



# The Thrasher

## Richmond Audubon Society

### RAS Meeting, Thursday January 19, 2006

The meeting will be held at St. Luke Lutheran Church, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The church is located at the intersection of Chippenham Parkway and Custis Road in South Richmond. The intersection is at a traffic light just east of the Hugenot Rd. exit. Lisa Guthrie, the Executive Director of the Virginia League of Conservation Voters, will be joining us at our annual Legislative Meeting to discuss the upcoming General Assembly. Lisa is one of the most well-informed political thinkers in Virginia, and her insights

are sure to produce an interesting program. We hope you will come and see what to watch for this session, and perhaps figure out how you can help get some crucial environmental legislation passed. The pre-meeting dinner will start at 5:30 p.m. for the nominal fee of \$5.00. Call or email me by Wednesday, October 19 if you plan to be there for the dinner. (743-1479 or [lindawarfield@comcast.net](mailto:lindawarfield@comcast.net)) Dessert will be available after the meeting.

Note: Those who want to come but

are unsure you can make it, get your name on the list. Too much food is better than not enough! (If you can't make it, you will not be responsible for the cost.) Reservations will not be accepted after the 18th. If you enjoy the pre-meeting dinners, share one of your favorite dishes with our group. (Bring receipts to the meeting so I can reimburse you for your expenses.) Call or email by Sunday, January 15, to let me know what you plan to provide.

*Linda Warfield*  
Hospitality Chair

Note: The next *Thrasher* you will receive will be the February issue. See the notices on Page 7

### Oppose The "Species Extinction" Bill

H.R. 3824, which would curtail many protections for endangered species in the United States, was rammed through the House in late September in only 11 days, and with almost no debate allowed. The chief sponsor, Rep. Pombo of California, says that his bill will correct the 1973 Bill, passed during the Nixon administration, and will give species a better chance. But his bill eliminates several key legal protections, and writes into law huge loopholes that will certainly lead to extinctions and not recoveries for endangered species. National Audubon, Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, and all leading environmental groups in the U.S. are strongly opposed to the passage of this bill.

This bill will: 1) Require that all landowners be compensated for protecting endangered species even though the costs for this new mandate are not covered with current revenues and the costs are likely to be very large. 2) Require that new scientific information about an endangered species NOT be admitted after a very short review process. 3) Require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency to respond within 180 days to development projects that may threaten a species. This timeframe is far too short, given the inadequate funding of USFWS in administering the ESA. 4) Refute "Best available science", a legal term used in ESA analysis, which would no longer be determined by scientists,

but by a political appointee who could broadly modify the use of the word "Best". 5) No longer will the use of "critical habitat" be part of the management plan for ESA species.

6) Pesticide controls would be greatly relaxed, allowing a five-year free use timeframe before any restrictions.

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See Page 3 for more facts about HR 3824.

To find out still more, and to take action, please go to [www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/summary.asp?subject=411&flow=2](http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/summary.asp?subject=411&flow=2)

There you can also thank your Congressman if he voted against the bill in the House, and tell your Senator that you oppose this bill.

*John M. Roberts*  
Conservation/Advocacy Co-chair

## President's Message: January, 2006

The snow is falling; the world is white. Yesterday the Carolina Jessamine was sending out its sweet yellow blossoms in the vines covering the plant stand on the back deck, and today the little birds are seeking shelter in its overarching branches and leaves. Never let it be said that Richmond is not an exciting place to live, weather-wise. We finally cut back the daylily leaves – they were still green until last week when they finally laid down for the winter. And to think that spring migration will be with us before we know it! We probably won't have had time to do all those things we were going to accomplish during the winter months.

The Auction was a huge success, exceeding the contributions of past years. The food was great and plentiful and the location warm and welcoming. Lots of space to move around, view the auction items, and visit with friends. A big thank you to all those who worked so hard to make it a superb evening. The income will fund the many projects of your Richmond Audubon Society.

Speaking of YOUR Richmond Audubon, the board is looking at ways to reach and involve more of our members by providing new programs beyond those traditionally offered. As

I looked in the mirror at my gray hair and looked around the room at the Auction I was once again struck by the preponderance of gray heads. Although we bring a generation of experience and action to RAS we need to develop activities that fit the time schedule and interests of our younger members. The face of volunteerism has changed in the past 25 years.

We need to hear from you about the types of activities in which you would be able to participate. What are they? Would you prefer more weekend field trips, more field trips starting later in the day or in the afternoon, a weekend day program on using binoculars, some programs involving parents and children, more activities focused on backyard birding and gardening for the birds, more conservation activities designed for family participation? Let us know. All of the board members are available by email and telephone numbers are also listed in each month's Thrasher. Check page 7 of the Thrasher and give us a call. No idea is too wild because wild ideas may spin off into great workable ideas.

*Ellen Ackerman*

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## Avian Flu Risk in the United States

Although any risk at this current time is very low for those residing in the United States some of you are concerned and desire further information about Avian Flu. A couple of important points are reproduced here from the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and the National Audubon Society. Is there a risk for becoming infected with avian influenza by eating poultry? There is no evidence that properly cooked poultry or eggs can be a source of infection for avian influenza viruses. For more information about avian influenza and food safety issues, visit the World Health Organization website:

[www.who.int/foodsafety/micro/avian/en/](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/micro/avian/en/).

What about feeding birds in my backyard? People who feed birds are not at high risk of contracting avian influenza from birds in their yards or at their feeders. However, since birds can transmit other diseases to humans (e.g.

salmonellosis), people who feed birds should routinely clean their feeders and bird baths as recommended by Audubon ([www.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home/SafeFeeding.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/SafeFeeding.html)) and the USGS National Wildlife Health Center ([www.nwhc.usgs.gov/whats\\_new/fact\\_sheet/fact\\_birdfeeder.html](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/whats_new/fact_sheet/fact_birdfeeder.html)). People who come into contact with wild bird excreta should thoroughly clean up with soap and water. You can also check out the National Audubon Society's web site for information regarding Avian Flu at [audubon.org/bird/AvianBirdFlu.php](http://audubon.org/bird/AvianBirdFlu.php). The Richmond Audubon Society's web site, [www.richmondaudubon.org](http://www.richmondaudubon.org) will carry the link to the continuously updated National Audubon Society's information regarding Avian Flu.

*Ellen Ackerman*

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## Great Backyard Bird Count: February 17-20, 2006

February 17-20, 2006 is a weekend not just for watching birds, but for teaching new people as part of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). And it's the opportunities that GBBC offers you that are so important, whether as Chapter Leader, Center Educator, or active member. Some members use their library to recruit new members by talking about the GBBC. Others invite new bird-watchers to take part in GBBC at their

Centers or lead groups out onto National Wildlife Refuges or National Parks because America's backyard is big. It only starts at your back door! Teachers even build curricula around the GBBC.

Take a look at past year's results at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc) and get your digital camera ready to share your birds through the online gallery.

Participants submit their observations online and can see where their results

fit in immediately through maps, charts and tables. There's no fee or registration, just the joy of birds and the buzz of seeing your results on the computer. Your challenge is working out what you can do with the GBBC to help you be more successful! For more details, contact Paul Green at [pgreen@audubon.org](mailto:pgreen@audubon.org)

*Ellen Ackerman*

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## More information on HR 3824

A. The US Fish and Wildlife agency is severely underfunded in its administration of the ESA (\$16 million vs \$153 million needed just for species processing). USFWS needs a dedicated fund just for ESA analysis and recovery efforts, and this funding must be equal to the task in order to protect our Nations Natural Heritage. Much of the budget is now eaten up in legal fees brought either by developers or by environmental groups seeking to list or protect species. Vertebrate Animal recovery plans are underfunded, but plant and invertebrate plans are woefully underfunded. (There are currently about 1200 listed species.)

B. The current administration has not listed one new species willingly, despite the fact that on average, 40 new species have been listed annually since 1973. Politicalization has proceeded far down into the staffing of the USFWS. Environmental groups, through court cases have been able to force listing of about 13 species each year since 2000.

C. The Candidate list for new species is long, and, according to NatureServe, there should be about 9,000

new listings now.

D. 27 species have gone extinct since 1973 while waiting to be listed for ESA protections.

In 1997, over 70% of conservation biologists polled by the Washington Post said that they believed that the Earth is experiencing a Mass Extinction, only the sixth in the past 600 million years, and the only one caused by a single species: man. The reasons for this are: pollution, loss of habitat, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and over-harvesting of wild animals for food. Recovery from a mass extinction takes tens of millions of years.

Our planet has taken 3 billion years to reach the diversity we have today, and we depend on biodiversity. We have an obligation to pass on a Sustainable Earth to our children. The loss of species means loss of biological information, beauty, and salve to our minds, (biophilia). When too many species are lost, there is a real threat that whole ecosystems will break down. We owe it to ourselves to protect the Common Natural Heritage of all Americans.

## From The Kitchen Window – January, 2006

Where conies come out to sun and romp  
As near a paradise as can be  
And not melt snow or start a dormant tree

It lifts existence on a plane of snow  
One level higher than the earth below,  
One level nearer heaven overhead,  
And last year's berries shining scarlet red

So near to paradise all pairing ends:  
Here loveless birds now flock as winter friends,  
Content with bud-inspiring. They presume  
To say which buds are leaf and which are bloom.

Robert Frost

*From the Kitchen Window*, we all wish you and yours a fun New Year: John and Caroline, Tommy Titmouse, Windy Wren, Cheeky Chickadee, Carl and Carla Cardinal, Phineas Finch, Jenny Junco, Sparky Sparrow, Nyety Nuthatch, Woody Woodpecker, Billy Blue Jay, Fanny Flicker, Danny Dove, Rufous Towhee, et al..... and Sammy-buck Squirrel.

Our Winter visitors, to date (December 15<sup>th</sup>), include White-throated Sparrow (not as many as in past years), Dark-eyed Junco (lots of them), one Winter Wren, one Pine Siskin, one Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, one Brown Creeper, one Pine Warbler, several Yellow-rumped Warblers, several Eastern Bluebirds – with a New England accent, and a couple large flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds and Robins – with Jersey accents.

The Full January moon, named the "Wolf Moon", brightens the long winter night on the 14<sup>th</sup>.  
And the Great Horned Owl nests.

John Coe

(Except for the last two paragraphs, this *From The Kitchen Window* is from the January 1998 *Thrasher*)

The Virginia Audubon Council  
and  
Virginia Conservation Network's Annual Citizens' Lobby Day

*Give a Day for the Environment:  
Monday, January 16, 2005*

Valentine Richmond History Center  
1015 East Clay Street, Richmond  
www.RichmondHistoryCenter.com  
804-649-0711

The Virginia Audubon Council will hold its next meeting sometime between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on January 16 in Richmond in connection with Lobby Day, which is organized by the Virginia Conservation Network. Participation in Lobby Day will give RAS members the opportunity to speak to legislators about their concerns for bird populations, habitat preservation, and other natural resource issues. You can make a difference!

More information about Lobby Day and on-line registration can be found at  
[www.vcnva.org](http://www.vcnva.org).

Every Chapter member is invited to join the Council for Lobby Day on January 16.

### Why Come to Virginia Conservation Network's Citizens' Lobby Day?

So you can:

Speak to your legislator face-to-face. Tell your legislator in person about your concerns on funding natural resources, water resources, and land use and transportation.

Network with other activists.

Learn more about how you can make a difference.

### How do I find out who my Senator and Delegate are?

Go to [legis.state.va.us](http://legis.state.va.us) and click on who's my legislator to find your representatives.

### Set up appointments with your senator and delegate in advance!

In order for you to see your Delegate and Senator we need you to schedule an appointment in advance. This year we will be working through legislative contact teams to set up meetings with legislators. IF YOU ARE NOT A LEGISLATIVE CONTACT TEAM MEMBER, MAKE YOUR OWN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES OR CALL TO 804-644-0283 TO FIND OUT WHO ELSE IS ATTENDING FROM YOUR DISTRICT. If you are a legislative contact team member, work through the lead legislative contact member on your team to schedule the appointment. Please contact Missy Neff at 804-225-1902 or [mneff@valcv.org](mailto:mneff@valcv.org) or Carey Whitehead at: 804-644-0283 or [vcngeneral@aol.com](mailto:vcngeneral@aol.com) if you have questions. Find out more about the Legislative Contact Team Program at: [www.valcv.org/valcvdocs/help/lct.htm](http://www.valcv.org/valcvdocs/help/lct.htm)

*Manny Bererra*  
President, VAC

## The Prothonotary Warbler Project at Dutch Gap: Final Results for 2005

In 2005 the number of nest boxes at Dutch Gap was expanded to 120, up from 100 in 2004. A late spring and substantial increased competition from Tree Swallows got the Prothonotary Warblers off to a slow start. The warm-up in May and the retro-fitting of 75 of the nest boxes between the first and second round of nesting (to reduce the hole size and thus Tree Swallow competition) enabled the birds to pretty well catch up. There were 423 Prothonotary Warblers banded at Dutch Gap in 2005, plus a remarkable 92 returned adults captured. In addition, three birds were captured that had been banded as nestlings last year at Deep Bottom Park or at Presquile NWR. That's a total of 518 in all for the season.

The breakdown of the 423 birds banded includes 355 newly banded nestlings (19 in their first breeding season, 17 in their second or later breeding season, and 32 hatched in natural cavities and captured during post-fledgling dispersal). Of the 355 nestlings banded, 41 were recaptured 1-2 months post-fledging. Of these, 27 were males, 13 were females, and 1 was of unknown sex.

Of the 92 adults recaptured, 20 females and 14 males (banded at Dutch Gap as nestlings) were in their first breeding season; 38 females and 12 males were known to be in, or at least in, their second breeding season; 5 females and 2 males were known to be in, or at least in, their third breeding season; and one male was known to be in at least his fourth breeding season.

Two VCU graduate biology students completed their field work on Prothonotary Warblers at Dutch Gap this year: Charlie Clarkson and Terry Smith. Charlie successfully defended his master's thesis and Terry's master's thesis

defense will be scheduled for early in the spring semester. Several undergraduate VCU biology students assisted Terry with her research. It is anticipated that a third graduate student will begin her research at Dutch Gap in the coming season.

When the 2006 season starts, all 120 boxes (with reduced hole size) will be ready for the arrival of these beautiful warblers. It is hoped that from the first week of May through the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June you will hear their song no matter where you are at Dutch Gap. What a happy prospect!

*Bob Reilly*



A male Prothonotary Warbler perches at Dutch Gap in summer of 2005. Photo by *Al Warfield*

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## Another Successful Auction

Final figures for the income from the RAS Auction and Raffle are in. The final amount will be less after expenses are deducted, but they were minimal this year. The live auction brought in \$5510, the silent auction got \$2030, bringing the total auction income to \$7540. The raffle brought in an additional \$2770, bringing the total for both events to \$10,310. Having a smaller silent auction stimulated more energetic bidding, and the income from the raffle more than made up the difference.

We can't thank Bob Coles enough for stepping up at the last minute and doing an excellent job as auctioneer, but we'll try: THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

Please support the following businesses which generously donated to the auction: Appomattox River Company, Zeiss Sports Optics, Island Manor House in Chincoteague, Custom Framing Made Simple, Wild Birds Unlimited, Birdwatchers, Fin and Feather, Richmond Sky Tours, 43rd Street Gallery, Joan Cordle, RN, Therapeutic Massage, Midlothian Chiropractic and Acupuncture, and Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens.

Who will be next year's auction chair? I am looking for someone else to be in charge next year, though I will work with her or him as much as wanted. Most of what the next Chair needs is in the computer and my workbook, and I will meet with her/him to make a smooth transition. The new Chair will be well supported with help on posters, printing, and other jobs as needed. Next year's Chair needs to be lined up now if next year's event is going to be successful. Any volunteers?

*Linda Warfield*, 2005 auction chair

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## Field Trips: January - February, 2006

Sunday, January 1, 2006 – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd: Ring in the New Year with a brisk walk in the park. Meet Sue Ridd at 8 a.m. at Bryan Park's picnic shelter #1. Questions, call Sue at 270-5365.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Saturday, January 7, 2006 – James River Winter Bird Count & Brunch: Join fellow birders for a casual winter count of the James River Park System with a brunch hosted by Mary and Larry following the count. We divide the park into sectors to count including: Huguenot Woods, Pony Pasture, Wetlands, 42nd Street, FloodWall, Belle Isle, Byrd Park, and Ancarrow's Landing. Call Julie Kacmarcik at 530-3660 to join a count party. And bring a breakfast-y item to share while we tally our results. This is a *great* way to start the year.

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 – The first 2nd Wednesday walk for 2006 with John Coe: This month's walk will be The Flood Wall, James River Park in Richmond. Call John at 276-1397 for details. You will be treated to a fun mid-week walk and hopefully some waterfowl, too.

Sunday, January 15, 2006 – Grandview, Hampton, Virginia: Join Clark White of the Cape Henry Bird Club as he shows us the winter water fowl of the Tidewater Area. Ducks and loons are probable. Dress for the elements. We will meet at the Bottom's Bridge Park and Ride on Route 60 at 7:30 a.m. To sign up contact Julie Kacmarcik at 530-3660.

Saturday, January 21, 2006 – Dutch Gap Conservation Area: Join

Betsy Saunders for a winter look around Dutch Gap. Meet Betsy at the Henricus Visitor Center at 7:15 a.m. Call Betsy with any questions at 272-0605.

Saturday, January 28, 2006 – Point of Rocks Park, Chesterfield County: Check up on our winter visitors and residents with an exhilarating walk beginning at 8 a.m. Meet trip leader Irene Ries at the parking lot nearest the trail (it's by the children's playground). Target species include sapsucker, kinglets and Hermit Thrush. For information contact Irene at FOPSP@yahoo.com.

Saturday, January 28, 2006 – Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens: Join Bob Sass for a winter walk in the gardens. Meet at the main entrance at 8 a.m. Admission fee payable at the end of the trip \$6.00. Garden members free. For more info and to sign up call Bob at 285-8177.

Sunday, February 5, 2006 – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd: Sunday morning walk at Bryan Park with Sue Ridd. Sunrise is at 7:11 a.m. Meet Sue ½ hour after sunrise at picnic shelter #1. Questions, call Sue at 270-5365. What birds are about and braving the cold? Wednesday, February 8, 2006 – 2nd Wednesday walk with John Coe: This winter morning walk will be to Bryan Park in Richmond. We will be on the look-out for winter birds and visiting waterfowl and maybe a peek at the nesting Great-horned Owl! Call John at 276-1397 for details and to sign up.

Saturday, February 11, 2006 – George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County (on the Potomac River): Join Tyler Turpin for this glorious winter field trip. A \$4.00 park admission fee per person or a national park pass will get us into some good spots on the cove near the house. The trip will cover the beach, picnic area, and visitor's center area, and then into the Town of Colonial Beach. Target birds include Redheaded Woodpeckers, Bald Eagles (4-pair nest on the site), spectacular views of Tundra Swan and any species of waterfowl found in Virginia is possible. Meet at the park at 9 a.m. in the Visitor's Center parking lot. Car poolers and people wanting to travel as a group will depart the Hardees at Parham and Route 1 at 7 a.m. sharp. Call Tyler at 804-750-1878 for more information about the trip.

Remember that field trips are subject to change occasionally. Check the RAS listserve and/or website, or call the trip leader before you head out the door.

Note: all phone numbers in area code 804 unless indicated.

*Julie Kacmarcik  
Caroline Coe*



RAS members on a field trip at Dutch Gap (Left). Female Northern Shoveler in the Dutch Gap marsh (Right). Photos by *Al Warfield*

**Officers and Board Members for 2005-6**

President	Ellen Ackerman	eackerma@aol.com	262-7040
1st Vice President	Al Warfield	warfield101@comcast.net	677-3758
2nd Vice President	Pam Dummitt	pamdummitt@yahoo.com	353-3571
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Hospitality	Linda Warfield	lindawarfield@comcast.net	743-1479
Conservation/Legislation	Margaret O'Bryan John Roberts	heron329@aol.com call for email address	746-5599 329-0812
Membership	Nelda Snyder	snyderfolks@earthlink.net	795-1446
Past President	Margaret O'Bryan	heron329@aol.com	746-5599
Programs*	Sandy Wynne	sswynne@verizon.net	276-5520
Publicity	Greg Moser	vtsec11@juno.com	358-3470
VA Audubon Council Rep	Ellen Ackerman	eackerma@aol.com	262-7040
Youth	Kevin Jones	kvnJns@aol.com	264-7157
At Large	Mary Arginteanu	maryarg@aol.com	320-0138
At Large	Kim Harrell	flyingfish1@erols.com	282-3419

**Important Notices**

**To submit change of address or report problems,** give your name, old address, new address, phone number, and state your problem or intent to our Membership Chair (see table at left).  
To renew or discontinue your membership, please contact National Audubon Society. See your Audubon Magazine for contact information.

Editor's Note: Please submit articles by the 15th of the month before each issue.  
Email: warfield101@comcast.net  
Surface mail: Al Warfield, *The Thrasher* Editor, 4749 Southmoor Road, Richmond VA 23234.

*The Thrasher* will be printed 7 times a year beginning in 2006. The actual months of publication will be determined later.

**Thanks to these Thrasher Volunteers:**  
**Linda Warfield:** Labels & proofreading  
**Patrick Hickey & Jean Adams:** Mailing

*The Thrasher* is printed on recycled paper

**Welcome to New Members of Richmond Audubon Society**

-----NEW MEMBERS-----			TRANSFERS	
CHARLES CITY	GOOCHLAND	RICHMOND	RICHMOND	CHESTERFIELD
James A. Tyler	John Haden	Thomas J. Abbott	Adam Rabung	Mitchell Rose
CHESTER	HOPEWELL	H. J. Beninghove	Mr/Mrs Joe Ripley	MIDLOTHIAN
Marylou M. Clumby	Betsy H. Ameen	Nancy D. Blanchard	Gail Rudolph	Marlene Odair
Susan Dubose	Ted Sweetland	Dorothy Blau	Pamela J. Scrima	RICHMOND
John R. Emershaw	MAIDENS	Robert Blueford, Jr.	C. R. Settles	R. H. Chapell, Jr
CHESTERFIELD	Teresa McNally	Patricia & John Cogbill	Robert Shippee	Les Harrison
Barbara A. Deets	MECHANICSVILLE	Victoria Deeds	Betty Smith	John Popence
COLONIAL HEIGHTS	Jannette Kierce	Paul Denby	Norine Smith	Stella Sargent
Pat Brown	MIDLOTHIAN	Genevieve Dybing	Mr/Mrs Lewis L. Stal	Jan & Ray Tarasovic
Madeline L. Spain	Ted Chapura	Les Edwards	Gayle M. Stewart	George Watkins
CROZIER	Jo Ann Mollisee	Mary L. Freed	Mrs. Cabell Tabb	Ann Williams
Beatrice A. Brookes	Billy Smith, Sr.	Mr / Mrs H. S. Graham	Estelle G. Taylor	
GLEN ALLEN	Cathy C. Todd	R. B. Hawkins	May Thomas	
Robert Bryan	MONTPELIER	Wyatt Heisler	Diane Topscher	
Elizabeth Gomperts	Sheri Goggin	Marion Hunter	Mr/Mrs Edward Ward	
Shari Himelbloom	POWHATAN	Helen Keeton	Robert B. Watson	
Gordon Jazic	Vivian M. Cox	Mary E. Konst	Richard B. Weston	
J. H. McKissick	Jerry Wade	Thomas Layman	Winder Family	
Mack T. Ruffin, III	PROVIDENCE FORGE	Charles Leuschen	Mary Wooding	
V. Rust	Gary Grow	Ann Page	Ruth Woodward	
Regina Smith	QUINTON	Cheryl Phillips	Johnny Wright	
Roger H. Wood	Jeff Ellett		Doris L. Young	

The members above joined RAS or transferred to RAS during the fall of 2005. Welcome, and please come to a meeting or field trip. Make sure to let someone know you are new to the organization.

*Nelda Snyder*, Membership Chair

# The Thrasher

Phone: (804) 257-0813



Richmond Audubon Society

On the Web at: [www.richmondaudubon.org](http://www.richmondaudubon.org)

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2006

## Mystery Predator

Not being as active in our chapter as I would like, I do spend a lot of time providing for the birds in our back yard. It is located in the Olde Hermitage sub-division [Henrico County] where a creek runs down Hermitage Road, and we have acres of wetlands and trees, which attract into our yard at least 50 varieties of birds. On October 26, 2005 when I returned home at noon, there was a hawk or falcon in the dogwood tree, of which I obtained video images. Around 3 p.m. when I again returned home there was a pile of feathers, obviously from a dove. I had known something was preying on my birds as I found feathers behind my junipers prior to this event, so I have been asking for "divine intervention" in seeing this predator. My prayers have been answered three times now. Below is one more example: On November 2, 2005, returning home the raptor was

again in the dogwood tree. I looked out to see what was feeding in the yard, but no birds were there. At 4:15 p.m. I went to the bay window in the kitchen and this predator took flight from the dogwood tree to one of my two sock feeders, knocked it off the railing, caught a finch, flew into a tall tree, and proceeded to eat its prey. The whole process was recorded on video.

Never did I think a predator would take such a small bird, but survival is the name of the game. My children think I'm baiting by feeding these birds but I truly feel I'm giving more life than what this predator is taking. Not only do the birds benefit, but chipmunks, squirrels, possums and raccoons as well.

Using Sibley's, my wife, Anne, and I cannot ascertain the species from the video we have. Anne is leaning towards a Peregrine Falcon and I to a Rough Legged Hawk, but the other

feathers don't match this or any other predator in this book. Perhaps someone will view my footage and solve the mystery.

*Jerry Wells*

*Ed: Sue Ridd, one of our RAS officers, took a look at Jerry's videos, and decided that the bird in the dogwood tree was a Cooper's Hawk. Another raptor that attacked prey in his yard was a Red-shouldered Hawk. Both of these predators like to hunt in wooded areas, and are quite common in Greater Richmond. On a field trip in Bryan Park with Sue, Jerry saw more specimens of these raptors as well. This is a great example of an RAS member asking for help from another RAS member, and becoming more involved with the activities of the organization. Hopefully it will lead to better knowledge of the natural environment, and promote conservation of wildlife and their habitat.*

Richmond Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 26648  
Richmond, VA 23261



# Audubon

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Richmond, VA  
Permit Number 603

### NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY Chapter Membership Application

Yes, please enroll me (us) as a **new** member(s) of both National and Richmond Audubon Societies at the address below, **at the introductory rate**. Also included are subscriptions to the NAS magazine, **Audubon**, and the RAS newsletter, **The Thrasher**. (Make checks payable to **National Audubon Society**. And write "X53" on the check).

\_\_\_ Individual/Family Member(s) \$20 enclosed

\_\_\_ Student/Senior Member \$15 enclosed

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Send your check and application to:  
**Richmond Audubon Society**  
c/o Membership Chair, Nelda Snyder  
9900 Arrahatteck Trail  
Richmond, VA 23231-8339

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7xch



## The Thrasher

*the newsletter of the Richmond Audubon Society.*

*The Richmond Audubon society promotes the enjoyment, understanding, and preservation of birds, other wildlife, and habitat through education, advocacy, and fellowship.*