

# Stockton

## Learners During Pinelands Short Course

Participants View Live Raptors and Sea Life, Go Birding, Listen to Music and Learn About the Pinelands Environment, Cultural and History

***For Immediate Release; Photos on [Flickr](#)***

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**Contact: Susan Allen**  
**News and Media Relations**  
**Galloway, NJ 08205**  
**[Susan.Allen@stockton.edu](mailto:Susan.Allen@stockton.edu)**  
**(609) 652-4790**  
**[www.stockton.edu/media](http://www.stockton.edu/media)**

**Galloway, NJ** – Ed Clarke, of Mullica Township, N.J., looked through his binoculars to closely observe a diving grebe across Lake Fred while his wife, Jennifer, learned about the ecology of pinelands lichens in the Unified Science Center.

There was something for everyone who attended the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Pinelands Short Course at Stockton University today. The New Jersey Pinelands

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A bird that is heard more than seen is the whip-poor-will, named after its unique call. These insect-eaters have specialized feathers near the bill that form a net to corral insects, said Rokita as he held up the study skin.

He discussed common backyard birds such as the blue jay, a species clever enough to mimic the call of the red-tailed hawk to clear out the competition at the feeders. Ed Clarke shared that he has observed ruby-throated hummingbirds hovering over the sprinklers in his yard to get water.

Also among the group was Caitlin Morrison, of Collingswood, N.J., who said she developed a greater appreciation for birding, which has become her hobby, after taking an ornithology course. This year was her fourth Pinelands Short Course.

After the overview, the group walked outside with a spotting scope and binoculars to identify birds in the wild, but not without stopping to see the aquaria housing poison dart frogs, a boa constrictor, green anoles and other critters.

Fred Strang, an environmental officer for the Coast Guard Auxiliary in Manahawkin, N.J., attended sessions to learn about local sea life, osprey monitoring and climate change. "New Jersey is a very unique place," he said, adding that we need to protect it. He is studying how runoff creates environmental impacts in the Barnegat Bay ecosystem and how the loss of eel grass takes away fish habitat by eliminating food, shelter and protection for juvenile fish. "No