



# Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

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

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

May 2024

Thursday, May 9, 2024 - Annual Plant Sale & Program  
6:00pm - GCNC Annual Plant Sale  
7:00pm - Program: Flower Flies of New Jersey

Presenter: Jeff Mollenhauer

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

Though often easily overlooked due to their small size and mimicry, flower flies (also known as hover flies) are an amazing group of insects with a fascinating life history. There are over 6,000 described species of flower flies in the world and more than 400 species occur in northeastern North America. With many beautiful color patterns they are like the warblers of the insect world. Adult flower flies are important pollinators of crops and native plants, while the larvae have key roles in the recycling of waste and control of pest insects. Come learn more about the flower fly species found in our area and be prepared for some unbelievable adaptations for survival!



**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).

## Annual Plant Sale!

Gardeners get ready! Once again it is time for the annual Nature Club Plant Sale, held just before the start of the regular May meeting. For those gardeners new to the plant sale let me explain that this is a member participation event - but don't worry, this is the stuff we live for.

First, we hope that you will find lots of "just the right plants" there to fill out your garden at home - and buy them. The proceeds go to the club and its programs. We also hope that you will help to supply some of those "just the right plants" for other members to find.



Second, as you are out in your gardens this, spring please keep an eye out for plants you can share -- perennials that need dividing, “volunteers” in the wrong spot, extra seeds you have collected, shrubs – whatever you think someone would enjoy in their garden.

Don't worry about the selling – we will take care of that – just pot them up and bring them along with you —clearly marked, please. We try to keep the “Mystery Plants” to a minimum! Much of what we sell comes right from our own members.

### **Field Trip: Introduction to the Pine Barrens**

**Brendan Byrne State Forest, Woodland Township New Jersey.**

**Saturday June 1, 2024. 9:30 am to 1:30 pm.**

**Trip Leader – Karl Anderson**

With a combination of short drives and walks, we will visit several pinelands environments and look for some typical plants, including local specialties and a few “carnivorous” species. Other taxa (birds, herps, lichens) will not be ignored.

Meet at 9:30 AM on June 1 at the Brendan Byrne office, on the south side of Route 70 about one mile northeast of the intersection with Route 72 at the Four Mile traffic circle. Look for the state forest entry sign on the right. Bring lunch and beverage. For more information, email leader at [karlanderson6@aol.com](mailto:karlanderson6@aol.com)

### **BIRD QUEST IS COMING SOON: Saturday May 4, 2024**

The club invites people of all ages to participate in the **24th Annual Gloucester County Bird Quest** taking place on **Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> from 7 AM to 12 noon** throughout Gloucester County. Our theme this year is **“They Had Feathers!”** recognizing that birds are living dinosaurs. Our area is rich in dinosaur fossil history including at Ceres Park and the soon-to-open Edelman Fossil Park.



What exactly is Bird Quest? It is several things:

- A way to discover the unique birds that live in and pass through our county.
- A way to discover local parks and natural areas.
- An opportunity to learn how to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat.
- An opportunity to have fun with family, friends, and colleagues.
- A light-hearted competition where novices are encouraged to participate.

**How it works:** Teams have 5 hours on Saturday (7am to noon) to visit sites in Gloucester County. Birds are identified by sight or sound. The goal is to find as many different species of birds as possible. During the noon hour, all participants gather at an outdoor pavilion at the WIN/Wheelabrator Wildlife Refuge in Westville for lunch, T-shirts, story swapping, and door prizes.

**How you can participate:** There are some options:

- You can form a team, plan your route, and record the bird species you see or hear between 7am and noon.
- For some variety join our guided walks in various natural places in Gloucester County led by a bird expert who will help you identify the bird species present. These walks will be paced and placed so you can participate in all of the walks or just one or two while you spend the rest of the time birding on your own.



- 7:00-9:15: Tall Pines State Preserve: From the intersection of Rt 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd) and Mantua Ave in Wenonah (and Holy Nativity Lutheran Church), travel south on Rt 553 to the next traffic light at Bark Bridge Rd. Turn right onto Bark Bridge Rd. then in 200ft turn left into the parking lot to meet there. There are no restrooms at Tall Pines.
  - 9:30-11:00: Riverwinds: From Route 44 in West Deptford take Delaware St which becomes Riverwinds Drive upon entering the Riverwinds Complex. Drive past the community center, stay to the left, and park in the parking lot just before the Riverwinds restaurant entrance.
  - 11:15-12:15: WIN/Wheelabrator Wildlife Refuge in Westville (also the picnic location): Access from Rt 130 – opposite Hazel Ave in Westville, just south of Big Timber Creek. Turn into the Butterfly Garden Parking area to park for the Pavilion and meeting area.
- Team leaders should be sure to enter the species found at [birdquest.gcnatureclub.org](http://birdquest.gcnatureclub.org) by 12:30pm. We prefer not to collect paper checklists.

**How to register:** Registration will take place online, not using paper forms and checks. The cost is \$15 per person, payable by credit/debit card. Each participant will receive a 2024 “They Had Feathers” 100% Cotton T-shirt as shown above, available in both youth and adult sizes. We ask that team leaders strive to enter one “order” with the names and shirt sizes for their team. The website [birdquest.gcnatureclub.org](http://birdquest.gcnatureclub.org) is open now! The deadline to register is **Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>**. Shirts will need to be picked up at WIN/Wheelabrator on May 4<sup>th</sup>, or at the regular May club meeting in Wenonah on Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### How to get ready for May 4<sup>th</sup>:

- Join one or more of the 11 free, friendly training sessions this month; the schedule is at the end of this newsletter and on [Meetup](https://www.meetup.com).
- At the Bird Quest website [birdquest.gcnatureclub.org](http://birdquest.gcnatureclub.org) you will be able to find the rules, our traditional paper checklists (for use in the field), and general info about the event.
- The club’s “Natural Places” book can guide you to 35 publicly-accessible natural areas around the county, many of which are good bird habitats. It’s available at local retailers (including Daminger’s, Words Matter, and Triple Oaks) and [online](#).

If you have questions, please contact event coordinator Scott Barnes via email at [birdquest@gcnatureclub.org](mailto:birdquest@gcnatureclub.org) or by leaving a message at 856-468-4174. Messages will generally be returned during non-business hours.

Happy spring birding!

## Save the Date!

### June 29, 2024 - Gloucester County Firefly Festival

This year’s Gloucester County Firefly Festival will be held at Tall Pines Preserve on Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 pm. The details will be in the May and June newsletters.

## Events by other organizations

### Tall Pines State Preserve 8th Anniversary National Trails Day Hike

Friends of Tall Pines State Preserve

June 1 2024, 10:00am to 12:30pm

Estimated Total Hike Distance - 2.0 miles

## Event Description

Join the Friends of Tall Pines State Preserve on a guided nature walk as we celebrate National Trails Day and mark Tall Pines' 8th anniversary. On this leisurely walk through the meadows and woodlands of Tall Pines, Friends members will point out the native birds, wildflowers and insect pollinators found at Tall Pines. We will also be visiting the Tall Pines Pollinator Garden. After the walk, light refreshments will be served. For additional info go to

<https://friendsoftallpinespreserve.org/>

**Scotland Run Park:** 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.

### **Bird Walks at Scotland Run Park**

Come search for the many birds that visit or inhabit Scotland Run Park! Volunteer birders from the Gloucester County Nature Club will be leading walks on May 1 and May 15. The walks are free of charge and will take place on the **first and third Wednesdays** of the month from 8:00am to 9:30am. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars. Rain cancels the walk. Meet at the Nature Center Parking Lot.

### **Spring Paddles at Scotland Run Park**

Scotland Run's highly anticipated Spring Paddles program has started for the season! Spring paddles will be held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from 9:30am-11:30am, April through June. This is a perfect opportunity for you to get outside and enjoy all of what Wilson Lake has to offer. This program is free and allows you to use our kayaks/canoes for a guided tour of Wilson Lake. The tour consists of light educational components and will be led by county employees. Registration is required, and we ask that you register for the specific boat you'd need. We offer double kayaks, canoes, and single kayaks. You can register for the event at the link below: Dates for May include May 1 and May 15, For more information on Spring Paddles call 856-251-6710.

## Nature Notes

### **Natural Events for the month of May**

- Jack in the pulpit, pink lady's-slipper, and mayapple bloom by mid-May in the County's remnant woodlands.
- Early spring flowers such as spring beauty fade rapidly, as trees leaf out and shade the forest floor.
- Princess tree, or Paulownia (named after an 18th-Century Russian princess) blooms with large clusters of pale purple flowers. It's an invasive species but still very pretty.
- By late May, monarch butterflies arrive from the south and begin laying their eggs on newly emerged plants of common milkweed.
- Young rabbits, gray squirrels, and other small mammals are leaving their home nests. Drive carefully.
- Horseshoe crabs spawn on Delaware Bayshore beaches from late May to early June.
- Red knots arrive for their stop-over at the Delaware Bay area to double their weight on horseshoe crab eggs in preparation for their nonstop journey to Arctic breeding grounds.

### **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.

The club would like to welcome the following new members who have joined in the last month:

1. Penny DeGeorge of Mickleton
2. Jacki Dolbow of Sewell
3. John Keller of Glassboro
4. Becky Grace of Logan Township

**YOUTUBE CHANNEL:** We are now posting 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. 22 videos are now available, including these recent additions:



- [Beyond Honeybees: Beetles, Butterflies, Bumblebees and Other Pollinators \(January 2024\)](#)
- [Plant Communities of New Jersey \(March 2024\)](#)

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 during this club year whenever permitted by speakers and their sponsoring organizations.

**GCNC WEBSITE REDESIGN:** Starting last fall, five members of the Executive Board have been working with web designer Alex Younger to completely overhaul the club's web presence. The new site went live at the existing [gcnatureclub.org](http://gcnatureclub.org) address on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Here we'll introduce a few key features to look for.



An always watchful barred owl greets you on your way in. The navigation menu is just to the right of the owl's head.

On smaller screens such as smartphones, the menu appears as a yellow square with three lines. (This is called a "hamburger menu" in the web business.)

An important goal of the new design is to show upcoming club events in a clear and visually appealing way. By clicking an event's title you can see a map of its location. With two more clicks you can add it to your personal calendar.

We're not replacing Meetup. In fact each event will include a link to its matching entry on Meetup.



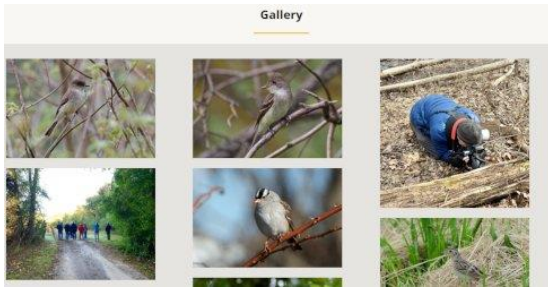
You can flip through the current edition of the newsletter right on screen. Older editions appear as links below the current one.

The way that we currently email monthly newsletters to members is not changing as a result of this website update.

The club has had an online store for several years, but now you can get to it much more easily. It offers the club's two books and two flash card sets. Plus you are now able to pay for your membership here as well.



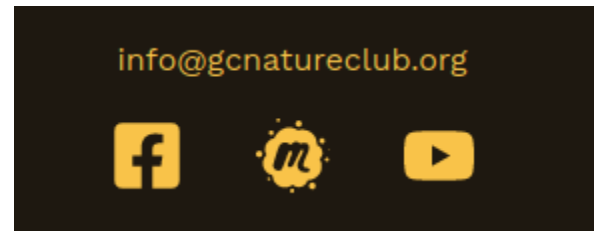
The checkout experience is similar to those at other online stores. You do not need to have any account such as PayPal; any major credit or debit card will work.



The site includes a small photo gallery. The images were not purchased; they show local wildlife and club activities and were taken by club members.

At the bottom of every page you can find links to our social media: Facebook, Meetup, and YouTube.

So how did we do? Send your thoughts on the new site design to [webmaster@gcnatureclub.org](mailto:webmaster@gcnatureclub.org) .



## Remaining Bird Quest Training Sessions

2024

**May 2 (Thursday) 6 PM – Dusk**

**RiverWinds Park**

**1000 RiverWinds Drive, Thorofare, NJ 08086**

Riverside shrubs and forested areas along the Delaware River make for great birding here. Look for migrating warblers, scarlet tanagers, hawks and maybe a bald eagle!

*Directions; Turn onto RiverWinds Drive. Drive past the community center and park in the parking lot just before the RiverWinds restaurant.*

Leaders: Gary Lizzi & Lloyd Shaw

**\*\*\* THERE ARE 2 BQ TRAINING SESSIONS FOR RIVERWINDS \*\*\***

**MAY 2 at 6 PM and MAY 3 at 7:00 AM**

**\*\*\* The meeting places are different \*\*\***

**May 3 (Friday) 7 – 8:30 AM**

**West Deptford Nature Trail**

**1000 RiverWinds Drive, Thorofare, NJ 08086**

Visit another part of RiverWinds, at another time of day! Look for scarlet tanager, magnolia warbler, blackburnian warbler, ovenbird, black-throated green warbler and many other migrants.

*Directions; Turn onto RiverWinds Drive. Go approx. 1000 ft. to meet in the West Deptford Nature Trail parking lot.*

Leaders: Dan & Danny Ceravolo