LOCAL RVA PARKS
Where are the birds in Richmond?

Upon moving to Richmond a few years ago, one of my biggest concern was, “Where will I find the birds?” I remember telling the REALTOR, “My dream home has a swamp in the backyard.” But, I don’t think she took me seriously enough.

Exploring this new locality, a new habitat, was fearful for me at first. Then, research turned up a gem of a book, Jerry Uhlman’s “A Birder’s Guide to Metropolitan Richmond.” The guy even met me at Bandy Field Nature Park and brought me a copy. What hospitality! I explored a few parks from the directions in his book: Three Lakes, Vawter Street, and Deep Run Parks. That went exceedingly well and my apprehension subsided.

An internet search for “Bird Club” turned up no results, but a friend suggested I try the Audubon Society. I suspected those folks would know where the birds are. The next meeting was in November. Unbeknownst to me, it was their Annual Auction, in those days. The warm smiles at the front door, greeted me as if we were friends already. I still had not found the birds, but at least I had found the bird people. The camaraderie of the group that night, inspired the attendance to a couple of RAS Field Trips and Bird Counts.

In the following month I was put on the Curles Neck team for the Hopewell Christmas Bird Count; there were birds there for sure. Just after New Years, the James River Park (JRP) Count united birding, fellowship and food, a winning combination in anyone’s book! That introduced me to the JRP Wetlands, where I saw this Barred Owl (above).

Spring soon arrived and there was talk of a Great Blue Heron rookery within the city limits. An Audubon field trip introduced me to the 42nd St. entrance to the JRP. It was amazing from the parking lot to the foot bridge during migration. Soon, that connected me to other photographers as well.

Then came the connection with our listserv. This enticed visits to a couple of very busy city parks that truly surprised me. They were bustling with bikers, dogs, and joggers. Both Joseph Bryan Park and Byrd Park have an oasis like effect on water fowl and migrants. (Continued on page 4)
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Summer Break…

We’ve been on our summer break, so I thought I would share a little bit about “how I spent my summer vacation.” One of my cousins got married in June in Boise, Idaho, where she works as an ER nurse. I had the good fortune to be able to spend a few extra days out there to take in the sights and sounds of Idaho—a place I had never visited before. I spent a day at the Craters of the Moon National Monument—a former volcanic hot spot some 15,000 years ago, which now consists of a vast area of lava flows and cinder cones. I happened to get there right around the start of the wildflower season. It was a very stark but beautiful landscape. Not a ton of birds in the park, but I had a number of firsts on the drive to the park, including my first (of many) Black-billed Magpies and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Another day, we visited the World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise. The Center has been instrumental in the restoration of Peregrine and Aplomado Falcon populations. We got to see a few of the California Condors they manage as part of their captive breeding and release program. The remainder of the birds at the Center are not able to be released due to injuries, but it was very interesting seeing some of them up close and learning more about them. Of course, the reason we were there was to celebrate my cousin’s wedding. She chose a picture perfect location on a cliff overlooking the Snake River. It was a beautiful backdrop, and I only felt a little guilty about getting distracted during the ceremony by the pair of Kestrels perching in the distance just beyond the gazebo where the vows were taking place!

Our summer vacation is coming to an end, and our regularly scheduled meetings resume in September. I look forward to hearing all about your summer vacations then!

RAS BOARD BRIEF - LOOKING AHEAD

The RAS “Annual Retreat” Board Meeting was held on July 19 at the VCU Rice Center which welcomed both continuing board members as well as many of the new volunteers. At this strategic planning session, opportunities for RAS to be of service to the community and to our membership were discussed. Topics considered and deliberated covered a range of topics: 2016-2017 Budget, repayment scheduling and Financial Report; sending Thank You notes for donations made in memory of Margaret O’Bryan and fund distribution ideas; the redesign of the RAS website; hosting The Virginia Society of Ornithology Annual Convention in 2017; replacing Byrd Park Swan Lake display graphics, updating James River Park System signage; viewing platform at Presquile National Wildlife Refuge; supporting the RVA Environment Film Festival; local field trips; fund raising; possible nominations for Avian Defender Awards; Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2 update for Richmond; and more. Please support the RAS service committee that best fits your talents!

FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks to all who contributed to the previous issue. Even though I regularly write and produce publications in my vocation, there was still a bit of a learning curve with the timing, communication, website version, and vendor coordination for the Thrasher. It has already been a rewarding avenue for service and for that I am grateful.

If you are interested in contributing to a future issue, have an idea for an article, or would like to help on the committee, email: thrasher@richmondaudubon.org

Bob Schamerhorn - Editor
FROM THE KITCHEN WINDOW by John Coe

“Commonly we stride through the out-of-doors too swiftly to see more than the most obvious and prominent things. For observing nature, the best pace is a snail’s pace.” Edwin Way Teale

The birds seem quiet as summer eases into fall. The “Crow boys” and the Blue Jays are the noisy ones—having a need to be heard. And the wren and the chickadees fuss at whatever is lurking in the bushes. Up in the tall pine tree the goldfinch still sings, being the late nesters of our summer birds.

In the oaks the katydids are quite vocal, if you can call strumming your sides with your legs “vocal”! And the crickets, sensing their time is short, are chirping away, mostly at evening tide. And the snails, characteristically, are very quiet and very slow.

Now is the time for the birds that go south to pack on an extra ounce or two ‘neath those new feathers, give final encouragement to the young, and begin their journey. Soon the night sky will be alive with bird chatter as they fly beneath the stars, on the magical path to lands most have never seen. Our birds of winter have raised their young in the Northern forests and the highlands to our west. They will soon wander south and east to join our resident bird friends.

And may the beauty and innocence of nature trump the annoyance of politics.

- The September full moon, the Harvest Moon, occurs on the 16th.
- Autumn arrives at 10:21 AM on September 22nd.
- The October full moon is on the 15th and is called the Hunter’s Moon.
(Continued from page 1) However, the greatest gifts of all my metropolitan adventures has been the people, the community itself. Some have become fellow birders, great friends, some as leaders, and occasionally my teachers. Richmond Audubon has shown me the birds and their homes, provided opportunities for
advocacy and service, but most of all, it has delivered unity in the love and protection of nature. So each of you as a member, as a part that Society, has been a blessing. Please come and join us at a meeting, on a field trip or in service. - Bob Schamerhorn
RAS FIELD TRIPS
Check the RAS Listserv or the RAS website for information and any late breaking news about field trips.

September 6, Sunday • 7:15 AM
Joseph Bryan Park with Sue Ridd
Meet Sue at Shelter 1 for an early morning of fall migration birding. For more information contact: Sue at (804) 270-5365

September 9, Friday • 7:00 - 8:30 AM
Owl hike with Tyler Turpin
Meet at the Pony Pasture Parking Lot • 7200 Riverside Drive, Richmond, VA. For Contact information: Tyler Twyford Environmental Educator, James River Park (804) 687-0701 • Tyler.Twyford@Richmond.gov

September 10, Saturday • 8:00 AM
Dutch Gap with Lewis Barnett
Meet at the entrance to Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area. Features a wide variety of habitats and great views of the James River. Fall migration should be well under way! For more information contact: Lewis at blbarnett3@gmail.com

September 14, Wednesday • 7:30 AM
Dutch Gap with John Coe
Meet at the parking lot at Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area. Dutch Gap features a wide variety of habitats and great views of the James River. You never know what might turn up!
For more information contact: John at (804) 276-1397

September 17, Saturday • 8:00-9:30 AM
Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens with Tyler Turpin
See the birds of Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center. Cost will be $8.00 for non-Ginter members. Must have at least 4 persons signed up by 8:00 PM on Wednesday of that week, for the trip to proceed.
To sign up contact:
Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 • tylerturpin@earthlink.net

September 17, Saturday • 8:00 AM
Richmond Battlefield National Park with RAS and University of Richmond Biology Department
National Park Service BioBlitz Practice. Join intro Biology students on the herp, bug, tree or bird ID team at the Gaines Mill unit of the Richmond Battlefield National Park on an inventory of overall biodiversity. The Gaines Mill site comprises a variety of habitat types, from wooded stream beds, agricultural fields, managed native grassland, and marshy wetland. Arrive at 6283 Watt House Road, Mechanicsville, VA by 8:00 AM for an hour of birding before the organized inventory begins around 9:00 AM.
For more information contact: Lewis at blbarnett3@gmail.com • (804) 920-4723

September 24, Saturday • 7:30 AM
42nd St.-James River Park with Lewis Barnett
Join Lewis Barnett to explore one of Richmond's best locations for enjoying the fall songbird migration. This beautiful section of the James River Park can produce eye level views of hard to spot birds. Meet Lewis at the 42nd st lot off of Riverside Dr. For more information contact:
Lewis at blbarnett3@gmail.com

October 1, Saturday • 7:30 AM
Rural Plains unit of the Richmond Battlefield Park with Lewis Barnett
Volunteers sought for an avian species inventory at the Rural Plains unit of the Richmond Battlefield Park. The survey is part of an NPS sponsored BioBlitz. Meet in the parking lot at 7261 Studley Road, Mechanicsville, VA.
For more information contact:
Lewis Barnett (blbarnett3@gmail.com • (804) 920-4723

October 2nd, Sunday • 7:37 AM
Joseph Bryan Park with Kathy and Rex Springston
Meet Rex and Kathy at Shelter 1 for early morning birding and fall migrants. For more information contact:
Rex and Kathy at crexs@aol.com

October 17th, Saturday • 8:00 AM
Dutch Gap with Lewis Barnett
Meet at the entrance to Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area. By October, most neotropical migrants have come through but there should be stragglers, early waterfowl possible. For more information contact:
Lewis Barnett (blbarnett3@gmail.com • (804) 920-4723

October 22, Saturday • 8:00 AM
Point of Rocks Park with Wendy Ealding
Join Wendy to search for migrants along the Appomattox River in Chesterfield County. This county park, near Chester, features a boardwalk through a tidal freshwater marsh. Meet Wendy at the parking area adjacent to the playground. The park address is 201 Enon Church rd. Chester, VA. For more information contact: Wendy at wealding@aol.com

October 29, Saturday
42nd St.-James River Park with John Ditto
Join John Ditto to explore one of Richmond's best locations for enjoying the fall songbird migration. Hopefully we'll catch some stragglers late in fall migration from the tree top pedestrian bridge. Meet John at the 42nd St lot off of Riverside Dr.
For more information contact: John at jdittojr@gmail.com
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ABOUT THE RICHMOND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Richmond Audubon Society (RAS) is a chapter of The National Audubon Society (NAS), becoming a member of either one, enrolls you in membership to both (NAS and RAS by location). Renewals processed through The National Audubon Society.

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

MAILING ADDRESS: Richmond Audubon Society
P.O. Box 26648 • Richmond, VA 23261

PHONE: 804-601-4917 (Message Line)

WEBSITE: www.RichmondAudubon.org

LISTSERV: www.freelists.org/list/va-richmond-general

NONPROFIT: RAS is a registered nonprofit 501 (C) (3) charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible.

NEWSLETTER: “The Thrasher” is issued bi-monthly (January, March, May, July, September, November). Please submit articles to thrasher@richmondaudubon.org no later than the 10th of the month prior. The newsletter is available for download (PDF) from the RAS website or by special request for a hard copy.

RAS BOARD MEETINGS: Held on the second Thursday on alternate months starting in January (except June and August). In July, the Board has its annual strategic planning session. Board Meeting start times and locations vary, members are welcome to attend board meetings, but let the President or Secretary know beforehand, due to space considerations.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Chapter Membership Application

Yes, please enroll me (us) as a new member(s) of both National Audubon 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

Name_________________________________
Address ______________________________
City __________________________________
State________ ZIP _____________________
Phone ________________________________
E-mail ________________________________

Make check payable to National Audubon Society and write “X53” as the check memo. Send your check and application to: Richmond Audubon Society, P.O. Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261

X53
ISSUE FEATURES:

LOCAL RVA PARKS
(See page 1 • Continued on Pages 4 and 5)

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
RAS BOARD BRIEF
(See page 2)

MEETING(S) & PROGRAM(S)
September 15: Prothonotary Warbler Research
Presented by: Jesse Reese
(See page 3)

October 20: Birds of Prey
Presented by: Bob Schamerhorn
(See page 3)

FROM THE KITCHEN WINDOW
Article by John Coe
(See page 3)

MEMBER’S PHOTO SUBMISSIONS
Subject: Local Richmond Parks
(See pages 4 and 5)
Left: Double-crested Cormorant at Byrd Park by Lori Schamerhorn

UPCOMING FIELD TRIP LISTINGS
(See page 6)