



Monticello Bird Club

November 2010

Volume 27, Number 3

Comments From the President

I can only reiterate Stauffer's call for a loud and very public thank you to Jenny Gaden for her extraordinary work on the Annotated Checklist. Many things simply happen. This is not one of them. Without her devoting innumerable hours of her own time, this excellent little addition to the local twitcher scene would not now be enriching all our birding lives. And on top of that comes the effort going in to maintaining the data base. It is all quite amazing. Thank you again, Jenny.

I recently read somewhere that the author found it odd that one could be interested in both Natural History and History (human). And that struck me as odd because to my mind they have long seemed like two sides of the same coin. Getting out to different landscapes in search of the feathered ones helps me (I like to think) visualize more easily how people lived in years past while knowing something about the human side of things makes me more and more curious about how our ancestors' actions helped alter the world we now see. The two hobbies reinforce each other. I heartily disagree with that writer.

Apart from that, it has been a great October. How could it not be? Even a comparatively dry run of a trip is time well-spent. As any birder knows, there are always a few pleasant surprises and maybe even a stunner or two.

And in closing—for those who are Netflixers—a Swedish documentary called Kestrel's Eye is a treat even for those not particularly sold on nature films. We saw it recently and were transfixed. Check it out.

Lou Tanner

November Meeting Program

Nightjars to be Topic of November 11th Meeting.

Nightjars, represented in Albemarle County and area by the Whip-poor-will, Chuck-will's-widow and Common Nighthawk, are enigmatic, hard-to-study birds. Little is known of their habitat requirements and population density. In recent years, conservationists and the general public have come to the general sense that nightjar populations are declining. Birders and non-birders alike often comment about how infrequently nowadays they hear the once familiar nocturnal call of the Whip-poor-will. What is happening with the nightjars, and what can be done to reverse their disturbing downward trend in population? Mike Wilson of the College of William and Mary's Center for Conservation Biology will discuss the nightjars, and issues surrounding them, at the November 11th meeting of the bird club. Hope to see you there.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

November 11th at 7:00 p.m.

Nightjars

December 9th at 7:00 p.m.

To be announced

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Speaker's Dinner Site Change

In the interest of trying something a little different, we will have our speaker's dinners of November 11th and henceforward at La Cocina del Sol Restaurant, on the lower level of Village Green Shopping Plaza, Commonwealth and Hydraulic Roads, in Charlottesville. Besides offering excellent food, La Cocina del Sol is conveniently located on the road to Ivy Creek.

In that Ellie and I will be in Ecuador during the November 11th meeting, Ruth Carmines has kindly agreed to serve as hostess for our dinner at La Cocina del Sol. Since this, our first dinner at this restaurant, may increase the usual attendance at these dinners, I would suggest e-mailing Ruth at rcarmines.is@gmail.com to let her know you are coming. Stauffer Miller

Monticello Bird Club

Techniques for Bird Photography
 Dr. Marshall Faintich
 Friday, November 12 1:00 -2:30 p.m.
 Covenant Church of God
 1025 East Rio Road

Learn how to photograph the birds around you so that you may enjoy them throughout the year. From photographing a common species of bird at your feeder to recording a rare avian visitor, knowing your birds and how to use your camera for bird photography can make the difference between a throw-away shot and one that you might frame and display in your home or office. Dr. Marshall Faintich's presentation will focus on local birds and photographic techniques; no knowledge or experience in either is required to attend.

Dr. Faintich describes himself as an astronomer by training (Ph.D. from the University of Illinois), a cartographer by trade, and a student of numismatics, archaeology and history. He is the official photographer and senior birding editor for the Rockfish Valley trail. His book **A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Wintergreen** can be purchased online or in local bookstores. He will be happy to sign any copies brought to the presentation.

To attend this free OLLI Special Presentation, register by email at olliuva@virginia.edu or call the OLLI office at 434-923-3600 or 877-861-9207 toll free.

The Way Forward

Many of you have by now obtained a copy of the Albemarle County Annotated Checklist book. Those of us who worked on it hope you are enjoying it. We also hope that as you note various species, you refer to the book to see if those birds are early or late for the season, in unusual number etc. If that is what you do with the book, then you are doing precisely what we, the authors, hoped for it.

What, however, of bird observations made *after* the book's publication date of September 2010? By what means do we go forward? Jenny Gaden and Dave Hogg have put considerable thought into this matter and have come up with what they think is the best path down which to proceed. Acting on the ideas of Patrick Toomey, a newcomer to the area, and happily both a birder and bird data devotee, the bird club will purchase a special software package (for around \$140) for maintaining the old records covered in the book and new ones that will be occurring post-September 2010. These records will be placed into a database administered by Jenny. This message here is mostly an alert as to what is coming. For now, save your bird records by whatever means you wish. When Jenny and her new software are operational, she will notify us. Good birding—and good record-keeping!
 Stauffer Miller

Bird Club Information

The Monticello Bird Club meets 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 December issue is 8:00 a.m. November 27.** Please email information to Doug Rogers at MBCNEWS@embarqmail.com or send to 1065 Weybridge Ct. # 304, Charlottesville, VA 22911.

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Chincoteague NWR & Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel
November 19-21, 2010

Join field trip leader Dave Hogg on a visit to this birding hot spot. Meet at the south end of CBBT in the administration parking lot at 9:45am on Friday, November 19, 2010.

The visit to CBBT islands is limited to 15 persons with prior submission of information sheet for security clearance. Information can be downloaded from www.cbbt.com/birding.html or can be obtained from Dave Hogg at the October meeting (or request by phone or e-mail), but must be returned to Dave by November 5 to be mailed to the CBBT. Depending on the number of participants there will be a fee of about \$10/person payable at the time of the trip to the CBBT.

You must also present a picture ID (e.g. driver's license) to the security officer. If you do not choose to do the CBBT, meet at Visitors Center, Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge between 12:30 and 1:00 pm.

Reservations for Chincoteague for the nights of November 19 and 20 can be made at the Island Motor Inn (757-336-3141). Mention that you are with the Monticello Bird Club for the group rate of \$92.00/night. 3 day prior cancellation limit.

Beaver Creek Lake
Western Albemarle

Saturday, November 13, 2010 at 7:30 a.m.

Meet the trip leader Dave Hogg at Beaver Creek Lake. After checking the lake for waterfowl we will explore others of the ponds in the area (Old Trail, Lake Albemarle, King Family Vineyard, or Mint Spring) depending upon which of the sites have been active during the preceding days.

The trip will be focused on waterfowl, but we can hope for sparrows and other wintering species. For more information contact Dave at (434) 974-7592.

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.

Please join us on November 6, 2010.

A special thanks to Kaki Pearson and Karen Anderson for their invaluable contributions to the Newsletter this month!
Doug Rogers

2010 Christmas Bird Count

The 2010 Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count will take place on Sunday, December 19. Mark your calendars now and details will appear in the December newsletter.

Monticello Bird Club Meeting, 14 October 2010

Club president Lou Tanner began the meeting by welcoming two newcomers. There were 30 people present.

Treasurer Henry Konat was not at the meeting, so Lou gave the financial report. As of October 4th the club's income was \$2,124 and expenses were \$2,828 resulting in a \$704 deficit. The club has \$10,170 in the bank.

Dave Hogg announced the upcoming field trips and gave details about the November overnight trip to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and Chincoteague Island. Members who plan to attend must first submit forms in order to obtain clearance. There will be a hired guide from the CBB authority.

Lou Tanner, speaking on behalf of the Ivy Creek education coordination, announced that ICF has recently lost 12 school group leaders and is in dire need of volunteers interesting in being trained as tour leaders. Training takes place on Tuesdays. Contact ICF if interested.

The Bird Seed Sale co-coordinators Jim Hill and Jim Nix were not at the meeting. Dave Hogg gave their report. Sign-up sheets are available for volunteers to (1) process orders and load cars and (2) make phone calls prior to the sale reminding those who have made orders about the pick-up date and location.

Jenny Gaden reported on the newly published checklist and encouraged members to keep good records. The club hopes to create a centralized database system that will maintain future updates and additions to the current list.

Bird Sightings during the past month were shared. Peter Dutnell saw a Black-billed Cuckoo and Red-headed Woodpecker near his home in North Garden. Nancy Newman reported seeing a Pine Warbler at Preddy Creek. A Female Evening Grosbeak has been sighted in the Fry Springs area. Apparently White-throated Sparrows are arriving earlier this year by two weeks, according to the checklist. Dave Hogg watched an Olive-sided Flycatcher and Lincoln's Sparrow in Crozet. Peggy Cornett described an episode at Monticello where a Red-tailed Hawk was stalking a very distressed squirrel that was clinging to the side of a tree. Lou Tanner saw a Cooper's Hawk checking out the chickens he keeps in the Belmont neighborhood. He also watched a flock of around a thousand Chimney Swifts near the Monticello Hotel in downtown Charlottesville. Evelyn Stevens saw a Cardinal having an aerial battle with a large praying mantis.

Submitted by Peggy Cornett, secretary

Excerpt from *The New Yorker* July 26, 2010 page 48

There is an on-going annual decimation of migratory birds by hunters and poachers in southern Europe. Blackcaps, one of Europe's most common warblers, are the traditional national delicacy on Cyprus, where they're known as *ambelopoulia*. They are the main target of Cypriot trappers, but the by-catch of other species is enormous: rare shrikes, other warblers, larger birds like cuckoos and golden orioles, even small owls and hawks. On the island, all forms of songbird trapping have been criminal offenses since 1974. By the mid-nineties, as many as ten million songbirds a year were being killed in Cyprus. To meet the restaurant demand, traditional lime-stick trapping had been augmented by large-scale netting operations, and the Cypriot government, which was trying to clean up its act and win membership in the European Union, cracked down hard on the netters. By 2006, the annual take had fallen to around a million. In the past few years, however, with Cyprus now a member of the E.U., the number of active trapping sites is rising.

In Malta, the most savagely bird-hostile place in Europe, the Maltese shoot bee-eaters, hoopoes, golden orioles, shearwaters, storks, and herons. Maltese hunters, who argue that the country is too small to make a meaningful dent in European bird populations, fiercely resent what they see as foreign interference in their "tradition."

Article by Jonathan Franzen