



Monticello Bird Club

December 2006

Volume 21, Number 4

December Meeting Topic:

Build It and They Will Come: Enhancing Bird Habitat on Your Land

Habitat loss and land fragmentation have contributed to the decline in regional and local bird populations. Wildlife biologists are concerned for the future of migratory and resident birds in our area, including Northern Bobwhite, Kentucky Warbler, Whip-poor-will, and Eastern Screech Owl. Minor changes in land management practices can improve conditions in Virginia's Northern Piedmont for dozens of songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors that breed, winter, and/or migrate throughout the region. Faren Wolter's presentation will focus on six types of Piedmont habitat: (1) agricultural, (2) grassland/hayfield/pasture, (3) old field/shrubland, (4) forest, (5) wetland, and (6) developed areas and backyards.

Faren Wolter joined PEC in February 2006. She grew up in Orange County and is passionate about conserving Virginia's natural resources and sustaining its rural heritage and agriculture industry, especially in the Pied-

mont area. Faren holds a PhD in Forestry with a concentration in Society and Ecosystems from the University of Missouri – Columbia. She also holds a B.S. in Aquaculture, Fisheries and Wildlife Biology with minors in Forest Resources Management and Environmental Science and Policy from Clemson

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Upcoming Meeting Topics

January 11: Aimee Weldon will speak on the Important Bird Area program through Audubon.

February 8: Ken Klotz will speak on Birding Guyana: The New Frontier.

Comments From the President

Had you – I address those readers of the male persuasion - been living prior to the turn of the last century, you might have chosen to spend Christmas day engaged in a manly pursuit known as a "Side Hunt". Ladies, of unquestionably superior moral sensibilities, eschewed this activity and stayed home preparing feasts for the returning hunters. The men would choose "sides" and compete to see which team could bring in the greatest treasure of dead birds, squirrels, deer, fox or anything covered with feathers or fur that moved within range of their gun barrels.

There were at that time, however, wise and learned men who were particularly concerned about the decline in bird species. Such men would never have spent Christmas day slaughtering the gentle beasts of field and forest. One of these was Frank Chapman, an ornithologist and early officer in the emerging Audubon Society. He proposed a new holiday

tradition – one in which individuals would count birds rather than shoot them. So on Christmas day, 1900, twenty-seven dedicated birders took to the field in locations ranging from Toronto to Pacific Grove California, Oberlin Ohio, Baldwin Louisiana and Sauk County Wisconsin, but mostly from the population centers of the Northeast. (Well, wise men have traditionally come from the east, haven't they?) They tallied a total of 90 species and 18,500 individual birds on all the counts combined.

Thus was born the Christmas Bird Count which today involves over 50,000 participants. These efforts have resulted in the longest running database –over a century now - showing trends in populations of early winter North American birds.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to you and all your furred and feathered friends.

- Jennifer Gaden, president

Inside December 2006

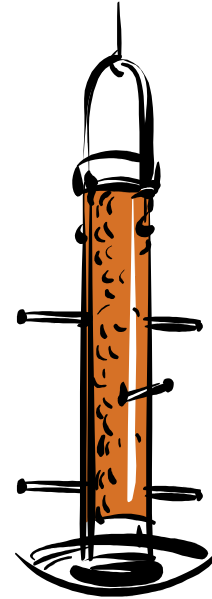
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OKTOBERQUEST

by Stauffer Miller

With Gratitude...

Howie Davis, with the help of Teresa Shaner, has organized our bird seed sale for several years (nobody's quite sure how many). This activity has been our one annual fund raiser and it has brought in ample money to do many good things. Howie will not continue in this capacity next year so it is time to give him grateful thanks for the fine job that he has done for the club.



After a productive few hours of birding October 1st, and realizing I would be mostly in Albemarle County for the month, I decided to see how many species I could come up within Albemarle for October. By October 4th, when I found a Cape May Warbler on Briery Creek Road (just steps from the Fluvanna County line) I was at fifty-six. I kept nibbling away, getting this and that species, so that when I saw a Common Grackle at Beaver Creek Reservoir during John Zimmerman's walk of October 21st (my best bird of his trip!), I was at eighty for the month. I had thought 100 would be impossible, but now I began to wonder.

Later on the 21st, Ellie and I discovered some ponds west of Crozet and on them was bird number eighty-one, Ruddy Duck. A visit there the next morning yielded Wilson's Snipe and some cowbirds. On October 23rd I visited the Gilbert Station area in the northeast part of the county and found Hermit Thrush and Winter Wren. With an American Wigeon at Hollymead Ponds on the way home I was at eighty-six. Although I lacked only fourteen of reaching 100, I was running out of reasonable possibilities. But, on a windy October 24th I went out to Secretary Sand Road with two target birds - Wild Turkey and Brown Creeper, and found both.

This was definitely getting interesting. As the month's final week began I kept looking at the calendar, the map and the very small list of reasonable possibilities left. I should have also been watching the weather, which turned rainy October 27th and 28th, denying any birding. I finally got number eighty-nine, Screech Owl, on the 29th. In a big arc of birding across the northern section of the county on the 30th I added Barred Owl, Sharp-shinned Hawk and, best of the day, Ring-necked Duck at Beaver Creek. My last day, Halloween, I spent in the far southern reaches of the county but could only add Rusty Blackbird and Green-winged Teal. Thus, I fell a little short of 100, but 94 didn't seem too bad. I'm going to rest in November!

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 January issue is December 23.** Please email information to Amy Gilmer at akgilmer@adelphia.net or send to 3166 Welsh Run Road, Ruckersville, VA 22968.

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

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Birdseed Sale	Howard Davis	howardsuedavis@juno.com	964-1242

Upcoming Field Trips

Southern Albemarle County Jaunt Wednesday, December 6

Stauffer Miller will lead this trip through southern Albemarle County, visiting several ponds and a variety of other habitats. **Meet at Seminole Square in the Giant parking lot at 8 am.** We will return to the Giant parking lot about noon. Questions? Contact Stauffer Miller at 434-296-5505 or stauffer@seepub.com

Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count Sunday, December 17

Contact Mo Stephens at 434-293-8658 for the name of a leader with whom you might go.

Christmas Bird Count Warm-Up Saturday, December 9

We will have a set of half-day field trips to various sites within the Charlottesville Christmas Bird Count area as a prelude to the actual count. JOHN ZIMMERMAN will meet a group in the CATEC parking lot on east Rio Road at 7:15 am and bird the Pen Park nature trail, Rivanna River bottoms at Dunlora, and Greenbriar Park. MARK ADAMS will meet a group in the parking lot at Barracks Road shopping center near McDonalds at 7:00 am. He will be driving a 2003 green Jeep Wrangler. The group will then proceed to Lake Albemarle, then along Decca Lane south to Garth Rd, then to Beaver Creek Lake, Jones Mill Road ("Sparrow Road"), Route 678 north of Garth Road, and end at Crozet "for snacks and to tick house sparrows." JENNY GADEN will meet a group at Ivy Creek Natural Area at 7:30 am birding around the education building, then proceeding to two private farms, and returning to Ivy Creek to bird the peninsula trail. DAVID HOGG will meet a group in the upper parking lot of National Radio Astronomy Observatory (on the UVa campus) at 7:00 am and will do Observatory Hill, the Rivanna Trail off Natural Resources Drive, Buckingham Circle to check the pond and Dede Smith's feeders, then to Ivy Farms East to Shack Mountain.



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University. In between both degrees she attended Vermont Law, taking graduate courses in environmental law. Faren is professionally certified as a wildlife biologist through the Wildlife Society and has worked extensively on a variety of scientific field studies. Before joining PEC's staff, Faren worked with landowners in the Missouri Ozarks to encourage collaborative ecosystem stewardship across privately owned forestlands to voluntarily achieve land management and goals. She has also taught courses in natural resource management and environmental science at Westminster College and University of Missouri – Columbia. Please join MBC members and our speaker for dinner at Wild Greens Restaurant in the North Wing of Barracks Road Shopping Center on December 14th at 5:45 pm prior to the meeting.

Celebrate Some Holiday Cheer

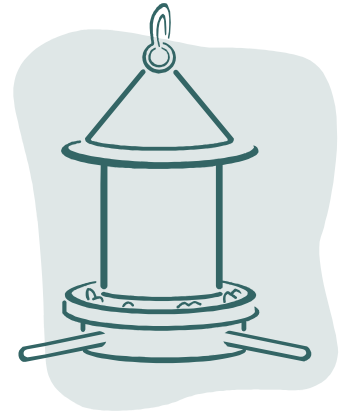
Following the regular December 14th meeting, enjoy a bit of food and time with friends. Carol & Jim Hill will provide the hot drinks. Consider bringing a holiday treat or a bird-related door prize. Our Hospitality Chair, Priscilla Kingston, will distribute door prizes with assistance from Teresa Shaner.



A note of thanks...

The annual Monticello Bird Club's Seed Sale was a success with over 11,000 pounds of seed and over two dozen bluebird boxes and feeders sold, raising \$1,800 for the club's activities. Many thanks go to all who helped with the sale - Vickie Boyle, Victoria Dye, Jenny Gaden, Jim Hill, Nancy King, Ron and Priscilla Kingston, Henry Konat, Stauffer and Ellie Miller, Nancy Newman, Elaine Page, Dede Smith, Leigh Surdukowski, Lou and Stephanie Tanner, Frank and Pat Wilczek, and John and Jan Zimmerman. A special thanks also to the Virginia Department of Forestry for allowing us to use their warehouse space for the seed pickup on November 4th and to Bob Hammond for providing the hand-crafted feeders and birdhouses.

Howard Davis and Teresa Shaner
Seed Sale Committee



MBC Minutes for November 9, 2006

President Jenny Gaden presided over the meeting and acknowledged new faces, including Jo and Ron Smith, who just moved to Lake Monticello from Las Vegas and reported seeing a Bald Eagle at the lake. Dick and Natalie Summer have also moved to the area recently from California. There were 45 present.

Treasurer's Report: Henry Konat reported that the club's net income was \$8,898.50 and that \$6,838 came from the bird seed sale. The net income for the sale was \$2,147, but there were still some outstanding invoices to pay.

Bird Seed Sale: Howard Davis reported that the sale was a great success and that there were only two bags of white millet, two bags of this-tle seed, one case of suet, one blue bird house and one platform feeder left. He thanked everyone for their help, especially Teresa Shaner. This will be Howard's last year managing the sale and his hard work over the years was acknowledged.

Hospitality: Priscilla Kingston mentioned the upcoming Thanksgiving Window-watch Bird Count, which entails counting the birds that visit your bird feeder for one hour on

Thanksgiving Day. More details are available at the Window Watch Wingfield Web site. Priscilla also reminded members of the annual Christmas party after the December meeting and asked that those attending bring refreshments and/or bird-related door prizes. Last year fifty people attended the party and there were twenty-nine door prizes.

Ivy Creek Bird Walk: Leigh Surdukowski asked for volunteers to lead the "First Saturday Bird Walk at Ivy Creek," which the club has been leading for many years.

Field Trips: John Zimmerman noted the upcoming 3-mile walk at Pen Park, which Jenny Gaden is leading, could be muddy. Stauffer Miller is leading a Wednesday walk in the northeastern section of Albemarle County, meeting at Forest Lakes. The registrants for the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel walk have been cleared to go. There will be a warm-up for the Christmas Bird Count on December 9, for a half day.

Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch: Brenda Tekin gave a detailed review of this year's tallies of over 18,000 raptor sightings at Afton Mountain, which included 65 Bald Eagles, 190 Osprey, 185 American Kestrels, 1,500 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 195 Cooper's Hawks, 14, 342 Broad-

winged Hawks. She noted that there was good weather this fall, accounting for some of the high counts.

Miscellaneous Announcements:

Jenny Gaden reported that the Cornell Laboratory "Project Feeder Watch" is in need of new participants. Those interested in taking part in this project would need to count birds at their feeders every two weeks from November 11, 2006 through April 6, 2007. Frank Wilczek reported about the new Virginia Master Naturalist program that provides training in ornithology, geology, botany, and natural history. Brenda Tekin brought old birding magazines to give away.

Bird Sightings: A Lake Monticello resident reported that a Bald Eagle flew through the screen into his porch. They covered the bird with a towel in order to transport it outside, unharmed. Bob Gilges saw a flock of wild Turkeys, including 9 hens, on his property. A Winter Wren was spotted in the outdoor garden supply area at Lowe's on 29th North. Leigh Surdukowski saw American Pipits in southwestern Albemarle County. A Green-winged Teal was seen at the Ragged Mountain Reservoir, along with an American Coot, Black Duck and two Pied-billed Grebes.

- Peggy Cornett, secretary