

Group Outreach Programs

with the Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center

The following is a sampling of Naturalist-presented, lecture and discussion-based presentations appropriate for a variety of audiences. Choose one of our existing topics or suggest one! Each program can be tailored to your group's specific needs, interests, and time frame. Virtual programs can be offered through our platform or yours. Presentation style varies. Please use the **key** below to identify the style of each program.



Amazing Adaptations

In this program, we will explore how wildlife survives in its environment. The concepts of habitat, niche, and adaptation will be covered in an interactive discussion, using animal 'artifacts' to further illustrate these concepts.

Armchair Birding

Travel the world with Armchair Birding! This program features first-hand birding stories that teach you about birds around the world. Each presentation includes photos and/or videos taken by the Naturalist. You can choose the location and topic that interests you the most! The available program titles include: Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Israel, Peru, the Galapagos, Hawai'i, Kenya, India and Sri Lanka, Svalbard, and a special program on Coral Reefs.



Backyard Bears

Bear sightings are increasing throughout the state of New Jersey. Do you know what to do if you see a bear? This lecture will help you become educated in bear 'etiquette', You will learn 'the bear necessities' and walk away with a better understanding of bears.

KEY

-  Pre-recorded video link offered virtually.
-  PowerPoint lecture offered virtually with a 'live' presenter.
-  'Artifact-based'/ hands-on program offered in-person.
-  PowerPoint lecture offered in-person.
-  Combination of artifact-based and PowerPoint lecture offered in-person.

Backyard Birds

Ever wonder about the birds in your backyard? This lecture will help you get acquainted with many of New Jersey's common backyard birds. Join a Naturalist and spend some time learning the fundamentals of backyard bird watching. You will learn basic identification skills, what to feed backyard birds, as well as when and where to place feeders in your yard.





Basically Bats ★ 🖥️

The only true flying mammals are often misunderstood and feared rather than appreciated for their prowess as our best natural insect predators. Did you know that a single little brown bat can consume approximately 600 insects per hour? So, pull the plug on your bug zapper and learn some bat biology. Class includes our famous bat quiz and a PowerPoint lecture about bat ecology.



The Bees' Knees 🐾

This little animal is one of nature's most important role players. Pollination is important for all living things, and bees have made an art of it. Without them, the species we know as *Homo sapiens* is in big trouble. Join us as we discuss all things that are bee and not to be.

May, June, and September only



Birds of the World 🕸 🖥️

Did you know that there are types of poisonous birds? Did you know that birds can fly while they are asleep? How about that one species migrates 50,000 miles every year? There are over 10,000 species of birds in the world and each one is more unexplainable than the next. This one-hour lecture highlights the wackiest, funniest, and most bizarre species from around the globe.

Butterfly Basics 🕸 🖥️ 🎥

What makes a butterfly a butterfly and not a moth? Are all butterflies beautiful? They are thought to be charming little critters that harmlessly flit and float from flower to flower seeking nectar. Is this true? With many interesting physical and behavioral adaptations, these little insects are more complex than you might think.



Cool Critters 🐾

Snakes, dragons, and bugs, oh my. Let's investigate things that slither, hiss, and hop. During this adventure of show and tell, you will join a Naturalist to learn what makes each animal special and important.

Coyote Cries ★ 🖥️

Perhaps you have heard a coyote howling at night or read about coyotes in the area. This lecture will help you sort the myths from the facts. Coyote education is important for anyone living in New Jersey.



Fantastic Plant Stories 🖥️

For hundreds of years, people have used plants when celebrating or decorating homes and public spaces. From the calming and contemplative effect of an evergreen bonsai with moss at its base to the excitement of scarlet poinsettia plants and cut evergreen trees; from formal planted gardens to simple bouquets of common flowers, plants have brought joy to our lives. Discover how plants are used in celebrations in your community and around the world.



Leave it to Beaver 🐾

Can you believe beavers are the second largest rodents in the entire world? These nocturnal, semi-aquatic critters are known for their amazing ability to construct dams and lodges and alter the environment. Unfortunately, their population has been declining since 1988 due to extensive hunting for their fur. Join a Naturalist and learn why this keystone species, which lives in your backyard, is such a vital part of our ecosystem.



Maple Sugaring 🐾

December – March only

Maple sugaring and winter go hand-in-hand. A Naturalist will help participants discover the secrets inside a maple tree. Participants will learn about both the history of maple sugaring beginning with the time of the Native Americans, as well as, the techniques used to make this tasty treat today. Bring your own pancakes or waffles!

New Jersey Owls ★ 📺

Come explore the nocturnal world of these fascinating birds of prey. Whether with long or short ears, barred or great horned, these raptors are truly special.



Nocturnal Sounds ★

Although humans are usually asleep at night, the New Jersey outdoors is anything but quiet. Listen to sounds from common nocturnal wildlife while learning a few fun facts about each animal.

Off the Coast 🐢 📺

The sea turtle is an amazing animal! They can migrate for thousands of miles and have a positive impact on our environment. During this presentation you will learn adaptations of sea turtles and why they need your help!



Oh Deer! ★ 📺

They are everywhere! Discover the world of deer biology and all the fun facts that make deer one of the most interesting animals in our backyard. Learn about the interactions deer have with predators, their habitat, and humans. Participants will see deer skulls, bones, antlers, and more!



Passports to Penguins ★ 📺

Travel to the bottom of the globe on an adventure of learning! During this one-hour presentation you will learn a lot about our black and white, waddle-y friends – penguins; information about the many different types of penguins, where they live, what they eat, and much more will be discussed and presented.



Planning a Native Butterfly Garden 🐞 📺

Do you love butterflies? Do you like growing beautiful blooming plants in your garden? This PowerPoint-based lecture and discussion will illustrate which native plants attract which native butterflies and moths. By special request, handouts can be provided, which include information about specific plants native lepidoptera eat, sources of native plants, and much more.



Rockin' Reptiles 🐾

Reptiles are amazing creatures. Together, we will learn what it takes to be a reptile! Let us take a closer look at some reptiles and their unique adaptations. We will see interesting animal objects and meet live reptiles* during this program!

*Live animals included only April – October.



Sharks 101 🗣️ 📺

Sharks are amazing but often times misunderstood animals. This presentation will include the facts and myths about sharks. You will walk away with a better understanding of sharks and the important role they play in our ecosystem.

Super Serpentes ✨

Snakes are found all over the world; even right here in New Jersey! Many people fear snakes despite their valuable ecological role. This program is sure to teach you the neat and interesting things about snakes as well as how to identify the slithery friends you could see in the Garden State. Upon request we can bring a live specimen as part of the program.



Virtual Rainforest 🗣️ 📺

Take a trip to the tropics of the Costa Rican rainforest. Find out what makes a two-toed sloth different from a three-toed sloth, what a three-wattled bell bird mustache looks like and many other fascinating facts.

Virtual Safari 🗣️ 📺

Travel via arm chair to amazing Tanzania to go on a virtual safari. This program will bring you deep into the wilds of the African 'bush' on game drives to see elephants, lions, gazelles, and many more fascinating animals.



Vital Vernals 🗣️ 📺

New Jersey has a special ecosystem that supports hundreds of species, yet can only be seen during spring. Vernal pools are unique habitats that only exist when water is prevalent. Come learn about the animals that use, and depend upon, a habitat that can disappear at any moment.

Winter Adaptations 🐾

Explore how wildlife survives the long winter. The concepts of habitat, niche, and adaptation will be covered in an interactive discussion, using animal 'artifacts' to further illustrate these strategies.



For more information or to schedule a program, please contact Kurt Bender at 908 722-1200 Ext. 5332 or kbender@scparks.org

Somerset County Park Commission welcomes everyone to participate in its programs and facilities regardless of race, color, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, national origin or religious or political affiliation. If you have individualized needs due to a disability, please call 908 722-1200 ext.5324 and we will be happy to arrange reasonable modifications. Three-weeks notice is required to ensure that appropriate modifications can be provided.

