



# Monticello Bird Club

December 2005

Volume 20, Number 4

December Meeting Topic

## Status Report: Virginia Birding Trail

Virginia is the first state to have a state-wide wildlife viewing trail. The Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail was completed in the fall of 2004 and the program and trail guides have won several regional and national awards. While the Trail will never be truly "done" it now moves to a different phase. On December 8, Jeff Trollinger (*photo, right*) will share details of that "different phase" with MBC members at our monthly meeting. As manager of Virginia's Watchable Wildlife Program (VDGIF), Jeff has been the driving force behind the birding trail and has also coordinated Virginia's Breeding Bird Atlas.

Jeff Trollinger is originally from Luray, Virginia. He received a wildlife management degree from Virginia Tech and is currently working on a graduate certificate in Wildlife Recreation and Nature Tourism from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Please join Jeff and other MBC members for dinner at Wild Greens Restaurant in Barracks Road North Shopping Center at 5:30 pm prior to the meeting.



## Usher in the Season With Food & Friends

Following the regular Dec. 8 meeting, we will partake of a little holiday cheer. Carol & Jim Hill will provide coffee and hot cider while all members are urged to bring yummy holiday treats to share. The club will distribute door prizes, which we have been doing ever since the very first MBC Holiday Party in 1987. That party, like this year's, was organized by Priscilla Kingston, who serves as Hospitality Chair. Teresa Shaner will assist.

We provide our own food AND we provide our own prizes. In PC parlance this is called "re-gifting." Consider bringing a bird-related "re-gift" for this holiday extravaganza!

## Comments From the President

For two reasons I encourage you to participate in the Christmas Bird Count "warm up" on December 10. The first is fun. Well, you may not like the idea of rolling out of bed early on a cold Saturday morning but once you make that great leap forward the rest is easy. Be sure to dress warmly, and don't hesitate to treat yourself to a thermos of hot chocolate and a couple of Krispy Kreme doughnuts for a nutritional mid-morning snack. That will be followed a few hours later by the hearty lunch you bring. While thus sustained you may get to see the Winter Wren or the Brown Creeper that has so far eluded you this season, or maybe you'll hear for the first time the difference between the calls of the Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and even glimpse their brilliant headdresses. At the end of the day you'll meet all the

other intrepid explorers to share your exciting adventures and tally your counts within the warm halls of the Ivy Creek Education building.

Reason number two is that by doing the "warm up" you may have so much fun that you'll decide to participate in the real thing – the Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count. We want more people to join in this noble tradition. The counts that the teams report are sent to the National Audubon Society and become part of a national database that stretches back to the early 1900s. This database has come to have truly major significance. It provides information used in many ways for the purpose of bird conservation. Your efforts are more than fun, they contribute to an important goal that all birders value.

(Continued on Page 2)

## Inside December 2005

<i>January Meeting</i>	2
<i>Birdseed Wrap-Up</i>	2
<i>Field Trips</i>	3
<i>Minutes</i>	4
<i>Gardening for Wildlife</i>	4

## Bird Notes & News... Notes & News...

### BIRDSEED SALE WRAP-UP:

The Monticello Bird Club sold 9,435 pounds of seed and suet as well as 7 blue-bird boxes provided by Bob Hammond. The pick-up site worked well, thanks to the late kickoff of the UVA v. Georgia Tech game and a number of well-placed signs pointing the way to the warehouse location. The club will net roughly \$1100. Many thanks also to the Department of Forestry (and Jenny Gaden) for allowing us to use their warehouse, and to all who purchased seed! Please note: There will be a limited supply of suet and thistle seed available for sale at the December meeting.

### ANNUAL DUES LAGGING

C'mon all you procrastinators who have been putting off paying your annual dues. We are talking about a \$15 outlay here, about what you'd spend on lattes for a week! The club uses these funds in ways to make you proud. We fund a 4th-grade class environmental project, we buy binoculars for Ivy Creek, we support the VSO's Roving Ravens. Pay now before stamps increase to 39-cents in January.



Snow Geese on the wing. Photographed by Brenda Tekin during the November CBBT field trip. You have a chance to see them again January 21! See Page 3.

### MBC Meeting

**Jan. 12: Randy Thrasher**

Why do so many birders have avian names? Ponder that as Randy Thrasher takes us to Peru via a picture-filled presentation "Birding Peru—A World Class Adventure."

### *President* (continued)

This year's Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count is Sunday, January 1, 2006 – yes, New Year's Day. Please contact Mo Stevens, 293-8658, for more information.

—Jennifer Gaden, president

## Bird Club Key Info

The Monticello Bird Club normally 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 January issue is December 19.** Please email information to Nancy King at [turnermtn@mindspring.com](mailto:turnermtn@mindspring.com) or send to P.O. Box 22, Ivy, VA 22945.

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Charlottesville, Virginia 22905  
Please visit our website at  
[www.ecoventures-travel.com/mbc](http://www.ecoventures-travel.com/mbc)

## Monticello Bird Club Board Members

<b>President</b>	Jennifer Gaden	<a href="mailto:jgaden@earthlink.net">jgaden@earthlink.net</a>	293-6275
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<b>Field Trips</b>	Lois Gebhardt John Zimmerman	<a href="mailto:cvillebirder@earthlink.net">cvillebirder@earthlink.net</a> <a href="mailto:jozimmva@aol.com">jozimmva@aol.com</a>	972-2446 974-9293
<b>Programs</b>	Ron Kingston	<a href="mailto:kingston@cstone.net">kingston@cstone.net</a>	293-5173
<b>Publicity</b>	Ellen Dudley	<a href="mailto:emdudley@nexet.net">emdudley@nexet.net</a>	244-2688
<b>Hospitality</b>	Priscilla Kingston	<a href="mailto:kingston@cstone.net">kingston@cstone.net</a>	293-5173
<b>Newsletter</b>	Nancy King	<a href="mailto:turnermtn@mindspring.com">turnermtn@mindspring.com</a>	293-7201
<b>Membership</b>	Robyn Kells	<a href="mailto:rkells@ntelos.net">rkells@ntelos.net</a>	970-1044
<b>Birdseed Sale</b>	Howard Davis	<a href="mailto:howardsuedavis@juno.com">howardsuedavis@juno.com</a>	964-1242

# Upcoming Field Trips & Autumn Trip Reports

## *CBC Warm-Up Saturday, December 10*

While this is not the official Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count, we will be covering the same area. **Coordinator is John Zimmerman.** Consult the map in November newsletter showing the CBC geographic sectors. Choose one of the sectors, and then contact the sector leader to learn the time and place that group will meet. (Jenny Gaden/293-6275; Jim Nix/973-7366; John Zimmerman /974-9293; Mark Adams/245-2250; Brenda Tekin/977-4209; Davis Hogg/974-7592). Compilation with all the sector groups will be at the Ivy Creek Natural Area education building at 4 p.m.

## *CBBT, Eastern Shore NWR Saturday, January 21*

A January trip to this winter oasis can produce a wide variety of waterfowl. Because of new rules, it will be necessary to provide security information for every member who plans to bird the CBBT, and pay a fee to cover the cost of a mandatory security guard to accompany us. Get your necessary forms to fill out from Brenda Tekin at the December meeting or contact her at [brenda@birdsofvirginia.com](mailto:brenda@birdsofvirginia.com) or 962-4936. Forms are due January 4. Fee: \$10. **There is a limit of 15 participants for the CBBT islands.** If we have less than 10 sign-up for the CBBT, we will cancel the trip. **We will carpool from Hardees on Pan-tops on Rt. 250 East. Arrive in time to leave promptly at 6:45 am.**

## *Henricus Park, Richmond Saturday, February 18*

Paul Bedell, Richmond Audubon Society, will be our guide around the park to see wintering waterfowl. More juicy details next month.

## *John Zimmerman Reports: Sparrow Road*

Sixteen members of the Monticello Bird Club made a trip to Beaver Creek Reservoir, "sparrow road," and Mint Spring Valley Park on **October 15**, a most delightful fall day. A total of 42 species were observed, including an adult Bald Eagle at each of the three areas we visited. "Sparrow Road" did not live up to its name, since only a few white-throats and white-crowns were seen and none of the usually common Savannah Sparrows. Perhaps they are running a little late this year. That also might explain the flock of tree swallows hurrying south at first light.



Ross's Goose. Photo by Brenda Tekin.

## *John Zimmerman Reports: Scheier Natural Area*

Four members of the Monticello Bird Club ventured out under a low overcast sky with poor visibility to visit the Scheier Natural Area in Fluvanna County on **October 22**. The walk was delightful, but the birding was slim with only about a dozen species identified.

## *John Zimmerman Reports: CBBT & Eastern Shore*

Fourteen members of the Monticello Bird Club and the Augusta County Bird Club visited the Eastern Shore **November 18-20** and compiled a group total of over 100 species. Highlights were many: Cave Swallow, a very late Barn Swallow, a male (as well as females) Harlequin Duck, and Great Cormorant at the CBBT on Friday. Purple Sandpipers were significantly absent. The Brenda Tekin party detoured to Ned Brinkley's in Cape Charles and saw the Rufous (or Allen's) Hummingbird while the rest of the group got to Oyster at low tide for a variety of shorebirds including Marbled Godwits. Saturday at Chincoteague offered thousands of Snow Geese descending in the morning light and provided very close looks at many Ross's Geese. The woodland trail had a variety of species, but the best moment was back in the parking lot looking DOWN on Brown-headed Nuthatches drinking from puddles of water. The Coughlin family hiked the lighthouse trail at dusk on Saturday and flushed an American Woodcock. On Sunday morning a Horned Grebe was diving in the surf along the beach and, stopping at Kiptopeke State Park on the way home, there was an very accommodating Ash-throated Flycatcher at the hawk watch.

## *Mark Adams Reports: Pine Knot*

Mark Adams and a small group enjoyed a gorgeous day **November 5** at Teddy Roosevelt's retreat, Pine Knot. The birding was relatively quiet, only 25 species were sighted. But a flock of 100 American Pipits in a short-grass field adjacent to the property added a bit of excitement to the trip. MBC is compiling a Bird List to celebrate Pine Knot's 100th birthday



# Gardening for Wildlife: Black Tupelo for Birds, Bees

The Black Tupelo, *Nyssa sylvatica*, is a true harbinger of autumn and one of our most beautiful Eastern native trees. In September, before most trees and ourselves acknowledge that summer is officially over, a few leaves on the Black Tupelo trees start to present autumn color with a smattering of orange and red. This transformation from dark green to bright red begins early and lasts long. In a woodland setting, it colors best when planted at the edge where it gets plenty of light as well as shelter from winds. It is somewhat pyramidal in shape when young but there is great variation in mature growth habit. It is slow to medium in growth but the growth rate of young trees is easily accelerated with adequate water and fertility.

It also makes an excellent specimen tree in any naturalized area as it is, certainly, one of the most consistent native trees for fall color. The small, greenish yellow flowers on long slender stems appear with the new leaf growth in the spring. Although the Black Tupelo is mainly dioecious, it is more correctly described as polygamo



*Nyssa sylvatica* or Blackgum.  
Photo: Larry Allain at [plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov)

dioecious; that is having primarily male and female flowers on separate trees but with the possibility of perfect or bisexual flowers present on the same tree. The primarily female trees have the more consistent fruiting performance.

In full flower, it is a target for bees, and the nectar they harvest results in the sought after Tupelo Honey. The black fruit, looking like small olives, ripen in late summer and the tree becomes very bird-friendly. Birds observed eating

Tupelo fruit include Wood Duck, bluebird, Purple Finch, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Hermit Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo and all the woodpeckers found in the Eastern USA.

The long taproot makes the transplanting of Black Tupelo difficult but propagation from seed is fairly easy. The following are guidelines given to me by Bob Eubank, noted for his work with native plants, and a member of the Lynchburg Bird Club.

“Either plant the seed in containers and place outside for the winter (protected from rodents) or place the seed in a container of damp peat moss and put in the refrigerator at around 40 degrees Fahrenheit for 60-90 days. Plant in the spring in one-gallon containers. Once the plants are a couple of feet high, move them to larger and deeper containers or plant in the landscape. I suggest moving them to larger containers and using a slow release fertilizer to add size quickly before planting.”

—Bill Leaning

## MBC Minutes for November 10, 2005

Jenny Gaden presided. She welcomed 62 people in attendance.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bob Gilges reported that the club's income during this fiscal year has been \$6,584, but we have not yet paid for the birdseed order. We have collected \$1,700 in dues from around 50% of the membership. There is \$17,945 in the bank.

**Field Trips:** John Zimmerman detailed the upcoming Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel excursion to the Eastern Shore and reviewed the club's plans for the Christmas Bird Count Warm-

Up on December 10, which was outlined in the newsletter. He asked for volunteers to pick a sector and sign up. (See *President's Comments, Page 1*)

**Bird Seed Sale:** (See *Bird Notes on Page 2* for wrap-up information.)

**Hospitality:** The December meeting is our annual holiday party and Priscilla Kingston reported that last year 67 attended and there were 21 door prizes. She encouraged members to bring refreshments and/or prizes to this year's celebration on December 8. Jim and Carol Hill will provide the beverages.

**MBC Activities:** Jenny announced that MBC is now providing a bird feeding kit to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Stone Robinson Elementary School. A student from the class will make a presentation at the May 2006 meeting about the class ex-

perience. Secondly, Jenny mentioned that the VSO is sponsoring field trips to Virginia Beach December 2-4 and encouraged MBC members to join this very friendly group. The VSO website has more details.

**Bird Sightings:** This past month Bill Leaning noted that the Cedar Waxwings had arrived early at his home in Earlysville and that bluebirds have been feeding on his winterberry hollies. Several people said they have not yet seen many birds visiting their feeders; perhaps because of the mild fall weather. John Zimmerman reported seeing Winter Wrens, Palm Warbler, and grackles galore during his field trip. Barbe Fehse has seen juncos and monarch butterflies. It was mentioned that a very late hummingbird was seen at a feeder.

—Peggy Cornett, secretary