



# Monticello Bird Club

February 2008

Volume 22, Number 6

## February Meeting Topic:

# Good Bluebird Stewardship

Our February speaker, Anne Little, is an avid bluebirder who has lived in Virginia for almost 20 years. She was the Treasurer of the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) for two years and acting Director of NABS for one year. Anne is President of The Virginia Bluebird Society, (VBS) and is one of the founding members of the society.

Anne will present "Good Bluebird Stewardship," a PowerPoint presentation. She will show you how to attract these beautiful birds to your yard, give hints on how to provide a safe habitat, and will provide information on plantings that provide food that will sustain them. There will also be information on other native cavity nesting birds in Virginia and how you can help increase their chances for survival.

Also on display will be examples of nests and eggs from various cavity nesters and samples of predator guards and boxes used by VBS.



Handouts for box and predator guard designs, monitoring protocol and record keeping will be available. You will have everything you need to build a successful bluebird trail.

Please join MBC members and our speaker for dinner at Wild Greens Restaurant in the North Wing of Barracks Road Shopping Center on February 14th at 5:45 pm prior to the meeting.

## Upcoming Meeting Topics

**March 13:** Bob Anderson will present "Time Travel in Faulkner's Big Woods: Encounters with the Ivory-billed Woodpecker"

## Please welcome new MBC members:

**Donna Spray  
David Shoch  
Michelle Scott  
Sandra Shawn  
Peter and Leslie Mehring**

## Comments From the President

Two places that our club visits each year on field trips are, for me, now areas of concern. The first is the nature trail at Pen Park. This pathway follows the Rivanna River through a riparian (riverside) woodland and attracts a variety of migrants and permanent residents. It is a year-round destination for birders and other nature lovers. For a number of years the city and county have been trying to relieve Rt. 29 of increasing traffic congestion so there are plans to construct an Eastern Connector that will connect Rt. 29 N to Rt. 250 E somewhere in the Pantops area. Three routes are under consideration and one goes through Pen Park. I do not know exactly where the road would be located but it is hard to believe that it would not compromise, possibly greatly, the nature trail. I hope this alternative will not be chosen.

As for the other place, "concern", I fear, is a word that is too late. "Sorrow" is more to the point. Rt.

811, or Jones Mill Road, which goes from Rt. 810 out of Crozet east to Browns Gap Tpk, is part of a perennial MBC fall field trip. Hedgerows that border extensive cornfields edge a significant length of the road. We find a variety of sparrows there and thus fondly call Rt. 811 "Sparrow Road". On January 19 two of us went to check out the White-crowned Sparrows that always inhabit those hedgerows in the winter. We were shocked to see that the hedgerows on the north side of the road have been razed to the ground. Nothing remains along the entire length of those cornfields except the red earth marked with tire tracks. The south side of the road still has a very thin row of trees and shrubs but the habitat as a whole is greatly changed. I assume houses will replace the cornfields.

It is too late to save Sparrow Road, but it is not too late to speak out about the bird habitat at Pen Park.

*-Jenny Gaden*

## Inside February 2008

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**IN PURSUIT OF 200**

As the year 2006 drew to a close, many were the discussions had by me and my birding buddy Rob Capon as to the number of bird species one could see over a year's time in Albemarle County. Not very sure of what the figure should be, we settled on 200, mostly because it was a nice round number. And with the encouragement of Rob, as well as Dave Hogg and Teresa Shaner, I decided to try for that lofty mark in 2007.

January went well and by month's end I had sixty-seven species, best of which was a Merlin perched in a tree-top along Coles Rolling Road. February brought the winter's first cold weather. With icing of ponds to the north of our county, waterfowl numbers increased, and I recorded Common Goldeneye at Forest Lakes and Canvasback at another pond. During one of the winter's few snows, I found several Herring Gulls at Chris Greene Lake, my only ones of the year. Tundra Swans over Langhorne Road at the end of the month,

brought my total to seventy-nine.

March 25th was memorable, as an outing that day with Rob yielded an immense flock of Wilson's Snipes in a wet cornfield along Langhorne Road as well as my only Gadwall and Vesper Sparrow of the year. A Northern Shoveler that day was my 100th bird. While exploring the Crozet area in April, Rob and I came across a pond along Half Mile Branch Road which had a few shorebirds. We returned a week later on a showery Sunday afternoon and found my only Dunlin of the year. A day later I was fortunate enough to find a real surprise, a Surf Scoter, near Crozet. Rob and Gretchen Gehrett, another birding pal, outdid themselves a week later by finding for me an American Bittern at the Old Trail Golf Course pond, also near Crozet. By the end of April so many new birds were flooding the county that on April 28th I was able to make sixteen additions to my list.

As May arrived, I was at 151 species. Outstanding that month were a Chuck-wills-widow, at the Greene County line, and a Little Blue Heron, found at Forest Lakes by Teresa. With the help of Leigh Surdukowski and Teresa, I located my only Least Flycatcher of the year, at the county's highest point, 3,200 foot Loft Mountain along Skyline Drive. That was number 179. Despite being out of the county in Turkey during the important migration period of August 25 to September 10, when Gretchen found me a Lincoln's Sparrow September 30, I was at 190 for the year. Could I find just ten more in the next three months? A Sora on October 1st near the James River was 191, a Marsh Wren at Scogo Lake October 8th was 192 and a Purple Finch near Scottsville October 15th was number 193. Unfortunately, that was it for October, while in November I found only one new one, Pine Siskins. Hard as I looked, thereafter, I could add only two more, a Northern Goshawk, on December 27th along Skyline Drive-just inside Albemarle County-and a

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**Bird Club Information**

The Monticello Bird Club meets at 7:30 pm on the second Thursday of each month, September through June, at the Education Building of the Ivy Creek Natural Area on Earlysville Road, 1/2 mile north of Hydraulic Road.

The editor of the MBC Newsletter welcomes submissions including articles, photographs and notices. **DEADLINE for the March issue is Februar 20.** Please email information to Amy Gilmer at [akgilmer@comcast.net](mailto:akgilmer@comcast.net) or send to 3166 Welsh Run Road, Ruckersville, VA 22968.

**Monticello Bird Club**  
P.O. Box 4362  
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Please visit our website at  
[www.monticellobirdclub.org](http://www.monticellobirdclub.org)

**Monticello Bird Club Board Members**

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<b>Membership</b>	Jim Nix	jim-nix@comcast.net	973-7366
<b>Birdseed Sale</b>	Jim Hill	jimcarhill@comcast.net	975-6523

## Upcoming Field Trips

### Highland County Excursion Saturday, February 9

Cricket Barlow will be our leader on this exciting trip to Highland County. **Meet at 6:00 am in the Giant parking lot at Seminole Square.** We will return around 5 pm. Plan on car pooling. If someone owns a 4WD vehicle, consider driving, since some of the best birding roads may be snow covered. Cricket has an SUV and can take 3-4 people. Dress warmly and be prepared to walk in the snow. We will stop in Monterey for provisions and restrooms. We will be looking especially for Golden Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Finches. Bring food and drink, in addition to binoculars, a telescope would be helpful. Cricket has a pair of 2-way radios that will keep the vehicles in touch. If you have similar equipment, please bring it. **PLEASE CALL** Cricket Barlow at 434-823-5272 or e-mail at [gubarlow3@earthlink.net](mailto:gubarlow3@earthlink.net) if you are considering going. If the weather appears questionable or definitely unfavorable, we can be in touch with each other. If you are curious about the weather in Highland Co., go to <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/lwx/>

### First Saturday Bird Walks At Ivy Creek Natural Area

On the first Saturday of each month the Monticello Bird Club hosts a bird walk at Ivy Creek Natural Area (ICNA) at 7:30 am. The walks start in the parking lot of ICNA.

### Secluded Farms Saturday, January 26

**Meet in the parking lot at the base of the boardwalk trail to Monticello (Kemper Park) at 7:30 am.** Easy 2 hr or so hike. Questions? Contact John Zimmerman at 434-974-9293 or [jozimmva@embarqmail.com](mailto:jozimmva@embarqmail.com)

### Lake Anna Louisa County Tuesday, February 26

Join Stauffer on a visit to the Louisa County side of Lake Anna. **Meet in front of Starbucks in the line of stores adjacent to the Giant grocery in the Rivanna Ridge Shopping Center on U.S. 250 East at 8:30 am.** We will check as much of Lake Anna as we can for waterfowl and other birds, having lunch in either Mineral or Louisa and returning by mid-afternoon. Questions? Contact Stauffer Miller at 434-296-5505 or [stauffer@scepub.com](mailto:stauffer@scepub.com).

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Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow on the 31st. Thus, I ended at 196 for the year. As they say, close but no cigar. My worst misses were Wilson's and Cape May Warblers.

I would recommend county listing for two reasons. First, it is a great way to get to know every backroad and byway of the county. Second, it provides a reason to get out most every day to see what's around. Will I make another run at 200 in 2008? Who knows?

*-Stauffer Miller*

### VSO Winter Field Trip North Carolina Outer Banks February 15-17, 2008

Head south of the (Virginia) border to enjoy the hopefully milder climate and the amazing birds of the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

**Lodging:** The Clarion Inn at Nags Head Beach will be our headquarters. Special VSO room rates are \$60 for oceanfront and \$55 for streetside plus tax (currently 12%). Ocean front rooms are available on a first come, first served basis. Phone: 252-441-6333; fax 252-441-7779. Make reservations by Jan. 25 to get the special rate. Remember to say that you are with the VSO.

**Program:** When you check in at the hotel, pick up a program of events and announcements at the front desk. *Friday Night:* An evening orientation and slide program will be presented. Check your program for the time and room location.

*Saturday:* We will have all day to visit the impoundments of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge and the beaches of Cape Hatteras National Seashore. The generally milder climate and the proximity of the Gulf Stream make for an interesting combination of wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, ocean birds and sometimes whales. We may divide into smaller groups, but every group will visit all areas. Be sure to bring your lunch and we will dine at a convenient birding location and rest area.

*Saturday Evening:* There will be a tally at 6:00 pm in the VSO conference room at the hotel.

*Sunday:* There will be no organized trips on Sunday, unless there are some unusual species to chase. This will be your opportunity to watch birds from your room, or check out some of the areas we visited on Saturday.

Come prepared for variable weather, lots of birds and a good time. If you have any questions, contact Bill Akers at 540-951-7692, Bill Akers at [Bill.Akers@adelphia.net](mailto:Bill.Akers@adelphia.net) or Peggy Opengari at [gramby@pemtel.net](mailto:gramby@pemtel.net).

## MBC Minutes for January 10, 2008

President Jenny Gaden presided and asked newcomers and visitors to introduce themselves. There were 43 people present for the meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** In Henry Konat's absence, Jenny gave the club's finance report for the previous month: income \$10,059, expenses (\$7,678), for a net of \$2,382; and the club has \$15,128 in the bank.

**Field Trips:** John Zimmerman referred members to the recent newsletter for details of upcoming trip, including the trip to Chris Greene Lake and Stuart's Draft. Cricket Barlow will lead a daylong trip to Highland County on February 9.

**Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count:** Jenny reported that the Christmas Bird Count, on December 16, was very good with 78 species and over 12,500 birds.

**Bird Feeder Maintenance Request:** Jenny appealed for volunteers to help maintain and monitor bird feeders and bluebird houses for residents of the University Village retirement community, who are unable to do so themselves.

**Charlottesville/Albemarle County Bird Counts:** Theresa Shaner and Leigh Surdukowski have led an effort to document bird sightings in the area since 2006 and Theresa encouraged members to continue keeping track of birds during 2008 to add to their lists.

**Recent Bird Sightings:** Lou Tanner continues to monitor daily appearances of an immature Red-tailed Hawk near Court Square in downtown Charlottesville. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was sighted. A Great Blue Heron with an eel in its beak was observed in the Rivanna River. Twenty-one raptors and a Long-eared Owl

were spotted in Nelson County and the Short-eared Owl on Bells Lane left recently. Carol Hill commented that Red-tailed Hawks were going after the goldfish in her pond. Many Crows are roosting in their winter rookery near Fashion Square Mall and several members noted large flocks. Ron Kingston reported a Brown Creeper, Pine Siskins, and Kingfishers seen by Dave Hogg. A Red-breasted Nuthatch was seen in Northwest Albemarle County. Bill Leaning believes he has more Purple Finches this year. Two juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawks were sighted on Ivy Road.

-Peggy Cornett

### A Request for Help

University Village, a retirement community on Ivy Road near the 250 Bypass, would like help maintaining their two or three bird feeders in the winter. The person who has been doing this is becoming too blind to continue and no one else has taken on the job. It would require that someone go to the community approximately once a week to fill the feeders and make sure everything is good shape. If you would be willing to take on such a service for University Village on behalf of the club it would be greatly appreciated. Please call Jenny Gaden at 434-293-6275 or [jgaden@embarqmail.com](mailto:jgaden@embarqmail.com) for more information.

### 2007 - 2008 Dues Reminder

Just a reminder to pay your dues for those members who have not yet paid their 2007-2008 fiscal year dues. Dues paid now will extend your membership through June 30, 2008. As of January 20, only 59% of MBC members have paid. If you are not sure that your dues are current, Email or call Jim Nix or Henry Konat to get your status.

## Ode to the Cardinal

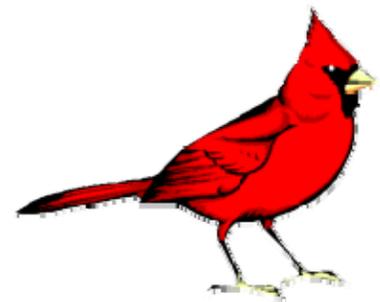
There sits the lone Cardinal  
A beacon in this sea of brown.

I want to thank you for not leaving,  
For not fading.  
For now you stand out in the dead  
of winter,  
The blood of life that will not stop  
flowing;  
The strength and wisdom of nature.  
Too soon you will fall into a green  
shrub  
Somewhere, become just a flash of  
red here or there,  
Behind the Scarlet Tanager,  
The Goldfinch, the Indigo Bunting,  
You are the wise old man who goes  
unnoticed.

Thank you  
For reminding me of brighter mo-  
ments,  
Of warmer days.

And for spending this winter with  
me,  
Enduring the cold together.  
We will await the others' return  
And patiently listen to their stories  
told with fading Spanish accents.

-Lindsey Gilmer



**In the fall an amendment to the by-laws was passed by the club. It allows the president to appoint an at large member of the board of directors. Jenny Gaden has invited Betty Mooney to fill that position and she has accepted. Thank you, Betty, and welcome to the board!**