



the Thrasher

Newsletter of the Richmond Audubon Society

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011 VOLUME 38, ISSUE 6

Pot Luck Dinner/ Show and Tell

Naseem Reza, Chair

Hospitality Committee

hospitality@richmondaudubon.org

Please join us at 5:30 PM on November 17, 2011 for a pot luck dinner and a birdy show and tell.

Bring a favorite side dish or dessert serving 4/6 (we do not have access to an oven for heating dishes.). RAS will provide turkey, ham, drinks, plates and utensils. This meal is different from our regular pre-meeting dinners: there is NO CHARGE. Please label your

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November Program: The Joy Of Backyard Birding with Joe Lively.



© Joe Lively

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Thrasher illustrations
© Carl "Spike" Knuth

The RAS program for November will be presented by our own Joe Lively. It is "The Joy Of Backyard Birding". The above self portrait documents the ultimate backyard birding pleasure. There is no greater reward than to have wild birds come in to your call and take a treat from your hand. The author has had more than 14 species "mooch" seeds, fruit and other food items. Anyone can do this. Learn how at Joe's presentation. He will also talk about the occurrence of winter hummingbirds, photographing backyard birds, and the seasonal changes in the birdlife he encounters.

Our November meeting will be on Thursday, November 17th 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.

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President's Message

Lewis Barnett



© Naseem Reza

for young African-American men. Belmead belongs to the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, and is currently a mixed-use property, with a portion in agricultural production, part used by a local riding club, and with over 1000 acres of beautiful upland forest preserved with a conservation easement. While Belmead is not typically open to the public, the Sisters are kind enough to allow Richmond Audubon periodic access to the property for field trips.

Turnout was low for this early October trip, possibly owing to early morning rain; that's a shame, as the overcast gave way to brilliant blue skies as we pulled into the property. As you might guess from the various uses the property currently sees, there are a variety of habitats and consequently a good representation of our local species. We were greeted by an Osprey, enjoying breakfast in a snag by a small pond on the road into the property – Sister Jean told us that the bird had returned to the property for several years in a row, and had been dubbed “Odysseus” for his wandering ways. As we chatted with Sister Jean, Hagatha the Heron (Great Blue) flew overhead. We were treated to other vigilant raptors, including Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, American Kestrels, and Bald Eagles, to Wild Turkeys patrolling the corn stubble, and to late-season songbirds like Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and our best bird of the day, a Cape May Warbler. We enjoyed watching a Yellow-billed Cuckoo shake the spines off of wooly caterpillars before gulping them down, and energetic Eastern Phoebes guarding the fence-lines.

Belmead is a memorable place, and well worth the short trip from Richmond. I encourage anyone who hasn't yet had the pleasure of visiting this beautiful site to keep an eye out for future field trips.

For more information about Belmead, you can visit www.discoverbelmead.com/historic-belmead.htm

I've recently had the good fortune to spend a beautiful fall morning at historic Belmead with master field trip leader Wendy Ealding. Belmead, located about 40 minutes west of Richmond off of Route 60, has a fascinating history, beginning life as a pre-Civil War manor, and being reborn post-war as an industrial and agricultural school

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

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 >

- 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.

Pre-meeting continued from page 1

serving dishes, to help you retrieve them after the dinner. If you have any questions about what to bring please contact Naseem Reza at the above email address or call at 272-1145.

The after dinner program will be a show-and-tell presentation of our favorite bird-related photos of the year. Send your three favorite photos from the past year to cyberspace@richmondaudubon.org with the subject "Show and tell". All photos are welcome — it's the stories as much as the images that make this so much fun!

Bon Appétit!



Ruddy Turnstones at Eastern Shore © Naseem Reza



Female Ruby-throated Hummingbird on daylily © Naseem Reza

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!

Officers / Committee Chairs and Co-chairs for 2011-2012

President	Lewis Barnett	president@richmondaudubon.org	804-320-7898
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Youth	Robin Ruth	RASkids@richmondaudubon.org	804-231-5949
IBA /VAC Rep	Margaret O'Bryan	IBA@richmondaudubon.org	804-262-1656



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.)

November 6, 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.

November 9, Wednesday – Second Wednesday Walk at Maymont Park, Richmond. A walk in the park on an early winter's day! Contact trip leader John Coe at 276-1397 or johnwcoe@verizon.net for where and when to meet.

November 19, 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.

November 19, 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.

Friday December 2 through Sunday, December 4, VSO annual field trip to Virginia Beach. An outstanding weekend is planned with a Friday afternoon field trip to the Whitehurst Tract. Field trips include a visit to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) on Saturday and a half day at Back Bay NWR and False Cape State Park on Sunday. You do need to sign up by November 11 because two trips have limited space and require a nominal fee. More details on the VSO web site: http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html. Contact Clark White at (757) 875-7649 or email cwbirds@cox.net to register.

December 4, Sunday at 7:45 AM. Bryan Park with Sue Ridd. Meet at Shelter #1. For more information, call Sue at (804) 270-5365.

December 14, Second Wednesday Walk at 8 AM. Dutch Gap Conservation Area, Chester. This 2nd Wednesday walk is a great opportunity to scout the birds in the park in advance of the upcoming Hopewell Christmas Bird Count (on Sunday, 18 December). Meet at the parking lot at 8 AM. Contact trip leader John Coe at 276-1397 or johnwcoe@verizon.net for more information.

December 17, 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.

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

Field Trip Report

Julie Kacmarcik

Another 1st class trip to the Vulcan Royal Stone Quarry in Rockville on September 10. This has become a great relationship between RAS and Vulcan for at least 5 years now. Vulcan exemplifies how industry and wildlife can co-exist successfully. Having been there many years now, it is interesting and refreshing to see that Vulcan is not satisfied with the status quo, they continue to improve and augment their wildlife habitat. It is an excellent place for our school children to visit. The nature trail, developed and maintained by the creative talents and visions of Sue Dudley continues to offer “awesome” learning opportunities.

We had at least 28 folks turn-out yesterday. Most of them were new to me. I hope they realize field trips do not typically start with breakfast served in the parking lot and then breaking for a full spread of lunch. Sue challenged our brains with nature-related games where everyone was a winner leaving with things such as a pound of mealworms, cedar bird houses and awesome feeders just to name a few. The real winners however are the employees of Vulcan as they have much to be proud of in their incredible environment.

Oh yeah birds...it was a spectacular blue, cloudless sky day. We did have about 20 species as we walked along the quarry road and throughout the habitat. I do believe most of us were talking more than scouring for birds. List below:

- Red-Bellied Woodpecker
- Downy Woodpecker
- House Finch
- American Goldfinch
- Blue Jay
- Carolina Wren
- Carolina Chickadee
- American Crow
- Northern Cardinal
- Chimney Swift (several)
- Osprey
- Great-Crested Flycatcher
- Eastern Tufted Titmouse
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Pine Warbler
- Great Blue Heron
- Eastern Towhee
- Turkey Vulture
- Killdeer
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- European Starling



Photos © Julie Kacmarcik

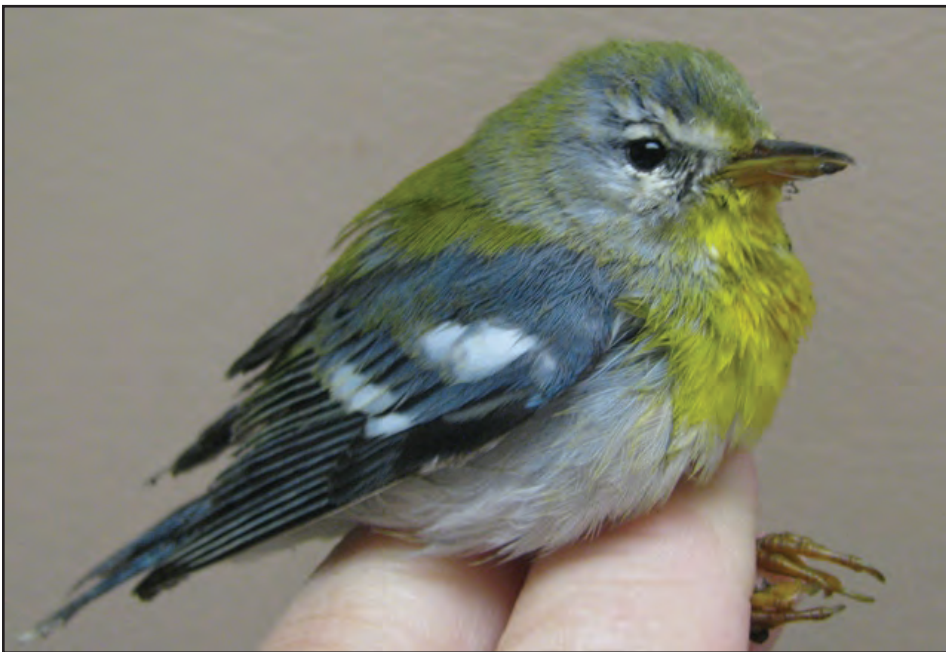


Much thanks to Vulcan Royal Stone Quarry for hosting us and for their continued commitment to the environment. Thank you Jeff, Henry, Russell, Gabriel and especially Sue Dudley. Rock on!

Migratory patient in the Emergency Room at MCV

Julie Kacmarcik

On September 13, at work, I was summoned to the ambulance drive for an unusual patient. A Northern Parula had most likely hit one of the glass doors or windows on its migratory journey south. Dazed and still, the bird sat on the ground and was transferred into the ER. It was kept warm and quiet until it regained its senses. The bird readily took water and some sugar water then stayed quiet in a ventilated box while the frenetic pace of the ER droned on. Many staff members were able to have their first look (ever) at a Northern Parula. A great experience for all. The bird was released with stable vital signs.



Photos © Julie Kacmarcik

AKA
NOPA
@MCV
ER

Share the View: International Nature Photography Contest

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver brings you an opportunity to share your beautiful nature photos and have a chance to win up to \$1,000. Any images of the natural world are welcomed--including landscapes, flowers, wildlife, macro shots, aerials, behaviors, portraits, underwater, abstracts, black & whites, and even urban wildlife. Enter as many images as you like for an entry fee of \$10 per image. The top 10 entries will be awarded cash prizes and the best 250 images will be featured on the contest website throughout 2012.

Proceeds from the contest benefits the Audubon Society of Greater Denver's education, conservation and research programs--a great way to support a premier nature organization, show the beauty of your surroundings, and receive recognition of your photographic efforts.

Visit <http://denveraudubon.contestvenue.com/> to enter your photos and register to receive email updates and contest tips. You will also find contest rules, answers to frequently asked questions, and short biographies about our judges. For more information, contact Karl Brummert at kbrummert@denveraudubon.org or Wendy Shattil at wendy@dancingpelican.com.

From The Kitchen Window— “of Windows Past”

John Coe

The days are getting short...the light is fading...this writing is of “Windows” past...November 1998

March, as you know, comes and goes as this lamb/lion thing. I think November does this too, except during some odd years it's kinda like a bunny rabbit all the way through. Anyway, I've been looking out the window a lot during these closing days of October and have noticed some signs that may have significance pertaining to the upcoming winter and, maybe, specifically November.

I think spiders may be prognosticators on a higher scale than we know. We glean a lot of our weather predictions from old standbys such as seed-pods, oak mast, fox grapes, Jim Duncan, the Farmer's Almanac, Woolly-bear caterpillars, and such. I think the spiders may be a notch above these guys and if that's true, we'd better keep an eye on the upcoming winter.

The kitchen window is framed with all sorts of spider webs, a virtual cathedral of spider art. And beyond the window, all the way to the rising sun, strands of filaments glisten. And if you look closely, folded up in oak leaves, and beneath the bark, and along the edges of the window and under the old shoe left outside all summer, there are little bundles of baby spiders, and they are all bundled up especially well this fall. They look a lot like little polar fleece pods. I'm thinking of cutting a little extra wood before too long.

The hummingbirds are gone, have been since the

first week of October. The grackles are gone as are the Red-eyed Vireos and the Wood Thrushes (Note: We used to have Wood Thrushes out back, sadly, not so for several years), the Chimney Swifts and our Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Large numbers of robins are passing through; the Yellow-rumped Warblers have arrived.

The towhee has come out of hiding, and a mockingbird is hanging out near the bird-feeders. We hear bluebirds passing overhead, and the crows and jays are hanging around in family groups. And our usual stay-at-home birds are here in good numbers: titmice, chickadees, cardinals, nuthatches, woodpeckers, House Finches,

Mourning Doves, and our Barred Owl pair.

Orion is high in the sky. The full November moon, named the Beaver Moon, occurs on November 10th at 3:16 pm. Our clocks fall back an hour on November 6th, and the Leonid meteor showers peak on the night of November 17th.

In December the full moon, called the Cold Moon, or by some the Long Night Moon, occurs at 9:36 am on the 10th. Geminid meteor showers peak on the night of December 13th. The Winter Solstice occurs at 12:30 am on the 22nd of December.

Christmas happens.

“There are homilies in nature’s work worth all the wisdom of the schools, if we could but read them rightly.”

Washington Irving



Richmond Audubon Society now on Facebook

Lewis Barnett

Richmond Audubon Society has established a page on Facebook. You can find us at www.facebook.com/RichmondAudubon. You can visit the page without joining Facebook. If you are a Facebook user, you can “like” our page to receive reminders of field trips, meetings, volunteer opportunities and other upcoming events on your Facebook newsfeed. Facebook users can also post questions or their own news items on the Richmond Audubon Wall. If you have questions about this new communication tool, contact cyberspace@richmondaudubon.org.



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 "COZX530Z"** on the check. Send your check and application to:

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