



# Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

**March 2024**

## **Program: Plant Communities of New Jersey, Native or Otherwise**

**Presenter: Karl Anderson**

**Thursday, March 14 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)**

**Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342**

Noted local naturalist Karl Anderson will present an old-fashioned lecture about the origins of New Jersey's high botanical diversity, an introduction to the native plant communities, the origins of non-native plants and their effect on native plant communities, and some thoughts on gardening with native species.



*A savanna along the Batsto River*

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.

Karl Anderson is also the author of **Observations by a Field Naturalist of Southern New Jersey**, 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. Copies are available for purchase at GCNC meetings, through our website and at selected retail locations.

**Directions:** The Holy Nativity Lutheran Church is located at 3 Lenape Trail, 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).

## Field Trip Report - The (Un)Dead of Winter at Ceres Park 2/4/2024 by Kris Mollenhauer

Our February field trip "The Undead of Winter" was very popular. Over 30 people attended so we split into three groups to survey Ceres Park for plants and insects that were not dormant at this time of year. Among our findings were canopy trees like pitch pine and tiny evergreen plants like striped wintergreen. We also looked at Fluffy Dust lichen and Powdered Ruffle lichen growing on the sides of trees. Evidence of Holly Leaf Miners was seen on the leaves of holly trees. Three species of evergreen ferns were seen. The marl mining history of Ceres Park was high-lighted, including that a predatory dinosaur (a relative of T. rex) was found in 1866 in one of the marl pits. Also, that the Nature Club played a key role, in the 1970s, in preserving the park... and that a Club member, Karen Kravchuck, was responsible for giving the park its name.

**Field Trips:** There are currently no field trips scheduled for March, however, you will be notified if a trip is added.

**Save the Date:** Bird Quest 2024 will take place on Saturday May 4. Next month's newsletter will include a list of training sessions leading up to that day.

## Events by Other Organizations

### Scotland Run Nature Center

- [Nature Tots](#) "Gardening for Wildlife" on March 12th and "Spring Birds" on March 26th. Two 1-hour sessions each morning.
- [Nature at Night](#): March 21, 7 to 8 PM. Join Senior Zoologist Bill Pitts of NJ Fish & Wildlife's Endangered & Nongame Species Program to find out more about some of the rare species you can find throughout the diverse ecosystems of South Jersey.

## Natural Events for the month of March

- Woodchucks emerge from hibernation.
- Male skunks wander widely, searching for mates.
- Red maples flower in late March, with male and female flowers on separate trees.
- Roadside "weeds" such as speedwell, wintercress, hairy bittercress, purple dead-nettle, and storksbill bloom before most native wildflowers.
- Eastern screech owls, New Jersey's most common owl, lay eggs beginning in March and continue through May.
- Woodcocks begin courtship flights.
- Male goldfinches begin to molt into their brilliant yellow breeding plumage.
- Eastern Phoebes return this month.



## 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 20<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.



**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. 21 videos are now available, including these recent additions:

- [The Death of Koschei the Deathless](#) (December 2023) 
- [Beyond Honeybees: Beetles, Butterflies, Bumblebees and Other Pollinators](#) (January 2024) 

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.