

Palisades

NATURE NOTES



Greenbrook Pond Covered in Snow Photo: Evan J. Zupfer

Notes from the Naturalist

Winter is usually a time when most of us ease our outdoor activities and spend more time indoors. This time away from the outdoors can be dull and dreary for some individuals, but I find winter to be very exciting for one very good reason, SNOW. Winter is the best season for snow and if the temperatures stay cold, it may stick around for long periods, completely changing the landscape. It also allows for some interesting and exciting activities and wildlife sightings.

First of all, hiking through snow is very different from normal hiking. If the snow is deep, it requires more effort to move along the trails and can be more challenging. The crunch of wet snow beneath your boots can be quite liberating to some. As for me, I like the light powdery snow. It can be like walking through cotton.

Animals leave many signs of their activities in the snow. Their tracks are one of the best and most comprehensive

ways to view their behavior during the winter months. After a light snow, one of my favorite activities is to search for some animal tracks and try to identify which animal made them. Many animals that are not easy to find or observe during the day can be recognized by the tracks in the snow. Below are a set of Red Fox tracks, an animal not easily seen during the day. Fox tracks can be identified by two distinct features. First the toes are very crowded and close together. Dogs have a more splayed print with more space between the toes. The second is the differences between the front and back feet. The front footprint is more rounded compared to the rear, which usually appears more elongated. You can easily see this in the photo on Page.2.

Next time it snows, go take a walk and see what you can find. I think you will be pleasantly surprised by what you come up with.



Palisades covered with snow Photo: Evan J. Zupfer



Red Fox tracks Photo: Evan J. Zupfer

Autumn Wildlife Sightings:

Late summer and fall sightings can be very exciting and also unusual. Many birds begin to migrate south and insects are still active and calling during the day and into the evenings. The cooler days and nights allow mammals to be more active as they search for food.

Starting on September 5th a Ruby-throated hummingbird and an Eastern-tailed Blue Butterfly were spotted in Fairfield by Ken Habermann. The following Saturday during a twilight hike, some fortunate Greenbrook members were treated to the tremolo call of an Eastern Screech Owl down by the dam. This call is usually associated with family members. Probably a parent calling to its young. On September eleventh Ken spotted an Osprey soaring over Greenbrook Pond, probably looking for some fish to snack on. That same day I heard a Belted Kingfisher calling constantly as it flew from perch to perch looking for small fish to catch.

On the nineteenth of September, Sandy was fortunate to hear and see an Eastern Phoebe down by the dam. Three Wood Frogs were found off of trail "B" by Ken that same day. Also on the nineteenth, a short wave of Warblers came through the Sanctuary. A Palm warbler was seen on the Gravel Road by Ken, and a small group of Black-and-White Warblers were feeding in the pine trees along "F" trail. A few days later on September 22 another group of Black-and-whites were seen near the Pavilion.

October started with some wonderful Reptile sightings. A young Copperhead was found crossing "N" trail on October 5. Multiple Garter Snakes were seen sunning themselves in early October. One just off of "J" trail on October 10, and a few more on the Gravel Road October 13. Ken spotted a Black Rat Snake in Fair Field on October 12. A Red-backed Salamander was spotted on the Gravel Road to the pond on October 20.

Bird sightings were also exciting in October. A Peregrine Falcon flew by Arboretum Point during a hawk watch on October 12. A Green-winged Teal was spotted on the pond by a member on the following day, October 13. A Lincoln's Sparrow was identified down by the pond also on October 13. October 16 was a busy day for bird sightings. Two Eastern Towhees were seen that day. One in the Native Plant Area and a second was seen at Bald Eagle Point. That same day many Yellow-rumped Warblers were feeding in the lower branches above the Picnic Area. A Winter Wren was found by Sandy and Ken while clearing trails at Bald Eagle Point. Finally, a Red-tailed Hawk was seen catching and carrying away a chipmunk from the bird feeder area. The following day I heard, then watched, a Red-breasted Nuthatch make multiple visits to the bird feeders.

There has been a large flight of Hermit Thrushes this fall. A single bird was seen near the pond on October 20.

Two more were spotted in the American Hollies along the Gravel Road on October 23. Another single bird was found off of "J" trail on October 26. A single Golden-crowned Kinglet was found darting through the lower branches at Duck Hawk Lookout on October 30.

The beginning of November started with a Red Fox sighted on "B" trail. Then on November 9, I watched a very active Winter Wren forage for bugs and spiders inside the office porch. It was darting in and out of the crevices and corners for several minutes as I stood motionless. At one time, there were only a few feet between us. A Bald Eagle was seen soaring over the Hudson River at Picture Point on November 15. The following day, November 16, Several Autumn Meadowhawk Dragonflies were observed buzzing around Kelder's Brook. A few lucky members on an Autumn Walk got some very close looks. Autumn Meadowhawks are the last Dragonflies of the season to take wing, and November 16 is late even for them.

— EVAN J. ZUPFER *Naturalist / Director*



Liberty State Park — SEE DECEMBER 28 IN ALMANAC

WINTER 2024-25 ALMANAC

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

Saturday, December 7 — 4:00 – 5:30 PM

Twilight Hike

A casual walk through the sanctuary to look and listen for sounds of winter wildlife. We may hear a Great Horned Owl calling

Saturday, December 14 — 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Christmas Bird Count

75th Annual Hackensack-Ridgewood Christmas Bird Count sponsored by the Bergen County Audubon Society.

Saturday, December 21 — 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Winter Bird Photography

Take advantage of the Angelo D'Angelo Bird blind to photograph some winter birds. Cameras with long (300-500mm) lenses are highly recommended.

Saturday, December 28 — 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Field Trip to Liberty State Park 1

Meet in the south parking lot by the Visitors Center at the end of Morris Pesin Drive. We will look for winter waterfowl and other wintering birds in this large open park.

Saturday, January 4 — 1:00 – 2:00 PM

Hike to Picture Point and Greenbrook Falls

The first hike of the new year. A brisk walk to the most panoramic vista of Greenbrook and its iconic waterfall.

Sunday, January 5 — 1:00 – 2:00 PM

Hike to Patriot's Leap

A short but breathtaking hike to the southernmost vista of Greenbrook...

Saturday, January 11 — NOON – 1:30 PM

Winter Nature Walk

We will look for signs of winter wildlife, around the pond and along the trails of Greenbrook. Bring binoculars.

Saturday, January 18 — 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Winter Night Hike and Star Gazing

Hike through the Sanctuary at night to view and identify winter constellations. Bring flashlights and binoculars..

Sunday, January 19 — 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Rain/Clouds date for Winter Night Hike and Star Gazing, or General Night Hike.

See description for January 18 program. The General Hike will start at 1:00PM and go to 2:30PM.

Saturday, January 25 — 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Trees in Winter

Learn to Identify trees using bark, buds and twigs.

Saturday, February 1 — 10:00 AM – NOON

Volunteer Day

We will be removing debris from the entrance road and the parking lot. Please wear sturdy shoes, warm clothes, and work gloves.

Saturday, February 8 — 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Winter Hike to High Point

A hike around Greenbrook Pond, culminating in the highest point in Greenbrook

Saturday, February 15 — 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

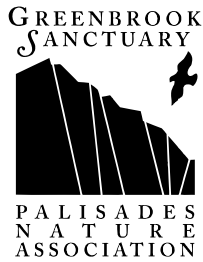
Winter Bird Photography 2

Take advantage of the Angelo D'Angelo Bird Blind to photograph some winter birds. Cameras with a long (300-500mm) lenses are highly recommended

Saturday, February 22 — 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Late Winter Hike

Enjoy a hike through Greenbrook to look for signs of animal activity in the snow. This hike will commence with or without snow on the ground. Binoculars are highly recommended



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS: CYCLE 4 — Jennifer K. Honan, Deborah Veach, Suk Lee, Yun Zhou, Shinduk Lee, Wade Woodbury, Jeff Thompson, Arnold Goldstein, Christine Avilezcusanelli, Nilufer DeScherer, Mitchell Huang, James Gaccione, Nina Combs, Rebecca Napolitano, Susan Payne, Nicholas Bracco, Bruce Anton, Shweta Rana, David Corwin, Fungyin Chen, Carlos Cespedes, Doug Ladzinski, Peggy Norris, Odelette Cho, Goran Ekstrom, Dave Marx, Carolyn DeMaio, Lisa Edmonds, Bo Yu, Slawomir Kuczynski, Kimberly Schwab. Justin White, Pamalla Gonzalez, Nakia Kenon

Members may RSVP to events on our website. <https://www.greenbrooksanctuary.org/>.

Email 2greenbrook@gmail.com or call Membership Director Mike Gallo with online questions: 201.280.0160.

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 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>This is a gift membership given by:</i> | | | |

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