"My heart is tuned to the quietness that the stillness of nature inspires."

Hazrat Inayat Khan
COVID 19  Our in-person monthly meetings, and field trips, have been halted for the health of our members until further notice. The RAS board is looking forward to 2021 for virtual meetings. Field trips are still on hold but we encourage everyone to bird on their own with social distancing and masks. Check out our website, Facebook and Freelist for future information.

President’s Message by Len Smock

I grew up as an outdoor birder. By that I mean that, as a kid, I was always out in the forests, fields, and parks, looking for birds. The sights and sounds of the outdoors thrilled me then as they do now. Like many of us, I get antsy if I am indoors too long. Several recent experiences have made me think about what if I, like many people, couldn’t get outdoors.

How could I bring nature, and especially birds, inside to me? The first experience was obvious. I was with two of my grandkids, ages two and four, in New Jersey. Together I set up their first bird feeder, clearly visible from where they eat their meals every day. They were excited, but then no birds came the first day. There was one very brief visit by a female Cardinal the second day. It was a bit of a disappointment to the kids. The next morning, I am awakened by the kids bursting in to wake me up and tell me “hurry” there are lots of birds at the feeder. They were enthralled by the Chickadees, Juncos, White-throats, Cardinals, Nuthatch, and Jay. And what was that cherry-colored bird? Well, they were close to the correct fruit – it was a raspberry-colored Purple Finch. That feeder brought the world of birds, of nature, into their home, and probably will instill a passion for nature for the rest of their lives.

I also recently was talking to an elderly shut-in, a person who used to love being outdoors as much as I do. She lamented not being able to get outside much, so now she brings nature in to her. She had found the many live cams that show activity at bird feeders and nests around the world. She never knew what would pop up on her computer screen. Perhaps old friends like Chickadees and Blue Jays. Or perhaps species exotic to her on cams in South Africa and Costa Rica. She told how a Ruffed Grouse had jumped onto a feeder at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in New York. She even was keeping a checklist of the species she saw in different countries. Here was another way for her, bound mostly to home, to enjoy birding. If you are interested in links to cams around the world, start here: https://birdwatchinghq.com/live-bird-cams/

I hope that all of the readers of this newsletter are able to find their ways of thoroughly enjoying the great outdoors.

Photos by Len Smock
Richmond Audubon Society Virtual Meetings

March 18, 7 PM

Presenter: Paul Bedell

Topic: Birding Ecuador, January 2020

Paul will describe his twelve-day trip to mainland Ecuador in January of 2020. Among the 400 species of birds seen were dozens of tanagers and nearly fifty species of hummingbirds! Habitats included the rainforest of the Amazonian lowlands to the stunted paramo of a 14,000 foot mountain pass over the Andes. He also photographed hundreds of moths and other insects. Join us for a taste of one of the most biologically diverse countries on the planet.

Join Zoom Meeting (NO pre-registration required)
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82802633350?pwd=QktxV1o0OEh1YWc5NndSZWdQaEcxUT09

Meeting ID: 828 0263 3350
Passcode: 131577
One tap mobile
+16465588656,,82802633350#,,,,*131577# US (New York)
+13017158592,,82802633350#,,,,*131577# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location
    +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
    +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
Meeting ID: 828 0263 3350
Passcode: 131577

April 15, 7 PM

Presenter: Wes Teets

Topic: Setting the Record: The Virginia Big Year

How many birds can one person see in Virginia in one calendar year? In 2020, a new records was set. Learn about the journey--strategies, experiences, and challenges.

Join Zoom Meeting (NO pre-registration required)
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82955111683?pwd=MUZiaTh1dlhRbWNtc2RmbUZjWWMyUT09

Meeting ID: 829 5511 1683
Passcode: 749017
One tap mobile
+16465588656,,82955111683#,,,,*749017# US (New York)
+13017158592,,82955111683#,,,,*749017# US (Washington DC)
Establishment of the B. Lewis Barnett, III Award

The Richmond Audubon Society announces the establishment of the B. Lewis Barnett, III Award, to be given by the society in honor of the life and memory of Dr. Barnett. The award memorializes his many contributions and service to Richmond Audubon, the Virginia Audubon Council, and the greater Virginia birding community. Lewis, who passed away recently, served Richmond Audubon in many roles, including as President, many years on the Board of Directors, as an outstanding birding field trip leader, and as an all-around engaged, friendly, and supportive member.

True to what was important to Lewis, the Barnett Award will be given annually in support of activities that will further education, research and conservation of birds and their environment. Nominations for and the awarding of the Barnett Award will be under the purview of the RAS Board of Directors. The Board will fund one or more awards annually.

Donations in Lewis’s name, which will go toward funding the Barnett Award, can be made at http://www.richmondaudubon.org/donate/

There is a New Trail in Town

Hanover County has developed a new birding area. Parks and Recreation thanks everyone involved in the creation of this nature trail, especially Mr. Heck Rice, who passed away September 2020. He lived to see his dream come true and realize the legacy he left an entire community.

This is a 2/3 mile walking trail with two loops. There are 4 benches available making for a nice leisurely birding experience. Two parts of the trail are pretty steep through the woods but the one by the field is easier to navigate. There are two viewing platforms, one to see the warblers in the spring and fall high in the trees and one down by the water to look for woodpeckers and waterfowl. In the field you can look for summer grass land birds. In the winter you can enjoy the nesting area featuring a mixture of ducks, swans, cranes, geese and teals, and other waterfowl.

For map and directions go to https://www.hanovercounty.gov/1078/Lake-Hanover-Nature-Trail
Wildlife Rehabilitators in Virginia

Beautiful spring time is here. New growth, babies being born, sunny days! It is that time of year when you see fawns without moms nearby and baby squirrels that fell out of their nests along with baby birds chirping around on the ground. Please remember to leave wildlife alone especially fawns and baby bears. Their moms are close by. Not unless you see one in distress like a fawn stuck under someone’s barbeque grill, can’t get out and dehydrating. Then you call one of the licensed rehabilitators to help you. Please remember it is illegal to keep or care for orphaned, sick, or injured wildlife unless you are a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Our Department of Wildlife Resources has a complete list of certified rehabilitators for your area.

https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured/rehabilitators/?fips=all

For Better Wildlife Habitat

Each of us in our own little corner of the world can make it a better place for us, for wildlife, for the world. In making your yard more natural you are also cutting down on your labor time but increasing your time to appreciate all that nature wants us to enjoy.

Here is a look at five things you can do to attract more birds, bugs, deer and other critters without breaking the bank or your back:

Kill the Invaders, Grass be Gone, Park the Mower, Soften the Edges, Plant Shrubs and Pollinator-Friendly Plants

For more information go to https://dwr.virginia.gov/blog/diy-for-better-wildlife-habitat/

Certify Your Habitat

Anyone can create a welcoming haven for local wildlife. Turning your yard, balcony container garden, schoolyard, work landscape, or roadside greenspace into a Certified Wildlife Habitat® is fun, easy, and can make a lasting difference for wildlife. Make a difference in your neighborhood and community.

http://nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Certify
The Real James Bond

Who would have thought that a writer would steal a name from a man thinking it was "as ordinary as possible". So there really was a James Bond who happened to be an ornithologist that wrote a book about the birds in the West Indies. While Ian Fleming was a keen birder and living in Jamaica he took the name from a bird book for his first novel “Casino royal” in the 60s.

“Fleming told Mary that he understood if they were angry at the theft of Bond’s name, and suggested a trade. “In return I can only offer your James Bond unlimited use of the name Ian Fleming for any purpose he may think fit,” he wrote. “Perhaps one day he will discover some particularly horrible species of bird which he would like to christen in an insulting fashion.”

“James Bond with no formal training in the field, he started working as an ornithologist at the Academy, and was “among the last of a traditional museum breed, the independently wealthy, nonsalaried curator, who lacked advanced university degrees.” Working at the museum, Bond became an authority on the bird species of the Caribbean, and his 1936 book, *Birds of the West Indies*, was considered the definitive guide to the region’s birds at the time.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Bond_(ornithologist)

https://getpocket.com/explore/item/license-to-bird-meet-the-real-james-bond
Wing-flicking Ways

The Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) rarely sits still, flitting, hopping, and flying around in short, energetic dashes making identification easy. In its genus the Regulus, means "little king" in Latin. When the male kinglet is excited or agitated, he raises his scarlet "crown." The females don’t have the red crest. It nests in boreal forest and winters in a wide variety of forest and shrub habitats.

https://abcbirds.org/bird/ruby-crowned-kinglet/?omcampaign=membership=button&eType=E mailBlastContent&eId=fae02436-5a6b-41ed-ba1d-356758647fd8

Photo by James Shelton

Photo by Pam Scrima
Golden-crowned Kinglet

This tiny bird only weighs about two pennies. It stays in perpetual motion in order to find a range of insects, spiders, and other invertebrates and their eggs to keep it alive. If it doesn’t eat constantly to match its metabolic requirements and combat the cold it will starve and freeze to death within two hours. It flicks its wings constantly as it moves similar to the Ruby-crowned Kinglet so they are easy to spot in a flock of other birds.

https://abcbirds.org/bird/golden-crowned-kinglet/?omcampaign=membership&eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=d7828bbe-fb21-45b6-9c0a-432d6896b520

Birdwatching is a Hobby for a Lifetime of Enjoying Nature

“Learning about the world around you is something you do throughout your entire life. Slowing down and noticing the natural world should be a daily practice. Birdwatching can be enjoyed anywhere, at any time — you don’t even have to go outside. It’s a free hobby that anyone can take part in. Stay safe, de-stress, and learn more about your ecosystem at home or during a vacation tour with an adventure in birding today.”

For some great educational information on birding for beginners and experienced birders go to
Photos by Mario Grasso

American Wigeon and Northern Pintail
Gadwall X Mallard hybrid

Hooded Magansers

Snow Geese, Blue Morph
25 Things About Birds (continued from last issue)

21. Robins Have a Sweet Tooth

Worms make up the majority of their diet, but robins don’t mind if you leave out a dessert tray. The birds are partial to pastry dough, fruit cake, and coconut cake.

22. They Know How to Cool Off

In warmer climates, birds beat the heat by spreading their wings and allowing for better air circulation. They’ll also flutter their neck muscles—called gular fluttering—to expel body heat.

23. Some of Them Use Tools

In a sure sign that Birdemic may one day be considered a documentary, some species of birds have been shown to use tools in order to make their lives easier. In North America, the brown-headed nuthatch will take a piece of tree bark and use it to pry off other bark in search of insects. American robins will use twigs to sweep aside leaves for the same purpose.
24. Hummingbirds are Always Starving

With fierce metabolisms brought on by constant movement, hummingbirds are always in search of nourishment—they require so much of it, in fact, that they’re perpetually a few hours away from starving to death. Ruby-throated hummingbirds will eat up to three times their body weight a day.

25. They Will Never be Movie Stars

American migratory bird species are hardly ever depicted in movies thanks to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that prevents domestic birds from being bought or sold for commercial purposes. If you spot a backyard bird in film or on a show, it’s either an imported species or a computer effect. To see a jaybird, you’ll have to turn off the TV and look out a window.

Newsletter

“The Thrasher” is issued bimonthly (January, March, May, July, September, November.) Articles and photo submissions are due by the 10th of the month prior. The newsletter is available for download (PDF) online at www.RichmondAudubon.org.

Any suggestions, comments, or ideas for the newsletter send to thrasher@richmondaudubon.org.

Thanks and have a great birding day!
Diane Jadlowski
OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS
OF THE RICHMOND AUDUBON SOCIETY

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ABOUT THE RICHMOND AUDUBON SOCIETY

RAS MEMBER MEETINGS: Third Thursday of the month except June, July, August and December (virtual are being planned)

RAS BOARD MEETINGS: Second Thursdays of January, March, May, July (annual strategic planning session), September, and November. Board Meeting start times and locations will vary. Members are welcome to attend, contact the President or Secretary in advance.

For information on late breaking news, meetings, and field trips check the RAS Listserv or the RAS website. Join our FACEBOOK page or MEET-UP group.

PHONE (Message Line): 804-601-4917

WEBSITE: www.RichmondAudubon.org

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/RichmondAudubon/

MEETUP 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.
RICHMOND AUDUBON SOCIETY Membership Application

Yes, enroll me (us) as member(s) of both National Audubon and Richmond Audubon Society at the introductory rate of $20.00. Write “X53” as the memo and mail to address below. A subscription to the National Audubon Society “Audubon” magazine is included.

Name ________________________________________________________________

Address ______________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ State _________ ZIP _____________

Phone __________________________ E-mail _____________________________

Make check payable to: National Audubon Society

Send check and application to:

Richmond Audubon Society
P.O. Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261

X53