



Monticello Bird Club

April 2013

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Comments from The President

Lou Tanner

Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, sister of that Theodore who was famous for something or other, later recalled that he had once paused while they were strolling around the White House and, in the midst of some non-ornithological discussion/lecture, picked up a feather from the ground before him, noting that it was “very early for a fox sparrow.”

I personally would not vote against someone just because they could not distinguish between a fox sparrow feather and that of a rival species. A person could be unaware of the difference and still lead a perfectly useful life. Nevertheless, if it ever came to pass that a candidate for that office could in fact tell the difference, I would certainly sit up and take notice.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s unforgettable Sherlock Holmes once said to Dr. Watson, “you see but you do not observe.” Birders do both. Some of

them at least are able to detect subtleties of color and bill shape but also see a bigger picture that includes weather patterns, the change of seasons, and the availability of food just to mention a few important details. Like all human beings, Theodore Roosevelt had a few warts to be sure. But he did know his birds and gloried in being out in nature in a way that few now do. In my humble opinion, we are much the poorer for not being alert to those connections between ourselves and the rest of the natural world. Knowing that one warbler or duck is likely to arrive before another is not the same as being familiar with sequestrations or knowing how Congressional Committees work but it does attest to a way of looking at the world that resonates with me. If the day ever comes that that sort of person runs for the highest office in the land, I might decide that birding expertise was not

quite enough for me. But on second thought, I just might give it a whirl and vote for the birder.

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Peter Kaestner to Present Program on April 11th at 7:00pm

Stauffer Miller

We are privileged to have as our April 11th speaker Peter Kaestner of Falls Church. Peter is currently employed by the State Department in Washington. From 2006 to 2009 he oversaw consuls in India. Earlier postings included Egypt, Brazil, Guatemala, New Guinea and Colombia. Wherever he has been, he has sought the area’s birds.

Peter is especially proud of the 949 species he has seen in India. Through his long association with that country, he has experienced its transformation from the post-colonial period until today—and its effects on the country’s birdlife. Peter has seen 8462 birds of the world, one of the highest marks ever achieved. In 1989 he discovered a species new to science, the Cundinamarca Antpitta, just fifty miles south of Bogota, Colombia.

Don’t forget about dinner with the speaker. We dine at the Brick Oven Restaurant in the Rio Hill Shopping Center at 5:30 PM. You will not want to miss hearing some of the stories Peter will be telling about his adventures in pursuit of the world’s birds.

We have no formal program at the May 9th meeting. Rather, members of the club can show a few of their slides of any topic related to birds, the natural world or your travels. We want good participation in our member’s night so please bring a few slides so this will be a gala night.

I will soon begin the task of engaging programs for 2013-2014. Please offer any suggestions of persons or topics you might like. I am especially keen to find someone who could talk about hummingbirds or vultures.

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Club Activities

First Saturday Bird Walk

Saturday, April 6, 7:30am

Join Janet Paisley on April 6th at 7:30am in the parking lot of Ivy Creek for the 1st Saturday Bird Walk. Gnatcatchers, Tree Swallows, and Pine Warblers are some of the early spring migrants that may be seen on this walk. As an added bonus, Janet is also well-versed in wildflowers. Beginners are welcomed on this walk.

Preddy Creek Trail Park

Saturday, April 13, 7:00am

Doug Rogers will lead us on a visit to Preddy Creek Trail Park. We visited this site back in the fall and the consensus was that we should return for the spring migration. We will meet in the park's parking area at 7:00am.

Directions: Route 29 north, 4 miles beyond Airport Road turn right on Burnley Station Road. Travel 2.6 miles and the park entrance is on the left.



Riverview Park

Saturday, April 20, 7:00am

Please join John Davis at Riverview Park. Riverview Park is a part of the Rivanna Trail system that has often had interesting birds. The Park is at the eastern terminus of Chesapeake Street, past Hollywood Cemetery. Where the road ends, turn left into the park. One can also go east on East Market Street, turn left just after passing Woolen Mills Church, follow that road one block to the "confluence" of Chesapeake and the park, and go straight into the park.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker at Piney Grove

Saturday, May 18, 7:30am

The Monticello Bird Club will be visiting this lone site in Waverly, Virginia where the red-cockaded woodpecker nests. As a bonus, it is likely, though not certain, that banding will be taking place when we visit. For logistic reasons at Piney Grove, we are limited to 20 people. This is expected to fill quickly since this is a life bird for many. We will leave at 7:30am, after assembling at the Giant Food parking lot in Pantops. The drive is approximately two hours.

If you are certain that you would like to go, please contact John Davis by email: jbtdavis@gmail.com, no later than May 1. This will be first come, first served and a waiting list will be kept in case people should change their plans.

Birding Before Work

Warbler Road

Saturday, April 27, 5:30am

Eve Gaige and Gabriel Maple will lead this excursion to Warbler Road. We will depart from the Inn at Afton and carpool. This will be a long day so bringing lunch is strongly advised. "Warbler Road" is located off the Blue Ridge Parkway near Buchanan, Virginia. It is a 12-mile stretch that follows several different roads, there being no actual road by this name. The club has not visited this spot in a number of years, but all of the past reviews are raves, particularly during the spring migration.



All trips will begin at 7:00am, and will end by 8:30am.

We will continue the program of short trips to see migrants during the last week of April and the first week of May. Most of the trips will be at the Ivy Creek Natural Area (ICNA). Special trips will be on April 24 and May 1, to Observatory Hill; and on April 26 and 30, to Secluded Farm.

Meeting Places:

Ivy Creek Natural Area: Parking Lot

Observatory Hill: Parking lot of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, 520 Edgemont Road, at the northeast base of O-Hill. It is reached by taking McCormick Road west from its intersection with Alderman Road.

Secluded Farm: Meet at the overflow parking lot for the Thomas Jefferson Parkway (Monticello Trail); the entrance is off Route 20 North, just north of the intersection with Route 53 and across from the entrance to PVCC.

Week One

4/22 Ivy Creek-Doug Rogers
 4/23 Ivy Creek-Janet Paisley
 4/24 Observatory Hill-Peter Dutnell
 4/25 Ivy Creek-Stauffer Miller
 4/26 Secluded Farm-John Davis

Week Two

4/29 Ivy Creek-Doug Rogers
 4/30 Secluded Farm-John Davis
 5/1 Observatory Hill-Lou Tanner
 5/2 Ivy Creek-Teresa Shaner
 5/3 Ivy Creek-Jenny Gaden

Monticello Bird Club March 14, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Peggy Cornett

Lou Tanner opened the meeting by welcoming several newcomers: David and Tom Jones and Lesslie Crowell's son Tom Rathe. There were 42 attending the meeting.

Doug Rogers gave the treasurers report. Receipts this period were \$125; disbursements: \$272; and bank balance: \$10,864.71. We are on budget for the year. Anticipated expenses to June 30, 2013 will be \$400. We have 120 paid memberships to date, compared to 128 YTD 2012. Construction of the birding trail on Gilbert Station Road is set for March 20, 2013. At present, we have five volunteers. More are welcome! Contact Doug if interested.

Doug concluded with an update on the approaching elections for the board, which will take place at the next meeting. Lou Tanner will be stepping down as President and Peg Watson is resigning as newsletter editor. Nominations for Officers and Board Members for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013 are: President-Doug Rogers; Vice President – Kathy Sudduth; Secretary – Peggy Cornett;

Treasurer – Maynard Davis; Field Trips – John Davis; Speakers – Stauffer Miller; Publicity – Gabriel Mapel; Hospitality – Priscilla Kingston; Newsletter – Joanne Bricker; Membership – Lesslie Crowell; and Birdseed Sale – Jim Hill. Please submit any other nominees to Doug by next month's meeting.

John Davis reported on field trips. The trip to the Cumberland Marsh last week was cancelled due to the snow storm. Peter Brask will lead the trip to Lickinghole Creek on March 23. There are trips planned for every weekend in April.

The Gordon Avenue Library book sale begins March 20 and it's a good place for find books on birds and natural history topics.

Dave Hogg reported that the astronomers at Observatory Hill are interested in developing a sign about bird life on the property and have asked for our ideas and input on the text and possible illustrations. The

trails at O Hill are in bad condition, but it is a historic bird watching site. Anyone interested in participating in this project should contact either Dave or Lou.

Recent bird sightings were shared. A Fox Sparrow was seen under a bird feeder, along with about 11 Cow Birds. Jenny Gaden had a Pine Warbler at her suet feeder. The first Phoebe and Rufous-sided Towhee were spotted. Elaine Page had a Woodcock on the path to her house. Peter Dutnell saw a Woodcock on his pond in North Garden and a Tundra Swan flying over. A Ross' Goose was reported in Southern Albemarle County, which is a record. A Cackling Goose was also reported.



Summary of the 2011 and 2012 Tally of Albemarle County Bird Species

Submitted by Teresa Shaner and Leigh Surdukowski

The tally of 2011 and 2012 Albemarle County checklists is done. Through the dedicated efforts of our local birders, twelve new species were added. In 2011, six observers recorded a total of 207 species. In 2012, nine observers found 212 species, the highest number of birds and observers for a single year. The composite total for 2006-2012 counts now stands at 247 species.

New birds added to the list in 2011 include: Trumpeter Swan, Greater Scaup, Snowy Egret, Common Moorhen, Red-necked Phalarope, Forster's Tern and Violet-green Swallow. In 2012, Rough-legged Hawk, Black Tern, Orange-crowned Warbler, Painted Bunting and Evening Grosbeak were added to the cumulative list.

The Violet-green Swallow, a remarkable find by Pete Myers at Old Trail, was a first for Albemarle County, as well as a first in Virginia. Stauffer Miller found the Red-necked Phalarope at the Bentivar Marsh. Prior to 2011, according to the annotated checklist for the county, the only record for a Red-necked Phalarope "was an exhausted bird that landed on the McIntyre School in 1939". Peter Brask spotted the Black Tern at King Family Vineyards. The last time a Black Tern was seen in the county was 43 years ago. The previous 2 records for Black Terns date back to 1959 and 1955 at Langhorne Pond. Another amazing spotting was the 2011 sighting of the Greater Scaup by Chris Murray at Old

Trail. Although this is the 4th county record for this bird, the previous records date back to 1950, 1954 and 1959. The Forster's Tern found by Pete Myers at Old Trail was another unusual tern record. Prior to 2011, there were only 2 records for the county, one in 1948 on the James River and another in 1993 at Davenport Pond.

Many thanks to those who submitted their lists - Peter Brask, Dave Hogg, Tom Jones, Stauffer Miller, Janet Paisley, A. J. Parmiter, Teresa Shaner, Leigh Surdukowski and Eve Schwartz.

For a complete listing, email Teresa Shaner at twshaner@embarqmail.com or phone 434-964-9420.

Monticello Bird Club

Bird Books for All

Submitted by Elinor Miller

On Mother's Day in 1963, I lay awake all night listening to what I was soon to learn was the song of a Mockingbird. I was so captivated by what I had heard that I turned to a friend whom I knew was knowledgeable about birds. She specified a few books to help me gain knowledge and comprehension of birds and encouraged me to buy records of bird songs. Although I didn't always get the best looks at birds in my yard, I easily learned their songs.

I began to master all the sounds that I heard and finally had the courage to go to a wildlife area not far from my home where I became acquainted with other birds. I quickly became a very serious birder and after a while, I realized I was not the only person on the planet who was obsessed with them!

As time went by, I went on many trips with several local birding groups, as well as a few organized tours. Stauffer Miller and I met when we were both single, so we joined various birding tour groups when we could disappear from our work places or be on real vacations. We did our best to see as many birds as we could.

However, I lost my hearing ability on our last homebound trip and I quickly

realized that it was now very difficult for me to continue birding. I was soon into a full-time, 5-year project, creating 5 volumes of Word Web Vocabulary for teachers and students.

Once I realized I no longer used the bird books I have, I made a list of 59 whose prices range from \$1 to \$45. Some of those are A Dictionary of Bird Names by James Jobling, 1991: \$30; A World Checklist of Birds, Monroe & Sibley: \$45; Beyond the Bird Feeder by John Dennis: \$25; Birdwatcher: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson: 437 pages: \$25; Checklist of

the Worlds' Birds by Edward Grusand: \$12; 101 Questions Answered About Birds by Allan & Helen Cruikshank: \$12; Reference Atlas to the Birds of North America by Mek Baughman with 700 maps: \$20; The Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior; 487 pages: \$44...AND lots more books!

Feel free to make an appointment by emailing elinormiller@seepub.com: (434-296-5505), or consider the books at my home, or wait until we go into spring's evening light, when I can bring the books to Ivy Creek's April's and May's monthly meetings.

Virginia Working Landscapes

Submitted by Amy Johnson, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute

Virginia Working Landscapes is seeking skilled birders to assist with grassland bird surveys. Introductory training will be held on April 13th from 9:00am to 1:00pm. A practice survey will be May 12th from 8:00am to 10:00am. Survey season is May 15th—June 30th. Point counts are carried out within 4 hours of sunrise and take 45-60 minutes per site. Time commitment is 6 survey sessions plus training. You will need binoculars and a field guide, all other survey supplies provided.

For more information, visit www.VAWorkingLandscapes.org. To register, contact Amy Johnson at sbiecology@si.edu or 540-635-0032. Please provide your name, phone number, city of residence and a short description of your relevant skills. Also indicate which counties you'd be willing to travel to for surveys (Frederick, Clarke, Loudoun, Rappahannock, Warren, Shenandoah, Page, Madison, Greene, Orange, Albemarle, Culpeper Fauquier, Prince William, Augusta).

The Monticello Bird Club meets 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. Membership is \$15 per year for individuals, \$25 for a family or for printed newsletters. Membership year is July 1—June 30. The editor of the MBC Newsletter welcomes submissions including articles, photographs and notices. **DEADLINE for each issue is 9:00AM on the 20th of the month.**



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