

A PUBLICATION OF
CHURCHVILLE NATURE CENTER

BUCKS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS & RECREATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Star Party Campfire
March 2 - 7:30 pm
- Spring Night Hike
Campfire, March 16 -
7:00 pm
- Waterfowl Watch Trip
March 25 - depart 8am
- Lenape Village Opens
for the Year, April 1 -
Sundays 1 to 4 pm
- Center is Closed for
Easter, April 8
- Migratory Marathon
Bird Count, May 12
- Beginners Canoe
Course, May 19 - 7am
- Water Gap Natural
History Hike, May 20 -
Departs 6:30 am
- Frog Trip in Pine
Barrens, June 2 -
Departs 5:30 pm
- Star Party Campfire
June 8 - 9:30 pm

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The Dragonfly

48 Years of Education & Preservation

VOLUME 43, NO. 1

SPRING 2012



Annual Wildflower Sale

April 28 & 29 ~ May 5 & 6 🌸 9:00 AM to 5:00PM



Member's Only

Preview Sale

April 27, 9 AM - 7 PM

Members will receive a special
discount coupon in the mail
prior to the members' day

Churchville Nature Center Specializes In

*Plants To Attract
Hummingbirds & Butterflies*

*Native Plants * Aquatic Plants*

Variety Of Herbs

*Drought Tolerant
Xeriscaping Plants*

Beautiful Hanging Baskets

Colorful Perennials

Knowledgeable Staff & Volunteers Available to Assist You
All Funds Raised Benefit The Churchville Nature Center And Its Education & Preservation Efforts

For More information Contact The Nature Center at
(215) 357-4005, churchvillenaturecenter@co.bucks.pa.us

2011 Volunteer of the Year

Fred Knight

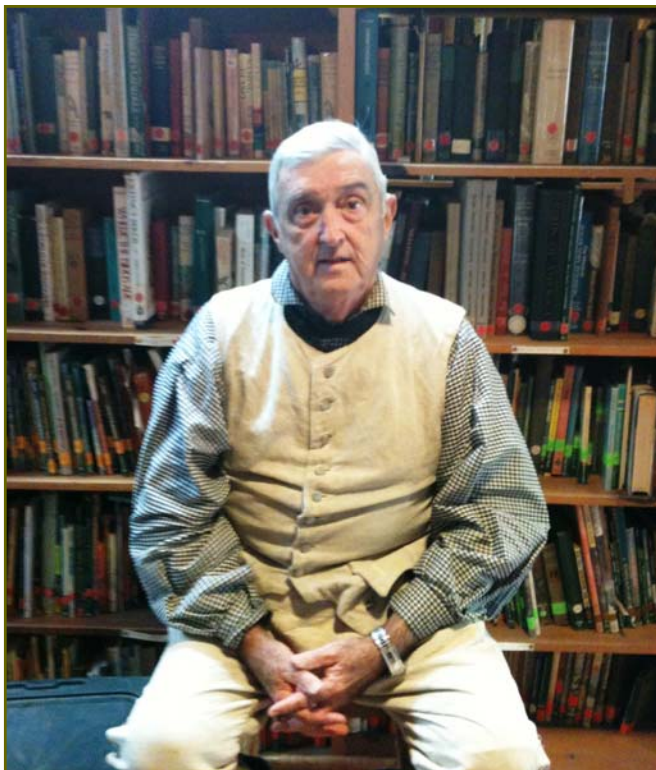
“The Many Faces of Fred”

Fred Knight is engaged in a variety of projects, both here at the center and in his community. He is always giving his personal touch, making whatever he does rewarding and fun.

Fred moved to Northeast Philadelphia in 1964 and met his wife Helen at the roller skating ring when he was 19 and she was 16. They dated for five years, when he went into the navy and was stationed in Beirut. Not wanting to miss his wedding day, Helen wrote to the admiral requesting he make it home for the up-coming ceremony. Happy to say he made it home in time. Together they had two sons, Raymond and Joseph, and have two granddaughters, Kaitlyn 8 and Rachael 6.

We think of Fred as part of the Churchville Nature Center family. He goes back to the 1970's when the center was first located in the farm house. Over the years Fred and Helen volunteered at one of our most popular fundraisers, the Cornell Pumpkin Festival. You could always recognize him, for he was always stationed at the Duck Pond wearing his famous duck hat and would flap his wings to all the children passing by.

Not a day goes by that he isn't juggling several projects at once. He has a long-time commitment of entertaining our children and their parents. For the past thirty-five years, on any given holiday, he would be dressed up as Uncle Sam, a bunny, or Jelly Belly. But he is most



noted for his connections to the Jolly Ole Elf, Santa Claus. Santa has always been a memorable experience here at the center and a cherished tradition. Having all those children sitting on his lap is a fantastic experience. When he is around there is always a contagious excitement that only he can generate.

Presently he is head custodian in the Horsham School District and participates with his son in the reenactments of the Revolutionary War, as a private, and the Civil War as a color sergeant carrying the flag, while his son is the company commander Captain. He is also part of the George Washington-crossing-the-Delaware reenactment on Christmas day.

We want to thank Fred for taking time out of his life to bring happiness to the families of the Churchville Nature Center and the community, and we want you to know how important you have been over the years. It is an honor having you as our 2011 Volunteer of the Year.

Building Expansion: Phase 1



Thank You Donors

We would like to thank all those who have made donations since our last newsletter

Annual Appeal

Eunice Adesman
Wayne & Barbara Anderson
Marge Bader
Carole Boag & Rhoda Marshall
Rena Bordonaro
Michael Borovicka
Michael J. & Sandra Bowdren
Kate Boyer
Jeanne & Jim Bray
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Peg Thatcher
Nancy Trent & Dave Head
John & Ann Van Eerden
Earl Wade
Carol Wengert & Bill Dockhorn
B. Lee Werner
David & Judith Zeff

Migratory Marathon

Eunice Adesman
James & Donna Kelly
Maryjane & Jerry McHugh
Gary A. & Regina Stopyra
Craig & Julie Tobias

Through The Eye Of The Dragonfly

Small Secret

By Marlin Corn, Naturalist

Most people would probably appreciate the beauty of a colorful display of woodland wildflowers, the regal flight of a soaring bald eagle, or the excitement of spying a red fox stalking prey in a winter meadow. Some people would appreciate the sight of a turtle basking on a log in a pond, or a frog sitting quietly in the nearby shallows. Few would actively seek out the more secretive forms of wildlife that remain hidden from most of us; cryptically colored sparrows flitting through brambles, or bats, owls, flying squirrels and other nocturnal creatures that can usually be seen only by venturing outdoors at night in search of them. Even fewer still would expend the energy to tromp through the forest and lift numerous logs and rocks, or slosh through a wetland during a rain storm on a late-winter night. However, as many dedicated nature enthusiasts know, these are the only ways to observe some of our most secretive, yet fascinating animals; salamanders. And some salamanders are harder to find than others. Of the ten salamanders species found in Bucks County, one of the least common is also our smallest; the diminutive four-toed salamander, *Hemidactylium scutatum*.

Averaging between two and three inches in total length, female four-toed salamanders are slightly larger than males. The head and cylindrical body is typically reddish brown in color, but often with lighter mottling and black spotting on the upper surface of the tail and legs. There is a noticeable constriction at the base of the tail. Males have a slightly longer snout, which is somewhat square in shape compared with the more rounded muzzle of the female. At first glance, a four-toed salamander might be mistaken for a similarly sized and colored redback salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*). The easiest way to tell the difference is to turn the salamander on its back. The underside of the redback salamander is grayish with fine white flecking; the belly of the four-toed salamander is brilliant blue-white with bold black spots. It is the only salamander in our region with a white venter. Another way to differentiate this species is by counting the toes on the hind feet. Their name comes from the fact that they have only four toes on all feet; most salamanders have five digits on the hind feet and four on the front.

Four-toed salamanders belong to the salamander family *Plethodontidae*, commonly referred to as the lungless salamanders, as they do not, in fact, have lungs. While all salamanders absorb varying degrees of oxygen through their skin, Plethodonts obtain *all* of their oxygen via cutaneous respiration and through the lining of the roof of the mouth. It is critical that the thin, permeable skin of salamanders stays moist in order to facilitate this oxygen exchange. Some salamanders live their entire lives in water, metabolizing oxygen from the water through their skin; but many species, such as the four-toed salamander,

spend most, or all of their lives on land. To avoid desiccation they spend their days under moist leaves, moss, decaying logs or other detritus on the forest floor, venturing out into the open only on moist nights.

Plethodonts are also unique among salamanders in their reproductive natural history. Most salamanders begin their lives in a larval form, similar to a tadpole but with external gills and a rudimentary pair of hind legs, hatching from eggs that have been laid in water. As they feed and grow they slowly undergo metamorphosis into a terrestrial form; developing legs, absorbing their gills, and the keel that borders the top and bottom of the tail during the aquatic phase.

Female Plethodonts lay their eggs on land and guard them until hatching. In some species, such as the redback salamander, the young hatch out looking exactly like miniature adults, completely bypassing the aquatic larval stage and metamorphosis. Four-toed salamanders hatch out of terrestrially laid eggs looking very much like adults, but with external gills, semi-developed feet, and a keel that runs down the entire length of the dorsum. Upon hatching they must enter water and lead a brief aquatic existence while their gills and keel are absorbed and their toes develop. For this reason, females always lay their eggs within a couple inches of the edge of a swamp, bog, vernal pool, slow-moving stream, or other quiet, fishless body of water. They prefer sphagnum moss for nesting because of its outstanding moisture-retaining quality, but will utilize other types of moss. The female generally lies on her back and deposits her sticky eggs on the underside of a moss clump overhanging, or within a couple inches of, water. As the young hatch and wriggle out of the eggs they fall into the water where they will live until metamorphosis is complete.

Four-toed salamanders reach sexual maturity after about two and a half years. Mating occurs from late-summer through the fall in their woodland habitat. Fertilized females overwinter and then migrate to the oviposition sites in spring. Incubation lasts anywhere between 38 and 60 days. As with all Plethodonts, females guard the eggs, but four-toed salamanders sometimes engage in communal nesting; several females may lay their eggs in the same location. This likely occurs where adequate oviposition sites are in short supply. In these situations not all females will remain with their eggs – in fact only one female may remain to guard all of the egg clusters of several mothers. As soon as the young have hatched and wriggled their way into their aquatic nurseries, the females migrate back to the upland woods.

Continued on Page 5

Through the Eye Of The Dragonfly

Continued From Page 4

Like all salamanders, four-toed salamanders are predators and eat only live prey – essentially any animal that is small enough for them to overpower and swallow, including many species of insects, spiders and ticks. In turn, they are preyed upon by a variety of larger spiders, amphibians, reptiles, birds and small mammals. As a defense mechanism, they have the ability to break off their tail at will. The dispatched tail will thrash about wildly, holding the attacker's attention and giving the salamander a chance to escape. Over time, a new tail will be regenerated.

While there are many animals that would like to make a meal of four-toed salamanders, the species faces greater threats. Like all amphibians, their thin, permeable skin makes them extremely sensitive to pollutants. Because they require two different types of habitat, they are heavily impacted by development and other types of habitat disturbances. Often, roads get built between their upland

and aquatic egg-laying sites, meaning they must make perilous road crossings in each direction. Each year hundreds of four-toed salamanders (and other aquatic-breeding amphibians) are unwittingly slaughtered on our roadways as they attempt to reach their breeding grounds. As a result, the species has greatly declined in many areas. For this reason the four-toed salamander is considered a species of concern in our state.

People can help protect four-toed salamanders and other amphibians by taking care while driving on rainy spring nights. Drive slowly and watch for small objects lying in the road; salamanders and frogs often appear as white or very light colored, when illuminated in the headlights. Help ensure that these tiny, mysterious creatures survive to delight and inspire future generations of those who can appreciate such subtle treasures of our natural world.



Four-toed Salamander, Hemidactylium scutatum.



Four-toed Salamander, venter.



Got Drugs?



What a strange question for a nature center to ask, right? But have you ever considered that prescription drugs are also a household hazardous waste? Besides being a possible danger to our family members, or even ourselves if not used correctly, EPA studies have detected pharmaceutical drugs in our *water supply*. Many of the townships in Bucks County have an answer - Free and anonymous medication disposal collection boxes at many of our local township buildings and police departments. If you have old or unused drugs you wish to safely dispose of, please contact the following municipalities for hours and regulations:

Bensalem Township Police
Hilltown Police Department
Newtown Township PD
Plumstead Township
Springfield Township PD
Warwick Township PD

Bucks County Courthouse
Lower Southampton Police
Northampton Township PD
Quakertown Borough PD
Upper Makefield PD
***Its Free *Its Safe**

Doylestown Police Department
New Britain Police Department
Penridge Regional PD
Richland Township PD
Upper Southampton PD
***Its Anonymous**

Churchville Nature Center's
Dragonfly Niche Gift Shop Sale Days

15% off
April 28 & 29, 9AM to 5PM

*We carry a wide variety of items for
 the nature lover in your family:
 bird seed, feeders, field guides, jewelry,
 children's books, children's toys,
 and many more gift items*



In conjunction with the Annual Wildflower Sale

Thank You

- Joel Peters for the donation of paper wasp nests and other natural history items
- John Chalikian for donating his skills & time for some professional electrical work
- Richard Hartnett for the donation of numerous deer antlers for our Lenape programs
- With thanks and gratitude to the Schnur Family Philanthropic Trust for their donation of \$5,000
- Churchville Bible Camp for their donation of \$435 and the Congregation of North and Southampton Reformed Church for their donation of \$1,075 for our Green Building Fund
- Mr & Mrs Jim Howard for their \$500 memorial donation to our new play area

Wish List

- We recycle used 6" plastic plant pots and plastic plant trays for our annual fundraising Wildflower Sale. Please drop them off next to the wooden barn
- A new or gently used point of sale cash register (the kind that can read bar codes)
- bricks and brick sized pavers
- heavy duty metal wheel barrels
- garden rakes
- heavy duty hand trowels
- hedge shears

Welcome New Members

We would like to spotlight folks who have joined us as new members of the Friends of Churchville Nature Center since the last issue of the "Dragonfly". Welcome to our family of *Friends*. Thank you for supporting the nature center, its goals, and the membership.

New Members

Nancy Bilheimer
 Stephen & Carol Cohen
 Brent Deisher
 Jennifer Durkin
 Michael Fleming
 Paul Gergel

Autumn Hatchell
 Allen Herman
 Anne Hood
 Lisa Jaffee
 Ike Osenberg
 Linda Painter

Cheryl Reardon
 Dolores Rizzo-Costantino
 Dr. Edward Rockel
 Rolle Family
 Diana Sherman
 Tara Shoemaker

Bob Smith
 Dana Stefanick
 Harry Swenson
 David Tattoni

Life Members

Bob & Lesley Bechtold
 George Belfield
 Kate Boyer
 Virginia Boyer
 Jeanne Burford
 Larice & James Burt
 John & Ann Byron
 Marlin & Joann Corn
 Doug Crompton
 Fred Crown & Christine Hoffman
 Marge Custer
 Patti Ann Cutler
 Andrew & Kristi DeSaro
 Laura Dittmeier-Schmidt

Robert & Ascinda Fliegel
 Carol Fitzpatrick
 Judy & Ken Foulke
 Pam & Herb Perkins-Frederick
 Arthur & Susan Friedman
 Sharon & Park Furlong
 John M. Gauker
 Mary George
 Beth Ann Gilbert
 Mary Ann Gilbert
 Michael S. Gross
 Alan Harvison
 Shaun & Sarah Hicks
 Lewis W. Hull
 Bob Hutchinson

Lon Jarman & Dee Wetzel
 James & Donna Kelly
 Patricia & George Komelasky
 Philip & Terri Layton
 Gloria & Robert Lechner
 John & Mary Jane Leonard
 Philip & Ann Lohr
 Stuart & Mary Lutzker
 Mary & Tom Lynskey
 Janet V. Mackiewicz
 Michael & Alice McAllister
 Charles Medveck
 Linda Messatzzia
 Terry & Dan Nagle
 Thomas and Rachel Naulty

John & Eileen Nelson
 Diane Neumann
 Norm & Katy Patten
 Marilyn & John Pawling
 Scott Petersen
 Roy & Gail Reinard
 Dr. & Mrs. Theodore Robinson
 Harry Rothwell
 Blair & Kimberly Ruch-Alegant
 Steve Schnur
 White Eagle & Wahupa C.
 Scott
 Diane & Ron Sears
 Leigh & Deborah Shull
 Joseph Sodomini

Albert Spendlove
 Michael & Carolyn Sterthous
 Faith McKee & Chris Stieber
 Gary & Regina Stopyra
 Mildred & Frank Stopyra
 Peg Thatcher
 Diane Thompson
 William A. Thompson
 Frederick G. Tilduster, Jr
 The Turner Family
 Rick & Donna Tweed
 Harriet & Albert Unrath
 Jim & Sue Wartenberg
 Lucile B. Wyncoop
 Nick & Pat Zahn

Schedule of Events

March

- Fri, 2nd *Star Party Campfire – 7:30 pm
 Sat, 3rd *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 Sat, 10th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 *Basket Making Class - 1:00 pm
 Sun, 11th *Naturalist Program "Ramblings Afield" – 2:00 pm
 Fri, 16th *Spring Night Hike & Campfire Program -7:00 pm
 Sat, 17th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 Sun, 18th *Naturalist Program "Wake Up: Its Spring!" – 2:00 pm
 Sat, 24th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 *Neshaminy Canoe Trip – Departs 8:45 am
 Sat, 24th – Sat, 31st * Photo Contest Display – 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
 Sun, 25th *Spring Waterfowl Trip – Departs 8:00 am
 Sat, 31st *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 *Clean-up Day – 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

April

- Sun, 1st *Lenape Village Opens for the Year – 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 *Naturalist Program "April Fools" – 2:00 pm
 Sat, 7th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 Sun, 8th *Center is Closed for Easter Holiday
 Sat, 14th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 Sun, 15th *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 *Naturalist Program "Early Wild Edible Plants" – 2:00 pm
 Sat, 21st *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 Sun, 22nd *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 Fri, 27th *Members Only Wildflower Sale – 9:00am to 7:00 pm
 Sat, 28th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 *Delaware River Canoe Trip – Departs 8:00 am
 *Annual Wildflower Sale – 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
 Sun, 29th *Annual Wildflower Sale – 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
 *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 4:00 pm

May

- Sat, 5th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 *Wildflower Sale – 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
 Sun, 6th *Wildflower Sale – 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
 *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 *Naturalist Program "Spring Wildflower Walk" – 2:00 pm
 Sat, 19th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 *Basic Tandem Canoe Training – 7:00 am
 Sun, 20th *Delaware Water Gap Spring Nature Hike – Departs 6:30 am
 *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 Sat, 26th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 *Naturalist Program "Aquatic Study" – 2:00 pm
 Sun, 27th *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 4:00 pm

June

- Sat, 2nd *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 *Frog Safari Natural History Trip – Departs 5:30 pm
 Sun, 3rd *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 *Naturalist Program "Poisonous Plants" – 2:00 pm
 Fri, 8th *Star Party Campfire – 9:30 pm
 Sat, 9th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 *Moving Water Tandem Canoe Course – 7:45 am
 Sun, 10th *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 *Naturalist Program "Insect Discovery" – 2:00 pm
 Sat, 16th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 Sun, 17th *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 9:00 am
 *Naturalist Program "Terrific Trees" – 2:00 pm
 Fri, 22nd *Lightning Bug Campfire " – 8:00 pm
 Sat, 23rd *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am
 Sun, 24th *Lenape Village Tours – 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 Sat, 30th *Bird Walk – 7:00 to 9:00 am

Organizations At The Churchville Nature Center

Bucks County Aquarium Society

Meets the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM. For more information, contact Carol Ross at (215) 822-5669, RedDragon@aol.com, or visit the web at www.bcasonline.com.

Bucks County Orchid Society

Meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM. No July or August meeting. For more information, contact Alan Block at (215) 860-8022, e-mail to Alan_Block@hotmail.com, or www.buckscountyorchidsociety.org.

BucksMont Organic Gardeners

Meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00-9:30 PM for meetings and field trips. For more information, contact Joy Snyder (215) 441-4596, or RNJSnyder@aol.com.

Bucks County Single Volunteers

Meets every Tuesday at 6:45 PM. For more information, contact svbc411@gmail.com, or visit the web at www.svbucks.org.

Churchville Eco Explorers 4-H Club

Meets the fourth Monday of the month at 6:45 to 8:30 PM. No August or December meeting. For more information contact Judy Foulke at (215) 675-2798, or by e-mail at Ivylamb@aol.com.

Churchville Photography Club

Meets the first and third Monday of the month at 7:30 pm. No July or August meeting. For more information, call Scott Petersen at (215) 598-8447, e-mail to lpetersen@verizon.net or on the web at www.churchvillephoto.net.

Delaware Valley Woodcarvers Association

Meets every Tuesday at noon for "Whittle-A-While" and the Fourth Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM. No July meeting. For more information, call Joe Dubosky at (215) 547-6393, e-mail to CarverJoe@aol.com.

Society For Creative Anachronism: Shire of Buckland Cross

Meets the Second Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. No August meeting. For more information e-mail Ray Becker at rusic_adornments@yahoo.com or visit the organizations sites at bucklandcross.eastkingdom.org & www.sca.org.

Species Spotlight

Celebrating the Diversity of Species within the Churchville Greenway Watershed

Eastern Phoebe

Sayornis phoebe

The Eastern Phoebe is a small bird which belongs to the group of birds known as “flycatchers”. Flycatchers are mainly insect eaters and often will catch insects on the wing. Their common habit is to perch on a branch, then fly out erratically, catch an insect, and fly back to the perch again.

The Eastern Phoebe is slightly larger than a sparrow and the most common and recognizable flycatcher in our region. Its plumage is gray-brown above, with a white throat, dirty gray breast and buffish under-parts, which become white during the breeding season. The Phoebe is easily distinguished in the field because it almost always has a habit of pumping its tail up and down. It also has a distinctive call, which sounds like a throaty “fee-bee”, from which it gets the name “Phoebe”.

The Eastern Phoebe is considered one of our harbingers of spring, as it is one of the first birds to arrive in spring migration, usually by mid March. They start nesting soon after, in April. They usually leave our area by October sometime, spending their winters in the southern US, Mexico and Central America.

Phoebes build an open cup nest with a mud base that is mixed with moss and lined with grass. It is usually cemented or placed in rock cliff crevices, underneath roof overhangs on a wall, or under bridges and other such areas. We have had them nesting every year under our building eaves or our woodshed or springhouse. They usually have two broods per year. Although the phoebes are mainly insect eaters, they will occasionally take small fruit, especially during the colder months.

The Eastern Phoebe was actually the first banded bird in North America. In 1804 John James Audubon attached a piece of silver thread to the Phoebe’s leg to track its return in successive years. Because the Phoebe uses bridges, buildings and other man-made structures to make its nest, it has done very well in areas that have been developed.

Come this March all of our local birdwatchers are sure to be keeping watch for the first Eastern Phoebe to be seen. At Churchville Nature Center that has become a tradition. We usually have our first sighting around March 8, and every year they return almost exactly to the day.

We invite you to come out this spring for a short walk around our buildings and into the field. You will almost surely have the opportunity to get acquainted with our resident Eastern Phoebe and hear a sound that has truly announced that spring has returned: fee-bee...



Thank You, Corporate Partners & Supporters

These local businesses have chosen to support the Churchville Nature Center and its mission. Please join us in extending our thanks.

Bear Creations ❖ Bucks County Aquarium Society ❖ Bucks County Orchid Society
 Bucks-Mont Organic Gardeners ❖ Churchville Eco-Explorers 4-H Club ❖ Churchville Photography Club
 Four Lanes End Garden Club ❖ Northampton Township Historical Society ❖ Northampton Township Lions Club
 PA-Delaware Valley Woodcarvers Association ❖ SCA - Shire of Buckland Cross
 Single Volunteers of Bucks County ❖ This Is Your Earth ❖ Warrington Garden Club

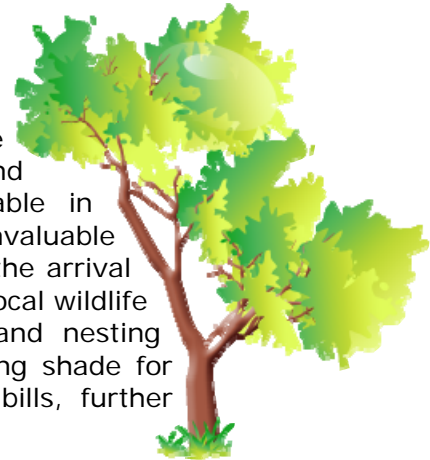


Eco-Action Page

A Column Designed to Inform and Inspire
About the Many Ways You Can Help Protect Our Environment

Healthy Habitat Habits: Plant A Tree For You and Me

The phrase may sound almost cliché, but planting a tree is one of the single most important ways to help both the local and global ecology of our planet. Not only are trees invaluable in sequestering enormous amounts of carbon, but they are also invaluable to our local wildlife. Our region was entirely forested prior to the arrival of colonists, and trees provide the type of habitat most of our local wildlife evolved to become most dependant on for food, shelter and nesting habitat. Strategically locating a new tree will provide cooling shade for your home in the summer, helping to reduce your energy bills, further reducing your carbon footprint.



Environmental Organization Spotlight

In each issue of ECO-ACTION we will spotlight an organization dedicated to protecting our environment.

This issue:

Fauna and Flora International

Fauna & Flora International's work spans the globe, with over 100 projects in nearly 40 countries, mostly in the developing world. Their vision is a sustainable future for the planet, where biodiversity is effectively conserved by the people who live closest to it, supported by the global community. They stand up for biodiversity and aim to show just how relevant it is to all of those who share the planet. They act to conserve threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, choosing solutions that are sustainable, based on sound science and taking into account human needs.

Contact :

Contact Flora and Fauna
International:
1720 N Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20036
202-375-7766
www.fauna-flora.org



Consumer Activism Corner

Today's Activist Tip: **Break Out the Bamboo**

Bamboo is a far more sustainable natural resource than wood because it grows very quickly; it is considered the world's fastest growing plant. Some species can grow three feet per day and can be harvested after only three years. Trees can take anywhere from 8 to 50 years before they are ready for harvest. Bamboo is now being used as a stylish alternative to wood for floors, sinks, art frames, cutting boards, bowls, plates, utensils, trays, fencing, furniture, countertops, and many other household items. The harvesting of bamboo is much less detrimental to wildlife than the harvesting of trees and does not cause the soil degradation that is associated with logging. Bamboo should not be used as a landscape plant in our region, however; it is an extremely aggressive, invasive species in North America.

Christmas Bird Count Results

It was an exciting count day with CNC's 2011 Christmas Bird Count Team on December 17. Our team this year welcomed 22 participants and we had a high species count of 64 for the day which was the highest species number in many years. Overall the group counted 4,786 individual birds. Highlights of the day were Red-shouldered Hawk, Bufflehead Duck, Greater Scaup Duck, Common Snipe and a first time CNC Christmas Bird Count record of a Pileated Woodpecker.

CNC's next scheduled bird count/census will take place on Saturday May 12 for our Annual Migratory Bird Marathon. Call the Center to sign up.

Bird Count Team Members

Marcia Angermann
George Belfield
Marlin Corn
Vince DeAntoniis
Brent Deisher
Sharon Furlong

Shaun Hicks
Bernadette Hritz
Dianne Hritz
Jacqueline Hritz
Jim Hritz
Lucy Hritz

Molly Hritz
Karen Jim
Butch Lishman
Dwight Molotsky
Casey Setash
Kathy Setash

Chris Stieber
David Tattoni
Richard VanAkcer
Nick Zahn

Species Seen (64)

Snow Goose (White)
Canada Goose
American Black Duck
Mallard
Green-winged Teal
Greater Scaup
Bufflehead
Hooded Merganser
Common Merganser
Pied-billed Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Blue Heron
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Killdeer
Common Snipe
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Rock Pigeon (Rock Dove/
Pigeon)
Mourning Dove
Eastern Screech-Owl

Great Horned Owl
Belted Kingfisher
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Blue Jay
American Crow
Fish Crow
Crow (sp)
Carolina Chickadee
Chickadee (sp.)

Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Carolina Wren
Winter Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
Eastern (Rufous-sided)
Towhee

Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow



Migratory Bird Marathon
May 12, 2012

MAKE A DONATION!
MAKE A PLEDGE!
JOIN THE TEAM!

Support the Churchville Nature Center through this annual Migratory Marathon Spring event.

Experienced and beginner birders are welcome

For more information, contact CNC Director, Chris Stieber at (215) 357-4005 ext. 11 or cgstieber@co.bucks.pa.us

Dragonfly Niche Gift Shop Spotlight

How to Choose Bird Seed

There is a wide variety of bird seed for the bird enthusiast to choose from, sold at a variety of local places, including here at CNC's Dragonfly Niche Gift Shop. But how do you choose what's best for the birds that you want to attract to your home, as well as what's best for your budget. The primary seed of choice is sunflower. Conversely, the worst thing you can put out for birds is a cheap mix, which is often full of inexpensive filler, such as red millet. With bird seed, like most everything, you get what you pay for. At CNC we take pride in offering a good quality seed, including our Audubon mix (which is produced exclusively for nature centers).

- ☞ **Black Oil Sunflower:** Birds need a high calorie diet, and no seed provides that more than black oil sunflower. It has a thinner shell and larger kernel than its counterpart the striped sunflower. It also has a large variety of birds that prefer it; Cardinal, Chickadee, Mourning Dove, Finches, Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, etc. The downside is that squirrels also love sunflower as well, so a squirrel-resistant feeder may be needed. Sunflower is best used in a tube or hopper feeder
- ☞ **Mixed Seed:** With a mixture of seeds such as sunflower, peanuts, cracked corn and white proso millet, a mixed seed can be a great way of attracting a variety of songbirds, but be careful what you choose. Many inexpensive mixes are packed full of "fillers" such as golden and red millet, flax and more. Be sure to check the package for ingredients. Here at CNC we have a special Audubon mix that our supplier has created just for nature centers. Since the cracked corn and millet are favorites of ground-feeding birds, it's best used in a platform or tray feeder.
- ☞ **Peanuts/Peanut Hearts:** Peanuts are loved by Blue Jays, Chickadees, Titmice Woodpeckers and more and can be put out in a small feeder or mixed with sunflower. The down-side is that it is also loved by squirrels, so again, a squirrel-resistant feeder may be needed.
- ☞ **Safflower:** Safflower is a great alternative seed for those who are having problems with squirrels and less desirable birds such as starlings and grackles. Safflower is considered an acceptable seed by the popular feeder birds such as Cardinals Chickadees and native Sparrows, but disliked by those animals that you don't want. Like sunflower, it is best used in a tube or hopper feeder.
- ☞ **Thistle/Nyjer:** Thistle, or Nyjer seed, is a small, black, rice-size seed that is loved by House Finches, Gold Finches and Pine Siskin. Due to its size, it requires a specialty feeder with small holes or a mesh "sock" bag. If you want to use thistle to attract only Gold Finches, then you will need a special "upside down" tube feeder with the holes below the perch. Gold Finch, unlike house sparrows, will feed while hanging upside down.
- ☞ **Suet:** Suet is used primarily to attract woodpeckers, although chickadees, nuthatches, brown creepers, Carolina wrens and others will also feed at suet cakes. Suet is rendered beef fat that is poured into cakes. Most often a mixture of seeds or dried fruit is added. Seeded suet is the first choice, but if you have a problem with squirrels in your suet, a pure cake can be used. These are placed out in cage feeders or mesh bags during the colder months. We don't suggest putting it out in the summer since the fat will get runny and can get rancid.



The seeds featured above are those that are most popular, but there are also other varieties on the market such as patio mixes which are shell-less. Whatever you choose, be sure to watch for fillers, excess "scrap" and shells in the bag. Regularly clean your feeders with a mixture of hot water and white vinegar; keep your stored seed dry to prevent mold, don't store feed in your house since it can attract rice weevils during the warmer months that can get into your other dry goods; and regularly rake unused seed and shells from your feeding station that can breed mold and bacteria harmful to wildlife. But most of all we hope you enjoy feeding and watching the birds!

THE DRAGONFLY NEWSLETTER

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Closed Monday

Trails open

sunup to sundown every day

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Our mission ...

... is to instill an awareness and appreciation of the natural world in all people through education, and to promote responsible environmental stewardship with a commitment to the preservation of resources and wildlife habitat.



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48 Years of Education & Preservation

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