



# Rancocas

## *Nature Center*

Step out our front door into your own adventure!

### **RANCOCAS NATURE CENTER *Center Focus* Spring 2012**

Rancocas Nature Center

794 Rancocas Road, Mount Holly, NJ 08060

Phone: 609.261.2495 / Fax: 609.261.9916

E-mail: [rancocas@njudubon.org](mailto:rancocas@njudubon.org) / Web site: [www.njudubon.org/centers/rancocas](http://www.njudubon.org/centers/rancocas)

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

The Center closes at 4 p.m. each day until March 11

CLOSURES: Center closed on Sunday, April 8, for Easter

#### *Staff:*

Susan Buffalino, Sanctuary Director

Kerri Sellers, Teacher-Naturalist

Becky Laboy, Teacher-Naturalist

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

Environmental Educator, Diane Rothschild

#### Calendar of Events

March 3	Saturday Nature Explorers
March 4	Photographing Wildlife at Barnegat
March 4	Photographing Wildlife at Barnegat
March 4	Spring Warbler ID Workshop
March 8	Speaking of Nature Series
March 14, 21, & 28	Nature Toddlers Series 1 (AM Session-Wednesday)
March 14, 21, & 28	Nature Toddlers Series 1 (PM Session-Wednesday)
March 17	Early Migrants at Pedrickstown
March 25	Salamander Sunday
April 1	Interpretive Trail Hike at Rancocas
April 4	Nature Toddlers Series 1 (AM Session-Wednesday)
April 4	Nature Toddlers Series 1 (PM Session-Wednesday)
April 7	Spring Birding at Forsythe NWR
April 7	Saturday Nature Explorers

April 12	Speaking of Nature Series
April 15	Celebrate Earth Day at Rancocas
April 18 & 25	Nature Toddlers Series 2 (AM Session-Wednesday)
April 18 & 25	Nature Toddlers Series 2 (PM Session-Wednesday)
April 22	Short Walk with Sandra Keller at Pennington Park
April 28	Atlantic County Park with Lloyd Shaw
May 2 & 9	Nature Toddlers Series 2 (AM Session-Wednesday)
May 2 & 9	Nature Toddlers Series 2 (PM Session-Wednesday)
May 5	Wildflowers at Assunpink WMA
May 5	Saturday Nature Explorers
May 6	Interpretive Trail Hike at Rancocas
May 10	Speaking of Nature Series
May 12	Twenty-ninth Annual World Series of Birding
May 15	Weekday Birding at Sandy Hook
May 20	Birds, Bees, and Butterflies in Your Backyard
May 23 & 30	Nature Toddlers Series 3 (AM Session-Wednesday)
May 23 & 30	Nature Toddlers Series 3 (PM Session-Wednesday)
May 27	Short Walk with Sandra Keller at Cooper River Park, Camden County

## **CHILDREN'S NATURE SERIES**

All programs require advance registration.

### **NATURE TODDLERS**

**Series 1: Wednesdays, March 14, 21, 28, and April 4**

**Series 2: Wednesdays, April 18, 25, May 2 and 9**

**Series 3: Wednesdays, May 23 and 30**

AM Session: 10 to 11 a.m., PM Session: 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Young children are naturally curious about their surroundings. The Nature Toddler series teaches children aged 3 to 5 years about the natural world around them. Through age-appropriate hands-on activities, stories, short hikes, and crafts, children can share educational experiences with their parent/caregiver. Each week offers a different environmental theme that utilizes the Rancocas gardens, trails, and Dragonfly Pond to reinforce the outdoor experience. Please preregister for the series.

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

### **SATURDAY NATURE EXPLORERS**

**Saturdays, March 3; April 7, May 5**

1 to 3 p.m.

The Rancocas Nature Center is an exciting place to spend a Saturday afternoon. A different environmental topic each week will inspire explorations on the trail. Nurture your child's awareness of the natural world and start them on the path to "growing up green." Children can participate in Nature Explorers on their own, with a friend, or with a parent or other caregiver. It's a great venue for sharing the beauty of the natural world with your children or grandchildren.

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

## **PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES**

All programs require advance registration.

### **INTERPRETIVE TRAIL HIKE AT RANCOCAS**

**Sundays, March 4, April 1, and May 6**

1 to 2 p.m.

On the first Sunday of each month, join a NJ Audubon 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

## **CONNECT WITH NATURE SERIES**

Register in advance for all programs.

### **SALAMANDER SUNDAY**

**Sunday, March 25**

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Every spring like clockwork, these elusive amphibians emerge from hibernation as the days warm and the daylight extends. Females of the species migrate to a vernal pool or wetland to deposit their eggs, and the fascinating cycle of the next generation begins to unfold. The afternoon's activity will include a hike to search for the three species of salamanders that make Rancocas their home. Boots are provided or you can bring your own.

Cost: NJA members, \$7/person, \$15/family (limit 5); nonmembers, \$10/person, \$24/family (limit 5).

### **CELEBRATE EARTH DAY AT RANCOCAS**

**Sunday, April 15**

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Celebrate the 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. It's a time to thank the earth for its bounty and focus on what we need to do to conserve and protect our important resources. Through interactive activities and games such as "The Incredible Journey" and "Recycling Relay," children and adults will learn about the environment and how to live a "green" lifestyle. The afternoon will include a tour of Rancocas streams and Dragonfly pond, and demonstrations of backyard composting and rain barrels. This program is engaging for all ages.

Cost: NJA members, \$7/person, \$15/family (limit 5); nonmembers, \$10/person, \$24/family (limit 5).

### **BIRDS, BEES, AND BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR BACKYARD**

**Sunday, May 20**

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Take an afternoon tour of the Rancocas meadows and experience the colors of spring. A variety of flora and fauna can be found in these maintained habitats. With binoculars, field guides, and ID cards, identifying the common species is easy. Participants will also learn tips on creating a wildlife habitat to attract birds, bees, and butterflies to their own backyard. Loaner binoculars will be available.

Cost: NJA members, \$7/person, \$15/family (limit 5); nonmembers, \$10/person, \$24/family (limit 5).

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## **ADULT PROGRAMS AT RNC**

### **SPRING WARBLER ID WORKSHOP**

**Sunday, March 4**

2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Join Sandy Hook Bird Observatory Director and veteran naturalist Pete Bacinski as he presents a comprehensive workshop on ID-ing New Jersey migrant and resident warblers. Learn from a master. Visuals via a PowerPoint presentation; handouts provided. Presenter: Pete Bacinski.

Cost: \$15 for members, \$20 for nonmembers. Call 732-872-2500 for details and registration.

### **SPEAKING OF NATURE SERIES**

**Thursdays, March 8, April 12, and May 10**

7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Interested in nature? Looking for a new hobby? The Rancocas Nature Center will be hosting a series of evening presentations that focus on a variety of topics related to the natural world. Watch for details in the weekly email blast or call the center for information about topics and presenters. Please pre-register for this program.

Cost: free for members; nonmembers, \$5/person suggested donation.

### **SHORT WALKS WITH SANDRA KELLER**

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 are needed; the idea is to keep it simple. Only persistent rain cancels a walk. Call the center for directions to the site. Please arrive by 9:00 a.m.

#### **Pennington Park & Rancocas Greenway, Delanco**

**Sunday, April 22**

Meet at 9:00 a.m.

Visit one of the sites highlighted in the *Birding and Wildlife Trails* Burlington map. Pennington Park is accessed from Creek Road and offers trails with overlooks from which to view wildlife in varied habitats. The morning walk will also include the Rancocas Greenway spur that follows the Rancocas Creek.

Cost: \$7 for members, \$10 for nonmembers.

#### **Cooper River Park, Camden County**

**Sunday, May 27**

Meet at 9:00 a.m.

Cooper River Park encompasses 346 acres of urban preserved land. Its large, open water area is attractive to a variety of wildlife. The morning walk, during this period of spring migration, will follow the shoreline pathways that loop the main area of the park.

Cost: \$7 for members, \$10 for nonmembers.

### **TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING**

**Saturday, May 12**

Support New Jersey Audubon and the Rancocas Nature Center on the "Big Day!" Associate naturalist Sandra Keller, Barb Wiley, Rancocas teacher naturalist Becky Laboy, and past Teen Bird Club president Sarah Tanedo will be birding their prime area this year. Your support is needed. Interested in sponsoring a team? Please contact RNC for details.

### **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.

### **PHOTOGRAPHING WILDLIFE AT BARNEGAT**

**Sunday, March 4**

Meet at 10 a.m.

Join associate naturalist Steve Mattan at Barnegat to learn the tricks to photographing wildlife in the field. Bring your camera, lenses, and tripods to take full advantage of the day. Or, just tag along with binoculars and enjoy the diversity of late winter fauna at the shore.

Leader: Steve Mattan.

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

**EARLY MIGRANTS AT PEDRICKSTOWN**

**Saturday, March 17**

Meet at 9 a.m.

Join associate naturalist Lloyd Shaw as he “hunts” for ducks and other waterfowl, early shorebirds, and passerines in Salem County. Meet in Pedricktown. The day will include visits to Mannington Marsh and Featherbed Lane. This is a joint trip with SHBO.

Leader: Lloyd Shaw.

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

**SPRING BIRDING AT FORSYTHE NWR (BRIGANTINE)**

**Saturday, April 7**

Meet at 8 a.m.

Spring into the season by spending the day at one of the shore’s premiere birding spots. Forsythe is a great location for spotting early spring migrants, raptors, waterfowl, and gulls. This is a joint trip with SHBO.

Leader: Lloyd Shaw.

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

**ATLANTIC COUNTY PARK WITH LLOYD SHAW**

**Saturday, April 28**

Meet at 7:30 a.m.

Atlantic County Park has its share of resident and migrant passerines. Lloyd Shaw will lend his expertise, and it is sure to be a productive day for beginners and the experienced birder. This is a joint trip with SHBO.

Leader: Lloyd Shaw.

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

**WILDFLOWERS AT ASSUNPINK WMA**

**Saturday, May 5**

10:00 a.m. to mid-afternoon

Assunpink WMA in Monmouth County and the adjacent township of Roosevelt have a few hidden spots with an abundance of spring flowers. We will be looking for such species as Nodding trillium, Showy orchis, and Birdfoot violet in addition to more usual species.

Leader: Karl Anderson. Cost: \$15 for members, \$20 for nonmembers.

**WEEKDAY BIRDING AT SANDY HOOK**

**Tuesday, May 15**

Meet at 7:00 a.m.

Join birding guru Tom Boyle as he focuses on the arriving warblers and passerines on the tip of New Jersey at Sandy Hook. It’s sure to be a great day of birding. This is a joint trip with SHBO.

Leader: Tom Boyle

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

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**BURLINGTON COUNTY NATURAL SCIENCE CLUB**

NJ Audubon 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 7:30 p.m. For updates on meeting locations and presentation topics, visit the club’s Web site 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 Joey Baran, Hedy Bauer, John and Marilyn Courtney, Katie Dole, Laura Edwards, Blake Elkins, Bob Hall, Bill Holloway, Jean Jordan, Dave and John Lestino, Bob Lord, Steve Mattan, Mary and Bob Metrione, Ken Mitchell, Candy Myers, Abe Reuther, Diane Rothschild, Arline Spangler, Murray Stern, Laura Tanedo, Louise Tompkins, Mami Umemura, David White, Barbara Wiley, Bill Wiley, Al Wiley, and the Work Group.

With each season of *Center Focus*, Rancocas highlights the contributions of one of its volunteers. This issue focuses on Bob Lord's very generously donation of his time and expertise. Bob has the unique job of connecting with and coordinating the efforts of the Work Group, a local alternative high school. The group volunteers at Rancocas several mornings a month and they tackle assorted projects in the field and at the center. Bob also utilizes his design and construction skills to handle ongoing issues relating to facilities and trails. Thank you, Bob, for your expert help.