



Monticello Bird Club

March 2014 Newsletter

Website: www.monticellobirdclub.org

Volume 28

Issue 7

Facebook: [Monticello Bird Club](#)

MBC Monthly Meeting—Thursday, March 13th at 7:00pm

Comments from the President

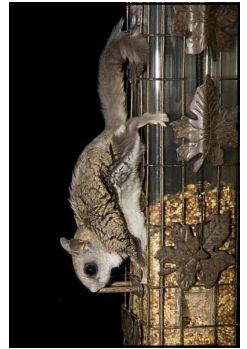
Doug Rogers

It was about 10pm – well past sunset in January – and there was a distinctive “thunk” on the sliding-glass door that opens to our little deck.

Our condo is on the top floor of our building. We have two seed feeders, a nut-cake feeder and some homemade “Bark Butter” feeders on our deck. Our regular winter visitors include Yellow-rumped Warblers, Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Northern Cardinals, White-breasted Nuthatches, White-throated Sparrows, Juncos, House Finches, Song Sparrows and all such. During the daylight hours we frequently hear the distinctive “thunk” on our door when one of the birds flies into it (usually a Mourning Dove). Fortunately, they never seem to injure themselves. Hearing that sound at 10pm at night, though, was a real surprise!

I looked out on the deck at the feeders. At first, I saw nothing unusual. I continued to watch for several minutes and finally saw a pair of eyes staring back at me. The eyes were brown with long eyelashes and the animal was tiny. It was a flying squirrel – the first I had seen in many years! It had been feeding on our nut-cake feeder and promptly leaped over the railing and “flew” to the nearby woods. Despite witnessing the theft of our birds’ prized nut-cake seeds, we were thrilled to add this little furry mammal to the list of avians who have visited our Pantop patio.

On another note completely, the VSO is going to have its annual meeting in Wintergreen in 2015. The MBC board and the Augusta club’s board have voted to co-host the event. This will be exciting (and a lot of work)! Jenny Gaden and I will be the initial representatives on the MBC Team to plan this event. As we go forward, more help will be needed to make it successful. All who are interested in being members of this Team please contact me ASAP.



Flying Squirrel
Photo by Steve Ryan
Wikimedia Commons

Speaker of the Month: John Lampkin: “Bugs in Your Bloomers”

Stauffer Miller



Digging out from their upstate New York home, John Lampkin and his wife Jane are happily heading for warmer climes. En route, they have graciously agreed to stop in Charlottesville so that John can dazzle us with his educational, artistic and, above all, entertaining program, “Bugs in Your Bloomers” at our March 13th meeting.

Insects and flowering plants have been co-evolving for 135 million years and as a result, both groups have flourished, becoming our most abundant flora and fauna. The relationships are more varied, complex and sophisticated than first meets the eye. So, what is that bug and what is it doing in that flower? Armed with camera and thinking cap, John Lampkin has been investigating that question and will let us in on some of the amazing “answers” he has documented in this beautiful photographic presentation.

John Lampkin is an avid amateur naturalist and macro-photographer and has been the compiler for the North American Butterfly Association counts in Rockland County, New York for the past ten years. Coincidentally, as a professional composer his woodwind quintet, "Insects: A Musical Entomology in Six Legs" won the Grand Prize in the 2001 Composers Guild international competition. John also constructs crossword puzzles for the New York Times and the LA Times, with many of his puzzles having Nature themes. Except for his fascination with bugs he is totally harmless.

As usual, we take our speakers to dinner before they present their programs. Please join us at the Brick Oven Restaurant at 5:30pm on March 13th to dine and chuckle with John and Jane. Hope to see you there.

Submitted by Joanne Bricker for Stauffer Miller

First Saturday Bird Walk

March 1, 7:30am

On the first Saturday of each month (*for twenty years!*), 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-Spring 2014

Mar. 1...Peter Dutnell

Jan. 4 Jim Nix
Feb. 1 Teresa Shaner
Apr. 5 Janet Paisley
May 3Stauffer Miller
June 7 ... David White

Birding Tidbits

...about a bird you might find on the Bird Walk at Ivy Creek in February
by Janet Dalton

American Crow

The American Crow is one of the most common and familiar birds in North America. It's all black, with black bill, legs and feet. The Fish Crow is nearly identical, but can easily be differentiated by call.

American Crows are flocking birds and live in family units; male and female plus offspring. Males and females mate for life until one dies. They're cooperative breeders with families up to 15 individuals. They forage together, guard each other and take care of one another. American Crows can live up to 20 years and as a result delay breeding; female at 3-1/2 years and males 4+. Additionally, their long lives have enabled them to see much and adapt.

American Crows form winter roosts (Oct-Mar) where they sleep together for protection (great horned owls are one of their biggest predators), share information about food and enjoy social benefits. Sounds a lot like humans!



American Crow
Photo by Dick Daniels
Wikimedia Commons

Field Trips

Organized by John Davis

Albemarle County

Saturday, March 8, 7:30am

Led by Leigh Surdukowski

Leigh will lead us on a 2-3 hour tour of northern Albemarle County looking for ducks and other winter birds.

Directions: Meet at 7:30am in the Ivy Creek parking lot and we'll car-pool from there.

York River State Park Trees & Birds

Saturday, March 15, 8:00am

Led by John Holden

John has invited the bird club to join this trip he runs at York River State Park for the Virginia Master Naturalists. We will hike 2 trails in this beautiful and pristine park. In addition to wading birds, eagles and hawks, there can be a number of warblers in the evergreen shrubs along the shoreline. The trees are magnificent as well, and we will spend time identifying and appreciating them. Be prepared to hike the Taskinas Creek trail — 2.25 miles round trip—up one of the best preserved and natural estuaries in the Bay watershed, and later hike the Mattaponi Trail—2 miles round trip— to a fossil beach on the York River.

Directions: Meet and carpool from Starbucks on Pantops in time to leave by **8:00am**. The park is a 2 hour drive from Charlottesville. John will bring several field guides. Please dress or bring clothing for "possible" cool weather hiking. A snack or bag lunch is suggested, as this trip will last most of the day.

American Woodcocks

Friday, March 21, 6:30pm

Led by Jenny Gaden

Jenny will lead this field trip in search of American Woodcocks putting on their aerial display. **Bring a flashlight** to help you, since it will be dusk.

Directions: Meet at 6:30pm at the parking area across from the Piedmont Store on Route 810, just after Garth Road (Route 614) joins it in White Hall. We will carpool the short distance to the woodcock fields on Clark Road.

Notes from BRYBC

by Gabriel Mapel

The Young Birders Club is going great! We held our first meeting in the Shenandoah Valley (rather than Charlottesville) on February 1st, and it was extremely successful. We had several new members in attendance and had a program on Bluebird Nest Monitoring with plans to monitor a Bluebird Trail in the Valley as well as continue our trail at PVCC, which we had a great time monitoring last year. Our next meeting is Saturday, March 1st at the Ivy Creek Education Building at 9:30am, so if you know of any interested young birders, please spread the word, we'd love to see them there!



Membership Notes

by Lesslie Crowell



Now that MBC has achieved its membership goal for 2014, it is time to work on attracting members for next year. First Saturday Bird Walks and meetings have proven to be an excellent way to introduce the public to our club. Additional advertising also works very well.

This spring I will again be manning publicity tables all day for MBC at the Tufton Farm Open House on April 5th. In addition, I will be at City Market for two Saturday mornings in April and May, and, in the fall during the Hawk Watch and before the Birdseed Sale.

I would be very grateful if several MBC members would volunteer an hour or two of time to spell me at any of these events. If you can help, please contact me at lessliecrowell@aol.com or 434-284-3503.

Treasurer's Notes

by Maynard K. Davis

We've now made all the contributions we had budgeted for, including donations to the American Bird Conservancy, the Blue Ridge Young Birders Club, Ivy Creek Foundation, National Audubon Society and Virginia Society of Ornithology.

We have generated a surplus of just under \$1,500 so far this year, and the Board is considering appropriate projects to make best use of the surplus funds. One possible suggestion in the works may be the permanent preservation and display of five species of birds (currently in Jenny Gaden's freezer) in a free-standing display case in the Ivy Creek Education Building. Stay tuned for further details.



MBC Minutes February 20, 2014

Peggy Cornett, Secretary

President Doug Rogers welcomed the gathering of 35 members, guests, and three newcomers at this rescheduled meeting and asked for interesting bird sightings. Eve Schwartz reported her rare sighting of two Blue Jays in this unusual, jayless season.



Reports from the Treasurer and Membership Chair were presented and are noted above.

Jenny Gaden presented Albemarle County results for the December 15th Christmas Bird Count. There were 72 Species counted, which included two "rare" sightings of Blue-Winged Teal and Horned Grebe by David White. Two "High" totals were noted—Northern Harrier-3, and Merlin—also 3. Totals of 52 Rock Pigeons, 77 Mourning Doves, 29 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and 22 Blue Jays were all-time "Low" totals at this year's count.

Doug reported for Field Trip Coordinator John Davis that the Highland County Trip produced sightings of 6 Golden Eagles and several Bald Eagles. Birders on John Holden's Belvedere walk saw a Coopers Hawk feeding on a Starling, 3 Sparrow species, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Hermit Thrush. Unfortunately, the absence of Short-Eared Owls caused a cancellation of Teresa's Louisa trip, and the snowy February weather also wiped out Gabriel's Shenandoah Valley Trip and postponed the Dutch Gap Trip to Feb. 22. The popular two week *Birding Before Work* walks will be scheduled for late April and early May. John is considering substituting Riverview Park for the Secluded Farm venue. Please advise if members have input pro or con regarding this proposed change.

Doug made a plea for any "busy persons" to volunteer for the position of Field Trip Coordinator, which will become available for the 2014-15 season. He also asked club members to consider serving on the team for the 2015 VSO Meeting which will be head-quartered at Wintergreen and co-hosted by Augusta and Monticello Bird Clubs. There will be many volunteers needed for this exciting event and many ways to contribute. So please, contact Doug or Jenny Gaden, who will be heading the team and volunteer for this undertaking. We need everyone to step up and serve.

Stauffer reported the many exciting birds found recently by intrepid birders in our area. If you haven't been following along on the Monticello Bird Alert, Stauffer provided a summary. Among the exciting finds were Long-tailed Duck, Loggerhead Shrike, Lapland Longspurs, Merlin, Common Merganser, and, after much ID discussion, a Red-necked Grebe. To keep up with the details, locales, and fearsome birders and their finds, often with accompanying photos, follow along on the Monticello Bird Alert. Directions for joining this group are found on our website www.monticellobirdclub.org.

Submitted by Joanne Bricker for Peggy Cornett



To help us keep our ducks in a row, Eve Gaige sent this wonderful instructional photo of a Canvasback (left) and Redhead (right).

At James Madison's Montpelier, Rebecca Hagen (who works in the Curatorial department) took this beautiful wintry shot of a Great Blue Heron.



Nancy Newman documented the unexpected visit of a Long-tailed Duck at Chris Green Lake.

Balcony

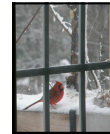
by Julie Horne

The sunlight streaming in through glassy doors
Reminds me to look out into the world
And see above, the sky all pink and streaked
Arcing above the gentle mountain peaks;
Closer in, the lake, all rippled, hiding in the trees;

But closer yet, the birds
So artless in their need of seed or nuts
That they dare come in close,
To sacrifice the safe so they
May live within the cold.

From little juncos pecking on the planks
To finches, choosing just the proper seed,
To woodpeckers who crack the larger finds,
To cardinals who monitor it all,
They share, without a tweet, the bounty I provide,
But fly away the instant I approach.

This is the twitter feed for me,
A treat for sight, a vision of the real.



Marjie Giuliano documented these artistic rectangular sapwells in a pyracantha. Do you know the answer to this Woodpecker "Who Done It?" We're more likely to see sapwell **holes** drilled by the little Culprit — an industrious Yellow-bellied Sapsucker!

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Thanks for the wonderful sharing.
Appreciatively,
Your MBC Newsletter Editor



Monticello Bird Club

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Visit our website at
www.monticellobirdclub.org
for club and membership information.

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

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

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|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
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