



Monticello Bird Club

September 2011

Volume 28 Issue 1

Comments from the President

Lou Tanner

It was a long hot summer. The reign of cicadas, ticks, and mosquitoes, however, is drawing to a close and the season of hawk migrations is about to take its place. That is nothing if not good news.

As we are going to be drowning in Civil War Sesquicentennial commemorations over the next four years, my own thoughts have gone more in that direction of late and less towards the world of birds. Yet as the nation was ripping itself apart by the mid-nineteenth century, an all-too-rare voice of sanity quietly surfaced. Less well known than her famous father James Fenimore Cooper, Susan Fenimore Cooper deserves an audience of her own for her Rural Hours, published in 1850. While he had written in his The Last of the Mohicans of the disappearance of the Native Americans as the pioneers

and settlers took over their lands in upstate New York, she was noting the similar declines in certain types of birds, notably the "wild-pigeons" as she called them (passenger pigeons it would seem from her descriptions), but also of catbirds and robins and others. From her home in Cooperstown, NY, better known nowadays for baseball connections, she explored, observed tirelessly, and wrote beautifully of the world of nature in that small corner of a country rapidly hurtling towards a terrible conflict. Her writings are little gems. There is even more to Susan Fenimore Cooper for those who are interested, but for anyone who simply likes birds and the natural world beyond, she makes for a great companion.

See you soon.

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Dinner with Speaker

Just a reminder, we take the speakers to dinner before the programs at the bird club. If you'd like to meet, or get to know better, Ken and Marcelle Klotz, our September speakers, come to La Cocina del Sol Restaurant in the Village Green Shopping Center at the Corner of Hydraulic Road and Commonwealth Drive in Charlottesville on September 8th at 5:30 PM. Hope to see you there.

Ken and Marcelle Klotz to Speak at Bird Club Thursday, September 8, 2011 at 7:00pm

Ken Klotz and his wife Marcelle will take you on a trip to the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard where polar bears are found on the frozen sea ice even in late July, and the rocky cliffs are home to millions of nesting sea birds. Its largest island is Spitsbergen and our expedition cruise successfully circumnavigated the island over the course of 10 days, stopping for excursions on land and in rubber zodiacs to explore this amazing landscape. Located just 10 degrees latitude from the North Pole off the coast of Norway Svalbard is largely protected as a nature reserve, covered 60% by glaciers, but offering wonderful opportunities to experience this fascinating world of the midnight sun and encounter the plants and animals that have adapted to survive in these harsh conditions including

walrus, reindeer, arctic fox, guillemot, ivory gull, little auk, pomerine jaeger and nesting arctic tern.



Upcoming Fieldtrips

Nighthawk Watch

Monday, August 30, 7:00pm
Wednesday, September 1, 7:00pm

Don't miss the exciting evening flights of migrating Nighthawks. With luck, we might observe their acrobatics as they feed over the native grass field. Join us these evenings at 7:00 pm at the Ivy Creek Natural Area parking lot.



Fan Mountain

Saturday, September 24, 8:00am

A visit to Fan Mountain. Meet at the Crossroads Store at North Garden at 8:00 AM. Fan Mountain is nearby. We'll make frequent stops as we ascend the mountain, walk some atop it and have restrooms available there. We should see some warblers and other fall migrants. Leader, Stauffer Miller, 434-296-5505, stauffer@seepub.com

First Saturdays

Saturday, September 3, 7:30am
Saturday, October 1, 7:30am

On the first Saturday of each month, the Monticello Bird Club offers a bird walk at the Ivy Creek Natural Area. The fall migration will peak during this period, and ICNA has traditionally been an excellent place to see a good selection of these migrants.

Please join Peter Brask on September 3, and Dave Hogg on October 1, to find out how this season is shaping up. Meet at the parking lot of the Natural Area at 7:30am.

Licking Hole Creek

Saturday, September 10, 7:00am

Licking Hole Creek is an interesting birding area that the Club began to visit last season. The trail beside the pond offers a rich variety of habitat. Peter Brask will guide us around this area on Saturday, September 10, as we sample the fall migrants. Meet Peter in the parking lot of the Mudhouse on the Square in Crozet, at 7:00am. Please call Peter at 434-823-2363 for additional information.

Interested in a Club Trip to Chincoteague NWR and Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel ?

November 19-21, 2011

The Club has often made a trip to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and the Chincoteague NWR in November. To gauge the interest in making a trip this year, would you please let Dave Hogg know by Tuesday, September 20 if you might possibly be interested. Contact Dave at dhogg@nrao.edu, or at 434-974-7592.

Canoeing the South Rivanna Reservoir

Stauffer Miller

Hoping to find shorebirds on uncovered silt flats, Leigh Surdukowski and I canoed the South Rivanna Reservoir/River August 5th. We picked an excellent morning, with cloud cover dropping temperatures into the 70's, the first respite in four weeks from the relentless heat and humidity.

We put in at 6:30 AM at the boat ramp at the intersection of Earlysville and Woodlands Road, paddled beneath the Woodlands Bridge and made our way up the river. The only people we saw were individual rowers out for morning exercise. Since they were rowing backwards as they skimmed along, many wore rear view mirrors attached to their caps. I believe I prefer the canoe method, facing the direction in which I am proceeding.

After about a half hour of paddling, we encountered our first silt flat. On it were Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers. Our best flat had Killdeer, Solitary, Spotted and Least Sandpipers. An unexpected pleasure of the outing was seeing the numerous swampy backwaters and lagoons produced by the lowering impounded water. We paddled up slowly to them, peered in carefully and saw Wood Ducks, Great Blue and Green Herons. One Great Egret added to the heron variety in the lagoons.

We canoed west until we saw a farmstead on a hillside, then turned around. We got to the boat ramp around 9:30, just as a touch of heat was infusing the day. Leigh said she enjoyed viewing the shorebirds at eye

level. I most enjoyed seeing perhaps forty shorebirds, and seeing that they were taking advantage of the exposed silt flats of the South Rivanna to assist their southward migration.

Later—Leigh and her husband Jim discovered an immature White Ibis on one of the flats in the reservoir August 11th. Later there were two Ibis. Several of us canoed or kayaked to the site and enjoyed seeing these infrequent visitors to central Virginia.



From Your New Treasurer

Doug Rogers

In every organization, there are members who are said to be “*in good standing*.” These members are defined as persons who participate in the Club’s activities, support the Club’s goals and are “*known to the Treasurer*.”

It is that time of year again when you are needed to be “known to the Treasurer.” The membership application form is included in this Newsletter. Please use this form to both renew your membership and to join as a new member. If you don’t know whether your dues are current or not, please email me at mbcnews@embarqmail.com.

Our Club pays its bills and contributes to other like-minded organizations with funds received from members’ dues and our only fund-raiser, the Bird Seed Sale. During the

Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2011 our Club contributed a total of over \$1,500 to American Bird Conservancy, Ivy Creek Foundation, Audubon CBC, The Nature Conservancy and the VSO. In addition, we pay an honorarium to our excellent speakers that totals around \$1,000 per year. Revenue from membership dues was just slightly over \$2,000 for the year.

In prior years, the balance in our checking account has been steadily declining. If this trend continues, we will not be able to continue being a vital, vibrant Club that is making a difference in our community. Let me be clear: We don’t want to simply accumulate funds in our checking account. We want to creatively use our revenues to promote birds, bird habitat, conservation, birding

camaraderie and our Club’s other goals.

To keep our club vital and vibrant, this year I ask you to do five things:

- ◆ Renew your membership before October 1. [Renew at a higher level than last year, if you are comfortable doing so.]
- ◆ Bring a friend, acquaintance, neighbor, co-worker or relative to a meeting when there is a program that would interest them.
- ◆ Support the Bird Seed Sale.
- ◆ Get creative and send me some ideas for another fund raiser.
- ◆ Get creative and propose another Club goal for fiscal year 2011 – 2012. I will present all such ideas to our Board for approval.

Together, let’s make this a great year of birding!!

Dickcissels

Stauffer Miller

Clearly, the bird event of the spring in our area was the influx of Dickcissels. It all began on Saturday May 14, when Dan Bieker took his birding class to the area of the Langhorne-James River Road intersection in southern Albemarle County. One of the hayfields there, still unknown, had a Dickcissel that the class saw well. Knowing this to be a somewhat unusual bird for us, I pressed Dan a little to learn a more precise location for it.

Armed with that information, I went there early May 16th, and heard several Dickcissels singing but at some distance. Later that morning Dan went with David West and saw over twenty of them. Gabriel Mapel and his mother went later that day and also saw several of the birds. The unknown hayfield was the area they most preferred.

John Rowlett also visited the area. He reported 12-15 singing males, and



Dickcissel Photo by Rob Capon

felt they were setting up territories. He was quite taken with the large number of Grasshopper Sparrows and Bobolinks in the same fields. John felt that dry conditions in parts of the Dickcissel’s more usual Midwest

nesting areas drove them in these unprecedented numbers into our area, which had more lush grasslands. I hope you got to see the Dickcissel show, as this may not happen again for a long time.

VSO Fall Field Trip to Chincoteague, VA September 16—18. 2011 Leaders: Bill Akers and Jerry Via

Every fall is different at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, so join us to discover the surprises that await us on this year's annual fall VSO trip! In 2010, 148 species were tallied, including a great combination of waterfowl, shorebirds and migrating songbirds.

The Refuge Inn on Beach Road in Chincoteague will be the host hotel (800-544-8469 or 757-336-5511), however, the VSO special rate is no longer available for reservations. The Refuge Motor Inn is now totally non-smoking and no pets are allowed.

Check-in time is 4:00PM. After you check in at the hotel on Friday, be sure to pick up a schedule of events for the week-end at the VSO headquarters, located in the Conference room at the far end of the Refuge Inn. The Conference room will be open Friday from 4:00-5:30pm and re-open at 7:30PM.

Meals are on your own. The Refuge Inn offers a complimentary continental breakfast for guests and will open early for us for breakfast at 7:00am. Chincoteague is known for its fine dining and you will be able to choose from any number of excellent restaurants.

An evening orientation and slide program will be presented on Friday by Jerry Via at 8:00 PM in the Conference room. Jerry and Bill Akers will also give a preview of birds in the area and a synopsis of the field trips for the week-end.

On Saturday, you can select from a variety of field trip experiences: "Morning Warbler Walk" on the Woodland Trail to look for migrating songbirds; "Motorcade to Assateague Beach," with frequent stops to look at shorebirds; and "Birding and Biking" to explore the wildlife loop (No cars are allowed until 3:00pm, so it's a safe, easy ride. If you don't have a bike, you can rent one at the shop next to the Refuge Inn).

Also, there will be a bus trip to the Wash Flats at 1:00pm on Saturday. This is a restricted area in the refuge and can only be entered with special permission. Permission has been requested to disembark twice on the way back like has been done for past years. The shorebirds and raptors are often abundant in this area. The bus has a capacity for 30 people and the minimum number for the trip is 20.

The cost per person is \$12 for VSO members and \$17 for non-members. If you want to go on this trip, you must make a reservation in advance with Meredith Bell, VSO field trip co-chair, merandlee@cox.net or 804-824-4958. Payment will be made at the registration area when you arrive on Friday. If you are unable to attend after making your reservation, please contact Meredith so that she can open up your space for someone else.

Sunday will repeat many of the field trips from Saturday, so you will have a chance to sample many different areas. Check out time from most of the motels is 11:00AM.

If you are unable to get a room at the Refuge Motor Inn, you may want to try these motels: Best Western (800-553-6117), Sea Hawk (757-336-6527) and Lighthouse (757-336-5091). For additional information about lodging and restaurant options, check out the Chincoteague town website: www.chincoteaguechamber.com. If you have any questions, contact Meredith Bell, VSO field trip co-chair: 804-824-4958 (cell) or merandlee@cox.net

The Monticello Bird Club meets 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. Membership for an individual is \$15 per year (July 1—June 30). Family membership is \$25. The editor of the MBC Newsletter welcomes submissions including articles, photographs and notices. **DEADLINE for each issue is 9:00AM on the 4th Thursday of the month.**



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Monticello Bird Club

Membership Form

Become a Monticello Bird Club Member for 2011—2012

When you join MBC, you will receive ten issues of the MBC Newsletter chock full of information about field trips, speakers, bird sightings, and more. You will be sent timely notification of our annual Birdseed Sale. You will know that you are supporting bird-friendly programs locally and regionally. And you will be among a group of warm, friendly, and sharing people who have a passion for birds and birding!

Yes, I want to join the Monticello Bird Club!

☐ Renewal ☐ New member

☐ Individual (\$15)

☐ Family / Contributing (\$25)

☐ Sponsor (\$50)

☐ Additional Donation \$ _____

Send my newsletter: ☐ by postal mail ☐ by email

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____



Please make check payable to Monticello Bird Club.

Mail form & check to: Monticello Bird Club, P.O. Box 4362, Charlottesville, VA 22905