



Monticello Bird Club

January 2016 Newsletter

Website: www.monticellobirdclub.org

Volume 30

Issue 5

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

MBc Monthly Meeting—Thursday, January 14th at 7:00pm

at Ivy Creek Natural Area—Education Building

Comments from the President

Doug Rogers



As we approach the half way mark in our Club's fiscal year, I look back and feel proud of what we have done:

- Our Field Trips have been well planned and led – and enjoyable. (Our last one had nearly 30 people in attendance.)
- Our annual Bird Seed Sale was a resounding success and its profits funded the very nice prizes for the children (and classrooms) who participated in our youth poster contest.
- The poster contest was such a success (over 70 participants!), we plan to make it (or a similar community outreach project) an annual event.

Going forward, we have more fun, more camaraderie and more worthwhile activities in the works!

Turning now from the fun part to the people who make it all happen, I have learned that we will have at least three Board members leaving the team at the end of our fiscal year on June 30. We will need to find creative and enthusiastic people to fill the Newsletter Editor job, the Bird Seed Sale Chair and the Membership Chair. We commend and give our hearty thanks to Joanne Bricker, John Holden and Lesslie Crowell for all their hard work for our Club. All of you will be missed.

Those who have served on the Board have told me that they enjoyed the contributions they made to the Club; they got to know the inner workings of the Club; they got to know far more people than they would have had they not served.

Someone has the time and talent to be the Newsletter Editor; someone has the time and talent to coordinate the birdseed sale; someone has the time and talent to take on the Membership Chair position. Please see me, email me, call me and let me know your names – by the end of January.

And going forward the rest of this fiscal year, let's have more fun, more camaraderie and do more worthwhile activities!

Good birding!!

Programs

Lou Tanner



Topic: “Renaturalization “of Pleasant Grove Park

Speaker: *Walter Hussey*

The Speaker for the January meeting will be Walter Hussey, the moving force behind an ambitious program to “renaturalize” Pleasant Grove Park in neighboring Fluvanna County. After a career with NASA, Hussey has set his sights on a project that is both wondrously simple, yet complicated beyond belief. The plan is to reconfigure what has been, for decades, land used only for pasture, and transform it into meadowland that will be home to a rich collection of life — plants, birds, mammals, and butterflies alike. Mr. Hussey completed the Master Naturalist's course, an achievement in itself, but is doing something spectacularly useful with it that promises to serve as a marvelous resource for the community as well as a source of inspiration for future landowners and naturalists alike. Come hear what is bound to be a fascinating talk and get inspired to visit the site in spring, when participants in a club field trip led by Doug Rogers will see the real thing.



Earth Day Flower Planting

All Photos—Courtesy of Fluvanna County Parks and Rec



Earth Day Pollinator Garden Planting—above

Future Quail Hedgerow—below

As always, you are invited to our Meet the Speaker pre-meeting dine at Brick Oven Restaurant at 5:30pm.

First Saturday Bird Walk

January 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

Jan. 2....David White

Feb. 6 Teresa Shaner
March 5 ... Peter Dutnell

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 an *unusual* bird you might find on the Bird Walk at Ivy Creek

Christopher Murray
(amarumayo@gmail.com)

Winter Bird Irruptions

Winter is upon us in the Monticello area, and for many birders this means that winter irruptions can deliver some unusual species to their favorite birding spots. Irruptions are irregular large-scale migration movements of birds into areas in which they aren't typically found. Such movements can extend far outside of normal ranges. The exact causes for irruptions vary between species and can be difficult to predict, but food availability in the birds' normal wintering areas generally drives these movements. In an area as vast as the boreal forest, seed crop shortages and failures can send millions of birds south as individuals search out food for survival. Contrastingly, food surpluses can also drive some irruptions. In certain raptors such as snowy owls, lemming and vole overabundance in the summer breeding months can lead to very large clutch sizes and high chick survival, causing juvenile adults to move widely in the search for food when they disperse.

Although the winter finches are the most well known group to irrupt, in fact many species from boreal and northern areas can irrupt if the circumstances arise. In our area, pine siskins, purple finches and red-breasted nuthatches are three of the most common irruptive species to appear; however other less common species do occasionally show up including evening grosbeaks, common redpolls and red and white-winged crossbills!



Pine Siskin
Photo by Doug Rogers

Field Trips

Gabriel Mapel



Green Springs Historic District Louisa County

Date: Saturday, January 9th

Meeting Place & Time: 7:30am at Giant Shopping Center in front of (former) Starbucks corner lot.

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

Within the county to our east, but only 30 minutes from Charlottesville, is the Green Springs Historic District in Louisa County, north of Zion Crossroads. During this morning trip we will travel the roads of Green Springs in search of Northern Harriers and other raptors, sparrows, including Savannah and White-crowned Sparrows, and woodpeckers, including Red-headed Woodpecker. We will also stop at several ponds and lakes in search of waterfowl, which include Canada Geese flocks with any rarer geese traveling with them and Tundra Swan.

Highland County

"Presstime" postponement alert due to lack of eagles!

Date: Changed from Jan date to Saturday, February 13th

Meeting Place & Time: 7:30am in the Barracks Road Parking Lot in front of Bed, Bath & Beyond or

8:15am in shopping center at intersection of Routes 250 & 42 in Churchville

Leader: Doug Rogers
doug5996@gmail.com
434-973-7634 (h)

This is our annual trip to Highland County — the Switzerland of Virginia!. We will look for Golden Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks, Horned Larks, a variety of sparrows and possibly some unusual birds. We should be in the town of Monterey around 9:30am — just in time for the thermals to get the Golden Eagles soaring. We will bird in the Blue-grass Valley and the Hardscrabble area until around lunchtime, returning to Monterey to eat. Following lunch, we can do some more birding or head for home — your call. Please let me know that you are coming.

The Rivanna Trail in the Willoughby Area

Date: Saturday, January 30th

Meeting Place & Time: 8:00am in the Food Lion
Parking Lot of the Willoughby Shopping Center

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

Just outside the city limits, in Albemarle County, there is an under-birded section of the Rivanna Trail along Moores Creek in the Willoughby area. Trip leader Gabriel loves to bird this section of trail, and on this morning walk we hope to turn up a variety of winter residents including kinglets, Brown Creepers, woodpeckers, and sparrows. Even though the meeting place is quite close to the trail head, there is limited parking there, so carpooling the short distance from the parking lot is encouraged.

Bluebird Trails Report for 2015

by Ann Dunn, Albemarle County Coordinator

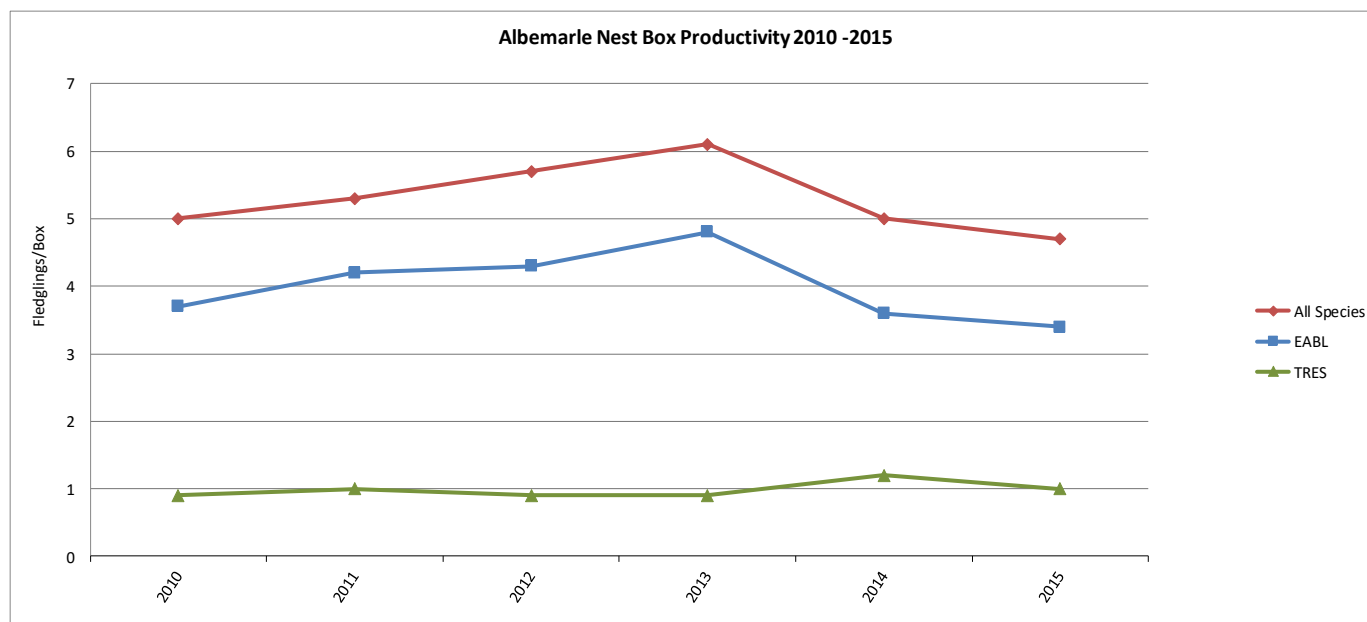
The combined Hammond, Kingston and Minor Bluebird Trails provided 495 monitored nest boxes for our area cavity nesters this year. We thank our more than forty hard working volunteers who watched over these boxes on a weekly basis throughout the season. The Hammond trail expanded its borders into Fluvanna with four boxes installed at the new Pleasant Grove County Park. The site was so successful, with 100% nesting survival and a productivity rate of 7.0 fledglings per box, that an additional fifteen boxes were recently installed for the coming season.

Overall it was another difficult year for our nesting birds. Weather once again was a major factor with a four week period of severe cold in late winter followed by a cool April. Nesting was slow to start; the average first egg date was April 13. With bluebirds delaying activity until after the arrival of Tree Swallows, turf conflicts between the two species occurred early in the season. Most nesting activity had ceased by the end of the first week in August.

In all, 2325 birds fledged from our boxes, of which 72 percent were bluebirds, 20 percent were Tree Swallows, the remainder a mix of Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, House Wrens and an occasional Carolina Wren or White-breasted Nuthatch. Bluebird nest box productivity (3.4 fledglings/box) continued to decline from previous years (see graph below); that of Tree Swallows showed a 25 percent drop from last year's high of 1.2. Over the previous five years, nesting survival rates as measured by the percent of eggs which develop into fledging birds, has been higher for Tree Swallows (average 81%, range 79-84%) than for bluebirds (average 78%, range 71-84%). This past season, however, while the bluebird survival rate remained within normal levels at 76%, that of the Tree Swallow fell to a new low of 67%. Could it be that in those early season skirmishes, Eastern Bluebirds out-competed the Tree Swallows? More data is needed. We eagerly await the arrival of a new season and the opportunity to monitor the next chapter in breeding activity by our area cavity nesters.



Nest Building Pair
Photo by Ann Dunn



Treasurer's Notes

Maynard K. Davis



Our financial health remains "good." We currently have a budget surplus for the year of just under \$2,500. We've paid most of the costs of our new venture, the poster contest; and the total expense will be just over \$1900. We still have slightly over \$1000 in the budget for other worthy projects. Let me know if you have any questions.

Maynard

Membership Notes

Lesslie Crowell



MBC extends a warm welcome to new member Patricia Coldewey and Family, and to new members/Sponsors Jim and Carol Haden, and Cheryl Lewis. Thanks goes also to our 21st Sponsor, K.B. Johnston, as well as to all who joined, renewed, upgraded, and donated to make the fall membership drive and other club projects a success.

If you are interested in helping with a birding/MBC information table at two different plant sales on Saturday, April 30 for an hour or two, please contact me. I need a few people to cover both venues—Monticello's Center for Historic Plants and Piedmont Master Gardeners.

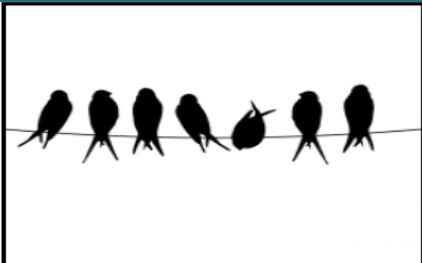
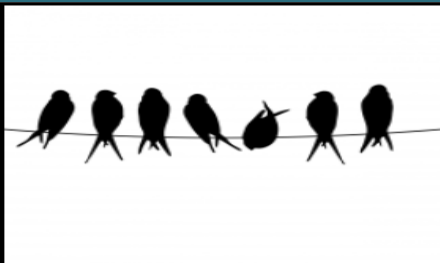
Wishing you good health and good birding for 2016! *Lesslie*

MBC Meeting Minutes, December 10, 2015

Peggy Cornett



- President Doug Rogers called the meeting to order. Two new members, Edwin and Kay Poole, were recognized. Attendance was 40.
- Jenny Gaden announced the upcoming Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 20. All are welcome to join. Nancy O'Brien will host the potluck at the end of the day.
- Doug thanked Ron and Priscilla Kingston, who organized the evening's holiday party and door prizes.
- Recent bird sightings were shared. Nancy Newman has just returned from a trip to Africa, where she saw many birds. A Woodcock was seen doing its flight in Madison. Peter Dutnell saw a flock of Lincoln Sparrows near Scogo Lake. A pair of Orchard Orioles and a Ruffed Grouse have been seen. Red Crossbills were observed on a private farm in Red Knob, West Virginia.
- Joanne Bricker and Lesslie Crowell reported on the successful poster contest. Awards were presented in a ceremony held at the Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Building on Sunday, December 6. We had around seventy-five entrants from Albemarle and Charlottesville schools. Six classrooms received a bird feeding station, plus a subscription to *Feeder Watch* and a plaque. Individual winners received binoculars. The contest was supported with funds from our successful bird seed sale. Joanne and Lesslie gave special thanks to Mary Mapel, Maynard Davis, and John Holden for their work on the project.
- Lesslie reported that, in addition to Edwin and Kay Poole, new members are Jim Haden and Andrew Snyder. We currently have 148 members.
- Doug Rogers gave the following reports for several board members who were not present.
- Treasurer's Report for Maynard Davis: The club has a surplus of \$3,900, which will pay for the contest prizes. We are currently ahead of revenue projections.
- Field trips report for Gabriel Mapel: Chris Murray led the Nov. 21 trip to Old Trail Golf Course and reported 35 species. There is only one field trip in December, on the 12th. Dan Bieker is leading the trip to Southern Albemarle County.
- Publicity report for Susan Babineau: the club's Facebook currently has seventy-nine members. Many bird sightings are reported on Facebook as well as meeting reminders and bird lists from past field trips.
- Leigh Surdukowski reported on the First Saturday Bird Walks at Ivy Creek, which have been sponsored by the Monticello Bird Club for over twenty years. Leigh read the names of the most active leaders over the years. She is currently looking for volunteers in 2016.
- After viewing a retrospective video of the Afton Mountain Hawk Watch the meeting adjourned for the holiday party.



ALC Copies Inc.

1170 Emmet St.
295-2679

[A Local Choice](#)

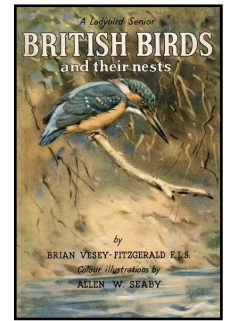
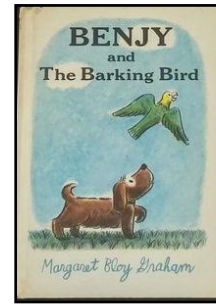


ALC Copies Inc., a locally owned small business, generously supports our MBC Bird Club.
For your personal printing needs, please choose ALC!

Bird/Book Lovers Help Wanted

Diana Foster

Love bird books? Want an excuse for perusing books about the birds of the world? The Ivy Creek Foundation is reviewing its large book collection and selecting ones most appropriate for creating a reference library. If you can help, please contact Diana Foster, dfoster@newventure.com.

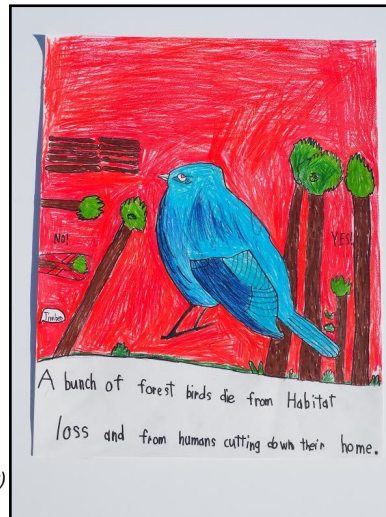


2015 Bird Conservation Poster Contest Winners

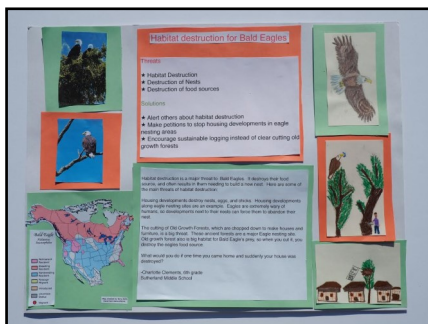
For those of you who missed the December 6th Award Ceremony or the publicity on our MBC Facebook Page, here are the winning posters from our first and most successful Bird Conservation Poster Contest, Enjoy!



1st Place Senior Div Ezra Staengl (above)
1st Place Junior Div George Spofford (right)



Awards Ceremony
Emcees / Contest Organizers
Mary Mapel & Maynard Davis



2nd Sr Div. Charlotte Clements



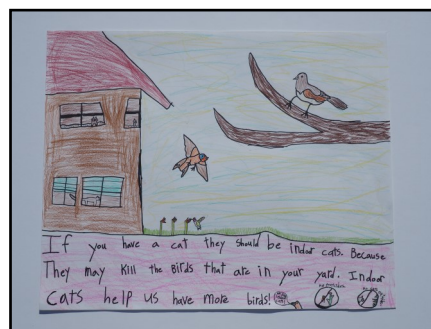
2nd Jr. Div. Izzy Goodbar



3rd Jr. Div Tessa Darrin



Hon Men Jr Div Lilly Hinerman



Hon Men Jr Div Esme Williams

Classroom Prizes

- **1st**—Free Union Country, Blair Amberly's grade 3
- **2nd**—North Branch, Jennifer Page's grade 3-4
- **3rd**—Greer, Sarah Healy's grade 2 & Joanie Evans's K
- **Hon Men**—Clark, Mary Craig's grades 1-3 & Stone Robinson, Elizabeth Shifflett's grade 4

Follow this link to read [NBC 29's coverage of the event.](#)

Bill Leaning

The Wonderfully Versatile Junipers— Part 1

I will divide my article about Junipers into two parts. In this month's piece I will discuss Junipers and the first of four species of Juniper that do well in Central Virginia. Next month, I will present the remaining three species. Three of the four are growing on our Omanu property in Earlysville.

Junipers are the most ubiquitous and toughest of all the needle evergreens used in the general landscape. They can play a vital role in the wildlife garden providing year round evergreen shelter and nesting sites. We have had nesting Northern Cardinals, Catbirds, Northern Mockingbirds and Brown Thrashers. Many species also provide food in the form of cones. Junipers inhabit the most adverse cultural niches in nature, which makes them easy care trees and shrubs for the wildlife garden. Juniperus is a highly variable genus, existing as 60 foot tall trees, all the way down to 2 or 3 inch spreading ground cover. All Junipers have small needle or scale-like foliage. Young plants are always needle-like; older plants have both forms. They are readily transplanted and will thrive in almost any soil except those that are constantly wet. They prefer full sun for maximum growth but will do quite well in "bright shade" or a minimum of 5 hours of sun, daily. Junipers are extremely versatile and can be used in hedgerows, group plantings or as single specimens. They can also be used as ground covers and, heaven forbid (in a wildlife garden), topiary.



There are 13 species of Juniper native to the United States and up to 70 species throughout the temperate and subtropical regions of the Northern Hemisphere and south of the equator in Africa. The majority of landscape types of Junipers come from only ten species. In recent years, growers have become more regionally selective, and instead of increasing their number of cultivars, they are paring down their selections to the best and easier growing forms. A major reason for the potential versatility in the landscape is the extraordinary variability, both in the Juniperus species and the subsequent cultivars.

Growth habit varies from low-growing ground cover types to mounded shrub-like cultivars, to conical and pyramidal trees, both dwarf and full size. Foliage color varies from lustrous dark green to light green, bluish, silver-blue, gold, yellow and shades in between. There is an excellent grouping of dwarf conifers including several species of Junipers in the Gotelli Collection at the National Arboretum. Another collection of evergreens including Junipers, is at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens in Richmond, a wonderful place for landscaping ideas.

The Eastern Redcedar *Juniperus virginiana*

A tough irrepressible tree that will thrive where few other plants will barely survive. A great naturalizing type of tree native to eastern and central North America. Densely columnar to broad-pyramidal in outline when grown as a single specimen in full sun. It can reach 40 to 50 feet high and 8 to 20 feet wide. Many nursery selections are 1/3 to 1/2 that size.

Eastern Redcedar is great in a hedgerow, as a screen or in natural groupings. The rich green summer foliage assumes a ruddy brown-green color in winter. Male trees produce thousands of tiny brown cones that yield clouds of yellowish pollen in the spring. Our driveway looks like it is dusted with flowers of sulfur as the majority (unfortunately) of the Eastern Redcedars in our woods are males; happily pollinating our neighbor's female trees. The female trees are, often, covered with frosty blue, 1/5 inch-diameter cones that provide great bird browse, particularly, for cedar waxwings. I said, often covered, because there is considerable year to year variation in the size of the cone crops. I bought three nursery grown female Eastern Redcedars laden with cones to go with all my male trees. They have yet to have a heavy cone crop, again. Perhaps arranged "marriages" should be avoided.



Cultivars and Varieties

- "Canaertii" A dark green, soft-textured variety appears tufted at the ends of the branches. This is a female clone that sets large quantities of blue-green cones. It matures at 20 to 30 feet high.
- "Grey Owl" is another interesting female form with a spreading, soft, silver gray-green foliage. A real favorite of ours. Grows to about three feet high and twice as wide. I have seven specimens in three locations and, what is most important, there is no evidence of deer browse in 17 years!!
- "Silver Spreader" is a wide-spreading low-growing, silver-gray male form.

Bill

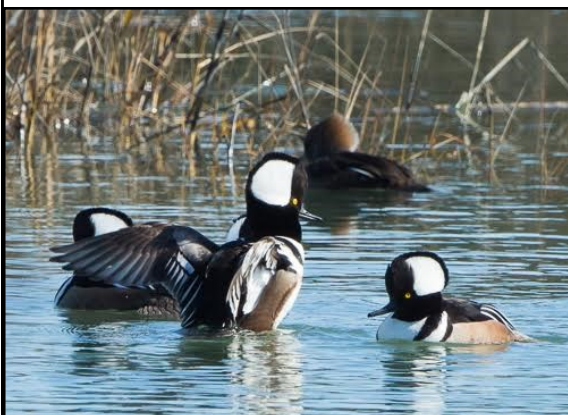
While we're still fanning ourselves and sipping iced tea in this strange Charlottesvilleian "winter," several MBC'ers were visiting some awesome places and have kindly sent photos to enable us to share in their experience from our armchairs...



First, from **Huntington Beach State Park SC**, photographer **Jeannie Holden** captured the essence of beauty and serenity in these photos from her and **John's** fall visit.

Clockwise from top left...

- **Pied-billed Grebes**
- **Hooded Merganser, female**
- **Long-tailed Duck**
- **Hooded Mergansers, male**



From her exciting November travels to **South Africa and Botswana**, **Nancy Newman** shared these stunning photographs..



(clockwise, from top left)

- **Golden Weaver Bird** building nest, Botswana
- **Magnificent Creature**, non-flying, we hope!
- **Blue Waxwing Tiny Finch**, male, Botswana

Richard Teig attended a birding photography workshop over the Thanksgiving weekend in **Bosque del Apache, New Mexico**. Myrlene Staten grabbed binoculars instead of a camera and took in the birding opportunities. Despite 14 degree temperatures, the experience was exceptional. We witnessed “blasts” of hundreds Snow Geese taking off; Sandhill Cranes gliding everywhere; and, along the way, a few Scaled and Gambrel Quail; Road-runners; and, a multitude of other migrants.

(For prospective visitors, Richard adds, “The relatively new Holiday Inn Express in Socorro, NM is just a few miles from Bosque and convenient for those traveling in that direction.”)



Photos, clockwise from top right...

- **The Blast**
- **Sandhill Cranes & Snow Geese**
- **Road-runner** (note the crew cut)
- **Northern Pintail**
- **Pair of Sandhill Cranes**



Monticello Bird Club
P.O. Box 4362
Charlottesville, Virginia 22905

Visit our website at
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 Earlsville 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.

President	Doug Rogers	doug5996@gmail.com	434-409-8156
Vice President	Kathy Sudduth	kas3m2@embarqmail.com	434-973-0690
Secretary	Peggy Cornett	pcornett@monticello.org	434-984-9816
Treasurer	Maynard K. Davis	davismk@sbcglobal.net	434-205-4268
Field Trips	Gabriel Mapel	birdmangabriel@yahoo.com	540-363-5035
Programs	Lou Tanner	lmtannerxiv@gmail.com	434-979-1722
Publicity	Susan & Guy Babineau	gsbabineau@comcast.net	434-981-6285
Hospitality	Priscilla Kingston	kingston@cstone.net	434-293-5173
Newsletter	Joanne Bricker	mbcnleditor@gmail.com	434-825-2676
Membership	Lesslie Crowell	lessliecrowell@aol.com	434-295-1395
Birdseed Sale	John Holden	runningwithantlers@gmail.com	434-973-9179