RAS SUMMER BLOCK PARTY - VA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS (VABBA2)

Special thanks to all who came out to support the first “Block Party” held this past June at the Harrison Lake Fish Hatchery. We learned a bit about atlasing breeding birds (www.VABBA2.org), as we walked and talked amongst friends. This event was held in lieu of the RAS picnic. While this was certainly a diversion from the traditional annual picnic, it contained all of the familiar fellowship, camaraderie and eventually food. The Block Party event was designed both to support the efforts of the VABBA2 as well as to embody the inclusion of our full membership. Harrison Lake is an easy access property with lots of birds, many right in the parking area including: Killdeer (bottom right), Indigo Bunting, Great Crested Flycatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Rough-winged Swallows, Yellow-throated Warbler, Blue Grosbeak and more. Flat, level pathways between the nearby ponds are only a short walk away. For those who are able and are more energetic there of plenty of long woodland trails too. The property is actually divided by two different VABBA blocks, the Westover Northwest and Westover Northeast. It was not long before we had accumulated forty-three different species around the hatchery ponds area before heading into the woodlands to count a total of thirty-one species there. Both species and numbers were noted for the survey along with notions of breeding behavior in each sector. Then after a full morning of birding and fellowship, we headed just down the road to the Dockside Restaurant for a leisurely lunch on the waterfront. Consider joining us at a future “Block Party!”

RAS MEMBER’S MEETINGS

WHEN: RAS membership meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM (except June, July, August and December). Come early for coffee, cookies and conversation beforehand starting at 6:30 PM.

WHERE: Held at St. Luke Lutheran Church • 7757 Chippenham Pkwy., Richmond, VA at the corner of Custis Road and Chippenham Parkway unless noted.

VISIT: www.RichmondAudubon.org for updates and additional information.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Welcome back birders!

We are about to get back into the swing of things this fall with the start of our “new year” for Richmond Audubon. I hope you enjoyed your summer, and I look forward to hearing about any adventures you may have had. I will share a little bit about my big summer adventure to South Africa in a later issue.

As we get back into the swing of things this fall, I did want to take a moment to address one issue that cropped up over the summer. I know we get excited when a new or rare species makes an appearance here in our area. But in our quest to get that sighting, we do need to make sure we are going about it respectfully and ethically.

In case you weren’t aware, the American Birding Association has an ethical code of conduct for birders. The full list of ethical rules is available online here: http://listing.aba.org/ethics/. Among the rules are the following:

2. Respect the law, and the rights of others.
   2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner’s explicit permission.
   2(b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.
   2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

Our organization has had the good fortune to be permitted on a number of outstanding plots of privately-held land, and we want to continue to maintain those relationships by ensuring that we adhere to the highest standards when we are on private land. We also want to be sure we are respecting the wishes of private landowners who do not want us on their property, as well. I have no idea why there are people who do not share our enthusiasm for birding (honestly, the mind reels!), but we need to be respectful of their wishes even if it means we have to wait for another opportunity to get that next entry on our life list.

I encourage you to take a look back through the code of ethics on a regular basis—bookmark it on your computer or print a copy and put it in your favorite bird book—and then let’s go enjoy the great outdoors. I look forward to seeing you out and about this fall!

Eileen R Geller - RAS President

RAS BOARD BRIEF

Decisions, planning discussions and plans made at the RAS Annual Board Planning Meeting held, July 1st at the VCU Rice Center are going into motion for future events and service opportunities. The Strategic Planning covered a wide range of areas, including: the donation of an existing bird nest collection to a local facility; Bluebird box monitoring; the The 2018 Great Big Greenhouse “Kids Day”; a Cats Indoors project; “Lights Out” Richmond; Nature Camp Scholarships, and even the possibility of a Richmond Audubon Photography Contest; plus possibilities for fund-raising development and sponsorship of the 2018 Richmond Environmental Film Festival.

Please join us and support the RAS service committee that best fits your talents! Hospitality Chair-person NEEDED!

FROM THE EDITOR

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

Submissions are due on the 10th of the month preceding the publication date. Thanks to all who have contributed, especially Naseem Reza.

Bob Schamerhorn - Editor
UPCOMING MEMBERS MEETINGS
RAS Meetings held at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 7757 Chippenham Pkwy, Richmond, VA. The program begins at 7:00 pm, with coffee, cookies and conversation before, starting at 6:30 pm.

WELCOME BACK!

SEPTEMBER 21 • PROGRAM: THE AFFECTS OF MENHADEN HARVESTING ON BIRDS PRESENTED BY: ZACHARY GREENBERG OF THE PEO TRUST

Menhaden are a filter-feeder fish are commonly found in all salinities of the Chesapeake Bay and Mid-Atlantic waters. Almost half a billion pounds of menhaden are harvested each year from the U.S., more than any other fish. Does this affect birds? Terns, Seagulls, Loons, Ospreys and Eagles all eat these fish, as do Humpback Whales, Striped Bass and Bluefish. A recent study found that Osprey rely on menhaden for good reproduction rates.

Unlike all other fish with limits set by Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), menhaden levels in Virginia are set by politicians with guidance from a fishing council. The Pew Research Center has supported basing this catch limit on the best science looking at all the benefits of the fish including ecosystem support such as the needed food supply for birds and other wildlife.

Zachary Greenberg of the Pew Trust will address Richmond Audubon with his concern for protecting Menhaden Levels. Come and hear his talk and bring any questions you have. He is very knowledgeable on this subject and should provide an interesting talk. He can help us protect Bald Eagles and Ospreys.

OCTOBER 19 • PROGRAM: ALASKA - “OUR EPIC ADVENTURE” PRESENTED BY: LORI & BOB SCHAMERHORN

Come see and hear the stories from this dramatic landscape. Adventures from the trip of a lifetime, beginning in Anchorage, exploring a few local hot spots. Then travels along the Seward Highway to Lowell Point for a boat trip to the Holgate Glacier with views of Horned and Tufted Puffins, Rhinoceros Auklets, Pigeon Guillemots, Stellar Sea Loins, Humpback Whales, Sea Otters and much more. Then, returning to Anchorage to see Red-necked Grebes and Moose before departing for Lake Clark National Park and Reserve on a Brown Bear (Grizzly) photography expedition. Come witness this co-hosted event full of adventures and tales from the Alaska wilderness.
SPECIES SPOTLIGHT
BY NASEEM REZA
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER

The Red-bellied Woodpecker (Melanerpes erythrocephalus) is a resident bird for us and like a few other species of woodpeckers (Red-headed and Acorn), it hoards food with the onset of winter.

Typical food consists of nuts, fruits and insects that are packed tightly in crevices of tree trunks and branches. Unlike other woodpeckers it does not defend its cache of food.

The Red-bellied has adapted to the free food available at feeders and can be seen “harvesting” and hiding sunflower seeds and suet during late fall and early winter.

Photos by Naseem Reza
Red-bellied Woodpecker
MALE - Left
FEMALE - Below
JUVENILE - Bottom Left
MALE AT NEST - Bottom Right
Photos by Bob Schamerhorn
RAS FIELD TRIPS - SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

Check the RAS Listserv or the RAS website for information and any late breaking news about field trips or join our MEET-UP GROUP: www.meetup.com/RAS-Meetup/

SEPTEMBER


September 16th at 8:00 AM • Saturday • Dutch Gap with Lewis Barnett. Meet Lewis at 8:00 AM at the entrance to Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area. Dutch Gap features a wide variety of habitats and great views of the James River. Fall migration should be well under way, so you never know what might turn up! For more information, contact blbarnett3@gmail.com

September 23rd at 8:00 AM • Saturday • Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens with Tyler Turpin. See the birds of Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center at 8:00 A.M. Cost will be $7.00 for non-Ginter members, finish around 9:30 - 9:45 AM. Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or email tylerturpin@earthlink.net to sign up. (If 4 persons have not signed up by 8pm on Wednesday the week of the trip, the trip will be cancelled.)

September 30th at 7:30 AM • Saturday • 42nd Street entrance of Richmond's James River Park System. Join to explore one of Richmond's best locations for enjoying the fall songbird migration. This beautiful section of the James River Park has a tree top pedestrian bridge that can produce eye level views of hard to spot birds. Park on Riverside Dr. and meet at the gated 42nd Street parking lot.

September 2nd at 6:55 AM • Sunday • Bryan Park with Jan Frye Johnson. Meeting location: Shelter #1 Joseph Bryan Park. Join us for our regular first Sundays bird walk. See what birds have made an early sprint migration.

Contact: Jan at Jan@byrdnyrd33@gmail.com

OCTOBER

October 7th ALL DAY • Saturday • THE BIG SIT! at Chimborazo Park. Join Richmond Audubon as we attempt to tally as many species as possible from one stationary location, while we SIT! The Big Sit! will see teams across the country “competing” as they attempt to record as many species as they can from a fixed location in one day. The count will be stationed on the bluff of Chimborazo Park in Church Hill. This will be the first time counting from this location and it will be exciting to see how many species are possible. Anyone interested in helping with the count is welcome, just bring a chair and your optics (including scopes) and hang out for a while. Counters will be stationed on the bluff from first light until sunset. Chimborazo Medical Museum will have public restrooms available during business hours. For more on The Big Sit visit: https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/about.php. For more information contact Ellison Orcutt at vicepresident1@richmondaudubon.org.

October 14th at 8:00 AM • SATURDAY • Dutch Gap with Lewis Barnett. Meet Lewis at 8:00 AM at the entrance to Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area. By October, most nontropical migrants have come through but there should be stragglers and by this time there’s a chance early waterfowl migrants will be arriving. You never know what might turn up! For more information, contact blbarnett3@gmail.com.

October 21st at 9:00 AM • Saturday • Youth Birding at Bryan Park with Ellison Orcutt. Enjoy a morning of birdwatching with other youth who are curious about birding. Explore the ponds, creeks and woodlands around Bryan Park in Richmond’s Northside. Although a multi use park, Bryan Park offers excellent birding and convenient trails and parking. In addition to enjoying the birds, the group will learn about the hobby of birding and some of the relevant techniques and equipment. All skill levels are encouraged and parents should plan to join their children or at least remain at the park. Extra binoculars will be available to share. Meet Ellison in the parking lot adjacent to shelter 1 by 9:00 AM. This is accessed by car through main entrance off of Hermitage Rd. For more information and to RSVP contact: Ellison at Mr.Ellyo@gmail.com. This walk is best for youth between elementary school and high school. Please share with other youth and families that may be interested.
OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE RICHMOND AUDUBON SOCIETY

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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 Society, enrolls your membership in both (NAS and RAS by zip code). Renewals are processed through The National Audubon Society.

AFFILIATES: Chapter of the Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) and the Virginia Conservation Network (VCN).

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

PHONE (Message Line): 804-601-4917

WEBSITE: www.RichmondAudubon.org

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/RichmondAudubon/

MEET-UP GROUP: www.meetup.com/RAS-Meetup/

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/@RichmondAudubon

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 bimonthly (January, March, May, July, September, November.) Submissions due by 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: Second Thursdays of January, March, May, July (annual strategic planning session), September, and November. Board Meeting start times and locations vary, members are welcome to attend, contact the President or Secretary in advance.

AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yes, enroll me (us) as member(s) of both National Audubon and Richmond Audubon Societies at the address below, at the introductory rate of $20.00.

A subscription to the NAS “Audubon” magazine is included.

Name_________________________________
Address ______________________________
City __________________________________
State_______ ZIP _____________________
Phone ________________________________
E-mail ________________________________
Enclose a $20.00 check payable to National Audubon Society for Individual/Family Membership and write “X53” as the memo.

Send check and application to:
Richmond Audubon Society
P.O. Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261
X53

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