

Rancocas Nature Center, *Center Focus* text, Fall 2010

RANCOCAS NATURE CENTER

794 Rancocas Road, Mount Holly, NJ 08060

Phone: 609.261.2495 / Fax: 609.261.9916

E-mail: rancocas@njudubon.org / Website: www.njudubon.org/centers/rancocas

HOURS: Tuesday to Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. / Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. / Closed Mondays

Please note: When EST resumes on November 1, the Center will close at 4 p.m.

CLOSURES: Center closed on Thursday, November 25, for Thanksgiving Day.

Staff:

Susan Buffalino, Sanctuary Director

Tony Geiger, Teacher Naturalist

Kerri Sellers, Teacher Naturalist

Associate Naturalists: Karl Anderson, Tom Bailey, John Courtney, Sandra Keller, Gary Lizzi, and Lloyd Shaw

Environmental Educator: Diane Rothschild

Calendar of Events

September 3	Morning Bird Walk at Rancocas
September 8, 15, 22, & 29	Nature Toddlers (Series I-Wednesday)
September 9, 16, 23, & 30	Nature Toddlers (Series I-Thursday)
September 11	Saturday Nature Explorers
September 11 & 12	8th Annual New Jersey Meadowlands Festival of Birding
September 12	Sod Pipers in Pedricktown at De Lea and Johnson Sod Farms
September 19	Beginning with Birding Basics
September 25	BurlCo Tree Walk with Karl Anderson
September 26	Short Walk with Sandra Keller at Palmyra Cove
October 1	Morning Bird Walk at Rancocas
October 2	Saturday Nature Explorers
October 3	Pine Barrens Natural History with Rick Radis
October 3	Interpretive Trail Hike at Rancocas
October 9	Fall Migration at Palmyra Cove
October 17	Batty for Bats-Halloween Special
October 17	Short Walk with Sandra Keller at Taylor's Preserve
October 20, 27	Nature Toddlers (Series II-Wednesday)
October 21, 28	Nature Toddlers (Series II-Thursday)
October 23	Courtney's Fall Birding at Bombay Hook NWR
November 5	Morning Bird Walk at Rancocas
November 3, 10	Nature Toddlers (Series II-Wednesday)
November 4, 11	Nature Toddlers (Series II-Thursday)
November 6	Saturday Nature Explorers
November 7	Interpretive Trail Hike at Rancocas
November 7	RNC's Third Annual Photo Exhibit Opening Event
November 13	Supawna Meadows NWR
November 14	Getting to Know the Rancocas Reptiles

CHILDREN'S NATURE SERIES

All programs require advance registration.

NATURE TODDLERS—Series I

Wednesdays, September 8, 15, 22, & 29, or Thursdays, September 9, 16, 23, & 30

10 to 11 a.m.

Young children are naturally curious about their surroundings. This 4-week series is designed to engage 3 to 5 year-olds accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Each session will coordinate with a seasonal event so children can have a first-hand experience with the natural world when they visit the center. Nature Toddlers is offered as a four-week program. Please preregister for the series.

Cost: members, \$25/child for the series; nonmembers, \$38/child for the series.

SATURDAY NATURE EXPLORERS

Saturdays, September 11, October 2, November 6

1 to 3 p.m.

Rancocas' Nature Explorers program was traditionally geared to elementary-aged children, but as of this season it will expand to include interested parents and guardians. The new format still allows parents to drop off their children to participate in activities as usual, but now also gives interested adults a chance to share the discovery process with their children and/or grandchildren. During the spring season, we had a number of parents join the group and it was a positive experience for all. Each monthly program explores a different theme that includes explorations and activities at the center and on the trails. Nurture your child's awareness of the natural world and start them on the path to "growing up green."

Cost: members, \$7/person for each session; nonmembers, \$10/person for each session.

NATURE TODDLERS—Series II

Wednesdays, October 20, 27, November 3, & 10, or Thursdays, October 21, 28, November 4, & 11

10 to 11 a.m.

Young children are naturally curious about their surroundings. This 4-week series is designed to engage 3 to 5 year-olds accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Each session will coordinate with a seasonal event so children can have a first-hand experience with the natural world when they visit the center. Nature Toddlers is offered as a four-week program. Please preregister for the series.

Cost: members, \$25/child for the series; nonmembers, \$38/child for the series.

PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES

All programs require advance registration.

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CONNECT WITH NATURE SERIES

BEGINNING WITH BIRDING BASICS

Sunday, September 19

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Birds can be found in almost every habitat and over 47 million Americans enjoy bird watching and birding each year. It's a great way to connect with nature. This program is designed for beginning birders of all ages. The hands-on activities and trail hike, led by a NJAS naturalist, will focus on the fundamentals of bird identification. By using various strategies you can learn to recognize different bird species and bird calls. Loaner binoculars will be available.

Cost: members, \$7/person and \$15/family; nonmembers, \$10/person and \$21/family.

BATTY FOR BATS-HALLOWEEN SPECIAL

Sunday, October 17

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Holy smokes, Batman—this mammal can fly. Bats are the only true flying mammals; sorry, Batman fans. Despite the fact that bats comprise about one-fifth of all mammal species worldwide, their nocturnal habits and their association with Halloween have contributed to bat folklore, superstition, and fear. Celebrate the holiday at RNC. Learn about bat behavior and how we can co-exist with these interesting creatures. This program is geared toward participants of all ages.

Cost: members, \$7/person and \$15/family; nonmembers, \$10/person and \$21/family.

GETTING TO KNOW THE RANCOCAS REPTILES

Sunday, November 14

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

The Rancocas Nature Center is home to a variety of resident animals. During this program, participants of all ages can get an up-close look at several of our reptiles and learn about their physical characteristics, diet, and habitat requirements. The afternoon also includes reptile-focused activities along the trail during a naturalist-led hike of the Nature Center grounds.

Cost: members, \$7/person and \$15/family; nonmembers, \$10/person and \$21/family.

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INTERPRETIVE TRAIL HIKE AT RANCOCAS

Sundays, October 3, and November 7

1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

On the first Sunday of each month, join a NJAS staff person or an associate naturalist for an interpretive hike through our varied habitats. It's a great way to become familiar with our well-maintained trails.

Bring a camera and/or binoculars to use as we stop at scenic spots along the way. The easy pace is suitable for all ages; please use a child carrier to transport small children.

Cost: members, free; nonmembers, \$4/person and \$10/family

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3rd ANNUAL PHOTO EXHIBIT

Sunday, November 7, Event Opening

1 to 4 p.m.

Visitors to our center are just as likely to carry a camera as a pair of binoculars. For the third year we have created a venue for our visitors, volunteers, and program participants to share their photos with the general public. Last year's exhibit was a highlight of the season and added color to our classroom.

Photographers of all ages are encouraged to submit up to five framed or matted images (no larger than 8" x 10" prints) for this exhibit. The only requirement is that all photographs must have been taken on the Rancocas Nature Center grounds. Vote for your favorite photo when you visit the Center. The two winners will receive a t-shirt of their choice or a voucher for a free RNC program. Call the Center for more details or visit our Web site at www.njaudubon.org/centers/rancocas. Refreshments will be served during the Event Opening on November 7.

Cost: members, free; nonmembers, \$2/person and \$6/family

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ADULT PROGRAMS AT RNC

All programs require advance registration.

MORNING BIRD WALKS AT RANCOCAS

Fridays, September 3, October 1, November 5

8:15 a.m.

Join a RNC naturalist for a "first-Friday-of-the-month" bird walk as we look for migrants and resident species. Sightings will be added to the RNC bird list. Meet at the picnic tables by the parking lot. Walks begin promptly at 8:15 a.m.

Cost: members, free; nonmembers, \$5.

SHORT WALKS WITH SANDRA KELLER

At Palmyra Cove

Sunday, September 26

At Taylor's Preserve

Sunday, October 17

9 a.m. to noon

You don't need much time or gas to take advantage of these short walks with associate naturalist Sandra Keller. A quick morning trip to a local "hot spot" is a great way to start your Sunday. No reservations needed; the idea is to keep it simple. Only persistent rain cancels a walk. Call the Center for directions to the sites. Please arrive by 9 a.m. sharp.

Cost per trip: members, \$7; nonmembers, \$10.

ADULT FIELD TRIPS

All programs require advance registration.

You can register by calling the center or by mailing a check to RNC, 794 Rancocas Road, Mount Holly, NJ 08060. To facilitate sending site directions, **please include your e-mail address when you register.** Trips take place rain or shine (within reasonable limits). Bring binoculars and/or scopes, lunch (if desired), and dress appropriately for the weather.

SOD PIPERS IN PEDRICKTOWN AT DE LEA AND JOHNSON SOD FARMS

Sunday, September 12

8 a.m. to early afternoon

Join Lloyd Shaw as he visits De Lea and Johnson Sod Farms to search for sod pipers. Meet at the Pedricktown Causeway.

Cost: members, \$15; nonmembers, \$20.

BURLCO TREE WALK WITH KARL ANDERSON

Saturday, September 25

9 a.m. to early afternoon.

Enjoy visits to three area sites during this Saturday trip. Karl will do his usual magic with plant ID and focus on the diversity of species found at Rancocas, Smithville, and Brendan Bryne State Park. If you took last fall's tree course, it's a great way to brush up on the skills you learned. Leader: Karl Anderson.

Cost: members, \$15; nonmembers, \$20.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE NJ PINE BARRENS

Sunday, October 3

Meet at 8:45 a.m.

NJ Pines Barrens expert Rick Radis will take you to some of his favorite local haunts for Pine Barrens natural history. Sign up early as this is a popular trip. This is a joint trip with SHBO. Leader: Rick Radis.

Cost: members, \$15; nonmembers, \$20.

FALL MIGRATION AT PALMYRA COVE

Saturday, October 9

Two start times- 7 or 9 a.m. to late afternoon

Join Lloyd Shaw for a Palmyra Cove "Big Day" for fall migration. Let's see how many species Lloyd and company can produce at this great birding location. The bird tally goes toward the Audubon Wildlife Society's count. There are two different start times; participants can choose what is best for them. Spend the day or any part of the day. Last year's trip was exciting and productive. Meet in the Palmyra Cove Nature Park parking lot. Leader: Lloyd Shaw.

Cost: members \$15, nonmembers \$20.

FALL BIRDING AT BOMBAY HOOK NWR, DELAWARE

Saturday, October 23

10 a.m. to midafternoon

Delaware is not as far as you think, and often worth the trip. Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge offers a variety of habitats to explore along the Delaware Bay. Participants will car-caravan to salt marsh and freshwater sites in search of waterfowl, songbirds, and raptors. This is always a great trip. Call the Center to arrange carpooling. Leader: John Courtney

Cost: members, \$15; nonmembers, \$20.

SUPAWNA MEADOWS NWR

Saturday, November 13

9 a.m. to early afternoon

Get two for the price of one. Spend the day in two national wildlife refuges, Supawna and Abbotts Meadows. Lloyd will focus the attention on sparrows, late migrants, and raptors. Meet at Supawna Meadows NWR. Leader: Lloyd Shaw.

Cost: members, \$15; nonmembers, \$20.

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8TH ANNUAL NEW JERSEY MEADOWLANDS FESTIVAL OF BIRDING

Saturday and Sunday, September 11 and 12

Join NJ Audubon trip leaders for a weekend of birding at the New Jersey Meadowlands Festival of Birding. Visit our website at www.njaudubon.org.

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BURLINGTON COUNTY NATURAL SCIENCE CLUB

NJAS members are invited to the monthly meetings of the Burlington County Natural Science Club. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month, September through May, at 7:45 p.m. For updates on meeting locations and presentation topics, visit the club's website at <http://oldsquaw.tripod.com>.

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Rancocas' dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers contribute many hours of their time each season. Center Focus offers a venue to extend our thanks. The nature center would not be the vibrant place it is without their help. Thank you to Hedy Bauer, Bob Birdsall, John and Marilyn Courtney, James Cox, Katie Dole, Laura Edwards, Blake Elkins, Peggy Esposito, Bob Hall, Jean Jordan, Bob Lord, Steven Maldonado, Steve Mattan, Mary Metrione, Ken Mitchell, Candy Myers, Eric, Daniel, and Zachary Rakebrand, Abe Reuther, Diane Rothschild, George Rowland, Arlene Spangler, Laura Tanedo, Louise Tompkins, Mami Umemura, Rachel Weiss, David White, Barbara Wiley, Bill Wiley, Al Wiley, and the Work Group. In addition, Rancocas would like to thank its WSB team, the Rancocas Ravaging Red-tails, members Sandra Keller, Sarah Tanedo, Barb Wiley, and driver Doug Johnson for their energy and commitment to this important NJA event.

Each of Rancocas' volunteers deserves special recognition. This season, Rancocas would like to highlight the contributions of Candy Myers. As a Master Gardener, Candy designs, coordinates and works with volunteers to maintain the beauty of Rancocas' Butterfly/Hummingbird Garden and the Children's Garden. Through her efforts both gardens were featured on the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Burlington County Garden Tour for 2010. In addition, Candy secured a grant from the Hardy Plant Society-Mid-Atlantic Group for plants and materials.

Long-time volunteer, Pat Pawlowski, has retired from her volunteer activities at Rancocas. Pat's contributions cover several decades and three Rancocas directors. Her favorite activities included the care of Rancocas' resident animals. Pat's energy, commitment, and enthusiasm are missed. And it is with

sadness that Rancocas acknowledges the sudden passing of Pat's husband, Paul Pawlowski. Pat has generously established a "Rancocas Nature Center Live Animal Fund" for contributions in memory of her husband. Rancocas staff and volunteers extend their sincerest sympathies to Pat at this difficult time.

Last season, William Sheaffer completed his Eagle Scout project at Rancocas. William elected to build a new kiosk for the center. The kiosk features double the amount of display space. It is located on the side of the parking lot and it will allow Rancocas to advertise additional materials to the center's visitors and hikers. William also coordinated a trail maintenance project that improved access from the trailhead. Thank you, William, for your expertise and leadership.