



Monticello Bird Club

January 2007

Volume 21, Number 5

January Meeting Topic:

The Virginia Important Bird Areas Program

Please join Aimee Weldon, from the National Audubon Society, on January 11th, as she provides a captivating presentation on the Audubon Important Bird Areas (IBA) program in Virginia. The IBA program is a global effort to protect vulnerable bird species by identifying and then conserving the most essential habitats for birds worldwide. To date, more than 10,000 sites have been identified, 14 of which are right here in Virginia. These sites contain some of the most pristine and unique coastal, forested, and grassland habitats in the Commonwealth and support nationally and regionally significant bird populations.

Come learn about the IBAs near you as you enjoy a slide show filled with gorgeous pictures of Virginia's birds and habitats. Ms. Weldon will describe numerous ways that you can get involved in protecting the special places in your backyard. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about what you can do for Virginia's birds!

Please join MBC members and our speaker for dinner at Wild Greens Restaurant in the North Wing of Barracks Road Shopping Center on January 11th at 5:45 pm prior to the meeting.

Comments From the President

Here's some good news for the new year. Whooping Crane numbers have hit a record high since their low point of 15 individuals in 1941. This fall the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service recorded 237 Whoopers that made the 2,400 mile flight from Canada to the Texas coast. That's up from 220 last year. The total population, including captives, is now 515 birds. This is the first time that the North American population has broken 500 since the early 1900s.

It was a productive year for the endangered birds. Sixty-two mating pairs produced 49 chicks in Canada's Wood Buffalo National Park. Of those, 45 made it down to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, and without human help – no ultra-lights for these babies!

That's the largest number of chicks to complete the journey since the counts began in 1938. The birds will spend the winter eating crabs, clams and mud shrimp that live in the coastal marshes. They need to fatten up for the return trip during which they will eat very little.

While all of this is very encouraging, the species is not yet "out of the woods" (not a good pun). To remove the birds from the endangered species list the population would have to reach 5,000 birds. Their recovery must overcome obstacles such as collisions with power lines during migration, loss of winter and migration habitat, and damage to winter habitat from chemical spills. I also seem to remember that some have been taken in the recent past by ignorant hunters.

Let's hope their good fortune holds out.

- Jennifer Gaden, president

Upcoming Field Trips

Madison County Thursday, January 18

Stauffer Miller will lead this trip through the fields and farms of Madison County. **Meet at McDonalds/BP at the intersection of US 29 and Washington St. (Route 634) in Madison at 8 am.** We will make a loop north of Madison looking at fields, weedpatches, streams, and a few ponds. If there are not many birds, there will be interesting scenery. It will take about 3 hours. We will stop for lunch in Madison. Questions? Contact Stauffer Miller at 434-296-5505 or stauffer@seepub.com

Cowbane Pasture Saturday, January 27

John Zimmerman will lead this trip to Cowbane Pasture and the back roads around Stuarts Draft in search of horned larks. **Meet at Giant parking lot, Seminole Square at 7 am.** Questions? Contact John at 434-974-9293.

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Monticello Bird Club

MBC Minutes for December 14, 2006

President Jenny Gaden presided over the meeting. There were 42 present.

Treasurer's Report: Henry Konat reported that the club's income for the period was \$9,462 and expenses were \$7,176, for a net income of \$2,286. The bird seed sale brought in \$1,923 after expenses. He also reported that around 65% of the membership has renewed, so there are still a number of members in arrears.

Field Trips: John Zimmerman reported that all of the December field trips are completed except the Christmas Bird Count, which takes place December 17. John commended Jenny Gaden for her excellent work in organizing and coordinating this year's bird count.

Hospitality: Priscilla Kingston thanked everyone for contributing refreshments and door prizes for the annual Christmas Party, which followed the meeting. The club donated two of the door prizes this year: a carton of 12 suet cakes (packaged

into six bundles of two cakes each) and a bag of niger seed. Everyone attending the party received a prize this year.

Miscellaneous Announcements:

Jenny drew attention to the various publications she has received for club members: the VSO newsletter; *Bird Calls*, the publication of the American Bird Conservancy; the Ivy Creek Foundation newsletter; the national and state issues of The Nature Conservancy magazine; and the Piedmont Environmental Council newsletter. Jenny also made available copies of the latest VSO field check-list of the birds of Virginia. Carol Hill mentioned that this year's stamps from the US Postal Service feature the Madonna & Child with Bird.

Bird Sightings: A Ruffed Grouse was seen at Calf Mountain and a Red-headed Woodpecker at Lake Anna. Peggy Cornett reported seeing three Bald Eagles (two adults and one juvenile) at Tufton Farm near Monticello. Dave Hogg saw a Greater White-fronted Goose in Waynesboro. Stauffer Miller spotted a Loggerhead Shrike in West Virginia. And very curious behavior was exhibited by a Tufted Titmouse in Georgia when it allowed a person to hold it and scratch its neck.

Of Interest....

Ellie Miller will teach eight 2-hour birdwatching classes through the Open Doors' community adult education program at Albemarle High School on Tuesday evenings from 7-9 beginning February 6. For registration information call 434-975-9450. If you have questions about the class, please call Ellie at 434-296-5505 or, preferably, email her at elinormiller@seepub.com

Upcoming Meeting Topics

February 8: Ken Klotz will speak on Birding Guyana: The New Frontier.



Bird Club Key Info

The Monticello Bird Club 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 February issue is January 25.** Please email information to Amy Gilmer at akgilmer@comcast.net or send to 3166 Welsh Run Road, Ruckersville, VA 22968.

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