



Monticello Bird Club

November 2015 Newsletter

Website: www.monticellobirdclub.org

Volume 30

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

Issue 3

MBC Monthly Meeting—Thursday, November 12th at 7:00pm

at **Ivy Creek Natural Area**—Education Building

Comments from the President

Doug Rogers



I feel like a child waiting for Santa to arrive. Several things – important to the life of our Club – are in the works, and the outcomes are uncertain: Our Club project – the youth poster contest, *Bird Conservation: Understanding the Threats; Finding the Solution*, has been launched. At this point we don't have a handle on how well it is progressing. Our annual Bird Seed Sale has been launched and orders are coming in. While we remain optimistic, we are not yet comfortable that we will hit our goal. We do have a dedicated Team working hard to make it happen! Membership renewals have been coming in at a brisk pace, but we have more work to do there too.

And last, but not least, there is the issue of the Ragged Mountain Natural Area (RMNA). There are strong and organized forces working to turn the RMNA into a multi-use area that allows off-leash dogs, mountain biking, jogging trails and such.

Last night (10/19) I spoke at the City Council meeting and made my plea for keeping the RMNA as it currently is – a “natural area.” Others, of similar mind, also spoke in favor of keeping it as is. Our voices were not unopposed; the mountain bikers and others spoke passionately about opening up the RMNA to the multi-use concept.

At the end of the meeting there was some confusion, with a couple of competing motions. What they seemed to resolve was to stop trail building until a more thorough biological survey and planning process could be completed. Things were put on hold for now, and the issue will come up for more review later.

Please get involved. Let your voice be heard – whichever side you support. This is an important piece of real estate, and those of us who would like it to remain a true “natural area” should stay on top of this issue as it evolves.

Good birding!

Programs

Lou Tanner



Topic: *All Things Newfoundland*

Speaker: *Henry and Becky Wilbur*



The November meeting will feature as speakers what must be one of the best teams anywhere in natural history. Henry Wilbur, Professor Emeritus of Biology at U.Va., and wife Becky, with whom I am fortunate to teach, will be giving a slide show and talk about everything in Newfoundland based on a trip they took there last June. Henry is an expert in particular on amphibians while Becky has a Ph.D. in Botany. That only scratches the surface of their interests and expertise, however. I can attest from walks and talks over the years at Mt. Lake, the Outer Banks, and around central Va. in general that they are extraordinary guides to anything at all you might encounter in the great outdoors. Between them, they know everything worth knowing about snout beetles, mushrooms, salamanders, constellations, western Va., small and otherwise unremarkable plants, geological processes, canoeing, and more. Oh yes, and birds. I am a fan. Please come to the Brick Oven on Thursday, November 12th, at 5:30 and make their acquaintance before moseying over to Ivy Creek for the show.

December's meeting will feature a talk by Gary Norman, leader of a Forest Game Bird Project dedicated to restoring habitat for Ruffed Grouse in particular. He is a wildlife biologist with the Va. Division of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) and will talk also about broader issues relating to forestry in Va.

First Saturday Bird Walk

November 7th 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 2015

Sept 5...Tom Jones

Oct. 3 Leigh Surdukowski

Nov. 7 ... Peter Brask

Dec. 5 ... Dave Hogg

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
Jenny Gaden

Editor's Note: Jenny is taking a three month hiatus from her "Birding Tidbits" column. David White has graciously volunteered to contribute a Tidbit of his own in her stead. For this issue, you will find his piece in the "Joy of Birding" section of the Newsletter (page 6).

However, here's a different sort of "tidbit" from Jenny in her role as Count Compiler for the annual Christmas Bird Count. She wants us to know that **Sunday, December 13** is the date of this year's **Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count**. More details will follow in the December issue of the Newsletter.

If you are a seasoned counter or a novice who would like to learn more about this important, annual, citizen science project, follow this link to the [National Audubon Society website](#), where a wealth of information about the CBC resides. Hope you will choose to volunteer for this year's count.

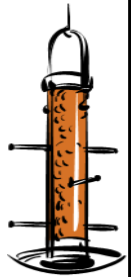


Last Minute Bird Seed Sale Reminder

John Holden

Thanks for supporting our annual Fundraiser.
Just in case you forgot,
you may still place your order at [our website](#)
through **Monday, Oct. 26.**

We look forward to loading up your
trucks and trunks with seed on
Pick Up Day, Saturday, November 7.
(Can't pick up that day? — I'll deliver!)



Field Trips

Gabriel Mapel



Panorama Farm in Earlysville

Date: Sunday, November 8th

Meeting Place & Time: 8am in the
Ivy Creek Parking Lot

Leader: Stauffer Miller
stauffer@seepub.com
434-296-5505

We will meet in the Ivy Creek Parking Lot and car-pool from there the short distance to the farm entrance. First will be a walk in the composting area of the farm, and then a walk to a pond. This trip has to be on a Sunday, as heavy equipment is in operation at the farm on other days.

Lindy Bain Loop Trail

Date: Saturday, November 21st

Meeting Place & Time: 7:30am at Grit Coffee
1110 Old Trail Drive, Crozet

Leader: Chris Murray
amarumayo@gmail.com

Chris Murray will lead us on a trip to the Lindy Bain Loop Trail in the Old Trail subdivision in Crozet. This is a very good birding area and this will be our first ever organized field trip there. We will hope to find a variety of species and end up with a morning's trip list approaching 40 species — which would be an impressive mid-November total.

Treasurer's Notes

Maynard K. Davis

If you've had trouble using our online PayPal payment function, you're not alone. Many of us who use Internet Explorer have encountered a software problem accessing PayPal.

We think the problem has now been fixed. If you still have trouble, please let me or Kathy Sudduth know. (Contact info can be found on the final page of this newsletter.)

Thanks for your patience.

Maynard



Membership Notes

Lesslie Crowell

We extend a warm welcome to new members Elizabeth Wilson, Michael McQueen & family, Amy Neale, Melissa & Ross Gallardy, Jonathan Gendzier, JoAnn Dalley, Kate Asquith & family, Pamela Bartlett, and Dorothy & Tommy Clark.

A grateful thank you goes to additional Sponsors: Judith & John Lane, Carroll & Bob Gilges, Rob Capon, Julie Russell & Phillip Ianna, Stephanie & Lou Tanner, and Mike Iwanik & Vickie Gullet. Also much appreciated are Contributing members and all who have renewed or upgraded their memberships. We hope to have our fall membership drive and all renewals completed by Nov. 1.

Lesslie



MBC Board Meeting Minutes, October 8, 2015

Peggy Cornett



-**Doug Rogers** opened the meeting and welcomed newcomers. There were thirty-five in attendance.

-**Bird sightings** were reported: Lou Tanner heard a Barred Owl at the UVA library, probably in one of the Pavilion Gardens. Barred Owls and Screech Owls have been heard in Dunlora subdivision, where John Holden heard a Great-horned Owl squabbling with a Barred Owl.

-**Dan Bieker** announced an upcoming city council meeting that will decide the fate of public trail use at Ragged Mountain Natural Area (RMNA). In the late 1990s the Ivy Creek Foundation raised a lot of money to fund the creation of RMNA to be maintained as a preserve for birds, wildlife, and native flora. Now the City of Charlottesville has taken over management and wants to open the park to mountain bikers, joggers, and dog walkers. Dan encouraged bird club members to voice opposition to this new proposal by attending the public meeting on Monday, October 26, 7 PM and/or emailing the board of supervisors.

-**Mary Mapel** reported on the Blue Ridge Young Birders Club poster contest that MBC is sponsoring. She asked that we spread the word about this project, which is open to students from K-8. The deadline for poster submissions is November 21 and a reception for the project participants will be held Sunday, December 6 at 2 PM in the Education Building at Ivy Creek.

-**John Holden** reported on bird seed sales. This year we have good pricing on the seed and the deadline is coming soon.

-**Lesslie Crowell** reported on membership. Late renewals are due by November 1. So far we have ninety-three individual members, sixteen sponsors, fifteen contributing, and twenty-one families.

-**The Afton Mountain Hawk Watch** celebration is Saturday, October 10, 11 AM-2 PM.

-Doug gave a brief **treasury report** for Maynard Davis, who was out of town. The club is on budget but membership renewals are needed.

-**Gabriel Mapel** gave the field trips report. Two trips are scheduled in October: Rockfish Valley Trail on the 17th with Janet Paisley to see migrating warblers; Riverview Park/Rivanna Trail on the 31st with Leigh Surdukowski to see sparrows.

-**Stauffer Miller** recently acquired bird records that had been kept by Warren Cloud from 1943 to 1958. Stauffer shared excerpts of some amazing observations that Mr. Cloud made at his backyard bird feeder, including large numbers of Northern Bobwhite and Eastern Meadowlark. He also noted "Bull Bats," a term for Common Nighthawks.

-**An Ivy Creek Foundation board member** thanked the members of MBC for supporting ICF over the years. Currently they are getting their trail maps back in sync. The warbler trail, initiated by Jenny Gaden in years past, will be named the "South Field Trail."

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Remembering Mo Stevens and Francis Fife

by Dan Bieker

This seems to be the season of passing for heroes of the birding community, as well as the community at large. Sadly, the past few weeks have seen the loss of two of the best: Mo Stevens and Francis Fife.

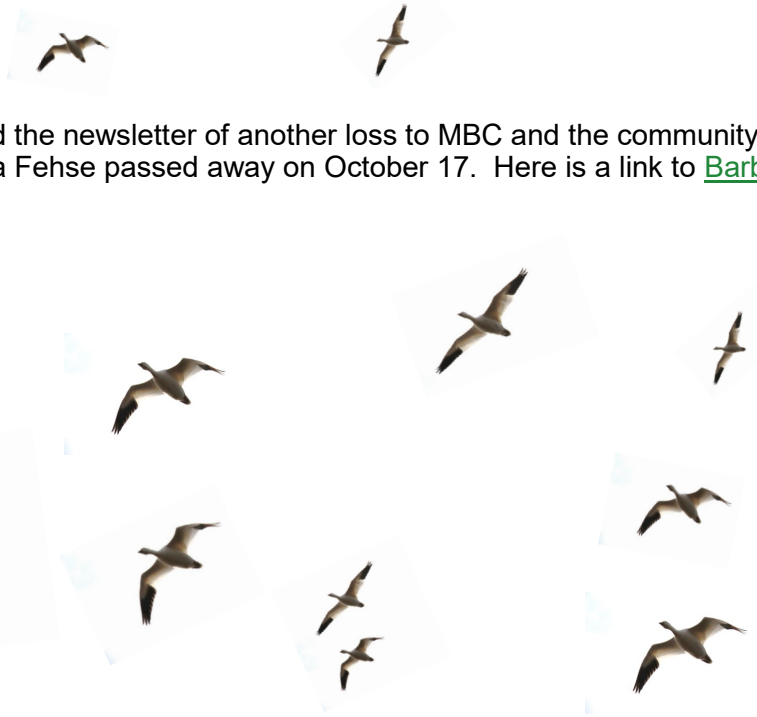
Although his academic training was in engineering, Mo's self-taught knowledge of plants and birds was without equal, and he has long been recognized as one of the leading botanists and ornithologists in the state. Reports and records of rare birds in this area over the past eight decades are overwhelmingly attributable to Mo, as well as records of rare plant species. His heyday was before the digital age, but the database of information stuffed in his notebooks would dwarf most hard drives. His house was a veritable library — books stacked everywhere with leaf and flower specimens pressed between the pages. Before computers, if you wanted to report a sighting or thought you might have an early or late arrival of a bird, you'd call Mo. Thumbing through a notebook, he'd quickly affirm if you had a record or note — it seemed a more intimate connection to the natural world than a cold computer screen can often be. Mo was a quiet man, always friendly, and someone who loved to get out and roam. His veracity and expertise as a field naturalist will forever be legendary.

Francis Fife, on the other hand, was at home in the public arena. A deft politician, former mayor, activist — the accolades are endless. Many in the birding community remember Francis as the perennial host of post-Christmas and Spring Count dinners. All through his public life, and later behind the scene in retirement, he was a tireless advocate for the environment, the homeless, and efficient government. The epitome of a gentleman, he could navigate the intricacies of government and party politics like few ever could. And Francis loved to talk birds. Already an accomplished birder, he was a student in the inaugural ornithology class offered by PVCC in 1985. In the late 70's he was a driving force in the establishment of Ivy Creek Natural Area, and again in the mid 90's for Ragged Mountain Natural Area. His home off Cherry Avenue is a nature preserve in itself. I will forever remember Francis as a politician who understood the concept of a natural area as a place where the needs of nature took precedent over human activity. A true champion has passed and will not be forgotten.

Editor's Note: Here are links to the "Daily Progress" obituaries for [Mo Stevens](#) and [Francis Fife](#). MBC's "Annotated Checklist" is dedicated to Mo. A PDF of the checklist resides at our website. If you scroll down to pages 6 & 7 of the PDF, you can see a picture of Mo and read the [Dedication](#), beautifully written by our own Stauffer Miller.

And Yet another Loss...

Ron Kingston and Peggy Cornett notified the newsletter of another loss to MBC and the community. MBC's former president (1995-96) Barbara Fehse passed away on October 17. Here is a link to [Barbara's obituary](#) in the "Daily Progress."



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

Bill Leaning

Graemont West Bluebird Trail

Our home for 13 years in Stirling, NJ, was across the road from the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. We walked and birded the trails whenever time permitted. One of the interesting programs was the positive impact nest boxes had on the Wood Duck and Eastern Bluebird populations in the refuge.

When we moved into our house in Earlysville in 1998, we called it "The Place of Birds" or "Omanu" in the NZ Maori language. One of our first tasks was to join the Monticello Bird Club. Among the welcoming members was Ron Kingston who told me I had a near neighbor who was also a retired veterinarian, but not only that, he was known as "The Bluebird Man of Albemarle".



The 85 acre Graemont West Development was a little more than a mile from Bob Hammond's house and he said we should fill this "nest box void" as soon as possible. The 1998 nesting season was my "internship." I travelled with Bob on several occasions to learn how to monitor a nest box trail. He built six nest boxes for me and suggested where they should be positioned. In 1999, we fledged 27 bluebirds and 5 tree swallows. Bob used an "elderly" golf cart to monitor his county-wide nest box trail. When it came time to sell his Mallard Lake property, he bequeathed the golf cart to me, and it is still going strong (several replacement batteries later!) each nesting season.

I am indebted to the late, Bob Hammond for his enthusiastic support of our wish to start a blue bird trail and his patience and technical advice when we were getting started.

The initial six nest boxes have grown to 32 with half of them paired with 15 foot spacing to allow both blue birds and tree swallows to nest without interference. In the 17 years since we started the Graemont West Nest Box Trail, we have fledged 1,158 bluebirds, 594 Tree Swallows, 191 chickadees and 38 titmice. A very gratifying experience. *Bill*



Outer Banks Celebration

by David White

My first two weeks of October were spent at an ocean front home on North Carolina's Outer Banks, a locale that has excited my birding energies for a number of decades. This occasion, however, was elicited by celebration of 50 years of our marriage of which at least 17 years have been the best years of my wife's life, according to her. This also meant that these two weeks were designed to be spent in the company of close friends and relatives who were slated to rotate through the doors of our rental over the fortnight. This and the effects of Hurricane Joaquin had a definite impact on my birding activity although all visitors certainly understood this long-standing affliction of mine.



A single **Northern Pintail** (no plethora here)
Photo by Doug Rogers

So, for the most part, "passive birding" became the condition under which I operated as I did my best to pay due attention to both my social and my avian environments. I did manage to take several bird-oriented field trips, occasionally in the company of an interested family member or a friend. Almost mandatory was a trip down to the refuge at Pea Island with a stop along the way at the Bodie Island Lighthouse area; this was undertaken in the calmer days following the departure of Joaquin and was highlighted by views of a Dickcissel, a Reddish Egret, several Caspian Terns, a lone White Ibis, a small gathering of Shovelers, a plethora of Northern Pintails and an audible Clapper Rail.

Several shorter trips up to Duck and it's new (to me) soundside, off-shore boardwalk, were also productive, not so much for shorebirds but for the passerines which were active in the grasses along the protected beach line there. Apparently, this boardwalk has become a favorite haunt of local birders; almost immediately I encountered binocular-laden, field guide-toting folks among the strollers and dog walkers there. I also encountered several American Redstarts, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, a Blue Grosbeak, a couple of Indigo Buntings, a Hooded Warbler, and a Common Yellowthroat as well as several Tree Swallows, Forster's and Royal Terns, a Pied-billed Grebe and an amenable Great Blue Heron.

"Our" house, although ocean front, was protected somewhat by a grass and sea oat covered dune that sat between the house and the ocean. Upon the high point of this "barrier dune" sat a 16' x 16' deck with benches which commanded a closer look of the ocean and the beach and where many a cup of morning coffee was consumed while awaiting the sunrise (again, post-Joaquin) and marveling at the Brown Pelicans and assorted gulls as they mastered the ever-present winds and stiff breezes that were virtually a constant condition. Aside from Sanderlings and Willets, an occasional Osprey and the squatting Ring-billed, Laughing and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, the beach was devoid of species such as turnstones and plovers. Late one afternoon, however, in the very brisk breezes, a Peregrine Falcon did waft its way over us, perhaps 20' overhead, and hovered and held, and hovered and held, giving us the gift of a prolonged and intimate visit.



A trio of **Sanderlings**
Photo by Doug Rogers

On our last day, a most glorious calm and warm day, as we cleaned and packed and readied our belongings, ourselves and our memories for the trip back to our Charlottesville home, we were afforded the pleasure of being surrounded by hundreds of southbound Tree Swallows as they coursed by us on all sides, often at eye level, another reminder of the changing season that is upon us. As we pulled onto the road a lone Cooper's Hawk swooped over, perhaps a cousin of our neighborhood Cooper's at home, reminding us that our birds at home also needed our attention.



Eve Gaige sent in this incredible photo of an aerial encounter between two **Juvenile Bald Eagles**. Whether it's battle, ballet, or just play, there's no denying it's another of Eve's fabulous shots!



So much information, so little time...
Follow these links to articles that your fellow birding enthusiasts recommend.

From **Janet Paisley** — Cornell Lab of Ornithology continues to offer new opportunities for expanding our knowledge of birds and birding at their [Bird Academy](#) website.

From **Burnie Davis** — A recent article from the Daily Progress describes a [new research aviary being built at Virginia Tech](#) to keep it competitive with other wildlife research institutions.

From **Joanne Bricker** — Here is a positive story from St. Louis, MO, about a coordinated [business, government, and agricultural effort to promote monarch butterfly habitat](#).

David White and his wife were not the only ones to head for the coast to catch some migrating shorebirds this fall. Doug Rogers and Joanne Bricker recently visited Mathews County, VA, and Doug captured some great photos below.



Black-bellied Plover



Laughing Gull



Semipalmated Plover



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 Earlysville Rd, 1/2 mile north of Hydraulic Rd.

The editor of the **MBC Newsletter** welcome submissions, including articles, photographs and notices.
DEADLINE for each issue is **9:00AM on the 20th** of the month.

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