



Monticello Bird Club

September 2005

Volume 20, Number 1

September Meeting Topic

Birds of Prey in Hampton Roads

Having banded more than 15,000 raptors in his lifetime, Reese Lukei, Jr. is well-qualified to discuss “Birds of Prey in the Hampton Roads Area” at our first meeting after the long, hot summer. On September 8, Mr. Lukei will offer a slide presentation that will focus not only on raptor identification but will take a look at the world of raptors—their habits and habitat, population levels, food sources, and where and when to go to observe birds of prey. He will also talk about raptor re-introduction programs, current research projects, and tell stories about raptor rescue efforts.



Speaker Reese Lukei and a Red-tailed Hawk.

Division and is a volunteer research associate for The Center for Conservation Biology at The College of William and Mary. For the past 15 years he has operated a raptor banding station during the fall migration at Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge. Please join

and our speaker for dinner at Wild Greens Restaurant in the North Wing of Barracks Road Shopping Center at 5:30 pm prior to the meeting.

Hot Topics for Future Meetings

October 13: Chris Bolgiano

Environmentalist and self-described “mildly amusing author,” Chris Bolgiano will explore the mythology and factual evidence surrounding the elusive Eastern Cougar in Virginia.

November 10: Bill Williams

Dr. Williams will discuss the biology and breeding population status of colonial and beach-nesting water birds on the Virginia barrier islands.

December 8: Jeff Trollinger

Mr. Trollinger is a wildlife biologist who helped coordinate the recently-completed Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. He’ll provide an update of that project.

Reese Lukei has over 25 years experience in trapping and banding raptors in Hampton Roads. He is licensed by the U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resources

Comments From the President

As always, it seems that the summer flies by as swiftly as a hummingbird zips across our deck. It won’t be long before we notice that only the male remains at our feeders as the females and young will have left for the tropics. Enjoy while we may the lazy song of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo somewhere in the distance, the occasional early morning music of the Wood Thrush, the twitters of the Chimney Swifts as they soar and swoop overhead and a last view of the Red-eyed Vireo as it moves quietly through the treetops. Soon these birds will be gone – just like the summer of 2005.

During this period your Board has not been idle. Our program committee has a full slate of speakers for the year – the first time in my memory

when this has been accomplished by August 1. The field trip schedule is also largely planned; trips are close to home and further afield, including many of our old favorites as well as some new destinations. Our birdseed sale is planned for November 12, and as you can see the newsletter is looking great once again. Whatever it is that you enjoy as a member of the Monticello Bird Club is due to the volunteer efforts of fellow-members. The more help we get, the more vibrant the club will be. Please don’t be afraid to jump right in. I’m looking forward to seeing you again on September 8, and am anticipating another fine year with the club.

—Jennifer Gaden, President

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HEADS UP!

**Monticello Bird Club Annual Birdseed Sale
will take place**

Saturday, November 12, 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

at

Southern Select Produce

(located at the rear entrance of Shoppers World Shopping Center,
across from Fashion Square Mall on Route 29)



Deadline for Birdseed Orders is October 28.



**For more information contact Howard Davis
434-964-1242 or howardsuedavis@juno.com.**



***Watch for the MBC Birdseed Order Form
in October's newsletter.***

Mmmmmm, mmmm Munchy Mantis Meal



Photographer Brenda Tekin staked out the nest of this White-eyed Vireo in Southside Virginia. She observed nest-building, incubation, and the birth of two hatchlings. She lucked out when one of the adults returned to feed a Praying Mantis meal to the youngsters.

Bird Club Key Info

The Monticello Bird Club normally meets at 7:30 p.m. 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 November issue is October 27.** Please email information to Nancy King at turnermtn@mindspring.com or send to P.O. Box 22, Ivy, VA 22945.



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Please visit our website at
www.ecoventures-travel.com/mbc

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Upcoming Field Trips Roam Near and Far

VSO Chincoteague Trip September 16-18

A weekend at Chincoteague will start off our fall birding season. The headquarters for this trip is the Refuge Motor Inn (757-336-5511). VSO rate is \$81.75. There *may* be some rooms left by newsletter publication date but other motels can be used. Evening program Friday night at the Refuge Inn will review shorebird identification and provide details for Saturday field trips. There will be no boat trip or tour of the wash flats this year. Sunday field trips will be a repeat of Saturday's. All participants on Saturday will be members of the Jerry's Fledglings team involved in the annual Kiptopeke Challenge for the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. Questions? Contact John Zimmerman at 974-9293 or jozimmva@aol.com



You may see a red-billed American Oystercatcher at Chincoteague!
Photo: Peter Wallack "Birds of Sanibel."

Ivy Creek Natural Area Saturday, October 1

Peter Brask leads the First Saturday Bird Walk. **Meet in the Ivy Creek parking lot at 7:30 am.** This is a great trip for beginners and old-hands, alike! Questions? Contact Peter Brask at 823-2363.

Appalachian Trail & Little Calf Mountain Saturday, September 24

Put on your hiking shoes and join Peter Brask for a 2-3 mile moderately difficult walk along the Appalachian Trail starting at Beagle Gap (milepost 99.5) and ending up on top of Little Calf Mountain. We'll look for migrating warblers along the Trail and there's a good view-point to check out hawks on Little Calf Mountain.

Meet at the Afton Inn parking lot. Take I-64 west to Exit 99 (22 miles west of Charlottesville). Turn right on U-S 250 and take the first right. Just before the intersection with Skyline Drive, take a right at Rte. 610 and you will see Afton Inn on your right. **We will depart Afton Inn at 9:00 am.** This is the perfect trip for those who like to sleep in! Bring water and a snack. We should return at about noon. Questions? Contact Peter Brask at 823-2363.

"Sparrow Road" & More! Saturday, October 15

John Zimmerman will lead this popular trip in search of sparrows as well as any other migrant passerines we happen upon. Besides the aptly-named Sparrow Road, the trip will include stops at Beaver Creek Reservoir and Mint Spring Valley Park. This is easy roadside bird-watching.

Meet at Seminole Square in the Giant parking lot at 7:00 am and expect to return about noon. Questions? Contact John Zimmerman at 974-9293 or jozimmva@aol.com

James River at Scottsville Saturday, October 1

Jim Nix will be our fearless leader on this walk along the James River at Scottsville. Expect to see a variety of riparian birds, including migrant warblers and sparrows. The walk should be mostly level for about 2 miles but it will be necessary to cross over the levy between the parking lot and the James River, and the river side of the levy is rocky.

Meet at the parking lot behind the school in Scottsville at 7:00 am. Take Rte.20 south to Scottsville and turn right at the last street before the bridge across the James River. Continue to a "T" intersection and turn left (toward the river). This street ends in a short distance; the parking lot will be on the right between the school and the river. Questions? Contact Jim Nix at 973-7366 or jnix@cstone.net.

NOTE NEW RULES! NEW RULES!

CBBT & Eastern Shore November 18-20

Because of new security rules, it will be necessary to provide security information for every member who plans to bird the CBBT, as well as a fee to cover the cost of a mandatory security guard to accompany us at \$50/ hour. **There is a limit of 15 participants for the CBBT. Forms to be filled out will be available at the September and October MBC meetings to be returned to John Zimmerman ASAP.** If you choose not to do the CBBT (or sign-up after the limit is reached) we will establish a meeting time at the Visitors Center, Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge at the north end of the CBBT. More details on this trip will be in the October and November newsletters.

Gardening for Wildlife: Eupatoriums

Sitting on the front porch needing a little inspiration for an article for the newsletter, I was enjoying the hummingbirds feeding at the cardinal flower blooms. I have written about cardinal flowers. Then, I noticed scores of Tiger Swallowtail butterflies all over the Joe-Pye Weed. The Eupatorium genus contains some wonderful butterfly magnets. They are medium-size to towering perennials with large, showy clusters of

small flower heads at the tops of leafy stems.

JOE-PYE WEED. *Eupatorium purpureum* is native to the eastern United States, an imposing plant of damp meadows. With a height of 5-9 feet and a spread of 2-4 feet, this is no plant for small gardens. Dusty rose to pinkish purple flowers appear in large dome-shaped clusters in late summer and persist into the autumn. It's a good bee

plant and very attractive to butterflies including swallowtails, fritillaries, buck-eyes, Monarch, Painted Lady, Red Admiral and sulphurs. The seeds, if left, are eaten by sparrows and finches. The native range is stream banks and marshy areas or moist sunny meadows. The Eupatoriums have become popular in wild gardens and restored meadows and they are valued perennials in a more ordered garden as taller background plants. They can be cut back after the flowers fade and induced to flower, again. Clumps can be divided in the spring or fall. They do

David Sibley Canoes the Cache River In Search of "THE Woodpecker"

Excerpted from "The Arkansas Times" by Leslie Newell Peacock 6/9/2005

David Allen Sibley, the artist and ornithologist whose field guides travel with virtually every birdwatcher who goes beyond his feeders, jumped in his camper and drove to Arkansas a week after the announcement of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's re-discovery. He called it a "scouting trip," the first of many. The soft-spoken expert is considered by many to be the Roger Tory Peterson of the current generation

National Geographic and Peterson guides include the bird. Why did Sibley leave it out?

"I wrestled with it," he said. But the bird hadn't been documented in decades; in the end, he decided, if he were to include rare birds, it would be those one might actually see. "I didn't want to *think* it was extinct," he added.

Motoring a canoe up the Cache River May 5, the keen-eyed Sibley called out the species flitting about and directed attention to their nests. He followed an egg-yellow prothonotary warbler into a small hole in a tree, a blue-gray gnatcatcher's to his little lichen-covered nest, a mere bump on a limb. When a brown bird darted from one bank to the other, Sibley uttered quietly, "gray-cheeked thrush." That's a bird that mere mortals don't call on the wing.

After an hour in the swamp, Sibley was anxious to start searching on foot. The Cache's "hot zone" is not where the bird lives, Sibley said (echoing Team Elvis' sentiments).

"In my experience," he said, "when you're in the right spot, you keep seeing the bird. They stick around." He wanted to see that spot.

A Yale ornithologist's son who dropped out of Cornell after a year so he could devote his time to studying and drawing birds, Sibley worked 12 years and drew 6,600 illustrations for his landmark "Sibley Guide to Birds," published in 2000. It includes 810 species. But he did not include the ivory-billed woodpecker, saying in the preface that, sadly, the bird was probably extinct.

On his way back to the dock, in a dense cypress-filled channel, Sibley noticed fresh scaling on a tupelo that was only partly dead, whose bark ivory-bill beaks are designed to tackle. He examined it for a time, and then left the swamp to tackle the depths of the White River refuge, whose large, dense woods are more likely the bird's home.

Before coming to Arkansas, Sibley put on his website, www.sibleyguides.com, a page on the ivory-bill. It can be downloaded and inserted into his bird guide.



Joe-Pye Weed or *Eupatorium maculatum*.
Photo: www.wssa.net

best in full sun but can handle light shade. They thrive in moist fertile soils rich in organic matter. You can, also, encourage branching and reduce overall height by cutting back by one-third in late spring. I found this out quite by accident when white-tailed deer pruned my Joe-Pye Weed and it emerged again as a multiple branched shrub.

E. fistulosum and **E. maculatum**, also called Joe-Pye Weed, are similar. A commonly-sold garden cultivar is "Gateway," a sensible 4-5 feet high with dusky purplish flowers on purple stems. One of autumn's showiest perennials, it deserves wider use.

BONESET. *E. perfoliatum* produces fluffy white flowers in flat-topped clusters. Prefers moisture but tolerates drier conditions than Joe-Pye Weed. In the past, it was thought to help knit broken bones – hence the common name. Great in moist meadow restoration.

—Bill Leaning