Linda Warfield
RAS Member and Nature Photographer

Born and raised in Baltimore, MD, I came to Richmond in 1979 and now consider it home. I have been an RAS member since 1996 and a serious photographer since 1999 when I accepted an invitation to join the Focus Group Camera Club. I use basic adjustments in Camera Raw and Photoshop and seldom use special effects or advanced techniques. Some of the places I have exhibited are Richmond Public Library, The General Assembly, The James Center, Richmond Camera, and Capital One. Three of my photographs are in Capital One’s permanent collection at Innsbrook. My current camera is a Canon 40D. Four years ago my husband and I started Allinda Photography and its website http://www.allindaphoto.com/ where I display my best works.

I saw my first American Dipper a few years ago in Anchorage, AK. I was so entranced, I almost missed the shot!

During a trip to Florida I hoped to see a new life bird, the Limpkin. I was fortunate to be able to photograph this mother and chick. (The chick is slightly blurred due to its constant fluttering.)

When photographing wildlife I like to capture interesting behavior. These two male Moorhens (above) were having a serious turf battle, using their huge feet with talons as weapons.

"Water Hog" (see page 7) is my favorite bird photo. Everybody tells me it makes them smile :-).

I photograph more than birds. For me photography is a way of capturing a moment and preserving memories. Rather than do a photographic project, I usually prefer to record people, wildlife and scenery from the frequent trips my husband and I take. The following bird photographs are from some of these trips.
President’s Message

Avian Defenders
Lewis Barnett

At our October meeting, we will present Richmond Audubon’s Avian Defender Award to two local heroines, Mary Elfner and Rita Shultz. The Avian Defender Award, established 2007, honors local conservationists who have made significant contributions to bird conservation in the Richmond area and beyond.

Mary Elfner has played a crucial role over the past four years guiding the Virginia IBA Program during its transition from the identification of Important Bird Areas to implementing on-the-ground conservation based on the identified IBAs. She has worked tirelessly to identify adoption groups (the boots on the ground for IBA oriented conservation efforts), get the information about the significance of IBAs into local government planning processes, and coordinate with private landowners to implement bird-friendly conservation practices on their properties. She was an integral organizer of the Team Warbler project, a collaboration among VCU, National Audubon, Richmond Audubon and Panama Audubon which connected scientists and middle-schoolers in areas important to the breeding and wintering of Prothonotary Warblers. She continues to work on conservation education with middle-schoolers with the Team Woodthrush project, working with schools in Northern Virginia and Richmond to teach children about threatened bird species and the habitat that shelters them.

Rita Shultz is a long-time volunteer with the Richmond MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity andSurvivorship) banding station. She is one of those special people who gives up sleep, energy, and free time in huge chunks to gather important data on our local breeding birds. Rita has also folded her love of birds into her daily work by convincing many of the patrons on her mail delivery route into allowing her to install Eastern Bluebird boxes on their property. Rita installs the boxes at her own expense and monitors and maintains them after installation. Rita had a 90% response rate on her initial written appeal to folks on her route, and banded 200 chicks in the boxes in 2011. Rita’s outstanding work was recently recognized in an article in the July-August 2012 issue of Audubon magazine.

In addition to recognizing Mary Elfner and Rita Shultz as Avian Defenders, Richmond Audubon will contribute $100 to each to support their ongoing projects.

Publication Schedule
The Thrasher is issued six times a year. Submit articles no later than the 10th of the month before each issue. Deadline for the next issue is October 10.
September Program

Caroline Coe, Programs Chair

Thursday, September 20, 2012, 7 PM is the fall kick-off meeting. Come meet and greet our esteemed speaker Brian Taber, President of the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. Learn about the Kiptopeke Songbird Station – celebrating its 50th year of continuous operation this fall.

The songbird station at Kiptopeke spreads the message of songbird conservation and appreciation to a wide and diverse audience of all ages. The banding staff, the station’s many skilled and dedicated volunteers, and over 100 species of songbirds make a lasting impression and help build personal conservation connections for visitors from all walks of life.

http://www.cvwo.org/50th.php

October Program

Thursday, October 18, 2012, 7 PM. At this meeting we will present the RAS Avian Defenders Awards to two special individuals: Mary Elfner and Rita Shultz. (see the President’s Message). We are fortunate to have such dedicated individuals as award recipients and delighted that they will present our evening’s program.

Mary Elfner, Virginia Audubon Council’s IBA Program, Team Wood Thrush. Mary served as the Audubon IBA Coordinator for 3 years, and continues her work with the Virginia Audubon Council. As the recipient of a Toyota/Audubon TogetherGreen fellowship in 2011, Mary expanded her conservation reach with the Team Wood Thrush Project. Team Wood Thrush is a Virginia Audubon Program that provides vital experiential and online networking opportunities to middle school students regarding a common species in decline, the Wood Thrush, and its habitat. Watch the 3-minute video featured at: www.teamwoodthrush.org.

Rita Schultz, long-time RAS volunteer and member and dedicated bird bander, will tell us how she turned her U.S. Mail route into a bluebird trail! Her Host-a-House effort seeks to foster peace between bluebirds and the residents in whose newspaper boxes they sometimes nest. Rita’s “labors of love” include banding of Northern Saw-whet Owls, Prothonotary Warblers, Eastern Bluebirds and others with the Powhatan MAPS program. Read about Rita’s work in the July-August 2012 of Audubon Magazine. http://www.audubonmagazine.org/articles/birds/mail-maams-mission-protect-bluebirds

Our meetings are held at the St. Luke Lutheran Church, located at Custis Road and Chippenham Parkway.

RAS will NOT be hosting pre-meeting dinners this year. This popular social meal will be on hiatus. Instead, please join us for a pre-meeting social with dessert, coffee and sodas. We'll gather at 6:30pm for conversation and cookies. The meeting will begin at 7pm.

And, looking forward, mark your calendar for Thursday, November 15 and the RAS Annual Pot Luck Dinner. WE are the entertainment for the evening: RAS member pictures, videos & stories. Details will be found on RAS web page http://www.richmondaudubon.org/ and in the November/December newsletter.

Please contact me with questions or suggestions, 804.276.1397 or cccoe@verizon.net

RAS Programs Celebrate the JOY of BIRDING
"In a world that seems so very puzzling is it any wonder birds have such appeal? Birds are, perhaps, the most eloquent expression of reality.” Roger Tory Peterson

Roger Tory Peterson was one of the first directors of Audubon Camp at Hog Island, Maine where Caroline and I attended “The Joy of Birds” in June. And the most amazing sights were from our bedroom window.

Outside the bay – shimmering in the glow of early morning – and morning is really early there – lighting up harbor boats and the lobster pots marked by shore-to-shore multicolored bobbers. Along the path between the shore and our window a Northern Parula pair had constructed an amazing nest of the native usnea lichens and the young were free of the egg and on a fast track to being REAL birds and very demanding for nourishment. The very devoted parents were constantly bringing bugs from the apple tree out on the lawn.

From the window the nestlings and their colorful parents were a joy to watch. Out on the path a mere frog’s jump from the window there was a constant congregation of human campers with binocs and cameras, with lenses longer than our arms, viewing the tangled nest and the proud, harried Parula parents and their young.

Near the last day, from our window the young fledglings fledged and climbed among the lichens and perched on to the branches of the tree, the parents watched and probably cheered. The many humans on the path definitely cheered and took many pictures. The window closed.

I would go back, for the joy.

The full moon in September, named the harvest moon, occurs on the 29th at 11:19 pm.
The autumnal equinox is the 22nd at 10:49 am. In October, the full moon also occurs on the 29th at 3:50 pm and is named the Hunter’s Moon. And look to the east after midnight on the 21st for the Orionid meteor showers.
The Coe’s Go to Camp, June 2012

Caroline Coe

Hog Island, Maine: an island in Muscongus Bay off the Bay of Maine, an island with ties to the spirits of Emily Dickinson, Rachel Carson and Roger Tory Peterson. Hosting its first Audubon Camp in 1936, this magical place was deeded to National Audubon in 1960, and in June of this year it drew John and me to camp for the “Joy of Birding.” And what a joy it was!!!

Captain Mike ferried us over to the island aboard the SnowGoose III. And the adventure began. Over the next few days we found joy, the most friendly and amazingly knowledgeable staff, dedicated volunteers, great food and BIRDS!

The osprey pair and young on the nest atop the electric pole were always engaging, but the Northern Parula pair outside our bedroom window stole the show and received endless attention as we located the nest tucked in the usnea lichen and watched the parents feed their charges. And then one day, to the delight of all, the first fledgling popped out and clung tightly to the hanging old man’s beard lichen!! After many parental visits and much cheeping, three siblings followed. I’d guess this family’s fledging activities could easily be the most photographed birds on Hog Island.

The weather was cool with some rain and clouds but we enjoyed more clear blue skies and delightful sunrises. Walks, boat rides, off-island field trips shared meals & evening programs.

The food was DELICIOUS and bordered on the gourmet with a good touch of home cooking and homemade bread.

And my list of very favorite Audubon staff now includes Scott Weidensaul (I think he knows everything), Steve Kress (Mr. Sea-bird Restoration), Julie Zickafoose (author, artist, joyful person) and Bill Thompson (editor Bird Watchers Digest, songwriter), Lang Elliott (bird and insect recording expert, we’re all heard his work, and he quotes poetry!), Sara Morris (ornithologist, bander, women with a non-stop sense of fun in education), Peter Vickery (no one knows Maine birds better) and Tom Johnson (ornithologist and pelagic bird guru). These folks added their talents, passions and friendship to Audubon for a week of camp. It was easy to feel the presence of Roger Tory Peterson and so many more conservationists, birders, ornithologists, Auduboners.

Have you ever celebrated International Guillemot Appreciation Day? With costume, song, skit and food? We have; we often saw this wonderful seabird on the waters around the island.

Have you boated out to East Egg Rock to see the Puffins, a razorbill and 3 soaring tern species? The puffin was my life bird and I reveled in the sight of them (they’re so cute!). Steve Kress was our guide and there can be no better introduction to sea birds restoration – with a pioneer’s knowings and a wry humor to make for good story telling.

And height of my camp experience was recording bird morning song with the consummate field recordist Lang Elliott. We met at 4 am and with parabolic microphone, recorder and headphones, went forth into the awakening coastal forests of Hog Island. There was no more magic to my camp then the chance to venture out and capture the sounds of a Winter Wren and a Brown Creeper.

Our last night was the lobster feast. Amazing. Can I say more? YES! There were Puffin cream puffs (Julia Child’s recipe) for dessert! And then followed an evening slide show to recap our adventures, and a delightfully humorous show with Bill Thompson, III (BT3) complete with song.

Puffin-costumed folks waved us off the island on the last morning. And now each of us who were present has a permanent piece of Hog Island magic within us. This is good.
Field Trips
Ellison Orcutt

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

September 22, Saturday – Dutch Gap with Betsy and Ben Saunders
Meet Betsy and Ben at 8:00 AM at the entrance to Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area. Fall migration should be well under way, so you never know what might turn up! For more information, contact betsyben@juno.com.

September 29, Saturday, – Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens with Tyler Turpin
See the birds of Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center at 8:00 A.M. Cost will be $6.00 for non Ginter members, finish around 9:30 - 9:45 AM. Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or email tylerturpin@earthlink.net to sign up.

October 7, Sunday – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd
Meet Sue Ridd at Shelter #1 thirty minutes after sunrise for the monthly walk in Bryan Park. Call Sue with any questions at 270-5365.

October 13, Saturday – Dutch Gap with Betsy and Ben Saunders
Meet Betsy and Ben at 8:00 AM at the entrance to Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area. Fall migration should be well under way, so you never know what might turn up! For more information, contact betsyben@juno.com.

October 27, Saturday, – Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens with Tyler Turpin
See the birds of Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center at 8:00 A.M. Cost will be $6.00 for non Ginter members, finish around 9:30 - 9:45 AM. Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or email tylerturpin@earthlink.net to sign up.

*Meet at Powhatan Plaza Shopping Center (corner of Academy Road and Route 60 in Powhatan - this location is about 12 miles and 20 minutes west of the 288 and Route 60 intersection) at 7 am in order to carpool as much as possible. Registration ahead of time would be preferred by contacting Wendy at either WEalding@aol.com or (804) 598-9243.
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Please go to http://www.Allindaphoto.com to see more of Linda’s work.

Rockfish Gap Hawkwatch Open House

The hawk watch will be hosting an open house on Saturday, September 8th 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. to kickoff the 2012 season! We will be bringing up a canopy tent and grill and will be providing hot dogs and chips for everyone! We hope you can come by for some hawk watching, learn about what we do, how we do it and why, try out some binoculars and spotting scopes, catch up with old friends, and make new friends!

The Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch is held on the grounds of the Inn at Afton, located on the southern side of Rockfish Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains, right off I-64 exit 99 (at the intersections with Rt 250, the southern end of the Skyline Drive and the northern end of the Blue Ridge Parkway) just 5 miles east of Waynesboro and 20 miles west of Charlottesville. The hawk watch provides panoramic views of the gap and both the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Piedmont Region to the east. For more info: www.rockfishgaphawkwatch.org

From the Editor

Linda Warfield is our featured nature photographer in this issue. Since joining RAS in 1996, she has shared her time and talents with the organization including serving on the RAS Board in various capacities. Thank you Linda.
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Chapter Membership Application
Yes, please enroll me (us) as a new member(s) of both National and Richmond Audubon Societies at the address below, at the introductory rate. A subscription to the NAS magazine, Audubon is included.

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

Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
City ____________________________
State___ ZIP _____________________
Phone __________________________
E-mail __________________________

Make check payable to National Audubon Society and write “C0ZX530Z” on the check. Send your check and application to:
Richmond Audubon Society,
P.O. Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261
C0ZX530Z

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