Monticello Bird Club

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## MBC Monthly Meeting — Thursday, May 12th

# Comments from the President

at Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Building

MBC monthly meetings will be on hiatus for the summer. Our first meeting of the new fiscal year will be on Sept. 8th.

This month we are going to convene a meeting of the Club's "Brain Trust." The meeting will take place in the ICNA Education Building on April 24 at 2:00 p.m. We have some weighty matters to discuss.

- 1. How can we recruit new Team members to fill the two vacancies on the Board: Newsletter Editor and Bird Seed Sale Chair?
- 2. Do we continue with the Newsletter or do something else?
- 3. Assuming this year's Bird Seed Sale is as successful as last year's, do we again sponsor a poster contest, like last year, or do something else?
- 4. What kind of community outreach programs should the Club do?
- 5. How can we attract younger people to the Club?
- 6. What else should we consider in planning the future of the Club?
- 7. How do we maintain the confidentiality and security of the Club's Membership Roster?

At the April meeting, the new Board for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2016, was voted in. We look forward to working with all of them. Without their talents and hard work, the Club would not be the vibrant organization it is. Please personally thank each of them at the May meeting.

Two members of the Board are leaving: Joanne Bricker and Lesslie Crowell. Joanne and Lesslie, we can't thank you enough for your years of service to this Club. You will be missed. Also, please express your gratitude to Joanne and Lesslie at the May meeting.

Spring migration is underway; the Golden Eagles have departed from Highland County, and the Goldenwinged Warblers will soon arrive, along with breeding Bobolinks and others. The Prothonotary and Swainson's Warblers have arrived in the Great Dismal Swamp, and the Monticello Bird Alert is announcing the daily return of migrants and summer residents to our area. As this wonderful time of year unfolds, I wish you all...

Good Birding!



### Topic: "Bayscaping"— the use of native plants to attract wildlife & improve water quality at the same time Speaker: Matt Kowalski

The speaker for the May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting will be Matt Kowalski, a Watershed Restoration Scientist for the state of Virginia with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF). A native of the Shenandoah Valley, he spent a decade in PA working with its Natural Heritage Program but returned to his native state in 2013. Matt has a background in wild-life biology in particular but approaches it in a broad ecological sense that emphasizes soil and water conservation as well. He is also a strong advocate of the use of native plants in this effort, thus killing several birds with one stone—a



horrible analogy to use in a Bird Club newsletter—but you get the point.

Matt is also bringing along a co-worker from the CBF, Robert Jenkins by name, whose specialty is outreach in Central Virginia. Together—'tag-teaming' as Matt puts it—they will educate us in the numerous small ways in which we can all work towards improving habitat for wildlife in our own neck of the woods and beyond, encouraging us to think of the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed as our backyard. It should make for an inspiring finale in this our last meeting before we recess for the summer.

Please come to the Brick Oven as usual at 5:30 just prior to the meeting and meet the Speakers—and also thank that establishment for being so welcoming each month.



## **First Saturday Bird Walk**

May 7th 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

#### May 7....Leigh Surdukowski

June 4 .... Jim Nix July 2 .... Doug Rogers August 6 .... Jenny Gaden Sept. 3 .... Leigh Surdukowski

For information about opportunities and events at Ivy Creek Natural Area, follow this link to the <u>Ivy Creek Foundation Public</u> <u>Program Calendar.</u>

**Field Trips** 

Gabriel Mapel

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

by Tom Jones

### **Blackpoll Warbler**

#### Setophaga striata

The high-pitched, rapid "tseet-tseet-tseettseet-tseet" of the Blackpoll Warbler can be heard in any Albemarle yard, roadside, or park in May and will certainly be heard at Ivy Creek. This member of the wood warbler family often stays pretty high in the trees and forages deliberately, so it can be easier to hear than see. But look for the distinctive black cap and white cheeks of the breeding male; the former feature gives this species its name ("poll" being Middle English for head or hair of the head).



Blackpoll Warbler Photos by Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren Wikimedia Commons

The male also has two bold wing stripes, black streaking along the sides and is white below. The female lacks the black cap and is not as boldly marked, and all Blackpolls in fall rate as "confusing fall warblers," so be sure to consult your Sibley for comparison with Bay-Breasted and Pine warblers.



The Blackpoll winters in northern South America. It breeds in far northern New England and New York and in the upper reaches of the Canadian boreal forest. This longdistance migration may be why Blackpolls are some of the latest warblers we see in spring (almost exclusively in May according to local e-Bird records). The return home to South America also leads to some incredible fall nonstop flights over the Atlantic lasting up to 70-90 hours. So caps off to this little black-capped warbler for its efforts!

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
April 25	ICNA	Peter Dutnell
April 26	<b>O-Hill</b>	Doug Rogers & Joanne Bricker
April 27	RP	David White
April 28	ICNA	Jim Nix
April 29	O-Hill	Leigh Surdukowski
Date	Site	Leader
May 2	<b>O-Hill</b>	Doug Rogers & Joanne Bricke
May 3	ICNA	Stauffer Miller
May 4	RP	Jenny Gaden
May 5	ICNA	Lou Tanner

### Bellair Farm Southern Albemarle County



Date: Sunday, May 8th

Meeting Place & Time: 7:00am at Bellair Farm

Leader: Michelle McKenzie michellemckenzie2010@gmail.com 540-447-0855

#### New Members' Bird Walk Mint Springs Valley Park in Crozet

Date: Saturday, May 14th

Meeting Place & Time: 7:30am at Mint Springs in the parking lot by the lake

Leaders: Doug Rogers & Lesslie Crowell dou5996@gmail.com, 434-973-7634 lessliecrowell@aol.com, 434-295-1395



Our February trip to the private Bellair Farm was such a success that we are going again for spring migration! Bellair farmer and MBC member/birder Michelle will lead us looking for warblers, Blue Grosbeak, Red-headed Woodpecker and more.

**Directions:** From Charlottesville, take Route 20 south 8-9 miles. Take left onto Carter's Mountain Road and an immediate right onto Secretary's Road. Go 1.8 miles. Take right at sign that says Bellair Farm CSA. Follow signs for "Bellair Barn," which will lead you down a hill (bearing left) toward a large green barn with a red roof. Park there.

New members are encouraged to meet fellow birders on this spring walk in your honor. "Old" and "relatively new" members are also invited to come share your expertise and meet those new to MBC within the past year. We will hike the trail, looking for migrants and resident species.

**Directions:** For your GPS, the address is 6659 Mint Springs Park, Crozet. To get there from Charlottesville, take Route 250 West. Bear right onto Route 240. Go straight through Crozet where 240 becomes Railroad Ave. Bear right onto Mint Springs Road and follow the sign, turning left into the Park.

#### Pocosin Cabin in Shenandoah National Park

Date: Saturday, May 21st

Meeting Place & Time: 7:00am at milepost 59.5 on the eastern side of Skyline Drive

Leader: Janet Paisley janet paisley@comcast.net 434-989-3857 Janet will lead our walk at this favorite spot for hearing and viewing spring migrants and returning residents.

**Directions:** (Driving time from Pantops Mountain is about an hour.) The best way to go is Route 29 North to Ruckersville. Turn left onto Route 33 and take it to Skyline Drive. (You'll be entering at milepost 65.5) and turn left, heading North. As soon as you reach milepost 60 (about a 14 minute drive from the entrance), watch for the unmarked fire road on your right (as the Drive makes a gentle rightward swing). Turn in and park in the pull-off ahead and to the left. (We will email you if there are any changes due to the recent Rocky Mount fire.)

### Novices eBird Too

by JoAnn Dalley

The article about eBird, written by Guy Babineau in our April Newsletter, was enthusiastic, timely and informative. While in north central Florida recently, I was able to use eBird to map out birding hotspots within a 30-minute drive of the location of my family visit. On the last day of my visit and my eighth hotspot (Deep Creek Conservation Area at Edgefield), I recorded the most birds and species (23) including two Northern Bobwhites and an American Kestrel. The previous day's highlights included seeing eight Wood Storks at Deep Creek Conservation Area West, a close encounter with a Bald Eagle at Rodman Dam and a marvelous sight-



ing of a Northern Parula wrestling with a large yellow caterpillar ten feet from my feet at Dunn's Creek. As a novice birder, using eBird to plan my birding hikes and to record my sightings was easy and added to my rewarding overall experience.

(Clockwise from left) American Kestrel, Bald Eagle, Northern Parula Photos by JoAnn Dalley





#### Treasurer's Notes Maynard K. Davis



#### hanks go to our last two meeting speakers, Dan

Bieker and Tom Dierauf. Not only were their presentations fascinating, but each has now graciously declined the customarv honoraria in favor of donations to the Kestrel Box Project of the Virginia Society of Ornithology. Thank you, Dan and Tom.

#### **Membership Notes** Lesslie Crowell

BC extends a warm welcome to new members Bob & Doris Huff and Mary Langenkamp.

And, speaking of new members, there is a **New Members' Bird** Walk on Saturday, May 14. ("Old" members invited as well!) Details are in the Field Trips column.

Many thanks to Kate Asquith, Peggy Cornett, Dave Hogg, Patty Kalbfleisch, and Leigh Surdukowski for volunteering to help at the MBC table during the two plant sales on April 30.

Maynard

Lesslie

## MBC Meeting Minutes, April 14, 2016

Peggy Cornett

-Doug Rogers welcomed several newcomers, including Donald Clark, Shawn Hill and his wife, and new MBC member Bob Letts. There were fifty-five in attendance.



-Recent unusual bird sightings were reported. Stauffer Miller announced that Janet Paisley saw a Black Scoter at Ragged Mountain. Nancy Newman's neighbor discovered a nesting Robin that was

killed by the string from a released helium balloon. David White commented on a photo by Janet Paisley of an Indigo Bunting.

-Members approved the following returning officers for 2016-17: Doug Rogers as president; Kathy Sudduth, Vice President; Maynard Davis, Treasurer; Peggy Cornett, Secretary; Lou Tanner, Programs; Gabriel Mapel, Field Trips; Susan and Guy Babineau, Publicity; Myrlene Staten, Membership; Priscilla Kingston, Hospitality. Still to be filled: Newsletter Editor and Bird Seed Sale Coordinator. Bird Club business will be discussed at a planning meeting on April 24 at Ivy Creek Natural Area at 2 PM.

-The Virginia Society of Ornithology annual meeting will be held April 29-May 1 in Roanoke.

-Lesslie Crowell reported that the club currently has 165 members, including new members Bob Letts and Ludwig Kuttner.

-Maynard Davis gave the financial report. Although we are slightly below budgeted membership (175) we are ending the year with a surplus (+\$3474). He thanked Dan Bieker for donating his honorarium for his March meeting program to the VSO Kestrel Project.

-Doug gave the field trips report for Gabriel, who was in the Shenandoah. On March 11 Jenny Gaden led the annual Woodcock watch at Humpback Rocks, where they saw six males and several females. March 19 Peter Brask took a group of eleven to Lickinghole Creek where they reported thirty-seven species including a Bald Eagle and Blue-headed Vireo. On March 26 Stauffer Miller led a group to Panorama Farm where they saw Louisiana Waterthrush and Wood Ducks. There are several trips planned for April. Dave Hogg will lead a walk on the Rivanna Trail in Pen Park on April 16. Doug Rogers will go to Pleasant Grove Park April 23. John Holden will lead a trip to Cumberland Marsh on April 30 for Warblers. May trips are in the works. Birding Before Work walks will be at Ivy Creek, Riverview Park, and Observatory Hill, meeting at 7 AM.

-Susan Babineau reported that we now have over 100 Facebook members, which is a good way to announce meetings, walks, and to share photos and birding experiences.

-Jenny Gaden gave away a tripod.

## 22nd AnnualPurple Martin Field Day

by Ron Kingston

f you are interested in establishing or expanding a Purple Martin colony, attend this event. It starts at 11:00 am, Saturday June 25th, at the farm of Merle and Lance Wood in Louisa County, Virginia (located between Richmond and Charlottesville).



Photo by Kathy Laine

Enjoy watching hundreds of these beautiful birds soaring and feeding their young while an expert tells you all about them. A nestbox trail tour to view bluebirds and Tree Swallows will begin at noon.

No registration is necessary. The event is free, but donations are appreciated to help cover expenses. Bring lawn chairs, binoculars, notepad, camera, and a picnic lunch to enjoy on the grounds. Drinks and snacks are provided.

For information and directions, visit the Purple Martin Field Day website.

## Drink your Joe and Know You've Made a Difference

by Joanne Bricker (Lesslie Crowell suggested we remind folks about bird-friendly coffee, so here goes...)

S ometimes "doing your part" to help our migrating birds can seem like a daunting task. But here is an easy way you can support our favorite neotropical migrants. When buying coffee, be sure to look for the certification label issued by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center: **Bird Friendly.** This is the only 100% organic and shade-grown coffee certification available.



Here's a link to tell you more about what <u>Bird Friendly certification</u> actually means and all the good causes you will be supporting when you purchase coffee with the Bird Friendly label. And, here's a list of online resources for ordering Bird Friendly certified coffee.

If personal experience helps in making a choice from the long list above, Yours Truly has been a very satisfied customer of Birds & Beans coffee for several years. Disclaimer...this is not a paid endorsement! Just wanted you to know that I've very much enjoyed both the coffee and the customer service at <u>Birds & Beans</u>. What a savory way to support our birds, our fellow (wo)man, and our planet!

## Letter from MBC's David White on Behalf of The Arc of the Piedmont

# LARK FOR THE ARC VIII

April 2016 Dear Friend:



It's *The Lark*, darn it! Yes, it's **Lark VIII**: the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual *Lark for The Arc* in support of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are supported by The Arc of the Piedmont, a 63 year old 501-C-3 charitable organization that provides home, hearth and much needed support to these folks who are among our most vulnerable citizens and neighbors. This year's edition will be upon us come the <u>7th of May</u> when I will set forth to count the various species of birds found in a designated portion of Albemarle County, Virginia. The results will add to the local repository of bird lore, a form of "citizen science" which does have scientific merit, in fact.

While I wander in the weeds for science I also ask you to consider supporting another of my passions: the people with intellectual disabilities (ID) and developmental disabilities (DD) who are supported by **The Arc.** 

Each species of bird has its unique characteristics. The people supported at **The Arc** also have unique characteristics which identifies each of them as a person and a personality. Birds have the Audubon Society, et al, to represent them; the people whom **The Arc** represents have many needs but few advocates working on their behalf. **The Arc** is the nation's leading agency doing this work: providing direct services and doing advocacy work at every level. Funding, as always, is precarious and we depend on public support to augment our efforts.

So I ask that YOU consider making a tax-deductible donation to The Arc based on my efforts:

\$1 (or any amount) per species. Examples: \$1 for 75 species identified on Count Day = \$75; \$1.50 for 80 species = \$120; 50 cents for 78 species = \$39, and so on. My average count is about 75 species.

Of course, your donation of *any* size is extremely helpful and is very much appreciated, and you don't have to wait for the count to be completed!

Dan, another **Arc** volunteer, and I will be hitting the byways, counting for two important causes. Knowing that we have your support will be our antidote to the spiders and snakes, rain, rabid wombats, lightning and hail and other assorted obstacles that we are sure to encounter. *Please take pleasure from our discomfort; that way you can actually enjoy making your gift knowing that we are "suffering" for our friends at The Arc.* 

To make a gift please send a check to **The Arc** to the address below or use a credit card to make a secure on-line donation via PayPal at our website, also listed below. After the count, and after I pick the last tick, I will circulate the species list for the day. All donations received, before or after count day, will be gratefully acknowledged. I personally thank you for considering this request and this important cause!



David

David I. White, Jr. The Arc of the Piedmont 509 Park Street Charlottesville VA 22902 www.arcpva.org

## Guess Hoo's Here? Catch a Lark for The Arc VIII



### Going Cuckoo: The Arc of the Piedmont and the Albemarle Spring Bird Count

May 7, 2016, all day long!

Please keep this "fact sheet" handy as it provides you with information regarding your participation in *Lark VIII*, as well as contact information for The Arc of the Piedmont and me.

Remember: **The Arc of the Piedmont** is a 501-c-3 charitable organization and all donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. Each donation will support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and each donor will receive a letter acknowledging their contribution; therefore, please be sure that we have your name and mailing address (email or "snail mail"). Checks should be made out to **"The Arc"** and mailed to *The Arc of the Piedmont, 509 Park Street, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902.* 

For credit card payment you may make a secure donation through *PayPal* at our website: <u>www.arcpva.org</u>; please specify "Lark" in the comments section.

Options: Make a donation based on number of species reported on the May 7 count (usually 75 to 80);

Make a donation based on number of species + a special Crazy 8s Cuckoo Challenge;

Make a donation based on a donation, any size, + a special Crazy 8s Cuckoo Challenge;

Make a donation to a good cause just because you want to!

Feel free to email me at dwhite@arcpva.org, but no "tweeting," please J

Share this via *Facebook* and we can make *Lark for The Arc VIII* something to crow about!

#### New for Lark VIII: Crazy 8s Cuckoo Challenge

Put your creative side to work with challenges to test my avian acuity while fully understanding that this extra work will detract from my tick picking and my rabid raccoon avoidance activity. Your Bonus Bird Buck ideas mean more sweat for me... and I love that! Here are some examples to get your juices flowing:

Two cuckoo species is worth an extra  $\underline{\$8}$ ;

How about an extra \$28 if you can count 8 warbler species;

I'll pony up an additional \$8 for every woodpecker species you count;

Here's an extra \$8 for each heron species you find;

If you get three swallow species, I'll swallow my checkbook for an extra \$18;

*Two oriole species* + a tanager + a grosbeak = an extra \$18;

A Bald Eagle gets you a \$28 bonus.

You get the idea. Any amount(s), any challenge: just have some (extra) fun at my bird-brained, tick-picking, snake kicking expense! Remember: your *total* gift is tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. Note: Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and Passenger Pigeons are off limits.

## **Request for Spotting Scopes**

Doug Rogers recently received the following email, which I pass along to you.



I am a PhD student at the University of Virginia studying shorebird foraging on algae-covered tidal flats in the Virginia Coast Reserve. We are seeking some assistance in acquiring used spotting scopes. It does not need to be of very high quality, we are not looking for bands or anything like that.

I was wondering if you wouldn't mind sharing our request with your organization to see if anyone is planning to sell or get rid of an old spotting scope and tripod. Thank you for your consideration!

Alice Besterman PhD Candidate Environmental Sciences University of Virginia afb5kg@virginia.edu

Please email Ms. Besterman at her address to the left, if you've got an extra scope waiting for a worthy cause!

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

#### **Bird-friendly Crabapples**

W hen you plant crabapples, you will enjoy the flowers that cover the trees in spring, from white to purplish red (depending on the variety). You may not notice the insects on those flowers but vireos, warblers, orioles and other insecteating birds certainly will. Then, later in the season, we have the real reason for growing crabapples—the fruit.

The crabapples attract Cedar Waxwings, robins, bluebirds and other thrushes, Blue Jays, Carolina Wrens, mocking birds, catbirds and more. The birds seem to like crabapples best in late autumn after a few hard frosts, when the fruit are shriveled and soft.





Currently, at least 100 to 200 types of crabapples are grown in North American nurseries, with at least 300 to 400 additional types in arboretums and botanical gardens. There is, however, a relatively short list of "superior" crabapples that you should look for; namely, those most resistant to the scourges of the Ma-

lus species – apple scab, cedar rust, fire blight, leaf spot and powdery mildew. It makes no sense to spray or have defoliated trees in the garden when smart selection can mitigate all or most of the above.



It is worth looking for the following cultivars as they are essentially disease-free, even in the worst climatic years: 'Adirondack', 'Bob White', 'Callaway', 'David', 'Donald Wyman', M. floribunda – Japa-

nese Crabapple, 'Harvest Gold' (also, known as 'Winter Gold'), 'Indian Summer', 'Prairifire', M. hupehensis - Tea Crabapple, 'Red Jewel', M. sargentii – 'Sargent Crabapple', 'Snowdrift' and 'Sugar Tyme'. In our garden at Omanu, we have three specimens of 'Prairifire' and one of 'Donald Wyman', all doing well with no spraying.

Most crabapples are small to mid-sized trees that grow best in full sun. They are quite adaptable to varying soil conditions but do best in a heavy loam that is well-drained, moist, and on the acid side. They require little pruning, but if any is done, it should be completed before early June, as most crabapples initiate flower buds for the next season in mid-June to early July. *Bill* 









from MBC members

