



Monticello Bird Club

November 2013 Newsletter

Website: www.monticellobirdclub.org

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Facebook: [Monticello Bird Club](#)

MBC Monthly Meeting—Thursday, November 14th at 7:00pm

Comments from the President

Doug Rogers

On September 22 – 24, Joanne and I went to Union, WV and spent two sessions hawk-watching at the Hanging Rock Observatory. On September 23 counters recorded their best day – between 700 and 800 hawks passed by. We saw over 160 in a half hour period. (I am aware that many more than that were observed at a spot much closer to home at Rockfish Gap.) We had a good time; the weather was very agreeable and the winds were out of the north and northwest.

Watching the birds in a kettle, then breaking out and flying southward by the observatory – at almost eye-level - was a real thrill! The view was spectacular. As at many hawkwatching areas, a plastic owl is perched on a pole near the viewing area to lure would-be predators. Sure enough, shortly before noon, a Red-tailed Hawk made a dive-bomb pass at the owl, talons outstretched; it veered off at the last second as it realized the owl was a fake. Alas, I wasn't adept enough to get the shot with my new camera.

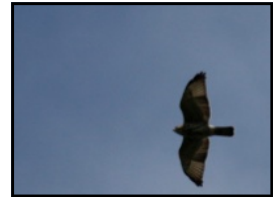
Raptors have made this trip for thousands of years, and I couldn't help thinking about how much the land has changed beneath them. A few years ago, I read the book *1491* by Charles Mann. According to Mann, prior to the arrival of Europeans, virtually all of the forests along the East Coast would have appeared like a modern park today. The Native Americans managed the land with fire; large areas of land were devoted to agriculture; towns of significant size dotted that landscape from (what is now) Maine to Florida. Although I doubt they counted the raptors, I am sure these people were well aware of the migration spectacle each year.



View from Hanging Rock Observatory
Photo by Doug Rogers

The generations of migrating raptors have witnessed the park-like forest that greeted the first Europeans changing to a clear-cut forest; to a second-growth forest; to even larger tracts cleared for agriculture; to small towns which gave rise to megacities; to unsustainable global climate change.

May we be good stewards of the ecosystem in such a way as to preserve, for future generations, the awe and wonder of seeing the migration of these wonderful birds we know as raptors.



Broad-winged Hawk
Photo by Doug Rogers

Speaker of the Month: Marcia Hecker

Stauffer Miller

Our speaker for the November 14th program will be Marcia Hecker of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Marcia received biology degrees from George Mason University and in 1997 began training at the Smithsonian's Feather Identification Laboratory under Roxie Layburn. She later trained under Carla Dove.

Marcia's expertise is in identifying bird species when the bird is not available for examination, and only its feather or feathers are present. Sometimes she examines the entire feather and other times just a portion of it. Much of her work is identifying birds through feathers taken from bird-aircraft collisions. Her services are also used in anthropological and wildlife law enforcement cases. If you think you're a featherweight when it comes to avian plumage questions, don't miss this program!

As is our custom, we take our speaker to dinner before the program. I encourage you to come to the Brick Oven Restaurant at Rio Hill Shopping Center at 5:30 for food and socializing. We have gone there enough times that our waitress has gotten to know us as the bird people. She, along with the speaker, is worth meeting.



Feather in Flight
Photo by Louise Docker
Wikimedia Commons

Birding Tidbits

...about a bird you might find on the Bird Walk at Ivy Creek in November
by Jenny Gaden

Red-bellied Woodpecker



Red-bellied Woodpecker, male
Photo by Ray W. Knight
Wikimedia Commons

The Red-bellied Woodpecker, our most common woodpecker, is often mistaken for the Red-headed Woodpecker because both species have bright red on their heads. The Red-bellied male has a red forehead, crown and nape (back of neck); the female has red only on the nape. The Red-headed, however, has a completely red head, including the cheeks and throat. It is the least common woodpecker in our area.

The Red-bellied woodpecker, with its zebra-striped back, can be found year-round at ICNA foraging on the trunks of trees or flying over the fields into the woods. In flight you will notice a white rump patch and white patches towards the tip of its wings. It is the only woodpecker in these parts with that combination of field marks. The

“red belly” is a mere wash of pink at the lower belly and difficult to see in the field. This woodpecker is very vocal with its churrs, chas and occasional “wicka’wicka” sounds that remind one of the Northern Flicker or Pileated Woodpecker. Look and listen for this medium sized woodpecker any time you are outdoors near the woods.

Field Trips

Organized by John Davis

Panorama Farm

Sunday, November 3, 7:30am
Led by Stauffer Miller

The bird club has visited Panorama Farm in the past and had success particularly with sparrows. The trip must be made on a Sunday as that is the only day work shuts down at the farm.

Directions: Meet at Ivy Creek parking area at 7:30am for the short drive to the farm. Leader Stauffer Miller, 434-296-5505, stauffer@seepub.com.

Riverview Park

Saturday, November 16, 7:30am
Led by John Davis

Please join John Davis at Riverview Park. Riverview Park is a part of the Rivanna Trail system that has often had interesting birds.

Directions: 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 Wollen Mills Church, and follow that road one block to the “confluence” of Chesapeake and the Park. Go straight into the Park.

First Saturday Bird Walk

November 2nd, 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 for Winter-Fall 2013

Sept. 7 Tom Jones

Oct. 5 ... Peter Brask

Nov. 2....Peter Dutnell

Dec. 7 Dave Hogg



Red-bellied Woodpecker, female (above)
Red-headed Woodpecker (below)
Photos by Dick Daniels
Wikimedia Commons



Birdseed Sale

by Jim Hill

Last Call !!



You have **only a couple of days left** to order birdseed in our **only fund raiser** of the year. Call some friends, and you may all go to our website for online ordering and payment.

- Birdseed Sale Orders due by **Nov. 1st.**
- Order online at www.monticellobirdclub.org
- Seed pick-up Nov. 9th
- Please, **do it now.** Thanks!

Membership Notes

by Lesslie Crowell

MBC extends a warm welcome to our new members:

Blair Amberly
Jerome Buescher
Patricia Burkett
Scott Connuck
Content Hagen
Gary Huff
Kim Kozella
Martha Massie
Andrea McCurry
Nancy-Elizabeth Nimmich
Mark Rough
Grace Suttle
John Vernon



Stay tuned. More to come next month!

Treasurer's Notes

by Maynard K. Davis

We are making steady progress on the current Membership Drive. New and renewing members are making themselves known to the Treasurer. We appreciate your support!

With only a week to go for the Birdseed Sale, we are **half-way** to our fundraising goal. If you haven't already done so, please place your order now. And, if everyone called one or two bird-feeding friends and gently (or more strongly, with tact!) encouraged them to order online by Nov. 1st, we'd meet our fundraising goal!



Thank you for your efforts.

MBC Minutes, October 10, 2013

Submitted by Peggy Cornett, Secretary



In President Doug Roger's absence, Treasurer Maynard Davis opened the meeting by reminding members to renew their membership. Income to date is up \$1,300. There were no newcomers and 29 were present at the meeting.

Lesslie Crowell reported on membership. To date there were 74 memberships, including 58 renewals and 16 new members. There are 40 individual memberships, nine contributors, 24 families, ten sponsors, and one lifetime.

Jim Hill reported on the bird seed sales by reminding the audience that this is our only fund raiser for the year and that our yearly contributions depend on these funds. The order forms are out, and orders can also be made securely online. Last year we raised \$1,200 and hope to improve this year. The black oil sunflower seed will be less expensive this year; the other prices are about even with last. Jim passed around a sign-up sheet for volunteers to make reminder calls, help with administering the paperwork at pick up and checkout, and helping the Birdseed Team load the bags.

John Davis gave a report on field trips. They have had good attendance for the trips, but there has not been a lot of bird sightings overall. The Trump Winery trip was beautiful, but noisy leaf-blowers and too much grounds grooming and spraying hindered the walk. Secluded Farm also had very few birds. Upcoming trips include Preddy Creek Park (Doug Rogers leading), Lickinghole Creek, and a Sunday trip to Panorama Farm (Nov. 3) with Stauffer Miller leading.

Dave Hogg, President of the Ivy Creek Foundation, welcomed the bird club to the ICF facility for another year, and thanked MBC for organizing the First Saturday Bird Walks, which have been offered for over ten years.

Bird sightings were shared. Jenny Gaden now has a Least Flycatcher visiting her garden. Jenny also passed around a feather that she couldn't identify. A Great-horned Owl was noted at Meadow Creek. Daniel Mapel reported hearing a Great-horned Owl and a rooster calling at the same time. Jim Hill watched four American Crows in his back yard making a huge racket at a Red-tailed Hawk that was sitting nearby. Nine Great Egrets were seen in Farmville. John Holden saw a Black-throated Green and a Black-and-White Warbler recently.

Notes from BRYBC

by Gabriel Mapel

The Blue Ridge Young Birders Club had a great season of Fall Migration! Despite one rained out trip, our two field trips in search of warblers and other passerine migrants were big successes! On our Stony Point Pass field trip we tallied 12 warbler species, including highlights of Cape May, Bay-breasted, and many great looks of Black-throated Blue. Several young birders got 5 to 10 life birds! Our trip to Rockfish Valley Trail also yielded some good birds, highlighted by 8 warbler species, including Louisiana Waterthrush and Nashville. Plus, we had great looks of Lincoln's Sparrows.

Our next meeting is Sat., Nov. 2nd at 9:30am in the Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Building. Please spread the word! Any interested young birders are encouraged to come to the First Saturday Bird Walk at 7:30 and stay for the BRYBC meeting. Our program will be a summary of arriving-into-the-area winter birds and tips for where to find them (i.e. at backyard feeders, on ponds, in the woods, etc.) We will talk about several wintertime bird studies such as Project FeederWatch, the Great Backyard Bird Count, and Christmas Bird Counts. Hope to see you there!





How I Got Started with Birding...A Personal Narrative

by Stauffer Miller

Joanne Bricker, our capable newsletter editor, has made the excellent suggestion that we members of the bird club write about that which got us started with birding. I think it is often a number of factors that converge in the right point in our lives. I also think we need contact with the right person or persons at just the right time. Kristin Alexander of the Potomac Valley Audubon Society wrote about this in that group's newsletter of last June. She made the astute observation that, as she put it, "I'm willing to bet that if you think back, you will recall an adult who introduced you to a special place and shared with you their passion for the natural world."

That adult for me was a man named Clark Miller. No relation to me, Miller lived a few miles from my Berkeley County, West Virginia home in the town of Inwood. He had moved to that place around 1935 from Pennsylvania to work in the lab of Inwood's Musselman Apple Products plant. As a lab worker, he may have had some scientific background that had drawn him to birds.

For reasons now unknown to me, my brothers and I started going with Clark around 1970 on local field trips, usually to the C&O Canal near Harper's Ferry. He was an affable, warm-hearted man who had a way of disarming those around him with funny expressions. For instance, when someone in our group was missing and we'd asked about his or her whereabouts, Clark would say they'd gone to the summer house...uhh...some-er for men, some-er for women, the summer house.

He loved to teach what he knew about the birds and was willing to take all the time needed to tell us about what a warbler was, a concept that can be difficult for the beginner. His guidance had a strong effect on me because I soon started going to outings of the state birding organization, the Brooks Bird Club, whose members were just as insistent as Clark in wanting to help the beginner. I recall the patience members of that group had in teaching me the song of the Scarlet Tanager. It was easy they said, just think of the opening bars to "In a Little Spanish Town." It worked and whenever I hear that buzzy song coming out of the canopy, I think of that ditty. The BBC also had its funny expressions. It was from them that I first heard characterizations of a bird as an LBJ (little brown job) or BIH (bird in a hurry).

These little expressions and phrases, summer house, In a Little Spanish Town, LBJ and BIH, while seemingly trivial, nonetheless made me feel inside rather than outside the birding fraternity and brought a sense of inclusiveness. So, hats off to Clark Miller and the Brooks Bird Club for giving my birding narrative its start.

Editor's Note: And hats off to you, Stauffer, for sharing your wonderful story with us. I sincerely hope your moving narrative will inspire other members to share their unique birding joys and memories with all of us in future newsletters.

One final reminder before the Nov. 1st deadline...

Order your Birdseed Now!



www.monticellobirdclub.org

Both online and postal ordering are available.

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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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