



Monticello Bird Club

December 2009

Volume 26, Number 4

December Meeting Topic: Birds of Paradise - Adventure in New Guinea

New Guinea is the world's largest tropical island and harbors a diverse array of cultures and a wealth of natural history. It is home to many unique species of plants and animals, many still undiscovered. Included in this wealth are over 700 species of birds, none more elaborate and bizarre than the birds of paradise. Thirty eight of the world's 43 species of birds of paradise live in New Guinea. Our speaker, John Spahr, has been fortunate to have seen many of these in two recent trips to that special island. He has studied these birds in some depth and will share his knowledge in a very visual and informative presentation.

John has had an interest in natural history since childhood with a special fondness for birds. He joined his first bird club at age 12 and has remained an active member of one or more bird clubs or Audubon Societies ever since. He has also been involved in regional and national birding and conservation groups. His birding interests have led him to many destinations both within the US as well as to Europe, Africa, New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, Central and South America, and the Caribbean; he has led group trips to Southern Africa, Trinidad & Tobago, Belize, and most recently to Cuba. John has a special fondness for tropical birding, particularly witnessing the same Neotropical migrants that visit Virginia interacting with their tropical winter habitats. Professionally John is a

practicing (soon to be retired) medical doctor, a Pathologist. For years he has extended his experience in his medical specialty to birds by providing free pathology services to the Virginia Wildlife Center. He currently serves on the board of the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory and is the immediate past president of the Virginia Society of Ornithology. His program tonight is based on two trips to the island of New Guinea, in 2005 and 2008.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

December 10th: Birds of Paradise Adventure in New Guinea

January 14th: An Appreciation of Bird Song

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Comments From the President

With Yuletide approaching, I hereby announce: It's time to get out there and do Christmas counts.

From C.ville to Mechums and all points between

Not a crow, coot or creeper can we leave as unseen.

My apologies go to Carolyn McGrath, as I'm afraid I'm not much of a poet. I just wanted to proclaim with a little flare the arrival of the Christmas count season. **Sunday December 20th** is the Charlottesville count. The object of a Christmas count is to record all the birds within a fifteen-mile diameter circle. The center of the C.ville circle is roughly Farmington Country Club, with rim reaching Pantops on the east, White Hall on the west, Fox Mountain on the north and Red Hill Road on the south. This count has suffered for want of full coverage but coordinator Jenny Gaden has been working hard to correct that. Be sure to attend our club's December 10th meeting, as Jenny will be there to answer questions and hand out assign-

ments. Don't miss out! At the end of the day, participants gather to enjoy a potluck supper and tally what all parties have seen.

Want to count some more? See information on page 3.

Our December meeting will be a busy one. After the usual business and a fine presentation by John Spahr on birds of far-off New Guinea, we will have a Christmas party. While we munch on holiday refreshments, Priscilla Kingston will dispense door prizes. Bring a few cookies or similar items, and perhaps something to submit as a prize.

After a good deal of hemming and hawing, our meeting start time has been changed from 7:30 PM to 7:00 PM. This will be **effective in January**. So, make a note of that. I conducted a rather informal vote on this at the November meeting, and there was general agreement for the change. I don't know how many members we have in the "color counties" of Greene and Orange, but hope this change will allow those of you there to start at-

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Monticello Bird Club

(Comments from the president continued from page 1)

tending meetings.

Mike Hayslett gave an outstanding talk to our group November 12th. Afterward, several members suggested we make a donation to his Friends of the Virginia Vernal Pools Program. Accordingly, I have asked treasurer Henry Konat to do that. Speaking of Mike, I want to recount something told by Betty Mooney at the meeting. As we sat around the table at Ruby Tuesday, looking at our watches and wondering where Mike was, as he hadn't arrived on time, we pretty much decided he was the sort of person who would never get lost in the woods but might get confused negotiating the streets of Charlottesville. When he finally arrived, he admitted exactly that, and we all laughed.

I want to thank Jim Hill for heading an excellent birdseed sale. For future sales, he has some interesting merchandising ideas. Treasurer Henry Konat tells me we are way behind in collecting dues. If you have been a member of our club in the past or present, most likely you believe in the furtherance of birds and their habitat. Our dues support that goal, as can be seen in our donation for

vernal pools. We need your dues, and the support of birds implicit in them. Don't be a sluggard when it comes to the very reason our club exists.

Six of us enjoyed a trip on November 22nd to Hog Island WMA. The birding highlight was standing at our scopes and identifying the species making up a spread-out raft

of waterfowl and water birds.

We lunched atop a viewing platform, with the broad reach of the James River before us

I hope to see you at 5:45 PM at Ruby Tuesday on December 10th, or later that evening at the meeting.

Stauffer Miller



Stauffer Miller, Amy Gilmer, Lois Gephardt, Lou Tanner, Joanne Bricker at Hog Island WMA
Photo by Doug Rogers

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 December issue is November 27.** Please email information to Doug Rogers at MBCNEWS@embarqmail.com or send to 1065 Weybridge Ct. # 304, Charlottesville, VA 22911.

Monticello Bird Club
P.O. Box 4362
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Monticello Bird Club Board Members

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Birdseed Sale	Jim Hill	jimcarhill@comcast.net	975-6523

Field Trips & Counts

First Saturday Bird Walks at Ivy Creek Natural Area

On the first Saturday of each month, the Monticello Bird Club offers a bird walk at Ivy Creek Natural Area at 7:30 AM. Some of the walks stay near the main building and parking lot, others go out on the peninsula. Each month has a different leader. Some outstanding birds have been seen on the walks.

The walk for this month will be on December 5. See you there!

Charlottesville Christmas Count

The count will be December 20. The compiler for this year is Jenny Gaden. Details at the December 10th meeting. Also see details on page 4.

Warren Christmas Bird Count

The Warren Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, January 3, 2010.

Please contact Allen Hale, compiler at [434-263-8671](tel:434-263-8671) if you wish to participate. In the past, a supper tally has been hosted by Tom and Toots Klipstein at Springtree Farm in Fluvanna County. Attendance has dwindled and we'll forgo the tally unless there is substantial support for its continuation.

Celebrate Some Holiday Cheer.

Following the regular December 10th meeting, enjoy a bit of food and time with friends.

Please bring a holiday treat or a bird-related door prize.

Our Hospital Chair, Priscilla Kingston, will distribute door prizes.



Mature Bald Eagles at Hog Island, WMA.
Photo by Doug Rogers

Introducing Kathy Sudduth



Kathy is a new member of the Monticello Bird Club and we welcome her.

She has lived in Charlottesville thirty years, much of that time working as manager of the Cytogenetics Laboratory at the University of Virginia Hospital. In that capacity, she knew Dr. Thaddeus Kelley (or Thad as she knew him), quite well. Dr. Kelley, a past member of our club, died in the summer of 2009.

Kathy says she developed an interest in birds by going on the first Saturday walks at Ivy Creek Natural Area.

We hope to continue featuring new members with photograph, text or both and appreciate Kathy being our first new member to be photographed for the newsletter. Last month our Newsletter introduced and welcomed new member Ruth Carmines.

Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory (CVWO)
Cuba Bird Survey,
March 18 -29, 2010.

If interested, contact:
John Spahr
jspahr@yahoo.com
234 W. Frederick St.
Staunton, VA 24401
540-887-2345

Monticello Bird Club

Minutes, 12 November 2009
Peggy Cornett, secretary

President Stauffer Miller opened the meeting by welcoming guests, including Ron S., Ruth's friend from St. Paul, MN; Kathy S, a new member; Ralph, a Master Gardener and Master Naturalist; and Linda Childs, friend of Peggy Cornett. There were 46 in attendance.

Treasurer's report:

Henry Konat was not present; Jim Hill gave the financial report for the period: the club's income was \$9,121; expenses, \$1,761; NET, \$7,367. Jim added that the numbers are skewed because the bill for the bird seed sale was still outstanding. The club has \$19,940 in the bank. Jim also noted that membership renewals are still lagging and encouraged those who have not paid to do so as soon as possible.

Bird Seed Sale:

Jim Hill shared a spreadsheet analysis of the bird seed sale this year compared with previous years using data going back to 2001. This year there were 478 bags of seed sold and, because we enjoyed a rate decrease from last year's wholesale prices, this year's profit was \$1,474.38, which is down slightly from 2008. Jim has also been researching results of bird seed sale totals from other bird clubs, thanks to Ron & Priscilla Kingston, who hold memberships in many clubs throughout Virginia. The Rockingham bird club's income this year was \$4,600, but they have a higher mark-up. The Augusta bird club offers an incentive of home delivery for an extra \$5 fee.

Field Trips:

Doug Rogers announced he is making a second attempt to visit Hog Island. See the newsletter for details. Brenda Tekin is leading a trip to Chincoteague November 20-22. Stauffer announced that the club is still in need of an official field trip coordinator. He is acting as coordinator in the interim.

Thanksgiving Window Watch Count:

Ron Kingston provided hand-outs for members to count birds they see at their bird feeders for one hour on Thanksgiving Day. This project was started 25 years ago. Completed forms should be sent to Thelma Dalmas.

Christmas Bird Count:

Jenny Gaden is organizing the Christmas count, which takes place December 20. She still needs volunteers.

Bird Sightings:

Ron Kingston reported seeing a Hermit Thrush and one Fox Sparrow. Carolyn saw four adult Bald Eagles in a field south of Madison. Dave Hogg saw a Bald Eagle at Ivy Creek during the first Saturday bird walk he led earlier in the month. He also saw lots of Hermit Thrush and Goldfinch. Peter Dutnell saw a bobcat on his property in North Garden, and Stauffer Miller saw two bobcats on the Blue Ridge Parkway. No one has yet reported seeing any Red-breasted Nuthatch. Pat Wilczek saw a Brown Creeper. Doug noted that Yellow-rump Warblers had returned. Jenny Gaden has Brown Creepers coming to the peanut butter she puts out on her feeder.

Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count

On Sunday, December 20, the 2009 Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will take place. We will join tens of thousands of other volunteers around the country who, over a three-week period, will head out before dawn in many cases armed with binoculars, telescopes, checklists, bird guides, cameras, hot coffee and bountiful snacks to spend the day counting birds. Everybody can do it – grandmothers, students, soccer moms and even hockey moms. They will be beginning birders or experienced scientists. All are welcome.

These Citizen Scientists are taking action for conservation. By participating in the National Audubon Society's CBC they help scientists understand how birds are faring amid unprecedented environmental challenges. The data they collect informs the world about the State of Birds, and provides the information we need to shape their future and ours. This is the 110th Christmas Bird Count.

Last year thousands of volunteers counted nearly 60 million birds across the Americas and beyond. Each count occurs in a designated circle, 15 miles in diameter, and is organized by a designated "compiler" – Jenny Gaden for the Charlottesville CBC. Those interested in participating in the count should let Jenny know (434 293-6275; jgaden@embarqmail.com). If you are an inexperienced birder you will be able to go along with a more experienced person or group. If you are an experienced birder maybe you would consider starting a new route in a part of the county which is currently not covered. A potluck supper and tally will follow the count that evening.