



Gloucester County Nature Club Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

May 2006

Program – The Race to Save the Lord God Bird: The Story of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and Annual Plant Sale

Thursday, May 11th at 6:00 PM at EIRC, Sewell

Presenter: Kris Mollenhauer

Program Coordinator – Rich Dilks



The Ivory-billed Woodpecker is one heck of a bird. Big, noisy, powerful, and fierce, it once existed all over the southern US. Once thought to be extinct the Ivory-bill was recently rediscovered in Arkansas.

This is the story of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker as the centerpiece for a fascinating and vital history that tells the long and belated evolution of the "bird lovers," from the guys who loved them, shot them by the dozen, and sold them to collectors the world over, to the first modern ecologists who arose in the 1930s

The story of the Ivory-bill is a cautionary tale of how species become scarce, with lessons that are important in the context of other places and other species, including Gloucester County.

PLANT SALE! Our annual plant sale will be held just before the start of our May meeting at EIRC. **The sale will start at 6:00** and the proceeds will benefit the Nature Club and its programs. Arrive early to shop for some wonderful new specimens for your garden. Much of what is offered at the sale comes from our own gardens. As you make your way to your flower beds now that spring has finally arrived, keep an eye out for those perennials that need dividing, "volunteers" in not quite the right spots, seeds, trees and shrubs, too. Whatever you can share, bring it with you and be part of the plant sale. Questions? Call Karen at 468-6536.



Field Trip –Gloucester County Bird Quest - Saturday May 6, 7:00 am – Noon



The Gloucester County Nature Club and many area businesses, industries and local environmental commissions invite people of all ages to participate in the **2006 (seventh annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest. The 2006 Bird Quest** will take place on **Sat., May 6, 2006 from 7 AM to 12 noon in Gloucester County.**

During this time, teams visit parks and natural sites in Gloucester County and find as many different bird species as they can. The Quest is:

- A way to discover Gloucester County's parks and natural areas
- A way to discover the unique birds that live in and through our county
- A chance to learn how to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat
- A chance to have fun with friends and colleagues
- A light-hearted competition

The Quest is an educational event: novices are encouraged to participate. At noon, all participants gather at Atkinson County Park on Delsea Drive to report results and for **(free) lunch, t-shirts, posters and prizes.**

Most people organize their own Quest team with colleagues, friends, and/or family. Last years Gloucester County Bird Quest attracted several hundred participants made up of teachers, school groups, scout troops, environmental commissions, families, friends... residents of Gloucester and neighboring counties. This year with support from Wheelabrator, LP of Gloucester County, the Club will operate two (free) guided buses for teachers and other persons unable to form their own team and who are willing to join a larger group.

This year we are proud to announce that we have our own colorful "Birds of Gloucester County" T-shirt and posters, designed by the Club's own Gary Lizzi. A county map and other materials are provided to registered teams. **A \$12 fee per participant covers the cost of lunch, T-shirt, posters, prizes etc.**

For more information and registration forms, see the Gloucester County Nature Club's website at www.gcnatureclub.org. An additional registration form is available at the end of this newsletter. To join a team or to ride a bus, contact Anne Rossell at EIRC, 606 Delsea Drive, Sewell NJ 08080. Registration forms can also be requested by phone (856-582-7000 X110) FAX (856-582-4206) or e-mail at anner@eirc.org.

Participants can attend any of a series of free field trainings in the evenings, mornings and weekends before the Quest. There are still a few remaining trainings left before Bird Quest:

May 1st – (Monday) 6:00 – 7:00 AM
Ceres Park, Mantua
Leader: Bob Cassel

Bird Quest Training
Co-leader: Carol Cassel

We don't usually think about tomorrow when we eat. In our culture, we want to spend little money and purchase items from all over the world. U.S. citizens spend less on food than people do in most other countries. But if we stop and consider the true costs to the planet of what we purchase, we might try to shift our habits somewhat.

At the online Alternet website, I read a fascinating article, "Fossil Fuel for Breakfast," by Chad Heeter (<http://www.alternet.org/story/34073/>) that describes the fuel cost of a simple oatmeal and coffee breakfast. The article included the following facts:

For decades, scientists have calculated how much fossil fuel goes into our food by measuring the amount of energy consumed in growing, packing, shipping, consuming, and finally disposing of it. The "caloric input" of fossil fuel is then compared to the energy available in the edible product, the "caloric output."

According to researchers at the University of Michigan's Center for Sustainable Agriculture, an average of over seven calories of fossil fuel is burned up for every calorie of energy we get from our food. This means that in eating a 400 calorie breakfast, you will, in effect, have "consumed" 2,800 calories of fossil-fuel energy.

A cup of coffee gives me only a few calories of energy, but to process just one pound of coffee requires over 8,000 calories of fossil-fuel energy -- the equivalent energy found in nearly a quart of crude oil, 30 cubic feet of natural gas, or around two and a half pounds of coal.

The more your food has been processed, the more packaging that was used, and the further it was shipped all add to the fossil fuel cost of what you are eating. The demands on the planet of our eating habits are extensive. As other countries develop, these demands are going to become even more intense.

Take the time to consider this when you are in the market. The item that is least costly to the planet is one that is grown or produced locally, with local resources. Is it better to buy the cheap produce that comes in from South America than spend a few more dollars and support our decreasing local farms?

This is not to say that food should not be a pleasure. It should be. But sometimes the simplest is the best. Making your own pancakes instead of purchasing a ready-made mix can be tastier and save some fossil fuel. The popular slow food movement, that accentuates the pleasure of home cooking and fresh ingredients, usually involves less processed foods and packaging.

What can you do to lessen your own impact on fossil fuel consumption? Buy items with the least amount of packaging. Waste less food. Buy food in season. Find a local farmer with a farm stand or join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). Start supporting that farmer by shopping there on a regular basis, even if it is a few miles out of the way. Think of how far much of the produce in the supermarket travels and you will realize that a few miles are worth the trip. Start eating as if there might be a tomorrow.

Exciting Project – The Gloucester County Natural Area Guide

In an effort to increase the appreciation and knowledge concerning the important natural areas of the county, GCNC plans to publish a guide to the natural areas of the county. It will include a description of the area, history, directions, maps, seasonal information and visitor guides for a number of important county natural sites.

We are doing this for a number of reasons. Foremost is to provide a guide for county residents who may not be aware of what our immediate environment has to offer. The second goal of this project is to provide more protection for these areas by documenting their existence and importance. Our plan is to elicit support from a number of county organizations so that this book will really represent what is best about Gloucester County and our connection to the natural world.

Members of the Executive Committee will be doing much of the writing and editing of the book, but we are asking for your assistance. We need help in a variety of arenas – data on specific locations, pictures of sites, history of the sites, people to get tax maps of each site and assistance in outreach for funding, to name a few. You do not need to be an expert; any help will be welcome! If you want to get involved with this project, please contact Loretta Dunne. We'll also place some information and reporting forms on the GCNC website.

Other Nature Notes

Young GCNC Member Wins Conservation Contest!

We recently became aware that young club member Ellie Allen has been named the winner for Gloucester County in the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ's "Species on the Edge Art and Essay Contest for 2006". Fifth graders across the state compete in creating art and essays to bring alive the plight of endangered species in the state. More than 1,400 children participated this year.

We should be extremely proud of Ellie. Her teacher, Mrs. Dragon, really got the kids revved up about this contest, and Ellie worked doggedly on her entry until she thought it was just right. Ellie and her mom Karen, also a club member, traveled along with Mrs. Dragon to Trenton last month to attend the awards ceremony. To see Ellie's entry and those of the winners from other countries go to: <http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/species2006/>.

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount to GCNC members!

Wild Birds Unlimited has a discount agreement with the GCNC executive board and is pleased to offer GCNC members an everyday 10% discount on all purchases excluding optics and food or sale items. Sharon Oakes, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, appreciates the many volunteer contributions made by GCNC members and hopes members can benefit from this discount. Members are requested to identify themselves as GCNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please call Sharon at 218-2973.

Looking Ahead

Programs-

June 8, 2006 - Annual Picnic

Field Trips-

June - Batsto Trip

Club Notes:

- The May Executive Committee meeting will be on May 7th at Erik and Kris Mollenhauer’s Lake Gilman house.
- If you’d like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Deb Maka at deborahann@backpacker.com or call 863-0330.
- 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.
- We’re still looking for a **secretary**. If anyone is interested in helping out the club, please email Deb Maka at deborahann@backpacker.com or call 863-0330.
- Information for the next newsletter should be sent to Barry Bengel at sharkeyes@comcast.net or 6 Greenwood Drive, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15th of the preceding month.

Election of Trustees

May is our Annual meeting to elect Trustees. Trustees are responsible for electing and providing direction for the Executive Committee members. When elected, Trustees serve a three-year term at which time the seat is up for election. All voting is final at the close of the May meeting with the results to be included in the June newsletter. You may use the ballot below to vote. Ballots will also be available at the May meeting. Voting must be received by 9:00 PM on May 11, 2006.

Gloucester County Nature Club 2006 Official Ballot

Board of Trustees (Term for 2006 – 2009)

Mark an X in the box to the left of the candidates of your choice.

(Please vote for no more than four (4) candidates)

Carol Cassel

Kris Mollenhauer

Karen Kravchuck

Brian Hayes

Write in (other than above)

Write in (other than above)