



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

June 2024

Program: Annual Picnic and Nature Walk at Wenonah Lake

Thursday, June 13 2024 at 6:00 pm at Wenonah Lake (directions below)

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342

The June 13 meeting of the Gloucester County Nature Club will be our annual spring picnic. The picnic will again be held this year at historic and lovely Wenonah Lake. This is a pot luck dinner of shared dishes. Attendees should bring a food item to share, and their own utensils, plates, and cups to cut down on the waste of disposables. Those who prefer to provide their own meals are welcome to do so. As with all club functions, the picnic is open to the public so why not bring a friend?



After the picnic, we will enjoy a walk on the trails along the lake. Wenonah Lake was dammed in 1762 by Abraham Dilks to provide power for his grist mill that once stood on Maple St on the lake's southern end. The lake is one of the few remaining swimming lakes in South Jersey. The woodlands surrounding the lake are part of the Wenonah Conservation Area. After the picnic we will stroll the woodland trails to look at the plant life and look and listen for birds. The area is botanically rich and diverse, and a haven for wildlife, including many song birds and a resident pair of Barred Owls.

Directions:

Wenonah Lake is located at the northeast corner of N. Jefferson Ave. and Maple St. in Wenonah. From Mantua Ave., turn north onto N. Jefferson Ave. Continue past the 4 way stop at N. Jefferson Ave. and Maple St to enter the lake parking lot. Wenonah Lake can also be

reached by traveling west on Maple St. from Rt.553 or by heading east on Ogden Road from Rt. 45 in Deptford.

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

Field Trip: Marl Pit & Dinosaur History of Ceres Park (Friday)

Ceres Park, Mantua Township New Jersey

Friday June 7, 2024, 6:30 pm.

Trip Leaders – Erik and Kris Mollenhauer

This walk along the trails in Ceres Park will explore the intersection of dinosaur history, geology, and 19th-century commerce. Wear crocs, rubber boots or old shoes if you want the full experience.

This event is free and open to the public, but registration via Meetup is required and is limited to 25 people. There is also an identical Saturday morning trip available.

Directions: From Rt 322 take Lambs Rd (635) to Pitman-Barnsboro Rd (553Alt). Turn left onto Rt 553A. Watch for Ceres Park sign on your left after crossing over Rt 55. Approximate street address: 964 Main Street, Sewell, NJ 08080.

Coordinates: (39.7484523, -75.1462949)

Field Trip: Marl Pit & Dinosaur History of Ceres Park (Saturday)

Ceres Park, Mantua Township New Jersey

Saturday June 8, 2024, 9:00 am.

Trip Leaders – Erik and Kris Mollenhauer

This walk along the trails in Ceres Park will explore the intersection of dinosaur history, geology, and 19th-century commerce. Wear crocs, rubber boots or old shoes if you want the full experience.

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BIRD QUEST 2024 Wrap-Up: The 24th edition of Bird Quest had overcast skies with some light rain around the noon hour. The mid-50s temperatures stood in stark contrast to the record-breaking 90 degree high just two days earlier. We had 91 registered participants across 30 teams. Of the 20 received checklists, the winner was Birding Bros (Tyler and Kevin Savage) with 88 species, closely followed by Erik Nelson and his family with 86 species. Our wrap-up lunch at Wheelabrator was followed by a short presentation by Erik Mollenhauer on the connection between birds, dinosaurs, and Ceres Park. And of course we gave out door prizes, some of which connected with this year's “They Had Feathers!” dinosaur theme.

This year's species were a bit more diverse than last year's: only 5 species were found by 90% or more of the teams. 17 species were found by 80% or more of the teams; of those only Red-eyed Vireo and Brownheaded Cowbird stood out as somewhat less common visitors to our event.

As we are accumulating more data year by year, some species numbers are relatively steady while others fluctuate due to weather, the places visited by our participants, or other unknowable factors. Here are a few differences from last year that stood out:

Species	2023 % of teams found	2024 % of teams found
Yellow-Throated Warbler	10%	40%
Cedar Waxwing	5%	30%
Belted Kingfisher	20%	40%
Eastern Bluebird	70%	40%
Common Raven	20%	0%
Turkey Vulture	95%	65%
Brown Thrasher	50%	15%

There were 4 species not found in 2021 or 2023 that were found by two or more teams this year: Redheaded Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Semipalmated Plover, and Blackpoll Warbler.

The coordinator (Scott Barnes) would like to thank the sponsors, the participants, those who attended the 11 training walks, and especially the volunteers that make everything tick. From the training walk leaders, to the day-of walk leaders, to those who donated door prizes and helped with various aspects of the Wheelabrator gathering: there are too many to name you all individually but your efforts were and are greatly appreciated.

Tour de Natural Places of Gloucester County

Join us as we explore the natural places of Gloucester County as described in the 2020 Edition of [Natural Places of Gloucester County](#), a publication of the Gloucester County Nature Club. Over the next year we will be scheduling outings to visit as many of the listed natural areas as possible. Activities may include birding, hiking, walks or ambles, or just exploring. See what we have scheduled:

Summer Family-friendly Playground Series: These summer events feature big play areas and stroller accessible walking paths. Consider bringing a picnic lunch for after our walks!

June 20, 2024, Thursday, 10am: **James G. Atkinson Memorial Park.** Meet at the parking area near the restrooms. Use the park entrance off Bethel Mill Road. Besides the playground, we can explore the path along Bethel Lake, as well as around the recreational fields. Rain cancels. Hosts: Sue Bergmann, Marilyn Henry
For more information see [Natural Places of Gloucester County](#), see pages 91 – 93, Location #21 for James G. Atkinson Memorial Park.

July 11, 2024, Thursday, 10am: **Charles Fasola Park.** 12 Sycamore Ln, Deptford Township. Meet at the upper level parking area by the splash pad and playground. Besides the playground, we will explore the 1.4 mile path around the park. Rain cancels. Host: Sue Bergmann
For more information see [Natural Places of Gloucester County](#), see pages 33 – 34, Location #8 for Charles Fasola Park.

August 15, 2024, Thursday, 10am: **Red Bank Battlefield.** 100 Hessian Ave., National Park. Meet at the parking area near the restrooms. Besides the playground, we can explore the historic area along the Delaware River and around the park. A GCNC member will share some history of the men who fought there in October 1877, and their connection to other important events of the war. If you think you know the history of the Fort Mercer battle, prepare to be surprised. The wider story is far more interesting and significant than now. = Rain cancels. Hosts: Sue Bergmann, Marilyn Henry, Eric Mollenhauer
For more information see [Natural Places of Gloucester County](#), see pages 9 – 12, Location #2 for Red Bank Battlefield.

South Jersey Firefly Festival - June 29, 2024, Saturday, 8pm – 10pm at Tall Pines State Preserve, Woodbury – Glassboro Rd. and Barkbridge Rd., Sewell. Free, but please register at Fireflyfest@gcnatureclub.org..

This year's South Jersey Firefly Festival will be held at Tall Pines Preserve on Saturday, June 29th at 8:00 pm. The festival includes a number of fun, family-friendly, education stations scattered along a half-mile, self-guided trail. We recommend people arrive between 8:00 and 8:15 pm and allow an hour to complete the walk. Some species appear at dusk; some appear when it is darker (the best viewing is after 9:00). The spectacular tree-top species is near the "fishing ponds". Bring a flashlight. **NO DOGS PLEASE.**

Poets, scientists and people of all ages have long been fascinated by fireflies (lightning bugs). A familiar sight in parts of the US, fireflies are the fairies of summer nights. Viewing "nature's light show" is part of the magic of growing up in New Jersey. But their numbers are declining. Join us as we explore the world of fireflies...the Night Country... and how you can help their numbers increase.

WHERE: From Rt. 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd) turn west onto Bark Bridge Rd. Park in the lot on the left. The trail begins and ends here at a Welcome Tent. Please car pool, as space for parking is limited. The festival is staffed by volunteers of the Gloucester County Nature Club and employees of the NJ State Park Service.

REGISTRATION: Attendance is **free** but we request that people pre-register so we can anticipate numbers. Please email to: Fireflyfest@gcnatureclub.org . Tell your name and the number of people in your group.

RAIN DATE: Sunday, June 30th at the same time

Events by other organizations

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 Walk 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 the last of the series of walks on Wednesday, June 5 at 8:00am. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars. Rain cancels the walk. Meet at the Nature Center Parking Lot.

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

1. Dan Duran of Pitman
2. Thomas Downing of Sewell
3. Michelle Moravec of Glassboro

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. 23 videos are now available, including these recent additions:

1. [*Plant Communities of New Jersey*](#) (March 2024)
2. [*Flower Flies of New Jersey*](#) (May 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.