



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

November 2023

Program: Bird Coloration: The Hows and Whys

Presenter: Shujaath Mehdi

Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 7:00pm at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342



As one might expect from the amazing diversity of colors and patterns exhibited by more than 10,000 bird species found in the world, birds can see color. The colors in the feathers of a bird are formed in two different ways, from either pigments or caused by the light-scattering structure of the feather. In some cases feather colors are the result of a combination of pigment and structural colors. The greens of some parrots are the result of yellow pigments overlying the blue-reflecting characteristic of the feathers. Why are some feathers iridescent? Is it true that the plumage of bluebirds is not truly blue? Can birds see in the ultraviolet and how does that effect how they see themselves and the world?

Please join Shujaath Mehdi as he explores the fascinating science behind the Whys and Hows of this great diversity and majesty of color in the avian universe.

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).

National Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Please join us on Saturday December 16 for the National Audubon Society Bird Count. The count involves exploring and canvassing a large circle within the county, divided into 13 'pie slices' delineated by roadways and waterways. We count everything we hear and see, starting with Owls in the early morning hours and finishing near dusk. Historically we've tallied 90-100 bird species on count day.

The period in which all of the counts throughout the country, and beyond, is from Dec.14 - Jan.5. Our count falls on the first Saturday of the period.

Each of the 13 zones has a leader(s) and assistants that travel their zone. Experience is not necessary and leaders and others are always willing to show and share the experience. We dress warm, take binoculars, scopes, and checklist, as well as snacks, and field guides to confirm species.

Most folks like to walk areas but car travel and spotting is a big part of it too! Especially with limited places to walk and park.

The first Northwestern Gloucester County Count was held on December 29, 1951 (five and a half months before I was born) led by Will Middleton the first compiler. Most of the participants were members of the Gloucester County Nature Club!

Please join us for a fun day out in nature. Rain or shine (or snow) the show will go on. If you know someone that already participates and would like to join them, give them a holler. If you wish to be placed in an area or have a preference as to where you would like to go, let me know.

Ron Kegel, compiler 856-881-9262

Events by other organizations

Trail Walk at Washington Lake Park

Date: Saturday, November 11, 2023

Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Location: 626 Hurffville-CrossKeys Road, Sewell, NJ 08080

Meet at Tennis court parking lot

Join Washington Township's Environmental Commission and South Jersey Land and Water Trust (SJLWT) will be hosting a trail walk in Washington Lake Park. The nature walk will be led by Michael Hogan, a naturalist (SJLWT), who has an encyclopedic knowledge of native plants. On the walk, Mike will identify flora and fauna as well as point out the invasive plants and their history of how and why they are now considered invasive. Please join us for an informative and pleasant walk on the Poplar trail.

The following events take place at the Scotland Run Nature Center in Clayton. For details and to register for programs, call the center at (856) 881-0845. All events are free.

- **Fall Paddles:** Paddles take place the 1st and 3rd Thursday of November 9:30 am to 11:30 am. Come and explore beautiful Wilson Lake and the many wonders it has to offer. Both canoes and kayaks are available. In order to participate in the event you must be able to operate a canoe or a kayak. Due to the limited amount of boats registration is required. This program is free to the public. Register at the Parks and Rec page on the county website.

Natural Events for the month of November

- Persimmons ripen - they are delicious when fully soft-ripe, astringent when unripe.
- Witch hazel in bloom.
- Woodchucks and chipmunks go into hibernation.
- Bats seek their hibernating sites in caves and abandoned mines.
- American tree sparrow, sometimes called the "winter chippy", is a regular winter bird feeder visitor.



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 20th of the preceding month.

The GCNC has a new book! – Observations by a Field Naturalist of Southern New Jersey

This book by well-known South Jersey naturalist Karl Anderson is a compilation of 100 newspaper columns he wrote between 2009 and 2022. With few exceptions, they deal with plants and animals that we see, or could see, in southern New Jersey every year if we were in the right place at the right time.

Do you want to know how to tell a huckleberry from a blueberry? What is making those holes in your lawn? How about the sex life of a land snail? And why did the skunk cross the road? These topics, and 96 others, can be found in this book.

Karl worked for New Jersey Audubon Society for many years, managing and developing the Audubon nature center at Rancocas State Park where he led field trips for bird, botany and general nature study. He has led or co-led over sixty tours across North America and beyond. After retiring from New Jersey Audubon, he worked part-time as a botanist for the State of New Jersey while continuing to do botanical inventories and lead local field trips. His favorite New Jersey haunts are the Pine Barrens, the Delaware Water Gap NRA, and any overgrown vacant lot.

162 pages. 5.5"w X 8.5" h. Weight: 9 ounces. Spiral bound for durability. Published March, 2023.

Copies of **Observations by a Field Naturalist of Southern New Jersey** are now available for purchase at local retailers including:

- **Antiques on Evergreen** - 429 S Evergreen Ave, Woodbury, NJ 08096
- **Dambly's Garden Center** - 51 West Factory Rd, Berlin, NJ 08009
- **Daminger's Natural Pet Foods** - 641 Main St, Sewell (Mantua Township), NJ 08080
- **Triple Oaks Nursery & Herb Garden** - 2359 Delsea Drive, Franklinville, NJ 08322
- **Wild Birds Unlimited Cherry Hill** - 1619 N Kings Hwy, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
- **Words Matter** - 52 S. Broadway, Pitman, NJ 08071

- **The Yellow Garage Antiques** - 66 South Main St., Mullica Hill, NJ 080621

The book is also available through the club's online store. To access the online store, click [here](#).



YOUTUBE CHANNEL: We are continuing to post 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. 18 videos are now available, including these recent additions:

- [Through the Dragon's Mouth – Secrets of the Night Sky \(September 2023\)](#)
- [An Introduction to Pinelands Ecology \(October 2023\)](#)

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 programs whenever permitted by speakers and their sponsoring organizations.

Reminder - Membership Dues

November brings with it membership renewals. This year we will be keeping the price the same as last year. Please remember that your dues are the only costs associated with being a club member, we do not charge for any of our programs or field trips. Many organizations charge their members for each walk or activity they attend. We believe that the club is still an excellent value and hope the added cost will not deter any of our members. It is much cheaper for us to send the newsletter electronically to our members and as a result those members who choose to receive the newsletter electronically will receive a discount on their membership. The dues are \$20 for electronic mailings and \$25 for regular mail delivery. Please fill out the membership form at the end of this newsletter and send your renewal form and a check payable to "Gloucester County Nature Club" to: GCNC Membership, P.O. Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080.

You may also sign up and pay your membership dues electronically via PayPal. Just go to <http://gcnatureclub.org/membership.php> and fill out the online form.

WAIVER

Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members or representatives shall not be liable for any injuries, loss or damage to person and/or property, direct or consequential, arising out of any trips and/or activities of the Gloucester County Nature Club. The assumption of risk, which is inherent in this type of outdoor activity, is implied on the part of each person who attends any Gloucester County Nature Club trip, and every person participating in any of said trips and/or activities assumes all risk and liability in connection therewith.

Everyone participating in any activity of the Gloucester County Nature Club will be required to read the release of liability, protecting the Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members and representatives from liability.

Gloucester County Nature Club and/or its leaders, officers, members and representatives are not in any way responsible for the personal safety of the attendees. When walking along a road, keep to the left, facing oncoming traffic and walk in a single file. When walking along trails, do not follow too closely or move too fast for your safety and for the safety of others (avoid collisions and/or whipped branches). FOLLOW THE LEADER: If you forge ahead, you may find yourself alone. Responsible adults must accompany children under the age of 16. If you expect to drop out of the group early, please inform the leader. Report to one or more of the hikers if you intend to discontinue on the route.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2023-2024

- New Member Renewal
- Paper Membership (\$25) - regular mail
- Electronic Membership (\$20) - newsletter via email; ***please provide email address below

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ ***Email Address: _____

Please note any special knowledge you would be willing to share: _____

Would you be willing to serve on a committee? If so, which committee(s): _____

Are there other ways you could participate? If so, how? _____

Would you like to give a gift membership? If so, indicate Paper ____ or Electronic ____

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

A note will be sent informing them of your gift membership in the GCNC, thank you.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE WAIVER

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please mail completed form with payment to GCNC, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 or bring to a meeting.