



Monticello Bird Club

December 2015 Newsletter

Website: www.monticellobirdclub.org

Volume 30

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

Issue 4

MBC Monthly Meeting—Thursday, December 10th at 7:00pm

at Ivy Creek Natural Area—Education Building

For our December meeting, attendees traditionally bring a food offering or a bird-related (gently-used is fine) door prize. After the meeting, we share the holiday goodies and raffle off the non-edible treats.

We hope you will join us for this **annual seasonal celebration!**

Comments from the President

Doug Rogers



Santa is about to arrive! Our Club community outreach youth poster contest, *Bird Conservation: Understanding the Threats; Finding the Solutions*, had over 70 entries. Judging of these posters was done on November 23; a reception will be held on December 6 at 2:00 p.m. at Ivy Creek, where prizes will be awarded. This has been a very ambitious project, and we are very excited about it! I hope you will take time to come to the reception, support the participating classrooms, and congratulate the deserving winners. I regret that I cannot attend this event because of a conflicting obligation, but I urge you to come and celebrate this first year of what we anticipate will be an annual event.

Our annual Bird Seed Sale was a resounding success – setting a new record. Many kudos to **John Holden** and the **BSS Team of volunteers** who helped count the inventory when it arrived, who made calls to our members and non-members alike asking for their support, who helped track the delivery and who provided the muscle power to get it onto the vehicles and into the hands of our customers. This was a great team effort and a job well done.

Worthy of note: Two folks from the community, who are not members, have made a substantial contribution to the Club in honor of the efforts of Joanne Bricker. Joanne would like to designate these funds to assist a young birder, nominated by the Board of the Blue Ridge Young Birders Club, to attend the Audubon summer program at Hog Island, Maine (or a similar program).

Reminder: At our next meeting, we will have our annual holiday meeting and gift raffle. Please bring a dish to share and/or a bird-oriented gift – slightly used is fine. Bring your Holiday Spirit and let's have a fine evening of sharing and camaraderie.

Good birding!!

Programs

Lou Tanner



Topic: *Ruffed Grouse & Virginia Forest Ecology*

Speaker: *Gary Norman*

Just a few decades ago a hiker in the forests of Virginia was quite likely to encounter a Ruffed Grouse. Just how rare this experience has become is something no birder needs to be told. Our speaker for the December meeting has spent decades wrestling with this and related issues.

Gary Norman, Senior Research Biologist for the VA Division of Game and Inland Fisheries, has been the Upland Game Bird Project Leader for most of the last two decades. He graduated from Glenville State College in WV in 1977 with a degree in Biology before earning further degrees at WVU and VA Tech. He was a Wildlife Biologist for the WV Department of Natural Resources from 1980-87 before moving on to the VA DGIF. There he has devoted years to working on conservation issues related to grouse, wild turkeys, and quail among other things. For an informed presentation on what is happening to the ecology of VA forests and how this has in turn affected the birdlife we see or don't see, come to the Dec. 10th meeting. As usual, we will be eating at the Brick Oven at 5:30. Come meet Gary Norman and get a preview.



First Saturday Bird Walk

December 5th 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 Fall & Winter 2015

Dec. 5 ... Dave Hogg

Jan. 2....David White
Feb. 6 Teresa Shaner

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 a bird you might find on the Bird Walk at Ivy Creek this month
David White

Winter Wren

When we left the Outer Banks in mid-October, we knew we were returning to a changing of the seasons in Charlottesville and this was soon experienced right in our own back yard. While summer lingered on in the form of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at our feeders, equally exciting as a harbinger of what was to come was an early visit by one of our smaller winter visitors and, indeed, our smallest wren: *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Better known as a **Winter Wren**, this easily overlooked winter visitor can be found poking around brush piles, rock walls and in dense brush. It measures about 4" in length and has been likened to a "dirty golf ball with a short, cocked up tail." The "Gold Book," the annotated check list of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, shows that this diminutive bird can be found in the Piedmont from October until well into April. To be on its breeding grounds and to hear its song is a treat. Sibley describes the song thusly: "... long and complex: a remarkable continuous series of very high, tinkling trills and thin buzzes." The word *ethereal* comes to mind. Here at home we are usually relegated to hearing little chips and scolding but delicate trills, not nearly so robust as those of its cousin the Carolina Wren. So while out on a winter walk be aware of little movements in the tangle of roots at the base of a tree, or a little *jip-jip* from the nearby underbrush. Sometimes the best treats come in small packages!



Winter Wren
Photo by Doug Rogers

Wanted: 1st Saturday Leaders for Ivy Creek Walks in 2016

by Leigh Surdukowski

The Monticello Bird Club leads a bird walk the First Saturday of every month at Ivy Creek at 7:30am. These walks are open to the public, and the focus of these walks is to introduce novice birders to birding in Charlottesville. Please contact Leigh Surdukowski, lsurdukowski@gmail.com, if you are interested in being a trip leader for 2016.



Special thanks to the following folks who volunteered to be trip leaders in 2015: David White, Teresa Shaner, Stauffer Miller, Gabriel Maple, Jim Nix, Doug Rogers, Leigh Surdulowski, Jenny Gaden, Tom Jones, Peter Brask and Dave Hogg.



Field Trips

Gabriel Mapel



Southern Albemarle Farms

Date: Saturday, December 12th

Meeting Place & Time: 8am in the parking lot of
Piedmont Veterinary Service

Leader: Dan Bieker
danbieker@gmail.com
434-971-9618

By special permission, we will visit three private farms in search of waterfowl, raptors, and whatever else the winter landscape offers. Southern Albemarle has extensive farmland, wide open views, and the best chance in the county for grassland species.

Directions: From Piedmont VA Community College, follow Rt 20 south for 11.5 miles and turn right on Rt. 712 (Plank Road). Piedmont Veterinary Service is immediately on the right. Park at the guard rail facing Rt. 20.

Treasurer's Notes

Maynard K. Davis



Our Bird Seed Sale was a great success, and we've yet to incur significant cost for our major project, the poster contest. Accordingly, we currently have a significant budget surplus (>\$5,000). In the next few weeks, we'll spend some of this on the poster contest; and we'll also be providing our annual support to our traditional partners, e.g. Ivy Creek Natural Area. Please contact me with any questions. Thank you for your support.

Maynard

Membership Notes

Lesslie Crowell

As the MBC Fall Membership Drive draws to a close, the club has 143 paid members, with 27 still to renew. We welcome new members Norma Diehl, Andrew Snyder, and Patty Kalbfleisch.

Lesslie



MBC Board Meeting Minutes, November 12, 2015

Peggy Cornett



-**Doug Rogers** opened the meeting and welcomed newcomers, one being a new member. There were fifty-four present.

-Recent **bird sightings** were reported. Joanne Bricker saw two Pine Siskins at their feeder in the Pantops area. Carol Hill had a good look at a Bald Eagle and also observed Cedar Waxwings in Northfield subdivision. John Holden reported on his trip to Shackelford Island off the North Carolina coast over Halloween weekend. They saw 2,000 shore birds on the island, including Long-billed Curlews.

-**Bird Seed Sale report** began with a PowerPoint show of Pick-up Day at the Forestry Department. John Holden announced that we beat our sales goal with gross sales of over \$13,000 from 145 orders. A big round of applause was given for the entire Bird Seed Sale effort this year.

-**John Holden** offered flyers for the "**Wings over Water**" nature excursions. He will be leading the next trip to the Outer Banks.

-Doug gave an **update on the Poster Contest**, which is promoting bird conservation for grades K-8. Mary Mapel is heading the committee on this project and Nancy Newman has helped communicate the project to all city and county schools. The awards reception will be held at Ivy Creek Natural Area, Sunday, December 6, 2-3:30 PM and bird club members are encouraged to attend. Falconer Andrew King will give a program and there will be an opportunity for kids to dissect owl pellets.

-**The club's Christmas party** follows the December meeting. Ron and Priscilla Kingston asked that members bring either a food item or a bird-related door prize.

-Lesslie Crowell reported on **membership** and welcomed two new members, Norm Diehl and Patty Kalbfleisch. To date the club has 136 paid members and there are about 35 who need to renew.

-**Maynard Davis** announced that we will be spending funds from the successful Bird Seed Sale on the poster contest prizes and to support organizations such as the Ivy Creek Foundation. The club also provides a year's supply of bird seed for feeding stations at Stone Robinson and Venable elementary schools and for Ivy Creek. The profit from the sale this year was \$3,200, with 65 non-member buyers (up from 45 non-members last year). The sale is a good way to reach out to the community.

-Doug Rogers gave the **field trip report** in Gabriel Mapel's absence. Thirty-nine species were reported on Janet Paisley's trip to Rockfish Valley Trail. Leigh Surdukowski led a bird walk along the Meadow Creek/Rivanna Trail with 28 species. A Purple Finch was reported on Stauffer Miller's trip to Panorama Farm. The upcoming trips include November 21 with Chris Murray on the Lindy Bain Loop Trail.

-The publicity chairs reported that we have seventy-seven members on the **MBC Facebook** page.

-**Carol Hill** thanks Dan Bieker for his remembrance of Mo Stevens and Frances Fife in the last newsletter and for remembering Barbara Fehse, who served as MBC President.

-Jenny Gaden reminded members that the **Christmas Bird Count** will be December 20 and all are encouraged to participate. Jenny is coordinating the annual event.

-**Ruth Douglas and Peggy Cornett** announced a meeting on "Protecting Albemarle County's Biodiversity," to be held Thursday, November 19, 6 PM, at Ivy Creek education building. The meeting will introduce the Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee, and highlight some of its exciting work to explore and document rare habitats (flora, fauna, geology, etc.), and help conserve our area's biodiversity. Thanks to a grant from the Department of Forestry and the Green Infrastructure Center, the NHC will be developing a conservation plan over the next twelve months that will identify the most important areas of the county to conserve and form practical strategies on how to protect them. The NHC is seeking new members and asks that MBC members consider getting involved.

The 2015 Bird Seed Sale—Results and Thanks

by John Holden

Now that our Bird Seed Sale is over here are the results.

	2015	2014
Total Sales	\$13,049	\$ 9,702
Number of Orders	145	109
Orders from non-MBC members	65	48



The sale was very successful because of the following:

- Member participation, as well as reaching out to friends, neighbors and coworkers
- A record number of volunteers
- The involvement of some new groups of participants, like Master Naturalists

Lessons learned...We did not have to do paid advertising to increase sales, in spite of “aggressive” sales attempts by the radio station. This saved \$444 from last year. We need to offer “pick up” at a later time, and delivery also, as a way to serve more. We need to consider making it easier for non-computer folks, maybe offering ordering by phone, as well.

Proceeds from the Seed Sale support our monthly speaker programs, community organizations and the currently running Bird Conservation Poster Contest in our schools.

Special thanks go out to the Virginia Department of Forestry and Lizzie Mae, our Amish bird seed supplier from Ohio. I also want to thank MBC friends, Maynard and Doug and Joanne for their masterful direction, Jon Rockett and Lesslie Crowell for inspiring me with their enthusiasm, and the following volunteers that made my job really easy: John McCauley, Lou Tanner, Burnie Davis, Dave Hogg, Jenny Gaden, Kathy Sudduth, Tom Leback, Bill Wardlaw, Ellen Dudley, Susan Babineau, Nancy-Elizabeth Nimmich, Peter Duttell, and Janet Paisley. If I left anyone out, I am sorry...there were so many of us at every step.

The best part of the whole event was getting to know the wonderful members of our Club better. Next fall however...the Sandhill Cranes on the Wisconsin River, ice forming on the lakes of the Boundary Water, the Wings Over Water festival in the Outer Banks, and more days among the thousands of shorebirds on Shackleford Island, NC (maybe some of you will join Jeannie and me in these places) beckon. That means that **one of our members needs to jump forward and volunteer to chair the 2016 MBC Bird Seed Sale** -- knowing you will have plenty of help from fellow members. *John*

2015 Charlottesville CBC

by Jenny Gaden



The 2015 Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will take place on Sunday, December 20. We will join tens of thousands

of other volunteers around the country who, from December 14 to January 5, will count the number of individuals of each species they observe on one day during that period. The day can begin before dawn and continue until dark. The CBC, run by the National Audubon Society, began in 1900.

All levels of birders, from beginners to professional scientists, participate in the count. These citizen scientists are taking action for conservation. *The CBC has evolved to become a hugely important pool of data for researchers studying the ongoing status and ranges of bird populations across the Americas. The only other similar yardstick is the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), run during June in the breeding season. The co-analyses of CBC and BBS have become the combined yardstick by which ornithologists and conservation biologists assess how bird populations are doing – and where they are occurring – across the Americas.* (From the [National Audubon Society CBC website](#))

Each count occurs in a designated circle 15 miles in diameter, and is organized by a “compiler” who is Jenny Gaden for the Charlottesville CBC. Those interested in participating should let Jenny know (434-293-6275; jengaden@gmail.com). Everyone is welcome – newcomers, inexperienced or experienced birders. All will join one of the already-established teams. Participants should be prepared for the weather; if it's cold bring hand and foot warmers, snacks, lunch, and hot drinks and/or water. If it is raining, dress ac-

A potluck gathering will follow the count at 6 pm at the home of Nancy O'Brien. She and her late husband Francis Fife have been hosts of this event for a number of years, and Nancy wanted to continue the tradition. How fortunate we are. Directions will be available through the team leaders.


by Allen Hale

by Allen Hale

Lost Red-tailed Hawk—Can You Help?

(Editor's Note: President Doug Rogers received this email recently, and I pass it along to you birders out there in the field...)

Good morning Doug,
My name is Dave McRuer and I am the Director of Veterinary Services at the Wildlife Center of Virginia and a permitted falconer in Virginia. On Sunday Aug 22, I was flying my 3rd year female red-tailed hawk in the Old Trail area near Crozet when she was spooked by a 100+ flock of crows. Long story short, she hit a thermal, went up 1000+ feet and drifted south. The hawk is outfitted with biothane (synthetic) anklets and bells on both legs. I'm wondering if you might spread the word amongst your membership in case someone happens upon her in the field. She is a brilliant hunter and will survive just fine (she was trapped from the wild 3 years ago) but I'd be grateful to have her back. If anyone does spot the hawk, please have them contact Dave McRuer at 540-241-2212.



Red-tailed Hawk
Photo by Brent Myers
[Wikimedia Commons](#)

Thank you for considering my request.
Dave



Red-tailed Hawk
Photo by Brent Myers
Wikimedia Commons



You Are Invited

**To Attend the Reception to Award Prizes
to Winners of the
Bird Conservation Poster Contest
Understanding the Threats; Finding the Solutions
Sponsored by MBC & BRYBC**

Sunday Dec. 6th from 2-3:30pm
Ivy Creek Education Building

Awarding of Prizes at 2:30pm
Andrew King & his Falconry Hawk
Educational Displays including Owl Pellet Dissection Table
Light Refreshments



Here is a sneak peek at one of the Poster Contest entries. Please come to the December 6th Reception to view other exciting posters, congratulate winners and support all participating students and teachers.

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

Bill Leaning

Don't Rake All those Leaves, Yet!

Raking up all the leaves, besides being a major chore, eliminates a food supply for over-wintering birds. It also decreases summer populations of beneficial insect species. The larvae of many insects, including some butterfly and moth species, overwinter in the litter.

Many birds forage through leaf litter for food. Juncos, sparrows, thrushes, flickers and towhees hunt through leaf litter for insects, seeds, and berries. Robins and woodpeckers search for grubs and worms.

Just clear your walkways, and leave the leaf litter ("nature's mulch") on your garden until spring. Clean up your garden after the danger of cold weather has passed and migrant species are established for the season.

A measure of untidiness is welcome to the birds. When flowers and herbs go to seed, you can be sure some bird will enjoy them. When you don't get around to deadheading the perennials, or drying the herbs, you can always announce loudly that you wouldn't dream of depriving the birds of a food source.

Your eco-friendly procrastinator!

Bill

A few of the birds enjoying the leaf litter treasures in our yard...



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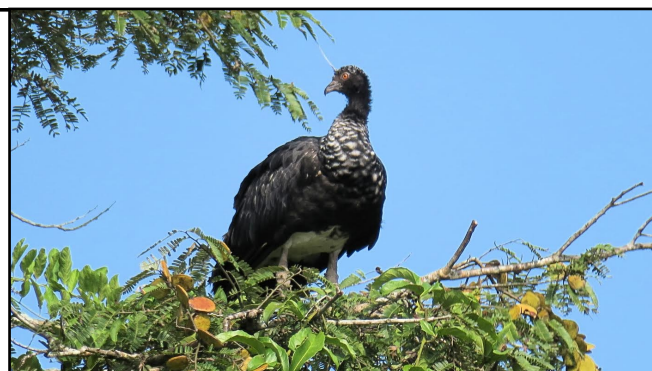


In early November, John Holden led a trip to Shackleford Island, NC and raved about the number of shorebirds observed. Jeannie Holden's fabulous photos convey a sense of those vast migratory shorebird numbers.



Richard Teig and Myrlene Staten just returned from two weeks in Peru. Having been to Macchu Picchu before, this visit focused on the south-central coast, Andes, and Amazon and was more focused on birding and nature generally.

Richard provided some photographs that represent the variety of birds encountered. It was breeding season, so most were decked out in their most dramatic plumage. Beyond resident birds of Peru, several American migrants were spotted along the way. Here's a sampling of Richard's photos from this exciting trip.



Photos, clockwise, starting at top right

- Horned Screamer
- Rufescent Tiger Heron—juvenile
- Hoatzin
- Peruvian Pelican (and intrusive booby)
- Inca Terns



Doug Rogers looked out from his Pantops balcony when he heard the crow commotion, only to find a Red-tailed Hawk attempting to perch peacefully nearby. But ignoring the persistent persecution of both the local crows and blue jays was not easy. What's a peace-lovin,' self-respectin', and in this case, most handsomely belly-banded Red-tail to do? Well, fly off when able to endure no more— but not before Doug grabbed his camera and recorded the proceedings.



First, it's the crows...



Next come the jays...



If you zoom in on the hawk's face (to the right), it's hard not to anthropomorphize and imagine this poor hawk thinking, "You've gotta be kidding!"



So much information, so little time....

Follow these links to articles that your fellow birding enthusiasts recommend.

From [John Holden](#) — John wanted us to be aware of the spectacular "Wings Over Water" Wildlife Festival events that take place in the Outer Banks each fall. If you didn't get to this year's October gathering, there's an encore trip in early December that you could (*quickly!*) register for [here](#) (*it may take a series of clicks, so persevere*), or you might just want to enjoy reading about it now and make a mental note to put in on your calendar for next fall.

From [Chris Murray](#) and [Janet Paisley](#) — Both Chris (cmurray1217@gmail.com; with two "Chris Murray" local birders it's confusing!)—and Janet wanted to alert members to the importance of Duck Stamps and how their purchase supports conservation causes that we all endorse. They both forwarded an interesting piece from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology about the [origin of the Duck Stamp](#), and if that doesn't convince you to purchase one or more stamps, here's [another article from Cornell](#) (they now call it the "Migratory Bird Stamp") that should convince you.



From [Linda Lester](#) — Does the Anchorage Public Library have bird books? Library users are looking for some. For [an answer to this reference question](#) follow the link and catch a glimpse of this library's most unusual patrons!

[Linda](#) also sent another interesting link about the prodigious digitalization project of Audubon's *Birds of America* (imagine!!). Read about it in [this link](#) to the Pulic Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County website.

From [Joanne Bricker](#) — We've been watching and waiting, and the fabulous technology allowing us to link eBird checklists with photos and audio is now available. Read about it on the [eBird website](#).



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 Earlsyville 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.

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