



The Thrasher

Richmond Audubon Society

Note: No RAS meetings are scheduled for June, July or August

RAS Meeting May 2006

RAS 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, at a traffic light just east of the Huguenot Rd. exit.

Program for May 18: Ralph White, Manager and Naturalist at the James River Park System in Richmond, will talk about "Revolution on the River: Environmental and Recreational Successes in the City of Richmond." Don't miss it!

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 or email me by the day before the meeting if you plan to be there for the dinner. 743-1479 / lindawarfield@comcast.net.

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.) Because enough food must be available for the number of attendees, reservations will not be accepted after the evening before the day of the meeting.

Food for the pre-meeting dinners is 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. It will help spread out the work required. Keep all your receipts for any food you bring. The way it works is this: those who bring food are reimbursed for their expenses if they provide receipts (bring them to the meeting), and those 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 email 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!

Linda Warfield, Hospitality Chair

Annual RAS Picnic: Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 10. 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 11.

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 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)

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President's Message: May-July 2006

Virginia has a new program for the protection of its birds and other wildlife. Named *Teaming With Wildlife*, it is an outgrowth of the development of Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan (the new name for the comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy) and Audubon has an exciting part of the new initiative. The main goal of the *Teaming* project is to have 300+ organizations in the Virginia TWW Coalition supporting permanent, dedicated funding for wildlife and habitat conservation and for implementation of the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan. Eventually these organizations throughout the state will be partners in the over 3,000 organizations nationwide joining in advancing the purposes of protection of our native wildlife. As an advocacy organization, Audubon occupies a unique position earned from the earliest protest against the wearing of bird plumes on hats to the latest efforts in support of placing a conservation easement on the James River Park. The other groups that are part of the Teaming effort include fishing and hunting organizations, garden clubs, wild flower enthusiasts, hikers, canoeists and all the various groups which

derive pleasure from the state of nature and the great outdoors. Together this will be a formidable force to advocate for the required full and continued funding of state efforts on behalf of our native wildlife. You can view Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan at www.dgif.virginia.gov.

Richmond Audubon is planning a gala event as part of our regular meeting on Thursday evening, September 21, to honor the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and our own Wayne O'Bryan with dinner, speakers, and distinguished guests. We will be celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the tax refund check-off for funding the Virginia Non-game Wildlife Program. As a Delegate, Wayne sponsored and moved the bill through the General Assembly. The bird conservation efforts in Virginia are funded largely through this effort. Be sure to mark the date and be there to make this a big RAS thank you.

Ellen Ackerman

Field Trips: May - July 2006

May is Birdathon Month: Start, join or sponsor a team to support local conservation efforts. See the article on page 4.

Friday May 5, 2006 – James River Park, Richmond: Join Mary Arginteanu and Larry Robinson for "Wetlands Before Work". This spring trek through the Wetlands meets at the park's Landria Drive entrance at 7 a.m. Don't miss the perfect chance to track spring arrivals before heading off to work. For more information, contact Mary at 320-0138.

Saturday, May 6, 2006 – Shirley Plantation, Charles City County: Join Betsy Saunders during the peak of migration at historic Shirley Plantation. This trip meets at 7 a.m. near the plantation parking lot. Target birds are Grasshopper Sparrows, Indigo Bunting, possible Dickcissel and warblers galore. For more information, contact Betsy at 272-0605.

Saturday, May 6, 2006 – Presquile National Wildlife Refuge: A pontoon trip around Presquile will be part of James River Days. Space is limited to 16 and all participants must pre-register by contacting James River Association at: www.jamesriverassociation.org.

Sunday, May 7, 2006 – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd: Meet Sue to rack up big numbers of neo-tropical migrants as she does her monthly inventory of the park. Meet at Shelter# 1 at 6:38 a.m. Questions, call Sue at 270-5365.

Wednesday, May 10, 2006 – 2nd Wednesday Walk with John Coe: Springtime birding at 42nd Street entrance of the James River Park. Catch the spring migrants! The walk will meet in the parking lot and starts at 7 a.m. Call John at 276-1397 for details.

Friday May 12, 2006 – Wetlands before Work: Join Mary Arginteanu and Larry Robinson at the Wetlands entrance of the James River Parks on Landria Drive at 7 a.m. for the season's final WBW. Track spring arrivals before hitting the rock pile. For more information, contact Mary at 320-0138.

Sunday, May 14, 2006 - Mother's Day: Take a Mom birding.

Sunday, May 14, 2006 – Varina Lions Club Canoeathon: Contact Buz Snyder at 795-1446 for details.

Friday through Sunday, May 19-21, 2006 – 2nd Annual Mountain Lake Birding Festival: Giles County. For more information:

<http://www.mtnlakehotel.com/birdfestival.htm>

Saturday, May 20, 2006 – Dutch Gap/Henricus Park, Chesterfield County: Join Wendy Eadling as she leads Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation participants and RAS folks through one of our favorite parks at the height of spring migration. Meet at the Visitors Center at 8 a.m. Contact Wendy at weadling@aol.com with any questions.

Sunday, May 21, 2006 – Merchant Mill Pond, Gatesville, NC: Join Julie Kacmarcik for our 3rd annual MMP May paddle. The park is 98 miles from Chester. BYOB (canoe or kayak) – canoes are available at the park but reservations are not allowed (there have always been canoes available in past years). This trip will give you "eye to beak" looks with Yellow-throated and Prothonotary Warblers. The calls of the Barred Owls and the Yellow-billed Cuckoos fill the swamp and an occasional alligator has been seen. Bring PFD, water, food, bug spray and sunscreen. Be prepared for Spanish moss, cypress and swamp conditions. Meet at McDonald's at Route 10 and 295. Please sign up for this trip by

Continued on next page

contacting Julie at 530-3660 or juliekazz@comcast.com.

Saturday, May 27, 2006 – Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, Richmond: Tyler Turpin will lead a bird walk through the late spring gardens. The walk will begin at 8 a.m. and costs \$6 per person for non-LGBG members. This trip requires advanced registration, so call Tyler at 750-1878 with any questions and to sign up.

Friday, June 2, 2006 – Dutch Gap Sunset Paddle, Chesterfield County: Join us for our 2nd annual Sunset Paddle through the tidal marsh in the Dutch Gap Conservation area under the leadership of Chesterfield County Department of Parks and Recreation. This trip is from 6 – 9 p.m. and is limited to 14 participants. All boats (canoe or kayak – your choice), paddles, and PFDs will be supplied. The fee is based on our group size: 6-9 paddlers/\$15 each; 10-14 paddlers/\$10 each. This trip requires pre-registration, so contact Julie Kacmarcik at 530-3660 or juliekazz@comcast.net. The maiden voyage last year was a blast!

Saturday, June 3, 2006 – James River NWR, Prince George County: This is a canoe trip along Powells Creek. A total of ten canoes or kayaks will access the waters of Powells Creek through the remote setting at James River NWR. All participants must bring their own boats and be experienced in maneuvering their craft. PFDs are required. Guide Cyrus Brame will interpret the rich wildlife and diverse history of the area. Participants must pre-register by contacting the James River Association at www.jamesriverassocia-

tion.org.

Sunday, June 4, 2006 – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd: Meet Sue and see how summer has settled in to the park. Meet at Shelter # 1 at 6:19 a.m. Questions, call Sue at 270-5365.

Sunday, June 4, 2006 – Piney Grove Nature Conservancy Preserve, Sussex County: This will be our 3rd pilgrimage with Clark White to see the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. The viewing of these birds is time-sensitive so it is crucial that you be on time. We will leave the Virginia Diner at 5:15 a.m. After our early morning birding, we will refuel at the Virginia Diner and then return for some local birding. Usually we have good looks at Brown-headed Nuthatches, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Hooded Warblers and Summer Tanagers, to name but a few! Please register for this trip with Julie Kacmarcik at 530-3660 or juliekazz@comcast.net.

Saturday, June 10, 2006 – Annual RAS Picnic at Arrahattek, Virginia: Our favorite event for the hazy, lazy days of summer. See page 1 for details.

Wednesday, June 14, 2006 – 2nd Wednesday Walk with John Coe: Meet John at the Henricus Visitors Center and walk the Dutch Gap Cypress trail. The trip will meet at 7 a.m. Call John at 276-1397 for information.

Sunday, June 18, 2006 – Father's Day: Take a Dad birding.

Saturday, June 24, 2006 – Dutch Gap, Chesterfield County: Join trip leader Betsy Saunders to see the

area's breeding birds. The fence along the Dutch Gap trail will likely be lined with birds perching and hunting for food. Meet Betsy at the Visitor's Center at 7 a.m. Call Betsy at 272-5365 for more information.

2nd Wednesday Walk in July and August: No trips scheduled - See you in September.

Sunday, July 2, 2006 – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd: Shake the summer doldrums and meet Sue as she does her monthly inventory of the park. Meet at Shelter # 1 at 6:27 a.m. Questions, call Sue at 270-5365.

Saturday, July 22, 2006 – Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, Richmond: Bob Sass will lead a bird walk through the summer gardens. The walk begins at 8 a.m. and costs \$6 per person for non-LGBG members. Advanced registration is required, so call Bob at 285-8177 with any questions and to sign up.

Please join us on a field trip or come out for a work day to some of our favorite places. And remember that field trips are subject to change occasionally. Check the RAS listserve and/or website, or call the trip leader before you head out the door.

Note: all phone numbers in area code 804 unless indicated

*Julie Kacmarcik
Caroline Coe*



Fred Beardsley: In Memoriam

An RAS member of many years, Fred Beardsley passed away on February 2, 2006. Fred was an interesting person who was especially well known at dinners and other gatherings where food was present, but he also supported the RAS Auction just about every year. Although most of us never knew it, he was ordained a Catholic Priest in the Diocese of Richmond on May 3, 1960. Rev. Beardsley served at St. Bede, St. Bridget, St. Paul and Sacred Heart until his retirement in 1977. He left behind some treasured friends, Herman, James, John, Julie, Paul, Reinhard, Andrea, Tom, and especially his beloved companion, Felicity, his dog. Fred was born in Baltimore, Md. and was a graduate of St. John's College, Annapolis. He will be missed at RAS meetings and dinners, and especially at the Annual RAS Picnic to which he always brought Felicity.

Written by Al Warfield (with the help of an Obituary from the Richmond Times Dispatch, February 6, 2006. Thanks to Julie Kacmarcik for bringing it to my attention, and for obtaining the obituary.)

Birdathon 2006



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

All the birds from across the state
Gathered together to join the debate.
Raptors, songbirds, shorebirds too,
assembled in the morning dew.

"It's that time again," said a swan.
"Next month is RAS birdathon!
They're collecting pledges and forming teams.
They'll be searching woods, fields, oceans, and streams."

"For 24 hours on a day in May,
They'll be looking for us," they all chirped in dismay.
A sleepy owl slowly turned his head.
"Listen, my foolish friends," he said.
"From these people you have nothing to fear.
In fact, they hold us very dear.
It doesn't matter if there's ten, two or one,
They're coming out to have some fun.
While they're at it they'll help us, too.
My feathered friends, I thought you knew
the funds they raise help us all.
Did you see the new sign on the flood wall?"

An osprey drawled, "Owl is right.
Richmond Audubon supports the fight
for bird and other wildlife conservation.
They funded a project for habitat restoration.
At Presquile NWR with Virginia IBA,
they're trying hard to make sure we're okay.
So when you see them in a group or alone,
Make sure you make your presence known.
Tell the migrants passing through this spring
to perch where they can be seen, chirp or sing.
To help the participants increase their species count.
And to surpass last year's generous \$3,400 amount."
We already have pledges from many of you,
and some teams have been formed, but only a few.
So please don't wait to fill out the form below.
See the contact information if there's something more
you'd like to know.

.....Margaret Ebbs

To participate as a birder in the Birdathon, you can bird on your own or create a team.

To create your own team, contact other birders, choose a captain, and then contact Margaret Ebbs. Gather pledges from friends and family. Finally the fun part - bird up to 24 continuous hours on any designated Birdathon day! Send all bird lists to Margaret Ebbs or Caroline Coe (contact information below).

To pledge, you can pledge an amount per species or give a flat pledge.

Individual team species lists will be combined to determine a cumulative Richmond Audubon Society species total. Per species pledges will be calculated based on this *grand total*. Last year's species total was 170. (\$.10 per species x 170 = \$17.00; \$.50 per species x 170 = \$85.00)

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, JohnCaroline@juno.com, phone 276-1397 or Margaret Ebbs, Mebbs525@juno.com.

THANK YOU for supporting the RAS 2006 Birdathon. *Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law.*

Note: the Birdathon Pledge Form is also available on the RAS website: www/richmondaudubon.org

James River Park Survey Volunteers Needed

Beginning the month of April 2006, the Friends of James River Park will be conducting a survey to determine usage patterns and numbers of visitors throughout the park. The survey will help to determine how the park is used, and by whom. Having this information will help us when we advocate for park improvements using real data to support our case.

The James River Park Survey will take place once a month on Wednesdays and Saturdays and last at least through September. The dates for the survey are: May 24 & 27; June 21 & 24; July 26 & 29; August 23 & 26., and September TBA. On each designated day 5 locations within the park

will be surveyed. Three prime use locations will be sampled every time: Belle Isle, Pony Pasture, and Ancarrow's Landing. The other 2 locations will rotate so that every location within the park is sampled at least once. We want to have the stations manned by volunteers who will conduct by intercepting visitors and asking a few quick questions. The volunteer shifts will run from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with at least 2 people per station. There will be three shifts of people: 6-10 a.m., 10-2 p.m., 2-6 p.m. So, each day we survey, we need a minimum of 30 volunteers.

To facilitate volunteer sign up, some really great incentives have been offered for volunteers who help out. Each volunteer who completes a four hour shift will receive: Friends of the

James River Park T-shirt (with cool salamander logo), Free tube ride on the James in the summer, Membership to the Friends of James River Park and Torch light tour of the Pump House. Friends of James River Park will provide chairs, coolers and drinks, and will replenish drinks during the day. High School students need to be juniors or seniors and must be reliable. They will receive community service hours for their time. A parent or adult chaperone must accompany younger students at all times. The contact people for volunteers are:

Cliff Fox: cfox@saturn.vcu.edu

Ralph White: jrriverpk@aol.com

Jeff Gilleo: jrriverpk@aol.com

Meet David Richmond, the New RAS Auction Chair

David Richmond, a new member who joined RAS last month, has volunteered to chair the Auction Committee. He always enjoyed nature and had an interest in birding, but decided to "re-connect with the joys of bird-watching" by joining our organization. David

grew up in Connecticut and has lived in Richmond since 2001. He is a professional furniture restorer, specializing in moving claims restorations.

David has long been interested in auctioneering, and even attended the Missouri Auction School in Kansas City. Since then he has had extensive experience conducting benefit auctions for various non-profits. We are very fortunate to have David in our club.

Please say hello if you see him at our meetings or bird walks.

As Auction Chair, David will start working on leads for the auction right now and will be forming the Auction Committee later this year. Meanwhile, I hope you also will be thinking of items and ideas for the Auction and serve on the Committee beginning later this summer.

Linda Warfield

National Audubon's Top 10 Endangered Birds

The NAS website contains a report that names the top 10 birds on the endangered list in the US. The birds named in the report are: Ivory-billed Woodpecker; California Condor; Whooping Crane; Gunnison Sage-Grouse; Kirtland's Warbler; Piping Plover; Florida Scrub-Jay; Ashy Storm-Petrel; Golden-cheeked Warbler; Kittlitz's Murrelet; and ten island birds of Hawaii. For Virginians, the Piping Plover nests on Eastern Shore islands, therefore being of special interest to us.

Since its enactment more than 30 years ago, the Endangered Species Act has been profoundly successful in protecting species. The longer a species is listed under the Act, the more likely it is to be improving.

Audubon released this report as the Senate actively considers legislation that, if passed, would undermine the vital protections provided to endangered birds by the Endangered Species Act. In September 2005, the House passed HR 3824, sponsored by Congressman Richard Pombo (R-CA). This bill, euphemistically called "The Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act," eliminates protection for critical habitat; creates loopholes allowing projects to proceed regardless of impacts on endangered birds and wildlife; provides highly controversial payments to landowners as compensation for complying with the law; and includes special exemptions for pesticide manufacturers.

The NAS report(s) can be accessed at the following URLs:

http://www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/Top_Ten_Endangered_Report_03_27_06.html

<http://www.audubon.org/news/top10/top10.php>

You can also find out how you can express your opinion to your legislators through the above web links.



Piping Plover on Wreck Island: Al Warfield

What Has RAS Been Doing Lately?

Here are a few of the projects our conservation organization has worked on so far in 2006.

Bryan Park Cleanup: Eleven people showed up to pick up trash from around the lakes at Bryan Park on the afternoon of February 25. Alice and Paul Boller from Beaverdam were the leaders. Alice made oatmeal raisin cookies for the volunteers and brought dog treats too. Phebe Van Valen, Carolyn and Daniel Pitts, Eileen Tangley, Harriet Turner, Linda & Al Warfield, and Sue Ridd (who organized the RAS volunteers) participated. The upper lake looked fantastic! Thank you all for coming out! Nobody had any time to take pictures; it was a very labor-intensive day!



James River Park English Ivy Removal: On three separate days in March the trees west of the visitor's center at James River Park were freed of English Ivy, an invasive foreign species, thanks to the efforts of RAS volunteers. Sue Ridd, Katie Holzback, Suzette Lyon, Al and Linda Warfield, Nazeem Reza, John Coe, and John Roberts participated. Over 45 hours of time were donated in this effort. We will follow the progress of this eradication effort, and will work on the ivy at other locations in the fall. Ground ivy will be tackled in future test patches.

Above Left, from left to right: Sue Ridd, Suzette Lyon, and John Roberts.

Above Right: Nazeem Reza.

Photos by Al Warfield



Right: From left to right -
Top row: Mark Kacmarcik, Ellen Ackerman, Margaret Ebbs, Ralph White, and Buz Snyder (leaning on sign).
Middle row: Larry Robinson, Nelda Snyder, Arun Bose, Julie Kacmarcik, Caroline Coe, and John Coe.
Bottom row: Sue Ridd.

Photo submitted by Julie Kacmarcik

James River Park Interpretive Sign: An interpretive sign titled "Wildlife You Can See During the Spring Fish Migration" has been designed and produced by RAS member Arun Bose for placement in the park. Funds for creating the sign came from the RAS 2005 Birdathon through the efforts of Pam Dummitt and others. Arun worked with Ralph White on the design and content. The sign was installed on April 11th by Ralph White (James River Park Naturalist and Park Manager) at the Floodwall section of the James River Park System, where the now famous Ash-throated Flycatcher wintered. Additional signs are in the design phase.



Above: Group shot of most of the volunteers who worked on March 17th next to a sign some of them installed. Included are 8 RAS members and several other volunteers. Julie Kacmarcik was also there but was still working when the picture was taken by Cyrus Brame. Can you identify all the RAS members?

Left (left to right): Buz Snyder, Al Warfield and Russell Deane next to the entrance sign they installed. Photo by Nelda Snyder.

Presquile NWR Volunteer Day: A large group of volunteers who converged onto Presquile Island on March 17 participated in a general cleanup of the refuge. Included were 9 RAS members as well as several volunteers from the Appalachian Trail Club, and Friends of Presquile NWR. Although it was definitely a working visit, we had a few nice views of Northern Harriers, Bald Eagles, Ospreys and lots of other species when there was a chance to notice them. Signs were installed, trees were removed, weeds were pulled, trash was picked up and hauled away, an owl box was put up, and the area looked better when we left. Cyrus Brame sent his thanks to all who helped with the efforts.

What Makes a Birding "Hotspot" So Doggoned Hot!

When we head into the field for a birding adventure, it's usually to a hotspot that is tried and true. Particular parks, refuges and preserves get a reputation over time as destinations that consistently host many different species or hard-to-find specialties.

Hotspots have attributes that draw birds to them: a water source nearby, plentiful food sources, safe nesting sites and cover for concealment when needed. Beyond that, hotspots often have habitats with a variety of landscapes or a concentration of food that attract certain species.

Two local birding hotspots with very different landscapes demonstrate the role of habitat in attracting species: Curles Neck Farm and the James River Park System. Both, located along the James River, meet birds' priority needs of water, food, nesting sites and cover. And, both sites are quite different.

Curles Neck Farm covers a large expanse studded with open fields and meadows, ponds and riverfront, small

concentrated forest patches, and marshy wetlands. With such a varied habitat, a good variety of species can be found during each season. Winter brings Canada and Snow Geese as well as several species of ducks. During migration, unusual—but expected—species often stop in the fields: Snow Buntings, Horned Larks and American Pipits wander through the open fields where Short-eared Owls have been spotted in the past. Until the barns were torn down recently, Barn Owls raised young in several of them. However, Great-horned Owls continue to breed in the stately trees near the mansion. The many species that visit or breed on Curles Neck Farm have a multitude of food sources to enjoy: cultivated crops, sub-aquatic vegetation, seeds, insects and various fish and small swamp critters.

While Curles Neck Farm gives birders the sense of open spaces and diverse habitats, the James River Park System is at its birding zenith during spring and fall migration. Hungry and tired songbirds busily forage through a

narrow corridor along the riverbanks, a forest remnant buffer between the water and residential development. The forest canopy is a prime food source with plentiful seeds and insects, and a dense, brushy understory gives birds cover as well as offering berries and caterpillars.

The park sections along Pony Pasture to The Wetlands, Riverside Drive to 42nd Street parking lot, Reedy Creek and Belle Isle draw many birders hoping to see colorful songbirds and warblers up close. The park units provide a compact stretch of vegetation for migratory and breeding birds that is primarily a deciduous forest tract, with few open areas and a small wetland area.

The James River Park System and Curles Neck Farm are hotspots that are unique and attract different species to their landscapes. Both are important seasonal sites and are recognized as consistent, productive hotspots by the local birding community.

Jerry Uhlman

Birds Stories and Photos from RAS Members

A Pair of Great Horned Owlettes and adult were found nesting in Bryan Park by Jan (Frye) Johnson in early April. The owlettes fledged on Easter Sunday. On Easter Sunday morning (April 16), Robin Ruth, Suzette Lyon and Aura Hanna saw one adult and one young. The young bird was still in the same tree but on a very different branch than the ones next to the nest. Thanks to all of you who came to see the nest with young!

Sue Ridd

A female Rufous Hummingbird had been sampling the sugar water in Naseem and Lou Reeza's Bon Air feeder since late last year, and was banded. In early April she began to develop an orange gorget. The photo shown here was taken in early April. She came to the feeder several times on the afternoon of April 9, but a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird showed up around 7 p.m. and chased her off. Apparently that was the trigger for her to leave for the breeding grounds.

Photo by Naseem Reza.



Above left: Al Warfield's photo taken April 7 showing the adult and both owlettes.



Above right: Grace Suttle's digiscope shot of the two owlettes just before fledging.



The Ash-throated Flycatcher that was discovered during the Hopewell CBC in December is shown here in a photo taken recently by Naseem Reza. It stayed in the Flood Wall area until just recently.

Curles Neck Field trip, March 12

It was a fantastic morning with gently warming temperatures, a large turnout of birders and a great showing of birds, including a Great-horned Owl on the nest with 3 down-covered owlettes. Curles Neck Farm lived up to expectations - its diverse field, grassland, shrub, pond, wetlands and river habitats provided us with 73 species of birds, other highlights of which were: Snow Goose (both phases), Blue-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Hooded Merganser, Northern Harrier, Wilson's Snipe, Horned Lark, Palm Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, and White-crowned Sparrow.

John & Caroline Coe

Photo was taken by Hal Tyler



Vulcan Materials Field Trip, April 8

Vulcan's Royal Stone Quarry more than rolled out the Red Carpet for the 7 Richmond Audubon's who threw caution to the wind and ignored the inaccuracies of our local weather gurus to enjoy a great day at a Certified Wildlife Habitat. This was Richmond Audubon's 2nd visit in 2 years and we were happy to add 7 more bird species to Royal Stone's bird inventory.

The morning started with a very entertaining and informative PowerPoint and Video presentation by Plant Manager Tim Walston and Administrative Asst. Sue Dudley. We then divided into teams for a friendly competition of "Bird Jeopardy." Everyone was a winner as we all left with handcrafted birdhouses, birdseed and hummingbird feeders. After pushing ourselves away from the huge breakfast table they laid out for us we went on to tour the site.

A few sprinkles lasting 10 minutes (tops) served as "dust suppression" in the quarry and never slowed down the birds or the birders. There were 39 species sighted, including a Great Blue Heron on the nest, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Rough-Winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, and both Pine and Palm Warblers. Vulcan's Royal Stone Quarry is to be commended for it's commitment to the environment and continued improvements they are making to their Wildlife Habitat, showing that industry and wildlife can co-exist successfully. Thank you for such an extraordinary program.

Julie Kacmarcik



Photos by Julie Kacmarcik:
Above left - Susan Dudley.
Right - RAS members and Vulcan Staff.



From The Kitchen Window – May-July 2006

"Though April showers may come your way
They bring the flowers that bloom in May

So, if it's raining have no regrets
Because it isn't raining rain you know
It's raining violets."

Buddy DeSylva/Lewis Silvers

April is the petal-laced garden path into May; the spring tonic; the elixir of rebirth; the catalyst seeping into the soil and stirring the soul of nature.

May is the result of all that March and April awakened from winter's rest, the prime of spring and a time of beauty and friendly temperatures. May is what we wish for when summertime comes.

The violets in the yard are doing very well, so maybe it did rain violets. We certainly haven't had much of the wet type rain, which our nesting birds say is OK, and the lush weed patches in the yard say is OK. It's our formal plantings and our vegetable gardens and we humans that will get gripey if the raindrops don't fall. So, let's make sure we provide plenty of clean water for our feathered friends, who will soon be teaching their young how to survive out there, including how to get a drink of water.

The birds of winter have probably gone to their summer place by this time (a couple juncos and lots of the White-throated Sparrows were still out back on April 17, as were a several Yellow-rumped Warblers). We still have a Baltimore Oriole hanging around – it's been here all winter. The hummingbirds arrived on April 16. The songs of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are in the trees, along with an amazing number of Chipping Sparrows. The Barred Owls are nesting down below, and the Red-shouldered Hawks nest next door. We have two pair of bluebirds in our boxes, and a chickadee nest in another. And all our other regulars are nesting about. We wish the best for our birds, and yours, as spring flows gently (we hope) into summer.

The Full Moon in May occurs on the 12th. It is appropriately named the Flower Moon. And look for the very bright planet Jupiter and the orange star Antares nearby. June's full moon happens on June 11 and is called the Hay Moon, the Hot Moon, the Rose Moon, the Strawberry Moon or the Honey Moon.

John Coe

Welcome to New Members of Richmond Audubon Society

ASHLAND Steven Martin Nancy Shillady Linda M. Suber Elmer Wiedeman	GLEN ALLEN Tom/Debbie Markwood Mary Overlees Barbara Ullrich GOOCHLAND Nancy Simpson Joyce Stancil HOPEWELL Paula Collette MANAKIN SABOT Margaret Franklin William Wood MECHANICSVILLE Anna Connell Gina Davis Carol Irish Paige Ramer Wanda Sherman	MIDLOTHIAN Tim/Bev Jacobs Barbara W. Lucas Robin McQuiddy Fred R. Nelson Vince Nevius Patricia C. Padgett MONTPELIER Doris McMonigle Nancy Russell MOSELEY Kay Burnett POWHATAN Miriam Hirsch Gerald P. McKendry Ralph M. Skeens PROVIDENCE FORGE James R. Lyle QUINTON Samantha Burdette Ashleigh J. Strouge SANDSTON Carol S. Smith Mary Turgeon Herb Whitehurst	RICHMOND Linda J. Adams J. C. Armstrong Michael Barry Jeanette Blaylock Herbert B. Chermiside Jr Constance Childress Edith Christensen Nancy C. Coleman Peggy L. Combs Randolph Dodson Milton Drummond, Jr Connie G. Ferguson June A. Folke Priscilla S. Ford Coragene S. Highbee Dr. Elizabeth Hodges Charles Hounshell Joseph Hrubik K. Jones J. Conway Kehoe Donald/Audrey King Louise King Nelson D. Lankford Alma Layne Louise Lommel Donald D. Looney	RICHMOND Arthur MacHall, Sr Lisa McKnight Donna Melton Davey Montgomery Sallie Nolte Robin K. Nooney Carol Ogburn Beverly B. Pettway John C. Pirovano Elinor Powell Dr/Mrs Hugh R. Rankin David Richmond Katy Rugg Dante A. Santacrocce Gordon E. Saxon Brenda H. Shimchick Nancy Smith Joan Sorrento Wirt L. Stephenson John Sundtrom Ina Swenck Charles K. Tribble Richard B. Vines David J. Vollrath Scott Wade Marsden Williams
BELLEVUE Lynn Valeri CHESTER John Carroll Larry Heiner Lenore Smith Jack Williams CHESTERFIELD M/D Cassidy Diana Sage COLONIAL HEIGHTS Leonard/Deanna Gunn CROZIER Joan I. Monticelli GLEN ALLEN Carrie Blunt C. N. Davis Edward Hutcherson E. Lovie Lucas				

The members above joined or transferred to RAS in 2006. Welcome, and please come to a meeting or field trip. Make sure to let someone know you are new to the organization.

Nelda Snyder, Membership Chair

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President	Ellen Ackerman	eackerma@aol.com	262-7040
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Important Notices

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

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

The Thrasher will be printed 7 times in 2006: Jan, Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June/July, Aug/Sept, Oct, Nov/Dec.

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Linda Warfield: Labels & proofreading
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The Thrasher is printed on recycled paper



The Thrasher Ad Page

MAPS Study this Summer

Again this summer, Bob Reilly will lead RAS volunteers in the MAPS research study of breeding bird success at Powhatan Wildlife Management Area. This is a bird banding study so it is an opportunity to observe birds "in the hand". We welcome visitors and new volunteers.

If you would like to learn our schedule, contact Mary Arginteanu at maryarg@aol.com

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To request an ad contact the editor at warfield101@comcast.net or 804-743-1479.

The Thrasher



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Phone: (804) 257-0813

On the Web at: www.richmondaudubon.org



RAS members are encouraged to register with Benevolink. This program has replaced Ukrops' Golden Gifts Program. Richmond Audubon Society is a registered charity with Benevolink, which works with hundreds of online businesses that consumers shop with everyday. These retailers contribute a percentage of every dollar you spend to the nonprofit organizations of your choice. Some of the other stores that participate include Home Depot and Best Buy.

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- c. Give - Based on member purchases, Benevolink retailers and merchants contribute charitable funds into the members' individual Benevolink accounts. On a quarterly basis, members log on to the Benevolink web site and direct their accumulated funds to the worthy cause(s) of their choice.
- d. Benefit - Benevolink accumulates contributions from all members and disperses funds to the nonprofits.

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

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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.