync.

The North American tree swallow is among the bird species beginning springtime activities earlier than historically recorded. Field biologists, who kept track of some 21,000 tree swallow nests in the United States and Canada over the last 40 years, concluded that the average egg laying date for female swallows has advanced by nine days - a phenomenon that mirrors other North American studies confirming higher temperatures and the earlier arrival of spring.

Excerpted from Environmental News Service Jan. 2, 2003

Great Backyard Bird Count- February 14-17, 2003

Why not join the 46,546 people who participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count in 2002 and become a "citizen-scientist?" The GBBC is a three-day weekend event that you can take part in from the comfort of your living room. To take part you count all the birds you see on any and/or all of the days. You can count the birds at your feeder (this is what most participants do) or a local park, etc. Directions and more info can be found at www.birdsource.org. You then enter your results at the same website. The data each individual counter enters is then available on the website so you can examine it for trends in different parts of the country or from year to year in your area. The data is also used by the scientists at Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. This is a fun way to census the winter birds in your area.

Christmas Bird Count, December 14, 2002

Regardless of the day's weather, there were highlights on the 2002 Christmas Bird Count. An orange-crowned warbler appeared in area 9 for Dr. Dick Ebert and his party. Not far away though, the Kegels in Clayton had another orange-crowned or was it the same bird? In area 4 the Hayes party found a woodcock and fox sparrows. Go to area 8, and the Kegel team had a snipe. Both the Hayes and Kegel parties had 54

by Bob Cassel



species. A total of 89 species were reported on count day. Cathy Carter's team had an osprey in area 5. An observer who signed up for December 14th but who slept through and didn't make the count, went out the next day and flushed a goshawk in the industrial park area of Logan Township. The teams that had a chance to reconnoiter their area in advance of count day, were able to go directly to good bird habitats, and to get permission to bird areas on farms. Following the long day, most observers were able to gather at Cassel's place, relate tales of their day, "brag" about the birds they found, and lament over the birds that should have been found. Next year, let's try for more observers in the field and find those birds that may have been missed. Karen Allen and daughter Ellie, Gale and Karl Anderson, Don Hogg, Mary Clouser, and Ed Cleary were among those who made this their first Gloucester County Audubon Christmas Bird Count. At the end of the day the fellowship and the fireplace was warm and the soups were delicious. Plenty of Christmas cookies topped the day. Thanks to all our observers who made the count a success! For more information go to <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>

Winter Blues

by Brian Hayes

I'm sure I don't have to tell you how difficult it is to get motivated to leave the house this time of year. There are plenty of excuses and I've used my share (You can take your pick: It's too cold, It gets dark too early, I just took my shoes off, or my favorite: I'm really comfortable right now). Let's face it, this time of the year it's just easier to sink down in the chair with a good book or your favorite movie. You know: just veg. I think this leads many people to get depressed in the winter and try to suffer through until spring but I can't imagine a year without it. True, winter isn't my favorite season but I look forward to it each year.



At the start of winter I look forward to the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts. Hopefully you joined the Nature Club in December on our most recent count (see Christmas Bird Count on page 3). At that busy time of year it is a great reason to get outside. This is a good time to visit the concentration of Eagles at Conowingo Dam (see Conowingo Dam article on page 1). Another great winter trip is to Bombay Hook NWR (see fieldtrips on page 1) or Forsythe NWR. I find both locations allow you to appreciate a good heater and warm clothes since it always seem to be windy and cold. As the cold of winter grips our region, birds that frequent colder climates often find the need to travel south. Keep your eyes and ears alert for rarities to our area like crossbills, grosbeaks, siskins, buntings, horned larks, longspurs, redpolls, goshawks, roughleg hawks, and snowy owls. What better time to look for owls than winter, when unlike the rest of the year you don't need to be up in the wee hours of the morning to look for these secretive fellows. Don't think that the only reason to look forward to winter is for birds.

Snow can add a lot of fun to the drab season. Snowball fights, snowmen, sledding, and making new tracks are just the start of the fun when you have snow. I miss it the years we don't get much. If you are lucky you might be able to walk in the woods on a moonlight night with snow on the ground. I'm always amazed how bright the moon can make the trails and since the days are short you don't have to be out very late to enjoy this special treat.

Not all winter activities need to test your fortitude against the elements. I like to use my indoor time to prepare for our next adventures. This could be anything from learning the basics of a new language, people or country, to learning the animals and plants in a new habitat. Instead of turning on the television you can learn some of the local plants and animals you had trouble identifying in the past year. There are great guides out right now for butterflies, dragonflies, wildflowers, birds, trees, reptiles, amphibians, ferns or lichens. The local library may have many of these guides and you can certainly get them at one of the many bookstores in the area. In addition to books there are some interactive games and CD's that will teach and challenge you to improve your skills. The internet can also provide a lot of this information as well but can be frustrating sifting through the volume of data.

So don't just hibernate this year, get out and enjoy winter. Regardless if you visit new locations, see rare birds, sharpen your identification skills, or explore the nocturnal world you find that winter has its own unique adventures. You won't have time for the blues and at the very least: you will learn some flora or fauna or be prepared for your next adventure. Enjoy! Winter has much to offer.

Volunteer Opportunities

Amphibian Monitoring

The Endangered and Non-game Species Program is actively recruiting new volunteers to participate in a statewide Calling Amphibian Monitoring Program (CAMP). The object of the program is to collect data about New Jersey's calling amphibians by surveying 15 mile routes during the spring. The ENSP has been working for several years through the Herp Atlas to create an accurate data base of which herps (reptiles and amphibians) are found where in the state and the size of each population. If you interested in becoming a part of their newest survey team there is a training program on January 30th at EIRC. At the training you will be taught how to conduct the surveys and receive a CD of "Calls of New Jersey Frogs and Toads." To register or learn more about the project call Larissa Smith at 609-628-2103 or LLsmmith@gtc3.com.



BirdQuest

The 2003 Gloucester County Bird Quest will take place on Saturday, May 3, 2003 from 7:00 am to 12 noon in Gloucester County. During this time, teams of people will visit parks and natural sites in the county to find as many different kinds of bird species as possible. The purpose of Bird Quest is to discover the natural areas of Gloucester County while trying to identify birds with friends and family. The event is designed to be educational rather than competitive. At the end of the event all participants will gather at Atkinson Memorial Park to share their results and for lunch, t-shirts and prizes.

In this its fourth year we hope that the Quest will continue to grow. Last year we had over 300 participants. In order for this event to happen we need many volunteers who are willing to help both before the actual event and the day of the event. If you'd like to volunteer to help out please call Paula Hayes at 468-9272.

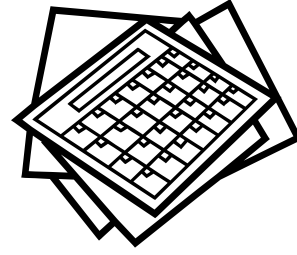
A training schedule and registration form will be in the next newsletter. We hope you will join us in May and for some of the very popular trainings held before the event.

Looking Ahead-

Field Trips:

Sunday, March 16th Silver Lake Trail Hike

Saturday May 3rd - Bird Quest



Club Notes:

- Executive Committee Meeting: February 9th at 7:00 pm, Location to be announced
- The Nature Club is always looking for ideas for future programs and field trips. Please contact the program or trip coordinators if you have ideas or would like to help.
- For information about the Nature Club call Brian Hayes at 856-468-9272.
- Information for the next newsletter should be sent to Paula Hayes at pnbhayes@aol.com or 413 North Stockton Avenue; Wenonah, NJ 08090 by the 15th of each month.

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