

Palisades

NATURE NOTES



Deer enclosure forest



Deer-ravaged forest

Notes from the Naturalist

IT IS SAID THAT A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS. WELL, MAYBE NOT. THE PICTURE ON THE LEFT SHOWS THE forest that now exists in Greenbrook within a very small area that was fenced off from the white-tailed deer in the spring of 2010. The photo on the right is the area immediately outside of the deer enclosure, which has not been protected. See a difference? So that's 52 words. Case closed. Or at least it should be. Unfortunately for some people, it isn't. And it's a story that needs to be told and retold until it sinks in.

When I first joined Greenbrook back in 1983, the entire sanctuary looked like the picture on the left. Shrubs – mainly maple-leaf viburnum – and tree saplings bordered all the trails. Wildflowers were abundant beginning with the ephemerals of early spring, through the summer and into the fall when the goldenrods and asters bloomed. There were some non-native invasive plants like Asiatic bittersweet, Japanese honeysuckle and garlic mustard but they were mainly confined to sunny trail edges and disturbed areas. That all began to change in the late 80's when the white-tailed deer population began to explode in our area and by the early 2000's the forest landscape was drastically changed.

To the untrained eye, most areas of Greenbrook do look

green. And in fact there is an abundance of certain ferns and grasses. They are there because the deer don't find them to be appetizing. In other areas the understory (and all the species that previously occupied it) is completely lacking. Native plant diversity is very low while the number of non-native plant species (also unpalatable to the deer) like wineberry, Japanese stiltgrass, mile-a-minute and mulitflora rose continues to grow.

But there is hope. The number of deer in Greenbrook is lower than it's been for many years. Over the past two winters we have managed to move many of them out of the sanctuary into the forest to our north. This past spring we observed more native trout lilies and Solomon's seal than we have in many seasons. Jack-in-the-pulpit seems to be making a comeback and in many areas we are seeing small maple-leaf viburnums – once the most abundant shrub in the sanctuary – poised to make a comeback if given the chance. This will not happen if even a small herd of deer is allowed to remain in Greenbrook. A small herd will very quickly become a large herd without any natural predators (wolves & mountain lions) left in Bergen County. That is why it is so important to support the efforts of Greenbrook Sanctuary and other nature centers in the area to restore our ecologically

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American mink with the catch of the day

Photo by Ken Habermann



Young copperhead snake

Photo by Sandy Bonardi

Notes from the Naturalist CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

unbalanced forests by reducing the deer population by whatever means necessary. If you would like to help, join us for a deer drive on Sunday, November 18th. Details are in the almanac.

In addition to observing more spring wildflowers, the bird migration was pretty good, although as usual, it was cloudy for most of our early morning bird walks resulting in less than optimal viewing conditions. Our Big Day Bird Count on May 12 was done in spite of a light, on-and-off rain throughout the day and resulted in a very respectable 84 species seen or heard in the sanctuary. But the highlight of the migration occurred the day before, during an early morning walk. The group was at Arboretum Point. Ken noticed a flash of red in a distant tulip tree and immediately thought “rose-breasted grosbeak?” But as the bird came into full view, both Ken and Steve Quinn yelled, “It’s a red-headed woodpecker!” This bird is rare in the Northeast (very rare in Greenbrook) and is listed as threatened in the state of New Jersey.

Several members have also observed our newest listed species in Greenbrook, the American mink. Ken was able to photograph one as it carried dinner – a very large chain pickerel – back to its den on May 6th. He was also lucky enough to spot a red fox in Fair Field on May 16th. I, on the other hand, seemed to have more luck with snakes this year. On May 31st I spotted a beautiful little Eastern milk snake near the pond. On June 8th, it was a large Black rat snake near the outhouse. While doing trail work on B trail near Green Brook on July 13th, I noticed a very young Northern copperhead, still with its bright yellow tail, moving through the leaf litter. This was particularly gratifying since copperhead sightings have been few in recent years. But where there’s a baby, there’s a mom and dad. Good news for me (although admittedly not for some of you).

Overall, the number of butterfly species observed in the sanctuary seems to be down a bit this summer, except for the monarchs who appear to be having a good year in the Northeast. I have seen them almost daily both at Greenbrook and on my milkweeds at home.

On a very hot, humid day in early August, I took a walk down to the dam. The restoration project that we undertook at that site 3 summers ago has matured into a mini-meadow consisting largely of native grasses, Black-eyed Susans, horsemint, blue vervain, common milkweed, New York aster and a few purple coneflowers. I reflected back on what an undertaking it was for Ken and me to keep the newly planted and seeded site watered during the drought that first summer. But every second of the effort was worth it, for what greeted me that day was an incredible array of insects – grasshoppers, bees, wasps, crickets, damselflies, dragonflies – hopping and flying everywhere I looked, while two monarch butterflies bounced from milkweed plant to milkweed plant, laying eggs. I have not observed so much insect activity in one spot in a very long time, which only proves that if you plant native plants, the insects will come (we do have to spray this area with deer repellent on a regular basis to keep them from devouring some of the plants). So on this August day, when I would normally be kvetching about the heat and humidity, I actually smiled at the sight of so much diversity. If only everyone could understand its importance.

– SANDY BONARDI *Naturalist/Director*

AUTUMN 2018 ALMANAC

NO PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR PROGRAMS UNLESS NOTED. **Call 201-784-0484 for weather-related cancellation information.**
Guided walks in Greenbrook **Sundays** at 2:00 PM (except where noted). All other walks will be led by Sandy Bonardi unless otherwise stated.

- **Saturday, September 15** — 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Hawk Watch

Join us at Arboretum Point as we scan the skies for migrating hawks on their southward journey.

- **Sunday, September 16** — 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Hawk Watch

See September 15 for details. NO 2 PM WALK SCHEDULED

- **Wednesday, September 19** — 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Hawk Watch

See September 15 for details.

- **Saturday, September 22** — 8:30 – 9:30 AM

Tai Chi at the Pavilion

The first in a series of 4 classes with Nancy Hoffman. Rain or shine. Wear loose clothing & soft pliable shoes.

- **Saturday, September 22** — 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Hawk Watch

See September 15 for details.

- **Saturday, September 29** — 8:30 – 9:30 AM

Tai Chi at the Pavilion

See September 22 for details.

- **Sunday, September 30** — NOON – 3:00 PM

Visitors' Day

NO 2 PM WALK SCHEDULED

This open house is an opportunity for non-members to visit the sanctuary. Call 201-784-0484 for more information.

- **Saturday, October 6** — 8:30 – 9:30 AM

Tai Chi at the Pavilion

See September 22 for details.

- **Sunday, October 7** — 2:00 PM

72nd Annual Meeting & Picnic at the Pavilion

Join us at the Pavilion for organizational updates, sanctuary news, elections and a picnic lunch. RSVP before October 1st at 201-784-0484 or at 2greenbrook@gmail.com. This event is open to Greenbrook members only.

- **Saturday, October 13** — 8:30 – 9:30 AM

Tai Chi at the Pavilion

See September 22 for details.

- **Saturday, October 13** — 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Hawk Watch

See September 15 for details.

- **Saturday, October 20** — 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Book Discussion

A discussion of the book *Fields of Sun and Grass* by John Quinn. Light refreshments will be served.

- **Saturday, October 27** — 9:00 AM – NOON

Volunteer Day at the Bog

We will be thinning out some of the vegetation in the bog. Muddy conditions. Wear old clothes and bring work gloves. Meet at the Visitors' Center in Greenbrook at 9 AM.

- **Saturday, November 10** — 10:00 AM – NOON

Fall Seeds & Fruits

- **Sunday, November 18** — 8:00 AM – NOON

Volunteer Day Deer Drive

Help us move a few deer out of the sanctuary. Good hiking skills required. Wear bright clothing. Please register by calling 201-784-0484 or emailing 2greenbrook@gmail.com.

NO 2 PM WALK SCHEDULED

- **Sunday, November 25**

Rain date for deer drive. See November 18 for details.

Big Day Bird Count • MAY 12, 2018 • 84 SPECIES SEEN OR HEARD IN THE SANCTUARY

Double-crested cormorant	Hairy woodpecker	Tufted titmouse	Chestnut-sided warbler	Canada warbler
Canada goose	Northern flicker	White-breasted nuthatch	Magnolia warbler	Scarlet tanager
Wood duck	Pileated woodpecker	Carolina wren	Black-throated blue warbler	Song sparrow
Mallard	Eastern wood pewee	House wren	Yellow-rumped warbler	Lincoln's sparrow
Osprey	Great crested flycatcher	Ruby-crowned kinglet	Black-throated green warbler	Swamp sparrow
Bald eagle	Eastern kingbird	Blue-gray gnatcatcher	Blackburnian warbler	White-throated sparrow
Red-tailed hawk	Yellow-throated vireo	Veery	Prairie warbler	Northern cardinal
Peregrine falcon	Blue-headed vireo	Swainson's thrush	Bay-breasted warbler	Rose-breasted grosbeak
Wild turkey	Warbling vireo	Wood thrush	Blackpoll warbler	Indigo bunting
Solitary sandpiper	Red-eyed vireo	American robin	Black & white warbler	Red-winged blackbird
Spotted sandpiper	Blue jay	Gray catbird	American redstart	Common grackle
Ring-billed gull	American crow	Northern mockingbird	Worm-eating warbler	Brown-headed cowbird
Great black-backed gull	Common raven	Blue-winged warbler	Ovenbird	Orchard oriole
Mourning dove	Tree swallow	Tennessee warbler	Northern waterthrush	Baltimore oriole
Chimney swift	Northern rough-winged swallow	Nashville warbler	Louisiana waterthrush	House finch
Red-bellied woodpecker	Barn swallow	Northern parula warbler	Common yellowthroat	American goldfinch
Dowry woodpecker	Black-capped chickadee	Yellow warbler	Wilson's warbler	

GREENBROOK SANCTUARY



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Send your e-mail address to Greenbrook@njpalisades.org.

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Membership entitles you to join Greenbrook Sanctuary's online community on Meetup.com.

View pictures, calendar of events and more. Email 2greenbrook@gmail.com or call Membership Director

Mike Gallo with any online questions, 201.280.0160. Also *Like* Greenbrook on Facebook and Twitter.

Palisades NATURE NOTES

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Join Us.

THIS FORM IS FOR NEW MEMBERS ONLY.

Yes, I want to become a member of Greenbrook Sanctuary.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$ 40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship | \$ 250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household | \$ 60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member | \$ 1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor | \$ 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization | \$ 50 |

This is a gift membership given by:

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Please make checks payable to: PNA, PO Box 155, Alpine, NJ 07620, or join on our web site.