Monticello Bird Club

November 2009 Volume 26, Number 3

November Meeting Topic:
Ecology/Conservation of Vernal Pool Wetlands

Our speaker, Mike Hayslett will conduct a lively PowerPoint presentation about the ecological characteristics, flora and fauna, and conservation needs of these special wetland habitats found throughout Virginia.

Mike is a trained wildlife biologist. He is the Naturalist-in-Residence at Sweet Briar College.

Mike's 23 year career as a naturalist, field biologist, and educator has centered around the areas of field ecology and natural history.

His specialties include wildlife habitat management, herpetology, and, especially, vernal pools: wetlands characterized by the presence of certain amphibians, crustaceans, and other fascinating biota.

Please join us for dinner with the speaker at Ruby Tuesday's restaurant - time: 5:45 November 12th.

Photo by Doug Rogers

Photo by Doug Rogers

Upcoming Meeting Topics

November 12th: Ecology/ Conservation of Vernal Pool Wetlands
December 10th: Birds of Paradise Adventure in New Guinea

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Comments From the President

O suns and skies and clouds of June,
and flowers of June together,
ye cannot rival for one hour,
October's bright blue weather.

(from October's Bright Blue Weather, Helen Hunt Jackson)

Pardon me if I cling to October rather than look ahead to November. October has been a beautiful month (albeit a little dry) and I have enjoyed being out under its bright blue skies. Birding has been pleasant at Darden Towe Park. Jennifer Jowdy alerted me to it. The park has had a nice variety of warblers, vireos and sparrows. I also enjoyed the club's trip to Hog Island Wildlife Management Area, put together by Doug Rogers. On the way down to our meeting spot in Smithfield, Ellie and I stopped at the City Point Park in Hopewell, where I walked along a bluff at the confluence of the Appomattox and James Rivers, imagining Lincoln and Grant meeting there in 1864. Afterward, we continued on our way and in the evening had dinner at the Smithfield Inn with Cris Crisci and Nancy Butters. Although the group's plans were somewhat thwarted the next morning (we couldn't enter the WMA because of hunting), we switched to plan B (or was it Y or Z?) thanks to the Birding and Wildlife Trail Guide Dean Joyner had in her car.

Well, I could go on some more about the Hog Island trip (including the interesting Scotland-Jamestown ferry crossing), but will move to other topics.

Two of our members who live in Greene County and have a long drive

(Continued on page 2)

(Comments from the president continued from page 1)

to our meetings have asked about an earlier start time. I have told them this would be all right except meeting earlier would mean having to take our speakers for dinner at 5:15 instead of 5:45 PM.

Are there more than two of you who live some distance away from Charlottesville who would attend if meetings began earlier? Likewise, is an earlier start time a problem for members who live closer? Let me hear from you.

At our September meeting there was some discussion of Chimney Swifts. While hard to believe, in the period 1939 to 1944 a man named John B. Calhoun banded over 20,000 swifts in Charlottesville. To read a series of articles about the amazing swift banding going on at that time, type in John B. Calhoun banding Chimney Swifts Charlottesville on Google and you'll get a wealth of information. Several of you have mentioned constructing a Chimney Swift "chimney" at Ivy Creek. If you like this idea, let me know. Perhaps it can be pushed forward.

I hate to bring up the unpleasant business of cars being broken into at Ivy Creek but feel I must. Since our next few meetings begin and end in darkness, and those have been the meetings when these incidents occurred, I urge you to use caution when parking for upcoming meetings. Leave nothing of interest to a criminal visible in your car, not even a binocular case, and park as close as you can to lit areas. We will also see if the police can circulate through the parking lot.

Returning to birds, about fifteen of us were on John Zimmerman's trip of October 17th to "Sparrow Road" near Crozet. The numerous and highly-vocal White-crowned Sparrows put on an interesting bit of behavior. After venturing out onto patches of short grass from cover, they would repeatedly leap fifteen inches into the air, in that way reminding me of a group of tropical birds called manakins. This may be what is called aerial feeding, in which the sparrows apparently snatch small gnats. Have any of you seen this behavior? It was a very good trip and I thank John for leading it.

Don't forget about our birdseed sale November 7th. You can do the walk at Ivy Creek the same morning. Next meeting is November 12th when we have another outstanding program, this one on vernal pools.

We dine with the speaker at 5:45 at Ruby Tuesday's Restaurant. Hope to see you there, at the meeting or elsewhere.

Stauffer Miller

Introducing New Member: Ruth Carmines

A little about myself. I was born right here in Charlottesville and except for my years at Virginia Tech, I've lived in or near Albemarle County all my life. I've always had an interest in the environment and conservation and was delighted to discover the MBC when I was looking for new directions to exlore. My birdwatching has been confined to a backyard feeder (a luxury I don't have now in apartment living), but I'm eager to learn more. I admit to having two cats, but their bird-hunting is confined to looking longingly through the windows at the bluejays and local catbird. I also have a hedgehog, but, alas, she has never expressed any interest in birdwatching.

Ruth Carmines

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.

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The editor of the MBC Newsletter welcomes submissions including articles, photographs and notices. **DEADLINE for the December issue is 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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Please visit our website at
www.monticellobirdclub.org

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Upcoming Field Trips

Hog Island Wildlife Management Area November 21 - 22

This trip has to be done on Sunday because of Saturday hunting in the WMA. Participants can spend the night of November 21 at EconoLodge Hopewell, VA (804-541-4849) or can meet the group there next morning no later than 8:00 AM. To get there, take exit 9-A off I-295 south of Richmond, watching for it on the right. There are several restaurants, including a Denny's, near the motel. From there we'll drive about an hour to the Hog Island entrance. Have a photo ID. We'll do some walking once inside. Bring lunch. Afterward, we'll cross the James on the Scotland-Jamestown ferry, and perhaps do some more birding. Should be back to Charlottesville no later than 7:00 PM. We should see eagles and perhaps waterfowl and other water birds. Leaders Stauffer Miller (stauffer@seepub.com, 434-296-5505)) and Doug Rogers.

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 AM. 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.
The walk for this month will be on November 7. See you there!

Eastern Shore, CBBT and Chincoteague Island - November 20-22

Join Brenda Tekin on what has become an annual tradition traveling to this favorite fall birding destination. The CBBT guided portion of the trip will be on Friday morning and is limited to 15 with prior submission of a registration form for security clearance. We will meet in the south end of the CBBT in the administration building parking lot by no later than 9:45 a.m. on Friday, November 20. The $50/hr fee will be divided equally among the participants which usually averages a little under $10 per person. Participants must also present a picture ID (e.g. driver's license) to the security officer. Follow the CCBT our next stop will be the Eastern Shore NWR. Lodging will be on Chincoteague Island and reservations can be made at the Island Motor Inn (757-336-3141). Mention you are with the Monticello or Augusta Bird Club to receive the group rate of $92/night. Please note there is a 7-day prior cancellation limit. Contact Brenda for the CBBT registration form and additional information (brenda@birdsofvirginia.com/434-962-4936).

Charlottesville Christmas Count

The count will be on December 20. Please see details on page 4.

The Wildlife Center of Virginia, in Waynesboro is pleased to offer a breathtakingly beautiful calendar depicting the eagles who reside at Norfolk Botanical Garden in Norfolk, Virginia. The photography is a visual feast for the eyes and the subject matter is dear to all of our hearts.

"The Garden of Eagles 2010 Calendar is an 11"x17", 12 month wall calendar including 15 large color photographs and over 30 smaller full color photographs. The calendar includes the 'special highlight' dates pertaining to the 2009 bald eagles' nesting season imprinted in the appropriate calendar date blocks.

Your donation of $20.00 for each calendar will benefit The Wildlife Center of Virginia. All proceeds from the sale of **"The Garden of Eagles 2010 Calendar"** will go to support the work of the Wildlife Center of Virginia for Bald Eagles.

The main goal is for all profit after printing costs to go to the Center. The cost per order for shipping will be $4.95. **If you wish to use a credit card or want to go through PayPal, there is an option to do this. The Wildlife Center of Virginia has a link on their site that allows people to purchase the calendar through PayPal, or use a credit card. Here is the link to their site.**
http://www.wildlifecenter.org/wp/2010eaglecalendar/

You may purchase your calendar locally at Wild Bird Crossing 1950 Rio Hill Center, 434/973-9649.

You may purchase your calendar by mail at the following address:

The Wildlife Center of Virginia
P.O. Box 1557
Waynesboro, Virginia 22980

Make checks payable to **Wildlife Center of Virginia** and please include in the Memo area "The Garden of Eagles 2010 Calendar". Include your e-mail address and you will receive an e-mail confirming your paid order and also when your calendar(s) is mailed.

Minutes of the Monticello Bird Club Meeting of 8 October 2009

Peggy Cornett, secretary

President Stauffer Miller presided. Newcomers included Jane Kopp from south Florida, Bill and Sherry Martin from Ruckersville, and Ruth Carmines.

* Treasurer's Report

Henry Konat reported a net income of $1,295, plus $1,200 in bird seed order that just arrived; and expenses of $1,565. The club has $12,400 in the bank.

* Bird Seed Sale

Jim Hill reminded members that order forms are available on the Web site and the deadline for ordering is October 30th. The seed will be distributed at the Forestry Department on November 7th. Seed prices are down from 2008. There is still a need for volunteers to 1) make telephone reminders during the week prior to pick-up, 2) greet customers in the pick-up area on November 7th, and 3) haul seed to cars.

* Christmas Bird CountJenny Gaden is coordinating the bird count this year, which takes place December 20th. She is still taking volunteers. They year they are trying to identify areas of the county that still need to be covered.

* Field Trips

John Zimmerman reported on upcoming trips, including the walk at Secluded Farm on October 10th, starting at 7:30 a.m. from the overflow parking area of the Monticello Parkway. Doug Rogers is leading a repeat trip to Hogg Island on November 21-22, because the area was closed on the date of the previous trip due to the fall hunting season. This time of year, the island is only open on Sundays.

* Quail Action Plan Update

Brian Morrison, member of the Virginia Quail Council, reported on current efforts to restore suitable habitats for wildlife and birds in Virginia. The Action Plan was funded to create 5 new positions for private land biologists to cover Augusta County, Culpeper, and Madison. They have designated $900,000 to establish a cost share program with land owners. Brian also reported on efforts to survey breeding habitats for warblers in the Appalachian area as part of the IBA (Important Bird Areas). There is a new proposal to establish an IBA survey in Central Virginia, including southern Albemarle County. He encouraged MBC members to refer to the DGIF Web site for more information.

Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count

On Sunday, December 20, the 2009 Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will take place. We will join tens of thousands of other volunteers around the country who, over a three-week period, will head out before dawn in many cases armed with binoculars, telescopes, checklists, bird guides, cameras, hot coffee and bountiful snacks to spend the day counting birds. Everybody can do it – grandmothers, students, soccer moms and even hockey moms. They will be beginning birders or experienced scientists. All are welcome.

These Citizen Scientists are taking action for conservation. By participating in the National Audubon Society's CBC they help scientists understand how birds are faring amid unprecedented environmental challenges. The data they collect informs the world about the State of Birds, and provides the information we need to shape their future and ours. This is the 110th Christmas Bird Count.

Last year thousands of volunteers counted nearly 60 million birds across the Americas and beyond. Each count occurs in a designated circle, 15 miles in diameter, and is organized by a designated "compiler" – Jenny Gaden for the Charlottesville CBC.

Those interested in participating in the count should let Jenny know (434 293-6275; jgaden@embarqmail.com). If you are an inexperienced birder you will be able to go along with a more experienced person or group. If you are an experienced birder maybe you would consider starting a new route in a part of the county which is currently not covered. A potluck supper and tally will follow the count that evening.

Virginia Quail Report

This is from the third meeting of the Virginia Quail Council, October 8, 2009

Virginia's new Quail Action Plan (QAP) continues to gain momentum in what will be the largest initiative to stop the decline of wildlife populations dependent on early-successional habitats in the state's recent history. The QAP was endorsed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) Board of Directors in February of 2009 and officially began July 1, 2009. The key goal of the plan is to gather support for early-successional habitats and the species that depend on them such as quail, numerous songbirds, pollinating insects and small mammals. Though state budgets are tight, funding was provided to hire five private lands biologists for each of the focal areas in the state. These positions will be filled by November 2009 and are jointly supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Also, a total of $150,000 in cost-share funds was allotted to each focal area to help get habitat established on the ground. For more information visit www.dgif.virginia.gov/quail/.

Reported by Brian Morse, member, Virginia Quail Council

The Monticello BirdAlert, by Robert Capon

The MonticelloBirdAlert provides birders in Central Virginia with an opportunity to post sightings of rare and interesting birds spotted in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia, and surrounding counties. Members of the group should only post birds that are sighted on public property or viewed from public roadways. Members may also post a siting of a bird on private property, if the landowner has granted express permission for you to make such a posting to this group.

Since its inception, birds reported on the MonticelloBirdAlert have included the Loggerhead Shrike, Fox Sparrow, Common Goldeneye, Horned Grebe, Horned Lark, Red Headed Woodpecker, American Woodcock, Surf Scoter, Glossy Ibis, Dunlin, American Bittern, and many others!

To join the group, please follow these steps:

1) Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/monticellobirdalert/>http://groups.yahoo.com/group/monticellobirdalert/
2) Click on the button: Join this Group
3) If you have a Yahoo ID, sign in and go to "Step 5"
4) If you don't have a Yahoo ID, click on the link: Sign Up. (It's free.)
5) Fill in the required information, read the terms of the agreement, and signify your agreement by clicking on "I Agree".
6) Once your a member, you can post messages by sending messages to
<mailto:monticellobirdalert@yahoogroups.com>monticellobirdalert@yahoogroups.com
7) Remember the cardinal rule (stated above) about respecting private property rights.

Please note: When you sign up, you'll have the opportunity to see individual messages or receive a daily digest of messages. The individual messages will enable you to see photographs posted with email messages, however the daily digest does not enable photographs to be seen. Since the MonticelloBirdAlert only provides a trickle of a small handful of messages a day, we suggest that you set up your account to receive individual messages.