



The Thrasher

Richmond Audubon Society

No meetings in June, July or August!

The Richmond Audubon Society extends our sympathy to members and families impacted by the recent events at Virginia Tech. We grieve the loss of lives and pray that with the passing of time we can find peace and renewed hope as we begin the healing process.

RAS Meeting in May 2007

All membership 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 May 17: Our speaker will be none other than RAS' own Larry Rohr, who will take us underground where bats live. Larry has been a caver for over 30 years and has seen bats up close and personal. Bats are the only flying mammals, and the name of their order "Chiroptera" means "Hand-Wing". Don't miss this program!

Dessert will be available after the meeting.

The Pre-meeting dinner will start at 5:30 p.m. There is a nominal fee of \$5.00. Call (743-1479) or email me (lin-dawarfield@comcast.net) by the day before the meeting

if you plan to be there for the dinner.

Note for 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 must be made by 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. We always need both vegetarian and meat entrees as well as salads and side dishes. If you would like to share one of your favorite recipes with our group, call or email me by the Sunday before the meeting. Keep your receipts so I can reimburse you at the meeting. Bon Appetit!

Linda Warfield, Hospitality Chair
Sandy Wynne, Program Chair

Annual RAS Picnic

Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 9. That's when Buz and Nelda Snyder will host our annual picnic at their lovely home in Varina. For those of you who haven't been there, their home overlooks a private pond with a small beach, swim raft, picnic area, and even a cabin with changing rooms and half-bath. Come by 8:00 a.m. for the morning bird walk. Bring your own meat to cook on the grills and a dish to share (four or more servings). We will eat around noon. RAS will provide drinks, ice, and utensils. The Snyders will provide charcoal, picnic tables and chairs, and

condiments. Well-behaved pets and children are welcome. Rain date is Sunday, June 10.

From Richmond: Go east on Main Street, which becomes Route 5. At the Y-intersection of Rt 5 and Osborne Turnpike, bear right onto Osborne Tpk. After 8 miles, Osborne becomes Kingsland Rd. at a 90° left bend. Proceed on Kingsland for 0.9 mi to Arrahatteck Trail, a gravel road on the right. Take this road past the house to the end of the road at the lake. Travel time 18 minutes from Capital Square.

From I-295: Take the Varina exit, (Exit 22), Rt. 5, west toward Richmond. Proceed west on Rt. 5 to 1st traffic light, Strath Road. Turn left on Strath to the dead end at Kingsland Rd. and turn right. Go past intersections at Varina Road and Hoke-Bradley Rd. About one block (0.1 mi) on the left, turn onto Arrahatteck Trail, and proceed as above. 10 minutes from Exit 22.

From Chippenham Parkway: At the end of Chippenham South, keep left and go straight on I-895 east (Pocahontas Parkway-\$2.00 toll). Take the first exit, Rt 5, stay in left lane and turn left at Laburnum Ave sign. At dead end turn left onto Osborne Tpk and proceed as above from Richmond. 30 minutes from Stony Point Fashion Park.

Linda Warfield (743-1479)

In this issue:

<i>The Thrasher</i> : Changes Are Coming	2
President's Message: - Al Warfield	3
RAS Field Trips & Work Days: -May - June. 2007	4
VSO Breeding Bird Foray - Wendy Ealding	4
A Blizzard of Snow Geese - Adrienne Strandberg	5
Help RAS Kids: Be a Volunteer	5
Thanks to Great Big Greenhouse	5
Thanks to Wild Birds Unlimited	5
Birdathon, May 2007 - Margaret Ebbs and Caroline Coe	6
VCU - Maymont Rice Center Field Trip Report, April 7, 2007	6
RAS Officers & Committee Chairs; Important Notices	7
From the Kitchen Window: - John Coe	7
Auction 2007 - Al & Linda Warfield	8
Audubon Membership Form	8

The next *Thrasher* will be the July/August issue.

The Thrasher: Changes They Are A-Comin'

* *The Thrasher* is now available on-line:

The photographs are in color in the online version, even though the line drawings will remain black for now. *Via* the RAS website, members can access information about meetings, field trips, and upcoming events 24/7. We believe that you will enjoy this added feature to the website, and will find it a very convenient way to access the newsletter and stay updated with Chapter activities, even if you decide to continue receiving it by mail.

* Change in *The Thrasher* Mailing:

Now that *The Thrasher* is online, there is an opportunity to improve the methods and efficiency with which we distribute the newsletter to both National and Chapter Members of RAS, as well as interested organizations. More than 1500 copies of *The Thrasher* are mailed out now. Currently, we have no way to know whether you read your copy or not. Starting in 2008, only people who have responded with their preference to receive it by mail will receive a copy. If you plan to read *The Thrasher* online only and don't want to receive it in the mail, that will happen if you don't respond at all. But if you do let us know of your intent, it will tell us who among the 1400 or so members on our list actually reads the newsletter, even if they never participate in any of our activities.

Important: Request to Continue Receiving the Newsletter through U.S. Mail:

If you are a member who wants to continue receiving the Thrasher in the U.S. Mail, please notify RAS of this preference before November 30, 2007 to continue your Thrasher starting in January 2008. If you are active in RAS at all, even if you just enjoy reading the newsletter, please respond to keep your newsletter coming in the mail. Please notify RAS in one of the following ways:

1. Send e-mail to Warfield101@comcast.net. Indicate "Thrasher" in the Subject line
2. Send a written response to: RAS, PO Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261 (allow a week or more extra time)
3. Call the RAS phone number (804) 257-0813 and leave a message with your name and phone number. You will be called back to indicate your choice.

What to include in your response (To ensure that we can tell which member you are)

* *Your name* (as it appears on your Thrasher label)

* *Your address with zip*

* *Telephone and e-mail addresses* so we can contact you

* *The 10-digit account number or other code at the top of your mailing label* located on the newsletter that is currently sent to you (e.g., 0000000001, NOL, COMP, COA, or WOL)

* *Whether you want to receive the Thrasher by mail or only read it online*

* (Optional for you but useful to us) *What RAS activities you enjoy:* Read *The Thrasher*, Field Trips, Meetings, Workdays, Auction, Projects, other (specify)

How will you know when the Thrasher is online?

The Thrasher will be posted on the RAS website on, or soon after, the first day of the first month that the issue covers. In addition, members who subscribe to the VA-General-Richmond List Serve will receive e-mail each time a new issue of the newsletter is posted to the web site. If you do not currently subscribe to the list serve, subscribing is simple. You can subscribe to the list serve by sending email to va-richmond-general-request@freelists.org with 'subscribe' in the Subject field. If you have questions about the list serve, please contact Robin Ruth by e-mail: robin.ruth@verizon.net, or by phone: (804) 231-5949.

More Information:

In an effort to ease through this transition, RAS is giving members ample time to decide the manner in which they would prefer to receive the newsletter. The deadline to notify RAS is November 30, 2007. RAS will make every effort to remind members of these upcoming changes and the deadline through the newsletter, at member meetings and on the web site. In the event that you are unsure of your membership status and/or have a membership related question, please contact Lori Rutledge, Membership Chair, by e-mail lorirutledge8@aol.com or by phone at (804) 310-9014.

See the President's Message (next page) for further details on the newsletter mailing changes.

Effect on your NAS Membership:

Just to avoid confusion, this response has nothing whatsoever to do with your NAS membership. You will continue to receive NAS publications and mailings, regardless of the decision you make on receiving the Thrasher.

President's Message, March/April 2007

Well, this is it! My last President's Message! It has been a very successful year for RAS. Because I inherited the job, many of the activities were already planned or initiated before my term began. Nevertheless, all the work we did at Presquile, the startup of the RAS Kids Committee, the DGIF Awards Dinner, the Annual Auction, and many others, all contributed to the successes, and I am proud to have been President of RAS during that time. Thanks to all the RAS officers, Board members, members who volunteered for projects and workdays, and others, who made it happen. Please support your new President, Pam Dummitt. I'll still be around as *Thrasher* Editor, First Vice President, and Past President.

Online *Thrasher*: This issue marks the beginning of a new era for *The Thrasher* and for RAS. *The Thrasher* is now online – see the article on p. 2. You can view in color the photographs you have enjoyed in black & white for the last several years. You can also find the field trips, meeting notices, and all our other articles whenever you want. If it were not for the work of Naseem Reza, one of our members, it would have taken longer for this to happen. Naseem demonstrated the feasibility by placing the Adobe PDF file of the January/February *Thrasher* on his website. When I told Robin Ruth, our Webmaster, she added that issue to the RAS site. Duplicate color versions of the black & white photos were added to the March/April web version. Maybe later it will get fancier, but for now, enjoy.

***Thrasher* Mailing Changes:** Over 1500 copies of *The Thrasher* are mailed out each issue, although we have only been able to count 200-300 members who have come to meetings, field trips, workdays, or any other activity for which we have a list of participants.

When someone subscribes to NAS and has a zip code in our area, they are automatically assigned to RAS, and receive a copy of our newsletter. This includes gift subscriptions, professionals who subscribe to have the magazine in their office, and others only interested in the NAS publications. We also send complimentary copies to organizations and individuals who ask for them or whom we feel should have them. Some folks ask for a 2-issue free trial. That will now be given by directing them to the RAS website. We would like to eliminate sending unwanted *Thrashers* just to go into the trash or recycle bin. But we also want to make sure you to have your mailed copy if you enjoy reading it.

Starting in January 2008, only those who tell us they want to continue their mailed subscription will receive the *Thrasher*, except for a few complimentary copies as described above. To continue the subscription, all that will be required is to give a response by November 30, either by e-mail, U.S. Mail, or phone. People who don't

read *The Thrasher* will not respond, and their subscription will cease, until they ask us to start it up again.

Optional Information you can provide: Simply decreasing the mailing list is not our only objective even if it is the major one. Even if you would rather read your *Thrasher* online and don't want the paper copy, it will help if you respond and indicate which type of activities you enjoy. That allows us to contact you if there are cancellations; to see if you want to participate in specific projects, determine who might be future Board members, etc. It also lets us know which of the 1400 or so people on our list actually read the newsletter.

***Thrasher* Label:** Please look at your mailing label on the current *Thrasher* issue. If you are an NAS member in good standing you should have a 10-digit account number at the top. If not, there may be something else. Here are the possibilities and their meanings:

If your label has an expiration date like "A/S 07", you are not on the new NAS electronic list. There may be a problem with your membership. If you send the requested response we will investigate.

If your label says "NLO", you are a Chapter-only Member in RAS but not a NAS member. You should be submitting a \$20 fee to our Treasurer once a year. If we have not received that in the last year your *Thrasher* will be discontinued starting in January 2008. To continue receiving *The Thrasher*, send us a response and we will bill you for this fee. (NLO means "newsletter only".)

If your label says "COMP", you are receiving a complimentary issue. Unless you are a birding store, we still need you to respond or we will automatically stop mailing *The Thrasher*. "COMP2" means you are receiving 2 free issues. You will need to submit your application and check. There won't be any more free issues now that the *Thrasher* is online.

If your labels says "WOL" (waiting on label), "COA" (change of address) and a few others, your information was submitted to NAS and the changes have not taken place yet. If the dates are way in the past, there is a problem at the NAS end. Your response will let us know to report it again, and to keep sending the *Thrasher*.

If there is something related to the *Thrasher* mailing you want to tell us besides what is being asked for, please do it very briefly in your response. There could be hundreds of responses we have to act upon.

After January 2008 there will be notices posted on how to change your preference, and the membership form has already been modified to allow new members to state their preference.

Al Warfield

Field Trips & Work Days: May - June 2007

Spring/Summer Pelagics— Sea birding with Brian Patteson: Check out Brian's website and choose a date for a memorable pelagic trip out into the Atlantic that is almost certain to add new entries to your Life List!!

<http://www.seabirding.com/>

May 2007 – RAS Birdathon: Start a team or support one. See article on page 6.

Fridays, May 4, 11, 18, 25, 2007 – The Wetlands before Work (WBW): Join Mary Arginteanu and Larry Robinson for spring arrivals at the Wetlands entrance to the James River Park on Landria Drive at 7 a.m. For more information, contact Mary at 320-0138.

Sunday, May 6, 2007 – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd: Take a spring walk around Bryan Park with Sue and look for all the spring migrants, decked out in their breeding plumage and singing their best songs as they pass through Richmond. Meet at Shelter #1 at 6:39 a.m. Questions?, call Sue at 270-5365.

Wednesday, May 9, 2007 – 2nd Wednesday Walk with John Coe: The 42nd Street section of the James River Park is THE PLACE TO BE for spring migration! Join John and catch the wave, meeting at 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot. Questions? Call John at 276-1397.

Saturday, May 12, 2007 – James River Park, Richmond: Join Lewis Barnett for spring birding at its best in the James River Park's 42nd Street entrance. This time of year over 20 species of warblers are possible, as well as vireos, thrushes, grosbeaks and more. The hummingbirds and gnat-catchers will be nesting and spring will be in full bloom. The trip will meet in the parking lot at 6:00 a.m. Call Lewis at 320-7898 for more information.

Friday - Sunday, May 18 - 20, 2007 – Mountain Lake Birding

Festival. For more details:

<http://www.mountainlakebirding.com/registration.html>

Saturday, May 26, 2007 – Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, Richmond: Tyler Terpin will lead a bird walk in the early spring gardens. The walk will begin at 8 a.m. and will cost \$6 per person for non-LGBG members. This trip requires advanced registration, so call Tyler at 270-6921 by the 22nd to sign up. At least 4 people must sign up or the trip will be cancelled.

Sunday, May 27, 2007 – Piney Grove, Sussex County: Join leader Clark White for a trip to find the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. We will leave the Virginia Diner at 5:15 a.m. Call Julie at 530-3660 if interested in this trip. We will refuel for breakfast after our initial woodpecker sightings. Other birds targeted: Brown-headed nuthatch, Summer Tanager, Red-headed Woodpecker, Prothonotary and Hooded Warblers.

Friday, June 1, 2007 –Dutch Gap Conservation Area, Chester: This trip is a wondrous water adventure and sunset paddle around the lagoon from 6 – 9 p.m. Are there nesting Osprey about, or Prothonotary Warblers darting into their nest boxes? Join us and find out. The cost is \$10 per person and includes all equipment: canoe or sit-upon kayak, paddle, and PFD's. The trip is limited to 14, so register early with Julie Kacmarcik at 530-3660. It's best to call after 8:30 p.m. or leave a message.

Saturday & Sunday, June 2 - 3, 2007 – VSO Breeding Bird Foray: See article below.

Sunday, June 3, 2007 – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd: An early walk in Bryan Park with Sue. Meet at Shelter #1 at 6:20 a.m. Questions, call Sue at 270-5365.

Wednesday, June 13, 2007 – 2nd Wednesday Walk with John Coe: John is working on a good summer location for the Wednesday walk. So call John at 276-1397 for the final location and trip details.

Sunday June 17, 2007 – Amelia Wildlife Management Area, Amelia, Virginia: Wendy Ealding will lead this Father's Day walk. Join Wendy as she takes us to new areas she has explored since moving to Powhatan. Meet Lewis Barnett in front of the Ukrops at Oxbridge Square at 6 a.m. to carpool the 40 minutes west on Rt 360 to Amelia. Contact Wendy if you have any questions at WEalding@aol.com.

Sunday, June 24, 2007 – Merchant's Mill Pond, Gatesville, North Carolina: This trip will meet at the McDonalds at Route 10 and 295 in Chester at 7:30 a.m. BYOB (canoe or kayak) or rent canoes at the park for a nominal fee. There is NO entrance fee in NC State Parks. Also bring water, lunch, PFD and be prepared for swamp conditions. Drive is 98 miles from Chester. Target birds: Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Yellow-throated warblers and many other nesting species. The swamp is dripping in Spanish Moss. On past trips we have sighted Anhinga and Alligators. Learn more about the pond at <http://ils.unc.edu/parkproject/visit/memi/ho.me.html>. Call Julie at 530-3660 to sign up.

Note: all phone numbers in area code 804 unless indicated

*Julie Kacmarcik
Caroline Coe*



VSO Breeding Bird Foray Each year, VSO holds a breeding bird foray in a specific area or type of habitat to determine what birds are breeding. This year, the location is all the state parks in Virginia! The foray will be held during the period of June 2-10. I have volunteered to be the lead for a number of parks, including Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield County. I am planning to cover Pocahontas the weekend of June 2-3. I would appreciate some help! If you are interested, please contact me at WEalding@aol.com or 804-598-9243.

Wendy Ealding

A Blizzard of Snow Geese

Last year Bob and Sandy Wynne presented a program on Bosque del Apache for an Audubon meeting. It sounded like a great place to visit, and when I came home, I got out the Atlas and located it just south of Albuquerque. I filed the information they had distributed and surprisingly never forgot about it. So when my husband's Barbershop Quartet was scheduled to represent the Mid-Atlantic chapter of Barbershop Singing at their convention in Albuquerque this year, I let him know that I wanted to go early and visit the Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. What an unforgettable experience it was.

At this time of year there are two times to view the "show" – sunrise and sunset. We stationed ourselves on the Flight Deck, an observation deck allowing you to be out a bit from the shore. We began hearing the squawking before we could even see the Snow Geese swooping in. Soon thousands of these shining white birds swarmed into our area, swooped around, and landed beyond our sight. The Sandhill Cranes began to fly in and settled right in front of our eyes, feeding on the plants in the water and "talking" to each other. Suddenly the Snow Geese began squawking again and rose in the sky and came our way – thousands of them, swooping right above our heads with the setting sun reflecting on their wings, turning them all golden. I was in a blizzard of Snow Geese! They were everywhere – swirling, squawking, and flapping their wings all around us! They swarmed like locusts – everyone together – and soon settled on the water near the Sandhill Cranes who seemed quite oblivious to all the racket.

More Sandhill Cranes soon made their appearance in smaller groups. We saw them do their dance and prance about – hundreds of them. When this reserve was started, there



were only 17 Sandhill Cranes. Now there are 17,000! They make their winter home here and what a paradise it is! They are obviously well fed and happy. I loved watching them glide and land on the water. The cranes were slower to wake up in the morning, sleeping on one leg with their head tucked warmly in their wing. The Snow Geese were the early risers, leaving before the dawn even broke – but with the same squawking and intensity. The Sandhill Cranes were the beautiful sight in the morning – their dark silhouettes streaming across the dawning sky.

Thanks to Audubon and the Wynnes for introducing me to such a spectacular sight.

The photo "A Blizzard of Snow Geese" was contributed by Mufty Mathewson of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Mufty was there with me when I experienced the "blizzard".

Adrienne Strandberg

Help RAS Kids: Be a Volunteer!

The RAS Kids Committee is looking for people to help us offer Richmond youngsters an opportunity to explore the natural world, and to discover the wonderful nature programs available thru local Parks and Recreation departments.

Our four partner groups provide adults to supervise the youngsters. Skilled naturalists lead many of our outings,

and experienced RAS interpreters lead the others. We are now helping our youth partners plan summer outings, including many James River Park walks, kayaking at Dutch Gap and fishing at the Rice Center. Your time is needed to go on our trips with the kids to help with interpretation, food, and photos.

Contact Mary Arginteanu at maryarg@aol.com or 320-0138 if you want to help.

Thank you Great Big Greenhouse!

A big "Thank You" to Doug Hensel and Great Big Greenhouse for the substantial discount they provided the "RAS Kids" Committee.

We will be planting gardens with Swansboro School first graders.

Thank You Wild Birds Unlimited

Bruce and Meredith Bass of "Wild Birds Unlimited" contributed bird feeders for two feeding stations RAS Kids is establishing at William Byrd Community House and Swansboro School.

A big "Thank You" Bruce and Meredith!

Birdathon, May 2007



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

What is a Birdathon?

Birdathon is an Audubon effort to raise awareness of our amazing birdlife here in Virginia and to raise funds to support much of our local conservation. It's a 24-hour birding foray in May that's undertaken by a team of birders to identify all the birds they can. RAS then combines all our teams' bird numbers and collects pledges and donations from our sponsors.

Who Can Participate?

All RAS members are encouraged to form a team and join in the fun.

Where Does My Money GO?

Richmond Audubon supports local and area conservation projects with Birdathon funds each year. Conservation projects include education outreach to a diverse audience, on-the-ground habitat restoration and preservation, and citizen science - all of which support our efforts to protect birds, wildlife, and their habitat.

How Do I Raise Money?

Get pledges based on a per species amount (last year we saw an RAS total of 186 species) or a dollar amount.

We suggest a \$25.00 pledge.

Start by sponsoring yourself for \$0.15 per species or a flat \$25.00.

Ask 5 co-workers to contribute. Ask a community organization to sponsor Birdathon for \$50.00.

Ask 2 small businesses, especially the ones where you shop, to sponsor you for \$50.00.

Please join our Birdathon and support conservation in Virginia! Past projects supported by Birdathon funds have ranged from signage and bird boxes in the James River Park, projects for the Lower James River Important Bird Area (Richmond Audubon's Adopted IBA) including wildlife surveys and habitat restoration projects on Presquile National Wildlife Refuge, and support for the ARK Wildlife Rehabilitators.

Birdathon Pledge Form

Name _____ Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Telephone _____ E-mail _____

I'll support you with my pledge of _____ per species. I am happy to pledge _____.

My gift of _____ is enclosed. My employer matches gifts, matching gift forms are enclosed.

I will give you an additional \$ _____ if a team finds a _____ (bird species).

Make checks payable to Richmond Audubon Society.

Send checks and/or pledge form to: Margaret Ebbs, 4702 Gaardahl Drive, Sandston, VA 23150

The birder/team you sponsor or RAS will be back in touch with you to collect the money pledged at the beginning of June. Questions? Contact Caroline Coe, cccoe@verizon.net, phone 276-1397 or Margaret Ebbs, Mebs525@juno.com.

THANK YOU for supporting the RAS 2007 Birdathon. *Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law.*

VCU Rice Center Field Trip, April 7, 2007

Eight participants enjoyed the morning snow and afternoon sunshine for the Rice Center field trip. This was the first trip of the 2007 Maymont-VCU Discovery Institute. The original trip to Presquile NWR was canceled due to the weather. The morning started with a chorus of Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-throated Warblers and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Between the snow flakes we watched an interesting aerial display of Osprey and Bald Eagle over Lake Charles with a Great Blue Heron looking on, and the sun making brief breaks in the clouds. We all had a look at a Red-headed Woodpecker peeking from a cavity; and it was good to hear the call of an Ovenbird. A total of 42 species were seen, including Northern Harrier, Sharp Shinned, Red-tailed, and Red-shouldered Hawks; Yellowlegs sp.; and Pine Warbler.



Photo of a Pine Warbler by Al Warfield

From reports by: *Leeanna Pletcher & Julie Kacmarcik*

Officers / Committee Chairs and Co-chairs for 2007-8

President	Pam Dummitt	pam.dummitt@capitalone.com	353-3571
1st Vice President	Al Warfield	warfield101@comcast.net	677-3758
2nd Vice President	Caroline Coe	cccocoe@verizon.net	276-1397
Secretary	Russell Deane	rtdeane@verizon.net	768-5956
Treasurer/Finance	Donna Brodd	drbrodd@aol.com	262-7040
Past President	Al Warfield	warfield101@comcast.net	677-3758
Development	Anne Dunnburg	adunnburg@comcast.net	212-9524
Thrasher Editor	Al Warfield	warfield101@comcast.net	677-3758
Education	Bob Schamerhorn	Bob@photobirds.com	658-0871
Field Trips	Penny Reynolds Julie Kacmarcik	psreynolds@mail1.vcu.edu juliekazz@comcast.net	828-4911 530-3660
Hospitality	Linda Warfield	lindawarfield@comcast.net	743-1479
Conservation	John Roberts	call for email address	329-6879
Legislation	Margaret O'Bryan Ann Brooks	catbird329@comcast.net acdbrooks@comcast.net	746-5599 323-9399
Membership	Lori Rutledge	lorirutledge8@aol.com	310-9014
Cyberspace	Robin Ruth	robin.ruth@verizon.net	231-5949
Programs	Sandy Wynne	sswynne@verizon.net	276-5520
Publicity	Greg Moser	vtsec11@juno.com	358-3470
Youth	Robin Ruth Mary Arginteanu	robin.ruth@att.net maryarg@aol.com	231-5949 320-0138
VA Audubon Council Rep	Lewis Barnett	lbarnett@richmond.edu	320-7898

Important Notices

RAS meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of every month except June, July, August and December. Meetings are held at St. Luke Lutheran Church at Custis Rd. and Chippenham Parkway.

The Thrasher will be printed 7 times in 2007: Jan./Feb., Mar./Apr., May/June, Jul./Aug., Sept., Oct, Nov./Dec.

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.

Board Meetings: RAS Board meetings are held on the second Thursday on alternate months starting in January. RAS members are welcome to attend, but please let a Board member know you are coming due to space considerations.

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

The Thrasher is printed on recycled paper

Notice: The Thrasher no longer contains ads

From The Kitchen Window – May / June 2007

"Most animals fear their predators, basically enough. How they recognize them as predators if they have never seen them in action is not always clear, but the reaction is."
Jeffrey Mass & Susan McCarthy....."When Elephants Weep"

It's mid morning in mid-April – the feeders are alive with activity out back. Three or four Mourning Doves are feeding on the platform feeder. Down along the fringes a half dozen or so brightly colored Cardinals are scattered about the low shrubs. A Downy Woodpecker is pecking away at one of the suet cakes, and the ground is alive with sparrows, juncos, a Fox Sparrow, a Brown Thrasher, and a towhee. The rays from the sun are streaming through the freshly leafed-out branches of the hickory tree, tracing strange shapes on the kitchen wall. I am pouring my second – maybe third – cup of coffee when all of the birds scatter, and a swift gray form streaks across the picture. I watch as a flurry of downy feathers drift down from the sky, lighting on the branches of the shrubs and the grass below.

Often, during the winter months a Sharp-shinned or Coopers Hawk will take advantage of the smorgasbord of birds we attract to our back yard; and we are saddened when we find the feathers of one of our favorite visitors. But we respond with glee when the Red-shouldered Hawk lifts a bushy-tailed squirrel from the yard, and with some dismay when she takes a green frog from our small pond. The Barred Owls watch over our yard at night and probably feed on critters we would rather not know about. But nature is about balance, and if we allow nature to be on it's own, without too much interference, those that are prey will learn and survive, or not, and those who are

predators become skilled hunters and survive, or not. John Burroughs said, "Nature is not benevolent; nature is just, gives pound for pound, measure for measure, makes no exceptions, never tempers her decrees with mercy, or winks at any infringement of her laws." It still amazes me that the young chickadee, who has never seen a hawk in its life, knows instantly to go hide when the Sharpie comes through....or not.

The full moon in May, called the Flower Moon, occurs on the 2nd. The month of May also has a second full moon that occurs on the 31st. Having two full moons occur in one month happens about every 33 months and the second one is known as a Blue Moon.

John Coe



Image of the moon during the lunar eclipse of April 7 by Al Warfield

