



# Monticello Bird Club

February 2016 Newsletter  
Website: [www.monticellobirdclub.org](http://www.monticellobirdclub.org)

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Facebook: [Monticello Bird Club](https://www.facebook.com/MonticelloBirdClub)

*MBC Monthly Meeting*—**Thursday, February 11th at 7:00pm**  
at Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Building

**Please join us as we celebrate the Monticello Bird Club's 30th Anniversary!**  
**Cake and hot drinks will be served following the program.**



## Comments from the President

Doug Rogers



Today, when I got up, the temperature at our house was a brisk and bracing fifteen degrees F. The birds outside were busy at our feeders and also busy drinking from our “water feature.” I thought, “Spring migration is not too far into the future and I am looking forward to it!”

Back to the present – the Golden Eagles are in their winter residence in Highland County. We are going to pay them a visit on February 13 and I am looking forward to that too! For a few of you, Golden Eagle is a life bird. Please come with the group. It's an exciting experience. Highland County is a world apart—the “Switzerland of Virginia.” See the meeting place and time on page 2 of this newsletter.

As you read this, please think of yourself as a member of a highly creative “**Think Tank.**” Tap into the creative side of your mind and develop some ideas on how to find a Newsletter Editor and a Membership Chair. (Maynard and I will fill in the gaps of the Bird Seed Sale Chair this year.) The Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair jobs are interesting, people-oriented jobs; they take you into all of the inner workings of the Club. You get to meet and know people that you would otherwise never get to know. You know how to reach me; let me hear from you today.

This month we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Monticello Bird Club. We owe a debt of gratitude to all of those who founded the Club and all who have kept it going for the past thirty years. Good birding!

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## Programs

Lou Tanner



**Topic:** *Budget Birding*

**Speaker:** *Ross Gallardy*



The February Speaker will be Ross Gallardy, whom some of you may remember from comments he made at the talk Pete Myers gave in September about e-birding. Ross, with input from fellow traveler, birder, and wife Melissa, will speak on their highly distinctive approach to what they call ‘budget birding.’ Ross grew up in western PA, where he acquired a deep interest in the feathered ones, but began to vastly expand his birding horizons to other parts of the U.S. during middle and high school. After college he joined the Marine Corps, where he continued his ornithological pursuits—like most Marines no doubt, before moving into even higher gear with the hobby after leaving the military. After marrying Melissa, a honeymoon of the sort most do NOT take led them to many more countries, among which were Peru, Korea, Thailand, and Chile to name but a few. In all, Ross says he has been birding for about twenty years now while Melissa refuses to claim much expertise, though she probably has a life list many of us would envy. Throughout it all, they do it on the cheap and just how they accomplish that, they are going to share with us at the February Meeting.

As usual, we will be dining at the Brick Oven in Rio Road Shopping Center at 5:30 just before the meeting. Please join us and meet Ross and Melissa.

## First Saturday Bird Walk

February 6th at 7:30am

On the first Saturday of each month the Monticello Bird Club offers a bird walk, led by a Club member, at Ivy Creek Natural Area. Participants gather in the parking lot at 7:30am. Birders of all levels are welcome.

### Walk Leaders Winter 2016

Jan. 2....David White

**Feb. 6 .... Teresa Shaner**

March 5 ... Peter Dutnell

For information about opportunities and events at Ivy Creek Natural Area, follow this link to the [Ivy Creek Foundation Public Program Calendar](#).

## Field Trips

Gabriel Mapel



## Highland County

**Date:** Saturday, February 13th

**Meeting Place & Time:** 7:30am in the Barracks Road Parking Lot in front of Bed, Bath & Beyond  
or

8:15am in shopping center at intersection of Routes 250 & 42 in Churchville

**Leader:** Doug Rogers  
doug5996@gmail.com  
434-973-7634 (h)  
434-409-8156 (c)

This is our annual trip to Highland County — the Switzerland of Virginia!. We will look for Golden Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks, Horned Larks, a variety of sparrows and possibly some unusual birds. We should be in the town of Monterey around 9:30am — just in time for the thermals to get the Golden Eagles soaring. We will bird in the Blue-grass Valley and the Hardscrabble area until around lunchtime, returning to Monterey to eat. Following lunch, we can do some more birding or head for home — your call. Please let me know that you plan to participate.

## Bellair Farm Southern Albemarle County

**Date:** Saturday, February 20th

**Meeting Place & Time:** 7:30am at Dairy Barn Road parking lot, just north of intersection of rtes 20 & 53

**Leaders:** Michelle McKenzie & Gabriel Mapel  
michellemckenzie2010@gmail.com  
540-447-0855  
birdmangabriel@yahoo.com  
540-363-5035

Join Gabriel and Michelle (MBC member/birder and Bellair Farmer) on this special trip to Bellair Farm, a beautiful, private 853-acre farm in southern Albemarle County. Michelle has arranged this special opportunity for us. She birds the property frequently and will know where to look for Hooded Mergansers, tons of raptors, meadowlark flocks, Brown Creepers, most of the woodpeckers, and other birds. Once we get to the farm, we will spend most of our several hours' time walking the land.

## Western Albemarle Ducks

**Date:** Saturday, February 27th

**Meeting Place & Time:** 7:30am in the Harris Teeter parking lot, Crozet

**Leaders:** Leigh Surdukowski  
lsurdukowski@gmail.com

Leigh will lead our carpooling caravan to nearby lakes in search of wintering ducks.



*American Robin  
feasting on Omanu's bounty  
Photo by Bill Leaning*

**Birding Tidbits** *about a bird you might find on the Bird Walk at Ivy Creek*  
Jenny Gaden

## American Robin

At dusk for the last week or so (I am writing in the middle of January) I have been watching the movement of hundreds of American Robins, *Turdus migratorius*, from the living room windows of my new house. The neighborhood is dense suburban, but the trees are, for the most part, tall and mature. By the hundreds, maybe more, flocks move into the top branches of the trees surrounding my house, settle for a bit and then fly to the next tree top, proceeding like this for about twenty minutes. Finally they head northwest to some roosting place unknown to me. These are wintering flocks made up of birds from many places north of here and probably include some that nest here as well. *Migratorius* means both “migratory” and “wandering”. The wintering flocks wander in search of berries and fruit fallen to the ground, and insects if the soil is still soft enough. Toward the middle of February we begin to see the migrating flocks traveling north. They congregate on our lawns, cock their heads (“the better to see you, my dear,” say they to the earthworms) to secure the fuel they need for their journey to their nesting areas. It might be a challenge, at that time, to differentiate between the two distinct groups of robins.

*(Editor's Note: If you would like to volunteer as a guest Tidbits writer for the May MBC Newsletter {deadline April 20}, please contact me.)*



*Hooded Merganser  
Photo by Doug Rogers*

## Treasurer's Notes

Maynard K. Davis



We currently have a budget surplus for the year of just over \$2,400, some of which we'll spend in the next six months. We are well over budget in donations, and we're closing in on the membership dues goal, based on the excellent efforts of Lesslie and the rest of the team.

Please call me with any questions.

*Maynard*

## Membership Notes

Lesslie Crowell



Please join me in welcoming new members Pat & Deidre Redington and Katherine Greiner, who, I understand, comes to us from Dan Bieker's PVCC Field Ornithology Class. Also, we welcome back Barbara Goodson. MBC gratefully acknowledges John Vernon's renewal as a Sponsor.

If you are interested in helping me and other MBCers distribute educational and membership materials for MBC at either of two plant sales on Saturday, April 30, any time between 8am and 2pm, I would welcome your assistance. My contact information is on the final page of this newsletter.

*Lesslie*

## MBC Meeting Minutes, January 14, 2016

Peggy Cornett



**-Doug Rogers** opened the meeting by thanking Lesslie Crowell for displaying the posters from the Bird Conservation Poster Contest in the education building. He welcomed newcomers at the meeting, including Pat and Deirdre Redington. There were 45 in attendance.

**-Lou Tanner** shared a **recent sighting** of a Brown Creeper at the City Courthouse in Downtown Charlottesville. Carol Hill reported seeing a red fox in her back yard.

**-Membership chair Lesslie Crowell** reported that we currently have 155 members, including eighteen new members. She announced that the Piedmont Master Gardeners and the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants will be holding plant sales on the same date, April 30. She is asking for volunteers to help promote the Monticello Bird Club at these two events.

**-Treasurer Maynard Davis** reported that the club's finances are in good shape. We have over \$2,400 to cover expenses for the next six months. We are close to our budgeted membership of 175. He gave away an Audubon bird calendar that came to the club's PO Box.

**-Gabriel Mapel reported on field trips.** The December 1 trip to private farms in Southern Albemarle County, led by Dan Bieker, was well attended with twenty-eight birders. They saw Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Gadwall and Bufflehead Ducks. Gabriel's January 9 trip to the Green Springs Historic District in Louisa County had eleven birders and they recorded forty species. Gabriel is leading a walk on the Rivanna Trail along Moore's Creek on January 30. The Highland County trip to see Golden Eagles will be led by Doug Rogers on February 13.

**-Joanne Bricker** reminded us that the deadline for newsletter submissions is Wednesday, January 20. She thanked guest contributors to the newsletter who replaced Jenny Gaden while Jenny was moving and solicited future guest Tidbits contributors.

**-Doug reminded members** that, at the end of June, both Lesslie Crowell and Joanne Bricker will be resigning their positions as membership chair and newsletter editor respectively, and asked members to please consider taking on these vital positions.

**-Guy Babineau**, publicity chair, said that the Facebook page is driving a lot of interest. Peggy Cornett commented that joining the MBC Facebook is a good way to see great bird photography posted by our members, including Doug Rogers and Guy.

**-Nancy Newman** recently visited Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck, North Carolina, which is a conservation area with 2,500 birds from all over the world. For more information, visit: <http://shwpark.com/>

**-Hospitality coordinators Ron and Priscilla Kingston** reminded members that the club celebrates its thirtieth anniversary in February and there will be special refreshments at the next meeting.



### Wood Duck

Photo by Nancy Newman  
Sylvan Heights Bird Park

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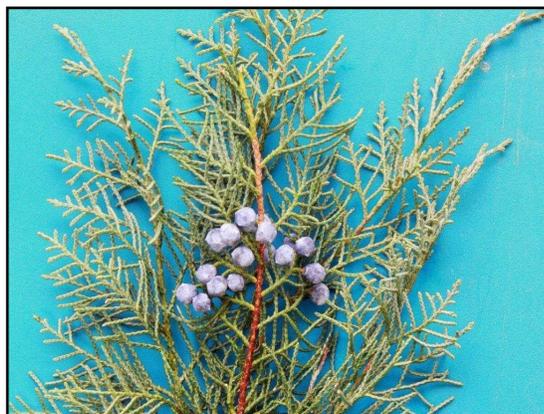


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## The Wonderfully Versatile Junipers— Part 2

I have divided my article about Junipers into two parts. In last month's column I discussed Junipers and Eastern Redcedar, the first of four species of *Juniper* that do well in Central Virginia. This month, I am featuring the remaining three species. Three of these four are growing on our Omanu property in Earlysville.

As a quick review...Junipers are the most ubiquitous and toughest of all the needle evergreens used in the general landscape. They can play a vital role in the wildlife garden providing year round evergreen shelter and nesting sites. We have had nesting Northern Cardinals, Catbirds, Northern Mockingbirds and Brown Thrashers. Many species also provide food in the form of cones. Junipers inhabit the most adverse cultural niches in nature, which makes them easy care trees and shrubs for the wildlife garden. *Juniperus* is a highly variable genus, existing as 60 foot tall trees, all the way down to 2 or 3 inch spreading ground cover. All Junipers have small needle or scale-like foliage. Young plants are always needle-like; older plants have both forms. They are readily transplanted and will thrive in almost any soil except those that are constantly wet. They prefer full sun for maximum growth but will do quite well in "bright shade" or a minimum of 5 hours of sun, daily. Junipers are extremely versatile and can be used in hedgerows, group plantings or as single specimens. They can also be used as ground covers and, heaven forbid (in a wildlife garden), topiary.



### Chinese Juniper *Juniperus chinensis*

A Juniper species with extraordinary variation. The species, native to China, Mongolia and Japan, grows to 60 feet high with blue-green needlelike foliage. The up to ½ inch cones are the largest of the cultivated Junipers.

#### Cultivars and Varieties

When I drew up my plant list for my initial landscaping some seven years ago, I had researched a Chinese Juniper called "Hetzii", a female form that sets abundant cone crops. The actual size in the landscape ranges from 5 to 10 feet high and wide. Three healthy young Chinese Junipers arrived in the spring of 1998 and have thrived where they were planted. By about year three, I started getting suspicious about the distinct lack of "abundant cones" for our birds. Back to the nursery to confirm that these plants were not the requested female clone "Hetzii" but the much more common Granddaddy of Chinese Juniper cultivars, "Pfitzeriana" or "Pfitzer". It is an attractive Juniper but for shelter and nesting possibilities, only. The good news is that it also has never been browsed by deer in 17 years.

I have yet to locate the clone named "Hetzii Columnaris". It matures at only 15 to 20 feet, is a beautiful blue-green, naturally shaped, columnar-pyramidal tree. It is a female that sets abundant cones! "Robusta Green," a female cultivar with gray-green foliage, sets abundant cones and can grow to 15 feet.

Wayside Gardens, in Hodges, South Carolina, has a Chinese Juniper cultivar called "Saybrook Gold," It is reported to be a spectacular, intense golden-yellow in all four seasons with a graceful, feathery-looking growth habit, reaching three feet high and 6 feet wide. Two other low-growing spreading types I saw at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens are "Daubs Frosted" and "Manhattan Blue".

### Creeping Juniper *Juniperus horizontalis*



This is a true spreading ground-cover type Juniper for those of us wishing to reduce the amount of lawn to mow or the number of weeds to pull! The cultivars of this species consistently develop mauve to deep purple colors in cold weather, making Creeping Juniper distinguishable from other ground-cover Junipers. It grows 1 to 4 feet high; and its spread is variable.

#### Cultivars and Varieties

Numerous cultivars have been selected and some nurseries offer several different forms. My experience with "Blue Rug" Juniper in New Jersey wasn't the best. The deer thought of it

as a salad bar, nibbling every green shoot as it emerged. As a consequence, I have not shared any Creeping Juniper with our Omanu deer population. “Plumosa” has long been the dominant Creeping Juniper cultivar, found virtually anywhere you can buy landscape plants.

Wayside Gardens is now offering a new compact Creeping Juniper called “Mother Lode,” just three inches tall with only a three foot spread. It is reported to have a rich, golden coloration, “bright and cheerful,” assuming a yellow-bronze hue in the winter landscape.

**Japanese Garden Juniper *Juniperus procumbens***

Thirty years ago, when I was starting a new garden in Central New Jersey, I was unaware of the need to avoid planting trees and shrubs that attracted deer. I soon learned what not to plant. The problem was the short list of What to Plant. In 1984, I had discovered (what was then very rare on the East Coast) a ground cover Juniper called *Procumbens nana*. As the years went by, this Juniper thrived and, best of all, the deer didn’t touch it. I have always considered this dwarf procumbent form the best ground cover Juniper ever. It has long wide-spreading, branches and rich, shiny blue-green needles. It grows up to 2 feet high with an attractive central “mound”. It has a spread of 10 to 12 feet and will also drape attractively over a stone wall. An interesting aside for those of you with patience is the fact that you can select one of the horizontal branches and train it to grow vertically. The end result (with a little judicious pruning) over time is a beautifully shaped dwarf evergreen seemingly growing out of a living green carpet.



In recent years, the Japanese garden Juniper has become more widely available. The original cultivar “Nana”, that mounds up in the center, has been followed by a “green mound” which is probably the same as “Nana Californica,” greener in color and soft, flat with a rug-like texture. It grows about 9 inches high with a 4 to 6 foot spread. The wide variety among the Junipers in growth habit, foliage color and texture beckons the wildlife gardener to try to include some in the landscape. *Bill*

**The Joy of Birding...a sharing of stories**



photos



& links



from M.B.C members

**Nancy Newman** kindly shared a few more fabulous photographs from her exciting November travels to **South Africa and Botswana.**



(clockwise, from above)

**Lilac-breasted Roller , Botswana**  
**Black Crake, Botswana**  
**Yellow-billed Oxpeckers dining on ticks provided by their host giraffe.**



From your Editor...Well, as I'm putting the newsletter together, it's Sat. Jan 23rd and the snow continues to mount. I'm certain we all have our respective avian feeding frenzies to report, but since I have a photographer nearby and a little space to fill, thought I'd include a few shots from our busy corner, third-floor balcony on blustery Pantops Mountain.

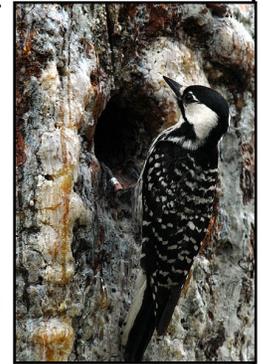


*So much information, so little time....*  
Follow these links to articles that your fellow birding enthusiasts recommend.

From [Frances Boninti](#) — Frances shared two compelling links. The first is a [timely, introspective article by nature writer Helen MacDonald](#) from the Jan. 6th New York Times Magazine, about our particular motivations for feeding wildlife. Definitely much food for thought here...

Frances' second find is in two parts, also from the New York Times. First is an [article about Jane Kim's Bird Mural](#) that now adorns Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology walls. And, here is a [link to the slideshow](#) (if you didn't already utilize the link embedded in the article) that allows us to better grasp the breadth and beauty of this prodigious project.

From [Janet Paisley](#) — Janet sent us an exciting article describing the decade long efforts of many wildlife organizations to [establish a new breeding colony of the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge](#). The article is written so that you feel you are a project participant during the culminating release phase of this incredible undertaking.



**Red-cockaded Woodpecker**  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Wikimedia Commons



(above) A not very picturesque, but a most active, pedestal.

(left to right)

- The "nutcake" attracts many visitors.
- My favorite Butter Butt. It's plumper and has more yellow coloring than its compatriots..
- Note the clever, sheltered wren under the cover!




**Monticello Bird Club**  
P.O. Box 4362  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22905

Visit our website at  
[www.monticellobirdclub.org](http://www.monticellobirdclub.org)  
for club and membership information.

The **Club meets** on the **second Thursday** of each month, September through May, at the **Education Building of the Ivy Creek Natural Area** on Earlsyville Rd, 1/2 mile north of Hydraulic Rd.

The editor of the **MBC Newsletter** welcomes submissions, including articles, photographs, notices, & links. **DEADLINE** for each issue is **9:00AM on the 20th** of the month.

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