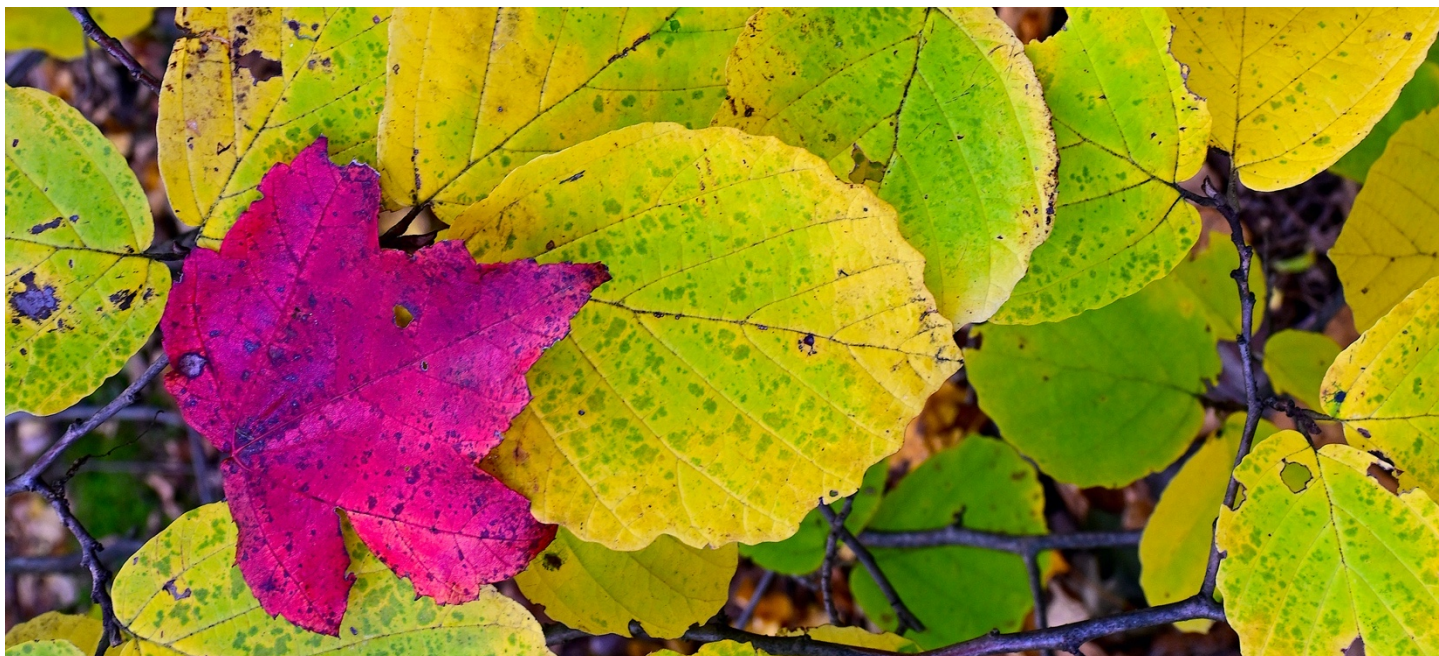




Red Maple Leaf on Witch Hazel

photo by Evan J. Zupfer

Notes from the Naturalist

Summer is still with us as I write this Newsletter. Soon the days will shorten and the temperature will drop in favor of cooler autumn weather. The summer was not without its events and sightings, and some were quite unique. I will begin with the month of May as most of these did not make it into the last Newsletter.

May 1 started with a multitude of bird sightings, after all it is when birds migrate through on their way north. A Beautiful Scarlet Tanager was singing near the pond while some Rough-winged Swallows skimmed the surface for some flies. A Jack-in-the Pulpit was found blooming in Fair Field by Sandy Bonardi. The following day, May 2, two different thrush species were sighted; A Veery off J trail and a Wood Thrush near B trail. Down by the pond a Common

Brown Cup Mushroom was discovered by long time member Joe Giordano.

A Blackburnian Warbler was found high in the trees over H trail on May 6. A Great Crested Flycatcher was heard calling above Fair Field by Sandy and she also found a Garter Snake in the same area. While walking the trails near Patriots Leap I heard the familiar insect-like call of a Worm-eating Warbler. I also heard an American Redstart while on C trail and a beautiful Pipevine Swallowtail showed its self in a small open area on S trail. Pink Ladies Slippers were found blooming by Sandy in the F trail deer enclosure. The next morning, Sandy and Ken heard a Yellow-billed Cuckoo calling near the cliff edge at Arboretum Point. May 9 gave us a Gray Catbird, Bull Frogs singing and an Eastern Wood Pewee down by the Pond.

On May 13 a flock of Cedar Waxwings made their way through the parking lot, and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird was seen down by the Pond. The next day, Ken spotted a brightly colored magnolia Warbler in the trees along the parking lot. While inspecting the front gate on May 15, I was thrilled to hear a Tennessee Warbler singing its staccato song high in the trees. The following week on May 21, A Northern Waterthrush and a Blackpoll Warbler were spotted down by the pond. The next morning on May 22, a Bay-breasted Warbler was seen down by the dam, and Blue Flag Iris was in bloom on the turnaround. Later, up in Fair Field, Sandy found an American Painted Lady flitting around the flowers. A Woodchuck was nosing around the Office on May 23. Woodchucks are a rare sighting in Greenbrook, but are quite common in New Jersey. I happen to have several in my Backyard that appear in spring and disappear around November. On May 30 a Black-billed Cuckoo was spotted near the pond by a Greenbrook member. The last day of May, Greenbrook members were excited to hear four different breeding birds calling in the parking lot, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Baltimore Oriole and Eastern Wood Pewee.

June brings an array of other sightings; On the 5th, Common Whitetail Skimmer Dragonflies began to fly around the Bog. Blue-eyed grass was also blooming in the same area. A late Spring Azure Butterfly was seen in the Parking lot on June 6. On June 10, our famous Black Rat Snake was again found hunting around the office feeders. Ken found a Great Horned Owl on P trail on June 11. The next day Ken watched an Eastern Harvestman Spider walk up and down the walls of the parking lot shed. On June 18 Sandy spotted the Black Rat Snake again, this time in Fair Field, then she watched a Tufted Titmouse feed its young behind the office.

July 2, down by the dam, I found a Northern Watersnake, an Eastern Garter Snake and a Green Frog all in the same area. Sandy observed a pair of Northern Osprey circle above the pond while Ken found an Eastern Kingbird on J trail, the west side of the pond. The same day, I found a rare rusty red Whitman's Jumping Spider walking along C trail. July 10, a Monarch

Butterfly was found on the Milkweed along the entrance road, and a Yellow Patches Mushroom had popped up near the bog. July 10 a large Copperhead Snake crawled along the deck as a few of us watched. Most Copperhead snakes in Greenbrook are small, no longer than a foot, but this magnificent specimen was more than two feet in length. That same day Ken and I watched a Bald Eagle chase an Osprey around the pond, very exciting. A Large Monarch caterpillar was found on milkweed by Sandy near the parking lot.

August 1, I spotted a White-faced/Ruby Meadowhawk Dragonfly in the Bog. Meadowhawk Dragonflies can be very difficult to identify as many species are very similar, having bright red bodies and tails. Their faces are where the differences usually lie, but again some can be so similar that you cannot differentiate them in the field. The only way to be sure is to have the Dragonfly in your hand and examine the genitalia.

On August 12, I found a large bright green caterpillar walking on the ground along N trail. It had obviously fallen from one of the trees above the trail. I carefully brought it back to the office to study it. After some research with a few insect guides I discovered that it was a Tulip Tree Silk Moth, a large colorful moth similar to a Cecropia. I quickly took a few photos and placed it on a Tulip tree so hopefully it could continue its life cycle and become a magnificent Silkmoth.



August 15, I spotted a Silver-spotted Skipper down by the pond. On August 26, Ken found a young Northern Watersnake near the dam.

Mush"BOOM"

Photography by Evan J. Zupfer

Because of the large amount of rain that fell this summer, we are having an explosion of mushrooms throughout the sanctuary. Not only in the numbers of Fungi but also in variety. If you walk along almost any trail, you will find a plethora of colors, shapes and sizes of mushrooms. August 8, we had a Mushroom walk with Paul Sadowski, the president of the New York Mycological Society. We spent over two hours studying and learning about Mushrooms. It was tremendously intriguing and exciting because of all the mushrooms. Below are a few photos from the walk.



As far as identifying them, this is my best guess. Top left is a Blusher Amanita, next to it is a Yellow Patches, below are Chanterelles, above and top is a Weeping Milk Cap and below it is a type of coral mushroom. These are my best guesses, if anyone believes that one or more have been misidentified, please send me an email at pnanaturalist@gmail.com.

Evan J. Zupfer
Director/Naturalist

President's Report

The pond area is a favorite gathering place of Greenbrook members to which the naturalists and the Administrative Council are directing greater attention. It comprises three ecological zones: the bog at the southern end, the deeper water near the dam at the northern end, and the emerging marsh bordering the bog. ("Emerging" is a misnomer because, prior to the dam's construction some 75 years ago, the pond area was all marshland and is now reverting as is happening to other man-made ponds.) The Council hopes to keep all these zones, as each attracts different plants, insects, birds and animals, but aquatic challenges abound.

The bog in many ways is the healthiest ecozone, with more native plants and fewer invasives. However, its decades-old bridge and cement walkway infrastructure is aging and requires repairs and reconstruction. Over the next year the Council's Projects Committee will be arranging for the removal of the entire existing bridge and deteriorating walkway sections and then constructing a new bog-viewing area. We will keep members advised of developments during this project.

The rest of the pond area is facing a more serious threat from the encroachment of two highly aggressive invasive plants. The more well-known is the European reed grass phragmites, which forms dense monocultures throughout our region's wetlands. This 15-foot-tall reed chokes out native grasses by releasing chemical toxins that stop other plants from growing. Controlling this invasive is labor-intensive; it requires repeated cutting over multiple years to starve its root system.

Potentially even worse is hornwort, a rootless feathery green weed that forms thick, drifting underwater mats, turns brown and easily blocks drainage conduits. Hornwort made its nasty debut at Greenbrook this summer when it clogged the drainage into the dam's spillway after a heavy thunderstorm. It took our naturalists countless hours to clear the mess. Like phragmites, hornwort's chemicals prevent native plants from growing and, more insidiously, its broken stem pieces develop quickly into new plants. Controlling this invasive will be difficult; excess growth must be raked manually on a continuing basis.

No natural environment can remain static, certainly not a place like Greenbrook subject to human design since its inception. But, the scale and pace of climate and other ecological changes are speeding up in an already frantic world, and we must do our small part in stewarding the landscape near and dear to us.

-Chris Connolly-
-PNA President-

Sanctuary Almanac – Autumn 2026

Programs subject to change. For more information call 201-784-0484 or email pnaturalist@gmail.com

Saturday, September 5 – 1:00PM – 2:00PM

Trees in Summer

Learn to identify trees using leaves, seeds and bark.

Saturday, September 12 – 12:00PM – 3:00PM

Hawk Watch 1

Join us at Arboretum Point as we look for migrating hawks and other birds moving south along the Hudson River. Come when you want, leave when you want. Binoculars and/or field scopes are recommended.

Saturday, September 19 - 10:00AM -11:00AM

Tai - Chi by the Pavilion

See page 6 for the complete Tai Chi Schedule.

Saturday, September 19 - 12:00PM – 3:00PM

Hawk Watch 2

See September 12 for description.

Saturday, September 26 ----- 12:00PM – 3:00PM

Hawk Watch 3

See September 12 for description.

Saturday, September 26 – 6:30PM – 8:00PM

Full Moon Hike

Enjoy the beauty of an Autumn night in Greenbrook by the light of a full moon. If the weather is good, we will watch the Full Moon rise over the Hudson River. Bring Flashlights.

Sunday, September 27 ----- Noon – 3:00PM

Visitor's Day

An open house to introduce the sanctuary to non-members. Including guided short walks and informative talks that help explain and describe this gem on the Palisades.

Saturday, October 3 ----- 12:00PM – 3:00PM

Hawk Watch 4

See September 12 for description.

Sunday, October 4 ----- Noon – 3:00PM

Rain date for Visitors Day

See September 27 for description of "Visitor's Day."

Saturday, October 10 ----- 12:00AM – 3:00PM

Hawk Watch 5

See September 12 for description.

Sunday, October 11 – 10:00AM – 12:00PM

History Hike with Eric Nelsen

Guided hike highlighting many historical structures in Greenbrook Sanctuary. This hike covers about 3 miles round-trip in about 2 hours on moderate trails. Hike will be held "drizzle or shine." Heavy or steady precipitation or icy trail conditions will cancel. If weather seems questionable on the morning of the hike, hikers can call 201-768-1360 and enter ext. 6108 to confirm.

Saturday, October 17 ----- 12:00PM – 3:00PM

Hawk Watch 6

See September 12 for description.

Thursday, October 22 ----- Starts 7:00PM

Annual Members Meeting at Fort Lee Historic Park

Join us in the auditorium at Fort Lee Historic Park for organizational updates, sanctuary news, and elections.

Followed by a presentation by Jim Wright on his new book, "The Peregrine Falcon." Please RSVP through our website: Greenbrooksanctuary.org by calling the Naturalist 201-784-0484 by October 20, 2026. Please refer to page 6 for more details.

Saturday, October 24 ----- 1:00 – 3:00PM

All the Vistas

Hike from the most southern vista, Patriots Leap, to the most northern, Bald Eagle Point. This is a long hike on rocky trails, with many hills and valleys, but the views are spectacular.

Saturday, November 7 ----- 1:00 – 2:30PM

Autumn Walk Around the Pond

A walk that completely circles Greenbrook Pond.

Saturday, November 14 ----- 10:00AM to Noon

Volunteer Day at the Bog

We will be clearing unwanted and old vegetation from the bog. The conditions are wet and muddy.

Please wear durable outdoor clothes and shoes. Don't forget a good pair of work gloves.

Saturday, November 21 ----- 1:00 – 3:00PM

All the Waterfalls and Cascades of Greenbrook.

This long and scenic hike covers all the waterfalls and cascades found inside the boundaries of Greenbrook Sanctuary. Reminder, this is a long hike on rocky trails, with many hills and valleys. Please wear sturdy hiking shoes and bring your cameras.

Tai- Chi Schedule for Autumn 2026

Nancy Hoffman will again be offering Tai-Chi classes this Autumn. All classes are from 10:00AM to 11:00AM and will be held on the lawn by the Pavilion. The schedule is listed below. Please call the Naturalist at 201-784-0484 if you have any questions.

Six Saturdays in Fall:

September 19, 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24. (No class October 31)

Jim Wright to speak at Greenbrook Sanctuaries Annual Members Meeting

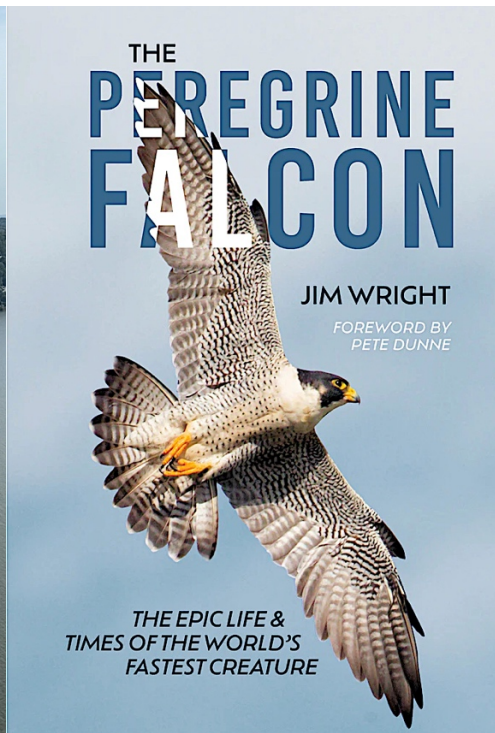
Thursday October 22 at 7:00PM

Fort Lee Historic Park

Henry Hudson Dr.

Fort Lee, NJ 07024

Parking is Free for this event



Jim Wright is a prize-winning writer and the author of "The Bird Watcher," a long-running column featured in New Jersey's The Record and USA Today. He has hosted screech owls in a backyard nest box, written about them since 2004, and observed them through a nestcam for a dozen breeding seasons. He is currently leading a grassroots campaign to ban the rat poisons that kill owls and other wildlife. He lives in Allendale, NJ.

Jim's latest book is "The Peregrine Falcon": <https://schifferbooks.com/products/the-peregrine-falcon>

Jim's nature blog: "Nature Done Wright," is at www.celeryfarm.net

FOR ALL WALKS AND HIKES, it is advised to wear sturdy shoes and bring plenty of water to drink. Long-sleeved clothing is recommended for protection against poison ivy and ticks. **REMEMBER:** Even “easy” walks are on trails, not paved surfaces — the surfaces you traverse may be uneven, with roots, rocks, and other obstructions. None of the sanctuary trails are entirely open or level. Mud and puddles are typical after rainfall. Use of walking sticks or poles are encouraged for added support.

Please be aware of **safeguarding against unauthorized visitors**. It is important for members not to allow non-members to enter the sanctuary. This can lead to non-members entering and getting locked-in often requiring Palisades Interstate Park Police to let them out.

When a car pulls up behind you at the gate, do not assume they are members, please ask them if they are members and, if so, make sure they have the current key. If not, please explain why membership is necessary for entry. **You may hand them or refer them to the membership and sanctuary information sheet available in the box attached to the front gate or greenbrooksanctuary.org.** Remember after you open the gate and enter, close and securely lock it behind you. This also applies when you are leaving the sanctuary and cars outside the gate are waiting to enter.

PLEASE HELP US KEEP GREENBROOK SAFE AND SECURE FOR ALL MEMBERS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND COOPERATION.

WELCOME NEW and RETURNING MEMBERS: CYCLE 3 --- Guy Nemirovsky, Robert Schwarz, Toshi Kajiro, Robert Hennigar (rejoin), Lois/Russell Huntington, Eileen McCafferty, Jane and Rick Dekovessey, James Davis, Chris Kerrigan, Thomas Henning, Sansthita Pattanaik, Nicole Yang, Ginn Fang, Vanessa Kingsley, Arthur Adler, Jae Kim, Jonathan Baum, Samuel Kim, Ian McCracken, William Beck, Jason Sabo, Yiyin Zhou, Davis Rogovich/Andie Zaikov, Paul Han, Nicole Sneyer, Joseph Richter, Semi Sager, Andrew Freda, Tania Mekhjian, Kyongmi Goodstein, David Sussman

Palisades Nature Notes

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Assistant Naturalist 1: Sandy Bonardi

Assistant Naturalist 2: Ken Habermann

Did you know it takes more than membership dues for us to maintain the sanctuary? For example, remedy for our ravaged beech trees, the ongoing need for replacing storm damaged fences and bridges are costly expenditures. Please contribute today, any amount will help. Use the link below.

Thank you in advance for the extra support.

<https://www.greenbrooksanctuary.org/donation>

Interested in volunteering for Greenbrook Sanctuary?

email our Director/Naturalist, Evan J. Zupfer at

pnaturalist@gmail.com

For potentially serving on our board, leading a Yoga, Art, Book group or have an idea of your own, please email

m.gallo@greenbrooksanctuary.org

Have you moved, changed your phone number or email address?

Please email greenbrooksanctuary@gmail.com with any updates

For new, renewal memberships, donations or for check mailing information please visit <https://www.greenbrooksanctuary.org/>

The Palisades Nature Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Membership dues and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.