



# Monticello Bird Club

April 2015 Newsletter

Website: [www.monticellobirdclub.org](http://www.monticellobirdclub.org)

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Facebook: [Monticello Bird Club](https://www.facebook.com/MonticelloBirdClub)

**MBC Monthly Meeting—Thursday, April 9th at 7:00pm**

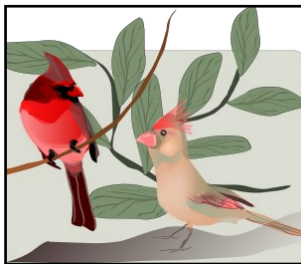
## Comments from the President

Doug Rogers

When I joined the Monticello Bird Club eight or so years ago, I was a bit unsure as to how to proceed – where to begin, how to participate, how to get to know existing members. If you are a new member – having joined MBC in the past year or are returning to the club after a time of non-membership – I want to personally welcome you. Please approach me at the next meeting and introduce yourself. Let's get acquainted! And yes, I do know that I tend to get involved in Club business before and after the meeting but please come to me anyway. I will recognize you as someone I don't know and stop whatever I am doing to speak to you. Everyone's name is important, and I will try very hard to remember yours. My track record isn't bad; although it usually takes me two or three times to really get it down.



In another effort to make new MBC members feel welcomed, we are holding a special bird walk on April 11<sup>th</sup> – for You! We are also inviting all interested “old-timers” to come along as well to meet and get to know our newest members. So, if you are a new or recently returned member, we hope you will try to make this event a priority.



On Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, Lesslie, our Membership Chair and I will meet you in the parking lot of Preddy Creek Trail Park – see the formal announcement of this event in the “Field Trips” column on page 2. We will hike down the winding trail that leads to Preddy Creek. There, we can expect to see local birds and hopefully some migrating warblers. This approximately two hours of good spring birding should provide a chance for old and new members to become acquainted and to experience the camaraderie and sharing spirit that is at the heart of MBC.

Please join us, and once again, Welcome!

## Speaker of the Month: Gabriel Mapel — Teen Birding Camp, Hog Island, Maine

Stauffer Miller

Gabriel Mapel of New Hope in Augusta County will be the speaker at the April 9th meeting of the bird club. Gabriel is well known to our group. We have watched him grow up and become an accomplished birder. In addition, he and his parents have been instrumental in developing the Blue Ridge Young Birders Club. Gabriel is now fifteen years old and has been birding for five years. He has a life list of 568 bird species, is field trip coordinator of our club, is president of the Young Birders Club and is on the bird records committee for Augusta County. At age ten, he wrote a children's book about bears.



Last year Gabriel took his first birding trip to Maine where he attended the Bird Studies for Teens Birding Camp at Hog Island in that state. The Monticello Bird Club was a co-sponsor of this trip. His presentation will be about the birds and adventures he experienced during his time at Hog Island.

Our speaker in May will be club member Bill Leaning, who will talk about birds and travel in Thailand. This will be the fourth country we have heard about in the 2014-15 series of programs, the others being Korea, Bolivia, Cambodia and Laos. Bill takes outstanding photos, so don't miss this opportunity to hear about the land of Anna and the King of Siam.

Dinner with the speaker will as usual precede our program. Come to the Brick Oven Restaurant at 5:30 pm for dinner with Gabriel. Hope to see you there.

**Birding Tidbits** about a bird you might find on the Bird Walk at Ivy Creek in April  
by Jenny Gaden

**First Saturday Bird Walk**  
April 4 at 7:30am

## Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*

Although the Eastern Phoebe is reported regularly on the Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count, most individuals migrate south for the winter where they find a reliable source of food – insects. After all, they are members of the Flycatcher family. Those few that choose to spend the winter here subsist on fruits when no insects are available. But they are one of the earliest spring migrants, arriving here in late February and early March, when their raspy “phoebe” song is a welcome sound. The most distinguishing feature of their appearance is their lack of distinguishing features. It is a small drab bird with a dark cap and tail. A wash of yellow on its underparts, seen in the fall and winter, fades by spring and simply becomes whitish. The phoebe does, however, have a special behavioral mark of distinction and that is the lowering and slow raising of its tail when perched. By April nesting is well underway. Phoebes like to make their nests on ledges with an overhead covering, and often select houses, bridges and other human-made edifices as nest sites. The nest is made of green moss, mud and grasses. You might find you are hosting a family in an upper corner of your front porch.



*Eastern Phoebe*  
Photo by Laura Parker

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—Spring 2014

Jan. 3 ... David White  
Feb. 7... Teresa Shaner  
Mar. 7... Stauffer Miller

### Apr. 4... Gabriel Mapel

May 2... Jim Nix  
June 6... Doug Rogers

For information about opportunities and events at Ivy Creek Natural Area, follow this link to the [Ivy Creek Foundation Public Program Calendar](#).

## Field Trips

Organized by Gabriel Mapel



## Bird Walk Welcoming New Members Preddy Creek Trail Park

**Date:** Saturday, April 11th

**Meeting Place & Time:** 7:30am at Preddy Creek Trail parking lot

### Leaders:

**Lesslie Crowell** & **Doug Rogers**  
**lessliecrowell@aol.com** **doug5996@gmail.com**  
**434-295-1395** **434-973-7634**

A Bird Walk especially for New Members. “Old” members are welcome to come share your expertise and meet those new to MBC within the past year. New members are encouraged to come out and enjoy the club on a spring walk designed in your honor. Expect to see a variety of lingering winter residents and early spring migrants.

**Directions:** Take Route 29 North. 4 miles beyond Airport Road, turn right onto Burnley Station Road. Go 2.6 miles to park entrance on left.

## Rockfish Valley Trail

**Date:** Saturday, April 18th

**Meeting Place & Time:** 7:30am at the Rockfish Valley Trail parking area along Hwy 151

**Leader:** **Gabriel Mapel**  
**birdmangabriel@yahoo.com**  
**540-363-5035**

Gabriel will lead us on a tour of the Rockfish Valley Trail in Nelson County. This site has a great diversity of birds, and we will hope to find some migrating warblers, flycatchers, sparrows and more.

**Directions:** Take Route 250 West to Route 151 South (Critzler Shop Road). Go 14 miles and pass through Nellysford. The trailhead is on the right by a bridge over a creek/river.

## Pine Knot Cabin—Roosevelt’s Presidential Retreat in southern Albemarle County

**Date:** Saturday, April 25th

**Meeting Place & Time:** 7:00am at the Monticello Trail parking lot in order to reach Pine Knot by 7:30

**Leader:** **Jim Nix**  
**Organizer:** **Kay Slaughter**

Jim Nix will lead an MBC birding trip to Pine Knot Cabin, the presidential retreat of Theodore and Edith Roosevelt near Keene, in southern Albemarle County. After birding, a member of the Pine Knot Foundation will be present to show the cottage to interested participants.

For other spring birding and nature walks at Pine Knot, see page 3 of this newsletter.

## Birding Before Work: *Weekday Mornings 7:00-8:30am, April 27—May 1 & May 4—May 8*

### Meeting Places & Directions:

**ICNA: Ivy Creek Natural Area**  
Gather in the parking lot.

#### O-Hill: Observatory Hill

Meet in the parking lot of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, 520 Edgemont Road, at the northeast base of O-Hill.

#### RP: Riverview Park

The park is at the eastern terminus of Chesapeake Street, past Riverview Cemetery. Where the road ends, turn left into the park. Or, you can go east on East Market Street and turn left just after passing Woolen Mills Church. Proceed one block into the park at the "confluence" of Chesapeake and the park.



If you can lead the walk on April 28 or May 5, please contact **Gabriel Mapel** [birdmangabriel@yahoo.com](mailto:birdmangabriel@yahoo.com), 540-363-5035

Join us on any or all of these **short, early morning walks** at birding hotspots in and around town, as we **welcome migrants** to Charlottesville, before heading off to the rest of your day!

Date	Site	Leader
April 27	ICNA	Janet Paisley
April 28	O-Hill	??
April 29	ICNA	Jim Nix
April 30	RP	Jenny Gaden
May 1	O-Hill	Leigh Surdukowski

Date	Site	Leader
May 4	O-Hill	Joanne Bricker
May 5	ICNA	??
May 6	RP	David While
May 7	ICNA	Teresa Shaner
May 8	O-Hill	Janet Paisley

## Theodore Roosevelt's Favorite Pastime

by Kay Slaughter

**P**ine Knot, Theodore and Edith Roosevelt's retreat from Washington in the early 1900s, will be available for birding and nature walks on three occasions this spring. If you like to combine your nature studies with American history, these trips are for you. During a visit in 1907, Roosevelt sighted 75 species, and reportedly, the last of the Passenger Pigeons was seen here.

As a young boy, Roosevelt began his study of birds as a diversion from his acute asthmatic illness, donating his collection of stuffed birds to the Museum of Natural History in New York City. During his presidency, his wife Edith purchased 15 acres in Southern Albemarle as a weekend retreat, which she and Theodore visited eight times during his presidency for 2 to 8 days each time. Toward the end of his first term, she purchased another 75 acres. All his children except for Alice visited the site at one time or another.

In addition to the April 25th MBC birding Field Trip (see page 2 of this newsletter), the Pine Knot Foundation will offer a Nature Walk Saturday, April 18, and another Birding Walk Saturday, May 2.



At 10am on Saturday, April 18, popular naturalist **Tom Dierauf**, retired director of forestry research at Virginia Department of Forestry, and **Chip Morgan**, a local wildflower enthusiast, will lead the **nature walk**.

Ornithologist **Clair Mellinger**, Editor of "Birds of Rockingham County, Virginia," will lead a **birding walk Saturday, May 2 at 9am**.

At all three trips, a representative of the Foundation will be present to show the cottage and talk about the site as part of Roosevelt's legacy.



For the MBC birding trip, participants will meet at the Monticello Trail parking lot on Route 20 to carpool to Pine Knot. For the other two trips, participants will meet at the Pine Knot parking lot, 700 Coles Rolling Road.

**Directions. From North:** Take S.Rt. 20 from Charlottesville south to Keene (approx. 12 miles). Turn left on Coles Rolling Road (S.R. 712) and go 1.5 miles. Turn left on Glendower/Coles Rolling Rd. for 0.1 mile, then take an immediate right staying on Coles Rolling Road. Go ½ mile, then turn right at the entrance to Pine Knot (sign is on the black board fence). Drive in the gate and proceed @ 200 yards to the parking lot on the left.

**From South/Scottsville:** Take S.Rt. 20 @ 7 miles; turn right at S Rt. 713 Glendower Road. Drive past Christ Church Glendower, then take your first right, S.Rt. 712 Coles Rolling Road, drive ½ mile to the Pine Knot gate, and park as above. Contact **Paula Beazley** 434-286-6106 or **Dahne Morgan** 434-295-6088 for info.



## Treasurer's Notes

by Maynard K. Davis

We have made a donation to the Owl Research Institute (ORI) in Montana in honor of Jenny Gaden and in appreciation of the wonderful talk about her experience at ORI which Jenny presented at our March meeting. Thank you, Jenny!

Maynard



## Membership Notes

by Lesslie Crowell

MBC extends a warm welcome to new members Kim Grosner, Mary Maher, Edwin Poole, Abbie Rowlett and family, Lee Baszczewski, Janet Parker, and Donna Shaunesey.

I could still use a few more volunteers for the afternoon of Sunday, April 19, or morning of Monday, April 20, for an MBC table at Ver-alum Farm during Historic Garden Week. We will join other non-profits in the beautifully restored barn to distribute educational and membership materials, talk with visitors, and spread the word about birding. Please let me know if you have the time and the inclination ([lessliecrowell@aol.com](mailto:lessliecrowell@aol.com), 295-1395). *Lesslie*



## MBC Minutes, March 12, 2015

Submitted by Peggy Cornett, Secretary

**-President Doug Rogers** welcomed 45 members and guests to the meeting and asked for interesting **bird sightings**. On the Monticello Bird Alert web page Marshall Faintich reported a Leucistic (brown and white) Carolina Chickadee in the Stoney Creek section of Wintergreen Resort. Lou Tanner saw a Red-tailed Hawk land on a telephone pole on the Downtown Mall, and there was mention of the Red-tailed Hawk that nested by the UVA Library last year. David White saw some unusual ducks on the Rivanna River at Riverview Park: four to five Canvas Backs, Common Goldeneye, and a Scaup. He also saw a Cooper's Hawk near Downtown. Jim Nix has a Red-shouldered Hawk nesting in a Tulip Poplar in his yard. Gabriel Mapel reported seeing a Smith's Longspur in Augusta County, which is a state record. A member has seen a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks watching their backyard bird feeders. Nancy Newman saw two Gulls on Preston Avenue and passed around a photo of a Burying Beetle, which was working on a bird at Fran Boninti's house.

**-Newcomers** included Martha Garland and Lee and Janet Parker.

**-Doug Rogers noted** that volunteers are needed for the upcoming VSO annual meeting at Wintergreen, May 9-10. Help is also needed for the 2015 Rusty Blackbird Spring Migration Blitz. Information is on the web site.

New MBC officers will be voted on in April. Doug reported the status of the nominations. Returning officers: President (Doug Rogers), Vice President (Kathy Sudduth); Secretary (Peggy Cornett), Treasurer (Maynard Davis), Newsletter (Joanne Bricker), Field Trips (Gabriel Mapel), Membership (Lesslie Crowell, who needs an assistant), and Hospitality (Priscilla and Ron Kingston). Lou Tanner has offered to be Programs chair and John Holden has agreed to organize the Bird Seed Sale (with help from Maynard Davis). We still have an opening for Publicity chair. Doug reminded members to submit newsletter articles and photos to Joanne by March 21.

**-Treasurer Maynard Davis** reported that finances were in good shape.

**-Lesslie Crowell reported on membership.** We surpassed our goal of 150 members, which included 27 new members. She and Doug Rogers plan to lead a bird walk for new members in April. She still needs volunteers to help April 19 (afternoon) and 20 (morning) for the club's Historic Garden Week table.

**-Gabriel Mapel** reported on past and upcoming **field trips**. There were two trips in February: Highland County and Dutch Gap near Richmond. The Feb. 21 trip was cancelled due to bad weather. March 14 John Holden will lead a trip to Cumberland Marsh and the York River to see ducks and Bald Eagles, unless it rains. [Trip was cancelled.] March 20 Jenny Gaden leads the annual trip to see and hear the American Woodcocks in Whitehall. Car-pooling is necessary. March 28 Peter Brask leads a trip to Lickinghole Creek area. A trip to Pine Knot is in the works for April. "Birding Before Work" takes place the last week of April through first week of May, Monday through Friday. Leaders are needed.

Gabriel also reported on the Blue Ridge Young Birders Club. Their fundraiser for bird species recorded was a success with 236 species nationwide and 163 in Virginia. The money raised helps support the club's general expenses, a traveling art exhibit starting this month at Baine's Books and Coffee in Scottsville, and a Chimney Swift tower at Ivy Creek Natural Area.



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ALC Copies Inc., a locally owned small business, generously supports our MBC Bird Club by printing our newsletters at no cost to us.  
*For your personal printing needs, please choose ALC!*

by Bill Leaning

## Cardinal Flower

**R**ed Cardinal Flower *Lobelia cardinalis* is a perennial, native to eastern U.S. and a few sites in mountains of the southwest. Erect, single-stemmed spikes of bright, clear red flower in the summer through to the autumn. Red Cardinal Flower is an excellent Hummingbird plant.

A bog plant in nature, it will grow in sun or part shade. Fifteen years ago, I bought a few small cardinal flower plants at the Charlottesville Farmers' Market and put most of them in pots in my water garden. The remainder I planted in the front garden. They all thrived and the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds loved them.

Most reference books say that cardinal flowers need rich soil and constant moisture. I have been pleasantly surprised that red cardinal flowers also thrive in red Albemarle clay. I leave the seed heads to mature and transplant the numerous self-sown seedlings the following spring. Seedlings grow, quickly, and some will bloom, the first year, from seed. "Wild" red cardinal flowers are now present throughout our garden.

Cardinal flowers are shallow rooted and subject to frost heaving. Mulch plants to protect the crowns but not so heavily as to rot the crowns. I simply let the fallen leaves act as a winter mulch and replant any lifted plants in the spring.

**Blue Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia syphilitica***, a slightly less showy cousin of the red cardinal flower is also a native to the eastern U.S. In this case, the leafy plants send up 3 foot stalks set with spikes of blue flowers. Growth requirements are the same as for red cardinal flower.

Nurseries are starting to offer several new hybrids bred from these species, with large flowers in a range of reds, blues and purples, on sturdy vigorous plants that adapt well to a wide variety of garden conditions, and most important – they all attract Hummingbirds.

"Queen Victoria" and "Royal Robe" are hybrids of *Lobelia cardinalis* and *L. splendens* (a close relative) with deep purple-red foliage and scarlet flowers. "Heather Pink" has soft pink flowers. *Lobelia gerardii* is a perennial hybrid between *L. cardinalis* and *L. syphilitica*.

"Vedrariensis" grows to 4 feet with coppery green foliage and spikes of bright royal purple flowers.

"Rosea", 2 ½ feet tall, has rose pink flowers. "Ruby Slippers", 3 feet tall, has dark red flowers.

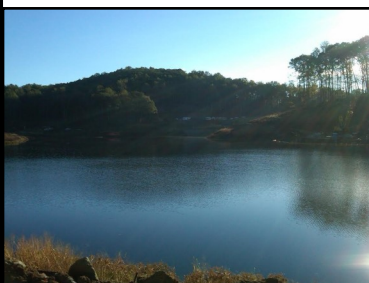


**Ruby-throated Hummingbirds**  
Adult Male (left)  
Young Male (above right)



Give this almost fool-proof perennial a try.  
The hummingbirds will thank you. *Bill Leaning*

## Ragged Mountain Natural Area Seeks Volunteers



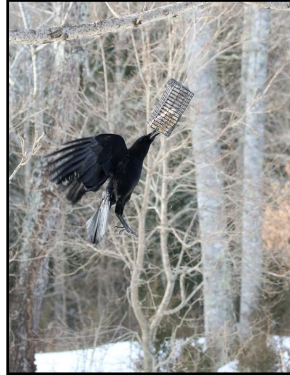
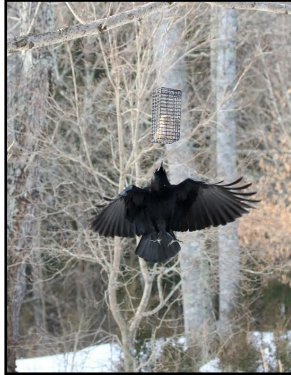
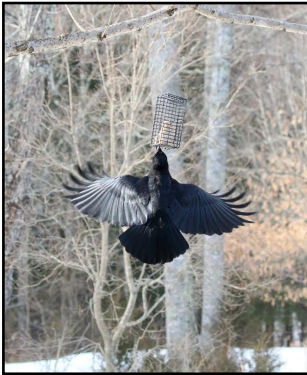
**N**ow that the Ragged Mountain Dam construction is complete, the Ragged Mountain Natural Area is once again open to the public. The City of Charlottesville is managing the area, and Chris Gensic of Charlottesville Parks & Recreation is seeking volunteers to help with current and future projects. Skills of MBCers and Master Naturalists can be helpful in surveying the area for identification of plants and year-round bird populations. Anyone who would like to help with trail building, educational projects, and participating in "bio-blitzing" the area should contact Chris Gensic at [gensic@charlottesville.org](mailto:gensic@charlottesville.org). [Here is a link for a map of the new RMNA trails.](#)





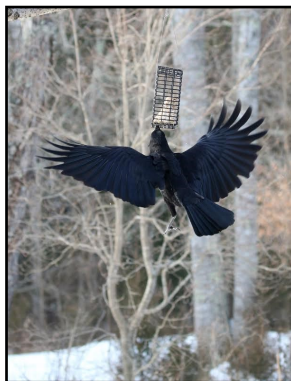


Here's another round of fabulous photos and links from our fellow birding enthusiasts..Keep 'em coming, Friends! *Joanne*



The snows made finding food difficult for the birds, of course, but this was an unusual sight at my suet feeder. A crow made repeated attempts, hovering like an overweight hummingbird, to grab a bite of the suet.

*Ken Klotz*



Lou Tanner sent us a link to [Douglas Tallamy's March 11th Op-Ed article in the NYTimes](#) about planting natives to support wildlife and bio-diversity. If you've ever needed an easy explanation to the "Why plant native?" question, here it is. Also, it's the perfect article to reference for a non-believer about to plant yet another Bradford Pear!



Gary Huff wanted to remind members of the Smithsonian exhibit called **Once There Were Billions: Vanished Birds of North America**. It will be on view in the Evans Gallery of the Natural History Museum through January 3, 2016.

Gary writes, "I saw this exhibit the other day (back in January!) and enjoyed it a great deal. I wanted to see Martha, the last passenger pigeon on earth, she's on the left in the center of the exhibit just above the yellow box in my photo.



*Apologies for the tiny photo!*



As we bid adieu to what feels like a very long winter, Jeannie's beautiful photo (bottom right) leaves us with the promise of spring. I look forward to sharing your photos and notes about those soon-to-arrive migrants and summer residents in the May Newsletter. Fondly, *Joanne*

**Pine Siskins** (left & above)  
Feasting at the home of John & Jackie Davis  
Photos by **Doug Rogers**

**Great Blue Herons**  
Nest-building Pair  
Magnolia Plantation  
South Carolina  
Photo by **Jeannie Holden**




**Monticello Bird Club**  
P.O. Box 4362  
Rottsville, Virginia 22905

Visit our website at [www.monticellobirdclub.org](http://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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Publicity	VACANT		
Hospitality	Priscilla Kingston	kingston@cstone.net	434-293-5173
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Birdseed Sale	VACANT		