

Plainsboro Preserve



Location: Plainsboro, NJ 08536
Mailing Address: 80 Scotts Corner Road, Cranbury, NJ 08512
Phone: 609.897.9400 / Fax: 609.897.0287
E-mail: plainsboro@njudubon.org / Website: <http://plainsboro.njudubon.org>

HOURS: Through March 15: Tuesday to Saturday, 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. / Sunday, noon to 4:00 P.M.
March 15 through November 15: Tuesday to Saturday, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. / Sunday, noon to 5:00 P.M.
TRAILS: Open dawn to dusk daily.
CLOSINGS: Closed Mondays and Easter Sunday, April 8.

Staff:
Sean Grace, Sanctuary Director
Melissa Craddock, Teacher-Naturalist
Teacher-Naturalist – to be announced
Reeni Samuel, Nature Store Manager

Associate Naturalists:
Greg Hartman, Henry Kindervatter, Valerie Lysenko,
Chris Magarelli, Heidi Mass, Shari-Beth Nadell,
Arlene Oley, Reeni Samuel, Henry Schaefer,
and Vicki Schwartz

Spring 2012 Programs March through May

EVERY DAY AT THE PRESERVE

(Tuesday through Sunday)

The Plainsboro Preserve is a collaboration with the Township of Plainsboro, the County of Middlesex, and New Jersey Audubon. The preserve is a 1,000-acre natural area that supports a diversity of habitats and wildlife, with one of the largest lakes in the area. In addition, you will find a nature center with nature exhibits, a reference library, a Nature Store, and several miles of trails. Stop by today and put a little nature in your life.

Nature Store: We have the best selection of field guides, binoculars, birdfeeders, and birdseed in the area. Our expert staff can answer your questions and offer advice. And we have a **new selection of birding gifts, birdseed, and nature merchandise** for you to browse. We have hand blown glass, hand made stuffed animals, many new children's books, and a host of unique gifts for everyone.

Hiking trails: Open daily, dawn to dusk. Times are posted by the township rangers. Over 5 miles of trails traverse an interesting variety of habitats.

Nature Camps

Welcome to Plainsboro Preserve's Nature Camps. Our camps are designed to give children an exciting outdoor alternative for school and summer breaks. A portion of each program will be spent outdoors building a deeper connection to the natural world through fun and informative activities. We provide highly trained environmental educators for each of our programs and have excellent student to teacher ratios. Join us and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Each camp runs from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. daily. Choose from ten different weekly themes. Summer Camp is broken into two age groups: Entering 1st to 3rd grades and 4th to

6th grades. Camps are developmentally appropriate with daily themes, games, and activities to ensure your camper is nurtured in a fun and safe environment. Preregistration is mandatory. Visit our website for detailed information and a full list of our camp titles and services and to download a registration packet: <http://www.njudubon.org/SectionCenters/SectionPlainsboro/SummerCamp.aspx>.

School Vacation Camp Grades 1 – 6

**SPRING INTO SPRING BREAK
Monday to Friday, April 9 to 13**
9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Join us for a wonderful week of camp
Continued

BIRDSEED SALE DAYS

Saturday, March 10

9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Orders due by Saturday, February 25

Saturday, June 9

9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Orders due by Saturday, May 26

NJ Audubon offers birdseed sale days several times a year. Support NJ Audubon's Plainsboro Preserve by purchasing our high-quality, locally grown birdseed, mixes, and suet. Select birdfeeders will be on sale the day of the pickup at the preserve. Our expertly trained staff can help you make your selections to help encourage your favorite local birds to visit your feeders. Birdseed order form: <http://www.njudubon.org/Calendar/BirdSeed.html>.

gearing up for spring while participating in some of our time-tested favorite activities. We will explore ecosystems, learn how to care for wildlife, play games, track animals, and discover the tools of the naturalist, all while making some new friends!

Cost: \$60 per day.

Summer Camp Topics for Boys and Girls Entering Grades 1 - 3

COOL CRITTERS OF PLAINSBORO PRESERVE Monday to Friday, June 18 to 22 *Special Pricing for This Week Only!*

To allow for snow day makeup at the end of the school year, we are offering a day rate of \$60 per day, otherwise regular weekly rates apply.

Meet some of our live animals inside the nature center and then head out onto the preserve to search for local wildlife. We will learn how to use field guides, collecting nets, and will set up our trail camera in our quest to discover animal life around us. Campers will encounter insects, birds, and mammals during this week dedicated to the animal kingdom.

BEST OF THE BEST Monday to Friday, June 25 to 29

We offer daily themes that children have consistently rated the most fun during summer camps! Activities include a stomp through streams, insect safaris, and searching for forest critters under logs. These activities are the "Best of the Best!"

SPY KIDS Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, July 2, 3, 5, and 6 Closed Wednesday, July 4th *Special Price: \$230*

Campers will develop a connection to the natural world by expanding their powers of observation. We will send secret messages, use binoculars to scan for hidden dangers, and go where no camper has gone before. Each day will bring a new outdoor adventure while connecting with nature.

COLD-BLOODED CREATURES Monday to Friday, July 9 to 13

Join us and learn about creepy-crawly cold-blooded creatures during this week of camp. Campers will have the

opportunity to meet snakes, turtles, salamanders, frogs, and insects in their natural habitats. Encounters with live animals are accompanied by associated learning activities.

NO CAMP JULY 16 to 20

WILD WISDOM
Monday to Friday, July 23 to 27
We will discover legends, stories, and myths from various cultures as we explore topics and natural themes. Stories are a jumping off point for exploration. Activities and crafts will reinforce campers' newly found knowledge.

SENSATIONAL SENSES Monday to Friday, July 30 to August 3

Every day will bring a new adventure while using our five senses! Test your taste buds during nature snack time. Listen and learn from the sounds of the forest. Campers will explore the wild world around them by looking, listening, touching, and tasting. We will try to stump our senses with fun games and activities!

NATURE NINJAS Monday to Friday, August 6 to 10

A Nature Ninja can move through the forest with the stealth of a fox, the speed of a deer, and the cunning of a cat. A Nature Ninja knows the language of the birds and learns from their animal helpers. Join us for a week of fun-filled activities and discover the world of the Nature Ninja.

WONDERFUL WILDLIFE Monday to Friday, August 13 to 17

Wild animals have always captured our imagination. During this action-packed week we will catch a few critters of our own in our quest to learn about local wildlife. Which animal is the fastest, biggest, or strongest? Learn all about the coolest animals in the animal kingdom.

EARTHKEEPERS Monday to Friday, August 20 to 24

Native Americans understand the importance of plants and animals and how we relate to nature. We will taste some foods Native Americans grow in

their gardens and learn about their animal friends. Through stories and explorations we will discover how we are connected with nature.

WILD DISCOVERIES Monday to Friday, August 27 to 31

Discover nature in the strangest places! Look under logs, splash in a stream, and search through fields during this week of nature investigation. Campers will see the natural world from different perspectives as they scan the tree tops and examine the stones beneath their feet.

Summer Camp Topics for Boys and Girls Entering Grades 4 - 6

NATURE CAMP SAMPLER Monday to Friday, June 18 to 22 *Special Pricing for This Week Only!*

To allow for snow day makeup at the end of the school year, we are offering a day rate of \$60 per day, otherwise regular weekly rates apply.

We will enjoy favorite activities from past summer camps, including games, hikes, survival skills, and tracking. Campers will search for animals on the preserve and make new friends along the way. This is a great introduction to our nature camps.

ANIMAL ADVENTURERS Monday to Friday, June 25 to 29

Campers will learn about reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals, and insects in one animal-packed week of camp. We will investigate different live animals in our nature center before exploring wild habitats on the nature preserve. Look at nesting birds, discover the world of insects, and photograph wild animals with our trail camera.

WOODLAND GAMES Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, July 2, 3, 5, and 6 Closed Wednesday, July 4th *Special Price: \$230*

Scavenger hunts, Frisbee golf, Stream Catcher, Capture the Flag, and Animal Charades are just some of the planned activities during this fun-filled week. Campers will have an opportunity to learn by playing outdoor games!

Continued

SURVIVAL I

Monday to Friday, July 9 to 13

Learn survival skills by putting them into practice. This week will introduce basic survival skills through hands-on experiences. Campers will build shelters, learn basic way-finding skills, gather food and water, and cook on a fire during this week of adventure. This is our core survival course.

NO CAMP JULY 16 to 20

PRESERVE EXPLORERS

Monday to Friday, July 23 to 27

This week offers campers an opportunity to explore the less-visited areas of Plainsboro Preserve. With over 600 acres to investigate, campers will enjoy hiking to the beaver lodge and Maggie's Point, search for woodland animals, and get to know a few plants and trees.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Monday to Friday, July 30 to August 3

Learn essential skills that will help you survive if you were to become lost in the woods. Search and rescue techniques will be introduced as campers attempt to find and then "rescue" a lost hiker. Campers will participate in a variety of fun activities that will teach way-finding, search methods, and core survival techniques.

SURVIVAL II

Monday to Friday, August 6 to 10

Campers will learn to track wild animals and the secrets of becoming invisible in the woods. We will learn about traditional Native American tools, including bows and arrows, and stone tools. We will revisit essential skills from Survival I such as fire and water, but may utilize different techniques. Survival I is not a prerequisite.

N.S.I.

(Nature Scene Investigators) Monday to Friday, August 13 to 17

Who left that track in the mud? Who made that nest? Who lives in that burrow? Campers will investigate clues in nature during this week of exploration and sleuthing. Come be a Nature Scene Investigator!

Plainsboro Preserve

Plainsboro Preserve Spring 2012 Events at a Glance

Saturday, February 25	Birdseed Orders Due for Pickup March 10
Saturday, March 3	Trash Pickup and Trail Tune Up
Saturday, March 10	Birdseed Pickup
Saturday, March 10	Woodcock and Amphibian Evening Walk
Friday, March 16	Sourlands Salamander Search
Saturday, March 17	Tools of the Native Americans
Friday, March 23	Sourlands Salamander Search
Saturday, March 24	Forest Scavenger Hunt
Saturday, March 31	Summer Camp Open House
Saturday, March 31	Terrific Turtles
Friday, April 6	Full Moon Hike
Saturday, April 7	Spring Egg Hunt
Sunday, April 8	Center Closed for Easter
Monday to Friday, April 9-13 ...	Spring into Spring Break
Saturday, April 14	Geocaching: A GPS Scavenger Hunt
Saturday, April 14	Duke Birding by Bike
Saturday, April 21	Spring Bird Migration at the Plainsboro Preserve
Saturday, April 21	Signs of Spring Hike
Saturday, April 21	Amazing Animals of Our Vernal Ponds
Saturday, April 21	Earth Day Festival
Saturday, April 28	Salamander Search
Saturday, April 28	Birding: Sourland Mountains Series Part 1: Somerset Sourlands
Saturday, May 5	Stream Stomping
Saturday, May 5	Birding: Sourland Mountains Series Part 2: Explore Baldpate Mountain
Sunday, May 6	Natural History of the Pine Barrens Trip
Saturday, May 12	Fistfuls of Frogs
Saturday, May 12	World Series of Birding Century Run
Saturday, May 19	The Birds Are Back in Town
Saturday, May 26	The Moth Ball
Saturday, May 26	Birdseed Orders Due for Pickup June 9
Saturday, June 9	Bird Seed Pickup

PREDATOR AND PREY

Monday to Friday, August 20 to 24

This week campers will learn about the relationship between predator and prey! Explore animal survival strategies like sneaking, stalking, and camouflage while searching for predators and their prey throughout the preserve. We will meet and care for some of the animals that live at the nature center during this week of camp.

NATIVE AMERICAN LIFE-SKILLS

Monday to Friday, August 27 to 31

Native Americans didn't survive...they thrived. Native Americans were part of the environment and knew nature's secrets. Who left that track? What tree makes the best bows? Where can I find food or water? This course combines the

skills of a naturalist with the knowledge of a Native American.

Family Nature Programs

Saturdays from 3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Welcome to the Plainsboro Preserve's Family Nature Programs. Each program is designed to explore nature through a theme. A portion of each program may be spent outdoors building a deeper connection to the natural world through fun and informative activities. We provide a highly trained environmental educa-

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Become a New Jersey Audubon member and enjoy discounts on tours, events, and field trips at all NJ Audubon centers. Members also get a 10% discount at our Nature Stores (greater discount on optics).

tor for each of our programs. Join us and create memories that will last a lifetime. Educational and fun, these Family Nature Programs are perfect for beginning naturalists and their families ages 6 to adult. Preregistration is encouraged.

Cost: members, \$3 per person;
nonmembers, \$5 per person
(unless otherwise noted).

TRASH PICKUP AND TRAIL TUNEUP

Saturday, March 3 *Special Time*

Noon to 4:00 P.M.

The Plainsboro Preserve is a huge community resource. This is an opportunity to give back by coming out and helping us pick up trash and “tune up” our trails. Bring a friend, your scout pack, or the family, and meet some like-minded individuals in our community.

Cost: Free.

WOODCOCK AND AMPHIBIAN EVENING WALK

Saturday, March 10 *Special Time*

Walk begins at 5:30 P.M.

Join us at the Plainsboro Preserve to witness the nuptial flights of male woodcocks as they try to woo their female counterparts. The preserve has a number of these amazing and secretive birds and in years past we have seen and heard many of them. Linger into the night as the amphibian chorus grows. Join sanctuary director Sean Grace for this fun and informative evening walk.

TOOLS OF THE NATIVE AMERICANS

Saturday, March 17

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Have you ever wondered how traditional people cooked over a fire, made a knife out of stone, tanned hides, made bows and arrows, or made a fire? We will spend some time inside sharing and learning about these interesting artifacts and then head outside and try our hand at making a fire with flint and steel.

FOREST SCAVENGER HUNT

Saturday, March 24

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Join us for a great journey by exploring the meaning of biodiversity. We will play games, have a scavenger hunt using all of our senses, and

solve riddles to see the diversity of the Plainsboro Preserve.

SUMMER CAMP OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, March 31

10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Come in and meet the staff during our summer camp open house. We will be available to answer questions and will have sample camp schedules. We will be offering a special one day promotion, so be sure to ask!

TERRIFIC TURTLES

Saturday, March 31

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Did you know that the vernal pools of Plainsboro Preserve are home to many types of elusive turtles? Participants meet several species of turtles in our nature center up close before creating their very own paper turtle to take home! We will also hike out to the vernal pools to search for turtles, weather permitting.

FULL MOON HIKE

SPECIAL DATE and TIME

Friday, April 6

6:30 to 8:30 P.M.

A familiar trail by day becomes a whole new experience at night! Our fearless naturalist will lead you on an adventure in which owls hoot, coyotes howl, and strange rustlings in the brush are wonderful possibilities. Join us for this family-friendly exploration into the animal world at night.

SPRING EGG HUNT

Saturday April 7

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Join us as we look for eggs along “Cottontail Trail” and see if we can’t find surprises that have been left behind. Many animals start their life cycle as an egg, and we will learn some interesting nature knowledge as we search for goodies. Come dressed to spend time searching for hidden treasures outside.

GEOCACHING:

A GPS SCAVENGER HUNT

Saturday, April 14

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Welcome to the 21st century scavenger hunt! Geocaching is a real-world outdoor treasure hunt where players try to locate hidden containers using latitude and longitude coordinates. After an introduction to the world of

geocaching, we’ll head outside with our GPS units to search for hidden treasure on the preserve! Please bring a GPS-enabled smartphone or GPS unit if you have one.

EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

Saturday, April 21

In celebration of Earth Day we are offering Family Nature Programs at 8:00 A.M., 11:00 A.M., and 3:30 P.M. Please join us in support of Earth Day and your local nature center. Standard program rates apply.

SPRING BIRD MIGRATION AT THE PLAINSBORO PRESERVE

Saturday, April 21

8:00 to 10:00 A.M.

Come and join sanctuary director Sean Grace for a stroll around the preserve looking and listening for a variety of birds. We will start with some close observations at our feeders and then look for some early spring migrants.

SIGNS OF SPRING HIKE ON THE PLAINSBORO PRESERVE

Saturday, April 21

11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

The Plainsboro Preserve is a great place to go for a spring hike. Bring your hiking shoes, dress in layers, and come prepared for a moderate hike to some of the lesser-explored areas on the preserve. Expect to cover several miles at a moderate pace with associate naturalist Shari-Beth Nadell.

AMAZING ANIMALS OF OUR VERNAL POOLS

Saturday, April 21

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

In spring, temporary ponds fill up, and these are magnets for breeding amphibians. Vicki Schwartz will lead a walk to the vernal pools at Plainsboro Preserve, where you will learn what vernal pools are, why they are important, and what kind of animals can be found there. Plan to get wet and muddy feet! Boots recommended.

SALAMANDER SEARCH

Saturday, April 28

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

The lives of salamanders are secretive and relatively unknown, yet salamanders may be the most abundant and easily observed animals in our

Continued

forests. Learn some facts about salamanders through a live salamander viewing and discussion. Then we will head out into the hardwood forest to carefully search for the secretive salamanders.

STREAM STOMPING

Saturday, May 5

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Bring your boots and prepare to get wet and wild as we talk about the importance of water in an ecosystem while we hike in and along Devil's Brook. With the spring season upon us, we are sure to find some cool critters and have a great time hiking along the stream.

FISTFULS OF FROGS

Saturday, May 12

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

How many frogs do you think we can catch during this hands-on program? Ten, twenty, thirty? Join us for a walk to some of our frog hot spots and try your hand at catching these slippery creatures! Learn how to safely handle these critters with care. We will tally up our frog totals and try to set a preserve record while learning about them up close! A limited number of nets will be available. Bring rubber boots or old sneakers that can get wet and muddy.

THE BIRDS ARE BACK IN TOWN

Saturday, May 19

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Join associate naturalist Vicki Schwartz for a fun adventure into the world of birds with your favorite budding naturalist. Meet a live bird up close and discover what makes birds so special. After some inside discovery time and activities introducing your budding naturalist to birds we will head outside for a bird adventure. Children, ages 3-7, must be accompanied by an adult.

THE MOTH BALL

Saturday, May 26

3:30 to 5:00 P.M.

Please join us at the Moth Ball, a chance to observe and learn about some of nature's most beautiful and often overlooked creatures. The preserve has a diversity of habitats that are perfect for moths. We will attract them, using some specialized lighting equipment, to make them

easy to see and photograph. While there are about 950 species of birds in North America, there are somewhere around 12,000 species of moths, from just an eighth of an inch in length to well over 5 inches. "Mothing" is a rapidly growing subject of interest in the United States.

NATURE FIELD TRIPS

Welcome to Plainsboro Preserve's Nature Field Trips for interested learners. Each field trip is designed for adults and focused family members to explore one of the natural areas of New Jersey. We provide a highly trained environmental educator for each of our field trips. Join us and build memories that will last a lifetime while exploring a deeper connection with the natural world. All the trips involve moderate exercise and each participant should bring basic necessities such as water, sunscreen, snack, and appropriate clothing. We prefer ten-day preregistration and advanced payment of \$10 for NJ Audubon members or \$15 for nonmembers for all trips (unless otherwise noted). To register, send check payable to "NJ Audubon" to Plainsboro Preserve, 80 Scotts Corner Road, Cranbury, NJ 08512. No refunds are made unless we cancel the trip. Field trips meet at or near the trip locations; directions and information are available online at www.njaudubon.org/centers/plainsboro. Group size is limited and a minimum number of participants are necessary. E-mail: plainsboro@njaudubon.org or call 609.897.9400.

SOURLANDS SALAMANDER SEARCH

Friday, March 16, 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.
Or....

Friday, March 23, 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.
Join us for an adventure into the Sourland Mountains as we search for the remarkable spotted salamander. When the first warm rains of spring arrive, many amphibians emerge from their winter burrows and migrate to their breeding pools. This is the only time of year that these large-bodied salamanders can be seen above ground in large numbers. Don't miss this spectacular natural event! Bring a headlamp or flash-

light, dress warmly, and wear rubber boots. This trip requires a short walk into the woods at night.

DUKE BIRDING BY BIKE

Saturday, April 14

8:00 A.M. to noon

Moderate bike ride.

Duke Farms is a beautiful five-square-mile piece of mixed habitat in central New Jersey that is a haven for bird migrants. Interlaced through fields and forest is an extensive bike path that allows us to cover distance at a moderate pace and locate a large variety of bird species. Join sanctuary director Sean Grace, Michael Pollock, and Stephen Bagen for a birding-by-bike bonanza.

BIRDING:

SOURLAND MOUNTAINS SERIES

Part 1: Somerset Sourlands

Saturday, April 28

8:00 to 11:00 A.M.

Moderate hike.

This Somerset County site is not only a great place to hike, but also a great place to witness migration in Central New Jersey. Warblers, tanagers, orioles, and bluebirds find the forests here a welcome haven during their arduous journey. Join sanctuary director Sean Grace on this wonderful hike and learn about spring migration.

BIRDING:

SOURLAND MOUNTAINS SERIES

Part 2: Explore Baldpate Mountain

Saturday, May 5

8:00 to 11:00 A.M.

Moderate hike.

Baldpate Mountain is located on the southeast end of the Sourland Mountain region where it rises from the banks of the Delaware River. There are 10 miles of trails with mature hardwood forests and mixed grasslands. Explore one of the best-kept secrets in central New Jersey while looking for breeding birds. Join sanctuary director Sean Grace on this wonderful adventure.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE PINE BARRENS WITH RICK RADIS

Sunday, May 6

Meet in Warren Grove at 9:00 A.M.

Trip 1. Visit the pygmy forest of the East Plains for spring wildflowers and

Continued

botany, fire ecology, herps, nesting birds, a little geology and history, and a lot more.

WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING CENTURY RUN

Saturday, May 12

All day.

Join us on an adventure from the Plainsboro Preserve up through Hunterdon County trying to locate 100 bird species. This is prime time for bird migrants and Sean Grace will be exploring a number of birding hot spots with short walks at a leisurely pace. Don't miss this great learning opportunity. The World Series of Birding is a fundraising event for New Jersey Audubon and helps us fund research, conservation, and education for a variety of bird issues. Participants are encouraged to make a minimum donation of \$1 per bird species identified.

SANCTUARY NOTES

All of the staff at the Plainsboro Preserve would like to thank the volunteers for their hard work and dedication supporting us and our mission.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: 609.897.9400

✓ **Trail Maintenance and Gardening:** Learn about nature while helping maintain our large trail network and native plant gardens.

✓ **Teaching Opportunities:** Do you have a special area of natural history interest or expertise that you want to share with others? Stop by and talk with us. Give the gift of knowledge.

✓ **Reception and Nature Store Volunteers:** This is your opportunity to help out in a friendly and fun atmosphere with people who share your love of the natural world! 