



Mark Your Calendar:

Monday, April 9, 2007 7:30pm

Meeting & Program, "What are Fungi?"
by Dr. John Dighton, Director, Rutgers
Pinelands Experimental Station.

Saturday, April 28, 2007

7:30am for early birds and 9:30am for late risers!
Field Trip to Sandy Hook, NJ
lead by Lloyd Shaw.

April Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Monday April 9, 2007 7:30pm at the Audubon Senior Center, Oak and Oakland Avenues in Audubon, NJ. The meeting will feature a program entitled "What are Fungi?" by Dr. John Dighton, Director, Rutgers Pinelands Experimental Station. Our refreshment volunteers are Laura Mitchell and Pat Winter.



"Having a Barnacle Goose in Cape May made many happy".- Photo by Chip Krilowicz

Field Trip to Sandy Hook, NJ

Sat. April 28, 2007 7:30am / 9:30am

Sandy Hook is one of the premier birding destinations in our state, year round. Next to Cape May, I'd say it's the best. In the spring it can be phenomenal. The north wind heading peninsula collects northward heading migrants the same way Cape May's southward heading peninsula collects them in the fall, and like Cape May it has a diverse range of habitats in close proximity to each other. An attentive birder should easily find 100+ species for their day list. This trip will be a joint venture with BCNSC and AWS and promises to be a great opportunity to see lots of good birds and lots of good friends.

Sandy Hook is interesting historically, geologically and naturally so plan on spending a full day exploring, whether you stay with the group or decide to explore on your own, because there's lots to see. The starting time is flexible because we will be birding in and around the near vicinity of our meeting place.

Directions to Sandy Hook

Take 295 North to 195 East to GS Parkway North, Take G.S. Parkway North to exit 105 for Rt. 36 Long Branch North. Take Rt. 36 into Long Branch and proceed North. (Rt. 36 turns left before you get to the ocean.) Drive North approximately 5 miles and look for signs for Sandy Hook on your right. When Rt. 36 goes left and over the bridge stay Right (actually straight) and drive into Sandy Hook. If anyone is in the toll booths (they usually don't charge until Memorial Day) tell them you're birding and you may proceed. Drive North to the Northwestern most point This is Lot K where the observation platform is located.

Birding is always best in the early morning so the plan is to start at 7:30am and bird the immediate vicinity until about 9 or 9:30am when we will return to the parking lot to meet late arrivals and proceed to our next spot. Anyone who arrives between times will most likely find the group in or around the "Locust

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Please send news items to Janet Goehner-Jacobs at awspublicity@aol.com

<http://www.audubonwildlifesociety.org>

Grove". To find the Locust Grove from the parking lot, walk Northwest towards the observation platform along a chain link fence on your right, at the first opening a trail leads directly into the Locust Grove. There is a port-a-pot at the parking area where we meet and the SHBO also has restrooms and we will be eating lunch there. So bring lots of food and drink to sustain yourself for a full day's adventure and come join us on this exciting fieldtrip led by SHBO associate naturalist and club member Lloyd Shaw. Of course bring bins and scopes. Bugs this time of year are minimal but always present in small numbers. Weather is always unpredictable this time of year so prepare accordingly and expect a great day!

-Lloyd Shaw

Look Closely, You Might Miss It

I looked west over the Delaware before dawn. A huge moon, a day from full, was low in the northwest. Its light made a narrow, golden path across the river, almost substantial enough to walk on. Within the confines of that path, the gilded water seemed to be speeding south, flowing like molten metal. An hour later, a soft light had replaced the darkness. The turgid river, high from recent rains, now slid slowly off the shoulders of the state like a long, brown scarf. Song Sparrows caroled their reedy trills and a frenetic Tufted Titmouse yelled "Fever, Fever!" More serious-minded birds were already foraging for food among the trees on the river's bank. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker jumped backward from the underside of a large branch as I approached while a White-breasted Nuthatch moved jerkily down the opposite side of the same tree. Working its way up the broad trunk of a sycamore was a Brown Creeper. This strange little bird with its bark-mimicking plumage quickly but thoroughly explored every crevice and every flap of bark with its slender, de-curved bill. Sunlight, fractured by the shapes of sycamores and oaks, brightened the water. Three fast-moving ducks flew upstream and landed, one male Bufflehead and two female Common Golden Eyes. They looked pathetically tiny on the back of the rolling, upwelling river and, perhaps astounded by the strength of the current, didn't dive but let themselves be carried towards Philadelphia. Just before dusk a half dozen small birds were flying rapidly and erratically in the same direction, their white breasts flashing. They were the vanguard of the season's Tree Swallows, four days early according to the Bucks County Audubon Society. That night there was a high, woolly cloud cover. Nothing but the radiance of the full moon pierced it giving a comforting sense that only the earth and its satellite existed in the universe. It was

March 3 and the Vernal Equinox was less than three weeks away.

John Maret
April, 2007

Expectations Do Not a Bird Create

At least once each year I go with a couple of colleagues to look for wintering owls at the Stony Brook/Millstone Reserve in Hopewell. We're always hopeful as the Reserve contains plenty of excellent habitat for them - large, dense stretches of cedars of all sizes bordered by rodent-filled fields and woods - but the area has never been particularly productive: two years ago we found a pair of Long-eareds and one Saw-whet the year before that. However, this winter seemed particularly favorable due to the heavy snow farther north and the open hunting grounds in central New Jersey.

As always, we started in the old stands of cedar first. There's something magical about the dark, dank and mysterious haunts of owls. We spread out and soon each of us was alone in the quietness and invisible to the others. Some scattered white-wash and a couple of old pellets were discovered but no birds. We walked through a deciduous wood to come to fields that had been overtaken by red cedar and multi-flora rose. Again we separated. I stayed along the edge where we had found Long-eareds two years ago. No such luck but nearing the end of the patch I found a tightly bunched cedar with voluminous pellets beneath it. Looking up I saw the tail and back of a Saw-whet and quietly moved away. I was able to attract the attention of my friends who materialized from the tangle and together we trained our binoculars on the very well-hidden bird. Only small bits of its body were visible but it suddenly flushed and flew awkwardly a few feet to an even denser tree. We called it a Saw-whet, moved on and went home but I had seen enough to make me uneasy. Although it had been impossible to get a clear look at any portion of the bird's body, I thought I had seen an ear tuft. The coloration wasn't right and I had never had a Saw-whet flush.

A week later, I went back. The bird was there but this time I had a clear look at its face and confirmed that it was not a Saw-whet but a red-phase Eastern Screech Owl, the first I've ever found roosting in the open.

John Maret
April, 2007

Invasive Garden Plants

So many of the plants that we all love and admire are potentially very harmful to our environment. As with all of the other invasives I have written about over the past year, these invasive plants are usually brought in on purpose. For example, European settlers brought hundreds of plants to North America from their home lands, for food, medicinal, and ornamental purposes. Introductions of exotic plants continue today, and are increasing with the mainly intentional and some accidental movement of large numbers of species between continents as a result of expanded international trade.

Some of the ecological impacts of invasive plants are listed below:

1. They compete with and replace rare and endangered species.
2. They encroach upon limited habitat of rare and endangered species.
3. They reduce or eliminate localized or specialized native plant communities, such as spring ephemeral plant communities.
4. They disrupt insect-plant associations necessary for seed dispersal of native plants.
5. They disrupt native plant-pollinator relationships.
6. They reduce and eliminate host plants for native insects and other wildlife.
7. They hybridize with native plant species, altering their genetic makeup.
8. They serve as host reservoirs for plant pathogens and other organisms that can infect and damage desirable native and ornamental plants.
9. They replace nutritious native plant foods with lower quality sources.
10. They kill native trees and shrubs by girdling or strangling the trunks.
11. They increase the incidence of plant disease and stress in forested areas.
12. They prevent seedling establishment of native trees and shrubs.
13. They reduce vigor of mature trees through shading.
14. They reduce the amount of space, water, sunlight and nutrients that would be available to native species.
15. They increase erosion along stream banks, shorelines and roadsides.
16. They change characteristics of the soil structure and chemistry.
17. They alter hydrological flows and conditions.

Multiflora rose, Japanese honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, and Norway maple have already disrupted

natural succession and wildlife habitats. The first two are not commonly planted now at all, but look how much they have taken over. The second two are still commonly planted. Common ornamental plants like periwinkle, some mints, and crown vetch, cause damage outside of the garden. Butterfly bush, Burning Bush and Asiatic Bittersweet are particularly problematic.

Butterfly Bush- Originally from China, *Buddleia davidii* has been added to some states' "Noxious Weeds" lists. Gardeners with existing plants are encouraged to cut off the flowers after they bloom, a common gardening practice called "dead heading," and dispose of them in the trash, not the compost bin. This will prevent the numerous wind-borne seeds from invading other properties. Nursery shoppers who want to buy butterfly bush are encouraged to seek plants from the *Buddleia* genus that have species names other than *davidii*. Or choose native alternatives like what I have listed under Burning Bush.

Burning Bush - Another originally from China and SE Asia, *Euonymus alatus* was introduced in the 1860's to the northeast of the US as an ornamental shrub. Its bright red leaves in the fall make it quite desirable. This bush is a threat to woodland areas, fields, and coastal scrubland because it out competes native species. Here is a link to the Nature Conservancy's site on invasive species: <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/>

Bittersweet - Unfortunately most of the bittersweet growing today is the very invasive Asiatic bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) and not the native bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*). The Asiatic bittersweet climbs and kills native trees and other vegetation. This is an example of having to be careful even if you do try and buy native species at local nurseries.

One interesting note, as I was researching this article, I still found lots of references to gardeners being told to use Purple Loosestrife! I didn't even think that was for sale anymore! For the June newsletter, I will summarize some ways to combat invasive species - plants, animals, birds, insects.

I would love to hear about what our club members are doing to control this problem. What are your thoughts on measures we should be implementing now? I will also try and get some control measures from friends who have to deal with this issue with their jobs.

For more information, check out these websites:

<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/invasives.html>

This site will allow you to read the NJ directive to public land managers about prohibiting the planting of non-native species.

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/commissioner/policy/pdir2004-02.htm>

Here are links to reports on what to plant as an alternative to favorite garden plants that are invasive.

<http://www.newfs.org/conserv/docs/invalt2.pdf>

<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/faqs/InvasivesAlternatives.html>

A link from New Jersey Audubon Society's Cape May Bird Observatory on starting native plants. It's not as difficult as you might think!

<http://www.njaudubon.org/Education/BackyardHabitat/Startingplants.html>

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07-08 Officers

Following is the slate of officers nominated for the 2007-08 year. Election will be held on May 14th, at which time additional nominees can be added.

President: Pat Brundage

1st Vice President: Dan Alexander

2nd Vice President: Joan Ziegler

Recording Secretary: Jean Gutschmuth

Corresponding Secretary: Janet Goehner-Jacobs

Treasurer: Shirley Shannon

Trustee (2010): Chris Herz

May Garden Tour

Once again, by popular demand, we will be holding a tour of our gardens on Saturday May 19, 2007. All members are invited to show off their gardens to us. We welcome last year's participants to see what has transpired in their gardens for the past year, and all other members, friends, neighbors and relatives who want to share their gardens with us. As last year, we will travel from home to home in a caravan. Everyone really enjoyed this outing last year and it's always fun and informative to see what other gardeners have created. Please call Joan Ziegler at 856 428 -1914 in the evenings if you are interested in participating. Remember we are also welcoming your friends, relatives and neighbors.

Other Club's Events:

Burlington County Natural Sciences Club, BCNSC presents, "Horseshoe Crabs and Red Knots" by Larry Niles on Wednesday April 11, 2007. BCNSC Meets the second Wednesday of the month, September through May at 7:45pm in Lumberton Leas Meeting Room, Lumberton, NJ. For more information on BCNSC go visit:

<http://oldsquaw.tripod.com/index.html>

Earth Day Art Night at Three Beans Fundraiser for Saddler's Woods

Saturday April 21, 2007 6pm – 10pm at the Three Beans Coffee Shop, 140 North Haddon Ave., Haddonfield, NJ. You can help put Saddler's Woods on the big screen! Proceeds from this event go towards the production of a Saddler's Woods documentary. This will be a fun wine and cheese affair with a variety of artwork on display by regional artists who have selected pieces to exhibit in honor of Earth Day. There will also be over a thousand dollars worth of prizes awarded through a Tombolla raffle. Tickets in advance are \$10 and are available online via www.saddlerswoods.org or by contacting Janet at 856-869-7372, janet@saddlerswoods.org. Tickets at the door are \$12.

Saddler's Woods: Birding with Michael Hogan

On Saturday May 5, 2007 at 10:00am renowned photographer and NJ naturalist, Michael Hogan, will lead a birding walk through Saddler's Woods. We will meet by the pump buildings on MacArthur Boulevard across from the Haddonview high rise apartments. To sign up contact Janet at (856) 869-7372 or janet@saddlerswoods.org.



Joe Heffron and Jean Gutschmuth enjoying last year's garden tour.