



Monticello Bird Club

March 2009

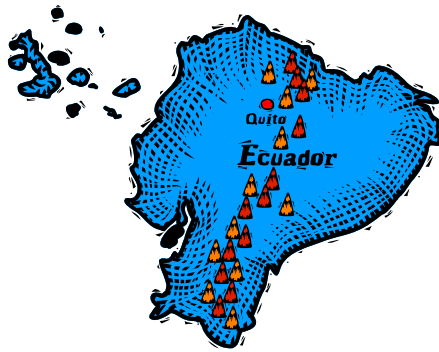
Volume 23, Number 7

March Meeting Topic: Birding in Ecuador

Our speaker this month is our very own Jim Nix. Jim will present a talk entitled: "Birding in Ecuador". In his PowerPoint presentation Jim will share the details of a July 2007 trip to Ecuador.

Jim Nix grew up in New York City, but has lived in Charlottesville since 1970. He has been an avid birder since the early 1980s and a member of the Monticello Bird Club since its founding in 1986. Birds of the American tropics became his special interest after a trip to Costa Rica in 1988. Two other trips to Costa Rica followed and, since 1995, he and his wife, Phyllis Binder, have made twenty trips to Mexico and Central and South America.

In July 2007 they spent three weeks in Ecuador in the Andean highlands and the cloud forest zone on the western slope. Only about a third of the time was spent birding, but they saw nearly 150 bird species including 34 hum-



mingbirds, 20 tanagers and three species of strange and secretive ant-pittas. Ecuador is a land of spectacular scenery and fascinating culture as well as incredible birds and is quite safe and comfortable to visit.

Please join MBC members and our speaker for dinner at Ragazzi's Restaurant in the Shoppers World Shopping Center near Whole

Foods Market on March 12th at 5:45 pm prior to the meeting.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

April 9th: Dr. Marshall Fain-tich will present "Birding Winter-green."

May 14th: Member's Night. MBC members share their favorite slides and photographs.



Comments From the President

While I would prefer to write about birds, other matters take priority. As all of you must know by now, two cars of attendees of Monticello Bird Club meetings have been broken into, one at the December 2007 meeting and the other at the one of January 2009. In the December instance, the perpetrator stole a backpack which contained a social security number and check book, causing the victim quite a bit of trouble in securing potentially compromised personal information. The car was also expensive to repair. In the other case, the car owner left a black brief case on the floor of the car. Only someone peering into cars with a flashlight could have seen it. In both instances, the cars were parked on the side of the Ivy Creek

parking area most distant from the meeting building. At this past meeting, the one of February 12, I noticed for the first time that that side of the parking area has absolutely no lighting. I am glad to say that attendees at our February meeting who arrived after pull-in parking on the lighted side was full parallel-parked on the illuminated side of the parking lot, not wishing to invite more break-ins. Until something can be done about illuminating the dark side of the parking area, I think we should make an effort to park as many of our cars as possible in the lit area. For those who park by pulling in, be aware of this as you back out, since there isn't much maneuver room, especially for a full size car.

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Monticello Bird Club

(Comments from the president continued from page 1)

Just before the meeting began February 12, Carol Hill took the initiative of telephoning the county police, who then made at least one cruise through the parking lot during the meeting. She is going to continue to call them in advance of meetings, at least for those months when we meet without daylight. Some people have suggested closing the Ivy Creek entrance gate but this idea has been rather roundly vetoed. Others have suggested implementing a system wherein individuals leave the meeting to stand perhaps fifteen-minute watch periods in the parking lot. Karen Joyner of the Ivy Creek staff has offered to do a watch. She is also in some discussion with the county about improving the lighting but the wheels of government turn slowly. I am happy to report that our February meeting was incident-free. Continue to take precaution. Do not leave anything visible in your car, even an empty binocular case.

It would seem, sadly, that the very quality for which we love Ivy Creek,

its quiet and tranquility, is that which makes it equally appealing to the local criminal element. I welcome the thoughts of all as we wrestle with this problem.

Amy Gilmer plans to cease doing our newsletter, effective with the June issue. She has done great work with it, and certainly three years is enough. But it leaves us in need a replacement editor, beginning in September. Amy tells me the job requires just a few hours each month. She is also willing to train. The newsletter is quite frankly the glue holding our organization together. We need a volunteer for this important post.

For several reasons, we have decided, starting with the March meeting, to change the speaker's dinner from Wild Greens to Ragazzi's Restaurant, in the Whole Food parking lot along Rt. 29. Do not go to Wild Greens that night, as you will not find folks from the bird club there. Hope to see you at Ragazzi's. The dinners are quite fun. Pat and Frank

Wilczek, who are chiefly responsible for this activity, are considering asking those planning to attend to make a reservation. No decision on that yet.

Our last program, the bird photography artistry of and by Bob Shaemernhorn of Richmond Audubon, was a knockout one. It was hard to pick out the photo that was most stunning. The March program should be just as good—MBC member Jim Nix talking about Ecuador.

The early February hot spot for birds was nearly ice-covered Forest Lake, aka, Lake Hollymead. As many as ten waterfowl species could be found there, including Redheads and Canvasbacks (yes, these are birds, not singing groups). Continue to watch the ponds, as March is also a good waterfowl month. The highest counts ever for Albemarle County for Pintails, Shovellers and Green-winged Teal have been in Marches past.

-Stauffer Miller

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 Earlsyville Road, 1/2 mile north of Hydraulic Road.

The editor of the MBC Newsletter welcomes submissions including articles, photographs and notices. **DEADLINE for the April issue is March 20.** Please email information to Amy Gilmer at 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

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Membership	Jim Nix	jim-nix@comcast.net	973-7366
Birdseed Sale	Jim Hill	jimcarhill@comcast.net	975-6523

Upcoming Field Trips

Humpback Rocks Visitor Center Blue Ridge Parkway Saturday, March 14

Join field trip leader Jenny Gaden as we look for American Woodcocks putting on their aerial display. Bring a strong flashlight to spot the woodcocks. **Meet at the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway at 7 pm.** Questions? Contact Jenny Gaden at 434-293-6275 or jgaden@embarqmail.com

Canoe Trip on Beaver Creek Reservoir Sunday, March 15

Enjoy a Sunday canoe trip on Beaver Creek Reservoir. Canoes for 6 people will be provided. The first six people to call Leigh at 434-295-8241 will have a space. Do not show up if you do not have a space. But if you have canoes or kayaks, you are welcome to bring them and join the trip. Bring extra life vests if you have them. Paddles will be provided. A little canoeing experience would be helpful, but not required. **Meet at the Beaver Creek boat ramp at 8:00 am.** Leaders – Stauffer Miller (434-296-5505 or stauffer@seepub.com) and Leigh Surdukowski.



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. John Zimmerman will lead the March 7, 2009 walk.

Pen Park Nature Trail Saturday, March 28

Join John Zimmerman on this easy hike on the Pen Park Nature Trail and the Dunlora bottoms. **Meet at 8:00 am at the head of the nature trail by Shelter #2 in the Pen Park picnic area.** Easy hike but moderate in length. Questions? Contact John at 434-974-9293 or jozim-mva@embarqmail.net

Birdwatching Binocular Show-and-Tell Saturday, April 9, 9 AM

After the bird walk, join members of the Monticello Bird Club in the Education Building to see and share in binocular "show and tell." Individuals are encouraged to show their own binoculars and to learn about various models currently available. Open to the public.

VSO Annual Meeting Fredericksburg, VA May 1-3, 2009

Hosted jointly by the Fredericksburg Birding Club and the University of Mary Washington, the Virginia Society of Ornithology's Annual Meeting will be held May 1-3 in Fredericksburg. Headquarters and staging location for all meeting activities will be Gari Melchers Home and Studio (GMHS).

Registration and exhibitor setup will begin at 4:00 PM on Friday, May 1. The official meeting hotel will be the Comfort Suites located at the intersection of I-95 and U.S. Route 17, a 5-min drive from meeting headquarters.

Friday night's business meeting will feature a short program by James Comiskey, Ph.D., Inventory and Monitoring Coordinator for the National Park Service Mid-Atlantic Network. Saturday morning's field trips will include such destinations as Crow's Nest, a pristine and biologically rich peninsula located on the Potomac River, Spotsylvania National Military Park, and Ferry Farm. For an extra fee, you may also register for a canoe trip on a gentle and scenic section of the Rapidan River which runs through high quality riparian habitat.

In keeping with Mary Washington's liberal arts tradition, the theme for Saturday night's banquet program will be "Birds as Inspiration for the Arts". It will showcase artistic works/performances by three distinguished UMW faculty who feature birds prominently in their creative works: Carole Garmon, MFA, Dept of Art and Art History, Craig Naylor, Ph.D., Dept of Music, and Claudia Emerson, Ph.D., Dept. of English, Linguistics, and Communication. All three are previous recipients of UMW's prestigious Outstanding Young Faculty Award, and Dr. Emerson was the winner of the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for poetry and was recently name Virginia's Poet Laureate by Gov. Tim Kaine.

For more information visit <http://virginiabirdsnet.umwblogs.org/>

MBC Minutes for February 12, 2009

MBC President Stauffer Miller called the meeting to order and reminded us that it was the 200th birthday anniversary of Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin. He mentioned the car break-in that occurred at the January meeting and noted the previous time this happened was December 2007. There were 53 people in attendance with several newcomers and guests of members.

Treasurer's Report: Henry Konat mentioned the Backyard Bird Count taking place on February 14-15. He reported the club's income for the period of \$10,472 and expenses at \$11,409, with a \$937 deficit. We have \$4,921 in the bank. Henry noted that renewals are still lagging and encouraged everyone to check their membership status.

Newsletter: Amy Gilmer plans to retire as newsletter editor after the June issue and will need a replacement beginning with the fall 2009 meetings.

Field Trips: John Zimmerman reminded members to check the newsletter for upcoming trips, which include an evening trip to Humpback Rock with Jenny Gaden to see Woodcocks, and a canoe trip down Beaver Creek Reservoir with Leigh Surdukowski. Theresa Shaner reported on the recent trip to Highland County that she experience with seven others. They saw Northern Harriers, Rough-legged Hawks, Kestrel, male Canvasback, two sub-adult Golden Eagles and they found the American Tree Sparrows. The trip was spectacular.

Land Management Booklets: Frank and Pat Wilczak brought extra copies of the revised second edition of "Managing Land in the Piedmont of Virginia for the Benefit of Birds

and Other Wildlife," produced by American Bird Conservancy, the Piedmont Environmental Council, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Frank reminded us that the Monticello Bird Club provided a financial contribution toward the creation of the booklet.

Recent Bird Sightings and Miscellaneous Announcements: Bill Leaning just returned from a trip to Thailand and as soon as he put out his feeders 25 Pine Siskins arrived. He also observed about 200 Cedar Waxwings and many Robins. Jenny Gaden reported a Red-headed Woodpecker in the woods near Whitehall and a Common Merganser. A male Red-wing Black Bird

was seen at a bird feeder. Two Great Horned Owls have been sighted in North Garden and on Garth Road. Leigh Surdukowski saw a smaller goose with pink bill swimming with Canada Geese at Beaver Creek. Theresa Shaner asked members to continue keeping bird lists for Charlottesville and Albemarle County, and submitting them for her and Leigh to compile. In 2008 there were 206 species reported. Lou Tanner mentioned an interesting article in the February 12 Washington Post about a bird study that is tracking the flight of Wood Thrush and Purple Martins with backpack transmitters, and found that these birds migrate over 11,500 miles.

--Peggy Cornett, Secretary

National Geographic Field Guides — Jonathan Alderfer on Birding Essentials Sat. March 21st, 2009 2:00 PM



A writer and illustrator of birding guides, Jonathan Alderfer (*National Geographic Guide to the Birds of Eastern North America*) discusses the art--with original paintings--and science of creating a birding field guide.

Jonathan Alderfer, National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern North America, writes and illustrates books on bird identification. Most recently, he co-edited two new field guides for National Geographic, on birds of the Eastern U.S and of the Western U.S.

Moderator: Allen Hale

**Location: Blue Ridge Mountain Sports
1125 Emmet Street
(434) 977-4400**