

The
Thrasher

May/June 2024



Newsletter of the Richmond Audubon Society

We promote the enjoyment, understanding, and preservation of birds, other wildlife, and habitat through education, advocacy, and fellowship



Bay-breasted Warbler by Pam Scrima

“And where the shadow deepest fell, the wood thrush rang its bell.” – John Greenleaf Whittier

BIRDING IS FOR EVERYONE!

Richmond Audubon Society Member Meetings

Member Meeting, May 16, 6 PM

Doors open at 6:00 pm for a social gathering and light refreshments. Meet other RVA birders! Our speaker will begin at 7:00 pm.

Topic: RGGI in lowering greenhouse emissions. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, known as "Reggie" from its acronym RGGI, helps Virginia do our part regarding saving habitat on the oceans and bays by slowing sea level rise, protecting food during migration, saving ocean forage by keeping water cooler and thereby saving species from not having to shift north. This is a worldwide effort. RGGI creates more efficient affordable homes, helps lower income homeowners weatherize their homes, and creates grants to plant trees here at home.

Presenter: Peter Della-Rocca, Environmental Defense Fund, Analyst, US Climate. Peter is an analyst on the U.S. Climate team, where he pushes rapid decarbonization on the state level. His work focuses on carbon pricing and power sector emissions, with a major emphasis on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. He joined EDF (Environmental Defense Fund) in January of 2023. Prior to that, he worked for three years at the Climate Leadership Council, where his research and advocacy covered carbon pricing, border adjustments, just transition measures, environmental justice, and agriculture. He holds a BA in government from Harvard University.

Place: First Unitarian Universalist Church (not the Unity Church) at 1000 Blanton Avenue, Richmond VA 23221. Please bring a dish to share and your drink of choice.

Member Meeting – No meetings in June, July and August

Field Trips

RAS trips are open to all!

RAS trips are open to all, RAS membership is encouraged but not required, and unless the trip says otherwise, you don't need to sign up. Please feel free to stay for as long as you want. Attendees do not need to stay the entire time listed.

** The field trip schedule is subject to change. Trips may be added, canceled, or modified. Please check the online calendar for the most recent trip information.

May

May 5, Bryan Park first Sunday of the month. Meet Matt Brooks at Shelter #1 a half hour after sunrise. Contact Matt at mattebrooks@protonmail.com or 206-734-6919 for more information.

May 4 and 5, 6AM, 42nd Street James River Park. Bird Richmond's premier spring migration hotspot during primetime! See good numbers of warblers, tanagers, flycatchers, orioles, and other migrants and breeding birds. Park along Riverside Dr. just west of 42nd St. We'll start birding around the parking area around 6:00–6:30 am and begin the walk to the park's main trails no earlier than 7:00 am. Join us at any point in between—the birding tends to stay good in this area. There is no official trip leader; multiple great RAS trip leaders will be on the scene. Find a group and get birding. Contact Matt Brooks at mattebrooks@protonmail.com or 206-734-6919 for more information.

May 11, 7:30AM, Caledon State Park. Join the illustrious Ewa Green at Caledon State Park. The park is at 11617 Caledon Rd in King George Co. The park consists of old growth forest, wetlands, and meadows, with trails leading all the way to the Potomac River. Spring birding is an excellent opportunity to see migrating warblers and thrushes among other species. This is a walking birding trip. We will meet in the parking lot to the left of the house and complete a round trip of about 5 miles. Park entry requires a \$5 fee. Contact Ewa Greene with questions via text 804-306-5612 or email ewagreene@gmail.com.

May 11, 8AM, Dutch Gap. Meet fast-draw birder Wes Teets at the Henricus Historical Park parking lot. This is one of our premier birding locations, with a great variety of habitats supporting myriad bird species. Our focus late fall through early spring is waterfowl. Expect 2 to 3 miles of slow-paced walking on paved roads and gravel trails with several spots to stop and observe the birds. We typically spend around 3 hours here. If the gate is closed, park at the boardwalk parking area right before the gate. You may join or leave the group at any time. No registration is required. Contact Wes at ras776@posteo.net or 540-521-5379 for more information.

May 14, 9AM, Tuckahoe Creek Park, 12341 Ridgefield Parkway, Henrico, VA 23233. Meet the lovely Diane Jadowski at the picnic tables. This is a 1/3-mile boardwalk with very easy walking. Picnic tables and benches are available for resting. Parking is available on the street (please don't block driveways). The boardwalk is ADA accessible, so everyone can enjoy this nature experience. <https://henrico.us/rec/places/tuckahoe-creek-park/> Contact Diane at djadski@gmail.com or 702-308-1953 for more information.

June

June 1, 7AM, Highland County. Bird the county with the highest mean elevation in Virginia. See specialties like Blackburnian, Cerulean, Golden-winged, and Mourning Warblers, and Alder and Willow Flycatchers, among the dozens of other songbirds breeding here. Meet at the Confederate Breastworks interpretive site on US-250 near the border of Augusta and Highland Counties. This is at the top on Shenandoah Mountain, about 17 miles west of Churchville, and just over 2 hours from Richmond. There is a small parking lot with interpretive signage and bathrooms here. Much of the birding will be done by driving and stopping at key locations to look for specific birds. For location updates, call/text Wes Teets at 540-521-5379. For more information ahead of time, contact Wes at ras776@posteo.net.

June 2, 7AM, Bryan Park first Sunday of the month. Meet Matt Brooks at Shelter #1. Contact Matt at mattebrooks@protonmail.com or 206-734-6919 for more information.

June 8, 9AM, Birding 101: Birding for Beginners. The Wetlands, Landria Drive entrance. 9:00–10:30. Are you curious about birding but not ready to commit to a pre-dawn trip? We'll cover the

basics of how to find birds by sight and sound, how to use binoculars effectively, phone apps to help with bird identification, and learn about some of our common summer birds here in Richmond. Note that this trip is primarily targeted towards new birders of any age. Binoculars will be available to borrow. This will be a slow-paced, ~1-mile walk on gravel trails. Street parking is available at the end of Landria Drive. Contact the esteemed Priscilla Erickson at priscilla.erickson@gmail.com for more information.

June 15, 8AM, Dutch Gap. Meet expert birder Wes Teets, at the Henricus Historical Park parking lot. This is one of our premier birding locations, with a great variety of habitats supporting myriad bird species. Our focus late fall through early spring is waterfowl. Expect 2 to 3 miles of slow-paced walking on paved roads and gravel trails with several spots to stop and observe the birds. We typically spend around 3 hours here. If the gate is closed, park at the boardwalk parking area right before the gate. You may join or leave the group at any time. No registration is required. Contact Wes at ras776@posteo.net or 540-521-5379 for more information.

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June 22, 7AM, Piney Grove Preserve, Wakefield, VA.. <https://goo.gl/maps/umtkuE42J1voQUfJ8> Join the fabulous Priscilla Erickson to look for rare Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in one of Virginia's only longleaf pine savannas, the Nature Conservancy's beautiful Piney Grove Preserve. We'll meet early to try to beat the heat (7:00–10:00 am) and walk along a gravel road looking for the woodpeckers and other species. We may walk up to 5 miles, depending on where we find the woodpeckers. Bring water, optics, and insect/sun protection. Park on the side of Chinquapin Road (604) near the intersection with Harrell Mill Road (621). Email Priscilla at priscilla.erickson@gmail.com to arrange carpooling, or just meet us there.

Field Trip Notes

Malvern Hill Battlefield

Trip Leader: Ewa Greene

On March 2nd a group of four die-hard birders met at 7:30 at Malvern Hill National Battlefield Park in the pouring rain. We waited for an hour under a shelter chatting about birds and exchanging stories. Eventually the rain tapered off and we were able to start birding. We were rewarded by some really good looks of a Merlin preening on top of a tree.



All in all, we saw 40 different species including Tree Swallows, Kildeer, Eastern Meadowlarks, and a Northern Harrier. We also enjoyed watching a skunk walk across a field and down the trail. Another great outing with the Richmond Audubon Society group.

Eastern Shore/Back Bay

Trip Leaders: Pam Scrima and Wes Teets



Richmond Audubon Society had yet another great outing to the CBBT #4 Island on February 25th, 2024 with 14 participants. The weather cooperated and we had clear sunny skies with moderate temps in the 40's - considering the time of year and location – that made for a fantastic field trip! We saw a total of 18 Species and the highlights of the morning were Long-tailed Ducks, Razorbills, Great Cormorants, Northern Gannets and Red-breasted Mergansers.

The surprise of the morning was 5 Tree Swallows – we certainly did not expect to see them at this location!

Additional notes from Matt Brooks, Field Trip organizer:



The Eastern Shore trip was a success. This was in no small part due to the excellent trip leaders Pam Scrima and Wes Teets. The Sunday morning Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel island trip was crisp and clear. We birded for several hours and had great looks at Black and Surf Scoters, Great Cormorants, distant Razorbills flying by, and the usual suspects. Strangely, we did not locate any Purple Sandpipers on this trip. Sunday afternoon, we met at the Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge and immediately

picked up Wilson's Snipes foraging in the open grass. We also had an Orange-crowned Warbler near the parking lot. We loaded up the almost-full, open-sided tram and headed out for a custom refuge birding tour.

Unfortunately, we had two no shows, and people on the waiting list missed the tram and its two, already-paid-for empty seats. Anyway, we birded the numerous ponds, wetlands, and forested areas in the refuge and finally arrived at the Back Bay State Park for a break at the visitor center. We birded our way back along the opposite sides of the ponds. We had lots of swans and ducks, along with sparrows and wrens closer to the road. Although the sun was out, it was really cold on that tram. Wind breakers are recommended next time



Pine Warbler and photos by Naseem Reza



In our RVA Region the Pine Warbler is the only resident warbler. It is only one of two species of wood-warblers that regularly visit suet feeders. The Yellow-rumped Warbler is the other one but it is a winter guest for us and migrates north to its breeding grounds in Spring and returns in the Fall. Unlike most wood-warblers, the Pine Warbler's plumage does not change with the seasons. Although there is a fair amount of variation in plumage, the sex of an individual bird is hard to discern.

A singing bird can be reliably identified as a male.



Bright bird but not necessarily a male.



Conversely a bird gathering nesting material can be safely identified as a female.

As its name suggests, Pine Warblers are partial to pine trees and usually hang out and nest on the upper part of the tree. They also feed on pine seeds. A suet cake will entice them to come down so you can enjoy a clear look at this beautiful bird.

A bird bath with dripping water will also do the trick.



Pine warbler competing for suet with a Tufted Titmouse



Paper, Trees, Birds, Tree Farmers

American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) recent webinar, *Trees at Work: How Working Forests Help Birds in the U.S. Southeast Region*. Hope you [enjoy the full recording and related links](#) — and share with a fellow bird enthusiast, or anyone who cares about conservation!

If you've had a cardboard box delivered to your house this week, it more than likely started its life as a tree in the Southeast United States — home to birds like the Swallow-tailed Kite, an iconic bird of prey that takes center stage in the exciting conservation story told by our guests.

In the webinar, you'll learn how ABC and our partners are working together to ensure that working forests, specifically timber management, can meet human use and demand, while also supporting conservation efforts that help keep bird populations thriving.

New Legislation Passed Migratory Birds

Great news! On April 9, the House of Representatives passed the **Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act (H.R.4389)**. This bill reauthorizes the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA), a federal grants program that funds migratory bird research and habitat restoration across the Western Hemisphere. The bill authorizes funds at current levels (\$6.5 million) and lowers the match requirement from 3:1 to 2:1.

Bipartisan House leadership was critical for advancing this bill. **Rep. María Elvira Salazar** (R-FL) introduced and advocated for the passage of H.R.4389. Send her a thank you letter to show your appreciation for her leadership on this piece of bird conservation legislation. Go to <https://act.abcbirds.org/a/action-fund-salazar>

Now the Senate must act to pass the Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act (S.4022). In March, **Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and John Boozman** introduced S.4022, which mirrors the House-passed version. Currently, the Senate bill is awaiting consideration by the Environmental and Public Works (EPW) Committee. **Urge the Senate to expedite passage of S.4022 by sending your Senators a letter.** Go to <https://act.abcbirds.org/a/c4-take-action-nmbca>

It's Warbler Season!



Black and White Warbler by Pam Scrima

Mourning Warbler by Pam Scrima



Wilson's Warbler by Pam Scrima

Common Yellowthroat by Matthew Crittenden





Kentucky Warbler by Matthew Crittenden

Magnolia Warbler by Naseem Reza



Blue-winged Warbler by Naseem Reza

Cape May Warbler by Naseem Reza





Northern Waterthrush by Julie Kacmarcik



Ovenbird by Julie Kacmarcik



Yellow Warbler by Julie Kacmarcik

Student Climate & Conservation Congress 2024

**JUNE 30-JULY 6, 2024 AT THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
NATIONAL CONSERVATION TRAINING CENTER**

For rising 9th to 12th graders

We are reaching out to urge you to encourage and sponsor the active environmental student leaders in your community to attend the Student Climate & Conservation Congress (Sc3) this summer. As an environmental non-profit organization we are appreciative of and in alignment with your well known emphasis on cultivating youth leadership and awareness to actively address the challenges of Climate Change, Environmental Justice, Restorative and Sustainable

Land Use, and Informed Community Action. We all know these are challenges that will loom large in the adult lives of this present generation of youth leaders.

Sc3 is unique among the youth leadership conferences students will find today. The agenda at Sc3 is *Student Centered*, and *Student Driven* to focus on environmental topics that are of most interest and concern for the Student Fellows in attendance. The location of the Congress is at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), on the banks of the Potomac, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. NCTC is a place-based facility steeped in the legacy of conservation and the importance of preserving natural wildlife habitat.

Sc3 Student Fellows will have an opportunity to interact with climate and conservation professionals, and with Faculty Fellows who are there to mentor, facilitate, and empower the strategies of peer to peer collaboration, decision making, and action planning. Sc3 is a program designed to give Student Fellows a framework to learn, experience, and practice the principles of environmental regeneration & sustainability with informed confidence, but most importantly: with renewed hope and a strong sense of connection and relationship to each other and the world around them.

Click <https://www.greenschoolsalliance.org/students-sc3> to link to the Sc3 Info & Application page, where you can also link to suggested ways you can sponsor a Sc3 Student Fellow and/or support Sc3 2024. Please feel free to contact us for any clarifying questions you may have.

Yours in the Spirit of Collaboration,

Katy Perry & Tod Cossairt, Sc3 2024 Coordinators
katy@greenschoolsalliance.org - tod@greenschoolsalliance.org

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. Articles can be trips, backyard experiences, stories, etc

All newsletters are available for download (PDF) online at <https://richmondaudubon.org/newsletter>

All articles are excerpts from internet unless byline is noted.

Please send any suggestions, comments, or ideas to thrasher@richmondaudubon.org

Thanks and have a great birding day!
Diane Jadowski , Editor



Photo by Diane Jadowski

RICHMOND AUDUBON SOCIETY Membership

Go to <https://richmondaudubon.org/join>

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ABOUT THE RICHMOND AUDUBON SOCIETY Mission Statement:

The purpose and objectives of this Society shall be to promote the enjoyment, understanding and preservations of birds, other wildlife and habitat through birding, education, advocacy and fellowship, while engaging in any such educational, scientific, investigative and charitable pursuits as may be part of the stated purposes of the National Audubon Society, of which this Society shall function as a Chapter.

RAS MEMBER MEETINGS: Third Thursday of the month except June, July, August and December

RAS BOARD MEETINGS: Second Thursdays of January, March, May, July (August 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.

WEBSITE: www.RichmondAudubon.org
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/RichmondAudubon/
MEETUP GROUP: www.meetup.com/RAS-Meetup/
FREELIST: 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 respects the individuality of each member of our community, and we are committed to an environment free of any kind of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, national or ethnic origin, politics, or veteran status.