



Monticello Bird Club

December 2013 Newsletter

Website: www.monticellobirdclub.org

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

*MBC Monthly Meeting—*Thursday, December 12th at 7:00pm

For our December meeting, attendees traditionally bring a food offering or a bird-related (gently-used is fine) door prize. After the meeting, we share the holiday goodies and raffle off the non-edible treats.

We hope you will join us for this annual seasonal celebration!

Comments from the President

Doug Rogers



Hawk Eye Nature Cam
Photo by Joanne Bricker

The Virginia Bluebird Society (VBS) held its semi-annual meeting on Saturday, November 9, 2013. They had three great speakers and their usual assortment of door prizes. Amazingly, I was the winner of one of the door prizes; my prize was a remote video camera – *The Hawk Eye Nature Cam* – to be precise.

The description on the side of the camera's box reads as follows:

- Color Video Camera plugs into TV
- Microphone lets you hear as well as see
- Infrared Night Vision for day & night viewing
- All weather protective shield allows outdoor use
- Wired with 100 feet of cable. Extensions available.

The VBS uses this type of camera, or something similar, for their Nest Cam project. The VBS' equipment is installed in a bluebird nest box near a school building, and the kids are able to monitor the nesting activity in the bluebird house from start to finish.

I am looking for a good home for this camera. I would like for someone with excellent creativity to put this camera to work promoting birds and birding, in general, and our Club, in particular. What are your ideas? Who would like to take on a project of this type?

Please send me your suggestions, and I will ask the Board to help me make a selection. I am confident that the Club can provide some modest help with additional funding, if needed.

Editor's Note: Doug was also awarded the "Volunteer of the Year" award at the VBS meeting. Congratulations, Doug. Both VBS and MBC are reaping the benefits of your hard work and generosity on their behalves. (I realize this editor may be unduly biased, but Doug's efforts are truly recognition-worthy, so I chose to shamelessly publicize this honor.)

Speaker of the Month: Jessie Cole

Stauffer Miller

Jessie Cole, wildlife rehabilitator at the Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary in Nelson County, will speak at the December 12th meeting of the bird club. Jessie comes to us thanks to a suggestion made to me by Brenda Lambert.

The Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary is a non-profit facility that serves all of central Virginia. The staff includes student interns, trained volunteers, a board of directors and two licensed rehabilitators. The sanctuary cares for and rehabilitates injured and orphaned animals so they can be returned to the wild. It also educates the public about the need for wildlife habitat. So far this year, the facility has cared for over 600 animals.

A Christmas party with holiday treats and a raffle of bird-related items will follow the program. Don't miss out on the fun and good cheer. As usual, we take our speaker out to dinner before the program. Consider joining us at the Brick Oven restaurant at Rio Hill Shopping Center at 5:30 pm. Hope to see you there.



Birding Tidbits

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



Dark-eyed Junco
Photo from Mike's Birds
Wikimedia Commons

Dark-eyed Junco

Dark-eyed Juncos, also known as Slate-colored Juncos and “snowbirds”, often congregate on the ground in winter, hopping around the base of trees and shrubs. Their head, back and breast are uniformly gray. They have a white belly and frequently flash their white outer tail feathers in flight. During the winter, Juncos move in flocks numbering from a handful to 30 or more individuals. The flock usu-

ally remains in a territory of about ten acres during the entire season. To avoid the competition, many females migrate farther south than the males. Up to 70% of Juncos wintering in the southern U.S. are females. Males tend to stay farther north in order to shorten their spring migration and thus gain the advantage of arriving first at prime breeding territories. I've stopped on the entry path into Ivy, spotting them in the brushy area in front of the barn.

Be sure to check out [The Ordinary Extraordinary Junco](#), a series of interesting short videos produced by scientists at Indiana University to learn more!

Field Trips

Organized by John Davis

Ponds and Lakes

Saturday, December 21, 7:30am
Led by Leigh Surdukowski

Leigh Surdukowski will lead us on a tour of some of the lakes and ponds of western Albemarle County. We will be looking for incoming winter birds, particularly ducks and sparrows.

Directions: Meet at the parking lot of the Harris Teeter store on Route 250 in Crozet and depart from there.

CBC The Christmas Bird Count

by Jenny Gaden

The 2013 Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will take place on **Sunday, December 15**. 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 early 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 114th Christmas Bird Count.

Each count occurs in a designated circle, 15 miles in diameter, and is organized by a designated “**compiler**,” who is **Jenny Gaden** for the **Charlottesville CBC**. Those **interested in participating** in the count should **contact Jenny (434 293-6275; jengaden@gmail.com)**. If you are an inexperienced birder you will join a more experienced person or group. If you are an experienced birder it might be possible to strike out on your own. **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. Directions will be available through the group leaders.

First Saturday Bird Walk

December 7th, 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



Monticello Bird Club

P.O. Box 4362
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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.

Birdseed Sale Wrap-Up *by Jim Hill*



A HUGE THANK YOU TO EVERYONE for our most successful Birdseed Sale in the last 13 years (as far back as our records go). Kudos to the members of the Birdseed Sale Committee who worked so very hard getting the word out via E-mails, telephone calls, fliers, posters, radio advertising and plain old-fashioned word of mouth. Their efforts allowed us to achieve a **record sale** amount of **\$9,026.00**. We also donated a total of **\$247** worth of birdseed to Ivy Creek Nature Center and both Stone-Robinson and Venable elementary schools.

We further extend our appreciation to the group who labored so intensely on Saturday, Nov. 16, loading **11,000 pounds** of birdseed. This group enjoyed greeting our fellow birdfeeding friends, who so graciously staggered arrival times throughout the delivery period, so that the loading process was smooth and free of delay.

Most of all, we especially thank the **89 people** who ordered birdseed (another record) to make our sale such a success. The **53 orders** that were made on-line through PayPal sure proved that Mary and Gabriel Mapel knew what they were talking about when they exhorted us to "get into the 21st Century"!! We also received an extraordinary **34 orders** from **non** MBC members. (Now that's advertising.) We will inform you of our final profit when all of the paperwork is in, but it will be in the \$2,000.00 range. Thanks again for all your efforts!



Membership Notes

by Lesslie Crowell

A sincere thank you to all of our 2013 members who have renewed for 2014! With 23 new members, our current membership stands at 115, including 11 at the Sponsor level. Our goal is 132 members. A special note of gratitude goes out to our Sponsors, whose support is very much appreciated as we work to maintain our current level of Club activities. If you have not yet renewed, you may do so either by check or through Paypal on the MBC website.



Congratulations to our following two new Lifetime Members, who were awarded their Certificates at the November meeting:

- Ken Klotz - for his many years of expert service as our webmaster.
- Ann Mallek - for being our biggest and most loyal birdseed sale supporter over the years.

Treasurer's Notes

by Maynard K. Davis

Revenue for the Birdseed Sale has exceeded our budgeted amount by \$1000. We are still below our target for memberships, but we expect to hit the goal before the end of the year. Our cash balance right now is significant, but the bill for the birdseed has to be paid in coming months. All expenses are on budget at this time.



MBC Minutes, November 14, 2013

Submitted by Lesslie Crowell, for Peggy Cornett, Secretary

MBC President Doug Rogers opened the meeting with about 45 people present, including 3 visitors. Doug advised people not to leave valuables in their cars when parking at ICNA.



Gabriel Mapel announced that Vic Laubach has a site that lists birding hot spots around Albemarle, Augusta, and Rockingham Counties. (*Editor's Note: These invaluable links will soon be up on our website.*) Sightings: Janet Paisley had a Canada Warbler at her patio waterfall this week.

John Davis reported on field trips. The walk at Panorama Farm on November 3 yielded 42 species. The next is at Riverview Park November 16, led by John.

Leigh Surdukowski asked for volunteers to lead the First Saturday Bird Walks, important for our beginners. Gabriel Mapel asked for volunteers for the Hawk Watch, as two counters are currently unavailable. This year broke the Hawk Watch record for Golden Eagles. The Blue Ridge Young Birders Club will be going on a field trip November 16 in Rockingham County for the Northern Saw-whet Owl banding.

Doug put out a plea for photos which are needed for the MBC website home page. Please submit those to Kathy Sudduth at kas3m2@embarqmail.com. Anyone who has a personal birding story to share, please submit to Joanne Bricker, newsletter editor, at mbcnleditor@gmail.com.



Stories of Birding Origins by Kay Slaughter

When I was five, I remember my father telling me about the Bob White.
"Listen," he said. "He repeats his name over and over 'Bob White, Bob White.'"

I was delighted and never forgot it. When I hear that call, although rarely, I am transported back to a farm in Southside Virginia where I first heard it. My father was a country boy, brought up among coveys of quail and rafts of turkeys, and my mother, a small town girl. They never forgot how to bait a hook or shoot a rifle, but I grew up in suburbia. Not surprisingly, given my parents, I married a country boy.

My husband's mother had bird feeders and gardens in the countryside of Northern Pennsylvania and she attracted many species of birds – grosbeaks and siskins, woodpeckers, finches to mention but a few.

My husband Ian then took up birding (we called it "bird watching" then) seriously in the mid-60s to early 70s as we travelled each summer to the Outer Banks and often north to Maine and Canada, and eventually on a great cross country trip. On these outdoor adventures, I became interested in the birds I observed.

The first of my three pivotal bird moments occurred during a family camping vacation on Ocracoke Island in North Carolina.

We had hiked in from the main island road along a path taking us toward the ocean and a place called South Point, where we hoped to go shelling. My daughter was maybe four, my son, five. We took a shortcut to the beach, leaving the path to cut across the sand dunes.

When we were too far to turn back, we began to hear squawks behind and before us. As we proceeded on, the squawking got louder as the birds flew closer and then started dive bombing us. With a broad-brimmed hat on my head and my eyes focused on the ground, I saw the growing silhouettes of the squawking birds as they zoomed in on us interlopers – the Common Terns were frightening with their sharp beaks and swift acrobatics but the Black Skimmers, with their especially fierce bills, were frightening in both shadow and full form.

My son in a show of male protectiveness threw a shell. My husband was flailing his arms and yelling to scare off the birds. I grabbed my small daughter under my arm and ran as fast as I could, hoping the hat would protect me and my daughter. At last the squawks and the pursuing birds lessened.

We realized that we, not the birds were the aggressors, as we were trespassing on nesting territory. They were simply protecting their babies, just as we were trying to protect ours. It became a piece of family lore, but also a moment of insight about respecting other critters' homes and habitat. Fortunately I had never seen Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds" and I never will.

Only a couple of years later, as we took a cross-country camping trip, we had stopped on the shores of Lake Michigan, erected our small tent and had settled into eating our dinner around a campfire. Husband Ian was talking about all he had seen that day when our 7 year old, Ian Jr., said, "Dad there's a big owl right over your head."

"Ah sure, Ian, no teasing now." I'm not going to be fooled."

"I'm not kidding Dad."

"You can't get me, Son."

"But it's really there — Mom, see it up there?"

As I looked up, I saw a Barn Owl perched on a branch about 20 feet above Ian. No Smart phone cameras in those days, we just all quietly looked, while Ian slowly turned his head to observe this magnificent creature in one of our many magical moments on this trip – it too has entered the family lore.



Finally, about a decade later, while living in Madison County, I read a notice that the Orange Bird Club was going on a hawk watch during migration at Loft Mountain campground. By this time, I had my own binoculars, and Ian and I regularly birded, especially when we were at the beach, but also at other places where we were hiking or visiting. (The children now teenagers were no longer interested in family weekend trips.)

We met up with the Club -- about three to five elderly women (probably younger than I am now) -- at Loft Mountain. They were delightful persons, and they knew their hawks. We chit chatted and then after about an hour, still early, as the air currents in the valleys below began to warm, the kettles of hawks arose, and we started counting. That day in about two hours we counted 400 hawks, many of them Broad-winged Hawks but also other accipiters heading south for the winter. (Since then, the numbers of hawks observed that day has grown like the proverbial fish tale) but my former husband, still a good friend, remembers 400-some.

Although these three events and other smaller ones hooked me on birding, it took many more years to enroll with the master teacher – Dan Bieker – to learn bird calls and songs as well as a more systematic approach to visual identification. (I may have taken Dan's PVCC class more times than anyone other than David White.)

Whether gazing at the Red-shouldered Hawk perched on the walnut tree in my neighbor's back yard, or coming upon a Golden-crowned Kinglet on the Rivanna Trail, I am so grateful to have found this wonderful way to spend time by myself and with others in nature.

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