

CLOSTER NATURE CENTER NEWS

P.O. BOX 80, CLOSTER NJ 07624 closternaturecenter.org

By the pond on Ruckman Road

DECEMBER 2020

DECEMBER EVENTS AND PROGRAMS:

Hiking, exploring, and enjoying nature with Naturalist Marc Gussen: a great way to accent online and at-home learning! We are keeping our class size to a maximum of 9 kids, mask wearing is mandatory. These outside-only programs will be for one hour over the winter months. It is imperative that our students dress properly for the weather, as we will be outside for the full hour program. Layering clothing is essential. If severe weather is predicted, we may need to reschedule classes.

December After School Programs:

1st - 3rd Grade

\$60/3 day session for Members

\$75/3 day session Non-Members

Mondays, 1:30 - 2:30pm Dec. 7th, 14th, and 21st

Tuesdays, 3:30 - 4:30pm Dec. 8th, 15th, and 22nd

Wednesdays, 1:30 - 2:30pm Dec. 9th, 16th, and January 6th

Thursdays, 3:30 - 4:30pm Dec. 10th, 17th, and January 7th

Fridays, 1:30 - 2:30pm Dec. 11th, 18th, and January 8th

4th - 7th Grade

\$60/3 day session for Members

\$75/3 day session Non-members

Mondays, 3:30 - 4:30pm Dec. 7th, 14th, and 21st

Tuesdays, 1:30 - 2:30pm Dec. 8th, 15th, and 22nd

Wednesdays, 3:30 - 4:30pm Dec. 9th, 16th, and January 6th

Thursdays, 1:30 - 2:30pm Dec. 10th, 17th, and January 7th

Fridays, 3:30 - 4:30pm Dec. 11th, 18th, and January 8th

Holiday Break Science Classes

December 28th - 31st, Monday - Thursday

Need something fun and educational for the kids to do during the holiday break? We'll have four days of nature exploration and discovery here at the Closter Nature Center! It is imperative that kids dress properly for the weather, as we will be outside for the full hour program. Layering clothing is essential. If severe weather is predicted, we may need to reschedule classes.

\$80/week for Members

\$100/week for Non-members

December 28th - 31st, Monday - Thursday

1st - 3rd Grade 10:00am - 11:00am

4th - 7th Grade 11:30am - 12:30pm

1st - 3rd Grade 1:30pm - 2:30pm

Christmas Bird Count – Get to Know Your Winter Neighbors: The Birds in Your Yard

On Saturday, December 19th, from 10 AM to 1 PM, the Nature Center will host an "Open Porch" for backyard birders—an opportunity to drop by the cabin by the pond and join others in observing and identifying the birds that are common to Closter throughout the winter.

These birds are bright bits of outdoor color, energy, and activity, while we stay snug in our homes. Bring binoculars if you have them. We have some

to loan, as well as a chance to look through a powerful telescope as if the bird is sitting on your hand! Stop by and get to know these perky wonders of winter survival.

Naturalist's Notes:

When scheduling science programs and hikes, I am often asked to focus on specific topics.

Since most of the Nature Center's educational programs are designed to support the curriculum of our local schools, I am more than happy to zero in on things like ecology or animal adaptations, but when things are left up to me, I leave it up to nature! More often than not, momentary gifts from the forest can be better than hours of painstaking preparation.

The most recent example occurred last week when I had "planned" to talk about how animals make it through the winter. My outline about migration, hibernation, brumation and diapause went out the window just five minutes into our hike, when a pileated woodpecker flew over heads and landed in a dead ash tree a hundred feet away. The woodpecker proceeded to peck away at the fragile bark of the dead tree, securing its dinner of dormant insects. Voila! My lesson for the day.

I couldn't have planned it better myself. The whole show lasted about three minutes, but we got several chances to see it fly, land, and eat. Being so large, conspicuous, and common, you would think that we would see these birds on every hike- but no, they can be a bit tricky to find. I guess we were lucky that day.

Actually, we were lucky *and* ready to see what the forest had to show us. Being ready for and finding the gifts that nature offers is a major facet of the art of nature observation and appreciation that I try to instill in all of my students. This holiday season, keep in mind that nature has wonderful presents for all of us. All we have to do is get outside, open our eyes and ears and be ready to receive them!

Cute Kid's Quote

On a brisk fall day, I asked some 1st and 2nd graders how animals make it through the winter. Before I even finished with my question, a bundled-for-the-Arctic little fellow barked out,
"Migranation"

--Marc Gussen

END OF YEAR GIVING and THANK YOU

The Closter Nature Center would like to thank the many families and individuals who support our environmental stewardship and education programming through their generous donations. During this challenging year punctuated by Covid-19, we have continued our work, including ongoing field research and vital fence maintenance work as part of our Forest Stewardship project. We have also continued to offer afternoon educational programs and managed a robust summer session. All of our educational programs strive to get children and adults reconnected with Nature and disconnected from digital devices! The Closter Nature Center needs your support to expand our program offerings at the Nature Center.

Please consider a donation to the Closter Nature Center in your year-end giving plans.

You can give either by going online
to <https://closternaturecenter.org/donate-now/>
OR by sending a check to Closter Nature Center,
P.O. Box 80, Closter NJ, 07624.

We are a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your tax – deductible donation will help support our programming, our facility, and stewardship of our 136-acre tract of forested woodlands. **"Thank You" for your support!**

**Our grateful thanks to these and other donors
who support the Closter Nature Center:**

NVE Bank: \$10,000 donation that supported the CNC's summer and fall Environmental Education Program.

Vicki Amatai

Jeanne Baer

Nancy and Robert Barnes

Gay and Mary Mayer

The Mayer Family Foundation

Janine Micera

Beth Ravit

Jennifer Rothschild

Dolores Witko

The Thorbjarnarson Family

(in memory of John and Bjorn Thorbjarnarson)

*Several anonymous donors, as well

**Important Native Species Preserve Update,
and Call for Volunteers**

The fierce winds that blew through the area over the weekend of November 15th caused significant damage to the fencing around two of the three deer exclosures in our preserve. The exclosures, which are an important part of the CNC's Forest Stewardship program, are designed to keep deer out of designated areas to determine what impact deer browse has on the forest's understory. Similar areas inside and outside the exclosures have been marked off and are being compared as part of a long-term

study to assess overall growth and to identify plant species present in each.

Several trees felled by the wind crashed atop the eight-foot fences around the Red and Blue exclosures, knocking down more than 100 feet at the Red and 75 feet at the Blue. Closter Nature Center Trustees Elizabeth Ravit and Tom Golodik, naturalist Marc Gussen, and volunteers Rupert Bowen and Sarah Bowen worked in extremely swampy conditions on November 16th and 17th to remove the downed trees and fully repair the breaks in the fence.

CNC members who would like to assist in the monitoring and repair of this important fencing project can make their interest known by filling out the form on the “**Volunteers**” page on the Nature Center’s website, Closternaturecenter.org. Volunteers should be willing to commit an hour to walking a fence line and willing to do a circuit at least once or twice a month on a long-term basis. The exclosures are off the preserve’s trails, so walking around each can be difficult, strenuous and, depending on the conditions, can involve standing water, mud and snow. Calf-high rubber boots are a required dress item. Volunteers can either perform repairs themselves or report back to the Nature Center when they find areas that need attention. For those willing to resolve breaks in the fence themselves, tools, repair supplies, safety glasses and work gloves are available to fencing volunteers at the Cabin.