



April 2010

# Monticello Bird Club

Volume 26, Number 8

## April Meeting Topic: The Flora and Fauna of our National Forests

This month's topic, "The Flora and Fauna of our National Forests" will be presented by Daphne Gemmill. Her slide presentation, which she edited, is based on an American Birding Association publication, *Birding in forty National Forests and grasslands*.

In 2000, Ms. Gemmill retired from the Climate Prediction Center for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Her goal was to run her small business, Big Pockets, which designed, manufactured, and sold clothing, accessories, gear, and gifts exclusively designed for birdwatchers.

She closed the company in 2006 when she sold the rights to the clothing line. Today, she does consulting work for the Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA, the National Geographic Society, the National Wildlife Federation and other similar clients.

### *Comments From the President*

April is a fine month for seeing many different bird species. Among these is the American Woodcock, one of North America's strangest birds. The woodcock is a shorebird that does not live at the shore, but rather in the woods. Besides having rather bizarre looks, this bird is perhaps most noteworthy for its unique twilight wing whistle and "peenting" serenade. The "peenting" is done on the ground. As the bird utters this rasping nasal call, he jerks his head backward but does not open his bill. After five or six of these calls, up goes the bird to a wide spiral and from aloft it bursts into an ecstatic chippering "song." While making the song, it flutters like a bat, banks like an airplane and otherwise cavorts in its aerial dance. The twilight sky-dance of the woodcock is a "must" for those who have not experienced it.

The woodcock is probably widespread in our area, but since it is hard to detect save for its crepuscular displays, rather few actual sites for it are known.

On April 6th, I will be leading a trip to a site that has been fairly reliable. I knew of the woodcock there because I had heard it from across a railroad track. In looking around, I realized that the means of experiencing it much better would be to walk behind a private home there. One day, I finally got my nerve up and knocked on the door of the house. When the woman who answered my knock got over the shock of what I wanted, she wanted to know more about the woodcock. You can imagine my difficulty in explaining to her the whys and ways of this bird. Let's hope it will be in a performing mood April 6th.

## Upcoming Meeting Topics

### April 8th at 7:00 p.m.

The Flora and Fauna of our National Forests

### May 13th at 7:00 p.m.

Member's Night - bring birding photos

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On another subject, Albemarle County has a new park. The Patricia Ann Byrom County Park is along Route 810 near White Hall in the mountainous northwest corner of the county. On Saturday, May 1st, the Albemarle Parks Department will sponsor a "bioblitz" there. The sponsors want birders, botanists and other with an interest in our natural and cultural history to visit the park that day, and see what might be there that is unique or special. For information, contact Diana Foster at [dfoster@newventure.com](mailto:dfoster@newventure.com).

Our next meeting is April 8<sup>th</sup> and the speaker is Daphne Gemmill. I hope you will be able to make it. We begin at 7:00 PM. Also, you are welcome to come to the dinner beforehand with the speaker at 5:30 at Ruby Tuesday. Have a good April.  
*Stauffer Miller*

## Avian Survey of Cerulean Warblers and other Priority Species in the Shenandoah National Park

The Shenandoah National Park staff has partnered with the Audubon Society and birding groups in surrounding counties to survey cerulean warblers and other priority avian species in Shenandoah National Park.

Cerulean Warblers are a species of continental concern because their numbers have been declining throughout most of their range in the past two decades. Additionally, there was a recent multi-organizational effort to get the cerulean warbler listed as a federally endangered species.

The surveys will be conducted intermittently from May through June, from sunrise until approximately 10:30 AM.

The Shenandoah National Park staff has identified 143 2-kilometer trail segments (line transects) in potential cerulean warbler habitat. These transects are located throughout the Park along park trails and fire roads.

This study will utilize walking transect counts to survey cerulean warblers and several other high priority

avian species (Canada warbler, worm-eating warbler, Louisiana water thrush, Kentucky warbler, winter wren, and whip-poor-will). While walking, volunteers will be recording all cerulean warbler and priority species vocalizations and/or observations along their transect. Volunteers may use GPS units and maps to navigate their transects.

Walking line transect counts are an effective way to survey elusive forest birds like cerulean warblers that are distributed unevenly across the landscape.

All volunteer bird monitors will be signed up as park VIPs. They will be instructed to leave a one-page identifier memo on their dashboard while parking along Skyline Drive in the grassy areas.

For further information about this bird survey and to join in and volunteer, please contact **Janet Paisley** at: [janetpaisley@comcast.net](mailto:janetpaisley@comcast.net)  
434-989-3857

### Bird Club Information

The Monticello Bird Club meets at **7:00 pm** 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 May issue is 8:00 a.m. May 1.** Please email information to Doug Rogers at [MBCNEWS@embarqmail.com](mailto:MBCNEWS@embarqmail.com) or send to 1065 Weybridge Ct. # 304, Charlottesville, VA 22911.

**Monticello Bird Club**  
P.O. Box 4362  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22905  
Please visit our website at  
[www.monticellobirdclub.org](http://www.monticellobirdclub.org)

### Monticello Bird Club Board Members

<b>President</b>	Stauffer Miller	<a href="mailto:stauffer@seepub.com">stauffer@seepub.com</a>	296-5505
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<b>Field Trips</b>	Stauffer Miller	<a href="mailto:stauffer@seepub.com">stauffer@seepub.com</a>	296-5505
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<b>Newsletter</b>	Doug Rogers	<a href="mailto:mbcnews@embarqmail.com">mbcnews@embarqmail.com</a>	409-8156
<b>Membership</b>	Jim Nix	<a href="mailto:jim-nix@comcast.net">jim-nix@comcast.net</a>	973-7366
<b>Birdseed Sale</b>	Jim Hill	<a href="mailto:jimcarhill@comcast.net">jimcarhill@comcast.net</a>	975-6523



# Field Trips

## First Saturday Bird Walks at Ivy Creek Natural Area

On the first Saturday of each month, the Monticello Bird Club offers a bird walk at Ivy Creek Natural Area at 7:30 a.m. Some of the walks stay near the main building and parking lot, others go out on the peninsula. Each month has a different leader. Some outstanding birds have been seen on the walks.

The walk for this month will be on April 3rd. See you there!

## Woodcock Walk

Tuesday, April 6th. at 8:00 p.m.  
Meet at Timberwood Grill parking lot in the Hollymead area We will drive about fifteen minutes to the Gilbert Station part of Albemarle County to listen and watch for woodcocks.

The site is behind a private home. I need to let the owner know how many people are coming. Please contact me in advance so I can get a good count. We should be back to Timberwood Grill no later than 9:45 p.m.

Trip Leader, Stauffer Miller, 434-296-5505 or [stauffer@seepub.com](mailto:stauffer@seepub.com).

## Albemarle/Charlottesville Bluebirds

2009 was a busy bluebirding year in the Albemarle/Charlottesville area. Last winter, thanks to grants from both the MBC and the Virginia Bluebird Society (VBS), we were able to refurbish eight of the 24 sites within the Bob Hammond Bluebird Trail. During the breeding season twenty five plus volunteers monitored 334 nest boxes located on both the Hammond Trail as well as those established by Ron Kingston and the late Bill Minor. A total of 1413 songbirds fledged from these boxes including 1080 bluebirds, 289 tree swallows and an assortment of chickadees, titmice and house wrens.

The 2010 breeding season will soon begin. We invite anyone to join us who would like to help in our continuing effort to maintain, expand and monitor our area bluebird trails. All information is sent to the VBS and ultimately to the North America Bluebird Society.

If you would like to help, please contact:

Ann Dunn: [add7k@virginia.edu](mailto:add7k@virginia.edu) or  
Janet Paisley:  
[janetpaisley@comcast.net](mailto:janetpaisley@comcast.net)

## Monticello Bird Club Dues and Membership

A report from our Club Treasurer:

Membership in the bird club now stands at 166. So far, only 108 of that number, 65%, have paid dues for 2009-2010. This is way behind last year's renewal rate. Those of you who haven't paid dues know who you are. We can do a lot better than 65%!

**Please attend to this issue right away!**  
*Henry Konat, Treasurer*

## Birding Before Work

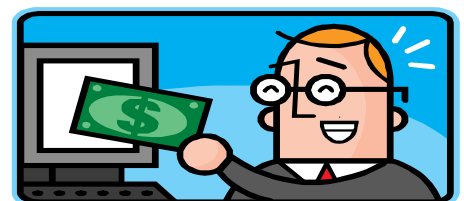
This popular series has been expanded to two weeks. The first week will be at Secluded Farm, the second week at Ivy Creek. To get to Secluded Farm, turn right onto Dairy Farm Road off of Rt. 20 north, just north of Rt. 53 junction. Meet in the parking lot at end of Dairy Farm Road. All trips at Secluded and Ivy Creek begin at 7:00 a.m., probably over no later than 8:30 a.m..

### Week One

Monday, April 26	Leader, Dave Hogg
Tuesday, April 27	Leader, Peggy Cornett
Wednesday, April 28	Leader, Lesslie Crowell
Thursday, April 29	Leader, Jenny Gaden
Friday, April 30	Leader, Janet Paisley

### Week Two

Monday, May 3	Leader, Stauffer Miller
Tuesday, May 4	Leader, Dave Hogg
Wednesday, May 5	Leader, Peter Dutnell
Thursday, May 6	Leader, Jenny Gaden
Friday, May 7	Leader, Leigh Surdukowski



## Monticello Bird Club Minutes, 11 March 2010

The meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.; President Stauffer Miller presided and forty-one members and visitors were in attendance. Several newcomers were introduced, including Ellen and Phil Anderson from Maryland and Leslie Crowell, who joined last year but this was the first meeting she has attended.

**Birding before Work:** Stauffer proposed that this year we extend this spring offering to two weeks: April 26-30 at Ivy Creek Natural Area and the first week of May at Secluded Farm. He passed around a sign-up sheet for volunteer leaders.

**Treasurer's Report:** Henry Konat reported that the club's income for the period has been \$10,549 and expenses were \$10,764 with a net of -\$215 this year. So far only 66% of previous membership has renewed. The club has \$12,357 in the bank.

**Bluebird Trail:** The Albemarle County coordinator for the Virginia Bluebird Society, Ann Dunn reported that they have made progress with repairs to nest boxes on two of the trails.

**Important Bird Areas Project:** Janet Paisley reported on the cooperative program monitoring the Skyline Drive and Appalachian Trail areas of the Blue Ridge. Contact Janet if you are interested in participating.

The Publicity Chair is still vacant and it is hoped that a new candidate will step forward soon.

Potential areas for Field trips were reviewed by Doug Rogers, including a trip to the James River State Park and the James River Wildlife Management Area where warblers are expected in spring. Another very "birdy" site is the Skyline Drive fire road near Big Meadows (mile post 59.5) where warblers are abundant.

**Recent Bird Sightings:** Lou Tanner watched a Red-tail Hawk grab a Robin at Stonewall Jackson Park. Janet Paisley has had Pine Warblers singing in her backyard. Stauffer and Doug mentioned Meadowlarks at Darden Towe Park. Also, Bluebirds and

Pileated, Downy, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers were seen on a single tree. Nancy Newman has seen Bluebirds at her feeder since the snow and two Fox Sparrows at McIntire Park. She also talked about a live video cam on the internet where nesting Bald Eagles can be watched 24/7. The Web site is: [www.wildearthtv.com](http://www.wildearthtv.com). One interesting episode featured a Great Horned Owl that has occupied an Eagle's nest. There were a pair of Hooded Mergansers and three Killdeer spotted near Hollymeade. A Cooper's Hawk and a Sharp-shinned Hawk were seen downtown. A Ring-necked Duck was seen in the lake below Monticello High School. Robins have visited feeders. Nancy N. counted 40 Ring-necked Ducks at a pond on 250 East. Jenny Gaden has watched a Hawk at her suet feeder. Stauffer has heard Cooper's Hawks vocalizing and he mentioned the sighting of a Red-breasted Nuthatch and Golden-crowned Kinglet during the Tufton Farm field trip.

*Peggy Cornett, Secretary*

### Albemarle County Year Lists

Did you keep you a list of birds found in Albemarle County or the City of Charlottesville in 2009?

I will be compiling a listing of total species noted for last year and see how it compares to what was reported in 2007 and 2008. While we might not break the "record" of 207 species reported in 2008, it will still be interesting to note what birds were (and were not) seen in 2009.

Please send a copy of your list to me at P.O. Box 7803, Charlottesville, VA 22906, or by e-mail to [twshaner@embarqmail.com](mailto:twshaner@embarqmail.com) by April 15. Questions? Phone 434-964-9420.

*Teresa Shaner*

### MBC May Meeting—Member's night

We encourage all members to come to the May meeting with photos of birds and birding. Please bring your photos on a suitable medium (flash drive or a CD) for use in the Power Point projector. This should be a fun evening for all! If you have digital photos and need help putting them on a flash drive, please contact me.

*Doug Rogers*