

# Gloucester County Nature Club

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

March 2001

**REGULAR MEETING -Thurs., March 8, 2001 - 7:00 pm – EIRC Building, 606 Delsea Dr. in Washington Twp. (next to the Dairy Queen on Rt. 47)**

Bob Cassel, Program Coordinator, 478-2496

### A Natural History of Costa Rica

The tropical regions are home to the greatest diversity of plant and animal species on the planet, and nowhere is the diversity more spectacular than the Central American nation of Costa Rica. Our “expedition” to this jewel will be guided by Mr. Bert Hixon, a senior at Richard Stockton College. His program is modeled after material from noted forest ecologist Dan Jansen, and Bert’s work as a teaching assistant for a course in “Tropical Field Biology”. Bert’s presentation will illustrate how habitat diversity drives species diversity.

**FIELD TRIP –Sunday, March 11, 2001 – Cedar Run Refuge, Medford NJ – 8:00 pm**

Kris Mollenhauer, Field Trip Coordinator, 589-4387

### Sunday, March 11, 1 pm: Cedar Run Refuge, Medford NJ

Who takes care of sick, injured or orphaned animals? The people at Cedar Run Refuge do! This is one of the closest facilities in our area. Sign up for a guided two-hour afternoon tour of the wildlife compound and education center. The refuge cares for and rehabilitates many injured animals like Orion, an adult Bald Eagle. The refuge staff will talk to us about how to care for injured or orphaned wildlife. We will get a close-up look at many wild animals. A great trip for children and all age groups. Call the Field Trip Coordinator, K. Mollenhauer (589-4387) to register and get drivers’ directions. Limited to 25 people.

*This Spring the Nature Club will offer a series of five mini-field trips (each lasting 1-2 hours) highlighting some unique signs and sounds of springtime in Gloucester County (full descriptions will appear in later newsletters).*

**Monday, March 5, (5 pm): Sky Dancers: The American Woodcock** Join Brian Hayes at dusk to seek the spectacular aerial courtship displays of the woodcock, an upland shorebird native to Gloucester County. Courtship begins with a ground display during which the male turns and utters a nasal “peent” for about a minute. This is followed by a 45-to 60-second sky dance in which the male spirals 30 to 90 meters above the ground while making a twittering sound. Then suddenly he rockets with a melodic warbling call, leveling off a few feet from the ground. The walk will be about 2 miles. Bring a flashlight. Call the Field Trip Coordinator, Kris Mollenhauer, (589-4387) to register and for drivers’ directions.

**Tuesday, March 27, (7 pm) – Stalking *Spring Peepers* after Dark – Scotland Run Park**

**Monday, April 2, (5 pm) – On the Trail of *Trailing Arbutus* – Elk Township**

**Tuesday, April 24, (5:30 pm) – Searching for the Elusive *Swamp Pink* – Glassboro Wildlife Mgt. Area**

**Monday, June 4, (5:30) pm – Summer Snow in Gloucester County: *Mountain Laurel* in Bloom –  
Ceres Park, Mantua**

## **FUTURE EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

### **Programs/Event**

**April 5** (7 PM, first Thursday of the month, Pitman High School Auditorium) **The Raptor Project: a close encounter with 15-20 different kinds of LIVE EAGLES, HAWKS, OWLS and FALCONS.** Raptor Project stars include “Cody” (a Golden Eagle with a seven foot wing-span), “Snowman” (an Arctic Snowy Owl), “Paragon” (a Peregrine Falcon) and “Tiny Tina” a Saw-whet Owl. This is the largest and most varied collection of traveling raptors in the world. The presenter and Project Director, Jonathan Wood, is a Master Falconer and Wildlife Rehabilitator, bringing unique insights, observations and humor to this nationally acclaimed show. His program emphasizes awareness of the vital role of raptors in the environment, their conservation, rehabilitation (of injured birds) and captive breeding programs (to re-establish endangered species). Presenting up to 1,000 educational programs a year, the Raptor Project has been seen on PBS, Good Morning America and The Today Show, to name a few. Great for families.

**May 10:** “Underwater Shipwrecks and Marine Life of the New Jersey Coast”

**May 12:** The **Second Annual Gloucester County Bird Quest**, from 7 AM-12 Noon on Saturday May 12. A fun, educational event, last year’s Quest was joined by 150+ people, from young children to senior citizens, school groups, scout groups, environmental commissions, families and friends. The event was sponsored by 11 local environmental commissions and 15 businesses and industries. Teams of 4-7 people led by knowledgeable birders search the County to find as many species of birds as they can, learning about bird identification, behavior, and Gloucester County’s unique natural areas. At noon, participants gather at James Atkinson Park (Bethel Mill Park) on Delsea Drive to report results, get a free lunch, free Quest T-shirts, posters and other materials/prizes. The 2001 Gloucester County Bird Quest will be in tandem with International Migratory Bird Day, an international effort to draw attention to the decline of migratory bird populations in recent years.

### **Field Trips:**

**Sunday, April 22 - Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Gardens, New Hope PA**

**Saturday, May 12 – Gloucester County Bird Quest**

**Saturday, June 2 – In Search of Great Trees: Rambles with Mimi.** A driving tour of some of South Jersey’s most spectacular trees, led by none other than Mimi Glass.

- To Deb Maka (Environmental Commission Coordinator), who, with members of the Deptford Environmental Commission and other Nature Club members, conducted a successful Environmental Commission Conference on Saturday, January 20 at the Deptford Municipal Building. The conference, attended by 75-80 people, brought together members of eleven local environmental commissions with members of the Nature Club and general public. The four-hour program included time for local commissions to report on current/past projects. Many people noted this as one of the most worthwhile parts of the program, as it led to informal discussions between members of different commissions about issues and concerns that transcend local political boundaries. A post-conference survey revealed a unanimous desire for another conference in the future to continue the dialogue, with the majority of people indicating preference for another four-hour Saturday conference in about six months. Jess Everett, a member of the Pitman Environmental Commission and the Nature Club, offered the possibility of the next conference being hosted at Rowan University (Jess is a professor of Civil/Environmental Engineering there).
  - To Marge Dolente, Mimi Glass and other Nature Club members who helped organize the Recognition Dinner (51 years) held February 8 at EIRC. The dinner was attended by 55 people, accompanied by fine food and great stories from past events in Nature Club history. Among many memorable anecdotes was one told by long-time Club member Janet Gyer about a rare plant rescue operation organized by the Club when Route 55 was being built.
- To Kris Mollenhauer, Jill Taylor (Gloucester County Parks naturalist) and other Nature Club members who organized a successful moonlit walk for 42 people on Friday night, February 9. The moon put in only a veiled appearance, and the group had no luck finding owls, but the stillness of a winter forest at night was enjoyed by all.

## **Community Events**

The Nature Club would like to have an exhibit or educational display at a number of local or county events in Gloucester County. We are especially interested in partnering with local environmental commissions to do a joint exhibit/display. The main limiting factor in this is finding a few Nature Club members to spend a few hours to “man” the display and pass out information. Please contact our new Community Events Coordinator, Maria Keefe, at [Kityblue@juno.com](mailto:Kityblue@juno.com) or 856-627-7010 if you might be willing to help man a Nature Club exhibit at one of the following events... or if you know of another local event that the Club should exhibit at... or if you are a member of a local environmental commission and would like to partner an exhibit with the Nature Club. Maria is developing a display that can be moved around to various events. If anyone would like to work with her to develop the display, please contact her.

- Saturday, April 21: Washington Lake Park annual Earth Day celebration, 10-4 PM. Need several volunteers to man the display for several hours at a time.
- Saturday, April 21: Pitman Environmental Commission’s annual Earth Day celebration 8-1 PM. Need several volunteers to man the display.

- Saturday, May 19: Deptford Day. Need volunteers to man the display.
- Sunday, June 10: Gloucester County Water Fest at Scotland Run Park, 11-4 PM. Need volunteers to man the display.
- Saturday, July 7: Date tentative. Min-grant clean-up. At least 15 people will be needed to clean up litter at a very interesting, little-known natural site (good for birding and native plants) in Gloucester County. The Nature Club will earn \$300 through this project.

### **Other Programs**

#### **Gloucester County Diversity Project Workshops (free)**

- HerpAtlas Training Workshop: Saturday February 17 at 10 AM to 1 PM (2<sup>nd</sup> session at 2 PM if needed) at EIRC Building on Rt 47, Washington Twp (next to Dairy Queen). Preregister at 609-628-2103, tell Jackie or Terry you are with the Gloucester County Project. (due to late notice of this newsletter, simply come, if you can't pre-register)
- Woodland Raptors Training Workshop: Saturday, February 24, 9 AM to noon at Monroe Twp Senior Center on BlueBell Rd near Main St. Pre-register by contacting Steve Paturzo/Melissa Craddock at 609-292-1231, 609-777-4136, mcraddoc@dep.state.nj.us or [spaturzo@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:spaturzo@dep.state.nj.us) Bring binoculars.
- Marsh-nesting Birds Training Workshop: Saturday, March 10, 9 AM to noon at site to be determined. Contact Steve or Melissa using above info, by March 6 for details. Bring binoculars. Contact Steve or Melissa to pre-register for any of the following workshops:
- Bog Turtles Training Workshop: Saturday April 7, 9-12, site to be determined.
- Pineland Herps: Wed, April 11 (evening), site to be determined.
- Grassland Birds: Sat, April 28, 9-12, site to be determined.
- Forest Songbirds: Sat, May 5, 9-12, site to be determined.
- Scrub/Shrub Songbirds: Sat, May 19, 9-12, site to be determined.
- Freshwater mussels: Sat, June 2, 9-12, site to be determined.

#### **Backyard Wildlife Habitat Workshops**

You are invited to attend a series of free workshops on how to create your own Backyard Wildlife Habitat, offered by Gloucester County Parks and Recreation and funded by NJDEP Division of Watershed Protection. By landscaping with wildlife in mind, you are creating your own private wildlife refuge as well as a beautiful yard, which is low maintenance and needs less water and chemicals. All sessions will be held at Scotland Run Park Nature Center located on Academy St. Clayton from 9 am to 12 noon. The Saturday dates and topics are: 2/24-Making Your Backyard a Home for Wildlife; 3/10 – The Dirt on Gardening-Basic Skills; 3/17 Gardening for Things with Wings; 3/24 – Benefits of Using Native Species in Your Landscaping; 4/21 = Field Trip to Test Gardens along the Maurice River, behind “Triple Oaks” Nursery. **It's FREE, but registration is required. Call 856-881-0845.** Note: Due to large enrollment, the 2/24 workshop will be held at the County Building on Delsea Dr. Clayton.

### Websites Worth Looking At

<http://www.topozone.com> Has interactive topographic maps for the entire US, including where you live.

<http://fermi.jhuapl.edu/states> US Color Landform Atlas includes shaded relief maps, county maps and satellite images of every state, plus multiple external links for each state.

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensphome.htm> The website of the NJ Endangered Species program includes an on-line field guide (with photos) of the reptiles and amphibians of New Jersey. Click on the link for HerpAtlas field guides.

<http://www.state.nj.us/wwwboard/gloucester/messages/44.html> Site of the Gloucester County Wildlife Diversity and Habitat Protection Project, where Gloucester County residents can ask questions and communicate with each other about the project.

[http://www.americanforests.org/clmt\\_chg/carbcalc.php3](http://www.americanforests.org/clmt_chg/carbcalc.php3) We live in a society dependent on autos and fossil-fuel generated electricity. Planting trees, which pulls carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, is one of the most effective ways of off-setting CO2 buildup (and global warming). How many trees do you need to plant to offset your carbon emissions? This Personal Climate Change Calculator helps you figure out the effect of your lifestyle on the Earth's climate, and how many trees you should plant as a result.

### Northern Mockingbird

This robin-sized, slim gray songbird with long tail, flashing white in wings and tail when it flies, is known for its ability to mimic the songs of other birds. The male and female are similar in appearance. Its scientific name, *Mimus polyglottos* means "mimic of many languages". The male may be able to sing up to 150 distinct songs, repeating each song 4-6 times before moving on to another. Native Americans called them "400 tongues" for their mimicking ability. They also imitate modern sounds such as whistles and the sounds of traffic. They sing frequently in the middle of the night, especially when there is a full moon.

Mockingbirds are year-round residents of Gloucester County and are common in residential areas, farms, parks, roadsides and a variety of habitats. They are often in short grass or loose soil when foraging; omnivorous in diet, they eat a wide variety of fruits and insects. They frequently give alarm calls that are heeded by other species of birds. Mockingbirds will attack dogs, cats and even people when protecting their young. Mockingbird eggs and nestlings are taken by Blue Jays, Common Crows and Fish Crows, which they will likewise harass to drive away from their nesting area.

Mockingbirds are not regular visitors to feeders since they prefer fruits and insects to seeds. However, they come readily to foods they like, such as peanut butter or raisins. A Mockingbird may establish a winter feeding territory that includes, by chance or interest, your bird feeder. The Mockingbird may then chase away other species from the territory, and thus the feeder. If so, move the feeder.

Always common in the Southern states, not many years ago Mockingbirds were rare in the Northeast and they never overwintered. Now they are a very common breeder that stays all winter. Their northward expansion has been attributed to the spread of Multi-flora Rose, a non-native invasive plant that produces a profusion of berries, as well as landscaping of ornamental trees and shrubs that provide food all year round.

In the 1800s, Mockingbird eggs were collected for food. Until the early 1900s they were used as cage birds in the U.S. because of their singing ability. A good singer would bring as high as \$100 in New York City at that time. They are now protected, as are all migratory birds.

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**Executive Committee Meeting:** The Executive Committee Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 4th at 6:30 PM at the home of Deb Maka, 619 Quincy Ct, Glassboro, NJ (off Rte 322, west of Glassboro) RSVP at 863-0330.

**Club News:** The Nature Club is always looking for ideas for future programs and field trips. Please contact the program and/or field trip coordinators with your ideas. For information about the Gloucester County Nature Club, call:  
Brian Hayes, President 468-9272                      Mimi Glass, Membership Chair, 589-6435

Information for next month's newsletter should be sent, by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, to:  
Erik Mollenhauer, 606 Delsea Dr. Sewell NJ 08080, 582-7000 X128