



# Monticello Bird Club

April 2016 Newsletter

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

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

at Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Building

## Comments from the President

Doug Rogers



As mentioned in our last Newsletter, this spring we are going to convene a meeting of the Club's "Brain Trust." In our last Newsletter, I provided a list of the items to be discussed. Since then, I have added an additional item—the confidentiality and security of the Club's Membership Roster. There was productive discussion on this topic at the last monthly meeting and I will continue to solicit your ideas.

We frequently look for ways to get people interested in birding. Peggy Cornett alerted the Board to a web site designed for those new to birding, [http://www.homeadvisor.com/r/birdwatching-guide/#.Vu67\\_NCYL1U](http://www.homeadvisor.com/r/birdwatching-guide/#.Vu67_NCYL1U) that I think is of value in this effort. Home Advisor was certainly a site I never would have considered! However, it has lots of good info in it. Do check it out.



**Bobolink**

Photo by Doug Rogers

Spring migration is soon to be underway, and every year I look forward to it with eager anticipation. The Golden Eagles will depart from Highland County; the Golden Winged Warblers will arrive, along with breeding Bobolinks and others. We may return to Highland County and visit such places as the Pocasin Fire Road, Warbler Road and many others to look for these wonderful migrants. Is anyone (other than Gabriel) going to McGee Marsh this year?

It's a wonderful time to be a birder.

Good birding!

## Programs

Lou Tanner



**Topic:** *The Forests of Virginia, Past to Present*

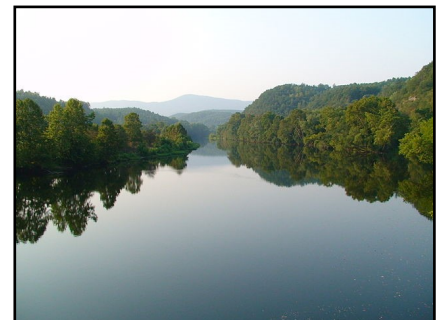
**Speaker:** *Tom Dierauf*

Any birder knows well the sad tales about Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and Passenger Pigeons and cannot but be aware that in our own times birds like the Quail and Cerulean Warblers, to name but two, are having their own troubles. In the latter two cases, the culprit is not hunting but habitat loss and more subtly, the changing mix of our forests.

Our April Speaker is well-qualified to speak to this problem though it is the trees themselves that will be the focal point of his presentation. Tom Dierauf, MBC member and retired forester, received a degree in General Agriculture from Rutgers a while back before going on to the Yale School of Forestry. He then worked for the Va. Department of Forestry for 38 years, during which time he did extensive research and observed plenty. Retired for almost two decades, Tom remains a very active all-around naturalist. He will speak in particular about what the forests and general landscape of Virginia would have looked like when Native Americans were the sole human inhabitants and before European settlement, but also about how this has changed in the four centuries since. As Tom has a long-term perspective, his thoughts about where things go from here will be worth hearing.

As always, we will be dining at the Brick Oven at 5:30 prior to the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Please join us.

The May Speaker will be Matt Kowalski, a Watershed Restoration Scientist with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. He will talk about what can be done to attract birdlife by planting native plants.



**James River Watergap,  
Appalachian Mountains,  
Virginia Blue Ridge Parkway**  
Photo from Wikimedia Commons

## First Saturday Bird Walk

April 2nd at 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 Winter 2016

March 5 ... Peter Dutnell

**April 2....Stauffer Miller**

May 7....Leigh Surdukowski

June 4 .... Jim Nix

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

**Birding Tidbits** about a bird you might find on the April Bird Walk at Ivy Creek  
by Lou Tanner

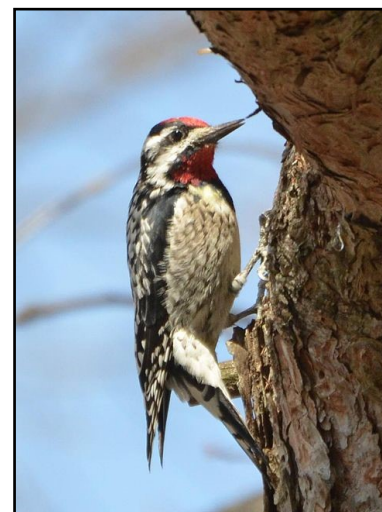
## Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

*Sphyrapicus varius*

Any walk in the woods will yield ample evidence that this discreet winter visitor has been around. The neat rows of holes it leaves behind in maples, pines, and other sapbearing trees are fingerprints that will attest to its presence for decades to come, even if the originals were drilled years ago.

One of the most migratory of all woodpecker species, it prefers to breed farther north, yet blesses us with its quiet charms and soft mewing sound from September to May each year. A century-old book that remains my Bible of ornithology even in the age of Sibley refers to them as “noisy rollicking fellows,” and perhaps that is true of them when they are frolicking further north with an eye toward breeding. The same book further speculates that this may be due to fermented sap they imbibe. I know not.

I only know that this subtle but lovely little bird, which clearly feels no need whatsoever to advertise its beauty but instead prefers to go about its business in peace, is much to my taste. I would make a poor forester. Many a source speaks of the fearful toll the sapsucker takes on trees and gives advice on minimizing that damage. I myself think it a very small price to pay for the enormous pleasure it gives us during its winter break. Consider it rent.



**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**

Photo by Andy Reago &  
Chrissy McClarren  
Wikimedia Commons

## Field Trips

Gabriel Mapel



## Rivanna Trails, Pen Park Area

**Date:** Saturday, April 16th

**Meeting Place & Time:** 7:00am at Pen Park  
Picnic shelters near trailhead

**Leader:** Dave Hogg

Dave will lead us on a 2 mile walk on the RTF Trail in the Pen Park area. As we follow the Rivanna River through several varied habitats, we will be looking for kingfishers, gnatcatchers, Louisiana Waterthrushes, Yellow-throated Warblers and other migrants.

## Pleasant Grove Park

**Date:** Saturday, April 23rd

**Meeting Place & Time:** 7:00am  
Giant parking lot on Pantops,  
in front of the now unoccupied  
(formerly Starbucks) corner storefront.

**Leader:** Doug Rogers

The drive to Pleasant Grove Park in Fluvanna County is approximately 20 minutes from Pantops. If you heard our January 2016 speaker, Walter Hussey, you learned of his promethean efforts to reconfigure and “renaturalize” this longtime pastureland into native-planted meadowland supporting a rich diversity of wildlife. This will be a new area for the club to visit and we anticipate its becoming an eBird hotspot. We should expect to see migrants, year-round residents and some surprises.

## Cumberland Marsh and York River State Park

**Date:** Saturday, April 30th

**Meeting Place & Time:** 7:30am  
Giant parking lot  
on Pantops. (see above)

**Leaders:** John Holden

**Prothonotary Warbler**  
Photo by Doug Rogers



Even without birds, these are two beautiful destinations. We will first visit Cumberland Marsh Preserve and be there at low tide to look for shorebirds. We will then walk about a mile on the trail system through varying habitats. Next, we'll drive about 1/2 hour to York River State Park (small entrance fee) and bird along the pristine Taskinas Creek, the York River, and a freshwater pond. Expect to walk another mile here. Raptors, wadingbirds, shorebirds, warblers and maybe, just maybe, Prothonotary Warblers await. Prize for being the first to spot one!

## Birding Before Work: *Weekday Mornings 7:00-8:30am, April 25—April 29 & May 2—May 6*

### 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.



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

Date	Site	Leader
<b>April 25</b>	<b>ICNA</b>	<b>Peter Dutnell</b>
<b>April 26</b>	<b>O-Hill</b>	<b>Doug Rogers</b>
<b>April 27</b>	<b>RP</b>	<b>David White</b>
<b>April 28</b>	<b>ICNA</b>	<b>Jim Nix</b>
<b>April 29</b>	<b>O-Hill</b>	<b>Leigh Surdukowski</b>

Date	Site	Leader
<b>May 2</b>	<b>O-Hill</b>	<b>Doug Rogers &amp; Joanne Bricker</b>
<b>May 3</b>	<b>ICNA</b>	<b>Stauffer Miller</b>
<b>May 4</b>	<b>RP</b>	<b>Jenny Gaden</b>
<b>May 5</b>	<b>ICNA</b>	<b>Lou Tanner</b>
<b>May 6</b>	<b>O-Hill</b>	<b>Guy Babineau</b>

## MBC Facebook Group Busts the 100 Member Mark

by Guy Babineau



The club Facebook group has grown rapidly recently and in March passed the 100 members mark. As more people join, the information shared becomes more varied and interesting. Recent information posted included checklists of birds encountered on the club field trip to Lickinghole Creek, photos and reports of early spring migrants, and backyard feeder observations. If you have a Facebook membership, simply type “Monticello Bird Club” in the Facebook search page and press return. When you arrive at the club page, click on the “Join Group” button. This will send a request to the page administrators to add you to the Facebook membership. The Facebook page is for MBC members and invited guests. Once you join, please contribute to the conversation!

## Time to Register for VSO Annual Meeting

by Kent Davis, President, Roanoke Valley Bird Club

The Roanoke Valley Bird Club is hosting the **2016 Virginia Society of Ornithology's Annual Meeting April 29—May 1, 2016**. You don't have to be a VSO or RVBC member to attend. In addition to lots of field trips around the Roanoke area Saturday and Sunday mornings, you can also enjoy keynote speaker Pete Dunne at Saturday night's banquet. Pete is a renowned author and speaker, longtime director of the Cape May Bird Observatory, New Jersey Audubon's Birding Ambassador, and founder of the World Series of Birding. Home base for the weekend is the Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center at 2801 Hersherberger Road. Room reservations can be made at 540-563-9300, 800-325-3535, or at [www.sheratonroanoke.com](http://www.sheratonroanoke.com). Rates are \$99 plus tax, but you must use the “Virginia Society of Ornithology Annual Meeting 2016” designation when reserving your room. More details will be forthcoming as they become available, so check our Facebook page or our website [roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://roanokevalleybirdclub.com) often. Here is a quick [link for more details and conference registration](#). (Deadlines for discounted hotel rates are April 8, and for conference registration, April 19.) If you have unanswered questions, you may contact Alyce Quinn, General Chairman, [twoquinns@yahoo.com](mailto:twoquinns@yahoo.com). We hope you will make plans to attend this fun event!





## Treasurer's Notes

Maynard K. Davis

The Club's finances are sound, and we're likely to have a significant budget surplus (\$1000+) at the end of the year. How much will depend in part on whether the MBC Planning Meeting on April 24 develops any projects which require funding. If you have any ideas, please let any Board member know. Thanks,  
*Maynard*



## Membership Notes

Lesslie Crowell

This month MBC welcomes two new members: Lynda Mosen and new Sponsor Katherine Dulaney.

If anyone is interested in helping at the MBC information tables on April 30 at Tufton Farm and at the Piedmont Master Gardeners plant sale, please contact me at lessliecrowell@aol.com.  
*Lesslie*



## MBC Meeting Minutes, March 10, 2016

Peggy Cornett

-President Doug Rogers called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and welcomed first time visitors, which included a student in Dan Bieker's ornithology class. There were fifty present. Doug asked for input on requests for the club's membership roster. The overall opinion was to keep the membership roster private. Jim Nix, however, mentioned that the club's membership list was available in years past. It was pointed out that members have the opportunity to connect to one another on the club's Facebook page, which currently has ninety-seven members. This issue will be discussed further at the April 24th board meeting, which takes place at 2 PM at the Ivy Creek Education Building.

-Interesting bird sightings were shared. Doug Rogers recently saw a rare Dickcissel, and photos are posted on the MBC Facebook page. Lou Tanner saw a Baltimore Oriole on Valentine's Day, as did David White on February 16. Carol Hill watched a bird's heart beating. Jim Nix saw Pine Warblers in pine trees while he was stuck in traffic on 29 North. Ron Kingston had a Baltimore Oriole at his feeder eating meal worms.

-Doug Rogers reported the slate of officers for the fiscal year 2016-2017. Remaining on the board: Doug as president, Kathy Sudduth as vice-president, Peggy Cornett as secretary, Maynard Davis as treasurer, Gabriel Mapel as field trip coordinator, Lou Tanner for programming, and Priscilla and Ron Kingston remaining as hospitality chairs. Vacancies will be: newsletter editor, membership chair, and bird seed sales coordinator.

-Lesslie Crowell reported that the club has gotten four new members since last month. The club currently has 164 members, including twenty-four new members. Lesslie also reported that the winning bird conservation posters are now on display at C'ville Coffee.

-Doug Rogers gave the field trip report for Gabriel Mapel. The February 20<sup>th</sup> trip to Bellair Farm was a success. Fourteen attended and forty-six species were observed, including a Merlin. Two trips on the horizon are: March 11 to Humpback Rocks with Jenny Gaden to see Woodcocks and March 19 with Peter Brask at Lickinghole Creek. Sign-up sheets were passed for volunteers to lead the "Birding before Work" bird walks in April.



## Gardening for Wildlife: Wisdom, musings, and photographs from Omanu

Bill Leaning

### Think Twice (or not at all) about Leatherleaf Mahonia

*Mahonia bealei*

When I started planting our "wildlife garden" in 1998, I searched for a reference that would guide and inspire me in the search for "bird friendly" plants for Zone 6. I found such a reference in Michael A. Dirr's "Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs", an illustrated encyclopedia, 1998 Reprint. On page 247 is a brief photo essay on *Mahonia aquifolium*, Oregon Grapeholly but no mention of *M. bealei* or Leatherleaf Mahonia.

Up until the time of my reissuing of my Oregon Grapeholly article for the March Newsletter, I had remained blissfully ignorant of the potentially invasive Leatherleaf Mahonia. It has, however, been reported to me by one of my readers (rather vehemently) that I should have mentioned the species of Mahonia that has the potential for ecological damage, namely, *Mahonia bealei*.

*M. bealei* is a species native to China, Japan and Taiwan, brought to the USA as an ornamental via Europe in 1848 by Robert Fortune.

The National Park Service conducted surveys in 2000 through 2007 recording the potential invasive nature of Leatherleaf Mahonia. Maryland classified it as an invasive species in July, 2010. Leatherleaf Mahonia is on the prohibited lists of Michigan, Tennessee, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. In Virginia, it is an invasive at the Petersburg National Battlefield.

I have been warned! Now, you have been warned. Think twice about Leatherleaf Mahonia. *Bill*



Here's the culprit.  
Be forewarned!

## Why I eBird

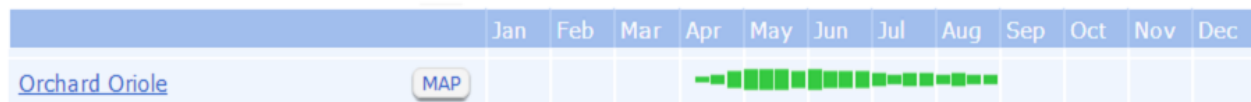
Article and photos by Guy Babineau

I am grateful to the members of the Monticello Bird Club for sharing their knowledge about birding hotspots. This method of learning works because we willingly share information with each other in meetings and trips. But when I travel somewhere else, I don't know the local birders but still want to quickly find good birding spots. As an example, in January I had a short trip to Los Angeles for work. My day was filled with work meetings but my body was still on the eastern time zone. I woke before sunrise each day and found a nearby park to join the sunrise dog-walkers and joggers. It was not an exotic locale, but identifying a different set of common birds from our own was fun, and this Western Scrub Jay in the gray early morning light was a pleasure to see. Before arriving at the park, I knew I had a very good chance of picking up a lifebird (Nuttall's Woodpecker). How did I find that park and know I would likely find that woodpecker? Because birders, like us, regularly enter checklists through eBird and I was able to access that information. I am grateful for the information and reciprocate by providing [my own observations](#) to pay back the birders of Los Angeles.



A **Western Scrub Jay** resplendent in the subdued light of morning

eBird is also useful locally...very locally...as in our backyard. Like many of you, Susan and I lavish the birdseed we buy from the club on the birds (and squirrels) in our yard. On a leisurely weekend morning, I enjoy seeing what birds are visiting from our kitchen window. Anticipating when our migrating birds will show up and depart is definitely part of the fun of backyard birdwatching. eBird helps with that as well because I can see what others have reported in the county over the years. When will those Orchard Orioles be back in the county? The data in eBird for Albemarle says soon! I can also access my own data to see when I first saw it arrive last year. I'm on the lookout.



*eBird data can be shown in many ways, including observation frequency. subdued light of morning*

The chart shows the frequency of birder-submitted checklists that include an Orchard Oriole. For that data to be present, we need two things. One is that our Orchard Oriole comes back each year, and secondly that we as birders, see the bird and enter our data in eBird.

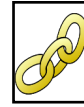
The data is fun and helps me get a better appreciation of the lives of birds, including their varied patterns of migration. But it is also important for scientists. That is the reason the Cornell Lab of Ornithology makes this great data and tool available to all of us for free. Our use of eBird for pleasure is a Citizen Science project that provides real data for scientific study. Among the many uses of the data is conservation of bird species by understanding changes in populations and distributions. Who knows, the data might help ensure that our Orchard Oriole keeps coming back for many years to come.

You can get started by visiting the [eBird website](#). You can enter and view the data from your computer or there are several smartphone apps that are useful in the field. I use two apps most frequently. The free eBird App (Android and iPhone) is great for entering data and I use this for most of my checklist entries. I also use an app called BirdsEye which is not free but allows me to access eBird data from my phone in convenient ways including telling what birds have been seen nearby based on my general location including a separate listing of birds I don't have yet on my life list. I used that feature to help find that Nuttall's Woodpecker as well as see this Golden-crowned Sparrow.



Birds common locally, like this **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, were new to me.

Many of you are already entering your checklists in eBird and more of you are using the data in eBird to plan your outings. I would like to encourage all of you to enter your checklists. The more data that is there, the better information we have. But you are also providing data to science and may find, as I do, the activity and the information adds to your birding experience and enjoyment.



## Spring is the time of year to....

- Listen for the unmistakable "kon-ka-reeeee" of the Red-winged Blackbird (*right*)
- Head for Maple Flats to search for a strikingly handsome Red-headed Woodpecker (*below right*)
- Or if you're a fine-feathered male Eastern Bluebird, you might just strike a pose and observe while your hard-working partner gathers nesting material. (*below*)

Photos from **Nancy Newman**



Or.....

- Take advantage of the beautiful Virginia weather and go for a leisurely stroll, as these Oystercatchers did back in January at Fort Myers Beach, Florida, where **Carolyn McGrath** photographed them.



*So much information,  
so little time....*



Follow these links to articles that your fellow birding enthusiasts recommend.

From **Carol Hill** — come two articles of note.

- A piece about the [importance of Black Vultures](#) written by our local naturalist Marlene Condon in the CROZETgazette.
- A [Washington Post](#) article about the trade-offs made by wading birds who dare to deal with alligators in the Florida Everglades. (Click the link, then scroll down to March 2, "The Gruesome Price..")

From **Janet Paisley** — come two important citizen science opportunities for us to contribute to birding data collection. (As these two links remain timely, I'm reprinting them from last month.) This information will enable greater accuracy in determining the status of current bird populations and foster the designing of best practices to protect birds and bird-friendly habitats in these challenging times. Your expertise and participation is vital. Follow the links below for more information.

- [VABBA2](#)—The Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas
- [Global Big Day](#)—May 14, 2016

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### Monticello Bird Club

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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 May, at the **Education Building of the Ivy Creek Natural Area** on Earlsyville Rd, 1/2 mile north of Hydraulic Rd.

The editor of the **MBC Newsletter** welcomes submissions, including articles, photographs, notices, & links. **DEADLINE** for each issue is **9:00AM on the 20th** of the month.

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