



# the Thrasher

Newsletter of the Richmond Audubon Society

MAY/JUNE 2010 VOLUME 37, ISSUE 3

## Hospitality Chair(s) Needed

The Hospitality Committee is seeking a volunteer to serve as Chair, or two members to Co-Chair this committee. Without, it is doubtful that we can continue our wonderful monthly dinners! This is a two-year RAS Board position to start in July 2010. The current Chair will be unable to serve after this date, but will be available to coach the new Chair(s).

Responsibilities include arranging for the food contributions each month and the annual RAS picnic in June, attending the RAS Board

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Venus Flytrap - Photo © Lynda Richardson

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Thrasher illustrations  
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## May Program – The Venus Flytrap’s Lethal Allure

On May 20th we are delighted to have Lynda Richardson present a program on her latest shoot for *Smithsonian* magazine which appeared in the February 2010 issue of the magazine. “The Venus Flytrap’s Lethal Allure,” is the story about a carnivorous plant seldom encountered in the wild that goes “against the order of nature” and is tenaciously hanging on in its native Carolina habitat.

## Annual RAS Picnic in Varina

Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 19. (Rain date Sunday June 20.) 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 lake with a small beach with a shallow area, swim raft, boats, picnic area, and even a cabin with changing rooms and half-bath. Come by 8:00 AM for the morning bird walk. Bring your own meat to cook on the grills and a dish to share (four or more servings). We

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## Richmond Audubon Society

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

### Important Notices

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

**RAS Board meetings** are held on the 2nd Thursday on alternate months starting in January (except June and August). In July, the Board has its annual strategic planning retreat. RAS members are welcome to attend board meetings, but let the President or Secretary know due to space considerations. Meeting locations vary; contact the President or Secretary for location details.

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

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

(804) 257-0813  
www.RichmondAudubon.org

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## President's Message

Lewis Barnett



Richmond Audubon Society has a long history of effective conservation and education programs. As members, it's a record we can all be proud of. We support scientific studies of bird life such as the long-running Institute for Bird Populations Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program, which studies bird demographics on a continent-wide scale. We actively engage in habitat preservation in our adopted Important Bird Area, the Lower James River IBA, which encompasses some of our favorite local birding spots. We are spreading our love of and respect for the natural world to a new generation through the RAS Kids youth education program. None of these things would be possible without the hard work of RAS volunteers and the generosity of our membership.

I'd like to encourage you today to support these important activities by making a donation to one of our intrepid Birdathon teams. These groups of dedicated birders will scour the James River corridor for a selected 24 hour period during the month of May to find as many species of birds as is humanly possible. You can add your financial muscle to the conservation and education mission of RAS by sponsoring the Birdathon team of your choice. I'll take shameless advantage of my position to make a pitch for your support of my team, the Crazy Coots, but if you prefer to support one of the other participating groups, I'll find it in my heart to forgive. (See the Birdathon Page for a complete list of teams and their members - <http://www.richmondaudubon.org/BirdAThonhon.html>)

You can support the Birdathon in a number of different ways. You can either sponsor a team with a pledge for a specific amount, or you can roll the dice and pledge a per-species amount. We'll be passing around pledge sheets at the membership meetings, or if you would prefer to send in a pledge by mail, an individual pledge form is available on the web page listed earlier, which includes all the information you need about how and where to send your pledge. We'll even take pledges by email – send your name, email and mailing addresses, the team you wish to support (hint: a really excellent team is mentioned earlier in this article) and the amount of your pledge to [birdathon@richmondaudubon.org](mailto:birdathon@richmondaudubon.org).

However you choose to do it, your Birdathon pledge will help keep the programs that mean so much to all of us thriving – please make your pledge today!

### Publication Schedule

The Thrasher is issued six times a year. Submit articles no later than the 15th of the month before each issue. Deadlines for each issue are listed here >

- December 15th for Jan/Feb issue.
- February 15th for Mar/Apr issue.
- April 15th for May/Jun issue.
- June 15th for Jul/Aug issue.
- August 15th for Sep/Oct issue.
- October 15th for Nov/Dec issue.

Email articles to:  
[thrasher@richmondaudubon.org](mailto:thrasher@richmondaudubon.org).  
Images to accompany articles are encouraged, and should be at full size with a resolution of 300 dpi.

## Volunteer Birders Needed!

David A. Bryan, Outreach Coordinator

Virginia Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program, National Audubon Society

This coming May, the Virginia Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program will be conducting survey efforts within the Central Piedmont Important Bird Area, Virginia's 20th IBA!

Please support our efforts by

Bear Creek Lake, Holliday Lake and James River State Parks. (*Note: Due to the end of Spring Gobbler Season (turkey hunting), WMAs and State Forests should not be surveyed on May 14th or 15th).*

**Why:** This survey is being con-



Grasshopper Sparrow • Photo © Bob Schamerhorn • www.iPhotoBirds.com

taking time to bird the Virginia Piedmont during our four day survey period from Friday, May 14th through Tuesday, May 18th, 2010. Please review the information below for more details and thank you in advance for your help!

**What:** Virginia IBA survey efforts within the Central Piedmont Important Bird Area

**When:** Friday, May 14th, 2010 through Tuesday, May 18th, 2010

**Who:** Volunteer birders, individually or in groups

**Where:** The Central Piedmont Important Bird Area. Prime public birding locations include but are not limited to the Featherfin, Horsepen Lake and James River Wildlife Management Areas, the Appomattox-Buckingham and Cumberland State Forests, and the

ducted in order to foster bird conservation through citizen science while it will also help the Virginia IBA Program learn more about species living within the Central Piedmont IBA. This information will help us in our outreach efforts and in preparation for future events within the IBA.

**Protocol:** Volunteers will conduct eBird-style traveling counts within the Central Piedmont IBA. They will travel distances of less than 5 miles, recording the date, their start and end times, the number of birders in their group and distance traveled. Participants will search for species of conservation interest including the Northern Bobwhite, Wood Thrush, Louisiana Waterthrush, Prairie Warbler,

*continued on page 7*

*Hospitality Chair(s) continued from page 1* meetings, handling the committee budget, and coordinating the committee volunteers.

There has been a wonderful response for volunteers to prepare monthly supplies, and to handle dinner set-up, clean-up, and the meeting beverages each month starting in September. Over a dozen members have volunteered to handle these responsibilities! So, please save this wonderful opportunity for fellowship and delicious meals by volunteering today. Please contact Jan Robertson, [hospitality@richmondaudubon.org](mailto:hospitality@richmondaudubon.org), or Pam Dummitt, Nomination Committee Chair, [pastpresident@richmondaudubon.org](mailto:pastpresident@richmondaudubon.org).

## Pre-meeting Dinner

Jan Robertson, Hospitality Chair  
[hospitality@richmondaudubon.org](mailto:hospitality@richmondaudubon.org),  
or 804-272-6674

The May pre-meeting dinner will start at 5:30 PM ahead of the scheduled program. 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 mid-day Wednesday, 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.

*continued on page 7*

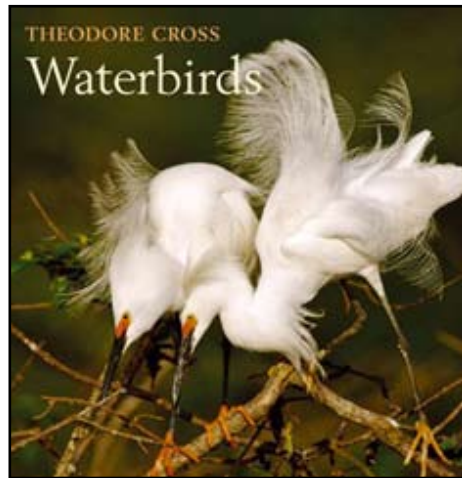
**Annual RAS Picnic continued from page 1**

will eat around noon. RAS will provide drinks, ice, and utensils. The Snyders will provide charcoal, picnic tables and chairs, and condiments. Children are welcome, but please leave your pets at home. Besides your food and binoculars, be sure to bring fishing gear and your swimsuit.

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 Arrahat-teck 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 Capitol 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 Arrahat-teck Trail, and proceed as above. 10 minutes from Exit 22.

From Chippenham Parkway: At the end of Chippenham South keep straight on I-895 east (Pocahontas Parkway- \$2.50 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. Call Jan Robertson for more details: 272-6674 (home), Mobile: 339-3450.



## Waterbirds by Theodore Cross

Book review by Naseem Reza

The late Theodore Cross found his passion for birds and bird photography at age 40 and it took him 45 years, when he turned 85, to publish this book that most birders will find hard to resist. To get a perspective for the book, a good start would be to go to [www.npr.org/blogs/pictureshow/2009/12/](http://www.npr.org/blogs/pictureshow/2009/12/)

[waterbirds.html](http://www.npr.org/blogs/pictureshow/2009/12/waterbirds.html) and listen to the National Public Radio's interview with the author.

This recent book does not deal with scientific names or banding codes but instead follows a folksy, anecdotal style to take the reader along on a journey that is replete with interesting bird facts complemented by the author's stunning photographs of what he calls *Waterbirds*. Almost by definition, water birds tend to nest in far away desolate places. This is especially true for the pelagic birds that come to land only once every year to nest and raise their young. According to Mr. Cross, the Sooty Tern fledgling takes to the air and comes back to land 5 years later upon reaching breeding age. Stories like this abound and each of the species covered in the book is given a special narrative that will resonate with the reader.

Looking at the dozens of beautiful, almost Schamerhorn/Warfield/Cox class, photographs in this 344 page 11X 12 inch book, I get the impression that Mr. Cross is partial to birds in breeding plumage with their wings extended but not necessarily flying. Since birds usually are in breeding plumage at their nesting sites, that is where he has gone to capture the images. Accounts include visits to well known breeding grounds such as Green Island, Texas, Christmas Island, just North of the Equator in the Pacific Ocean and Funk Island near Newfoundland, Canada. Lesser known sites are Johnston Atoll, near nowhere (800 miles West of Hawaii) and Ellsmere Island, Canada near Greenland. In one memorable story, the author found his way to Eastern Siberia looking for the nesting site of Ross's Gull. The fact that the last leg of the transportation was on board a Soviet military helicopter, should provide some idea of the extraordinary measures taken by the author for the sake of locating and photographing nesting birds.

So if your resume does not include a stint at Goldman Sachs, go to these places the easy way by getting hold of *Waterbirds* by Theodore Cross.

**Naseem Reza is an active RAS member since 2005 and took up bird photography when he retired from his day job in 2004. He is working on his Bird Book which will be lavishly illustrated with his photographs and plans to publish it when he turns 85. He has never been employed by Goldman Sachs.**



## Field Trips

Art Baker, Field Trip Chair

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/](http://www.freelists.org/archive/va-richmond-general/)) or the RAS website for any late breaking additions or impromptu field trips ([www.richmondaudubon.org/ActivFieldTrip.html](http://www.richmondaudubon.org/ActivFieldTrip.html).)

**May 1st, Saturday, James River Park, 42nd Street Entrance, 7:30 AM.** Meet RAS President Lewis Barnett at the 42nd Street entrance parking lot to look for returning migrants. Contact: [lbarnett@richmond.edu](mailto:lbarnett@richmond.edu), (804) 920-4723.

**May 2nd, Sunday, Bryan Park with Sue Ridd, 6:45 AM.** Come see Bryan Park from a different point of view. Each season has its own cast for your birding interests! Meet at Shelter #1. There is a Bryan Park trip on the first Sunday of each month, starting about 1/2 hour after sunrise. For more information, call Sue at (804) 270-5365.

**May 14th - 18th—Central Piedmont IBA. Volunteer Birders Needed!** See full details on page 3.

**May 15th, 2010—Vulcan Quarry, Goochland Co. 8:30 AM, rain or shine.** Join us on our 4th annual trip to Vulcan Quarry, a Certified Wildlife Habitat with an impressive bird/mammal and reptile list. Meet at the Scale House as you enter. Wear sensible walking shoes for hard pavement. No limit on participants but I would like a head-count as they always feed us well and provide many other surprises. Contact: Art Baker 804 730-9127 [fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org) or [albaker1@earthlink.net](mailto:albaker1@earthlink.net)

**May 22, Saturday, Belmead Mansion, Powhatan County, 7:30 AM.** Built in the mid 1800's, Belmead is located on approximately 1,200 acres of land overlooking the James River, located at 5004 Cartersville Road, Powhatan, VA. Meet at the Plaza Shopping Center parking lot at the corner of Academy Road

and Route 60 in Powhatan. Be prepared for possible muddy conditions on the trails. Contact: Wendy Ealding, E-mail [WEalding@aol.com](mailto:WEalding@aol.com), Phone (804) 598-9243

**June 4-6, Friday-Sunday, VSO Summer Field Trip—Highland County.** Summer field trip with hosts, the Bath-Highland Bird Club. Field trips will be offered Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. Full details at [http://www.virginiabirds.net/f\\_trips.html#Hco2010](http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html#Hco2010)

**June 6, Sunday, Bryan Park with Sue Ridd, 6:30 AM.** For more information, call Sue at (804) 270-5365.

**June 12, Saturday, Cold Harbor Battlefield Park 8:00 AM.** Meet at the visitors center parking lot for a walk through a mature hardwood forest. Warblers, Tanagers, Vireos, Flycatchers and Woodpeckers are all summer residents. Red-headed Woodpeckers, have nested here in past years. Take Exit 34A off Interstate 295. Go 1mi. to Cold Harbor Rd and turn Right. Go 2mi to the visitor center on the left. Contact: Art Baker 804 730-9127 [fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org) or [albaker1@earthlink.net](mailto:albaker1@earthlink.net).

**June 12-20—VSO Annual Bird Foray.** This year in Culpeper and Fauquier Counties, focusing on the Loggerhead Shrike. Full details at [http://www.virginiabirds.net/2010\\_foray.html](http://www.virginiabirds.net/2010_foray.html)

**June 19, all day—Richmond Audubon's Annual Summer Picnic.** Hosted at the home of Buz and Nelda Snyder at their lovely home in Varina. **Come for the morning bird walk at 8:00 AM.** Directions and full details on page 1.

**June 19, Saturday, Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, 8:00 AM to 9:45 AM.** Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center. You must sign up in advance; there must be at least four people signed up by 9:00 PM the Wednesday before the trip or it will be cancelled. **Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens Members FREE; Special Non-Member Cost: \$6.00.** Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or [tylerturpin@earthlink.net](mailto:tylerturpin@earthlink.net). Lewis Ginter BT is located at 1800 Lakeside Ave, Richmond, VA 23228-4700.

**the Thrasher by mail or online?**

**NEW MEMBERS** who joined through **National Audubon** and not via a direct application to RAS: If this is your first issue of *The Thrasher*, you need to send a response by one of the methods below in order to keep it coming to your mailbox.

1. Online: ([www.richmondaudubon.org/forms/FormE-ThrasherDelivery.html](http://www.richmondaudubon.org/forms/FormE-ThrasherDelivery.html))
2. Written response to: RAS, PO Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261 (See Information to Include).
3. Call the RAS phone number (804) 257-0813 and leave a message with your information (see below).

**Information to include:**

- Your name (from your mailing label)
- Your address (with 9-digit zip)
- Phone number and e-mail address so we can contact you
- The 12-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., 000123456789, or whatever is listed at the top of your label; you can leave out the leading zeros.)
- Whether you want to receive *the Thrasher* by mail or only read it online.

We want you to get your issue of *the Thrasher* in the mail if you want to receive it that way. Please respond, even if you intend to read it online. We need to know which of our many NAS members are really interested in RAS. We also want to reduce our costs, but not at the expense of your enjoyment.

New members coming to RAS through National Audubon will get at least one issue of *the Thrasher* in the mail so they will have a chance to see it before making their decision. If you come through RAS directly we will send *the Thrasher* automatically if you requested that on your application.

**EXISTING MEMBERS:** If you got this issue you don't need to send a response. You will continue to receive *the Thrasher* unless you send a response indicating otherwise, or your subscription lapses. Please stay abreast of your expiration date and keep your membership current. This is shown on your *Audubon Magazine* label.

**Birds of the Central Piedmont**

Barn Owl • Photo © Joe Lively

Field Sparrows • Photo © Bob Schamerhorn • [www.iPhotoBirds.com](http://www.iPhotoBirds.com)

Ruby-throated Hummingbird • Photo © Joe Lively

Grasshopper Sparrow • Photo © Bob Schamerhorn • [www.iPhotoBirds.com](http://www.iPhotoBirds.com)

## Officers / Committee Chairs and Co-chairs for 2009-2010

President	Lewis Barnett	president@richmondaudubon.org	804-320-7898
1st Vice President	Robert McLemore	vicepresident1@richmondaudubon.org	804-556-2757
2nd Vice President	Caroline Coe	vicepresident2@richmondaudubon.org	804-276-1397
Secretary	Pete Walker	secretary@richmondaudubon.org	804-387-1071
Treasurer/Finance	Pam Dummitt	treasurer@richmondaudubon.org	804-929-3899
Past President	Pam Dummitt	pastpresident@richmondaudubon.org	804-929-3899
Auction	Margaret O'Bryan	auction@richmondaudubon.org	804-746-5599
Bird-A-Thon	Lewis Barnett	president@richmondaudubon.org	804-320-7898
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Education	Kim Harrell	education@richmondaudubon.org	804-282-3419
Hospitality	Jan Robertson	hospitality@richmondaudubon.org	804-272-6674
Conservation	Vacant		
Legislation	Margaret O'Bryan	legislation@richmondaudubon.org	804-746-5599
Field Trips	Art Baker	fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org	804-730-9127
Membership	Lori Rutledge	membership@richmondaudubon.org	804-310-9014
Cyberspace	Bob Schamerhorn	cyberspace@richmondaudubon.org	804-929-6568
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Publicity	Diane Jadowski	publicity@richmondaudubon.org	702-308-1953
Youth	Robin Ruth	RASKids@richmondaudubon.org	804-231-5949
IBA /VAC Rep	Margaret O'Bryan	IBA@richmondaudubon.org	804-320-7898

## RAS Kids Helps Kids Make Birdfeeders for Arbor Day

Robin Ruth, RAS Kids Chairperson



Great Horned Owls • Photo © Bob Schamerhorn • www.iPhotoBirds.com

There must have been lots of happy, well-fed birds in Richmond following the Arbor Day Event at the Carillon on April 3rd. At that event RAS Kids helped 200 kids make peanut butter pine-cone birdfeeders to take home for the birds (probably a few squirrels too). In addition, people could take a short hike to look through a scope at a Great Horned Owl in a nest with her two owlets. Special thanks go to Larry Robinson and Naseem Reza for providing and manning the scope throughout the event. We estimated that 50 – 80 people saw the owls. Thanks also to Bob Schamerhorn for letting us use his magnificent photo of the owls with this article.

### Volunteer Birders from page 3

Kentucky Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow and Field Sparrow. However, participants will record the presence and numbers of all species seen or heard. A protocol data sheet is available upon request to help in this effort.

**How to Participate:** Email or call David Bryan, Outreach Coordinator for the Virginia IBA Program, at dbryan.audubon@gmail.com or (804)-766-7880 to notify the Program of your interest in volunteering. Please inform the Program of which location(s) and day(s) you would like to bird, as ultimately we would like to work with birders in order to spread out survey coverage throughout the IBA. Notification will also help the Program gauge interest and participation. Thanks for contacting us as soon as possible.

**Data Submission:** Please compile and submit your data to David Bryan by Monday, May 24th, 2010. Data may be submitted by email or snail mail to 530 E. Main Street, Suite 810, Richmond, VA, 23219. Additionally, participants are encouraged to record their results via the Virginia eBird website.

### Pre meeting dinner continued from page 3

You don't have to bring any food, but are welcome to share one of your favorite dishes. Keep all your receipts for any food you bring to be reimbursed for their expenses. 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 Appétit!*

# From The Kitchen Window

John Coe

No longer do chill breezes shiver the limbs, or frost whitens the roof of the neighbor's house next door. The window screens are in place, and the air is nice.

Our trees are dressed in green, as green as green can be...and in early light the street sounds are lost in the tree covers and only the voices of nature are voices clear.

When the wonder of April and her expression of new life becomes the richness of May and June.....

And the days are long, and nighttimes short, the voices of the wood will sooth your senses.

After the sun sets, and a breath of coolness drops in, the cardinals will sing, as only they can sing...perhaps happy that their new fledglings will nap the night away; The Barred Owl will be heard down in the flood-plain, and the toads will sing.

A distant lawnmower will be silent as darkness comes, and only the bark of a far away dog and the throb of a far away Harley will dilute the calming sound of the breeze in the leaves and the buzz of tiny insects. Hope they don't bite.

The Full Moon in May occurs at 5:07 PM on the 27th. It is named the Flower Moon, or the Milk Moon. Look for the bright star Regulus, in the constellation Leo, on the 21st, with nearby Mars and the passing moon.

The Full Moon in June, named the Hot Moon, or the Strawberry Moon, occurs at 5:30 AM on the 26th. Look for a partial eclipse of the moon just before dawn. The summer Solstice (Solstice means "sun stands still") begins at 5:28 AM on the 21st.

*“The field has eyes, the wood has ears; I will look, be silent, and listen.”*

Hieronymus Bosch

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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.** 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 "COZX530Z" on the check. Send your check and application to:  
**Richmond Audubon Society,**  
**P.O. Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261**  
**COZX530Z**



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