



# Monticello Bird Club

September 2006

Volume 21, Number 1

## September Meeting Topic:

### *Birds of New Mexico and Arizona*

Bill Grant is Vice-President of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club and has been an avid birder since 1994. He retired from a 34-year teaching career in the public schools of Virginia where he taught band and elementary music. Bill is also a professional musician and has worked with many well known celebrities in the music field. He currently is the Director of the Roanoke Valley Community Band, Assistant Director of the Kazim Shrine Band and owner of The Styl-ists Orchestra, a well known dance band in the area. He has spoken to many garden clubs, birding clubs and school groups on the subject of birding and serves the Boy Scouts of the Roanoke Area as their Birding Merit Badge counselor.

In 2002, Bill and his wife Loretta went west on a three week trip to New Mexico and Arizona. In this program Bill will focus on the birds of Bosque del Apache in New Mexico and Por-

tal and Patagonia, Arizona. Much of the footage was taken at the home of retired Cornell Lab of Ornithology ornithologist Sally Spofford, who for many years opened the yard of her home to birders visiting the Portal area. Sally passed away shortly after this video was made. The program also visits the Patton's of Patagonia hummingbird paradise as well as other birds and animals of the area. Please join MBC members and our speaker for dinner at Wild Greens Restaurant in the North Wing of Barracks Road Shopping Center at 5:30 pm prior to the meeting.

## Future Meetings Preview

### October 12: Lou Verner

Mr. Verner will provide practical tips on how to improve backyard habitat for songbirds, butterflies, and wildlife.



## *Comments From the President*

September is upon us. The late summer migration is well underway. Soon the hawks will be sailing down the Blue Ridge and the thrushes and vireos will join millions of other small birds as they course through the night skies towards their tropical destinations. These are the signals for the Monticello Bird Club to gather itself from the summer dispersal and congregate once again into a newly energized flock of bird lovers. Your board of directors is arranging programs to entertain us at our monthly meetings and planning field trips so that we may enjoy and learn ever more about the birdlife in our community and state. We are even

reaching out beyond the borders of the Commonwealth for one fall trip. In addition, the board is creating opportunities for school children and teachers to learn about birds. We are offering birding feeding kits for two elementary schools this year, and scholarships for teachers to take bird classes at Piedmont Virginia Community College. Through our bird seed sales we have raised the funds to do good work. There are many ways that non-board members can help us with these and other projects. We warmly invite you to do so. I look forward to seeing you on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

*-Jennifer Gaden, president*

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## Dramatic Bird Box Repair at Chris Greene!

by Mary Jane Fowler

I'm the monitor for the bluebird boxes at Chris Greene Lake. This year, for the first time, a White Breasted Nuthatch nested in one of the boxes. Project leader Bob Hammond tells me that, while it isn't unheard of for this species to use nest boxes, it's pretty rare. So I was quite excited to see, first 5 eggs, then 5 babies in the box.

When the nuthatch babies were about 8 days old, my mother came to visit and I took her to Chris Greene to show off all of "my" babies. As we were peeking into the nuthatch box there was a loud crack, and the post, which had obviously been rotting away for some time, broke off at the base. We were left holding up the post, babies inside the box and mama hovering nearby, on a windy day. I called Bob on my cell phone, but he wasn't home, so I had to figure out what to do.

I found a couple of old stumps and part of a broken railroad tie from a nearby set of steps and piled them against the post. It was a bit teetery but I hoped it would stay upright. Then my mother and I dashed to Lowe's, bought 3 large cinderblocks,

stopped at my house to get a shovel, and sped back to the Lake. Hooray! The post was still upright. While my mom held up the post, I use the shovel to level out the ground right behind it and placed the cinder blocks one on top of the other, lining up the interior holes. Then I picked up the post and inserted the base through the holes. It leaned a bit so I stuck a split-off part of the broken railroad tie into the gap. The post felt fairly solid and was almost upright. As we left, I saw mama nuthatch fly over to the box and go in.

Early the next morning Bob called, and we met him at the Lake. He brought a metal pole, which we drove into the ground about 5 feet from where the old post had been. Then we dismantled the jury-rigged post, removed the nest box,

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## REMINDER

### Dues for 2006-2007 are Due Now!

Your Monticello Bird Club dues for 2006-2007 are now due. Dues become "overdue" on October 31, 2006, when we may terminate your newsletter subscription. Membership categories are: Regular Member \$15, Contributing Member \$25, and Sustaining Member \$50. Please send your check, payable to the Monticello Bird Club to:

**Monticello Bird Club**

**P.O. Box 4362**

**Charlottesville, VA 22905**

Please indicate your newsletter format preference, if you have not previously done so, for receiving the MBC Newsletter. This can be either electronic only, paper, or both. Electronic only is the preferred format in that it is environmentally friendly. Either mark your format preference on the membership form when sending in your 2006-2007 dues, or Email either Robyn Kells at rkells@ntelos.net or Henry Konat at henryk54@verizon.net.

### Bird Club Key Info

The Monticello Bird Club normally meets at 7:30 p.m. 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 October issue is September 21.**

Please email information to Amy Gilmer at [akgilmer@adelphia.net](mailto:akgilmer@adelphia.net) or send to 3166 Welsh Run Road, Ruckersville, VA 22968.

**Monticello Bird Club**

P.O. Box 4362

Charlottesville, Virginia 22905

Please visit our website at

[www.ecoventures-travel.com/mbc](http://www.ecoventures-travel.com/mbc)

### Monticello Bird Club Board Members

<b>President</b>	Jennifer Gaden	<a href="mailto:jgaden@earthlink.net">jgaden@earthlink.net</a>	293-6275
<b>Vice President</b>	Jim Hill	<a href="mailto:jimcarhill@adelphia.net">jimcarhill@adelphia.net</a>	975-6523
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<b>Treasurer</b>	Henry Konat	<a href="mailto:henryk54@verizon.net">henryk54@verizon.net</a>	540-948-4771
<b>Field Trips</b>	John Zimmerman	<a href="mailto:jozimmva@earthlink.net">jozimmva@earthlink.net</a>	974-9293
<b>Speakers</b>	Pat Wilczek	<a href="mailto:patwilczek@earthlink.net">patwilczek@earthlink.net</a>	985-4444
<b>Publicity</b>	Ellen Dudley	<a href="mailto:emdudley@nexet.net">emdudley@nexet.net</a>	244-2688
<b>Hospitality</b>	Priscilla Kingston	<a href="mailto:kingston@cstone.net">kingston@cstone.net</a>	293-5173
<b>Newsletter</b>	Amy Gilmer	<a href="mailto:akgilmer@adelphia.net">akgilmer@adelphia.net</a>	825-2170
<b>Membership</b>	Robyn Kells	<a href="mailto:rkells@ntelos.net">rkells@ntelos.net</a>	970-1044
<b>Birdseed Sale</b>	Howard Davis	<a href="mailto:howardsuedavis@juno.com">howardsuedavis@juno.com</a>	964-1242

# Exciting Upcoming Fall Field Trips

## September Special!

Join Peter Brask on the mornings of **September 9, 16, 23 and 30 from 7:30 to 9:00 am** to watch confusing fall warblers and other migrants in his backyard. To reach Peter's home, go south from Charlottesville on US 29 to the Crossroads Store. Turn right on Plank Road (Route 692). Continue for ~3 miles. Turn left on Heartwood Road. Peter's house is the first one on your right. Questions? Please contact Peter Brask at 823-2363.

## Scogo Lake Saturday, September 9

Enjoy an easy hike around the lake through fields, wetlands, and forest edge. **Meet in parking lot at Scogo Lake at 7 a.m.** To reach the lake go south on US 29 for 6.8 mi from I-64 interchange to Route 710 (Taylor's Gap Rd.). Turn right on 710 and go 0.7 mi. to Route 696 (Edge Valley Rd). Turn left and travel ~ 2 mi to the entrance to Scogo Lake on your left. We will then drive a short distance to join Peter Brask in his yard. Questions? Contact John Zimmerman at [jozimmva@earthlink.net](mailto:jozimmva@earthlink.net) or 434-974-9293.

## Anderson Farm Saturday, September 13

Anderson Farm along Secretarys Sand Road in southern Albemarle County. Walk in some fields owned by club members Bill and Margaret Anderson to see whatever can be found. **Meet at Leslie Walton Middle School on Red Hill Road (Route 708) at 8 am.** Please park in the lower parking lot. The outing might change if conditions in the fields are unsatisfactory for walking. Questions? Please contact Stauffer Miller at 296-5505 or e-mail: [stauffer@seepub.com](mailto:stauffer@seepub.com) for the latest information.

## VSO Chincoteague Trip September 15-17

Enjoy this popular birding hotspot. The headquarters for trip is the Refuge Motor Inn (1-800-544-8469 or 757-336-5511). Motel rooms may still be available by this printing. An evening program at the motel Friday night will feature a preview of birds in the area, and a synopsis of the field trips on Saturday and Sunday. Questions? Contact Peggy Opengari at [gramby@pemtel.net](mailto:gramby@pemtel.net) or Jerry Via at [jerry.via@adelphia.net](mailto:jerry.via@adelphia.net).

## Beagle Gap Saturday, September 23

Join Peter Brask for a moderate 2-3 mile hike along the Appalachian Trail starting at Beagle Gap and ending at Calf Mountain. We will observe the hawk migration as well as the passerines of the Blue Ridge forest.

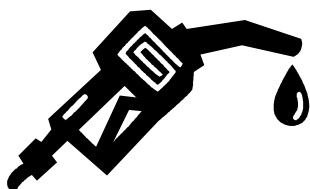
**Meet at 9:30 am in the Afton Inn parking lot, Rockfish Gap.** Or come up with Peter Brask after a little bird watching in his backyard. To reach the Afton Inn parking lot take I-64 west to Exit 99 (22 mile west of Charlottesville). Turn right on US 250 and take the first right. Just before the intersection with Skyline Drive, take a right at Route 610 and you will see the Afton Inn on your right. Bring water and a snack. Questions? Contact Peter Brask at 823-2363.

## James River at Scottsville Saturday, September 30

Jim Nix will lead this walk along the James River at Scottsville. The walk should be mostly level for ~ 2 miles, but it will be necessary to cross over the levy between the parking lot and the James River, and the river side of the levy is rocky.

**Meet at the parking lot behind the school in Scottsville at 7 am.** Take Route 20 south to Scottsville and turn right at the last street before the bridge across the James River. Continue to a "T" intersection and turn left (toward the river). This street ends in a short distance; the parking lot will be on the right between the school and the river. Questions? Contact Jim Nix at 973-7366 or [jnix@cstone.net](mailto:jnix@cstone.net).

*If you carpool on a field trip, please consider sharing gasoline costs with the driver.*



**More Field Trip Announcements on Page 4 .....**

## Holiday for Hawks!! September 22-24

Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch, established in 1976, will be celebrating 30 years of hawk watching with the return of HOLIDAY FOR HAWKS to be held September 22-24 at The Inn at Afton. Activities will include hawk watching, early morning bird walk, dedication of Virginia Birding & Wildlife trail marker, a basic hawks in flight workshop, vendors and displays, book signing by local author and naturalist, Marlene Condon, and a butterfly & dragonfly ID workshop with Bruce Grimes and Clyde Kessler. The banquet dinner will include an entertaining and visually stimulating program presented by Shawn Carey of Migration Productions. Reservation deadline is September 10. Details and

registration form can be downloaded from the web site [http://home.ntelos.net/~btkin/rockfish\\_gap\\_hawk\\_watch/html/RGHW-2006LinkPage.htm](http://home.ntelos.net/~btkin/rockfish_gap_hawk_watch/html/RGHW-2006LinkPage.htm) or contact Brenda Tekin (434) 977-4209 / [brenda@birdsofvirginia.com](mailto:brenda@birdsofvirginia.com).



Photo: Brenda Tekin

## Bird Box Repair

(continued from page 2)

and mounted it on the metal pole. A quick check on the babies showed them to be doing fine, though perhaps a bit curious about all the goings-on. We went back to the cars and stood there chatting for a few minutes. Suddenly, I saw the mama bird in a nearby tree. She flew over to the newly placed box, almost reached it, then veered off and flew away. She went to another tree, flew at the box and again veered away. She did this from several different directions. Then she finally flew up and perched momentarily on top of the box, then flew away. Again, she did this several times from different perches. She was obviously testing out and familiarizing herself with the box's changed location. Finally, she seemed to accept the new position, flew onto the box and then went inside. Mission accomplished!

Of course White Breasted Nuthatches are common and widespread little birds--but this special brood was definitely worth all the trouble. We were very pleased to have taken care of the imminent catastrophe--and we learned a bit about bird radar and distance perception too.

Zimmerman so that you can be contacted if we cancel the CBBT visit. If we cancel the CBBT, we will all meet in the parking lot at the south end of the CBBT at 9:45 am. Reservations for Chincoteague can be made at the Island Motor Inn (757-336-3141). Mention you are with the Monticello Bird Club for the group rate of \$88/ night. There is a 7-day prior cancellation limit.

### West Virginia Marsh October 13-14

Enjoy this overnight trip to a marsh owned by trip leader Stauffer Miller near Shanghai, WV. Headquarters for the trip will be the Comfort Inn at Exit 307 off I-81 at Stephens City, just south of Winchester, VA. Reservations for the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> can be made by calling 1-800-424-6423. Those not choosing to come the night before can meet the group at 7 am on October 14<sup>th</sup> at the motel. We will depart at 7:30 am, traveling north through Frederick County, VA and reaching the marsh about 8:30 am. We will leave the marsh about noon. It could be wet so boots are suggested. Questions? Contact Stauffer Miller at 296-5505 or e-mail: [stauffer@seepub.com](mailto:stauffer@seepub.com)

### Sparrow Road Saturday, October 21

John Zimmerman will lead this trip along Sparrow Road and will include stops at Beaver Creek Reservoir and Mint Spring Valley Park. **Meet at Seminole Square in the Giant parking lot at 7:00 am.** Questions? Contact John at 974-9293 or [jozimmva@earthlink.net](mailto:jozimmva@earthlink.net)

### Chincoteague NWR & Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel November 17-19

Join field trip leader extraordinaire, John Zimmerman on a visit to this birding hotspot. The visit to CBBT islands is limited to 15 with prior submission of an information sheet for security clearance. Security information forms will be available from John Zimmerman at the September and October meetings or call 974-9293 (e-mail [jozimmva@earthlink.net](mailto:jozimmva@earthlink.net)). Forms due to John Zimmerman by October 31st at 1046 Blackburn Bluff, Charlottesville, VA, 22901 or bring to October meeting. There is a \$10/person fee, payable at time of trip to the CBBT. You must also present a picture ID (e.g. driver's license) to the security officer. If we have less than 10 sign-up for the CBBT, we will cancel that part of the trip.

We plan to meet at the south end of the CBBT in the administration building parking lot at 9:45 am on November 17th. If you do not choose to do the CBBT, meet at the Visitors Center, Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge at 1 pm, but give your name/phone number/e-

**FLASHLIGHTS:** Don't forget to bring a flashlight to our monthly meetings to light your way from the Education Building to the parking lot!

