



The Thrasher

Richmond Audubon Society

The next *Thrasher* will be the May/June issue

RAS Meetings in March and April 2009

The meetings will be held at St. Luke Lutheran Church, beginning at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. 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 Huguenot Rd. exit.

Program for March 19: Garrie D. Rouse, Consulting Botanist at Rouse Environmental Services, Aylett, VA, will speak to us on the Freshwater Tidal Marshes of the Mattaponi & Pamunkey Rivers and what makes them special from a floristic and ecological perspective. Mr. Rouse has over twenty years experience in the application of his botanical sciences background to wetland assessments, endangered species studies, vegetative surveys and environmental impact reviews. He has gained extensive experience in endangered species surveys and rare plant population research and management through his previous employment with The Nature Conservancy, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, and Virginia Division of Natural Heritage. Garrie also owns and operates a small canoe and kayak business based in Aylett, Virginia, providing guided natural history tours and rentals on the relatively pristine Mattaponi & Pamunkey Rivers.

Program for April 16: Our speaker, Matt Jeffries, is National Audubon's International Alliances Program (IAP) Program Manager. He will inform us about Virginia's migrating birds and the partnerships in place to help protect their critical habitats, north and south. The Prothonotary Warbler, among others, will be highlighted. IAP protects the birds and biodiversity of the Americas.

Birds' regular exposure to vast geographic ranges makes them uniquely qualified as barometers of our planet's biodiversity and environmental health. Birds' visibility, accessibility and appeal help link people, cultures and places together throughout the hemisphere.

Dessert will be available after the meetings.

Sandy Wynne, Program Chair

The Pre-meeting dinner for each meeting will start at 5:30 p.m. There is a nominal fee of \$5.00. Email or call me by the Monday of the week of the meeting, and no later than the day before the meeting, if you plan to be there for the dinner so that we can arrange to provide plenty of food.

Note: if you 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 evening of the day before the meeting.

Entrée items for the pre-meeting dinners are provided by some of the attendees by pre-arrangement. You don't have to bring any food, but you are welcome to share one of your favorite dishes with our group. Keep all your receipts for any food you bring. Those who bring food are reimbursed for their expenses at the meeting if they provide receipts, and all who partake pay the \$5.00 fee whether or not they bring food. (We don't try to make a profit on the dinners.) Call or e-mail by the Sunday before the Thursday meeting to let me know what you plan to provide. This allows time to coordinate the dinner.

Bon Appetit!

Jan Robertson, Hospitality Chair

hospitality@richmondaudubon.org, or 804-272-6674

In this issue:

President's Message: March/April, 2009	2
Thrasher Editor Position Available	2
RAS Field Trips for January & February	3
Varina Lions Club Annual Canoe-a-thon, May 16, 2009	3
Birds and Climate Change: On the Move. National Audubon Website	4
RAS Nominating Committee and Elections	4
Naseem Reza: Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge Photos	5
Birds in the Richmond Area this Winter: Photos by Al Warfield	6
RAS Officers & Committee Chairs; Important Notices	7
From the Kitchen Window - John Coe	7
Learning to use the RAS Website: for those receiving Thrasher in the Mail	8
Audubon Membership Form	8

Future Programs & Trips

May 21 RAS Program: Naseem Reza will present a program on Hawaii birding. You will enjoy the great images from Lou and Naseem's trip.

Lions Club Canoe-a-thon will be held on May 16 at 9:30 a.m. See details on Page 3.

The RAS Picnic will be in June. The date and other information will be available in the next Thrasher issue.

President's Message: March / April 2009

Punxsutawney Phil and his shadow notwithstanding, I commenced spring-cleaning a few days ago. The idea was not so much to accomplish the "cleaning" part of spring-cleaning. It was more that by doing so I would be forced to move all the furniture. I read a book on feng shui explaining how rearranging things improves the energy, or "chi", in your home. I figured energy was something I could use more of, so I moved everything to the center of the room and tried to figure out a better way to put it all back.

Next, I took down all my pictures so I could wash the walls. I stacked my personal gallery of paintings, prints and photographs on the floor alongside each other in random order. Most of them feature birds or nature. I sat down to mentally picture the way I would re-hang them once the furniture rearrangement was finished. Anything to put off the wall-washing chore. I imagined the photo of owlets taken by a friend at Henricus one spring hanging next to my Audubon reproduction on *that* wall or beside the Elegant Trogons print over *there*.

Flight of fancy over, I went downstairs to get the mail. Glancing out the window, I did a double take. A man was standing at an easel looking for all the world like an Impressionist painter transported from France in a time machine and plopped smack dab in the median of the Boulevard in Richmond, VA circa 2009. My neighbor, the artist David Tanner, straw hat atop his head, brush poised at a canvas perched on an easel, was painting a picture of my static urban landscape, the one I see every day when I

walk out my front door.

Across the street, the gleaming white bell tower of St. Mark's imposes itself on the whole block, forever stationed south of the attorney's offices situated in what used to be a grand old home on the corner. On the other corner is the beautifully landscaped home of a realtor specializing in Museum District properties. But that is not what David was painting. His picture looked alive somehow, vibrant with color, form and – *chi*. David paints what is there, yet his paintings look like somewhere I have never been because he paints what he sees with his artist's eyes.

I am not an artist, but suddenly I saw the world just outside my door in a new light. Migration is on its way. The birds coming and going in trees along the Boulevard were somewhere else the day before. Tomorrow or next week they will flit around somewhere else on their journey. This view, the one I see today, is a limited edition of one in a gallery of limitless proportion and possibility.

So here's tip: if you need some new energy in your life, skip the spring-cleaning and head outside. Nature is creating an ever-changing tableau of "performance art" animated by birds. The gallery is always open, the featured collection always evolving. The economy may be faltering, but the best things in life are truly free.

Chi-eers,

Pam

Thrasher Editor Position Available

Since May 2001 I have held the position of Thrasher Editor. A lot has been changed about the Thrasher in my term as Editor, hopefully for the best. But I announced last September at a Board meeting that I was not planning to remain in that position after the end of the 2009 fiscal year, June 30. Therefore, the May/June 2009 issue will be my last.

Unfortunately, nobody who has been asked has accepted the position of Thrasher Editor. Maybe that's because it appears to be a very demanding job, or that people don't think they have the expertise for it. You don't have to be a graphics expert, and you can simply use Microsoft Word instead of desktop publishing software. All you have to do is receive the necessary information from other RAS members and put it into a form. You do need a good command of the English language, have a computer, receive and send Email, and know how to use word processing software. That's about it.

If you think you would like to take the job on, or know of someone who you think would be qualified and interested, please contact Lewis Barnett (lbarnett@richmond.edu) or me. The new editor will receive any help needed in getting started.

A proposal was made to the Board that would reduce the demands of the Thrasher position by making it a web-

based publication with no graphics, and limited to only the essential articles. Up to about 200 copies of each issue could be printed and sent out to people who really need a printed copy. The printing step could be desktop printing or taking it to Kinko's. This was worked out to greatly reduce the difficulty and amount of time required for this position. You can take the Thrasher in that direction if you see fit, or come up with your own idea.

RAS really needs someone to step up to the plate. We seriously need someone to coordinate the dissemination of critical information such as meeting notices, field trips, President's Message and maybe one or two other articles. The information isn't going to go out by itself. So, if you think you can do it, please send Email or make a phone call. We can discuss the particulars and arrive at what will work for you.

Al Warfield

Thrasher@richmondaudubon.org

804-743-1479

RAS Field Trips: March - April, 2009

Sunday, March 1. Bryan Park with Sue Ridd. Is the winter weather beginning to break? Join Sue for an early walk in Bryan Park and take a look for yourself! The trip meets at 7:15 a.m. at Shelter #1. Call Sue with any questions, at 270-5365.

Saturday March 7. James River Park, Pony Pasture Area. Meet Lewis Barnett in the parking lot off Riverside Drive at 7:30 a.m. For more information: 320-7898 or lbarnett@richmond.edu.

Wednesday March 11. 2nd Wednesday walk with John Coe, at Henricus/Dutch Gap. Call John (276-1397) for time and details.

Friday, March 27. Back again this season, "Wetlands before Work" with Mary and Larry. Running every Friday March 27-May 8. Meet at the entrance to the Wetlands of James River Park off Landria Drive at 7 a.m. Questions? call Mary at 320-0138.

Friday April 3. "Wetlands before Work" with Mary and Larry. Meet at the entrance to the Wetlands of James River Park off Landria Drive at 7 a.m. Call 320-0138 for details.

Sunday, April 5. Bryan Park with Sue Ridd. Spring is here. Join Sue's monthly walk to see what new arrivals have stopped over in Bryan Park. Meet at Shelter#1 at 7:15 am. Call Sue with any questions at 270-5365.

Wednesday April 8. 2nd Wednesday walk with John Coe, at the new Appomattox River Trail. Call John (276-1397) for time and details.

Friday April 10. "Wetlands before Work" with Mary and Larry. Meet at the entrance to the Wetlands of James River Park off Landria Drive at 7 a.m. Call 320-0138 for details.

Saturday April 11. Henricus/Dutch Gap. Meet Lewis Barnett at the Visitor Center parking lot at 8:00 a.m. For more information contact lbarnett@richmond.edu or 320-7898.

Friday April 17. "Wetlands before Work" with Mary and Larry. Meet at the entrance to the Wetlands of James River Park off Landria Drive at 7 a.m. Call 320-0138 for details.

Saturday April 18. Great Dismal Swamp with Darrell Peterson. Join Darrell for our annual pilgrimage to the swamp in Suffolk. The target bird is the Swainson's Warbler. A great trip to learn bird song and also observe butterflies. Meet at Bermuda Square Shopping Center (Routes 10 and 301 in Chester) near Shoney's at 5:30 am. Bring insect repellent, water, snacks and be prepared for a gentle, long walk. No facilities. Call 276-9354 for details.

Friday April 24. "Wetlands before Work" with Mary and Larry. Meet at the entrance to the Wetlands of James River Park off Landria Drive at 7 a.m. Call 320-0138 for details.

Saturday April 25. Join Tyler Turpin for a walk on the trails at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center at 8:00 a.m. Cost will be \$6.00 for non-Ginter members; finish around 9:30 - 9:45 a.m. Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317- 9478 or tykerturpin@earthlink.net to sign up.

Trip will be cancelled unless at least 4 persons have signed up by 9 p.m. of the Wednesday before.

Saturday, April 25. Trolley Line with Linda and Bob Cole. Meet at Luck Chevrolet at 7 a.m. on Route 1 in Ashland just north of Green Top Sporting Goods on the left as you head north. Left at the light (at Luck Chevrolet) and right into Luck's lot. Park on the left in the dirt along Ashcake Rd and don't block access to the rear of the building . Do not park among the new and used cars. Call Bob and Linda (798- 6618) for more details. Rain date is on the 26th.

Sunday, April 26 James River Park - Main area. Meet Lewis Barnett at the 42nd Street entrance at 7:30 a.m. For more information contact lbarnett@richmond.edu or 320-7898.

Friday May 1. "Wetlands before Work" with Mary and Larry. Meet at the entrance to the Wetlands of James River Park off Landria Drive at 7 a.m. Call 320-0138 for details.

Sunday May 3. Bryan Park with Sue Ridd. Come see Bryan Park from a different point of view. Each season has its own cast for your birding interests! For more information, call Sue at 270-5365.

Be sure to check the RAS website and the RAS listserv for any trips that were not available when this list was put together, or for changes.

Compiled by Al Warfield



Varina Lions Club's 17th Annual Canoe-A-Thon

Date: Saturday Morning, May 16, 2009

This great water route for birding is a 12-mile journey on one of the most historic stretches of the James River from Deep Bottom Boat Landing in Varina down river to the loop around Turkey Island (Presquile Wildlife Refuge). The take-out spot is Shirley Plantation where a home cooked barbeque lunch is served on the banks of the river.

Contact Buz Snyder at (804) 795-1446 for a brochure and/or registration questions. This is a fund raising event

to support sight and hearing programs by the Lions Club. Check-in time at Deep Bottom is 8:45 a.m. with launch at 9:30 a.m. after a paddlers briefing. Cost per paddler is \$35.00, which covers lunch, T shirt, and transportation of canoe/kayak and yourself back up river to the launch site. Kayakers welcome!

You can take your time, or enter the race - it's up to you. Discuss the details with Buz.

Birds and Climate Change: On the Move

This article is from the National Audubon website. You can read it in its entirety and access the birds affected: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/bacc/index.html>.

Nearly 60% of the 305 species found in North America in winter are on the move, shifting their ranges northward by an average of 35 miles. Audubon scientists analyzed 40 years of citizen-science Christmas Bird Count data — and their findings provide new and powerful evidence that global warming is having a serious impact on natural systems. Northward movement was detected among species of every type, including more than 70 percent of highly adaptable forest and feeder birds.

Only grassland species were an exception - with only 38 percent mirroring the northward trend. But far from being good news for species like Eastern Meadowlark and Henslow's Sparrow, this reflects the grim reality of severely-depleted grassland habitat and suggests that these species now face a double threat from the combined stresses of habitat loss and climate adaptation.

It is the complete picture of widespread movement and the failure of some species to move at all that illustrate the impacts of climate change on birds. They are sending us a powerful signal that we need to 1) take

policy action to curb climate change and its impacts, and 2) help wildlife and ecosystems adapt to unavoidable habitat changes, even as we work to curb climate change itself.

Examples of birds affected are Purple Finches, Wild Turkeys, Meadowlarks (both Eastern and Western), Ring-billed Gulls, Red-breasted Mergansers, Vesper Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, and Pine Siskins. Browse some species on the move - and some who are not as adaptable - and learn what you can do to help.

<http://www.audubon.org/bird/bacc/Species.html>

The interactive map (http://www.audubon.org/bird/bacc/images/BACC_map.jpg) provides a visual presentation of where a number of these species have traveled from their original grounds. The map is depicted here, but go to the link provided for full functionality.

A recently-released NAS Birds and Climate report clearly shows that climate change is affecting birds – and our world – now. For the past 40 years, as our climate has warmed, birds have shifted their winter ranges further and further north. This ecological disruption is yet another wake up call that we must act quickly to solve



the climate crisis. The birds' northward movement is another signal that climate change is here and action is needed now.

We need global warming legislation that will help birds and wildlife survive what is coming by protecting their habitats and will reduce global warming pollution 80 percent by 2050 to avoid the worst impacts of a rapidly changing climate. Tell your lawmakers where you stand on global warming. Go to <http://audubonaction.org/campaign/birdsandclimate> and sign the NAS petition.

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RAS Nominating Committee and Elections

The Elections for Officers and Board members will be held at the Annual meeting of RAS at St. Luke Church on May 21, 2009. VP Lewis Barnett will chair the Nominating Committee this year. The other members of the committee include Caroline Coe and Al Warfield.

The openings for Board positions are: President, Secretary, Conservation, Youth (RAS Kids), Education, Newsletter/Circulation, and Field Trips. Bob Schamerhorn has been nominated for Cyberspace. Two other positions that are not Board positions are available, and these are also extremely vital to the success of our organization: Auction Chair and Birdathon Chair. Any member can nominate any other member for any one of these positions. You can even nominate yourself. Contact Lewis at vicepresident1@richmondaudubon.org to nominate someone for a position.

Naseem Reza: Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge

Lou & Naseem Reza took a long trip to Florida recently. Here are some of the most interesting images from that trip.



If you go to Florida in springtime, do not miss Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Morning is best from the lighting perspective and oddly, the wildlife drive is closed on Fridays. As Art Morris mentioned in his book, *The Art of Bird Photography*, there is no better place in the country for large wading birds.

Siamese Twins

These are two White Pelicans, joined at the hip apparently, although not really. This one goes in the Humor Section.

Five Species

This photo includes Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Snowy Egret and Great Egret. They are attracted by the female Double-crested Cormorant (also in the picture) diving for fish. My guess is that the fish are flushed by the Cormorant and the other birds want a shot at them.

Can you identify them all?



Birds in the Richmond Area this Winter



Canvasback & Ring-neck Ducks at Shields Lake in February



Hooded Mergansers at The Arboretum in January



Ring-neck Duck swimming in Shields Lake



Ring-neck blasting off at Shields Lake

Plenty of ducks either spent the winter or some time here while migrating through. There have been White-winged Scoters in the James near the Wetlands and Pony Pasture, Common Mergansers near Rattlesnake Creek, rafts of Redheads and Buffleheads in the James, Hooded Mergansers in several lakes, and Ruddy Ducks in Swift Creek Reservoir, among many other sightings too numerous to mention here. Several reports of Lesser Black-backed Gulls and other fairly unusual species have also been reported. Most of these reports came via the RAS Listserv. One more reason to register for the Listserv. See the Backpage for how to do that.

All photographs and comments on this page by Al Warfield



The Great Blue Heron Rookery at the Pipeline in downtown Richmond. At least 6 nests can be seen in this picture. At least 4 herons can be seen here, and 2 are easily visible.

Officers / Committee Chairs and Co-chairs for 2008-9

President	Pam Dummitt	president@richmondaudubon.org	353-3571
1st VP	Lewis Barnett	vicepresident1@richmondaudubon.org	320-7898
2nd VP	Caroline Coe	vicepresident2@richmondaudubon.org	276-1397
Secretary	Russell Deane	secretary@richmondaudubon.org	
Treasurer	Donna Brodd	treasurer@richmondaudubon.org	262-7040
Past President	Al Warfield		
Development	Anne Dunnburg	development@richmondaudubon.org	212-9524
Thrasher Editor	Al Warfield	thrasher@richmondaudubon.org	677-3758
Thrasher Co-editor	Naseem Reza	thrasher@richmondaudubon.org	272-1145
Education	Bob Schamerhorn	education@richmondaudubon.org	658-0871
Hospitality	Jan Robertson	hospitality@richmondaudubon.org	272-6674
Conservation	vacant		
Legislation	Margaret O'Bryan	legislation@richmondaudubon.org	746-5599
Field Trips	Penny Reynolds	fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org	828-4911
Membership	Lori Rutledge	membership@richmondaudubon.org	310-9014
Cyberspace	Robin Ruth	cyberspace@richmondaudubon.org	231-5949
Programs	Sandy Wynne	programs@richmondaudubon.org	276-5520
Publicity	Diane Jadowski	Publicity@richmondaudubon.org	702-308-1953
Youth	Robin Ruth Mary Arginteanu	RASkids@richmondaudubon.org	231-5949 320-0138
IBA /VAC Rep	Lewis Barnett	IBA@richmondaudubon.org	320-7898

Important Notices

Richmond Audubon Society is a registered non-profit organization

For 2009 *The Thrasher* will be issued in Jan/Feb., Mar/Apr., May/Jun. Other issues to be determined.

Submit articles no later than the 15th of the month before each issue.
E-mail: thrasher@richmondaudubon.org

RAS membership meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of the month except June, July and Aug. Meetings held at St. Luke Lutheran Church at Custis Rd. and Chippenham Parkway unless notified.

RAS Board Meetings held on the 2nd Thursday on alternate months starting in Jan; RAS members welcome to attend, but contact a Board member to obtain location and time.

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

Richmond Audubon Society is also a chapter of the Virginia Society of Ornithology and the Virginia Conservation Network.

The Thrasher is printed on recycled paper

From The Kitchen Window: March – April, 2009

"Came the spring with all its splendor,
All its birds and all its blossoms,
All its flowers, and leaves, and grasses."
Longfellow

Even as the cold days and nights of Forever-February persist and challenge the lengthening daylight, symptoms of springtime stream through the window. The maple tree down on the flat glows red as the sun reaches its branch tips. Early crocuses and daffodils poke their yellow blooms through the winter leaf mat...And the drumming of woodpeckers can be heard in the kitchen.

Soon new spring buds will nudge the golden leaves of the beach tree into the wind, and the big Tulip Poplar will showoff its greens.

The little peepers and the Chorus Frogs are already singing, and as the nights become warmer, the American and Fowler Toads will join in.

As the song says – Lou Rawls I think – "Love is in the air". And our good ol' backyard feathered friends say it best, especially on a warm spring morning – with the window open.

As of this writing – mid February – our winter birds are still around. Along with the juncos and White-throated Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, a couple Hermit Thrushes, one sapsucker, one Brown Creeper, a fleeting Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Purple Finch, we still have 20 or so Pine Siskins enjoying our snacks. As daylight becomes more than nightlight, they too will go to their summer place – where love is in the air.

The Full Moon in March – known as the Worm Moon, or the Sap Moon – occurs on the 10th at 10:30 p.m. Spring arrives – the Vernal Equinox – at 7:44 a.m. on the 20th. And Saturn shines brightly all month.

The Full Moon in April – named the Egg Moon – will occur at 10:56 a.m. on the 9th. The Lyrid meteor shower should be a good show on the night of the 21st while the moon is a thin crescent. The New Moon, Venus, and Mars will be together in the early morning sky on the 22nd, and the moon will pass in front of Venus (occult).

John Coe



Learning to Use the RAS Website: *for those receiving The Thrasher in the mail*

Starting with this issue, and probably continuing for a long time, it is important that you get in the habit of using the RAS website and listserv for most of your news about what's happening in the Mid-Atlantic birding world and in things that stem from Richmond Audubon. That's because there is a chance that mailings of *The Thrasher* will not continue after the May/June 2009 issue.

It all depends on whether a new *Thrasher* Editor can be found by that time. If not, there will be an effort put forth to have all the critical information about the meetings and field trips placed on the website. But you will have to know how to find that information. So this is to get you started.

If you have access to the Internet, bring up your browser. It is probably Microsoft Internet Explorer. Near the top there is an area called the URL area. That's where you put the name of the website you want to access. Click to the right of whatever is there. It will look like this:

<http://www.google.com/>. Maybe not exactly that, but similar. When you click in the white space to the right of that the text will become all blue - or selected. Type the following into that solid blue area: www.richmondaudubon.org.

Then press "enter" or click on the green arrow to the right. The RAS website will open up.

You will see tabs at the top. Click on the one that says "Thrasher". There you will find all the critical information you need to keep up with the meetings, field trips, other activities like workdays, bird banding, RAS Kids, IBA activities, etc.

All of this has not been worked out yet, but it will be by the end of June, and some is already in place. So go to the website and try it. Look at all the pages. You will find information about birding and RAS that you never dreamed of.

In the January/February issue of *The Thrasher* there was an article on how to register for the RAS Listserv. On the website there is also information on it. While you are in the website, look at that information. You will benefit greatly from joining the Listserv. It is free, and you can get all the latest news. That includes birding news, field trip or meeting changes, etc. You can easily delete the Email you don't want, but some of the Listserv postings will be very valuable to you because they are instant updates of the latest information.

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



Audubon

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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 address: _____

Make check payable to **National Audubon Society** and write **"C9ZX530Z"** on the check).

Send your check and application to:

Richmond Audubon Society
c/o Membership Chair, Lori Rutledge
P.O. Box 363
Richmond, VA 23218-0363

C9ZX530Z



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.