



# The Thrasher

Richmond Audubon Society

The next *Thrasher* will be the November/December issue

## RAS Meetings in Sept. and Oct., 2008

The meetings will be held at St. Luke Lutheran Church, beginning at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. The church is located at the intersection of Chippenham Parkway and Custis Road in South Richmond. The intersection is at a traffic light just east of the Huguenot Rd. exit.

Program for September 18: "North to Alaska" by Bob Coles. This program will cover a June 2-17, 2005 birding trip to Alaska with "Otus asio Tours". Four Richmond Audubon members were among the 16-participants. It will cover where they went and what they saw. A total of 170-species were recorded in four primary areas: Seward, St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs, Nome, and Denali, and at several stops between them. In addition to photos of birds and landscape, Bob will cover the logistics of this type of trip, equipment and resources.

Program for October 16: Mary Elfner, the new Virginia IBA Coordinator will present a program

titled "The Virginia Important Bird Areas Program, Private and Public Land Conservation, Community Outreach and You!" The Virginia IBA Program is moving from the identification stage to the conservation stage. In order to conserve lands designated as IBAs, we must work with private and public landowners, provide community outreach opportunities, and continue to form a strong volunteer base so that Virginia's bird life and bird habitats are supported into the future. Please come, meet Mary, and find out what you can do to help support this cornerstone science initiative of the National Audubon Society. Dessert will be available after the meetings.

*Sandy Wynne*, Program Chair

The Pre-meeting dinner for each meeting will start at 5:30 p.m. There is a nominal fee of \$5.00. Call or e-mail me by the day before the meeting if you plan to be there for the dinner. 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. You don't have to bring any food, but you are welcome to share one of your favorite dishes with our group. Keep all your receipts for any food you bring. Those who bring food are reimbursed for their expenses at the meeting if they provide receipts, and 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 Appetit!

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

RAS Auction to be held at St. Michael's Episcopal Church on Nov. 20, 2008

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See the Auction article on Page 6 of this issue.

Directions to St. Michael's Episcopal Church  
From Chippenham Parkway, exit south on Jahnke Road (away from the hospital). Turn right at Buford Road. At the Old Bon Air Hotel (large white building on the left) turn left onto Rockaway Road. The first street on the right is McCrea; the church parking lot is on McCrea directly in front of the church. For handicap parking: Turn right at the second road off Rockaway into the church's lower parking lot and take the elevator up.

## President's Message: September / October 2008

These days it is hard to pick up a publication, turn on the news, or just go shopping without seeing something about "going green". A combination of rapidly melting ice caps and soaring fuel prices are finally driving home what Rachel Carson warned about in her prophetic book *Silent Spring* decades ago: we need to adopt more earth-friendly habits on a global scale by carefully considering the choices we make as consumers. Most of us have incorporated at least a few of the "green" practices widely recommended. We manage air pressure in our automobile tires and keep the engine tuned for better gas mileage. We switched to energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances, incorporated water-wise practices, and manage our itineraries so that we drive less to name just a few.

Food has also become important to the save-the-planet movement. Healthy eating combined with earth-friendly cuisine have combined to make organic foods and hormone-free meats widely available. Restaurants feature menus using locally produced ingredients.

In one of those suspiciously coincidental series of events that make you wonder if The Universe is trying to tell you something, three messages in one week presented themselves to me while I was busy going about my same ol', same ol' routine. While surfing through the National Audubon website for something else, a topic caught my eye. It was a free wallet card defining which fish are good to buy and which not to buy.

That same week, in my doctor's waiting room, I flipped through the April 2008 issue of *Eating Well* magazine, stopping on an exhaustively informative article about the wild vs. farmed salmon debate. Maybe I have been out of touch, but I was surprised to learn that wild Atlantic salmon are endangered, the result of disease spread by farmed salmon contaminating the water. And just in case I didn't get the message from those two information encounters, while in my dentist's waiting room I flipped through the April 2008 issue of *Country Living* magazine to a fea-

ture called "Green Guide". One of the featured sections on this page was a pitch from the Monterey Bay Aquarium entitled *Seafood Watch*, offering a pocket guide explaining which fish to buy and which to avoid.

After these three "information interventions" I thought to myself, "Something's fishy here!" Like most Virginians, I am aware of the perils created by overharvesting and contamination of our crab and oyster populations, and the devastation created by mercury poisoning in the James River and elsewhere. I have decided to heed the warnings The Universe has so helpfully pointed out about fish and seafood. Going forward, I plan to change my buying and eating habits to support sustainable fish and seafood harvesting.

If, like me, you can't imagine a future without crabcakes, grilled salmon, or oyster stew, you may also like to explore these resources. To become better equipped to make an informed decision about fish and seafood, a list of websites containing useful information follows.

seafoodwatch.org - offers a downloadable free pocket guide explaining which fish to buy and which to avoid.  
salmonnation.com and wildsalmoncenter.org - offer information on salmon conservation in the North Pacific.  
blueoceaninstitute.org/seafood - offers a downloadable pocket guide Ocean Friendly Seafood that lists species by color-code: green=good, yellow/red=avoid.

A copy of this wallet-sized guide is also available at: [http://www.audubon.org/campaign/lo/seafood/seafood\\_wallet.pdf](http://www.audubon.org/campaign/lo/seafood/seafood_wallet.pdf)

And check out the Green Choices: Seafood page of the April 2008 *Eating Well* magazine. It features fish and seafood labels and explains in detail what they do and don't mean. Your local library probably has a back copy.  
Bon Appetit!

*Pam Dummitt*

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## Reddish Egret: on Audubon's Watchlist as a "Vulnerable Species"

The Heron Specialist Group, an organization devoted to the study and conservation of herons, egrets, and bitterns, has identified Reddish Egrets as a "vulnerable" species, meaning that while the species is not critically endangered or endangered, it faces a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future. Although it is now fully protected from hunting in the United States, the species is still recovering from the decimation of 100 years ago. The greatest threat to Reddish Egrets now is habitat degradation and destruction. Residential and commercial development along the Gulf of Mexico threatens the high-salinity coastal waters that this species prefers. Development modifies the hydrology of coastal wetlands, thus changing the natural processes found in these ecosystems, and reducing the food supply for Reddish Egrets and other birds.

Volunteers are crucial to the success of programs that monitor the long-term status of wintering populations of Reddish Egret and other bird species. Audubon's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is one of the longest-running citizen-science monitoring programs in the world and has helped to follow changes in the numbers and distribution of Reddish Egret. To learn more about the CBC and how you can participate, visit: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc>.

See the full story at:

<http://audubon2.org/watchlist/viewSpecies.jsp?id=172>  
And see the picture by Al Warfield on Page 3. A first year Reddish Egret was seen fishing in the customary way they do it at Topsail Island, NC in August.

## RAS Field Trips and Workdays: September - October, 2008

Sunday September 7 – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd: See what early migrants we can find! Meet at 7:15 a.m. For more information, call Sue at 270-5365.

Wednesday, September 10 – Second Wednesday walk with John Coe will be at Bandy Field. Meet at the Starbucks north of the Huguenot Bridge at 7:30 a.m. Call John (276-1397) for details.

Saturday, September 20 – Afton Mountain/Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch: Visit the Hawk Watch at Afton Mountain on the side of the Inn at Afton Hotel facing I-64. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Gaskins Road Park-and-Ride to travel as a group or carpool, or you can meet the group at the side of the Inn at Afton. Lunch will be on your own. There is no set time for the trip to end. Bring an outdoor-type folding chair, binoculars, insect repellent, and water/drinks. To sign up or for more information call Tyler Turpin at 317-9478 or E-mail: [tylerturpin@earthlink.net](mailto:tylerturpin@earthlink.net).  
Directions to Afton: Take I-64 West to Exit 99. At red blinking light take a right. Drive under the overpass. Take a right on the 1st side road you see (Afton Circle Road). Drive uphill to the hotel and park. Hawk Watch is on side of hotel facing I-64. [http://home.ntl.net/~btkin/rockfish\\_gap\\_hawk\\_watch](http://home.ntl.net/~btkin/rockfish_gap_hawk_watch)

Saturday, September 27 – Bird Walk at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens: Cost is \$6.00 for non Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens members. Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center. You must sign up in advance; there must be at least 4 people signed up before Thursday evening or the trip will be cancelled. Contact Tyler Turpin at 317-9478 or E-mail: [tylerturpin@earthlink.net](mailto:tylerturpin@earthlink.net)

Sunday October 5 – Bryan Park with Sue Ridd: There should be some migrants there for sure this month! Meet at 7:30 a.m. For more information, call Sue at 270-5365.

Wednesday October 8: No 2nd Wed. walk in October.

Saturday, October 25 – Bird Walk at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens: Cost is \$6.00 for non-LGBG members. Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center. You must sign up in advance; there must be at least 4 people signed up before Thursday evening or the trip will be cancelled. Contact Tyler Turpin at 317-9478 or E-mail: [tylerturpin@earthlink.net](mailto:tylerturpin@earthlink.net).

Saturday October 25 – Fisherman's Island, Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge: -Join one of the ESNWR naturalists as we enjoy a walk on this protected area along the Chesapeake Bay. The walk will take us through scrub forest out onto the beach and under the CBBT.

Shorebirds, raptors, a variety of late migrants, night herons, and bay ducks can always be seen. We meet at the ESNWR visitor center at the north end of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge at 8:30 a.m. Be prepared to walk in loose sand. Bring binoculars, scopes, water, snacks; dress in layers. The walk usually lasts until about noon. No facilities. *This is always a popular trip & space is limited* so you must call to reserve a space. Contact: Julie Kacmarcik 530-3660 (evenings).

Sunday, October 26 – Curles Neck with John Coe: The trip starts at 7:30 a.m. Call (276-1397) or E-mail John for details in case there are changes.

November 12 – 2nd Wednesday walk with John Coe will be at Dutch Gap: Meet in the parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Call John for details.

Future Bryan Park Field Trips with Sue Ridd (always on the 1st Sunday of the month):

Nov. 2 7:15 a.m.

Dec. 7 7:45 a.m.

Come see Bryan Park from a different point of view each month. For more information, call 270-5365.



*Penny Reynolds*



Reddish Egret at South Topsail Beach, fishing for supper.

Photo by Al Warfield

## The Richmond Purple Martin Festival: July 26, 2008

The festival, titled "Gone to the Birds," was held at the 17th Street Farmers' Market on Saturday evening, July 26, 2008. Thirty Volunteers representing the Purple Martin Conservation Association, National Audubon Society, Richmond Audubon Society, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Virginia Society of Ornithology were present to assist the public in answering their questions about the pre-migratory roost site. The volunteers were scattered throughout the large crowd as they ate raspberry sherbet provided by the Nicely Brothers Ice Cream Distribution.

Others there were Jon Baliles (Office of the Mayor), and Linette Bond of Farmer's Market. They saw the Red-tailed Hawk take one Purple Martin and eat it on a telephone pole. The crowd as a whole booed the hawk. This pre-migratory roost site has been active from early July through September 7th since 1995. Last year, there was the possibility of losing the 20 Bradford Pear trees, but thanks to one ardent Purple Martin landlord, the trees were spared. Since July 13th, more than 3,300 visitors have come to see the Purple Martins!

*Sue Ridd*



Jimmy Fitzgerald (left), a martin colony keeper in Charles City County, gave helpful information to this couple and many festival-goers. He is a member of the Purple Martin Conservation Association. Photo and caption from Susan Barnes.



Above: Purple Martins settling into the Bradford Pear trees for the night. Photo by Al Warfield.

Above Left: Curtis Smith, who lives just a few blocks from the roost, has been walking over nightly to watch the martins, since asking why folks were looking up earlier in the summer. "It's part of my routine now... I think it's wonderful to be able to experience this right in the city." Armed with Fitzgerald's handout at the festival, Smith could tell first-timers more about the martins and the importance of the pear trees behind him.

Back at the site a few nights later, Smith said he stopped watching the Yankees and Orioles play on TV to rush over to 17th Street for another look at the swirling, swooping squadrons of martins. A new fan of the martins, Smith said his top-floor apartment window "just happens to face west, so I can see the tip-tops of these trees." Now the trees are special, and the martins are a plus to living in Shockoe Bottom, he added. Photo and caption from Susan Barnes.

## An Anytime, Anywhere Celebration of Nature in the City

Simple citizen-science project reaches urbanites of all ages

Ithaca, N.Y.-Nature has the power to soothe and enthuse. More people are finding that out as they join the free, year-round "Celebrate Urban Birds!" citizen-science project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. From schools, hospitals, and senior centers, to wellness programs, scout packs, and military bases, participants are reaping the benefits of a closer connection to the natural world and a new appreciation for city birds.

A girl in 4-H changed her mind about city birds after taking part in the project: "At first I didn't like urban birds," she said. "I thought of them as pests. Then I realized that they are just like me and other kids. We are ignored or people just see us as pests or don't see us at all...yet if you look a little deeper you can see that on the inside we are pretty unique and cool!"

People of all ages and backgrounds participate in Celebrate Urban Birds through gardening, cultural activities and citizen-science. For the citizen-science part of the project, participants watch city birds for 10 minutes, check off 15 target species of birds, and send the information through the mail or the Internet to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Once enough data are gathered, scientists hope to learn more about how birds survive in cities and how they use urban green spaces such as parks, rooftop gardens, and even potted plants on balconies for

food, resting sites, and shelter.

Individuals can participate on their own or through public events organized by local groups. "Celebrate Urban Birds!" has partnered with more than 2,000 organizations to hold special "birdy" events featuring the arts, science, gardening, or other ways to draw people into bird study and observation. While supplies last, everyone who signs up will receive a Celebrate Urban Birds kit in English and Spanish with two colorful urban birds posters, educational materials about birds and urban greening, a data form, and a packet of sunflower seeds to plant in pots and gardens. More than 60,000 free kits have been distributed.

After receiving his kit, one elementary school youngster with Down syndrome declared, "I will take these posters home and put them up on my wall forever because I'm going to be a scientist when I grow up!" Teachers find that the 10-minute bird observation can be done within a class period, and it reinforces math, reading, scientific, artistic, and team-building skills. One teacher noted, "Our group of middle school boys was impressed with being able to help with a project sponsored by a university."

Some groups go beyond a single event by greening their neighborhood--creating habitat for birds on balconies, rooftops, front stoops, or community spaces. Others are tapping into the

arts, creating dances, drawings, murals, sculptures, puppet shows, and short films based on city birds. The "Celebrate Urban Birds!" web site has lots of resources and suggestions about how to craft an event or project for libraries, nature centers, schools and youth groups, community gardens, home-school groups, or individuals.

Winners have been chosen for the project's first "Beautiful Birds in Urban Places" video and photo contest. Marian Mendez of Hialeah, Florida, captured first prize with her images of birds found in her back yard. She said, "I like to single out one bird and watch it for a while, trying to see the personality and mind behind it. And I'm out in the fresh air, getting sunshine and a new perspective on life." You can see Marian's photos and other great entries on the web site. Stay tuned for the next photo contest! Learn more about Celebrate Urban Birds and sign up at [www.CelebrateUrbanBirds.org](http://www.CelebrateUrbanBirds.org)!

### *Karen Purcell*

Project Leader  
607-254-2455

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a membership institution dedicated to interpreting and conserving the earth's biological diversity through research, education, and citizen-science focused on birds. Visit the Lab's web site at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu>.

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## Volunteer Days with the Virginia IBA Program

Recently, Toyota Corporation gave the National Audubon Society a grant to begin the TogetherGreen Program.

TogetherGreen ([www.togethergreen.org](http://www.togethergreen.org)) is a new Audubon conservation initiative made possible by Toyota, sponsored and organized by the Virginia Important Bird Areas (IBA) program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service. This coordinated kick-off effort is being synchronized to celebrate National Public Lands Day, the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy. Please volunteer with us on Saturday, September 27th, 2008 at one of three Virginia Important Bird Areas:

- 1) Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Trumbo Hollow, to protect this IBA from Invasive Nonnative Plants, 10 – 4.
- 2) James River National Wildlife Refuge, Prince George County, Return to Nature Project. Collection of man-made materials from eleven acres of undulating forests and marshy shoreline adjacent to Powell Creek, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- 3) Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge – replace covers on tree tubes at Wellford and Tayloe tracts to prevent entrapment and mortality of birds. 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

You must register to take part, so interested volunteers, please contact Mary-Stuart Torbeck at [VAIBAVolunteerDays@gmail.com](mailto:VAIBAVolunteerDays@gmail.com) to get more information and to register.

Come be a part of something truly big that will help conserve birds across our State, and our Nation, on September 27, 2008!

## Richmond Audubon Society's "It's For The Birds" 2008 Annual Auction

Join us on November 20, 2008 for fellowship, good food and a fun evening that provides the financial support for Richmond Audubon's important outreach programs. Here are important facts:

For the 2008 RAS Auction, Former President Margaret O'Bryan is the Honorary Chairperson.

New this year: all the food is provided.

Location: Please note that the auction will be at the same location as last year:

St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 8706 Quaker Lane, Bon Air, Virginia. See directions on Page 1.

The Auction Schedule will be as follows:

12:00 Noon	Set-up starts
5:30 p.m.	Doors open with Registration, Silent Auction, wine and snacks
6:00 p.m.	Food area opens
7:15 p.m.	Silent Auction comes to a close and the raffle prizes are awarded.
7:30 p.m.	Live auction starts
8:30 p.m.	Live auction ends and door prizes are awarded
	Checkout and cleanup

Cost: Event tickets are \$15.00 per person and include: a bidder number for the silent and live auctions; all you can eat heavy hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic beverages; a chance to win one or more door prizes (must be present to win); and a goody bag. (Wine is extra; glasses are \$5.00 each with unlimited refills).

Auction: Audubon's own Doug Sinclair is back by popular demand and will be calling the Live Auction. Both the Live and Silent Auctions will be full of delightful gifts and unique artwork, as well as great trips and outings. These include:

1) One week at the O'Bryan farm in beautiful Highland Co., donated by Wayne and Margaret O'Bryan	Mike and Ann Brooks
2) A "Live Birds of Prey" program by Kim Harrell	5) John & Caroline Coe's fun filled family pontoon outing at Dutch Gap
3) Two canoe outings with Bob Reilly to monitor Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes	6) plus many other great items!
4) The famous "Gourmet Wine Dinner", donated by	(We accept cash, checks and Visa or Master cards)

Raffle: Another opportunity to get members, friends and co-workers involved in helping Richmond Audubon. The tickets are \$5 each or \$20 for 5. There is a grand prize and a runner-up prize plus prizes for the member selling the	winning ticket. You do not need to be present to win. (Contact Person: Jerry Uhlman at 804-262-9546 or flyways@verizon.net). Prizes will be announced at the September 18th RAS meeting.
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Sponsorship Opportunities: For members and businesses that want to help but prefer to make a monetary contribution we have five levels of sponsorships ranging for \$125 to \$2,000. Each level has different benefits including event tickets and publicity. If you are interested please contact Bob Coles (804-883-7570 or [bob@bcoles.com](mailto:bob@bcoles.com)) to get the details and a sponsorship brochure.

Use of Funds: Seventy-five percent of the money raised goes to our RAS KIDS Project, which helps educate children in underserved communities in Richmond and introduces them to nature. The remaining 25% will help	with habitat restoration at the James River Park System and Presquille National Wildlife Refuge. and to citizen-science projects including our annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) that counts the wintering bird popula-	tions, MAPS bird-banding stations that collect scientific data to better understand area breeding birds, and the Prothonotary Warbler nesting studies at Dutch Gap Conservation Area.
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So, what can you do?

1. Buy event tickets and save the date: Thursday, November 20, 2008. 2. Make a donation or become a sponsor. 3. Help obtain other donations and sponsors. Donation forms can be obtained at the September or October meetings or by contacting any committee member. Deadline for donations is Friday, October 31. 4. Sell raffle tickets. Tickets will be distributed at the September and

October meetings. 5. Volunteer to help. Contact Linda Warfield 743-1479 [lindawarfield@comcast.net](mailto:lindawarfield@comcast.net) 6. Check the RAS website for updates ([www.richmond-audubon.org](http://www.richmond-audubon.org)). To make donations, become a sponsor, volunteer or get answers to any questions please contact: Bob Coles 883-7570 or [bob@bcoles.com](mailto:bob@bcoles.com); Caroline Coe 276-1397 or [cccoc@verizon.net](mailto:cccoc@verizon.net); or Linda Warfield (see above).

Donation drop off points: Birdwatchers 4636 Commonwealth Center Pkwy 763-3890 Wild Bird Center 1360 Gaskins Rd 741-2473	Wild Birds Unlimited 9778 Midlothian Turnpike 323-0353 Wild Birds Unlimited 10921-A W. Broad St 934-9200
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Remember all the food is provided. Save your home-cooked specialties for the "Pot-Luck Dinner and Celebration" to be held on December 18th, also at St Michael's.

See Page 1 for directions to St. Michael's.

Officers / Committee Chairs and Co-chairs for 2008-9

President	Pam Dummitt	president@richmondaudubon.org	353-3571
1st VP	Lewis Barnett	vicepresident1@richmondaudubon.org	320-7898
2nd VP	Caroline Coe	vicepresident2@richmondaudubon.org	276-1397
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Conservation	vacant		
Legislation	Margaret O'Bryan	legislation@richmondaudubon.org	746-5599
Field Trips	Penny Reynolds	fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org	828-4911
Membership	Lori Rutledge	membership@richmondaudubon.org	310-9014
Cyberspace	Robin Ruth	cyberspace@richmondaudubon.org	231-5949
Programs	Sandy Wynne	programs@richmondaudubon.org	276-5520
Publicity	vacant		
Youth	Robin Ruth Mary Arginteanu	RASkids@richmondaudubon.org	231-5949 320-0138
IBA /VAC Rep	Lewis Barnett	IBA@richmondaudubon.org	320-7898

**Important Notices**

Richmond Audubon Society is a registered non-profit organization

*The Thrasher* is issued in Jan/Feb., Mar/Apr., May/June, Jul/Aug, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec. pending circumstances.

Submit articles no later than the 15th of the month before each issue.  
E-mail: thrasher@richmondaudubon.org

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

RAS Board Meetings held on the 2nd Thursday on alternate months starting in Jan; RAS members welcome to attend, but let a Board member know due to space considerations. Most meetings are St. Luke.

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

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

*The Thrasher* is printed on recycled paper

**From The Kitchen Window: September – October, 2008**

"You must not know too much, or be too precise or scientific about birds and trees and flowers. A certain free margin helps your enjoyment of those things."  
Walt Whitman

It's a hot autumn afternoon as I watch a *Mimus polyglottos*, or as a bander's note may record, a NOMO, spread its wings to stir up insects from our dry lawn.

On the platform feeder a MODO, or *Zenaida macroura*, picks away at the dry seeds while others of his kind rest quietly along the shaded branches of the hickory tree.

Earlier in the day, before the sun topped the trees, the birds were busily feeding on things in the weeds and among the leaves. Now there's only the sounds of *Magicicada* - or could it be one of the *Tibicen* species - scratching it's wings in perfect pitch. And off in the distance I hear the soft tapping of a DOWO, or *Picoides pubescens*.

Often, as I watch from the window, I see a bird and I don't know what it is. This is especially true this time of year when these little birds passing through the yard on their way south don't look like they did passing through in the spring. So I rush around trying to find my binoculars and a field guide, and by the time I get back to the window the bird is gone.

Too often perhaps, I miss the pure beauty, the frenzy of wings, and the wonder of tiny-feathered forms that feed from tree to tree, to focus on one confusing fall warbler.

The ID and listing are fun and give us structure. But the real fulfillment is putting away your field guides and eye-pieces and your scientific nomenclature to watch the interaction between the forces of nature. That's particularly true now as the seasons change, and the magic of migration happens right outside your window.

The full Harvest Moon occurs on the night of the 14th of September. So named because the Harvest Moon shines earlier and longer than your average full moon, thus giving the farmer more time to work the field.

The Autumnal equinox occurs at 11:44 a.m. on the 22nd of September. In October the Full Hunter's Moon happens on the night of the 14th.

*John Coe*



### Important notice for NEW members of RAS - Action Required!

**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 *Thrasher* label)
- \*Your address (with 9-digit zip)
- \*Phone # and e-mail addresses so we can contact you
- \*The 10-digit account number or other code at the top of your mailing label located on the newsletter that is currently sent to you (e.g., 0000000001, NLO, COMP, COA, or WOL)
- \*Whether you want to receive the Thrasher by mail or only read it online

\*What RAS activities you enjoy: Read *The Thrasher*, Field Trips, Meetings, Workdays, Auction, Projects, other (specify) (This information is optional for you but useful to us.)

We want you to get your Thrasher in the mail if you want to receive it. 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* 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.

If you are not a new member: 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.

Richmond Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 26648  
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# Audubon

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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**. A subscription to the NAS magazine, **Audubon** is included.

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I want *The Thrasher* mailed to me: Yes / No

Make check payable to **National Audubon Society** and write **"X53" on the check**.

Send your check and application to:

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**c/o Membership Chair, Lori Rutledge**  
**P.O. Box 363**  
**Richmond, VA 23218-0363**

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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.