



Monticello Bird Club

March 2016 Newsletter
Website: www.monticellobirdclub.org

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MBC Monthly Meeting—Thursday, March 10th at 7:00pm

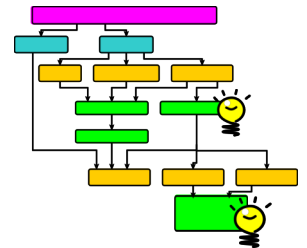
at Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Building

Comments from the President

Doug Rogers



This spring we are going to convene a meeting of the Club's "Brain Trust." We need to put our heads together and come up with a plan for the Club going forward. I am asking the Board and four non-Board members to participate. Specifically, we need to talk about the following:



1. How to recruit new Team members to fill the three vacancies on the Board: Newsletter Editor, Bird Seed Sale Chair and Membership Chair?
2. Do we continue with the Newsletter or do something else?
3. Assuming this year's Bird Seed Sale is as successful as last year's, do we again sponsor a poster contest, like last year, or do something else?
4. What kind of community outreach programs should the Club do?
5. How can we attract younger people to the Club?
6. What else should we consider in planning the future of the Club?

I solicit all of **your** ideas too. You are a member of the Club's Brain Trust. Send me your ideas on the above items or any others that you feel need to be addressed.

Hang on tight. Spring migration is coming!

Good birding!

Programs

Lou Tanner



Topic: *Ruffed Grouse & Virginia Forest Ecology*

Speaker: *Gary Norman*



Just a few decades ago a hiker in the forests of Virginia was quite likely to encounter a Ruffed Grouse. Just how rare this experience has become is something no birder needs to be told. Our speaker for the March meeting has spent decades wrestling with this and related issues. Gary Norman, Senior Research Biologist for the VA Division of Game and Inland Fisheries, has been the Upland Game Bird Project Leader for most of the last two decades. He graduated from Glenville State College in WV in 1977 with a degree in Biology before earning further degrees at WVU and VA Tech. He was a Wildlife Biologist for the WV Department of Natural Resources from 1980-87 before moving on to the VA DGIF. There he has devoted years to working on conservation issues related to grouse, wild turkeys, and quail among other things. For an informed presentation on what is happening to the ecology of VA forests and how this has in turn affected the bird-life we see or don't see, come to the March 10th meeting.

As usual, we will be eating at the Brick Oven at 5:30. Come meet Gary Norman and get a preview. (Gary was originally scheduled to speak in December, if this write-up seems familiar. As he couldn't make the December meeting, we look forward to his rescheduled March talk.)

The April speaker will be Club Member and retired forester Tom Dierauf, who will give a presentation on how the forests and landscape in general of VA appeared prior to European settlement and what environmental changes have occurred in the four centuries since.

First Saturday Bird Walk

March 5th 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

March 5 ... Peter Dutnell

April 2....Stauffer Miller
May 7....Leigh Surdukowski
June 4 Jim Nix

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



Birding Tidbits *about a bird you might find on the March Bird Walk at Ivy Creek*
by Tom Jones

Northern Flicker

Called yellow-hammer in Alabama where they are the state bird, Northern Flickers are seen here year-round and will likely be seen on any walk at Ivy Creek in March. Look for a good-sized brownish bird with a large white rump patch flying up from the ground where it may have been feeding on ants—its favorite food. Flickers also eat seeds and berries and other insects, but they eat more ants than just about any species.

All Northern Flickers in the East are of the yellow-shafted subspecies and have black-barred brownish backs, black-spotted buffy breasts, gray crowns, brown faces, red crescents on the nape, and yellow under the wings. Males also have a black “moustache.” All in all, they are one of our most striking common birds. There is also a red-shafted subspecies of the Northern Flicker out West with slightly different markings. The two subspecies hybridize in a zone on the Great Plains.

The flicker’s laugh-like “ki-ki-ki-ki” sound is sometimes confused with the call of the Pileated Woodpecker; it’s single, loud “keew” or “peough” is quite distinctive. So when at Ivy Creek in March, enjoy the sight or sound of our second-largest woodpecker—or third if you still believe there are Ivory-Billed Woodpeckers extant.



Northern Flicker
Photo from Mike's Birds
Wikimedia Commons

Highland County *(3rd time's a charm, we hope!)*

Date: Saturday, March 5th

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)

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 Bluegrass 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.

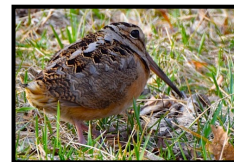
American Woodcocks at Humpback Rocks

Date: Friday, March 11th

Meeting Place & Time: 6:15pm at the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center (on your right, about 5 miles south of Rockfish Gap) along the Blue Ridge Parkway

Leader: Jenny Gaden

Jenny will lead our annual evening trip looking and listening for American Woodcocks performing their annual mating aerial display at dusk. We are trying a different location (than the traditional White Hall site) in hopes of more woodcocks and better views. Be sure to dress warmly for mountain weather and bring a flashlight.



American Woodcock
Photo by Eve Gaige
(Apologies for the cropping edit, Eve)

Lickinghole Creek

Date: Saturday, March 19th

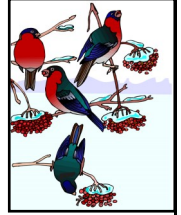
Meeting Place & Time: 8:00am at the Great Valu parking lot in Crozet (Rte 240, just east of Downtown)

Leaders: Peter Brask
peterbrask@yahoo.com
434-823-2363

Peter will lead us on our annual spring trip at Lickinghole Creek near Crozet. We will be looking for early spring migrants and lingering winter residents, including waterfowl, shorebirds, sparrows, and warblers. We will walk about 2 miles, and the trip will last for at least 2 hours.

CBC Results

Submitted by Jenny Gaden



The 2015 (Audubon designates it 2016) Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count took place on Sunday, December 20. It was a pleasant, clear day, practically no wind, with a little ice on some shallow waters. Forty-two people participated in 15 teams. The species reported are below. Three species (with asterisks) required rare bird form submissions. Teta Kain, the regional editor, has accepted the Common loon reported by Leigh Surdukowski. I expect that Stauffer Miller's submission of the Rusty blackbird will also be accepted. Teta will have to discuss with Audubon the Canada goose/Cackling goose hybrid, submitted by Cricket Barlow and David Shoch, as far as acceptance is concerned. I don't believe it will be considered a separate species, but what do I know? That decision will determine the number of species in this year's count. Not counting the hybrid, and including the Rusty blackbird, the total number of species is 73. The final report can be found in a few weeks through the query tool at www.christmasbirdcount.org; then click on "CBC Results".

Canada goose/cackling goose hybrid*
Wood duck
American black duck
Mallard
Green-winged teal
Bufflehead
Hooded merganser
Wild turkey
Common loon*
Pied-billed grebe
Great blue heron
Black vulture
Turkey vulture
Bald eagle
Northern harrier
Sharp-shinned hawk
Cooper's hawk
Red-shouldered hawk
Red-tailed hawk
American kestrel
Killdeer
Wilson's snipe
Rock pigeon
Mourning dove
Great-horned owl

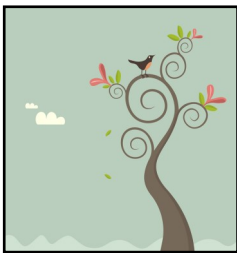
Belted kingfisher
Red-headed woodpecker
Red-bellied woodpecker
Yellow-bellied sapsucker
Downy woodpecker
Hairy woodpecker
Northern flicker
Pileated woodpecker
Eastern phoebe
Blue jay
American crow
Fish crow
Common raven
Carolina chickadee
Tufted titmouse
White-breasted nuthatch
Brown creeper
Winter wren
Carolina wren
Golden-crowned kinglet
Ruby-crowned kinglet
Eastern bluebird
Hermit thrush
American robin
Gray catbird

Northern mockingbird
Brown thrasher
European starling
Cedar waxwing
Yellow-rumped warbler
Pine warbler
Eastern towhee
Chipping sparrow
Field sparrow
Savannah sparrow
Song sparrow
Swamp sparrow
White-throated sparrow
White-crowned sparrow
Dark-eyed junco
Northern cardinal
Red-winged blackbird
Rusty blackbird*
Common grackle
Purple finch
House finch
American goldfinch
House sparrow
Wren

Birding Before Work Walks Need Leaders — How about You?

by Gabriel Mapel

As spring approaches we set our eyes toward warblers and the other wonders of spring migration! To celebrate migration, we will once again be holding our annual **Birding Before Work** walks. For the last week of April and the first week of May, we will hold a walk each weekday morning from 7-8:30am at one of three locations — Ivy Creek Natural Area (**ICNA**), Observatory Hill (**O-Hill**), and Riverview Park (**RP**). These walks are always fun, enjoyable, and birdy! The walk schedule follows.



WEEK 1	
Date	Site
April 25	ICNA
April 26	O-Hill
April 27	RP
April 28	ICNA
April 29	O-Hill

WEEK 2	
Date	Site
May 2	O-Hill
May 3	ICNA
May 4	RP
May 5	ICNA
May 6	O-Hill

In order to make the program a success, **we need leaders!** Please consider signing up to lead a **Birding Before Work walk!** To do so, Contact Gabriel Mapel (birdmangabriel@yahoo.com or 540-363-5035), and please specify which walk you would like to lead. Thank you so much for considering this!

Treasurer's Notes

Maynard K. Davis



We currently have a budget surplus of just over \$2,000. This past month we paid \$200 for the Hog Island Camp Scholarship for our deserving Blue Ridge Young Birders Club recipient, Gabriel Mapel. We also upgraded our projector for \$472, of which more than half was funded by a generous donation from Richard Teig.

Maynard

Membership Notes

Lesslie Crowell

MBC extends a warm welcome to new members Mary Ames, Eileen DeCamp, Ludwig Kuttner, and Robert Letts. Welcome back greetings are in order for Hooter Hartman and Catherine Buck.

Please let me know if you are interested in helping at the MBC information tables on April 30 at Tufton Farm and at the Piedmont Master Gardeners plant sale.

Lesslie



MBC Meeting Minutes, February 11, 2016

Peggy Cornett



-**Doug Rogers** opened the meeting by thanking Ron and Priscilla Kingston for organizing a celebration of the club's 30th anniversary with cake and cider, to be enjoyed after the program. Doug welcomed newcomers, and Mary Ames introduced herself as a new member. There were forty-six present.

-**Unusual bird sightings** were reported. John Holden saw numerous bird species during his recent excursion to wildlife refuges in South Carolina, including Magnolia Plantation, Kiawah, and Murrells Inlet. Highlights were Ibis and Tricolored Heron. Amy Neale reported observing twenty Sandhill Cranes flying over Southern Madison Co. Lou Tanner saw a Horned Grebe and a Red-headed Woodpecker at Kerr Reservoir and Buck Island on the North Carolina/Virginia border. Jim Nix has had Chipping Sparrows at his tube feeder. Doug Rogers and Joanne Bricker counted eighteen different species at their feeders during the recent snow storm. Ron and Priscilla Kingston saw their first Pine Siskin on February 7. They also reported seeing a first-year male Baltimore Oriole in their backyard on the same day. Goldfinches have been abundant at feeders.

-**Doug announced** that Richard Teig generously helped fund MBC's new projector. Gabriel Mapel is the recipient of an MBC scholarship toward his attendance to Audubon's Hog Island summer camp for a second year.

-**Doug is organizing a strategic planning team** to meet in April to make future plans for the club. He is asking for volunteers to be on the team.

-**Jenny Gaden reported on the Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count**, which was held December 20. Forty-two people were divided into fifteen teams. Three rare birds were submitted to Teta Kane: a Common Loon (reported by Leigh Surdokowski); Rusty Blackbird (by Stauffer Miller); and a Canada Goose/Crackling Goose hybrid. There was a total of seventy-three species reported. The highest count was the American Robin at 2,433. There were 552 Cedar Waxwings counted.

-**Membership chair Lesslie Crowell** welcomed four new members. She is asking for help manning the bird club exhibit at two events in April. An exhibit of the poster contest winners will be at the Virginia Discovery Museum and then move to C'ville Coffee.

-**The club's finances** continue to be in good shape according to Treasurer Maynard Davis.

-**Gabriel Mapel reported on Field Trips**. The January 30 trip on the Rivanna Trail in the Willoughby area offered twenty-six species including a Golden-crowned Kinglet. The Highland County trip was postponed to March 5. On February 20 there will be a trip to Belair Farm in Southern Albemarle County. Leigh Surdokowski will lead a walk to Western Albemarle County on February 27.

-**Newsletter editor Joanne Bricker** thanked Tom Jones and Lou Tanner for submitting articles for the Tidbits Column.

-**Publicity chair Susan Babineau** reported that there are nine new Facebook members and she encouraged members to post comments and observations, even if they don't have photographs



MBC's Happy 30th Anniversary Cake

Ron Kingston sent along this photo of our delicious Logo-decorated cake he and Hospitality Co-chair Priscilla Kingston provided for our February celebration. Yum.

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Bill Leaning

Oregon Grapeholly or Oregon Grape

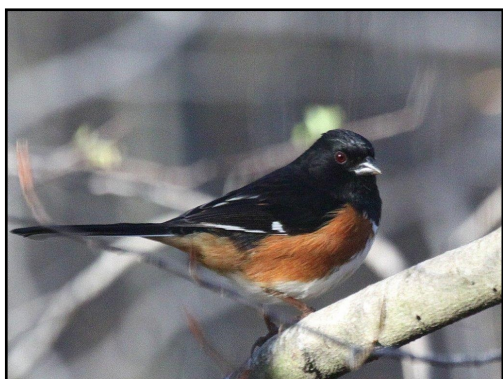
Mahonia aquifolium

Oregon Grapeholly is one of the more cold-hardy and bird-friendly broadleaf evergreens. This under-utilized species offers excellent shade tolerance. It will tolerate sun but tends to brown up very badly unless sited in a protected location. It prefers moist, well-drained, acid soil; avoid hot, dry soils and desiccating winds.

There appear to be at least two forms, one more compact and mounded prone to suckering; the other, a taller, upright and more open form. The foliage is certainly spectacular, especially, the newly emerging leaves, which are reddish bronze as they unfold, changing to glossy light green in the spring and a lustrous dark green in the summer. As fall approaches, the leaves can turn purplish bronze and hold this color all winter.



Mahonia Aquifolium
Photo from Wikimedia Commons



Mahonia is very handsome in flower with bright yellow “bee-friendly” flowers in April that are on long and wide terminal racemes. The fruit is a true berry, maturing in July/August as bunches of “grapes”. The bird-friendly fruits acquire a bloom as they mature.

Mahonia can be used as a foundation plant in a shrub border or as a single specimen. Apparently, many cultivars have been developed, but only a few are commonly available. “Compactum” or “Compacta” is probably the commonest in local nurseries. It’s a beautifully mounded form growing about 3 feet tall. “Kings Ransom” is more upright in habit and has apparently become more popular in recent years.

Cultivars worth searching for include “Apollo”, a low-growing variety with golden orange flowers in dense heads, which makes a good ground cover. “Emerald” intermediate between “Compactum” and the larger growing types has spectacular foliage and appears less prone to leaf discoloration.



Bill's beautiful photos of some of Omanu's visitors (clockwise from right)

- **Song Sparrow**
- **Bobwhite**
- **Eastern Towhee**



“Creeping Mahonia” *Mahonia repens*

This species is a low growing (12 to 18 inches) suckering, ever-green ground cover with yellow flowers and blue-black fruit. The leaves turn a rich purple in winter. I thought this would be a perfect ground cover for a shaded bank bordering our driveway at “Omanu”. *Mahonia repens* proved very difficult to find, but I finally obtained 24 specimens and planted them out. The ensuing drought years and a quick drying slope combined to devastate my experiment. “Creeping Mahonia” is well worth trying if you have the right conditions.

Bill

Bellair Farm — Check It Out!

by Joanne Bricker et al

This sunlit **Bald Eagle** posed regally from the far end of the pond for quite some time.
Janet's Photo



Gabriel Mapel's Feb.13th posting from the Monticello Bird Alert gives a sense of the glorious morning we field trip participants spent at beautiful Bellair Farm, where agricultural practices date back to the 17th century, The property is now being carefully and conscientiously transitioned to a responsible and sustainable business operation employing eco-friendly, organic practices and involving the community in its many operations and events. Here's Gabriel's MBA Post:



A **Belted Kingfisher** stubbornly perched behind a branch.
Janet's photo.

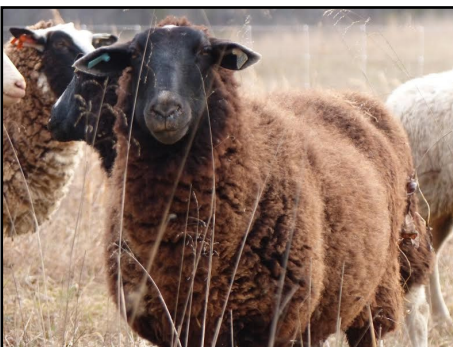
I co-led with Michelle McKenzie today a Monticello Bird Club field trip to Bellair Farm, a nearly 900-acre farm in southern Albemarle County where Michelle works. (Editorial Insert: Michelle, also a birder and MBA member, is the Associate Manager of Agricultural Operations at the farm. Doubt if that's your exact title, Michelle; I hope I haven't botched it too seriously, but she's a "dynamo," in any case!) It was a gorgeous day to be out with many great birds highlighted by an adult male Merlin that flew fast by us and then tore into a flock of Blackbirds, Meadowlarks, and Flickers. We lost sight of the Merlin but I feel somewhat confident that he succeeded in getting a meal.

Thanks so much to Michelle for co-leading this trip and letting us go on the gorgeous property! Thanks to all 14 participants for coming and enjoying the morning.

One **Fox Sparrow** posed nicely for the crowd, but turned away from the camera lenses.
(Janet's left & Nancy's below.)



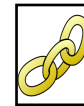
We observed a total of 46 species on our walk through varying habitats (and mud!). Janet Paisley and Nancy Newman were kind enough to send along photos from the morning (with only a short bout of arm-pulling from Yours Truly). So enjoy these pictures, and take some pleasurable online time exploring more of the beauty and bounty that is [Bellair Farm](#). You might want to consider becoming a Bellair Farm CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) member. Now's the time to sign up. Here's a link to [specific information about their CSA](#). Other farm businesses currently operating there are Twenty Paces (goat and sheep dairy) and Steven James Farms (beef cattle).



There was talk that Gabriel might schedule another MBC field trip to Bellair Farm this spring. Whether or not such a trip materializes, be sure to allot some time to visit (online, or preferably, in person) this special Albemarle County treasure.

A curious **Twenty Paces sheep** gawks at the passers-by. (left, Nancy's photo)

Our Bellair Snipe Hunt came up empty for most, but later in the morning, Janet found, off property, the **Wilson's Snipe** view that we were seeking..



The Joy of Birding...a sharing of stories photos & links from MBC members

If you find yourself in the northern parts of Florida, **JoAnn Dalley** recommends visiting Lake Woodruff NWR near DeLeon Springs where she shot the photos below.

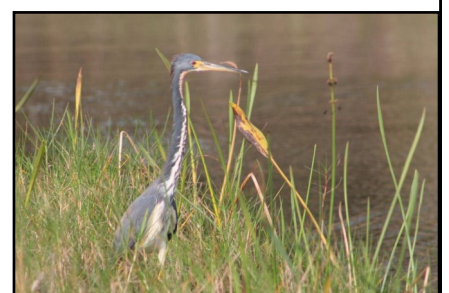
Great Blue Heron



Limpkin



Tri-colored Heron





Great Blue Heron
and one Big Gulp!

Wood Stork

White Ibis



Great Blue Herons
with nesting plans



(Below, left to right) **Little Blue Heron,**
2 White Ibis & Tri-colored Heron



Amidst the visual splendor of **Jeannie Holden's** photographs from her and John's recent visits to South Carolina destinations (Magnolia Plantation, Kiawah Island, and Huntington Beach State Park) are interspersed two poems to contemplate. "Hope and Love" was sent to us by **Carolyn McGrath**, and the Wendell Berry poem was sent to me by a friend who understands... Enjoy!

Hope and Love

by Jane Hirshfield

All winter
the blue heron
slept among the horses.
I do not know
the custom of herons,
do not know
if the solitary habit
is their way,
or if he listened for
some missing one—
not knowing even
that was what he did—
in the blowing
sounds in the dark,
I know that
hope is the hardest
love we carry.
He slept
with his long neck
folded, like a letter
put away.

"Hope and Love"
by Jane Hirshfield from
The Lives of the Heart.
© Harper Perennial, 1997

The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

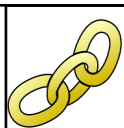
Wendell Berry, "The Peace of Wild Things" from
The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry. Copyright © 1998.



Look who's visiting and dining at David White's feeders these days—on suet, would you believe?!
Baltimore Oriole
 Photo by Doug Rogers, 2/22/16

From Near....

And, thanks Eve Gaige, for this fine shot of a puffed up little **Hermit Thrush**



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

From [Janet Paisley](#) — come two important citizen science opportunities for us to contribute to birding data collection. This information will enable greater accuracy in determining the status of current birding populations and foster the designing of best practices to protect birds and bird-friendly habitats in these challenging times. Your expertise and participation is vital. Follow the links below for more information.

- [VABBA2](#)—The Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas
- [Global Big Day](#)—May 14, 2016



Bill Leaning loves to feed & (photo!) shoot the birds who flock to Omanu. Here's an **Eastern Bluebird** making short work of the Hawthorn berry bounty.

...and Far

Nancy Newman sends us another shot from her African adventure—Botswana's **Three-banded Plover**




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

Visit our website at
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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