



Monticello Bird Club

November 2010

Volume 27, Number 4

Comments From the President

With the Christmas season upon us, thoughts turn at least occasionally—it is to be hoped—in a contemplative direction. It is a time to take stock, while enjoying the company of family and friends, and simply to ponder deeper questions about what is good, what is just, and what is lasting. And for this relative newcomer to this annual peaceful hunt there is no better way to accomplish all that than when watching and counting the feathered ones. Christmas bird counts—the ultimate stock-taking for that happy species of human who revels in the occasion—are not to be missed if at all possible. In my opinion, there is no better time of year. Obviously a large number of people agree or they would not have proliferated like they have ever since Frank Chapman et al. conducted the first one in 1900. Seize the opportunity and sign up.

Recent good news from across the pond has it that the increasingly uncommon Common Kingfisher is rebounding in Great Britain. Greek sailors believed that sighting one was a good omen since their alighting on the waves somehow quieted choppy seas and foretold calmer weather ahead and therefore their word for the kingfisher—halcyon—now means in the English language something like “the good old days of yore.” While looking forward, it is human nature it seems to me to also glance backward with some nostalgia for the things now passing or long gone. Maybe, just maybe, assuming one is not a fish or in the case of Australia’s kookaburra a lizard or snake, this small news item from abroad is not only great news in itself for local twitchers but also a needed reminder that sometimes the good things actually do come back around.

Happy holidays.

Lou Tanner

December Meeting Program

Southern Ocean Islands Topic of December Program

Charlottesville resident David Shoch will present the December 9th program at the Monticello Bird Club. In the fall of 2009, David served on the staff of Cheeseman’s Ecology Safaris to South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. South Georgia has been termed “crown jewel of the Antarctic” and according to David, deservedly so.

This program will take us through the vibrant early spring season on South Georgia with its vast colonies of King Penguins and various species of albatrosses, set in an other-worldly setting of glaciers and snow-capped peaks. This is a program you will not want to miss. If you’d like to acquaint yourself with David, consider having dinner with him and others at 5:30 PM at La Cocina del Sol Restaurant along Hydraulic Road in Charlottesville.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

December 9th at 7:00 p.m.

Southern Ocean Islands

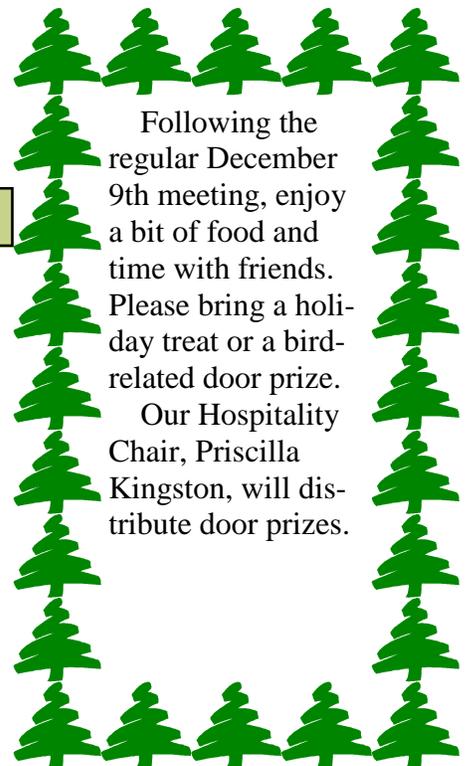
January 13th, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Barn Owls

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Celebrate with some holiday cheer



Following the regular December 9th meeting, enjoy a bit of food and time with friends. Please bring a holiday treat or a bird-related door prize.

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

Monticello Bird Club

Charlottesville CBC December 19th 2010

The Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will take place on Sunday, December 19. We will join tens of thousands of other volunteers around the country who, over a three-week period, will head out before dawn on a winter day to count the winter birds. All levels of birders, from beginners to professional scientists, participate in the count.

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 111th Christmas Bird Count.

Each count occurs in a designated circle, 15 miles in diameter, and is organized by a designated "compiler" – Jenny Gaden for

the Charlottesville CBC. The Monticello Bird Club sponsors the Charlottesville CBC by paying the \$5 fee for all members of the club who participate. Non-members pay their own way.

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. Be prepared: bring hand and foot warmers if it's cold; bring snacks, lunch and water or a hot drink if you expect to get hungry and thirsty; bring a camera to support your case when you spot a rare bird. And bring enthusiasm and a spirit of adventure.

A potluck supper will follow the count at the home of Nancy O'Brien and Francis Fife.

Bluebird Trails in Charlottesville/Albemarle 2010

2010 was another productive year along the bluebird trails of the Charlottesville/Albemarle area. We had 26 plus monitors reporting on 344 nest boxes located at multiple sites along the established Hammond, Kingston and Minor trails as well as on several individual properties. In all 1,756 songbirds fledged from these nest boxes, 1304 bluebirds, 289 tree swallows plus a few Carolina chickadees and tufted titmice. House wrens seemed to be less in evidence this year with only one successful nesting of this species reported. Although these birds are native and thus protected under Federal law they can be a nuisance on our trails by invading occupied nest boxes, throwing out existing eggs and occasionally young hatchlings as well.

The vagaries of the weather in 2010 impacted trail productivity to some extent. A late sub-freezing spell in the spring caused the demise of several bluebird broods while the extreme heat in mid-summer was associated with a high incidence of abandoned eggs.

We thank all the hard working volunteers who monitor and maintain these important nest boxes and invite anyone with existing boxes to share their nesting data. All information is sent to the Virginia Bluebird Society and ultimately to the North American Bluebird Society.

Ann Dunn

Bird Club Information

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 Earlsyville Road, 1/2 mile north of Hydraulic Road.

The editor of the MBC Newsletter welcomes submissions including articles, photographs and notices. **DEADLINE for the January issue is 8:00 a.m. December 24.** Please email information to Doug Rogers at MBCNEWS@embarqmail.com or send to 1065 Weybridge Ct. # 304, Charlottesville, VA 22911.

Monticello Bird Club

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Please visit our website at www.monticellobirdclub.org

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Membership	Jim Nix	jim-nix@comcast.net	973-7366
Birdseed Sale	Jim Hill	jimcarhill@comcast.net	975-6523

Key West, Virginia

Wednesday, December 8th: Field trip at Key West (Virginia, not Florida). Meet at Key West Club parking area at 8:00 AM for a walk beside fields and the Rivanna River. Afterward, coffee at nearby house of Kaki Pearson. Directions: Take Key West Drive from Rt. 20 north of Charlottesville, go approximately one mile, left, (continues as Key West Drive), across bridge, first left into club. Leaders: Kaki Pearson and Stauffer Miller, kopearson@gmail.com for further details.

Northern Albemarle County lakes tour.

Saturday, December 11, 2010 at 7:30 a.m.
 The tour will start at 7:30 am at the Ivy Creek Nature Area and carpool to nearby lakes looking for ducks and other water birds.
 At Chris Greene, weather permitting, we will take a 1 mile walk along a trail on the eastern edge of the lake. So, if the waterfowl are a bust, hopefully we will see some woodland birds.
 Please contact the trip leader Leigh Surdukowski (434-295-8241) for additional information.

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 a.m.
 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 January will be delayed one week, because of the holiday. Please join Jim Nix on January 8, 2011 for the first walk of the new year.
 Also, please note that Leigh Surdukowshi is recruiting leaders for the 2011 First Saturday Ivy Creek Bird Walks. Walks begin at 7:30 a.m. in the Ivy Creek Parking lot and last 1 - 2 hours. If you are interested in leading a walk, please contact Leigh at 434-295-8241.

In Memory of Nancy King

Nancy C. King, longtime bird club member and former editor of the club's newsletter (2005-06), died October 31, 2010 at her home in Ivy, Virginia. During her brief 59 years Nancy touched many lives with her wit, enthusiasm, and sheer joy of life. She loved the natural world and she communicated her keen observations and deep convictions through her writing and in radio interviews. Nancy spent her early years in New York, Maryland, and New Jersey; and graduated with a degree in journalism from the University of Missouri. She began her career as a radio reporter in Little Rock, Arkansas before moving to Washington, DC and then to Charlottesville. Her recent work with the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities allowed her to produce programs for National Public Radio. Her passion for bird watching led to her involvement with the Monticello Bird Club and the Ivy Creek Natural Area. She also became an avid gardener and created a breathtaking garden and wildlife sanctuary at her beloved Turner Mountain home.

At her memorial service, held at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church in Ivy, November 14, Nancy's family and friends shared memories of her delightfully buoyant humor, realistic and philosophical mind-set, and profound strength during her two-year battle with a rare form of cancer.

It was Nancy's wish that, in lieu of flowers, her friends honor her by dedicating time, momentary or prolonged, to admire nature's plants and animals, even its bugs, and to cherish and appreciate the great and small wonders of the world around us. If you wish to "plant a tree" or contribute to an organization to do this, that would be nice too. Personal expressions can be shared on the Web page dedicated to Nancy through the *Daily Progress*, or sent by mail to her husband, Michael McGowan, PO Box 22, Ivy, VA 22945.

-Peggy Cornett

A special thanks to Kaki Pearson and Karen Anderson for their invaluable contributions to the Newsletter this month!
 Doug Rogers

The next steps for the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Albemarle County

Now that we have created an annotated checklist of the birds of Albemarle County and Charlottesville current to September 2010, the logical next step is to collect all future birding records for this area (known from now on as the birds of Albemarle County) in a centralized place. Patrick Toomey has been a great help to me and the club by creating a database that will allow us to do this. This database has been installed on my computer so I will be collecting your information. I will be working with a records committee to examine the submissions and make final judgment as to their inclusion. More information about the committee will be forthcoming.

The following is the sort of information we would like submitted:

- Dates for migratory birds earlier or later than those mentioned in the checklist
- Unusual species for this area
- Species in unusual habitats or altitudes
- Unusual numbers of species
- Nesting evidence of the less common migratory species

Please send your sightings to me at ACbirds@embarqmail.com. We hope that many of you will make a point of observing ever more carefully when you are in the field, and be diligent about writing down your observations and sending them on to us. We look forward to hearing from you and believe that we will all benefit from such efforts.

Jenny Gaden



Praise and kind words for the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Albemarle County

Let Me Set the Record Straight

I appreciate the many kind words that people have offered concerning my involvement with the newly published annotated checklist, Birds of Albemarle County and Charlottesville, Virginia. “But let me be perfectly clear” (to quote the politicians). True, I shepherded this project along, but I was not working with a bunch of sheep. There was a committee of six: David Hogg, Stauffer Miller, Jim Nix, Brenda Tekin, John Zimmerman and me. Each of us brought particular skills, talents, experience and contributions to this project, and each of us devoted untold hours of work to its completion. The book is what it is because of a collaborative effort by all of us. So please, if you like what you see in our little book, credit the committee of six, without which there would be no little book.

Jenny Gaden

Report on the Field Trip to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and Chincoteague Island

The ten people who visited the CBBT Islands on November 19 were subsequently joined by four others from the bird club. There were also three from the Augusta club. The weather was clear and sunny, though cool with variable winds, and the group recorded 96 species.

The highlights were a Ross's Goose, a Sandhill Crane, and two Hudsonian Godwits. The complete list is given below.

Snow Goose	Ross's Goose
Brant	Canada Goose
Tundra Swan	Gadwall
American Widgeon	American Black Duck
Mallard	Northern Shoveler
Northern Pintail	Green-winged Teal
Greater Scaup	Common Eider
Harlequin Duck	Surf Scoter
White-winged Scoter	Black Scoter
Long-tailed Duck	Hooded Merganser
Ruddy Duck	Common Loon
Northern Gannet	Brown Pelican
Double-crested Cormorant	Great Cormorant
Great Blue Heron	Great Egret
Snowy Egret	Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron	Black-crowned Night-Heron
Black Vulture	Turkey Vulture
Bald Eagle	Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk	American Kestrel
Merlin	Peregrine Falcon
American Coot	Sandhill Crane
Black-bellied Plover	Killdeer
American Oystercatcher	Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs	Hudsonian Godwit
Marbled Godwit	Ruddy Turnstone
Sanderling	Purple Sandpiper
Dunlin	Short-billed Dowitcher
Laughing Gull	Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull	Herring Gull
Great Black-backed Gull	Royal Tern
Forster's Tern	Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove	Great Horned Owl
Belted Kingfisher	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker	Northern Flicker
Blue Jay	American Crow
Tree Swallow	Carolina Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch	White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown-headed Nuthatch	Carolina Wren
Winter Wren	Marsh Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Eastern Bluebird
American Robin	Northern Mockingbird
European Starling	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Eastern Towhee	Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow	White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco	Northern Cardinal
Red-winged Blackbird	Common Grackle
Boat-tailed Grackle	American Goldfinch



Monticello Bird Club Meeting Minutes, 11 November 2010

President Lou Tanner opened the meeting by inviting Jenny Gaden to say a few words at Nancy King, former editor of the MBC newsletter in 2005-06, who died October 31 after a long illness.

The Bird Seed Sales report was presented by Jim Hill, who also paid tribute to Nancy King by mentioning that she was a frequent attendee at past seed sales. This year there were 68 orders (three more than last year) for a total of \$7,508 in sales. The net profit was \$1,457. The club donated seed to Stone Robinson and Venable elementary schools, to the Ivy Creek Foundation, and to Gerald Shifflett, facilities manager, who was able to use the Forestry Department's heavy equipment to move and stage hundreds of bags of seed.

Lou acknowledged newcomers to the meeting, including Bonnie Yoder, a teacher at Venable, who was pleased to finally discover that the bird club was responsible for donating the seed for such a popular student activity.

The Northern Saw-whet Owl bird banding project at the Highland Retreat Camp of the Eastern Mennonite University in West Virginia was mentioned by Stephanie Miller. Treasurer Henry Konat reported that income for the period was \$9,516 and expenses were \$8,868.94, for a net gain of \$647.06.

The Christmas Bird Count will take place Sunday, December 19, according to Jenny Gaden, local organizer for Albemarle County, who stressed that volunteers are still needed and that newcomers are welcome. Jenny has made progress creating a centralized system for reporting and gathering bird sighting data in order to update the next edition of *The Birds of Albemarle County and Charlottesville Virginia* annotated checklist. Allan Hale announced that the Warren County Christmas Bird Count will be on January 2.

Dave Hogg began the field trips report by mentioning what a great day he had leading the First Saturday at Ivy Creek Natural Area walk on November 6. He also reported on the upcoming Beaver Creek and Sparrow Road trip.

The meeting attendance was 37.

Submitted by Peggy Cornett, secretary