

Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public
June 2003

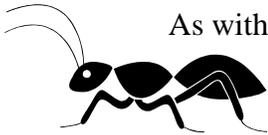
****Note the time and location change of this month's meeting****

Annual Club Picnic- Thursday, June 12th at 6:00 PM at Redbank Battlefield in National Park

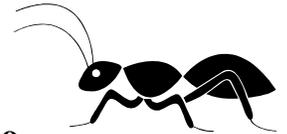
The June 12th meeting of the Gloucester County Nature Club will be our annual spring picnic. The picnic will be held along the Delaware River at Redbank battlefield in National Park. Attendees should bring a food item to share, and their own utensils, plates, and cups to cut down on the waste of disposables. Bring your binoculars as well because we will hopefully see some of the wonderful birds that prefer the river habitat.

As with all club functions the picnic is open to the public so why not bring a friend?

We hope to see you there for an informal evening of dinner, socializing, and as always, enjoying nature.



Directions: Follow Hessian Avenue (County route 642) west toward the Delaware River. The park is on the Delaware River where Hessian Ave. ends.



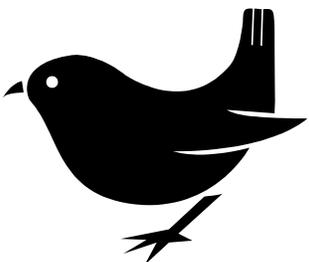
Field Trips **4387**

Kris Mollenhauer, Field Trip Coordinator, 589-

Bird Quest, Another Successful Year

On May 3rd over 200 people woke up, shrugged off the drizzle, and mobilized to meet their teammates throughout Gloucester County. The teams assembled all over the county and as Jim Six, of The Gloucester County Times, said who were these weird people up way to early to count birds? They were grandparents, grandchildren, moms, dads, teachers, teenagers, grade-schoolers, just ordinary people with a common goal to watch birds. (some teams included three generations from one family.) The goal was both simple and complex. The simple was to count each species of bird they saw once, the complex was to plan and move from place to place optimizing the all too short five hours allowed by the rules.

I was lucky enough to have about 30 teammates and a big yellow bus for my adventure. Because we were a big group and mostly new to birding we limited the places we visited. We went to just three locations but saw many of the spectacular birds Gloucester County has to offer- bluebirds, orioles, warblers, towhees, and our team's favorite great crested flycatcher. After five hours most of our team had seen about 50 species of birds, a pretty respectable number. Many had seen new "life birds," that is a species seen by someone for the first time in their life. When we rounded everyone up at the last stop to head for the picnic many couldn't believe our time was up. The day was completed with a fantastic view of a



scarlet tanager that posed over the crowd as Kris tried to snap a group photo. Another wonderful Bird Quest, I hope to see you there next year.

The team that won the event was considerably smaller and saw quite a few more species than my team, but I doubt they had more fun than us. Ebert's Sapsuckers saw the most species with 78 species. The team consisted of Richard Ebert, Ron Willey, Walter Spain, John McCann, Loretta Dunne, and Jonathan Stillwell. Congratulations to them and everyone who came out and enjoyed the day!

Bird Quest Experience

By Chrissy Berg, grade 6

This year at Bird Quest it was a lot of fun. My group was the Pitman Middle School Owls. We went to Alcyon Park, Wheelabrator and River Winds. At Alcyon Park we saw 28 species of birds. In all, our total for the day was 52 species. We even saw a red fox at Wheelabrator. Our team would like to thank Wheelabrator for giving us snacks and drinks.

The members of our team were Mrs. Everitt, Bob and Pat Baruzzi, Allison, Christopher, Chrissy, Rachel, Hannah, Sloane, Catie, Heather, and also my mom Judy. We had a lot of fun this year and will probably go again next year.

Gloucester County Nature Club Ruffs – World Series of Birding Report

It started at 3:00 AM in Wenonah with an Eastern-Screech Owl responding in the distance to a poor imitation. Ironically, it ended about 17 hours later, also in Wenonah, in the dusk, when we saw and heard a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks. In between, we drove over 160 miles throughout the County in pursuit of our avian wealth. Despite the fog and drizzle, we were able to locate by sight and sound 123 different bird species within the geographical limits of Gloucester County. Competing in New Jersey Audubon's famed World Series of Birding on May 10, 2003; our total placed us in a tie for fifth (out of 20 teams) in the Limited Geographic Category. As a group competing for the first time together and as the first ever team to compete in the World Series from Gloucester County, we feel that as representatives of the club, we acquitted ourselves well.



Highlights included the Common Nighthawk flying over the tree line just before dawn. The Whip-poor-wills zipping back and forth along the road in Glassboro Woods. The Glossy Ibis that flushed and the Pectoral Sandpiper that flew in at National Park. Both Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers that sang next to each, allowing for easy comparison. The flock of Bobolinks in the alfalfa field and the American kestrel sitting where Dick promised it would be. Lowlights were the disappointment we experienced when, despite our best effort, we couldn't turn a Dunlin into a Ruff (Reeve). At every feeder we checked out, we were told that the Ruby-throated Hummingbird was here "15 minutes ago." No Kingfisher. (364 days of the year they're around. How do they know to hide on the day of the World Series?) No Fish Crow (How? Why?). Running out of daylight before we could get to Gail's staked out Eastern Meadowlark.

As in every endeavor, one learns from the experience. Now that we have a World Series under our belts, we feel confident that with a little more scouting, a refining of our route and little cooperation from the birds, we can beat our total next year. At least we intend to try.

Jeff Holt, Dr. Richard Ebert, Bob Duke and Gail Cannon

Conservation Report

Can New Jersey Conserve Land in the Face of Development?

The state of New Jersey has always faced fast paced growth in certain areas, but now even areas not previously targeted for development are being hit. The reason for this sprawl into new parts of the state is the reality that the state will most likely be built out in as little as thirty years. This means in thirty years all available land for development will be developed or approved for development. Once build out occurs conservation of new land will be impossible.



New Jersey has always been one of the most densely populated states. However there have always been large pockets of rural land mixed in. This rural land is disappearing at an alarming rate. Houses and strip malls are appearing where they were once unimaginable. Even people who traditionally didn't care or notice new development have begun to notice it and care. Our quality of life is directly impacted by the gobbling up of acres of open space each day. The traffic in many parts of the state is out of hand, ongoing development continues to raise local taxes even as ratables are added. Many studies have proven that more housing and additional business does not reduce local taxes due to increased infrastructure needs.

In New Jersey developers still find it more profitable to plow over a field or clear cut a wooded lot than to redevelop abandoned properties. Drive around Gloucester County and you'll see many empty strip malls even as other newer ones are built just down the road. You can help to slow the march toward build out by getting involved locally. Attend planning board meetings, get involved in master planning (which is going on in many communities right now), seek open space preservation in your community, and vote with the environment in mind on a local, state, and national level. The groups that seek to profit from land development have a strong lobby you must also speak your mind by attending meetings, writing letters, and donating money to groups that work to protect land.

A Success Story

Many of the club's members traveled to Haddon Township this fall to tour MacArthur Forest with Maggie Downham who is a member of the Newton Creek Watershed Association. Located in Haddon Township, MacArthur Forest is one of the last remaining old growth forests in the Eastern U.S with beech and oak trees over 200 years old. This ecosystem is part of a historic area that was a stop on the Underground Railroad. At the time of the trip the McArthur Tract was threatened by a township plan to develop athletic fields. MacArthur Forest is a living example of the type of forests that once existed from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, before Europeans settled here. Today, almost no old growth forest remains; in fact less than 0.5% of the forest that remains in the Eastern U.S. can be classified as old growth.

On Earth Day of this year the town's council voted to adopt a conservation easement that will ensure the protection of the tract's amazing trees. Any efforts to develop or alter the property will now require judicial hearings. There are still 13 adjoining acres of old-growth forest that belong to the Paul IV High School owned by the Diocese of Camden. The groups that worked so hard to save the



trees from becoming soccer fields will continue to fight for purchase of the Paul IV trees and full protection of those as well. If you'd like to see photos or learn more you can go to their website at www.macathurwoods.com.

Gloucester County Announces 2003 Household Waste Collection Days



Here is your chance to clean out your garage and dispose of hazardous substances safely. Gloucester County is accepting paints, stains, motor oil, antifreeze, fluorescent tubes & ballasts, lead acid & ni-cad batteries, solvents, pesticides, cleaners, kerosene, herbicides, gasoline, turpentine, varnish, fertilizers, rat poison, auto and floor care products, weed killers, lighter fluid, propane tanks, photographic & pool chemicals. These products do not belong in the regular trash and should never be poured down a household or a storm drain. Call 478-6045 ext. 14 for more information

July 19, September 6, & October 4 at Gloucester County Solid Waste Complex in South Harrison Township on Monroeville Road (Rt. 694)

October 18 at Gloucester County Roads Department in Clayton on Delsea Drive
Call 478-6045 ext. 14 for more information

We Came, We Saw, We Bought Lots of Plants!

This year's annual club plant sale, held just before the May meeting, was a huge success. The variety and number of plants assured there would be something for everyone. The great weather that evening certainly didn't hurt, either.

Thanks to all who were a part of the plant sale as contributors, as buyers or -- as many were -- both. A special thanks once again to Ron Kegel for the many plants he brought and for so generously and patiently answering all of our questions to make sure we knew the perfect spot for that plant we purchased and just how to take care of it.

Next year we hope to spread things out a little more, making things easier to see and having prices marked more clearly to make things easier for everyone.

Now remember, as you enjoy your gardens this season, think of next year's sale, the plants you will need and the plants that you can share. Happy Gardening!

Club's Summer Plans

The GCNC operates differently in the summer months- There will be a June newsletter listing summer field trips; however we will not be sending another newsletter after that until September. The club does not have regular meetings in July and August but will host **many local walks** throughout the summer.

Election of Trustees

At our May meeting we elected the following trustees for a three year term- Brian Hayes, Kris Mollenhauer, Karen Kravchuck, and Carol Cassel. Thank you to everyone who took the time to vote. Trustees are responsible for electing and providing direction for the Executive Committee members. I'd also like to extend the club's appreciation to the trustees who have agreed to be part of the club's leadership team for the next three years.

The Kook Factor

Have you met someone who struck you as strange? You know; someone who seems nice but there is just something about them that is slightly “different”? There is a term I like to use for these people - ‘Kook.’ There are plenty of other terms used to describe these people such as strange, weird, scary, out-there, freaky, bizarre, cuckoo, or a couple sandwiches short of a picnic but by far my favorite is Kook. Here are some examples of how I would use it in a sentence: “He’s a kook”, “She’s a bit of a kook”, and “Wow, what a kook.” What makes one a kook, you ask? Well, since this is my article you are stuck with my expert opinion. Sometimes I know a kook when I see one and other times it takes a couple of conversations but trust me when I tell you they are out there just waiting to prove their kookiness to you. Anytime you leave your house, talk on the phone, or people visit your home you have the possibility of meeting one of these people. That is what I call the Kook factor. This may seem like a strange subject to appear in a nature club newsletter but I think it is important for you to be able to identify these people.

I recently had a conversation with a coworker about compost. I told them I compost all organic (meaning vegetable) matter and use this on our gardens and flowerbeds. This helps recycle waste, lessens what is added to landfills, and makes the soil more fertile. I could see by the stifled yawn that my coworker hadn’t received the benefit of their morning coffee mug (it couldn’t be the subject matter) but I continued on extolling the virtues of composting. I admitted that I have even gone so far as to provide a Tupperware container to capture the grinds from the community coffeepot at work. As that person quickly excused himself I realized he thought I was a Kook. Over the next several weeks I became convinced that my coworker was not alone. Everything from birding, backpacking, and composting to not mowing my lawn, buying organic produce, enforcing recycling in the office, and reducing my dependence on oil could cause people to look at me like a Kook. I had been so busy addressing the small environmental changes I felt I could make in my life (lead by example) I never noticed I had crossed the line from mainstream to Kook.

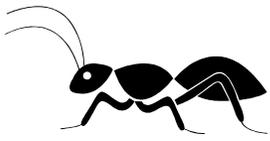


I have to admit I was shocked at first. How could this have happened? How could I be that fringe person? I have now become part of the Kook Factor. The more I thought about the path I have traveled over the past several years I realized: I believe it is imperative to take any and every small step possible to save and conserve our wildlife and natural places. Each year, I have tried to take another step or make that step just a little bigger. I’m sure some would say I haven’t done enough but it isn’t important how many steps you take or how large those steps may be; you need to keep taking those steps.

I will continue making my small contribution to the health of our planet in my personal life, at work, or by teaching other people about the environment regardless if people think I’m a kook. With the current administration in Washington DC our country could use a few more environmental kooks. Join me. I’m looking forward to the time when mainstream thought has caught up with me and the few people who are not environmentally aware are the kooks.

Look for your Summer Newsletter with the summer field trip schedule in the coming weeks!



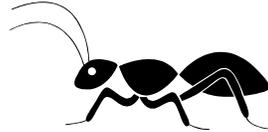


Website News

Be sure to check the club's website at www.gcnatureclub.org often. Brian has put up photos from the April field trip and will add pictures from Bird Quest in the coming days.

Club Notes:

- If you'd like to be on the list to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Brian or Paula at pnbhayes@aol.com or call 468-9272
- Executive Committee will meet on June 8th 6:00 pm, at Paula and Brian's House, 413 North Stockton Avenue, Wenonah. Call 468-9272 for more info and directions.
- 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.
- If you are interested in volunteering for a few hours at one of the community events the club participates in, please give one of our Community Events Coordinators a call- Jackie 848-4852, Bonnie 845-4650, or Elaine 227-0839
- 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.



Gloucester County Nature Club
c/o EIRC
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