



the Thrasher

Newsletter of the Richmond Audubon Society

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011 VOLUME 38, ISSUE 5

Pre-meeting Dinner

Naseem Reza, Chair

Hospitality Committee

hospitality@richmondaudubon.org,

Please join us for dinner before the meeting at 5:30 PM on Thursday, September 15, and October 20.

You do not have to bring food but you are welcome to share one of your favorite dishes—made by you or from a local deli. Keep all your receipts for any food you buy if you want to be reimbursed. There is a \$5 charge to cover drinks, paper products and fill in food items. Call 804-272-1145 or e-mail me by the Monday of the meeting week.

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September Program: Rising Seas Endanger Wetland Wildlife with Lynda Richardson.



Red Wolf, © Lynda Richardson

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Thrasher illustrations
© Carl "Spike" Knuth

Join local professional wildlife and environmental photographer, Lynda Richardson, for her program; *Rising Seas Endanger Wetland Wildlife*, a story she shot for *Smithsonian* magazine in 2010. The story centers around the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge near Manteo, NC and how it has been discovered that the rising waters of the surrounding sound will eventually cover the 154,000 acre refuge, possibly within ten years. Known for its rare red wolves, the only wild population to exist, period, and the largest population of black bear on the East Coast, the loss of this refuge would be devastating.

Through the creative joint efforts of numerous organizations such as the NC Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Refuge, this story illustrates some of the efforts these organizations are making to keep the refuge "afloat" as long as possible.

Our September meeting will be on Thursday, September 15th at 7:00 PM at St. Luke Lutheran Church, located at Custis Road and Chippenham Parkway.



Richmond Audubon Society

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

Important Notices

RAS membership meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of the month except June, July, August and December. Meetings are at 7:00 PM, and are held at St. Luke Lutheran Church at Custis Road and Chippenham Parkway unless notified.

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

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

Richmond Audubon Society
P.O. Box 26648
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www.RichmondAudubon.org

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Publication Schedule

The Thrasher is issued six times a year. Submit articles no later than the 10th of the month before each issue. Deadlines for each issue are listed here >

President's Message

Lewis Barnett



© Naseem Reza

Your Richmond Audubon Society board of directors met for our annual leadership retreat in mid-July. We were once again fortunate to have access to the VCU Rice Center as our meeting location, and enjoyed a mild, sunny day with beautiful views of the James River as our backdrop.

Those who have followed these

messages for very long understand that Richmond Audubon, like many other non-profit organizations, and like many individuals and families, is going through tough financial times. The good news is that, as a result of some difficult decisions by the board, we are surviving, and there are some bright spots. We have been reasonably successful at getting small grants to support some of our activities, and our baseline funding from National Audubon seems stable.

The main issue identified at our retreat this year can perhaps be summed up as "volunteer fatigue." Richmond Audubon has been blessed with a strong core of volunteer leaders over the course of its history, but as in many similar organizations, that core has been largely composed of the same group of people over the long-term, and volunteer burn-out is a real phenomenon. We seem to have little trouble generating a group for a specific activity like planting trees at Presquile, or helping with a community fair at one of the schools we work with, but finding people willing to organize as a committee chair or event coordinator is a tough sell. "I'm willing to help, but I don't want to be the point person" is the common refrain. I think we have all been in that state of mind – I know I certainly have. Unfortunately, without those people willing to take the point, there are no events for everyone to help with.

The practical consequence that the board was forced to confront this year was a sense of diminishing returns on our long-running fund-raiser,

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Pre-meeting continued from page 1

Please let me know what you will be bringing. NOTE: If you would like to come for the dinner but are not sure if you can make it, give me your name by mid-day on Wednesday. If you cannot make it to the dinner, you will not be responsible for the \$5 charge. *Bon Appétit!*

- December 10th for Jan/Feb issue.
- February 10th for Mar/Apr issue.
- April 10th for May/Jun issue.
- June 10th for Jul/Aug issue.
- August 10th for Sep/Oct issue.
- October 10th for Nov/Dec issue.

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

President's Message continued from page 2

the annual auction. Many of you have helped with this event over the years, and you all know that an auction is a very labor-intensive way to raise money. It worked well for years, but over the recent past, the return has simply not balanced the effort required and the cost in terms of volunteer burn out. As a result, the board decided to keep the pot-luck dinner at our November meeting, but to let the auction go on hiatus.

We are exploring various ideas to replace the lost revenue from the auction. Following the example of many sister chapters, we have decided to charge a small fee for some of our field trips. We hope that members will understand the value provided by our excellent volunteer leaders and respond appropriately. We are also looking at adjustments to our annual appeal to improve our return from that activity.

The bottom line is that the board is working hard to find ways to continue the mission that we all support. We ask for your indulgence, your support, your ideas, and your involvement as we continue that effort.

Email list connection (RAS Listserv)

Diane Jadowski, Publicity Chair

Want to be in the know with the latest, greatest local up to date information in the Richmond area BY the members and FOR the members? Subscribe now for Richmond Audubon Society (RAS) email list connection (RAS Listserv). RAS Listserv is an email based message delivery system accessible to RAS members and non-members that broadcasts a message from any subscribed RAS Listserv member to the entire group that has signed up for it. This communication tool is regularly used to post bird sightings, to update field trip changes, announce upcoming RAS meetings or to ask questions.

To join for free

- Go to our website RichmondAudubon.org
- **CLICK** on "Membership" at the top of the page
Scroll down to the end of the first paragraph under "Benefits"
- **CLICK** on "RAS Listserv"
- Scroll down to "To Subscribe:" and **CLICK** on the designated place and an email with "subscribe" in the subject line will come up on your screen. Then just **SEND** the email. ***Important to confirm*** to activate account so when you receive the confirmation email a few minutes later you simply **CLICK** on **REPLY**. You must complete this step or you won't be subscribed and won't receive any emails.

It is that easy!

Cashier Needed

Pam Dummitt, Treasurer

Cashier needed-to assist the Treasurer and Hospitality Committee at pre-meeting dinners. Duties include signing in / receiving payment from diners, and reimbursing those bringing food. Person will be responsible for maintaining a cash box provided for change, recording all transactions, making bank deposits and mailing these along with any receipts to the Treasurer. Duties can be coordinated between two people. The Treasurer will provide procedures, supplies, and training. If interested, email: treasurer@richmondaudubon.org.

Birdathon 2011-Preliminary Results

Pam Dummitt, Treasurer

Since May, our three Birdathon teams have been actively collecting their pledges. So far, The Crazy Coots, Team Birdzerk, and The Good The Bad and The Ugly Ducklings have raised a total of \$2329.55 from more than 28 supporters. Coots lead the other two teams for most donation dollars collected. Last year, Birdathon raised \$3067.30. We hope to match or exceed that amount before the end of this year.

If you haven't made a donation already, it's not too late! The money raised helps support our many projects, including the MAPS banding stations, RAS Kids programs, and programs at James River Parks. Donations can be sent to Richmond Audubon Society P O Box 26648 Richmond, VA 23261. Your donations are tax-deductible!



Field Trips

Lewis Barnett

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 4, Sunday at 7:15 AM. Bryan Park with Sue Ridd. Come see Bryan Park from a different point of view. Each season has its own cast for your birding interests! Meet at Shelter #1. There is a Bryan Park trip on the first Sunday of each month, starting about 1/2 hour after sunrise. For more information, call Sue at (804) 270-5365.

September 10, Saturday at 8:00 AM. Royal Vulcan Quarry, Goochland. No limit of participants but ask that you sign up so Vulcan knows how many folks to prepare for. Easy, flat walking with little to no shade. bring sunscreen and water. Meet at 8 am the scale house as you drive in the main entrance. Contact Julie Kacmarcik evenings after 8:30 pm at 530.3660 or email juliekazz@comcast.net for questions and to sign up.

September 14, Wednesday at 9:00 AM. Second Wednesday Walk at Robious Landing, on the James River in Midlothian, Virginia. Meet in the parking lot. Contact leaders Betsy and Ben Saunders for more information at 272-0605 or betsyben@juno.com

September 16-18, VSO Chincoteague Field Trip. Every fall is different at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, so join us to discover the surprises that await us on this year's annual fall VSO trip! In 2010, we tallied 148 species, including a great combination of waterfowl, shorebirds and migrating songbirds. Complete details can be found on the VSO web site http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html#chinc2011. If you have any questions, contact Meredith Bell, VSO field trip co-chair: 804-824-4958 or merandlee@cox.net

September 17, Saturday at 8:00 AM. Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation Area with Betsy and Ben Saunders. Meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot near the Henricus Visitor Center. Henricus/Dutch Gap is a favorite local birding spot with a variety of habitats accessible on flat, well-maintained trails. Call Betsy at 272-0605 for more information. 251 Henricus Park Road, Chester, VA 23836.

September 24, Saturday, Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, 8:00 AM to 9:45 AM. Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center. You must sign up in advance; there must be at least four people signed up by 9:00 PM the Wednesday before the trip or it will be cancelled. **Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens Members FREE; Special Non-Member Cost: \$6.00.** Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or tylerturpin@earthlink.net. Lewis Ginter BT is located at 1800 Lakeside Ave, Richmond, VA 23228-4700.

October 1, Saturday at 7:15 AM. Belmead with Wendy Ealding. Meet at the Powhatan Plaza Shopping Center (corner of Route 60 and Academy Road in Powhatan) so that we can carpool from there. We could still get some migrant fall warblers, maybe some migrating thrushes, and some possible early winter arrivals. Contact info is WEalding@aol.com phone 804-598-9243, to sign up. A \$5 fee will be collected for this trip.

October 2, Sunday at 7:30 AM. Bryan Park with Sue Ridd. Meet at Shelter #1. For more information, call Sue at (804) 270-5365.

October 12, Wednesday at 9:00 AM. Second Wednesday Walk R. Garland Dodd Park at Point of Rocks, 201 Enon Church Road, Chester, VA. The trip will start at 9 AM and walk out over the boardwalk the Ashton Creek freshwater tidal marsh. Contact leaders Betsy and Ben Saunders for more information at 272-0605 or betsyben@juno.com.

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October 15, Saturday at 8:00 AM. Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation Area with Betsy and Ben Saunders. Henricus/Dutch Gap is a favorite local birding spot with a variety of habitats accessible on flat, well-maintained trails. Call Betsy at 272-0605 for more information. 251 Henricus Park Road, Chester, VA 23836.

October 29, Saturday at 8:00 AM to 9:45 AM - Bird Walk at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens See September 24 for details.

October 29, Saturday, 8:30 AM – Noon. Fishermans Island National Wildlife Refuge. Limited to 20 participants. Meet at the ESNWR visitor's center at the northern end of the CBBT promptly at 8:30 AM.

We will then carpool to Fisherman Island with our Volunteer Naturalist's as they guide us through this pristine and fragile ecosystem. Be prepared to walk in loose sand through the maritime forest and then a wonderful walk along the Chesapeake Bay. This time of year is great for kettles of migrating raptors and other passerines. Last year we had many good looks at dolphins, Pelicans and seabirds. No facilities on the island so be prepared with water, sunscreen, snacks and layers of clothes. Contact Julie Kacmarcik evening's after 8:30 PM at 530-3660 or email juliekazz@comcast.net for questions and to sign up.

Sunday, December 18. Hopewell Christmas Bird Count. Call or email Arun Bose to sign up or get more details. (804) 335-8813, arun1bose@gmail.com.

From The Kitchen Window – Dog Days of Summer

I'm looking out the window this day, in early August, watching four nattily feathered adolescent bluebirds bathing in the shallow saucer – water flying off their matted blue feathers and speckled breasts flushed with droplets. Then, lined up as siblings should shake every feather and fly off, probably in search of bugs.

Now, in the dog days of summer, it's mostly too hot and humid for open windows. We humans have become quite wedded to the pleasure of air conditioning, so the sounds of nature are mostly lost beneath the hum of metal units and the tightly closed windows.

When September comes and the sun is riding lower in the sky and daylight time lessens, cool nights happen, and the window is open once again and the songs of birds and the crickets again waken the senses.

The cardinal and the wren still greet morning with song, but most of our birds of the yard are pretty quiet. It is now, as fall approached, when the birds get busy. The young have pretty much learned what they need to have learned (those that paid attention) and, if lucky,

will be around next summer and perhaps become a parent.

Some of the birds that added color and sound to our yard are getting ready to fly south. They will need to eat a lot and watch the bird weather channel (!) for the right winds and the right time to head into the night sky.

Our resident birds need to prepare also for the coming cold weather. They will have finished their final molt for the year and with new feathers be properly clothed. And if you watch carefully you can catch the chickadees and nuthatches gathering and storing seeds for the winter.

Cool will happen, the leaves will turn, the window will be open and the wren will sing.

The full moon in September will occur at 5:27 AM on the 12th – named the Harvest Moon, as it is the full moon closest to the autumnal equinox. Autumn begins at 5:05 AM on the 23rd. In October, the full moon occurs at 10:06 PM on the 11th, and is called the Hunter's Moon.

“I never for a day gave up listening to the songs of our birds, or watching their peculiar habits, or delineating them in the best way I could.”

John James Audubon

VA Important Bird Areas Conservation News; Team Warbler, the Atlantic Flyway Initiative and Saltmarsh Habitat and Avian Research Project (SHARP)

Mary Elfner, Audubon's Virginia Important Bird Areas Coordinator

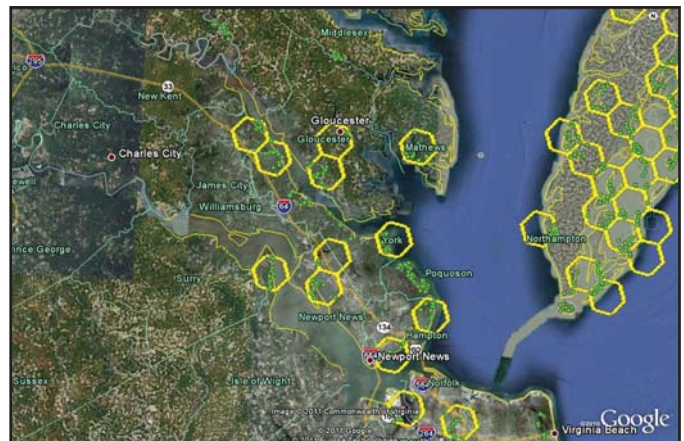


© Photo by Laura Cottingham, National Audubon Society

Audubon in Virginia has several conservation projects to highlight during this season: one of our most exciting is an international partnership between Richmond Audubon Society, Panama Audubon Society National Audubon Society and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) called: *Team Warbler — From Chesapeake Bay to Panama Bay and Back — Cross Cultural Connections Supporting Sustainable Communities*. Working under a Community Engagement grant from VCU, championed by Cathy Viverette, VCU Life Sciences Research Associate, this project seeks to connect students, researchers and Richmond Audubon in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to Panama Audubon in the Panama Bay watershed to raise awareness of and better understand the Prothonotary Warbler.

Here is an account from Dr. Lesley Bulluck, VCU Biology Professor, who led a team of VCU students and associated researchers to Panama in early January: “The VCU college class arrived on the afternoon of January 6 and drove to Gamboa where we would stay for the entire trip. The house we stayed in was owned by our guide Guido Berguido and was tucked nicely up to the rainforest edge. This prime location allowed us to wake that first morning to see numerous new tropical bird and mammal species at the feeders – red-legged honeycreepers, blue-crowned motmot, and tamarind monkeys were just a few highlights. We spent most of the day on January 7 training the students on field methods and visiting two of our field sites. On January 8 and through January 13 we collected data in each of these six sites twice; we split up into two groups and the students alternated each day between banding in

the mangroves and taking data on density and foraging rates in the mudflats of Panama Bay. On January 12, a group of middle school students from San Carlos came to our banding station in Playa Bonita to observe and learn about what we were doing. They were an enthusiastic group who were ready to get muddy and make observations of birds and mammals during the long trek to the station. In the mangroves, we captured a total of 160 individual birds of 25 different species and banded most of individuals that are Neartic-Neotropical migrants. We conducted most of our 2 minute foraging observations on 6 species and ~280 individuals across the three mudflat sites. We were happy to catch 26 of our target species, the Prothonotary Warbler, which we have been studying long-term here in Virginia.”



Map generated by the SHARP Team of the University of Delaware

Another exciting on-the-ground conservation project in Virginia is our involvement with Maryland/DC Audubon and associated researchers on the Saltmarsh Habitat and Avian Research Project (SHARP), which benefits marshland species such as Seaside Sparrow, Saltmarsh Sparrow, Nelson's Sparrow, Willet, American Black Duck and Clapper Rail. The overall project objective is to identify important regions for tidal marsh birds along the non-barrier-island Atlantic States (Bird Conservation Region 30) and to identify which regions and species within this area may be most sensitive to land and seascape change (e.g. sea-level rise, coastal or upland/watershed development, and fresh or marine water quality degradation). This survey helps Audubon in our regional conservation initiative, the Atlantic Flyway Initiative (AFI), which exists to bring together Audubon programs in eastern seaboard states.

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Officers / Committee Chairs and Co-chairs for 2010-2011

President	Lewis Barnett	president@richmondaudubon.org	804-320-7898
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2nd Vice President	Caroline Coe	vicepresident2@richmondaudubon.org	804-276-1397
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Treasurer/Finance	Pam Dummitt	treasurer@richmondaudubon.org	804-929-3899
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Conservation	Lori Kam	conservation@richmondaudubon.org	804-310-9014
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Cyberspace	Lewis Barnett (interim)	cyberspace@richmondaudubon.org	804-320-7898
Programs	Linda Warfield	programs@richmondaudubon.org	804-276-5520
Publicity	Diane Jadowski	publicity@richmondaudubon.org	702-308-1953
Youth	Robin Ruth	RASkids@richmondaudubon.org	804-231-5949
IBA /VAC Rep	Margaret O'Bryan	IBA@richmondaudubon.org	804-262-1656

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The AFI saltmarsh working group works to identify threats to salt marshes and the habitat they provide to high priority species. We will be conducting surveys mid-April to the end of June of this year. To learn more about this exciting conservation project, please visit: www.tidalmarshbirds.org.

Many thanks to the Virginia Society of Ornithology Conservation Committee for their conservation grant to support part of the field work of this critical conservation project in Virginia IBAs in marshlands of the Chesapeake Bay.

Virginia Audubon Council

Now more than ever it is important that we build a stronger Audubon presence in Virginia, and the **Virginia Audubon Council** (VAC) is the best way to do that. VAC is a coalition of the 6 Audubon Chapters in Virginia. Three times a year, in January, June and October, VAC meets at locations around the state. Currently VAC's focus is **Virginia's Important Bird Area Program** and providing a platform for sharing of Chapter successes and best practices.

Under the leadership of new CEO David Yarnold, **National Audubon** is undergoing the process of strategic planning for Audubon. Of great significance, David Yarnold has included Chapter leaders in the vision and planning process and truly understands the importance of Chapters and grassroots strength to Audubon. Your Chapter can help VAC consider how to best expand Audubon's wingspan in Virginia. (Note: the following link will provide more information on Audubon's strategic planning process: <http://chapterservices.audubon.org/news-announcements>)

VAC will next meet on Saturday, October 22 at the VCU Rice Center. Mary Elfner, VA's Important Bird Area Coordinator, will share with VAC Audubon's vision and help us find ways to implement it here.

And if you haven't been to the Rice Center, it is an amazing facility on the James River in the Lower James River Important Bird Area. The building is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified at the Platinum Level – the highest rating. The bird life is superb. You can find out more about the Rice Center at <http://www.vcu.edu/rice/>.

Need more information? Talk to your Chapter VAC representative or contact VAC President John Coe, johnwcoe@verizon.net to learn more about the Council and the upcoming meeting and how you might get involved.

VAC Chapter Contacts:

Audubon Society of Northern VA: Bill Brown, billbr50@msn.com

Cape Henry Audubon Society: Candi Delnore; candie.delnore@cox.net

N. Neck Audubon S: Rick Skelton or Maggie Gerdts, maggiurbanna@hotmail.com

Northern Shenandoah Audubon Society: Diane Greco, dianesours@yahoo.com

Richmond Audubon Society: Margaret O'Bryan, catbird329@comcast.net

VA Beach Audubon: Steve Coari, sp1nner@cox.net

October Program; India – Birding and More



© BS Thurner Hof

Corbett National Park, Keoladeo National Park and the Chambal River Sanctuary. In the mountains they stayed in two small villages called Sattal and Pangot which don't appear on most maps of India. They also spent one afternoon visiting the Taj Mahal. In total they saw 364 birds, nearly 30 mammals including tiger and Asian elephant. His program will deal not only with birds, but also with cultural and historical facets of India including cuisine and life in general for people living in this part of India.

Our October meeting will be on Thursday, October 20th at 7:00 PM at St. Luke Lutheran Church, located at Custis Road and Chippenham Parkway.

We are very fortunate to have Jan Hansen present a program about "India— Birding and More". Jan morphed from being an insurance auditor to a professional travel guide specializing in birding tours. He travels all over the world but makes his home in Chapel Hill, NC. October's program will be about a recent birding tour to India. The trip covers north central India (geographically speaking, the Ganges River plain) and goes up into the Himalayan foothills to an elevation of about 5500 feet. They flew in and out of Delhi, the capital of India and visited the states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarkhand. Key sites were Ranthambhore National Park,

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 _____
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 State _____ ZIP _____
 Phone _____
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Make check payable to **National Audubon Society** and write "COZX530Z" on the check. Send your check and application to:
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