Woodpeckers of the Richmond Area - Naseem Reza

We are fortunate to have 7 species of woodpeckers that are regularly seen in the Richmond area and except for the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (a woodpecker with a different name), they are all resident species that we can enjoy year round. All 7 species will come to your suet feeder, some readily and others with a little coaxing using the recipe submitted by John Coe found at http://www.richmondaudubon.org/ForBirdsSuet.html

**Pileated Woodpecker**
Our largest woodpecker. Uncommon but seen regularly in our area. Hunts for ants in the bark of dead trees. Male has red malar/moustache as opposed to the female’s black malar/moustache. Male also has more red on the head. Usually forages near the ground.

**Red-headed Woodpecker**
Uncommon, medium sized and by most account our prettiest with contrasting red, white and black plumage. Sexes look alike. Catches insects on the fly. Population declining due to habitat loss. Regularly seen on trees near the parking lot of Robious Landing County Park, Chesterfield County.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker**
Common, medium sized, red belly hard to spot. Male has red head and nape while the female has red nape. Frequent suet feeders. Population increasing. Seldom seen on the ground.

**Northern Flicker**
Large, common woodpecker despite its name. Forages mostly on the ground for ants and other insects. Both sexes have a red crescent nape but only the male has a black malar/moustache. Underside of wings and tail is yellow. Previously known as the Yellow-shafted Flicker.

**Hairy Woodpecker**
Uncommon, medium-large with long beak. Only the male has red on head (back part for adult and front part for juvenile). Similar to Downy Woodpecker but about a third larger. Also unlike the Downy, does not have black spots on the white outer tail feathers. Visits to the suet feeder are few and far between probably due to declining population at least in our area.

**Downy Woodpecker**
Our smallest woodpecker and also very common at the suet feeder. Similar plumage to the Hairy in all respects except the white outer tail feathers have black spots on them. Bill is also noticeably shorter.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**
Uncommon migrant, seen in our area only in the cooler months. Larger than a Downy but smaller than a Hairy. Has red crown and white stripe on the wings. Drills holes on trees to get at the sap and also for insects trapped in the sap. Male has a red throat while the female has a white throat.

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President’s Message - Looking Forward
Eileen Geller

I know what you are thinking. That picture of Lewis Barnett sure looks funny. When did he have time to grow his hair that long? After going above and beyond the call of duty and ably serving this organization for six years as President, Lewis Barnett found a sucker, er… successor to take his place.

I’m still not sure how he talked me into it. I’m relatively new to the organization and very much a novice birder. And what do I know about heading up Richmond Audubon Society—an organization that has been around since before I was born!? This is an overwhelming and terrifying endeavor!

As fate would have it, the National Audubon Society knew this was going to be an issue, so they have conveniently scheduled their national leadership conference for this July here in the great Commonwealth of Virginia! I am fortunate enough to be able to attend this conference, representing Richmond Audubon Society, along with Lewis Barnett, Caroline Coe, and John Coe.

I am also looking forward to meeting many of the leaders of the National Audubon Society and learning about their strategic planning. I also managed to sneak in some time for birding at Great Falls National Park. I am really excited about how this conference can help prepare me to at least try to fill the shoes of my many predecessors. I am proud of the work RAS does for conservation, education, and advocacy, and, though terrified, I am also very excited to be able to help RAS continue that important work.

Black-capped Vireo
Steve Baranoff

I filled our (Austin) backyard birdbath and put out peanuts for the Blue Jays. I heard a vireo which I assumed was a white-eyed. We have had a nesting pair in past years and I’ve noticed variances in their calls. I set up the tripod and camera. Eventually I saw a small yellow bird flitting around. The movements reminded me of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

I only got one "almost" clear shot before a neighbor started mowing his yard. Between the screeching of 20 Blue Jays and the 120 dB mower noise that lasted over an hour, the vireo moved on.

He turned out to be a Black-capped Vireo which is on the U.S. endangered species list and that breeds in a small area in south/central Texas and an even smaller area in Oklahoma. So I got a "lifer" in our urban backyard! See photo on page 4.
Meet Eileen Geller
Incoming RAS President

- I am a civil litigator at a health care law firm, which means I represent businesses in legal disputes that end up in court. I have never seen The Good Wife.
- I grew up on a working family farm in rural Indiana. I was a ten-year member of 4-H, in which I showed hogs, cattle, and rabbits, won grand champion yeast roll, and sewed several outfits, which I also modeled during the fashion revue. Despite such a domestic upbringing, as an adult, I much prefer the penthouse view and give me Park Avenue please!
- I have three cats: Pippi, Scout, and Junior. They stay indoors because they think all the wonderful birds that visit our feeders look just delicious.
- I’m 37, I have size 10 feet, and I think kettle corn should be its own food group.

Richmond Audubon’s Annual Bird-a-thon
Lewis Barnett

Four teams scoured the state from mountains to seashore this year in their 24 hour effort to support Richmond Audubon’s programs through our annual Bird-a-thon fund raiser. Birdzerk! continued their strategy of getting off the mark early, focusing primarily on the greater Richmond area during the last week in April, and came up with a respectable 96 species in spite of less-than-ideal weather conditions. The Purple Martians used the field trip to Warbler Road as their jumping off point, finishing up in Hampton Roads with a total of 130 species. The Crazy Coots were late to the party on May 17, starting at 42nd Street and ending at Chincoteague. Missing most migrating warblers, the team still ended the day with 113 species. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly Ducklings continued their mysterious ways, with a Big Day distributed both in time and space, coming up with a total of 68 species, impressive in spite of its dubious provenance.

If you have not already made a pledge or a donation, you can get details on how to do so at: http://goo.gl/hLyDwT

Making Peanut Butter Sticks - Al Warfield

Peanut butter is a favorite food for numerous species of birds. Start by trimming branches from trees in the yard. Hardwoods work best, such as oak or maple. I usually accumulate pieces of wood and let them dry out before using them to make these sticks. For peanut butter you want fairly straight pieces between 1” and 1.5” thick and 12-16” long.

Start with a piece of wood an inch or two longer than needed, then cut it to the exact size after drilling all the holes. Use drill bit about 5/8-3/4” in diameter, depending on the diameter of the stick. I use Forstner bits because they make a clean, flat-bottomed hole. Lay out the positions of the holes, starting about 1-1/2 to 2” from where the top will be. Then lay out the rest of the holes on one side as if all holes will be on the same side, leaving about 3/8” between the edges of the holes. But only drill every other one on the same side. Then drill the other side at the intermediate positions. Drill the holes deep enough to leave about 1/8” from coming through at the bottom. The last hole should not be less than 1-1/2” from the bottom of the stick to allow perching room.

It helps to have a drill press and a cut-off or miter saw. You can use spade or wood-boring bits, but they make small pilot holes at the bottom of the hole, and the holes they make are not as clean. Forstner bits work best. Make pilot holes where you plan to drill to center the holes properly.

Continued on page 7
Female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
©Naseem Reza

Male Red-bellied Woodpecker
©Lori Schamerhorn

Female Red-bellied Woodpecker
Bob Schamerhorn-www.iPhotoBirds.com

Male Northern Flicker
©Naseem Reza

Female Northern Flicker
Bob Schamerhorn-www.iPhotoBirds.com

Female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
©Naseem Reza

Male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
©Naseem Reza

Peanut Butter Stick
©Linda Warfield
**Field Trips - Ellison Orcutt**

These are all the RAS trips that have been submitted as of the publication date. Check the RAS listserv (if you don't subscribe the archives are at www.freelists.org/archive/va-richmond-general/) or the RAS website for any late breaking news about field trips (www.richmondaudubon.org/ActivFieldTrip.html.)

**July 5th Saturday**
*Bryan Park* with Tyler Turpin:
Start time: *½ hour after sunrise*
Meeting location: Shelter 1, Joseph Bryan Park
Join Tyler for early morning birding in Bryan Park.
For more information, contact Tyler at tylerturpin@earthlink.net or 804 317-9478.

**August 1st Saturday**
*Lewis Ginter* with Tyler Turpin:
See the birds of Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. Help Tyler search the beautiful grounds of the gardens for its resident bird life. Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center at **8:00 am**. Cost will be $7.00 for non-members. Walk will finish around 9:30 - 9:45 am.
Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or tylerturpin@earthlink.net to sign up.

**August 8th Saturday**
*Tangier Island* with Ellison Orcutt:
Time for a birding adventure to one of the most remote places in Virginia. Tangier Island is located in the center of the Chesapeake Bay. This isolated island is home to a hardy bunch of crab fisherman and many birds. We will take the Chesapeake Breeze, a ferry from Reedville, VA that departs at 10:00 am and is back in Reedville at 4:00 pm. With cruise time, that gives us 2.5 hours to explore the island and bird. Along with birding on the island, we will have an opportunity to bird during the extended ferry ride across the Bay where we will be on the lookout for Wilson's Storm-Petrels. Participation for this trip will be dependent on interested parties making a reservation ahead of time. The ferry is $27 for adults and reservations can be made here: http://tangiercruise.com/tangier-cruises/.
You must register yourself with the ferry company ahead of time and there is the possibility that the ferry will fill. Be sure to register early to get a spot.
Contact Ellison at fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org or (804) 339-6976 for help. Also, once you have registered for the ferry, be sure to contact Ellison so he can add you to the trip list and provide further details. We will meet at the Buzzard Point Marina near Reedville by 9:30 am. From Richmond, drive time to the marina is approximately 1.75 hours. The address is 468 Buzzard Point Rd. Reedville, VA 22539.

**August 22nd Saturday**
*Dutch Gap* with Lewis Barnett
Meet Lewis at 8:00 am at the entrance to Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area.
Explore this great birding destination to see what changes are noticeable as migration will be in its beginning stages. For more information, contact blbarnett3@gmail.com.

**August 29th Saturday**
*Radcliffe Conservation Area* with Wendy Ealding
Join Wendy to search for early migrants along the Appomattox River in Chesterfield County. This county park sits below the dam of Lake Chesdin and features trails along the river and swamp. Folks wishing to carpool from the Richmond area can meet Wendy at Oxbridge Square Shopping Center (360 & Courthouse Rd.) at 7:15 am. Those meeting at the site should arrive at 7:45 am. Radcliffe is just west of Colonial Heights. The address is 21501 Chesdin Rd S. Chesterfield, VA 23803. For more info contact Wendy at wealding@aol.com.

*Field Trips - Ellison Orcutt*
From the Kitchen Window - John Coe

“Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet with charm of earliest birds.”
John Milton

...and it is morning when one should be up and about ‘cause the days of July and August here in central Virginia tend to be a bit uncomfortable. Even the birds are becoming quiet during the day, except for the Red-eyed Vireo who sings, no matter, from the trees. But, in the early morning as the misty haze rises with the sun and droplets of dew form on the grasses, the cardinals and wrens and the robins start the day in song. The crows and Blue Jays voice their presence down by the creek, gathering, perhaps, for some morning mischief. The Mourning Doves and bluebirds join the chorus, and the finches. Our Barred Owls nested so far down the creek this year we don’t hear them much.... miss the raspy calls of the young.

Most of our backyard birds have their young flying and transitioning to independence by now, at least the first brood! The goldfinches wait to start, to establish relationships and nesting. I think they like their fresh fledglings playing around in the goldenrod and thistle at summer’s end.

July full moons are on the 1st and the 31st; the 1st is known as the Buck Moon, also Hay Moon or Thunder Moon; the 31st is a Blue Moon. Venus and Jupiter are close to earth and bright in the western sky after sunset.

The August full moon occurs on the 29th, known as the sturgeon moon. Look for the Perseid meteor showers late at night on the 12th.

Making Peanut Butter Sticks

For the hook at the top, first you need to drill a 3/8” or larger vertical hole in the center and glue the appropriate size dowel in it using a good waterproof glue. Hammer the dowel in until it bottoms, and cut it off flush with the top of the stick. Then make a pilot hole in the center of the dowel and place a screw-eye into it. Simply making a pilot hole and then putting the screw eye (or hook) into the top end of the stick will eventually fail because the wood dries out and the hole gets bigger.

Crunchy peanut butter works great for the sticks. Hanging these on a stiff wire from the rain gutter under the eaves will keep squirrels off. Good feeding!

September Program

Looking forward to September 17th, we will have Chris Ludwig, the Chief Biologist at the Virginia Natural Heritage Program, as a speaker and he’ll share with us Birds and adventure in Northern Ecuador - Andes to the Amazon basin.

Richmond Audubon has no member meetings in June, July or August. We look forward to seeing you on September 17th!

Caroline Coe, Program Chair

From the Editor

Although RAS does not hold monthly member meetings in the summer months, activities do not come to a standstill. Bird walks will continue in July and August and the RAS Board will hold its annual Retreat in July. Summer is also the time to make sure that the other creatures sharing our yards and woods have access to water especially when it gets really warm. Birds, mammals and even reptiles visit my bird bath.
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. A subscription to the NAS magazine, Audubon is included.

□ Individual/Family Member(s) $20 enclosed
□ Student/Senior Member $15 enclosed

Name __________________________
Address ____________________________________________
City __________________________ State  ZIP _____________________
Phone __________________________ E-mail __________________________
Make check payable to National Audubon Society and write “C0ZX530Z” on the check. Send your check and application to:
Richmond Audubon Society,
P.O. Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261
C0ZX530Z

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