



Gloucester County Nature Club

Monthly Newsletter

www.gcnatureclub.org

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

December 2009

Program – The Maurice River, a River Worth Protecting.
Thursday, December 10th at 7:00 PM at the Holy Nativity Lutheran Church,
Wenonah, NJ (directions below)

Presenter: Renee Brecht, Associate Director of Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, Inc.

Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks (856) 468-6342

Amid the quiet fields, woods and marshlands of Cumberland County's Bayshore region, the Maurice River flows gently on its journey to Delaware Bay. Our presenter tonight, Renee Brecht, Associate Director of Citizens United, will ask us to take the time to explore why the Maurice River and its tributaries are rivers worthy of protecting. The National Park Service looked at 1.5 million river miles across the country and determined that 2% were in need of greater study for a higher level of protection. The Maurice River was selected as a National Wild and Scenic River based on its very special cultural and natural resource features.



The Maurice River and its tributaries drain the southwest portion of the Pinelands National Reserve, providing a critical link between the Reserve and the Delaware Estuary. Thousands of years before European settlers, Native Americans used the resources of the river. The river's name is thought to be derived from the Prince Maurice, a 17th century Dutch ship reputed to have sunk in its waters. The Maurice River is a place of significant ecological diversity. It contains New Jersey's largest stand of wild rice, which attracts thousands of wintering waterfowl to the area each year. The mouth of the river is a critical staging area for migratory shorebirds. The immense variety of habitats throughout the watershed support such endangered and threatened animals as osprey, bald eagle and southern gray treefrog.

Directions: The Holy Nativity Lutheran Church is located just off Rte 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 – Audubon Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, December 19th, pre-dawn to dusk
Coordinator: Ron Kegel**



Please join us for the Northwestern Gloucester County Christmas Bird Count. If you are looking for something a little different yet much fun join us on the 19th. The Count was started in 1900 with the Gloucester County portion running over 55 years. Groups are divided up among a 15-mile radius and take census of all birds seen and heard. Some folks get started at wee hours in the morning trying to ‘raise’ owls, while others may start later or join a party for part of a day. Any time volunteered is greatly appreciated and hopefully rewarding for the individual. You may contact an area leader or if you want to be placed with someone, you may contact the coordinator. The leaders are all knowledgeable birders and can lead novice and experts alike! The leaders are familiar with their areas, most having been in their designated territory for a number of years.

The count generally averages anywhere from 75 to 95 species. It is a great citizen science endeavor and the information yielded from the count is submitted to the National Audubon Society. The Audubon folks digest the info in determining trends, disappearances, as well as, invasions and movements of our feathered friends. You may coordinate your time involved with your leader. Audubon requires a \$5 fee for all participants, used for administrative cost and a copy of national results in the form of American Birds. Please join us for a fun day. There is a wrap-up at the end of the day for those folks that wish to join in that too! If you would like to join the Count, please contact Ron Kegel @ (856) 881-9262 or RonaldK52@comcast.net.

Field Trip Report – Brigantine Refuge, November 15, 2009 by Karl Anderson.

Over fifty species of birds were seen on this trip, including bittern, tricolored heron, bald eagle, peregrine, white-rumped sandpiper, long-billed dowitcher, snow bunting, and a fair variety of waterfowl including snow goose, northern shoveler, ruddy duck, and hooded merganser. The weather was overcast in the morning, but by mid-day was warm, calm, and sunny. There were eight participants, plus trip leaders Gale Cannon and Karl Anderson.

Family Fun Walk

Wednesday, December 30 at 10:00 AM at Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua
Trip Leader: Maria Keefe (856) 627-7010 Email: walkingwith4boyz@comcast.net

Last year on December 30, we did our Babies in Backpacks/Family Fun Walk at Chestnut Branch Park in Mantua so I thought we would do it again! Join us on Wednesday, December 30, 2009 and bring the kids out for a walk at Chestnut Branch Park in the cold fresh air. We will walk at a toddler's pace exploring as we go. Dress in layers according to the weather. Bring your own backpack and/or a stroller that is able to be pushed on unpaved paths. Everyone welcome.



Directions: From the intersection of Rt 45 (Broad Street) and Cooper Street in Woodbury, go south on Rt 45 for 4.2 miles. Turn left (from right hand lane) onto Rt 553Alt (Main Street) in Mantua. Go south on Rt 553Alt for 1.6 miles. The park entrance will be on the left. There is a large paved parking area. Meet at the wildflower garden.

Future Walks: Monday January 18, 2010 and Friday February 12, 2010

Other Nature Notes

Raptor Census: Calling all experienced birders.

I'd like to start a census of the Raptor in our area but I need your help. I'm hoping this will be an annual winter census of raptors in Gloucester County. This has been done in Salem County since 1983. Our census would be conducted on the first Sunday of February, which is roughly midway between the beginning of winter and the beginning of spring. Additionally, there is significantly less traffic on the roads Sunday morning than on a Saturday. This year's date [2010] is February 7th. If anyone has questions or is interested in participating you can contact me through email at turkey.vulture2@verizon.net. -- Jack Mahon

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

Wild Birds Unlimited offers an everyday 10% discount (for non bird food items) to GCNC members! *Due to the current volatile market for bird food, the 10% discount for these items has had to be discontinued.* However, members will still receive credit for their purchases towards the Frequent Seed Shopper Program. WBU offers the GCNC discount on all other items in the store. Members are requested to identify themselves as GNNC members before their sales are finalized. Questions? Please contact Sharon at 218-2973 or sillybird348@comcast.net.



Events by other Organizations: December 2009

- December 5 (Saturday) – **Salem County Winter Birding**. 9:00 AM to mid-afternoon. Leader: Lloyd Shaw. \$Fee. Sponsored by the Rancocas Nature Center. For info: phone 609-261-2495.

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: Saturday 12/5, 1/9, and 2/6 at 8:00 AM
- Trim a Tree for Wildlife: Saturday 12/5 at 10:30 AM
- Afternoon Nature Strolls: Wednesday 12/2, 1/20, and 2/17 at 2:30 PM
- Evergreen Wreath Making: Wednesday 12/16 at 7:00 PM
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 12/9, 1/13, and 2/10 at 10:00 AM
- Family Nature Adventure: Saturday 12/12 and 2/13 at 10:00 AM. Enjoy a “Holiday Scavenger Hunt” and make a craft on December 12. On February 13, get rid of the winter blues.

Natural Events for the month of December

- Geminid meteor shower - December 13.
- Shortest day of the year is December 22.
- Bald eagles arrive from the north and winter in New Jersey.
- Raptor migration ends mid-month.
- Great horned owls are pairing up this month – listen for their calls
- Watch for late waterfowl migrants – shovelers, mergansers and goldeneyes.
- Take part in a local Christmas Count.

Looking Ahead:

Upcoming GCNC Programs

January 14, 2010: **Turtles** – Cindy Pierson, the "Turtle Lady"

February 11, 2010: **Pot Luck Dinner and Cargo for Conservation**

March 11, 2010: **Gaviotas** – Hollister Knowlton

April 8, 2010: **Hawks of Southern New Jersey** – Don Freiday, NJ Audubon Society

May 13, 2010: **Hummingbird Gardening** – Ward Dasey

June 10, 2010: **Annual Picnic** (location TBD) and **Awakening Spirits: The Art of Tracking** – Bill Marple, Instructor, Tom Brown Tracker School

2009-2010 GCNC Field Trips

Listed below are the field trips we have lined up for the next season. Changes and additions are not impossible. If you would be able and willing to lead a field trip, please contact Karl Anderson at karlanderson6@aol.com or (856) 845-7075.

January 16 (Saturday): **Eagles and Gulls at Conowingo Dam** – Jonathan Stillwell

February 28 (Sunday) (Rain date February 29): **Full Moon Hike at Alcyon Park** – Kris Mollenhauer

March (date TBD): **Manasquan Reservoir** – Jonathan Weir

April 17 (Saturday): **Bike the Glassboro Woods Trail** – Brian and Paula Hayes

May 9 (Sunday): **Wildflowers at Ridley Creek State Park** – Richard Dilks

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 468-6536.
- 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 15th of the preceding month.
- The December Executive Committee meeting will be held on December 6th at the Wenonah Community Center. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.