



# Monticello Bird Club

January 2008

Volume 23, Number 5

## January Meeting Topic: The Bobwhites and the Bees

Our speaker this month, Marc Puckett, will present a talk entitled: "The Bobwhites and the Bees". This PowerPoint presentation will explain why early-succession habitat is so important to a variety of species, including quail. It will set the stage for a brief explanation of the Virginia Quail Action Plan.

Marc is a 1992 graduate of Virginia Tech with a BS in forestry and wildlife and a 1995 graduate of North Carolina State University with an MS in wildlife biology. He has been employed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries since 1996, and is currently the state's small game project leader and co-leader of the Quail Action Plan. Marc also served as an infantry paratrooper from 1983 to 1987. He was the president of the Virginia Chapter of the Wildlife Society in 2003. He has long been

interested in conservation, presently he is involved in bio-fuels conservation efforts.

Please join MBC members and our speaker for dinner at Wild Greens Restaurant in the North Wing of Barracks Road Shopping Center on January 8th at 5:45 pm prior to the meeting.

## Upcoming Meeting Topics

**February 12th: Bob Schamerhorn** will present "Through The Camera's Lens"

**March 12th: Jim Nix** will present a program on birding in Ecuador.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

## Comments From the President

I'm gradually finding my way with the Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count. In 2006, my first year to participate, I was with Steve Jamme and Amy Gilmer in the Free Union sector of the count. In 2007, Rob Capon and I covered the South Rivanna River-Bentivar areas in place of Mo Stevens who was ill and David Hannah who was away. This year I did the area southwest of Ivy, Bill and Maureen Minor's former coverage. Since it looks like I will have this same area in 2009, I feel as if I may at last have a more "fixed address" in the count.

The area I covered this year, roughly bounded by Dry Bridge, Dick Woods and Broad Axe Roads, could be considered rather undistinguished habitat

except for one spot, a place I had never birded, the Ivy landfill. What, you might ask, would distinguish the landfill? Well, not that much, except that it is a large grass-covered expanse of low mounds, with interspersed patches of shrubs and scrubby trees. I could easily envision a Northern Shrike or Tree Sparrow there.

Although I found no birds of great interest at the landfill, it looks like a spot worthy of occasional checking, should any of our local birders be so inclined. The staff was quite obliging. The man at the gatehouse allowed me to drive right in, once he knew what I wanted. In fact, as I left he asked if I had seen anything unusual. The place is closed on Sunday.

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## Monticello Bird Club

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Another somewhat unusual habitat for our area, one well outside the count circle, is a small shrub-filled pond in the northeast part of Albemarle County. The pond was created many years ago when construction of a railroad obstructed the flow of a stream. Although my friend Rob Capon absolutely despises this place, because of its ticks, I have found the place to have its charms. For instance, I saw my only Least Bittern and Alder Flycatcher of 2008 there.

Last week I made an early morning visit to the pond. What was of most interest in the visit was not what I saw but what I heard. As I stood on an embankment, waiting for some daylight to overtake the darkness, I heard not one but two different cries which I would describe as plaintive. From the pond came a sort of wailing call, like a forlorn mammal. This was the pre-dawn call of the Wood Duck, a vocalization I have only recently learned. From a wooded area behind me came the ping-type cry of a Yel-

low-bellied Sapsucker. A duck and a woodpecker as a pre-dawn chorus—you just never know what you're going to experience when you get yourself out in the natural world.

Lastly, as the old year passes and a new one arrives, I would urge you to consider keeping a year's list for your county. Although I have done yearly county bird counts in other places, no one ever encouraged me to do it. Here, I have the support of several people, namely Rob, Gretchen Gehrett and Teresa Shaner. Peter Brask is also always interested in my list for the year. County listing provides incentive to get out and bird at all times of the year, in all habitats. Who knows, you might be the one, as you pursue your county list, who finds the first rarity at the Ivy Landfill!

-Stauffer Miller

## Government Review Confirms Red Knot Should Listed as Endangered Species

(Washington, D.C. – December 10, 2008) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released today the list of candidate species awaiting listing decisions under the Endangered Species Act.

“The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has once again confirmed that the Red Knot is increasingly threatened with extinction and deserving of heightened conservation measures, particularly immediate reductions in the commercial harvest of their primary food source – horseshoe crabs.” said Darin Schroeder, American Bird Conservancy’s Vice President of Conservation Advocacy.

The (rufa) Red Knot, a reddish-brown shorebird the size of an American Robin, annually migrates from Tiera Del Fuego to their arctic breeding grounds, stopping to rebuild critical energy reserves by feasting on horse-

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## Bird Club Information

The Monticello Bird Club meets at 7:30 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 February issue is January 20.** Please email information to Amy Gilmer at [akgilmer@comcast.net](mailto:akgilmer@comcast.net) or send to 2341 Highland Avenue, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

### 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

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<b>Birdseed Sale</b>	Jim Hill	<a href="mailto:jimcarhill@comcast.net">jimcarhill@comcast.net</a>	975-6523

## Upcoming Field Trips

### Warren Christmas Bird Count Sunday, January 4

Contact Allen Hale, compiler at (434) 263-8671 or [su-per@buteobooks.com](mailto:su-per@buteobooks.com) for information.

### Northern Albemarle County Saturday, January 10

Meet at the Starbuck's, beside Harris Teeter, south end of the Hollymead shopping complex, west side of US 29 N, at 8:30 am. We'll visit, at a rather leisurely pace, Chris Greene Lake, Forest Lakes (Lake Hollymead) and other places which may come to mind to the leader. We should be finished with our birding by noon (or before if we can't find much).  
Leader: Stauffer Miller, (434) 296-5505 or [Stauffer@seepub.com](mailto:Stauffer@seepub.com).

### Beaver Creek Reservoir, Sparrow Rd, and the Crozet area lakes Saturday, January 24

Meet at Giant in the Seminole Square parking lot at 7:15 am, or at Beaver Creek at 7:30 am.  
Leader: John Zimmerman, (434) 974-9293 or [joszim-mva@embarqmail.com](mailto:joszim-mva@embarqmail.com)

### First Saturday Bird Walks At Ivy Creek Natural Area

On the first Saturday of each month the Monticello Bird Club hosts a bird walk at Ivy Creek Natural Area (ICNA) at 7:30 am. Each month a different walk leader takes groups on the trails to see the birds of ICNA. The walks start in the parking lot of ICNA.

*(Red Knot continued from page 2)*

shoe crab eggs in the Delaware Bay. Unfortunately, science has shown the number of available horseshoe crab eggs has declined, leading the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to conclude in today's candidate review that, "The primary factor threatening the red knot (sic) is destruction and modification of its habitat, particularly the reduction in key food resources resulting from reductions in horseshoe crabs..."

"American Bird Conservancy appreciates the leadership of New Jersey, which has opted to institute a moratorium on further horseshoe crab harvesting, and Virginia, which has similarly opted to greatly reduce the number of horseshoe crabs allowed to be caught for bait in the eel and conch fisheries," said Schroeder.

Due to a 15% decline in Red Knot numbers at its wintering grounds in the past year, and a 75% decline from 1985 to 2007, FWS has increased the listing priority for the species from a six to a three. The Federal Register Notice is available at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-28986.pdf>.

*-American Bird Conservancy*

### VSO Winter Field Trip NC Outer Banks February 20-22, 2009

As in past years the VSO is heading south of the (Virginia) border to enjoy the hopefully milder climate of the outer banks of North Carolina. Note the exciting new addition of an optional Friday pelagic trip out of Hatteras!

**Lodging:** The Clarion Inn at Nags Head Beach will be our headquarters. Special VSO room rates are \$62 for oceanfront and \$57 for streetside plus tax (currently 12%). Oceanfront rooms are available on a first come, first serve basis. Contact information for the hotel is: P.O. Box 308, Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, 27948; (252)441-6333. Make reservations by Jan. 20 to get the special rate. Remember to say that you are with the VSO.

**Meals** are on your own. A 7:00 am Saturday and Sunday buffet breakfast will be available at the Clarion Inn.

**Program:** When you check in at the hotel, pick up a program of events and announcements at the front desk.

**Friday:** VSO Pelagic Trip

**Friday Night:** An evening orientation and slide program will be presented. Check your program for the time and room location.

**Saturday:** We will have all day to visit the impoundments of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge and the beaches of Cape Hatteras National Seashore. The generally milder climate and the proximity of the Gulf Stream make for an interesting combination of wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, ocean birds and sometimes whales. There will be a tally at 6:00 pm in the VSO conference room at the hotel.

**Sunday Morning:** New this year—trip to Alligator River NWR. We will depart from the hotel at 8:30 am giving those wishing to continue straight home from the field trip time to check-out of their rooms.

Be prepared for variable weather, lots of birds and a good time. If you have any questions, contact Bill Akers at (540)951-7692 or [bill.akersj@comcast.net](mailto:bill.akersj@comcast.net) or Peggy Opengari at (540)921-4340 or [gramby@pemtel.net](mailto:gramby@pemtel.net).

## MBC Minutes for December 11, 2008

MBC president Stauffer Miller welcomed about 50 people who braved driving rain and dense fog to attend the meeting. Several newcomers joined us including Sylvan Willig, Bob Wagner and his wife, and John Rocket and his fiancée, Yvonne.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jim Hill stepped in for Henry Konat and reported the 2008 Birdseed Sale netted \$1,725.35 for the club. Income to-date \$9,342.08; expenses \$8,673.90; net gain \$608.06. The club has \$14,550.58 in the bank.

**Christmas Bird Counts:** Jenny Gaden previewed the weather for the Christmas Count. She also noted that longtime Christmas Count compiler Mo Stevens has suffered a stroke and was in intensive care. Jenny, herself, will be teaching "Birdlife of Central Virginia" through UVa's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Learn more at [www.ollivua.org](http://www.ollivua.org) or 434-923-3600. Stauffer Miller described two additional Christmas Counts: Alan Hale will coordinate the Warren Bird Count on January 4 (Contact Stauffer for information) and there will be the Big Flat Christmas Count around Loft Mountain on Skyline Drive, date TBA (contact Stauffer for information).

**Field Trips:** John Zimmerman said he is working on a January trip and may be able to schedule a trip to Highland County in February. Stay tuned!

**Other:** Bruce Gatling-Austin, the Education Programs Coordinator at Ivy Creek made an appeal for school tour volunteers. They would guide school groups K-4 around Ivy Creek Natural Area during spring and fall. Time commitment is one hour per

week. If interested, contact Bruce at [programs@ivycreekfoundation.org](mailto:programs@ivycreekfoundation.org) or (434)973-7772.

**Recent Bird Sightings:** Jenny Gaden and Stauffer Miller talked about the Snowy Owl that has been spending time in Ruckersville and attracting a lot of attention! A visitor to Southeast Ontario saw a "Downy-headed Woodpecker." Stephanie Tanner observed a Hermit Thrush in Charlottesville. Ron Kingston spotted a Fox Sparrow in his yard. Carol Hill has been watching large flocks of Bluebirds and Robins around her home. Dave Hogg spied a Purple Finch at Sugar

Hollow and the folks on the First Saturday Bird Walk glimpsed one as well.

Betty Mooney introduced the speaker, Charles Ziegenfus. After his talk on juncos, the crowd enjoyed holiday food, drink and door prizes, all coordinated by Priscilla Kingston.

-Nancy King

## Winter and the Nuthatch by Mary Oliver

Once or twice and maybe again, who knows,  
the timid nuthatch will come to me  
if I stand still, with something good to eat in my hand.  
The first time he did it  
he landed smack on his belly, as though  
the legs wouldn't cooperate. The next time  
he was bolder. Then he became absolutely  
wild about those walnuts.

But there was a morning I came late and, guess what,  
the nuthatch was flying into a stranger's hand.  
To speak plainly, I felt betrayed.  
I wanted to say: Mister,  
that nuthatch and I have a relationship.  
It took hours of standing in the snow  
before he would drop from the tree and trust my fingers.  
But I didn't say anything.  
Nobody owns the sky or the trees.  
Nobody owns the hearts of birds.  
Still, being human and partial therefore to my own  
successes—  
though not resentful of others fashioning theirs—

I'll come tomorrow, I believe, quite early.

"Winter and the Nuthatch" by Mary Oliver, from *Red Bird*. © Beacon Press, 2008